

Assembly: St Thérèse of Lisieux



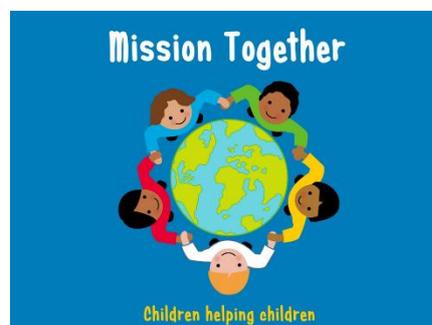
HOLDING SLIDE & LEADER'S NOTES

As Christians, we all have a mission: to share God's love with the whole world. No one is too young or too small to take part.

Through Mission Together, children everywhere pray for and share with one another in a unique exchange of love and friendship. By praying for one another and sharing what we have, we belong to God's worldwide family.

This assembly focuses on a young woman whose lifelong love of mission led her to be canonised St Thérèse of Lisieux, patron of missionaries.

We hope she inspires your pupils, as she has millions of Catholics for almost 200 years!



SLIDE TWO

Today's assembly is about this little girl.

Does anybody recognise her?

She was called Thérèse Martin and she lived in France over a hundred years ago with her parents and four sisters. Thérèse led a very ordinary life. She went to the local school and she loved reading and dressing up.



So why is today's assembly about this ordinary little girl? It's because of who she became.

Click to reveal images of St Thérèse of Lisieux.

We are going to find out how little Thérèse Martin became one of the most-loved saints, with statues of her in churches all over the world. And you might be surprised at how ordinary people like you and me can do extraordinary things through little acts of kindness.

SLIDE THREE

Even as a little girl, Thérèse believed that Jesus listened to her prayers and was very close to her.

Through prayer and reading about what Jesus said and did, Thérèse came to know him like a friend.



As she got older, Thérèse decided to spend her life staying close to Jesus and following his ways. Thérèse told her family that she wanted to become a nun.

Ask if any of the children can explain what a nun is.

[Click to reveal image of missionary nuns.](#)

A nun is a woman who dedicates her whole life to loving God and helping others. She leaves her family and friends to live with other nuns in a building called a convent. The nuns live together as sisters - they spend their time in prayer and by doing what they can to help people practically so that everybody might know how much God cares for us.

From the time she was a young girl Thérèse longed to be a missionary nun. A missionary is someone who delivers God's love in places far away, in foreign countries where people are suffering and in need of help and where Jesus' love is not known.

As a girl she imagined herself travelling to foreign lands to help the people. She regularly prayed for missionaries and would send her pocket money in support of their caring work.

Thérèse had been a member of Mission Together*, a charity that supports overseas missionaries.

* Thérèse was a supporter of Holy Childhood, now known in the England and Wales as Mission Together

SLIDE FOUR

Thérèse was so determined to do be a missionary nun, that at 14 she went to her local convent and asked the nuns if she could join them. But they told Thérèse she was too young and should wait until she was older.

But Thérèse didn't want to wait. She made a plan.

[Click to reveal image of Bishop.](#)

She put up her hair to make herself look older and went to see a very important man who was the leader of the local priests and nuns, the Bishop, to ask him if she could be a nun.

But the Bishop also told Thérèse she was too young. Undeterred, Thérèse decided to ask someone even more important than the Bishop. She convinced her father to travel with her to Rome.

Does anyone know where Rome is, and which special person lives there?

Answer: Rome is in Italy, which is in Europe. And the special person who lives in Rome is the Pope.

Does anyone know who the Pope is and what he does?

Answer: The Pope is the head of the Catholic Church on earth and his role is to help people follow the example of Jesus and love one another.

Our Pope today is called Francis. But in Thérèse's lifetime, the Pope was called Leo XIII.

[Click to reveal image of Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIII.](#)



When Thérèse met Pope Leo, what do you think she asked him?

She asked him if she could become a nun. Gazing at her kindly, the Pope replied, 'Go – go – you will become a nun if it is God's will.' This was enough for Thérèse, because she trusted in God's plan for her.

SLIDE FIVE

Due to her determination, when she was 15, Thérèse became a nun.

But she did not fulfil her dream to become a missionary nun and perform heroic acts that would reveal God's love to the world.

Thérèse did not have good health so she wasn't strong enough to make long and difficult journeys to faraway lands.

Instead, she realised that it is just as important to do small acts of kindness wherever we are. Thérèse believed that it is these small acts that can change the world.

In the convent Thérèse, like the other nuns, was given lots of ordinary tasks to do such as scrubbing the floor and washing up. Thérèse decided that everything she did each day – especially the small boring tasks – she would do with **great love**.

She called this her 'Little Way'.

It took her a lot of effort but Thérèse was determined. The Little Way is a very simple idea, but it is not as easy as it sounds! Can you imagine not complaining when you don't like the food you are given or the chores you are set? It can be quite a challenge!

Sadly, Thérèse didn't have a long life. She was only 24 when she died. The nuns who'd lived with her felt that other people should hear about Thérèse and her Little Way, so they made some of Thérèse's ideas and stories from her life into a book.

Soon, Thérèse's Little Way of loving God and others through ordinary, everyday tasks became known throughout the world.

Millions of people chose to follow her example. Because of this, a few years after her death, the Pope made little Thérèse a saint.



SLIDE SIX

The next time you are in church, look out for the statue of St Thérèse and remember that just because you are young or small, it doesn't mean your actions aren't important.

You too can follow a Little Way to love God and serve others.

Remember, it is not always easy being kind and loving all the time.

But you can pray to God to help you and try hard to follow the example of Jesus, as Thérèse always did. Let's listen to some of Jesus' words now.



Jesus told the people, 'Love God in every way you can.' This is the first and most important instruction. The second instruction is like the first: 'Love all the people around you as you would like to be loved.'

(Matthew 22:37-39, adapted)

What little acts of love and kindness can you do over the next few days?

- Can you do your chores without being asked?
- Decide not to argue?
- Share what you have to help others? Perhaps you could have a Mission Together collection box in your class or at home? In this way, like Thérèse, you can also help those most in need overseas.

SLIDE SEVEN

Because Thérèse spent her life praying for missionaries, many years after her death the Pope made her the Patron Saint of Missionaries.

At the start of our assembly we heard how as a child, Thérèse had been a member of Mission Together.

Being a Mission Together member meant that Thérèse promised to pray for children across the world and to share what she could to help children living in poverty to know God's love.

Let's follow Thérèse's example and finish by saying the Mission Together prayer now:

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love.
Now and forever. Amen

St Thérèse of Lisieux, pray for us.

