



# Diocese of Youngstown 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Learning:

## St. Columba

### Grades K-2

**Objective:** To identify a saint as a person who lives the love of Jesus; identify Saint Columba as the patron saint of the Diocese of Youngstown and as an example of how to live in love.

#### I. Engage the life experience

- In your own words: Today we'll be talking about saints, especially Saint Columba, and how saints can show us ways to live and love others. Saints are people who follow Jesus and want to do as he taught us to, and show other people how to follow him.
- Have them use the clay to form a cylinder and a ball to represent people as body and head. Let those who have the ability form arms or other human representations as they like.
- Ask them to use the clay bodies with each other to represent people doing as Jesus taught. (form a group of figures to help a figure who has fallen down; form a group to help a figure who is being bullied; have one figure care for another who is sick, etc.) Let them know that people who act like that can be called saints.
- Ask them if they know of any saints. Remind them that they've heard of St. Patrick, and probably St. Francis of Assisi, and that they know St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Tell them that there are many saints whose name we do not know.

#### Supplies

- Modeling clay, cornstarch clay, or Play-doh
- Toothpicks
- Story of St. Columba

#### II. Explore the concepts: The Story of Saint Columba

- In your own words: You're going to learn the story of a man who lived the way God asked him to. He listened carefully to God telling him what to do and where to go. Listening to God took him far from home and gave him a life of adventure.
- Read: The Story of Saint Columba
- Review:
  - How did Columba learn about Jesus?
  - Iona is an island. How do you think Columba got there? Do you think that living on an island would make people careful with supplies? Why?
  - What was your favorite part of Saint Columba's story?
- Explain that a patron saint is in heaven praying for us in particular ways. Explain that a diocese is an area under the care of a bishop. Our diocese is six counties under the care of Bishop George Murry. All the people in our diocese can ask Saint Columba in heaven to pray for us because he is the patron saint of our diocese.

### **III. Reflect and integrate with the lived experience:**

- Bring the clay figures back out and have them review how Columba acted like a Christian.
- Tell them in your own words: God cares about you – what you do, how you live, what your life is like. But God's first concern is the kind of person you are. Are you cranky and selfish and critical, or are you kind and caring and loving? Do you do things the way God would want?

### **IV. Respond with a way of living:**

- Have them use the toothpicks to carve their initial in their clay figures.
- In your own words, tell them that they can be saints too. We call Columba "Saint" not because he was perfect, but because he tried to live as God wanted him to live.
- Have them think of scenes with their figures of how THEY could act like saints in everyday life.

### **IV. Wrap-Up Prayer**

**Almighty God,  
thank you for giving us Saint Columba  
to show us the way to live according to your Word.  
He loved you,  
he loved other people,  
and he followed your commandments.  
Give us courage to be the kind of followers of Jesus  
that you want us to be.  
Amen.**

## The Story of Saint Columba (521-597)\*

Grades k-2

Saint Columba was born before there was internet, before computers, even before there were bookstores. But even without all those things, he loved to learn. He had many adventures, and most of them were about finding places to do what he loved: learning and teaching about God.

He was born in Ireland, and his name in the Irish language means “church dove.” He was brought up by his family as a Christian. He was educated by priests and eventually became a priest himself. He traveled around Ireland, preaching and teaching. Christianity had been brought to Ireland by missionaries (the most famous of them is Saint Patrick) more than 100 years before Columba was born, and it had grown and spread among the Irish people. Columba helped to establish monasteries in Ireland, places where monks lived. Monasteries in Ireland were centers of learning, praying, and serving people of the time.

There's a story told about Columba that tells about his love of learning and books. Another Irish holy man, Saint Finnian, allowed Columba to read his book of Psalms. All books in their time were written out by hand. Columba decided to make a copy of the book so he wrote all the Psalms by hand and made his own book. When Columba gave the original book back to Finnian, Finnian wanted the copy, too. They got into an argument that got to be so big, it involved their families. It had to be settled by a king in Ireland who said, “To every cow belongs her calf, and therefore to every book belongs its copy.” Columba had to give Finnian the book he had made. The story shows how much work Columba was willing to do in order to have his own book containing the Psalms from the Bible. It also shows that saints sometimes do things (like getting into huge arguments) that don't sound very holy, but after they realize what they did wrong, they can ask for forgiveness. Saints aren't perfect people; they are people who try always to follow Jesus.

When he was about 40 years old, Columba believed that God was calling him to leave Ireland and go to Scotland. God wanted Columba to spread his love of Jesus and of learning, and to use what he knew about monasteries to establish one there. In the year 562, he left Ireland with twelve friends who also followed Jesus. They wanted to find a quiet place to set up a new life. They went to a small island, Iona, in western Scotland. They built up what would become one of the most famous monasteries in Europe. Iona was the center for spreading Christianity in Scotland, and beyond.

Reading and writing had been important in the monasteries that Columba started in Ireland, and they were in Iona, too. There was a writing office, a library, and a school. Columba taught not just with books, though, but also by setting an example of how a Christian lives. He was known for settling rivalries among kings and tribes, and bringing peace to people who had been fighting each other. He became known as a person of prayer and wisdom. He was famous in his time, and those who knew him wanted him to be remembered after his death as a holy hero. They collected stories about him, and that's how we know of him fifteen centuries later.

Today, he is more famous in Ireland and Scotland than in America. But as people of the Diocese of Youngstown, we have the privilege to remember him, and to ask him to pray for us now, because he is the patron saint of our diocese.

\*Note to catechists: There is another Irish saint named Columban or Columbanus, who lived roughly the same time as Columba. Columban (543-615) was known for founding monasteries in France and Italy. If you're googling something, be sure you're looking at Columba or Colmcille (also Columcille, Columbcille, Columkille, etc. or Columba of Iona) from County Donegal, Ireland, and not Columban or Columbanus from County Meath.