

St. Josephine Bakhita

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This is the story of a young girl who was kidnapped in Africa by slave traders when she was only 9 years old. They named her Bakhita and sold her as a slave. She was cruelly treated and beaten by those who owned her. Yet she forgave her captors and she was known as a person of kindness toward others.

Learns about God

Years after she became a slave, Bakhita was taken to Italy by a family who treated her kindly. In Italy she learned about God from the sisters at a nearby convent. Bakhita had always wondered who created the sun, moon, and stars. Now she knew it was God. Eventually she became a free person.

Person of kindness

Bakhita was baptized in 1890 and given the name Josephine. She forgave those who had hurt her. She decided to join the same order of sisters who had taught her about God's love. Sister Josephine

comforted the poor and suffering people who came for help to the convent door. She was filled with compassion for people in need.

Works for justice

The life of this saint reminds us how important it is to work for justice for all people. Each person is made in the image and likeness of God and should be treated with respect. As God's creation we are to live with love for others in the world we share. Josephine died in 1947 and was canonized a saint in 2000. St. Josephine is a model for our own lives of what it means to live with forgiveness and love for others.

What can we do?

* Let's talk about this saint. What happened to her as a child? What was her life like in Italy? What did she do after she was baptized? Did she hold grudges? Why are all people to be treated with respect? Is it OK to be mean to someone who has been mean to you? Who did she help? How is her life an example for us?

* Let's look at scenarios where we can choose to live in peace with others. Someone lies about you and you get in trouble. Do you try to get even? Your younger sister accidentally ruins the poster you made for school. Do you have to forgive her? A kid at school shoves you in the hallway. Should you shove him back?

* Let's make a craft to remind us to love God and others. Write the words "Love God and love others" on white

FEBRUARY SAINTS

- 3** St. Blaise
- 5** St. Agatha
- 6** St. Paul Miki and Companions
- 10** St. Scholastica
- 11** Our Lady of Lourdes
- 17** The Seven Holy Founders of Servite Order
- 22** Chair of St. Peter
- 23** St. Polycarp

paper. Cut out the section of paper with the words and glue it to a half sheet of red cardstock. Decorate the border with heart stickers to remember to live in God's love.

Prayer

God of love, we celebrate the life and example of St. Josephine Bakhita. Help us to treat all people with respect because you created each of us. May we learn from the example of this saint. Give us the strength to forgive people who have hurt us. May we be people of kindness toward others as she was. Amen.

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