

For Intermediate Grades

Materials Needed:

- Costumes and props (*optional*)
- Writing paper
- Pencils or pens

Faith Connection

Before Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to name those who have smiled at them today and how those smiles made them feel. Then ask them to name those at whom they have smiled.
2. Ask if they have ever felt God smiling upon them. If they wish to do so, invite them to share something about that experience.

Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the stories of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Our Lady of the Smile, as is appropriate for the age of the young people you are teaching. The story of Our Lady of the Smile would be an excellent story to dramatize, with costumes and props as suggested by the text.

After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to describe the power of a smile as presented in the story of Our Lady of the Smile.
2. Invite volunteers to describe what could be the power of the smiles we give to others each day. (*For example: Our smiles can be signs of friendship and concern to those who are feeling lonely or tired. Our smiles can say "I'm glad you're here" to a parent who's just getting home from work or to a friend we haven't seen in a while. Our smiles can help younger brothers and sisters stop crying when they are feeling afraid or are upset.*)

Putting Faith into Action

1. Invite the young people to name those they know who need a smile today. List their thoughts on a flip chart or whiteboard.
2. Create a Litany to Our Lady of the Smile by naming those mentioned in #1 (*above*) in a prayer of petition, and by responding, "Our Lady, smile upon your children." (*For example: For our pastor, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children. For our parents, we pray: Our Lady, smile upon your children.*)

Curriculum Connection: Creative Writing

After Telling the Story

1. Invite the young people to recall what they shared about how the smiles of others have impacted them and about the power of the smiles we give others each and every day.

2. Write on the white board or flip chart the following titles:
 - The Smile that Changed My Life
 - God Smiled on Me Today
 - I Saw Our Lady Smile
 - The Smile that Got Away
 - Ten Reasons to Smile
3. Distribute writing paper and pencils or pens.
4. Ask the young people to choose one of the five titles listed on the white board or flip chart and to write a children's story, poem, song, or short story that fits the title they have chosen. Encourage them to illustrate their work.
5. Invite volunteers to share what they have written.

And Furthermore . . .

Display the young people's stories, poems, and song lyrics with a sign that says, "Our Lady of the Smile, pray for us!"