

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- Print resources and/or internet access for research on the Dust Bowl, the Dry Fifties, the North American Drought of 1988-1989, the causes of drought, and ways to prevent a drought

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite a volunteer to explain the meaning of the word abundance.
2. Ask the young people to name things they have in abundance. List their responses on the white board or flip chart.
3. Encourage them to listen for examples of abundance in the story of Our Lady of Abundance.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of Abundance.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to work with partners to recall the story. Ask the pairs to identify the main characters in the story and the roles they played, as well as examples in the story of abundance.
2. Lead a group discussion of the young people's thoughts. (Main characters: women, Baglio, pastor, parishioners; Roles played: prayer, relating Mary's message, processing to the spot, building a church; Abundance: faith and prayer, rain, crops, thanksgiving. Welcome additional responses and ideas.)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Have the young people review the things they earlier said they had an abundance of.
2. Ask if they need the abundance. If so, why? If not, what actions might they take to share their abundance with others in need?
3. If possible, organize a "Sharing Our Abundance" collection of games, books, clothes, sporting equipment, and so forth to benefit a parish or local outreach to those in need.

Curriculum Connection: History and Science

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to share what they know about droughts. What is a drought? What are some famous droughts in history? How do droughts impact crops, people, and livestock?
2. Ask the young people to listen for the connection between a drought and Our Lady of Abundance as you tell her story.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to tell what part a drought had to play in the story of Our Lady of Abundance. (*The people had suffered a long drought; Our Lady of Abundance heard their prayers for rain.*)
2. Divide the young people into five groups. Assign each group one of the following topics: The Dust Bowl, The Dry Fifties, The North American Drought of 1988-1989, The Causes of Drought, and Ways to Prevent a Drought.
3. Ask the young people to prepare ten- to fifteen-minute reports on their topics, including illustrations if available. The reports should highlight both the history or explanation of their topic and its impact on the crops, the livestock, and the people.
4. Invite the small groups to share their completed reports with the class.

And Furthermore . . .

Brainstorm with the young people ways that we use the gift of water every day. Ask them to name ways we waste water and ways we can conserve water. List their thoughts on the board. Vote on one way you will, as a group, quit wasting water, and one way you will make a stronger effort to conserve water. Ask the young people to invite their family members to join them in these efforts too. If time allows, invite the young people to create posters or social media messages that promote water conservation and help raise awareness of ways we waste the precious gift of water.