



Saint of the Month: Heaven's Heroes



Saint Leobinus
March 14

Goal: To provide a lesson for children about a saint who exemplifies a deep relationship with God and the ability to share that relationship with others

Materials Needed: This lesson plan, accompanying story, and any necessary materials for follow up activities

Objectives:

1. To assist children in developing the understanding that all of God's people are called to a life of holiness
2. To help children respond appropriately to the question: What is a saint?
One who:
 - is proclaimed by the Church, after their death, to have lived a life of holiness
 - teaches others about Jesus by their example
 - lives like Jesus
3. To introduce one of our Church's saints, Saint Leobinus (say Lee-AW bin-us)) telling as much of the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level.
4. To learn that Leobinus was a saint because he lived in a way that respected the Gospel of Jesus
5. To learn that we are called by God to share the Gospel with our lives
6. To help the children develop listening skills

Procedure:

1. Prepare the children to listen to Leobinus' story.
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Leobinus. Elaborate or abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.
3. Use the follow up questions (below).
4. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

Saint Leobinus

We don't know the year when Saint Leobinus, who is sometimes known as Lubin (in French), was born. This may be because he was born to a peasant family back in the unstable times of the "Dark Ages" of history. Many people were not educated at the time (including Leobinus' parents) and record keeping was spotty at best. During this time plagued by war mongering barbarians much of birth history was not recorded, unless you were from a family of wealth and education.

What we do know is that young Leobinus worked his parent's farm fields and also as a shepherd. He also had a great thirst for knowledge and wanted to be able to read, especially the Sacred Scriptures. These readings were usually the domain of priests and monks only. With his parents' permission, he left his family farm for a monastery in Noailles, France where he offered himself to the monks as a laborer in exchange for an education. This meant his family lost another person to work the farm and was a great sacrifice for the whole family. Leobinus was aware of the great gift he had been given. While he toiled in the monastery field by day, he received his education at night, studying and reading his lessons by candle light.

During this time, the monks in the monastery did not have individual cells, or rooms, but slept in a large dormitory – one large room with many beds. The light from Leobinus' candle burned well into the night as he studied disturbing the monks who had to rise early for Morning Prayer before their own duties. They complained that it interrupted the little sleep time they were allowed. Even their grumbling could not stop Leobinus from what he

knew to be God’s path for him. Leobinus put a screen around his candle and continued his studies.

Soon, Leobinus felt that God also wanted him to become a monk. He followed this call from God as well and took his place among his brother friars in the monastery. Soon, war between two local clans—the Burgundians and the Franks—broke out. Leobinus was captured and tortured while his fellow monks protected their most valuable possession: the Blessed Sacrament. When the soldiers thought he had died without revealing the site of the monastery’s “treasure” they left the area. Leobinus survived and was ordained a priest, eventually becoming Abbot, or head, of the monastery.

Leobinus went on to become Bishop of Chartres and took part in two very important sixth century councils of the Church of France: Paris and Orleans. Leobinus is also said to have had the gift of healing and some miracles were attributed to him before he died of old age in 556. He is honored with a stained-glass window in the Cathedral of Chartres, France.

Saint Leobinus’ Feast Day is March 14.

Pray: Saint Leobinus, you worked hard in your life to make the most of the talents God gave you and faced problems with great courage, even though it may have seemed impossible at times. Help us to live as you did, fearless in our faith and always seeking to further our education in gratitude for the gifts that God gave to each of us. Amen.

Follow-up Questions: (add, omit, re-word as appropriate for your grade level)

1. Even today, some people don’t know the exact day of their birth. In the missions, many people who live as Leobinus’ family did – poor, uneducated, and growing their own food – are more likely to mark birth and death by the cycle of the moon, the harvest, or some other natural occurrence (great storm, famine, drought, etc). How would your life be different if you did not know the exact date of your birth? Besides the presents and the cake, what would change?
2. God gave Leobinus a love of reading? What gift has God given you? How do you use it every day to give back to God?
3. What did Leobinus know to be the true Treasure at the monastery?

Follow-up Activities:

1. During Lent, keep a count of each book you read. Donate to the missions for each book in honor of Saint Leobinus. Your sacrifice will help children in the missions receive a better education.
2. Leobinus’ family sacrificed so that he could live at the monastery and go to school. Make a list of five things that your family has sacrificed for you. Thank them for each gift and make a gift to the missions in their honor.
3. Some of our names are very different in other countries’ languages as was Leobinus’. Find out how to say your name in a different language. Teach your friends how to say it and in what country the language is spoken.
4. Reading was one of Leobinus’ favorite pastimes. To honor him during Lent, read a book or story about a saint unfamiliar to you. In class, give a short verbal summary about what makes your saint special. When you finish the report, make sure you acknowledge the saint that brought you together by saying, “Thanks, Leobinus!”