



# LESSON PLAN:

## REACHING

Target Age: 5th-12th Grade

Ideal Learning Format: Family Catechesis

Ideal Group Size: Small Family Group or One-on-One

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[www.deepeningrootsministryservices.com](http://www.deepeningrootsministryservices.com)



# Overview

## Note about Amazon Link:

Deepening Roots Ministry Services is an Amazon Associate, and we earn a commission from qualifying purchases made through the links found in this lesson plan and on our [website](#).

## Materials Needed:

- Copy of lesson plan for each leader/parent
- Copies of each worksheet/prayer guide for each participant (including the leaders)
- Pen/pencil for each participant
- Colored pencils and/or crayons
- Bible (at least one, but it is best for each person to have their own)
  - We recommend [The Catholic Children's Bible](#) for elementary school children and [The Catholic Youth Bible](#) (New American Bible Revised Edition) for middle/high school youth, both published by Saint Mary's Press, and we use these translations for the verses quoted throughout the lesson.
  - You can also find the [Bible online](#).
- Bowl of water (preferably holy water if available)
- Candle (and lighter if needed)
- Web-enabled device to access YouTube videos
- Optional: The [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) (All excerpts needed are provided, but if you have a copy at home, please look them up and read straight from the Catechism.) You can also find the full [Catechism online](#).

## About this Lesson Plan:

This lesson plan is intended for at-home, family catechesis with children in 5th through 12th grade. It can be adapted for other groups as well, however Deepening Roots Ministry Services may offer a specific alternative for the group you have in mind, so please visit our [website](#) for more information.





## Note to Parents on How to Use this Lesson Plan:

You can adapt this plan based on your family's needs. Some suggestions for how to do so are included.

Parents/leaders should fully participate in the activities and discussions but ask open questions to allow the children to process the information and share their own thoughts and questions freely.

This lesson is of a particularly sensitive nature. As the parent, you know best what your child is ready for. Please use discretion, but also be open to new ideas.

Carefully read through the entire lesson and gather materials beforehand so that you can move seamlessly through the plan. Involve your children in as much of the preparation and lesson as possible (see below for suggestions).

This lesson plan references YouTube videos. Comments, ads, and suggested videos on YouTube do not represent the values of Deepening Roots Ministry Services.

If you are using a printed version of the lesson plan or the links in a digital version become outdated, please see our [website](#) for up-to-date resources.

Throughout the lesson, there are opportunities for digging deeper along with helpful information and resources for parents.

The lesson plan is intended to be done in order. However, it can be broken down into several days, depending on the age of your children and their attention span. There is an official Opening and Closing Prayer service for the lesson as a whole, however it is essential that you begin and end with some form of prayer each time you begin the lesson. You can use pieces of the prayer services provided or create your own tradition.

**A Note About Language:** This lesson plan, originally written in January 2021, capitalizes the word Black when used as a race but lowercases white and also uses the term person or people of color to describe people who are not white following current inclusive language best practices. Inclusive language is, however, regularly changing, and we recognize that these terms may become outdated.





### **Suggested seven-day breakdown:**

- Day 1: Opening Prayer Service and Topic Overview
- Day 2: Scripture Review
- Day 3: Tradition Review
- Day 4: St. Martin de Porres
- Day 5: St. Josephine Bakhita
- Day 6: Sister Thea Bowman
- Day 7: Family Examination of Conscience, Call to Action, Closing Prayer

### **Suggested three-day breakdown:**

- Day 1: Opening Prayer Service, Topic Overview, Scripture Review, Tradition Review
- Day 2: Saints Study (St. Marin, St. Bakhita, and Sister Bowman)
- Day 3: Family Examination of Conscience, Call to Action, Closing Prayer

### **Contents and Flow of Lesson:**

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# Part #1: Opening Prayer

## Note to Parent/Leader

**Involve the Children:** The more ways your children are involved, helping, and leading, the better! Make sure that they know their role before beginning. Here are some suggestions for roles children can assume for the Opening Prayer.

- Help and input in setting up the sacred space. Children can choose items and place them in the space.
- Assign someone to find the Scripture verse (John 1:5) and assist them as needed. This is a great chance to explain how to use a Bible if needed!
- Assign someone to be the candle lighter (the candle lighter has a spoken line in the prayer that they may want to rehearse).
- Assign someone to be the lector and read from Scripture. It is a very short reading, but they may want to practice a few times before beginning.
- Assign someone to be the leader or split this role into two parts.
- Assign someone to press “play” for the video.

**Prepare:** Set up a sacred space for your prayer. Continue to remain in this sacred space throughout each day of the lesson because working through the lesson can and should be a prayerful act. Make the sacred space meaningful for your family; there is no right or wrong way to do this, but here are some suggestions:

- Use a small table as a home altar or place a small piece of fabric (a folded sheet would be fine) in the middle of where you will be praying. This can remain in your home as a focal point and does not need to come down after the lesson.
- Set the home altar table or space with:
  - Candle (real or battery operated)
  - Bible open to John 1:5
  - Small bowl of holy water (if you cannot get holy water, use tap water and say a prayer asking for the Holy Spirit to enter the water)
    - [Learn more about using holy water in your home](#)
  - A copy of the Opening Prayer sheet found in this packet (It would be best to have one for each participant.)
  - Consider also adding a crucifix or other pictures/items that are relevant to racism or meaningful to the family
  - [Learn more about creating a home altar](#)
- Have a web-enabled device ready with [“Jacob’s Song”](#) || [Brother Isaiah” from Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.](#)
- Give each participant a copy of the Opening Prayer guide (found in this packet).





**Pre-Prayer Lesson:** You may want to do a short “pre-lesson” depending on your family’s needs and understanding of Catholic traditions.

- Ensure that each child knows how to make the Sign of the Cross. Parent resources:
  - [“Why Do Catholics Make the Sign of the Cross?” from the Life Teen blog](#)
  - [“5 Reasons Why Catholics Make the Sign of the Cross” by Fr. Rob Galea](#)
- Point out that when we read from the Bible during this prayer service, we will use the guide to help imitate the way Scripture is read during Mass and will say the same words and make the same gestures as we do during Mass. Some suggested discussion questions before beginning the Opening Prayer:
  - What does the priest say before reading the Gospel at Mass? (Answer: “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...”)
  - How do we respond? (Answer: “Glory to you, oh Lord”)
  - What do we do with our hand while saying “Glory to you, oh Lord” and why do we do this? (Answer: We trace a small cross on our forehead, mouth, and heart to ask that God’s words be in our thoughts, in our words, and in our hearts always. Parent resource: [“Why Do Catholics Cross Their Head, Lips, and Heart at Mass?” from the Life Teen blog](#))
  - After reading from the Gospel, what does the priest say? (Answer: “The Gospel of the Lord”)
  - How do we respond to this? (Answer: “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ”)
- Explain that singing and listening to music can be forms of prayer and that there will be a music video as part of the Opening Prayer.
  - [Learn more about the opening song](#)

**Post-Prayer Lesson:** After completing the Opening Prayer, explain that even though this formal prayer time has been completed, your family is continuing to pray by actively learning about God and how we pray and grow in relationship with God.

## **Leading the Activity**

As the family/group gathers together, ask everyone to bless themselves with the holy water as a reminder of our baptism and that our lives belong to Christ.

- Everyone begins the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.
- The **Candle Lighter** lights the candle while reading from the Opening Prayer Guide.
- The **Leader** reads from the Opening Prayer Guide.





- The **Lector** and everyone else reads from the script on the Opening Prayer Guide. If needed, here are two translations of John 1:5:
  - “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.” ([The Catholic Children’s Bible](#))
  - “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” ([The Catholic Youth Bible](#))
- Watch the **music video** for [“Jacob’s Song” by Brother Isaiah](#).
- The **Leader** reads from the Opening Prayer Guide.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

## Part #2: Topic Overview: What Is Racism?

### Note to Parent/Leader

Racism is a sensitive topic and can be hard for children (especially young or particularly empathetic children) to absorb. However, since racism is a reality, it is better to be direct in an age-appropriate way. This conversation will vary depending on your children, their ages, and their prior knowledge and understanding of racism. Use your own words rather than reading directly from the sample script below. This is written from the perspective of the United States; if you live in a different country, you may want to first do your own research on the history of racism in your specific region and culture.

[Find additional resources about racism on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\) website.](#)

### Leading the Activity (Sample Script)

Today we are going to talk about racism and what our faith teaches us about it.

**Discuss:** Have you heard the word racism used before? What does it mean? Where did you hear it and how did you learn what it means?

Racism is the discrimination or unfair treatment of people based on their race. Racism can be a conscious or subconscious belief. Racism can grow in people’s hearts and can also be seen through structures such as law enforcement, employment, and education/schools.





**Discuss:** Where have you heard or seen racism in action? How did you feel? What did you do?

Currently in our country (the United States) a lot of racism that was previously overlooked is being uncovered. Many people are working to break down racism both in our structures and in our hearts. Racism has hurt many groups of people, and one example of a group that has historically and significantly been hurt is Black people. Black people and other people of color have been treated unfairly by the police and sometimes have been killed by police or other people when they were causing no danger. Racism in hearts causes people to judge others and to be afraid of them when there is no real reason to be afraid. Black people are hired for jobs less often and are often treated differently in school.

**Discuss:** What do you know about slavery? Where did you learn about this?

Slavery is a system that treats humans as property. Slaves are usually treated with violence and work without pay. In the United States, slavery was legal for a long time and is how much of our country was built. There is still slavery in our world today. Both now and throughout history, slaves were taken from various cultures. Many slaves were kidnapped and brought to the United States from Africa. Even though slavery was eventually made illegal, it has a lasting impact on communities and people that can still be seen today. For example, many Black people do not have the same access to education, employment, and safe housing as white people.

**Discuss:** What of this information is new to you? How do you feel about racism? What questions do you have? How do you think God feels about the racism in our culture throughout history and today?

We're going to work together to learn more about racism and what our faith tells us about it. We will think about how God is calling us to act to help stop racism both in hearts and in the systems of our society. Racism is a sin and, as the Body of Christ, we are all called to actively work against it.





# Part #3: Scripture Review:

## What Does the Bible Say About Racism?

### Note to Parent/Leader

**Prepare:** Gather the following:

- A copy of the “What does the Bible Say” worksheet from this lesson plan for each participant (including parents/leaders)
- A Bible (at least one, but one per participant would be best)
- Colored pencils and/or crayons
- Pencil or pen for each participant

**Using the Bible:** The verse is included in the lesson plan, but have each participant find the verse in their Bible or take turns finding the verses in the Bible rather than reading them from this document. This will help participants experience finding answers from Sacred Scripture.

### Leading the Activity

**Intro/Color Your Person:** Have each participant color in the person on their activity page to represent themselves. Explain that we are going to read some passages together from the Bible and take time to reflect on what they teach us about racism and God’s plan for us and all humans. Once everyone is done coloring, ask participants to show their drawing and explain why they represented themselves the way they did.

**Scripture Study:** For each verse listed on the activity sheet, have someone read it aloud slowly two or three times and then give the group a few moments to reflect and write down their thoughts in words or pictures in the space provided on their worksheet. Discuss individual reflections. Allow for silence while your child is thinking and ask follow-up questions such as “what do you mean by that?” or “what do you think God is communicating to us through this?” If your child is having a hard time coming up with a reflection, you can use some of the questions and sample reflections below to get them thinking.





**Genesis 1:26-28:** Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.” So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.”

**Possible Questions:** Who did God create in His image? Does this passage say anything about a specific race, or did God entrust His creation to all humans?

**Possible Reflections:** God created all of us in His image. He does not see us differently based on our race or other similar factors. He calls all of us to take a leadership role in our world.

**Matthew 28:19:** Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.,”

**Possible Questions:** Who is God calling us to serve? Who does God want to follow Him?

**Possible Reflections:** God is calling us to reach out to all people. He values a relationship with everyone regardless of race or other factors.

**Acts 10:34-35:** Peter began to speak: “I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Those who fear him and do what is right are acceptable to him, no matter what race they belong to.”

**Possible Questions:** How does God see our differences? How does God want us to treat people who are different from us?

**Possible Reflections:** God loves us all and is pleased with us, regardless of race. We are all called to follow Him. We should follow God’s example and treat everyone in accordance with God’s love.

**Acts 17:26-28:** From one human being He created all races of people and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. He did this so that they would look for Him, and perhaps find Him as they felt around for Him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us; as someone has said, ‘In Him we live and move and exist.’ It is as some of your poets have said, ‘We too are His children.’





**Possible Questions:** Who did God create? How are all races connected? Who are God's children?

**Possible Reflections:** God created all races as one human family. We are all related as God's children.

**James 2:8-9:** You will be doing the right thing if you obey the law of the Kingdom, which is found in the Scripture, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." But if you treat people according to their outward appearance, you are guilty of sin, and the Law condemns you as a lawbreaker.

**Possible Questions:** According to this passage, what is the right way to treat others? Who is our neighbor? According to this passage, what is the wrong and sinful way to treat others?

**Possible Reflections:** We should treat everyone with love. Our neighbors are all of the humans in the world. It is wrong to treat people differently based on the way they look.

**Revelations 7:9:** After this I looked, and there was an enormous crowd — no one could count all the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.

**Possible Questions:** Who was standing in front of the throne of Jesus? Who is called home to be with God forever?

**Possible Reflections:** We are all one in God's Kingdom.

## **Going Deeper**

Suggested verses to continue your Scripture study:

- Romans 10:12
- 1 Corinthians 12:13
- Galatians 3:28
- Colossians 3:11





# Part #4: Tradition Review:

## What Do Catholic Leaders Say About Racism?

### Note to Parent/Leader

**Prepare:** Gather the following:

- A copy of the “What do Catholic Leaders Say” worksheet from the lesson plan for each participant (including parents/leaders)
- Colored pencils and/or crayons
- Pencil or pen for each participant
- Web-enabled device
- Optional: [\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#)

**Using the Passages:** The passages from various church documents found on the worksheet are included below along with links to their complete documents. Church documents are often written in technical language and giving summaries can be helpful, especially for younger children. Use conversation to see what your child understands from each excerpt.

### Leading the Activity

**Intro:** Explain that we are going to read some passages together from Church documents written by popes and bishops. We will take time to reflect on what they teach us about racism and God’s plan for us and all humans.

**Video:** Watch “[CST 101 | Solidarity](#)” by [Catholic Relief Services](#) on the sixth theme of Catholic Social Teaching, Solidarity. Explain that our Church has seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching which demonstrate how we are to act within society. The theme of Solidarity relates significantly to the reality of racism and offers us guidance in how we should act.

After watching the video, discuss how this relates to racism. How are all humans called to live and act with solidarity for those who suffer due to racism? What does solidarity mean?





**Document Study:** Have someone read each passage from the “What Do Catholic Leaders Say?” worksheet aloud (consider having each read two or three times slowly). After each excerpt, discuss its meaning. Ask your child what they understand from it, what it means to them, and what they think the authors are trying to say. When needed, offer a summary.

1. [\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#), paragraph 1935
2. [\*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church\*](#), Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, paragraph 433 (Vatican 2004)
3. [\*Brothers and Sisters to Us\*](#) (USCCB 1979)
4. [\*Statement of United States Bishops’ President on George Floyd and the Protests in American Cities\*](#) (Archbishop José H. Gomez 2020)
5. [\*Open Wide Our Hearts: An Enduring Call to Love\*](#) (USCCB 2018)

**Reflection:** After reading and discussing the quotes above, instruct everyone to spend a few moments reflecting on how we are called to act and write down their thoughts in words or pictures in the spaces provided on the worksheet. Discuss the individual responses. Allow for silence while your children are thinking and ask follow-up questions such as “what do you mean by that?” or “how do you think Jesus is calling us to act?”

### **Going Deeper**

For older youth (or for parent’s study) read the complete documents that these quotes are taken from.

## **Part #5: Saint Study: What Can We Learn from Saints and People of Faith?**

### **Note to Parent/Leader**

**Involve the Children:** For each saint/person of faith, the lesson plan below instructs your family to review the info sheet together. There are many ways to do this. You can invite someone to read aloud while others follow along. You could split up the three info sheets between individuals or small groups and have each person/group present the information through a speech, skit, or song. You could have pairs prepare for each info sheet and have one person pretend to be the saint and another person interview them. Be creative and decide what will work best for your family.





**Prepare:** Gather the following:

- Copies of the three info sheets for each participant (including parents/leaders)
- Copies of the three coloring sheets for each participant (including parents/leaders)
- Colored pencils and/or crayons
- Pencil or pen for each participant
- Web-enabled device to access YouTube videos

**Pre-Lesson:** You may want to take a few minutes to explain what a saint is. The term saint refers to any person who has died and is now in heaven. However, the more formal title Saint is given to those who the Catholic Church, through the pope, has determined to indeed be in Heaven with God and a worthy example of virtue. This process, called canonization, looks at the person's life and death and also verifies miracles attributed to the person. Saints are role models who we can relate to and look to for guidance and intercessory prayer. Because the saints are with God, we can ask them to pray for us in a special way. Each saint is different, with different gifts and challenges, and they can each guide us in a unique way. In this particular lesson, we will look at two saints (St. Martin de Porres and St. Josephine Bakhita) and one person of faith (Sister Thea Bowman), who is in the process of canonization but has not yet been given the official title of Saint.

Parent resources:

- [Learn more about saints on the USCCB website](#)
- Watch [“Do Catholics Worship Saints?” by Ascension Presents](#)

## **Leading the Activity**

**Introduction:** Explain that you will now look at three saints/people of faith who relate to the topic of racism. These are Catholic people who we can learn from, relate to, and pray with. Move through the steps below for each saint.

For each Saint/Person of Faith:

- **Info Sheet:** Review the info sheet attached to this lesson plan together using a method described above in an interactive and creative way.
- **Video:** After reviewing each info sheet, watch a short video about that saint/person.
  - [“Saint Martin De Porres” movie trailer by EWTN](#)
  - [“Bakhita: From Slave to Saint - Trailer” by Ignatius Press](#)
  - [“Blessed Among Us: Sister Thea Bowman” by Sheen Center](#)





- **Coloring Sheet/Reflection:** Before beginning each coloring sheet, explain that we not only learn from these saints and people of faith, but we also can ask them for their prayers. Coloring can be both relaxing and a form of prayer. Assign a leader to read the name of the saint/person from the top of the coloring sheet and instruct everyone to say “pray for us” together as you begin your coloring time. If you wish, put on calm or topical music in the background. Take as much time as you need for your family to color while discussing the following reflection questions before moving on to the next saint.
  - How did racism impact their life?
  - How did faith in God impact their life?
  - How did they act as Christ’s hands in the world?
  - What can we learn from them?

## **Going Deeper**

If you would like to continue your study of these saints and people of faith, there are many books and other resources available. The information sheets here were based on chapter books written for older children and teens.

- [Purchase St. Martin de Porres: Humble Healer by Elizabeth Marie DeDomenico, FSP](#)
- [Purchase St. Bakhita of Sudan: Forever Free by Susan Helen Wallace, FSP](#)
- [Purchase Sister Thea Bowman: Do You Hear Me, Church? by Peggy A. Sklar](#)

**Content Warning:** *Please use caution when choosing other materials as some resources are dated and present biased and untrue information, particularly in regard to St. Bakhita’s owners. Many books talk about her final two owners as being “kind” and “treating her well.” Though it does seem that St. Bakhita was treated much better with her final two owners, they still treated her as their owned property and did not free her on their own accord. The wording in some of these cases can be confusing and can limit our hearts’ full capacity to be truly anti-racist.*





# Part #6: Family Examination of Conscience

## Note to Parent/Leader

This part of the lesson can be challenging and needs to be facilitated with an open mind and an open heart. Depending on your family's needs and demographics, you may choose to edit some of these questions. Please proceed prayerfully.

**Prepare:** If you have a copy of the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), have that on hand.

**Pre-Lesson:** Ensure that your child understands what sin is. Parent resources:

- Watch [“What Is Sin?” by Ascension Presents](#)
- [Learn what the USCCB says about morality and sin](#)

## Leading the Activity

**Review and Reflection:** Explain that you will now learn about the concept of social sin by reviewing these excerpts together and considering our role and responsibility in social sin. (You may need to read each one multiple times and summarize for younger children.) Use the reflection questions below to help discussion.

**Passage:** [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), paragraphs 1868-1869

Sin is a personal act. Moreover, we have a responsibility for the sins committed by others when we cooperate in them:

- By participating directly and voluntarily in them
- By ordering, advising, praising, or approving them
- By not disclosing or not hindering them when we have an obligation to do so
- By protecting evil-doers

Thus sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. “Structures of sin” are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a “social sin.”





**Reflection Questions:** How do we participate in the social sin of racism? Are we aware of racism, even when it exists in more discrete ways? How do we react when we encounter racism in others? When is it our duty to disclose or hinder the sin of racism? What can we do in the future to better combat racism?

**Passage:** from [the page on “Social Sin” on the We are Salt and Light website](#) (a project of the USCCB)

Social sin resides within a group or a community of people. It exists within any structure in society that oppresses human beings, violates human dignity, stifles freedom and/or imposes great inequity. The only way we can recognize these sinful structures is if we step outside our own world and consider the world from another person's perspective. Once we have recognized these patterns and structures that are sinful, we need to move toward action on behalf of justice and the common good.

**Reflection Questions:** What have we done to “consider the world from another person's perspective”? How can we do this better? What “action” have we done “on behalf of justice and the common good”? What more can and should we be doing?

**Passage:** from [Open Wide Our Hearts: An Enduring Call to Love](#) (USCCB 2018)

The roots of racism have extended deeply into the soil of our society. Racism can only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality — economic and social — that we still see all around us. With renewed vigor, we call on the members of the Body of Christ to join others in advocating and promoting policies at all levels that will combat racism and its effects in our civic and social institutions. “Even in the developed world,” Pope Francis told members of the United States Congress, “the effects of unjust structures and actions are all too apparent. Our efforts must aim at restoring hope, righting wrongs, maintaining commitments, and thus promoting the well-being of individuals and of peoples.”

**Reflection Questions:** What are some of the racist policies and institutional barriers in our world today? What have we done to contend with these? How do we respond to Pope Francis’ call of “righting wrongs” and “promoting the well-being of individuals”? What more can we do to fill this call?





**More Reflection:** Next, explain that you are going to reflect and discuss additional questions to better examine what your family is doing well and how you can grow as an active member of the Body of Christ in efforts to defeat racism, both in hearts and in our society. Some of these questions are open ended while others are not; take your time to discuss and pray through the questions together. You may adapt these questions to better suit your family's needs and considering the race(s) of your own family.

- What do we see other people doing to positively address the issue of racism in our community? How do we support them?
- Do we use our words and actions to support others? When have our words or actions hurt others?
- Do we fear people who look different from us? If so, how does that fear impact our thoughts and actions and decisions?
- Do we own and read books that feature main characters who are of a different race? What percentage of our books meet this criteria? What about for TV and movies?
- Do we regularly shop or eat at places owned by people of color? Do we support other businesses run by people of color?
- Do we have friends who we regularly socialize with who are of a different race than we are? Do we have a diverse social group? How can we have a more diverse social group?
- Do our neighborhood, school, church, sport teams, and other activities include a diverse group of people? Why or why not? What can we do to increase diversity?
- Do we have diverse role models that we look up to (such as, teachers, coaches, doctors, religious, saints, athletes, speakers, bosses, etc.)? What can we do to have a more diverse set of role models?

**Role Play:** Consider the following scenarios and practice how each of you should and will respond if you find yourself in a similar situation. Consider creating skits.

- You are at school/work and a classmate/coworker who you are close with makes a joke about someone who is a different race (perhaps because they dress differently or have an accent). How do you react?
- You are hanging out with friends of the same race and a new person who you have not met comes in. They are a different race than everyone, and they do not have anyone to hang out with. How do you react?





- You are at school with a group of friends who are mostly white with the exception of a couple people. You are all talking loudly when you are supposed to be quiet. The teacher calls out the only Black person in the group and sends them to the principal's office. How do you react?
- You are at work and your office, including your supervisors, are mostly the same race as you. You are given a promotion; however, you know in your heart that a coworker who is of a different race actually deserves that promotion more than you do but was overlooked. How do you react?

### **Going Deeper**

- [Learn more about social sin on the We are Salt and Light website](#)
- [See the USCCB's Prayer Service for Racial Healing in Our Land](#) (a more adult-focused examination)

## **Part #7: Call to Action: Being Christ's Hands**

### **Note to Parent/Leader**

**Involve the Children:** This part of the lesson calls for participants to create an action plan. Take your children's suggestions seriously while creating the plan.

**Prepare:** Gather the following:

- One copy of the "Making a SMART Commitment" sheet from the lesson plan
- One copy of the "Being Christ's Hands" worksheet from the lesson plan
- Scrap paper
- Something to write with (such as a pen/pencil for brainstorming and a marker for the worksheet)

**Post-Lesson:** Follow through on the plan you create in this activity!





## **Leading the Activity**

**Brainstorming:** Together as a family, make a list of every way that your family, both as a group and as individuals, can combat racism. Think about things that came up during the Family Examination of Conscience. You can include things that you already do and also things that you have not done. Write down every idea, even if they seem unrealistic. Here are some suggestions to help get your ideas flowing. Please consult these suggestions after your family brainstorm and discuss them slowly; your family may be more creative without using this list of suggestions.

- Examine the viewpoints and realities of other cultures during historical events or time periods.
- Educate yourself on the history and cultural influence of other cultures.
- Visit historical sites of significance to other cultures.
- Display an anti-racism sign at your home.
- Support small businesses owned by people of color.
- Attend a local NAACP or other civil rights organization meeting.
- Participate in a religious service with a community of a different race.
- Purchase and consume books, movies, TV, and toys featuring main characters of a different race than your own.
- Organize a church or community effort to display anti-racism (such as chalking sidewalks, watching a socially conscious movie, or hosting a socially conscious book club or prayer service on anti-racism).
- Raise money and/or donate to an organization that promotes anti-racism.
- Challenge racism when you encounter it in hearts and in social structures.
- Be honestly and humbly aware of the racism that is in your own heart and pray and work to extinguish it.

**Committing to a Plan:** Once you have a solid list, pick two or three ideas, discuss how your family can commit to focusing on them over the next week or so, and rewrite them using the “Making a SMART Commitment” worksheet.

Once you have finalized the two or three goals that your family is committing to, write them on the “Being Christ’s Hands” worksheet and hang it up somewhere in your house where everyone can see it. If you will maintain your prayer table, consider displaying it there.

## **Going Deeper**

For suggestions of organizations to support, [see the map created by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development on the PovertyUSA website.](#)





# Part #8: Closing Prayer

## Note to Parent/Leader

Involve the Children: The more ways your children are involved, helping, and leading, the better! Make sure that they know their role before beginning. Here are some suggestions for roles children can assume for the Closing Prayer.

- Help and input in setting up the sacred space. Children can choose items and place them in the space.
- Assign someone to find the Scripture verse (John 1:5) and assist them as needed.
- Assign someone to be the candle lighter (the candle lighter has a spoken line in the prayer that they may want to rehearse).
- Assign someone to be the lector and read from Scripture. It is a very short reading, but they may want to practice a few times before beginning.
- Assign someone to be the leader or split this role into two parts.
- Assign someone to press “play” for the video.

**Prepare:** Use your sacred space for the Closing Prayer (see notes above for “Opening Prayer”). Here are some additional items needed:

- Bring the “Being Christ’s Hands” worksheet with your family commitment to your prayer space along with the saint pictures and anything else that has become meaningful to your family throughout this time.
- Have a web-enabled device ready with [“Jacob’s Song || Brother Isaiah” from Franciscan Friars of the Renewal](#).
- Give each participant a copy of the Closing Prayer Guide (found in this lesson plan).

## **Pre-Prayer Lesson:**

Explain that this prayer will be similar to the Opening Prayer you did at the beginning. However, we’ll be asking the saints/person of faith for their prayers. At that point in the Closing Prayer, everyone should say “pray for us” aloud after each of the names are said (see the Closing Prayer Guide).

**Post-Prayer Lesson:** After completing the Closing Prayer, explain that, even though this formal prayer time has been completed, your family is continuing to pray by the action of being Christ’s hands in the world. Your life can be a prayer when you are mindful of God’s presence and following His call!





## **Leading the Activity**

As the family/group gathers together, ask everyone to bless themselves with the holy water as a reminder of our Baptism and that our lives belong to Christ.

- Everyone begins the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.
- The **Candle Lighter** lights the candle while reading from the Closing Prayer Guide.
- The **Leader** reads from the Closing Prayer Guide.
- The **Lector** and everyone else read from the script on the Closing Prayer Guide. If needed, here are two translations of John 1:5:
  - “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.” ([\*The Catholic Children’s Bible\*](#))
  - “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” ([\*The Catholic Youth Bible\*](#))
- Watch the **Music Video** for “Jacob’s Song” by Brother Isaiah.
- The **Leader** reads from the Closing Prayer Guide and encourages everyone to respond when asking St. Martin, St. Bakhita, and Sister Bowman for their prayers.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.





# OPENING PRAYER

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Candle Lighter: Creator, as we light this candle, we ask that you light our souls so that we may shine in the darkness.

Leader: As we gather, we recognize that this space is made sacred and holy by Your presence, oh Lord, our Creator. We ask that You bless our time together as we focus on You and Your call to us. Please give us open hearts and open minds so that we may best be able to do Your will.

Lector: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

All: Glory to You, oh Lord

Lector: *\*Read John 1:5\**

Lector: The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ

Music Video: Jacob's Song by Brother Isaiah

Leader: As we move through this time together, help us to grow closer to You, our God. Help us to learn to do Your will. Help us to be Your light wherever there is darkness. Please shine Your light through us.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.





# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Color in your person, then read and reflect on each passage and what it teaches us about racism.

Acts 10:34-35

Acts 17:26-28

Matthew 28:19

James 2:8-9

Genesis 1:26-28

Revelations 7:9





## WHAT DO CATHOLIC LEADERS SAY?

1. "The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design."

2. "Any theory or form whatsoever of racism and racial discrimination is morally unacceptable."

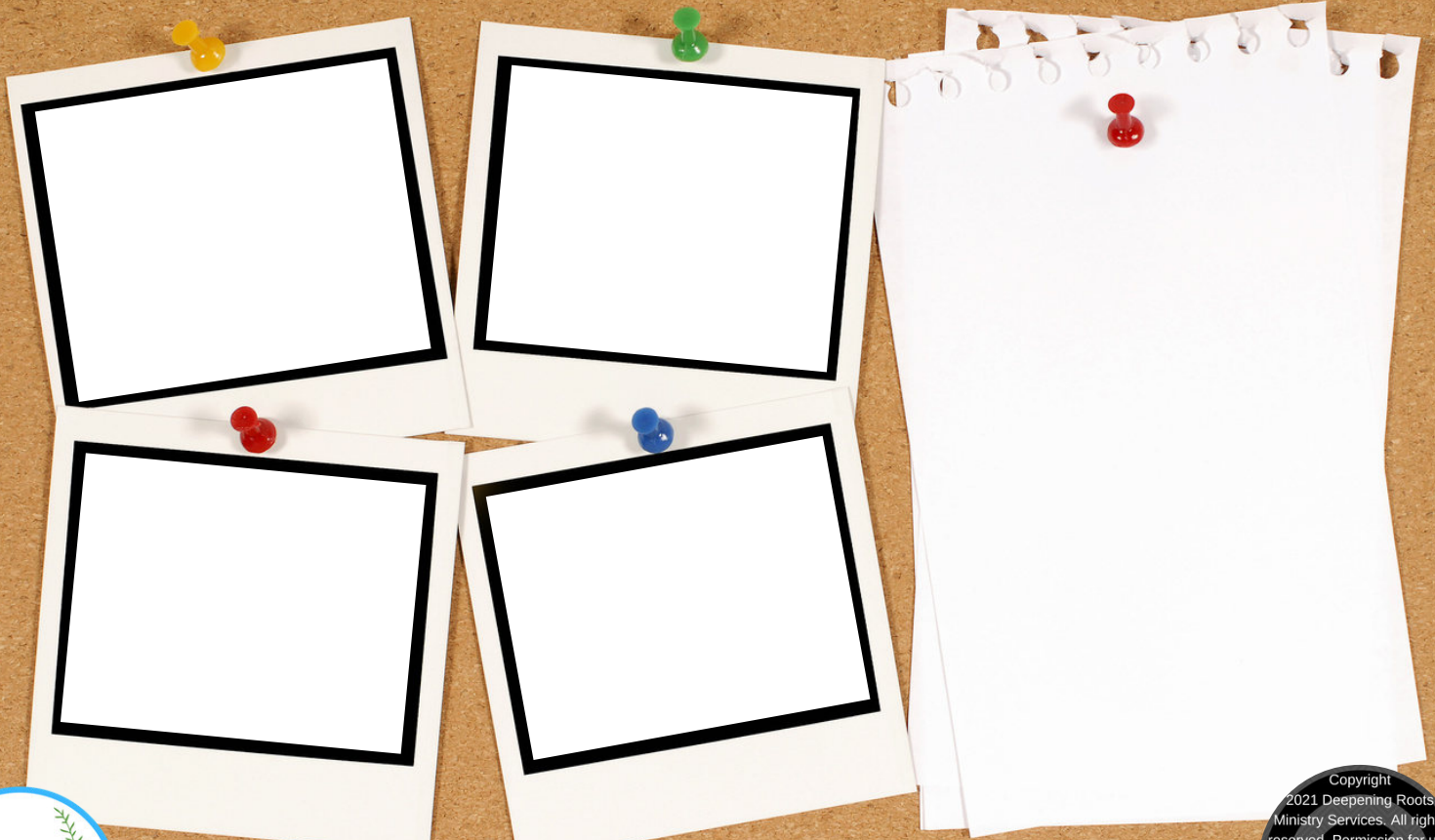
3. "Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society."

4. "[There is] justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin. It should not be this way in America. Racism has been tolerated for far too long in our way of life."

5. "We must be honest with ourselves. Each of us should examine our conscience and ask if [the fruits of the Spirit] are really present in our attitudes about race. Or, rather, do our attitudes reflect mistrust, impatience, anger, distress, discomfort, or rancor?"

After reviewing the quotes above, write and draw your reflection below.

\*See the lesson plan for citations of these quotes and links to the full documents.





# ST. MARTIN DE PORRES

- Born: 1579
- Died: 1639
- Canonized: 1962
- Feast Day: November 3
- Patronage: Peru, hairdressers/barbers, and those who work for social and racial justice

Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru, to a freed black woman of strong Catholic faith. His father, a Spanish noble, rejected his infant son because of the color of his skin, leaving Martin, his mother, and later his younger sister to live alone in poverty. Martin had a caring heart right from the beginning. As a child, he often gave his family's meager amounts of food to people in greater need.

When he was 8 years old, Martin's father had a change of heart and brought his children with him to Ecuador to get an education. After a few years, Martin returned to his mother.

At 12 years old, Martin began training as a barber. In those days, barbers were also doctors. Martin was a gifted healer. He spent his time serving the poor and practicing his faith through Mass and deep prayer. Martin began to feel called to serve God even more. At 15 years old, he went to the Dominican priory (where the Dominican priests and brothers lived and worked) in his town and asked to join them as the lowest position. Martin was a humble young man. He was invited in and lived there for the rest of his life. Martin's main task at the priory was sweeping and he was often seen with a broom in hand.

He was visited by Mary, received many blessings for him and his friends, and performed many miracles. Once there was a young brother in the priory who had become deathly ill. That night, despite a locked door, Martin appeared in his room and told the young man that he would live. The next morning, the brother woke with renewed health.

Martin had a deep closeness with God. He was often found face down in prayer in the middle of the night while surrounded by holy light or levitating while in prayer or surrounded by angels. One of the other helpers in the priory said, "If you work with Brother Martin, you'll see all kinds of things happening."

One day, there was not enough food to feed the brothers in the priory. Martin came to the kitchen to collect some soup to feed the poor who were also gathering in large numbers outside. Martin told the cook, "there's no need to worry," as he picked up a ladle and began serving generous portions. The soup never ran out and they fed not only the hungry people, but also the hungry animals who had gathered.

Not only people came to the priory for Martin's ability to heal; many animals also came to him. He could communicate with animals and had a special place in his heart for mice.

While preparing for a trip to Mexico with an archbishop he had healed, Brother Martin became very ill and knew this would be the end. He died in his bed, clutching and kissing his crucifix while surrounded by his praying brothers. Even after his death, Martin continued appearing to and healing his friends.



The book "Saint Martin de Porres - Humble Healer" by Elizabeth Marie DeDomenico, FSP was used in creating this information sheet. See the full lesson plan or our website for more information.

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# ST. MARTIN DE PORRES

Pray for us!

After learning about St. Martin, take some time to pray, reflect, and color.



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# ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA

- Born: 1869
- Died: 1947
- Canonized: 2000
- Feast Day: February 8
- Patronage: Sudan, human trafficking survivors, and patron against racial discrimination

Before she became Josephine Bakhita, she was a young girl in a village in Sudan (Africa) and had no knowledge of God. At 9 years old, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. She never saw or heard from her family again. The men who kidnapped her mockingly named her “Bakhita,” which means “lucky.” They forced her to walk long distances and then locked her in a small dark hut for a month before selling her.

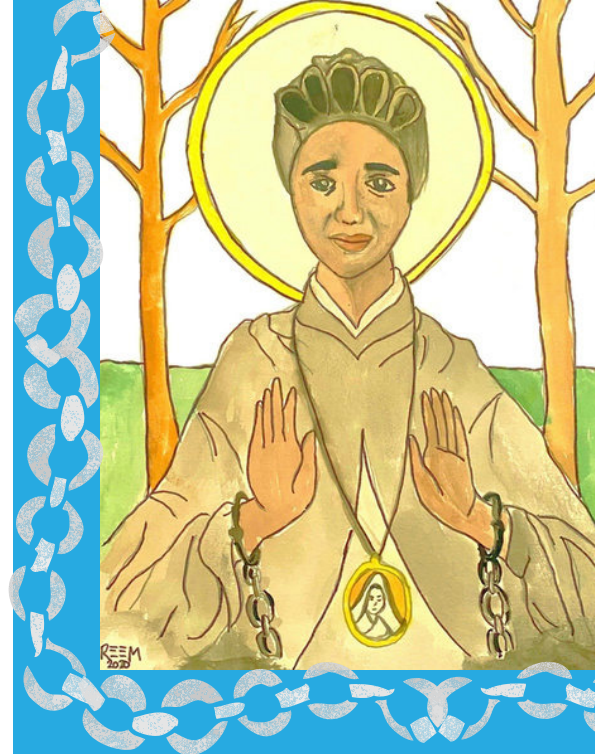
While a slave, she was abused and mistreated. She was once beaten until she became unconscious and almost died. Another time, she was cut with razors and had salt rubbed into her wounds to leave permanent scars.

Bakhita eventually ended up owned by a family in Italy where her main duty was to care for a baby girl who she became close with. Her owners needed to leave Italy, so they enrolled Bakhita and their daughter in a boarding school run by the Daughters of Charity of Canossa (an order of Catholic sisters). Bakhita chose to be baptized as a Catholic and began learning about the faith. When her owner returned, Bakhita refused to leave the school. Eventually, it was decided by a king’s officer that Bakhita could remain at the school because slavery was illegal in Italy. It was 1889, she was finally free to make her own choices, she chose to follow Christ.

When she was baptized, Bakhita took the name Josephine and kept Bakhita as part of her name as a symbol of God’s protection of her through difficult times. Bakhita continued studying and began to feel God’s call in a stronger way. In 1893, she began her training to become one of the Daughters of Charity and gave her life more fully to God. Her limited reading and writing skills made her training difficult, but she worked hard and became a sister.

In 1902, she was sent to live in a town in northern Italy. Sister Bakhita was kind to all and did all her work calmly and happily. She was still living in northern Italy in 1914 when World War I began. Many of the sisters were evacuated, but Sister Bakhita, stayed and took on extra responsibilities such as caring for wounded soldiers. She was gentle, courageous, and strong. Many people came to her for prayers, support, and guidance. After the war, her story spread and her life story was published. Sister Bakhita then began speaking about her life and faith throughout Italy. She remained humble and maintained her trust in God.

In 1939, World War II began, and Sister Bakhita continued to put her trust fully in God. As she aged, her health declined. Sister Bakhita died in 1947 after speaking her final words “I am so happy. Our Lady...Our Lady!” She was canonized (officially named a saint) in 2000.



The book "Saint Bakhita of Sudan - Forever Free" by Susan Helen Wallace, FSP was used in creating this information sheet. See the full lesson plan or our website for more information.

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# ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA

Pray for us!

After learning about St. Bakhita, take some time to pray, reflect, and color.



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# SISTER THEA BOWMAN

- Born: 1937
- Venerated: 2018
- Died: 1990

Sister Thea was born as Bertha Bowman and grew up in the segregated town of Canton, Mississippi. Bertha was an only child in a Black Protestant family. Her father was a doctor and her mother (and grandmother) had been teachers. The Bowmans often faced racism. Her parents had to go to a nearby town to deliver Bertha because the hospitals in Canton didn't allow Black patients.

Like her mother, Bertha loved and had a talent for music. Education was very important to the Bowmans, however access was very limited for Black children, and Bertha began to fall behind. A Catholic mission and school began in Canton to serve the Black community. This was a wonderful opportunity for Bertha. She began attending Mass, sang in the choir, and attended the mission's school (Holy Child Jesus School), staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA). At the school, Bertha quickly caught up to her expected reading level, joined the choir, and aspired to become a sister. Bertha specifically wanted to join the FSPA, which was a white religious order based in Wisconsin. In 1947, Bertha became Catholic.

Despite the attempts of her parents, and even their pastor, to discourage her from leaving home, she left for the FSPA motherhouse in Wisconsin at only 15 years old. One of the sisters traveled with her, but segregation laws made it illegal for Bertha and the white sister to ride in the same train car, so special arrangements had to be made.

In 1956, Bertha became Sister Mary Thea. She continued her education and, at the age of 20, was sent to teach in an affluent school in Wisconsin where she was the only Black person. Many of the parents complained about having a Black teacher at the school, but Sister Thea persisted and treated all of her students and their families with care and respect. After two years, she was sent back to Canton to teach at Holy Child Jesus School where she had first begun this journey. Many white people in the community did not think Sister Thea should be allowed to live with the other sisters. When driving somewhere, Sister Thea's parents often drove her so that the police would not see her in a car with her white sisters.

Sister Thea later received her Ph.D. from Catholic University in Washington D.C. She taught at the college level and was a speaker for cultural awareness and acceptance. She created programs for a variety of age groups to break down cultural barriers. She also ran choirs and used music in her teaching, led retreats and workshops, received many awards, and even appeared on the show 60 Minutes.

In 1984, Sister Thea was diagnosed with breast cancer. She continued her work even while undergoing aggressive treatment. She died from the cancer at age 52 in 1990 in her family's home in Canton. In 2018, Sister Thea was declared a "Servant of God," which is the first step in becoming a saint.



The book "Sister Thea Bowman - Do You Hear Me, Church?" by Peggy A. Sklar was used in creating this information sheet. See the full lesson plan or our website for more information.

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# SISTER THEA BOWMAN

Pray for us!

After learning about Sr. Bowman, take some time to pray, reflect, and color.



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# Making a SMART Commitment

Your family is being asked to commit to actively sharing Christ's love in the world by combating racism. Here are some guidelines to help you make a more complete and meaningful commitment.

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YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD BE **SPECIFIC**. BE SPECIFIC AND GIVE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE. YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS SUCH AS: WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHY?



YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD BE **MEASURABLE**. KNOW HOW YOU WILL TRACK YOUR PROGRESS AND HOW YOU WILL KNOW YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR COMMITMENT. YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS SUCH AS: HOW MUCH? HOW OFTEN?



YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD BE **ATTAINABLE**. MAKE A COMMITMENT THAT WILL BOTH CHALLENGE YOU AND THAT YOU WILL REASONABLY BE ABLE TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON.



YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD BE **RELEVANT**. MAKE A COMMITMENT WORTH MAKING; ONE THAT WILL HELP YOU GROW IN THE WAY YOU SHOW GOD'S LOVE TO OTHERS OR YOURSELF.



YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD BE **TIMELY**. YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD ANSWER THE QUESTION, WHEN? IN GENERAL, YOUR COMMITMENT SHOULD BE SOMETHING YOU CAN FOLLOW THROUGH ON IN THE NEAR FUTURE.







# Being Christ's Hands

Below is our plan to share Christ's love in the world by combating racism!





# CLOSING PRAYER

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Candle Lighter: Creator, as we light this candle, we ask that you light our souls so that we may shine in the darkness.

Leader: Lord God, we humbly thank You for all that we've learned and for the time we've spent together. Please forgive us for times when we have failed to do Your will and have acted through fear rather than love. We thank You for calling us to do Your will by creating space for anti-racism in our hearts and in our world.

Lector: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

All: Glory to You, oh Lord

Lector: *\*Read John 1:5\**

Lector: The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ

Music Video: Jacob's Song by Brother Isaiah

Leader: Please continue to guide us as we strive to be Your light wherever there is darkness. Please shine Your light through us as we work on these commitments that we've made to You.

St. Martin de Porres...(ALL RESPOND) Pray for us!

St. Josephine Bakhita...(ALL RESPOND) Pray for us!

Sister Thea Bowman...(ALL RESPOND) Pray for us!

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

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