

For Junior High

Materials Needed:

- Several copies of recent parish bulletins
- Journals or writing paper
- Pencils or pens

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to find an image of Mary they particularly like, and to note if the image has a title, such as Mary, Seat of Wisdom; Mary, Star of the Sea; Madonna and Child; Our Lady of Fatima; and so forth.
2. Invite the young people to share their images with the group. If the images have titles, discuss whether the title and the image seem to be a good match.
3. Ask the young people to recall why Catholics have images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints in their churches and in their homes. *(As a reminder that Jesus, Mary, and the saints watch over us; as a reminder that we too are a part of the Communion of Saints)*
4. Invite the young people to listen to a story of Mary, honored by the title of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.

After Telling the Story

1. Ask volunteers to explain why a statue of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones was important for the home. *(The home was for abandoned children; the statue was a reminder that Our Lady was watching over them and protecting them.)*
2. Invite the young people to say who they think the three teenagers could have been and why the teenagers wanted to work in secret. *(Welcome all suggestions.)*
3. Ask the group what messages the story teaches. *(For example, the importance of religious images, how our prayers are answered in unexpected ways, how our talents can be used for the glory of God, how Mary watches over us all, and so forth)*

Putting Faith into Action

1. Remind the group that the teenagers had no money to pay for their food and lodging, but they offered to use their artistic talents to create a statue for the home.
2. Invite the young people to take a few minutes to quietly reflect on their own talents. What are their talents? How can they serve God by using those talents?
3. Invite group discussion in response to the reflection questions.

4. Distribute parish bulletins and invite the young people to work with partners. Invite the young people to search several recent bulletins for opportunities to serve. Have the partners list the opportunities suitable for young people their age.
5. Invite a sharing of findings. Post results on the white board or on a flip chart, then invite the young people to share more opportunities of which they are aware.
6. Encourage the young people to consider serving the parish or the larger community in one or more of the ways you have discussed and listed.

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to discuss those they feel are the abandoned ones of today and why.
2. Brainstorm what would be signs of hope to these abandoned ones.

After Telling the Story

1. Have the young people write letters to Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones. Suggest a simple greeting, such as, "Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones;" an opening sentence, such as, "Today I am asking you to watch over _____ because _____;" and additional sentences that say more about the abandoned ones and implore Our Lady's protection and care.
2. Invite volunteers to share their letters. After each letter is read, invite the group to pray aloud, "Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones, pray for us."

And Furthermore . . .

Invite volunteers to create a mural with an image of Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones and the words, "Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones, pray for us!" Leave room around the image and words for the young people to post pictures of and articles about abandoned ones in the world today. Encourage the young people to take time to read the articles, look at the images, and pray to Our Lady of the Abandoned Ones.