



RAISING SAINTS

CHILDREN + FAMILY MINISTRY // WEEKLY GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY THE HERMIT



Primary Grade Students

A few days ago on January 17 we remembered a saint of the Armenian Church, St. Anthony the Hermit. St. Anthony's parents were very loving and taught him to love Jesus Christ and follow his example. Anthony lived in a good house in a village in Egypt. His parents made sure that he had everything he needed. He was a very polite and caring boy who went to church with his parents regularly. His parents died when he was a young man, so he had to take care of his sister and their home all by himself.

One day he decided to follow what Jesus had told his disciples that they should share whatever they had with those who were less fortunate and did not have all that they needed to live. He gave away all the money his parents had left him to the poor, keeping just enough for his sister to live on. He wanted to be quiet and live simply close to his village which was near the desert. He spent his time weaving baskets so he could eat simple food. He spent a lot of time being quiet and prayed always.

Have you ever tried to be quiet? Sometimes it is difficult to be quiet when there is so much you can do with toys, watching television, or going for activities after school. But we can learn to be quiet and rest for a few minutes each day. You might even end up liking the quiet time. Let's try it today.

- Put your heads down on your desk, or just sit comfortably.
- Close your eyes. Be still and quiet.
- Try not to think of anything.
- Listen quietly

After 3-4 minutes you will hear your teacher say, "Open your eyes and continue to be quiet. I will give you some drawing paper and crayons. I want you to use different colors and draw me a picture of how it felt to be quiet."

After 10 minutes your teacher will ask you to show your picture to your friends and tell them how it felt to be quiet. Make sure to have some quiet time everyday at home.

Intermediate and High School Students

This past week on January 17 we commemorated St. Anthony the Hermit, a saint of the Armenian Church. St. Anthony was born 251 A.D. into a well-to-do Egyptian family which was well reputed for their Christian life. His parents were able to provide for all his needs. Young Anthony lived a simple life and devoted his time to learning and practicing his Christian faith. His parents died early and left him at the age of twenty in charge of the care of his sister and their estate. One day as the Gospel was being read in Church he heard the words, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me." Mt. 19:21. He did so, reserving some funds for the care of his sister. He withdrew to solitude outside his village. Most of his time was devoted to self-discipline and working with his hands weaving baskets for his simple livelihood. He visited older men who practiced this simple and devout life of prayer and learned from them how to perfect his own spiritual life. He fought the temptations of the devil through praying the psalms and speaking the name of Christ so that he could live according to the will of God.

Think about your life. Most of us, thank God, have all that we need to have to live a comfortable life. Check all that apply to you:

- I live with my parents in a comfortable house.
- I go to school and have many friends
- I play sports and practice several times a week
- I go to Church every week with my family
- I take piano band lessons weekly
- I watch my favorite shows on TV
- I belong to a book club
- I take art lessons

It is wonderful to be active and busy, specially if you are with friends. Think about this question and write a few words or sentences about it.

- How often do you take time to be quiet or alone?

daily weekly I don't have time

- Spend some time alone, quietly. Describe how you felt. Can you name the feelings?

- Sometimes it may be hard to be alone, yet other times one does not want to be forced to participate in what others are doing. What has your experience been of being alone? Describe it in a few words.

Not everyone has an easy time being alone or silent. Yet we know that when we practice the discipline of taking time out to be alone or silent, we may find that we like it. Jesus our Lord spent a lot of time with people. But there were times when he needed to be alone and quiet. This is when he prayed to God his Father.

Find a peaceful place to spend a designated amount of time each day for a few weeks. Keep a record of your time alone.

- When are you usually alone, how often do you choose to be alone?
- What do you do when you are alone?
- What kinds of feelings do you have?
- Can you share what you wrote in your journal with your teacher, parents or friends?

If you've had times when you are bored or afraid being alone, know that you can overcome those negative feelings. St. Anthony prayed always like is Teacher, Jesus Christ. His favorite short prayer was to call on the name of Jesus Christ. Have you heard either your grandparents or parents say:

**Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.
Der Hisoos Krisdos, mez voghormya.**

Don't forget, making the sign of the Cross also is an act of faith in the saving power of Christ. It reminds us of his presence and we will not fear to be alone. God bless you!

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