

# ***Sorin Starts a School* Curriculum Guide**



**Tour the guide in this short video:**



**Version 1.0 (September 2023)**

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**MIND:**

**Called to be Creators Unit (Grades 5 - 12)**

SWBAT create a draft of an illustrated book about a saint.

SWBAT analyze an author’s choices.

SWBAT use their analysis of the author’s choices to improve their own artistic choices.

**Day 1 Lesson: Introduction to the Unit**

|  | <b>Teacher:</b>   | <b>Students:</b>                    |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)               | Circulate.  | Read <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> . |
| <b>Prayer</b>                            |   |                                     |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)          | Play <a href="#">author video</a> framing the unit and today’s task.  | Watch video.                        |
| <b>Q and A</b><br>(5 mins)               | Clarify anything that is unclear.<br><br>(If students are having a hard time deciding on a saint for which they have enough background, they might consider telling the story of a holy person they know - or the story of St. Hildegard of Bingen (as told in <a href="#">a PDF of this book chapter</a> and <a href="#">this PDF of this book chapter</a> ) or St. Andre Besette, CSC as told in <a href="#">this book chapter</a> .) | Decide on the saint / exemplar.     |
| <b>Independent Practice</b><br>(30 mins) | Circulate.  | Create first draft.                 |

*(Note: Feel free to give a second or even a third day for this work depending on student interest and ability.)*

**Day 2 Lesson: Art: Exemplars and Symbolism**

|                            | <b>Teacher:</b> | <b>Students:</b>   |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins) | Circulate.      | Look at the art on the first and the last spread of <i>Sorin</i> |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <i>Starts a School</i> . Write down similarities and differences that you see.  |
| <b>Prayer</b>                            |   |   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)          | Play <a href="#">author video</a> framing the day's task. | Watch video.  |
| <b>Q and A</b><br>(5 mins)               | Clarify anything that is unclear.                         | Ask clarifying questions.   |
| <b>Independent Practice</b><br>(30 mins) | Circulate.  | <p>1. Finish sketches for first draft of book.</p> <p>2. Choose an "exemplar" to imitate the style of and create a "next best draft" of one of the illustrations of their book.</p> <p>3. Create a "next best draft" of an illustration in their book that uses symbolism to communicate something important to the reader.</p> |

*(Note: Feel free to give a second or even a third day for this work depending on student interest and ability.)*

### Day 3 Lesson: A Source of Inspiration

|  | Teacher:  | Students:   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)               | Circulate.  | Skim <a href="#">Constitution 2</a> and <a href="#">Constitution 8</a> of from the CSC Constitutions. |
| <b>Prayer</b>                            |   |   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)          | Play <a href="#">author video</a> framing the day's task. | Watch video.  |
| <b>Q and A</b><br>(5 mins)               | Clarify anything that is unclear.                         | Ask clarifying questions.   |
| <b>Independent Practice</b><br>(30 mins) | Circulate.  | 1) Read carefully <a href="#">Constitution 2</a> and then do two things:                              |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | <p>a) find the line that the author integrated into the text of <i>Sorin Starts a School</i>.</p> <p>b) find a powerful line that calls to you that the author did NOT integrate into the story, circle it, and save it for later.</p> <p>2) Read <a href="#">Constitution 8</a> carefully and do the same two above tasks.</p> <p>3) Use either (or both!) of these lines that called out to you and write another stanza or two for <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> that incorporates your new rhyming lines.</p> |
|--|--|--|

**Day 4 Lesson: Story Structure and the Stability Stanza**

|  | <b>Teacher:</b>   | <b>Students:</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)               | Circulate.  | Find the four pages in <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> that has the line “Come, Follow Me.” Read all of those pages again.  |
| <b>Prayer</b>                            |   |  |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)          | Play <a href="#">author video</a> framing the day’s task. | Watch video.   |
| <b>Q and A</b><br>(5 mins)               | Clarify anything that is unclear.                         | Ask clarifying questions.  |
| <b>Independent Practice</b><br>(30 mins) | Circulate.  | <p>1) Choose a simple line (ie - “Come, Follow Me” around which to write a “stability stanza” for their story.</p> <p>2) Write a stability stanza into 2 or 3 different places in their story.</p> |

**Day 5 Lesson: Create Second Draft**

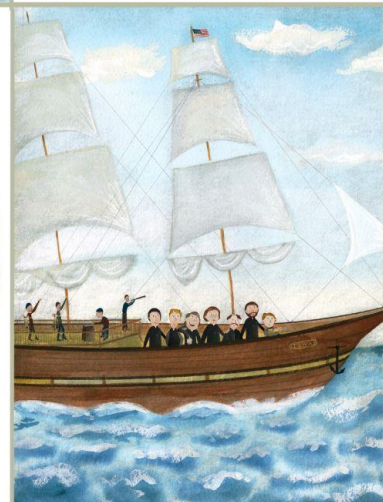
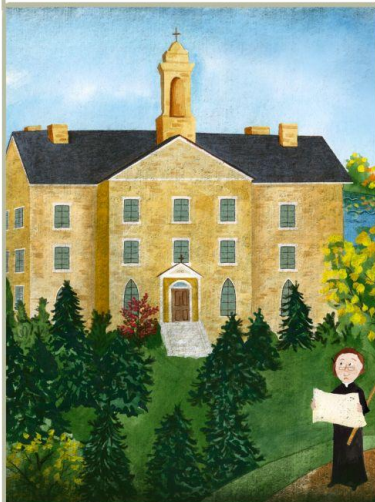
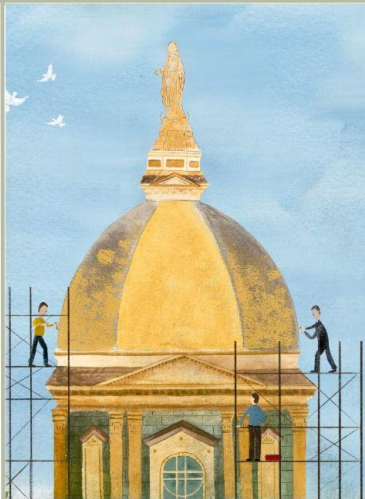
|  | <b>Teacher:</b>  | <b>Students:</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)               | Circulate.   | Re-read the rough draft of their story from day 1 of this unit.    |
| <b>Prayer</b>                            |  |  |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)          | Recall for the students the different aspects of creation that were covered in this unit.<br>-The use of sketching<br>-Art exemplars<br>-Art and symbolism<br>-Sources of inspiration<br>-The Stability Stanza<br><br>Tell the students that their task for the day is to write a “next best draft” based on all of the lessons in the unit. | Listen and take notes.   |
| <b>Q and A</b><br>(5 mins)               | Clarify anything that is unclear.  | Ask clarifying questions.  |
| <b>Independent Practice</b><br>(30 mins) | Circulate.   | Write a “next best draft” based on all of the lessons in the unit. |

## Sorin Starts a School: Plot Sequencing Activity

### Sorin sequencing activity

Each of the pictures below shows an event from Sorin Starts a School. Cut out the cards, mix them up, and put them in order. Then explain what is happening in each picture.

Variation: print out two copies, turn the cards face down, and take turns with a partner finding cards that match.



*Sorin Starts a School*: Character Study: Fr. Edward Sorin

Please read *Sorin Starts a School* and complete the chart.

| What does Fr. Sorin do or say? | Why do you think he does that? | Because of this action, how would you describe him? |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|                                |                                |   |
|                                |                                |   |
|                                |                                |   |
|                                |                                |   |

## *Sorin Starts a School: Somebody / Wanted / But / So / Then Activity*

1. Read *Sorin Starts a School* with students.
2. Work with students to complete the “Somebody Wanted But So Then” worksheet that follows. If time permits, students may also illustrate their responses.

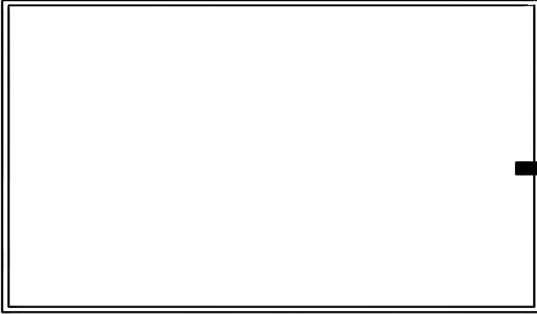
There are many possible responses for some of the prompts, but here are a few examples:

- Somebody: Fr. Sorin
- Wanted: to start a great Catholic school in the United States
- But: the main building burned down
- So: Fr. Sorin encouraged everyone to have faith and keep working for their goal
- Then: they rebuilt the main building

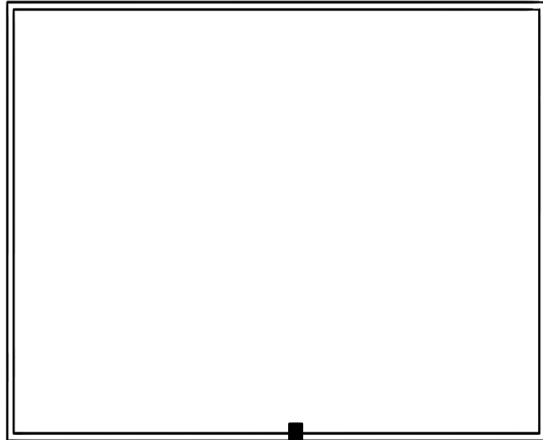
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sorin Starts a School

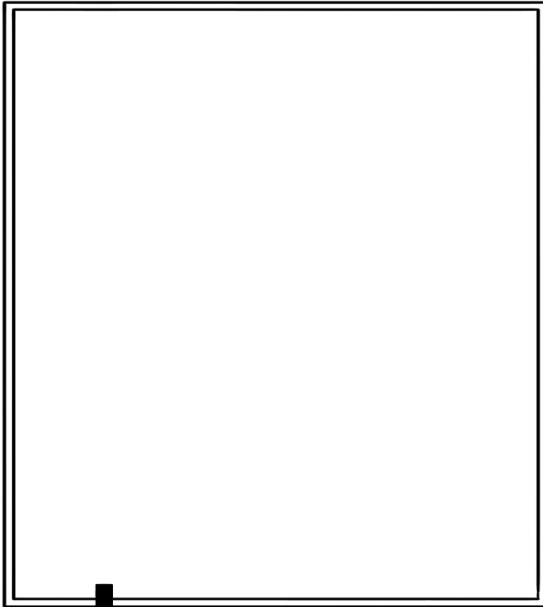
somebody




wanted



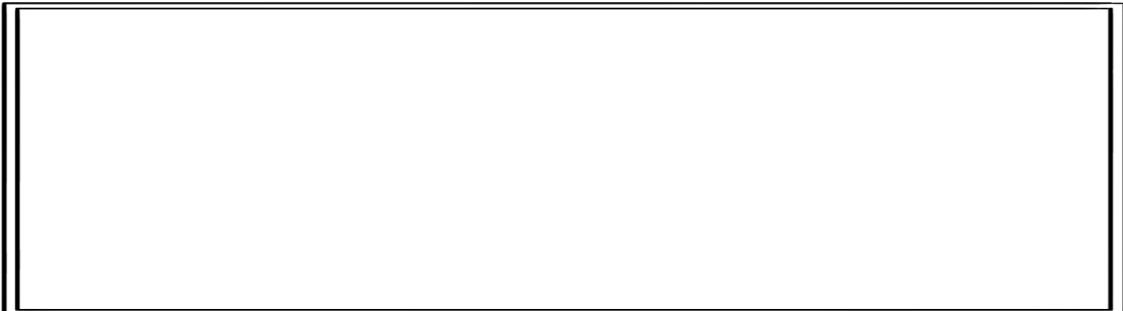
so



but



then





## HEART:

### **An Artistic Education: Sorin's Stained Glass Lesson** (Grades 3 - 8)

SWBAT describe the significance of the stained glass windows in the Notre Dame Basilica.

SWBAT describe how Fr. Sorin considered religious art to be educational.

SWBAT create a full-color replica of a stained glass window.

#### Materials:

-attached images of blank windows, printed on paper or cardstock (one sheet per student)

-colored pencils, oil pastels, and/or watercolors for each student

-images of basilica windows, included below (with projector to project image on wall)

-the book [\*Stories in Light\* by Nancy Cavadini and Cecilia Davis Cunningham](#) (optional, but recommended; it has outstanding pictures of the stained glass)

#### Prep for art activity:

-Print the outlines of stained glass windows on the following pages. (Print on 110 lb cardstock if using watercolors for this project.) Half the students will have a window top and half will have a window bottom. This is the shape of many of the windows in the Notre Dame Basilica.

|                                 | <b>Teacher:</b>  | <b>Students:</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)      | Circulate.   | Find the page in <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> where Fr. Sorin is speaking in the Sacred Heart Basilica after the main building has burned.<br><br>What do you notice about the art in the Basilica? |
| <b>Prayer</b>                   |  |   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins) | <p>"Today, we will consider the beauty and power of the art in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.</p> <p>From your warm-up, what did you notice?</p> <p>(turn and talk / or / ask for 2 or 3 hands to share)</p> <p>"Did you notice the stained</p> |   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>glass windows in the background?</p> <p>-The stained glass windows in the basilica were very important to Fr. Sorin.</p> <p>-He ordered them from a stained glass workshop (the Carmel du Mans Glassworks) in France near the town where he grew up.</p> <p>-The Basilica contains 22 stained glass windows with 444 different scenes. <b><i>This is the largest collection of French stained glass in the world!</i></b></p> <p>-The windows were created in the glassworks over the course of 11 years (Imagine starting an art project in 1st grade and working on it until you were in 11th grade!)</p> |   |
| <p><b>Reading</b><br/>(10 mins)</p>              | <p>Circulate.</p>  | <p>Students read <a href="#">the excerpt from <i>Stories in Light</i></a> and annotate the passage for the question:</p> <p>“What is the intended function of the stained glass in the Basilica?”</p> |
| <p><b>Reflection on Reading</b><br/>(5 mins)</p> | <p>Invite students to turn and talk / or / ask for 2 or 3 hands to share on the annotation question:</p> <p>“What is the intended function of the stained glass in the Basilica?”</p>  | <p>Turn and talk or participate in discussion.</p>  |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Art Activity Intro</b><br/>(5 mins)</p>                                    | <p>Let's encounter the power of this art by observing and recreating it.</p> <p>Distribute art supplies.</p> <p>Project the image of the basilica stained glass window below for students to see.</p> | <p>Gather and organize art supplies.</p>                          |
| <p><b>Art Activity</b><br/>(20 mins, and then into the next day, if desired)</p> | <p>Circulate.</p> <p>When students are through, cut out the completed windows and match them up, displaying them together on a large piece of paper, a wall, or a classroom window.</p>               | <p>Make beautiful recreations of the stained glass paintings.</p> |

Reading:

Excerpt from: [The Basilica of the Sacred Heart: From Empty Pockets to Stained Glass](#)

by Nancy Cavadini & Cecilia Davis Cunningham

“Notre Dame’s original church of the Sacred Heart, constructed of wood, was begun in 1848, and contained three round stained glass windows, made by Carmelite sisters in Le Mans. In 1870, when Notre Dame decided to build a larger, brick church in keeping with Notre Dame’s growing importance, Fr. Sorin again turned to his friends, the Le Mans Carmelites, to provide the windows. It would be an exceptionally large order—450 square meters of stained glass.

Fr. Sorin always insisted that education offered in a religious setting was “the vital question of the day.” The Carmelites saw their windows as indispensable to Holy Cross’s educational mission, for religious art “can make a complex and profound theological notion accessible, persuasive and attractive,” conveying a religious tradition and inviting devotion. Notre Dame’s exceptionally large window order allowed for “a church [with stained glass] which makes sense, something which commonly occurred in the 14th and 15th centuries and is now so rare, now that everything is done haphazardly.” The program intended the windows to be viewed as distinctly focused groups defined by their location in the church. The narthex windows would provide a meditation on the mercy of God, the nave a meditation on the lives of the saints, the transept a meditation on the Church, and the sanctuary would be reserved for the most august saints of the Church. The chapels would be meditations on particular devotions in the Church, and secondary to the main body of windows. The window’s most important image of God is found in the chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

All the basilica windows, as sacred art, provide a visual statement about where God is found in the world. The presentation of saints in the nave and sanctuary—as reflections of the holiness of God—offer indirect images of God. Even the windows in the transept—dedicated to the Church—argue for Jesus’s abiding presence in history through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Sorin’s decisive and strong leadership in forming Notre Dame and his insight into the benefits of an iconographic program for its church continue even now to offer an education in faith. His lively interest in art and faith gave us, today, a heritage that is an astonishing pedagogy written in light.”

Source: <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/the-basilica-of-the-sacred-heart-from-empty-pockets-to-stained-glass/>

## Stained glass windows, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

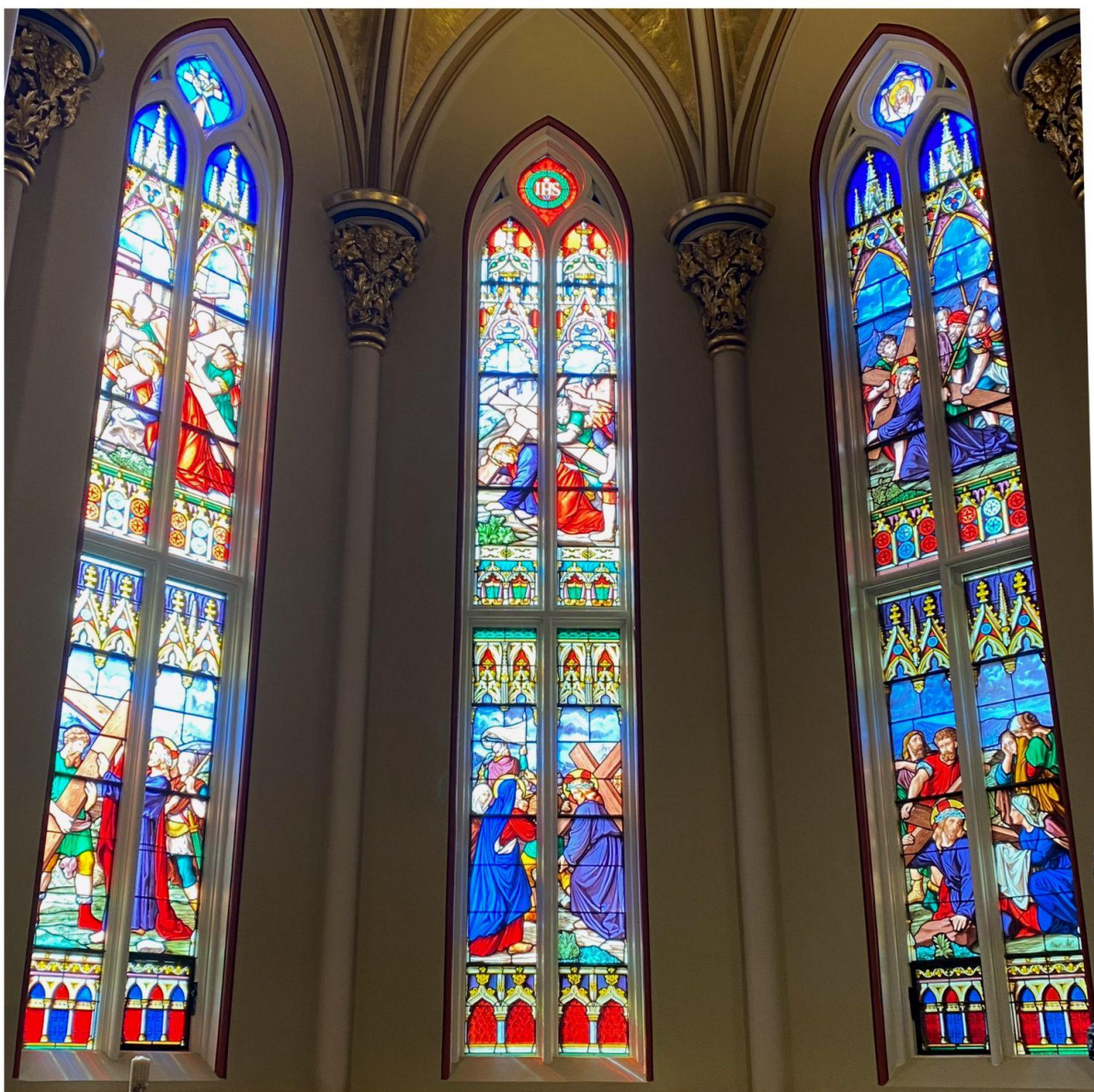
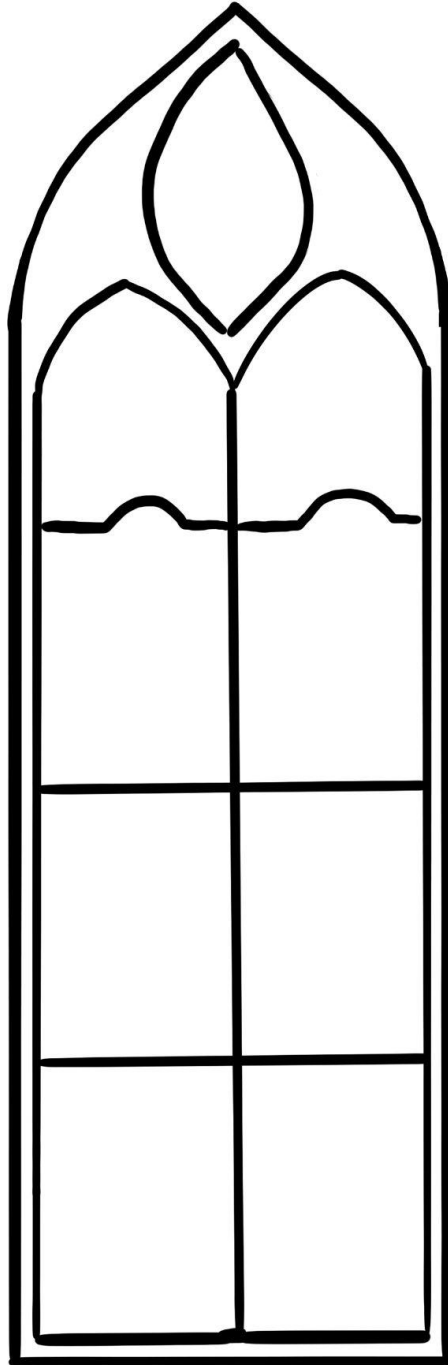


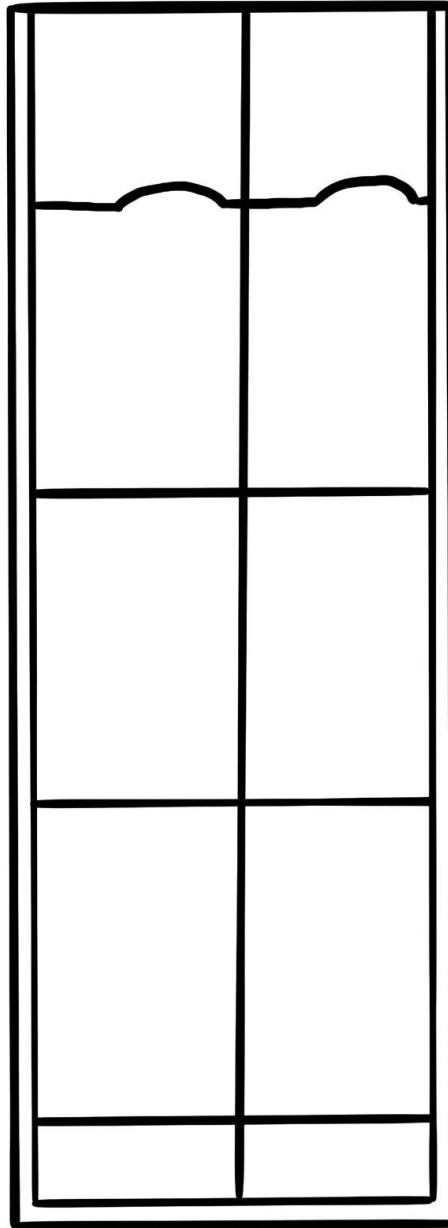
Photo credit: André Polaniecki

Top of window





## Bottom of window



## **Sorin and His Sins: Sacrament of Reconciliation Primer Lesson (Grades 3-8)**

SWBAT make a courageous examination of conscience.

SWBAT reflect on the sins in the narrative of *Sorin Starts a School*.

Lesson Agenda:

|  | <b>Teacher:</b>   | <b>Students:</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)                                 | Circulate.  | Read <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> .                                       |
| <b>Prayer</b>  | Teacher or student lead prayer asking for the grace to make a fruitful examination of conscience. | Pray.   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)                            | Play <a href="#">video introducing the examination of conscience exercise</a>                     | Watch video.  |
| <b>Guided Practice</b><br>(10 mins)                        | Circulate and give feedback.  | Work alone or in pairs on the practice examination of conscience activity |
| <b>Reflection on Guided Practice - Part 1</b><br>(5 mins)  | Play <a href="#">video reflecting on the examination of conscience exercise</a> .                 | Watch video.  |
| <b>Reflection on Guided Practice - Part 2</b><br>(10 mins) | Draw out student responses / negotiate discussion.  | Talk in pairs or whole group about response to reflection video.          |
| <b>Independent Practice</b><br>(15 mins)                   | Play reflective music and circulate.  | Make examination of conscience in form of a journal entry.                |

## Sorin Starts a School: Our Lady of Sorrows Activity

Our Lady of Sorrows is the patroness of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Fr. Sorin had a special devotion to her and prayed for her help during difficult times. You can recognize images of Our Lady of Sorrows in art because she is often shown gesturing towards her heart, portrayed with seven small swords around it, representing seven sorrowful things that happened during her life.

As you read *Sorin Starts a School*, look for Our Lady of Sorrows in the story. Where do you see her? What is Fr. Sorin doing when she appears? How is he feeling? Write what you notice below.

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Fr. Lou DeFra, CSC, writes the following about Our Lady of Sorrows:

*“Mary is not afraid of sorrow because she has directly experienced, in the most intense way, that the love of God – while it does not prevent sorrow, even tragic sorrow – is in the end more powerful than all that causes sorrow. Which means that all sorrow can ultimately be faced, indeed stared down. Mary knows and accepts the deepest human reality, that some sorrow in our lives is real and inescapable. So she does not run from it. But she also knows in her depths the love and never-abandoning care of God for her. This knowledge gives her an ultimately triumphal courage in the face of her sorrows. Our Lady of Sorrows understands the great secret – sorrow, faced and overcome by God’s love, brings us a powerful serenity, and enlarges our own hearts to love more fully and compassionately when we encounter others’ sorrow and suffering.”*

Call to mind a time when you felt sorrowful. How can you ask Mary to be with you in your sorrow? Draw and/or write about it below.



**ZEAL:**

**Blessed Basil Moreau's Zeal for the Mission** (Grades 5 - 12)

SWBAT articulate a definition of zeal according to Basil Moreau.  
 SWBAT empathize with a CSC missionary.

|                                 | <b>Teacher:</b>   | <b>Students:</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)      | Circulate.  | Review the pages of <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> where Moreau sends Sorin to America and the early beginnings of Holy Cross in Indiana. |
| <b>Prayer</b>                   |   |   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins) | <p>“Fr. Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, who sent Edward Sorin to the United States understood the virtue of <i>zeal</i> as “The great desire to make God known, loved, and served, and thus to bring knowledge of salvation to others.’</p> <p>Today, we will dive deeper into this virtue, especially in the life of the missionary work of Holy Cross.</p> <p>To do this, we will first read the paragraphs of the Holy Cross Constitutions on Mission. Second, we will learn about the Zeal of Blessed Basil Moreau. Finally, we will learn about</p> |   |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | some of the missions of the Holy Cross.”   |  |
| <b>Reading</b><br>(10 mins)                     | Circulate as students read.  | Read Constitution 2 and underline / annotate passages that show the virtue of “zeal.”  |
| <b>Presentation 1</b><br>(5 mins)               | Play <a href="#">this video on the zeal of Blessed Basil Moreau</a> .                                | Take notes on: What characterized the “zeal” of Moreau?  |
| <b>Reflection on Presentation 1</b><br>(5 mins) | Prompt students to do a “turn and talk” on their answer to “What characterized the “zeal” of Moreau? | Do the turn and talk with a partner.   |
| <b>Presentation 2</b><br>(10 mins)              | Play <a href="#">the first two segments of this video on the missions in Chile and East Africa</a> . | Watch the video.   |
| <b>Writing Assignment</b><br>(15 mins)          | Circulate as students write.   | Imagine you are a missionary and sent by the Congregation to some place that is not your home to spread the gospel to those who have not heard it. Write a letter to your parents about what your life is like. What frightens you about your life? What gives you strength? |

## FAMILY:

### One Family, Many Gifts: St. Andre and Edward Sorin (Grades 3 - 8)

SWBAT compare and contrast two vocational paths within the same religious congregation.

|  | Teacher:   | Students:  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)                             | Circulate.   | Read <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> .  |
| <b>Prayer</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)                        | <p>“Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Edward Sorin belonged, hoped that Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) would be the model for his community of religious priests, brothers, and sisters.</p> <p>But we know that different people in the same family can be, well, very different!</p> <p>Today, you will compare and contrast two brothers in the same family: St. Andre Bessette and Edward Sorin.”</p> |  |
| <b>Guided Practice</b><br>(10 mins)                    | Circulate.   | <p>Answer the following questions for the life of Edward Sorin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What was his vocation?</li> <li>-What work did he do?</li> <li>-What motivated him?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reflection on Guided Practice</b><br>(5 mins)       | Draw out student responses / negotiate discussion.   | Participate in discussion.   |
| <b>Introduction of Story of St. Andre</b><br>(10 mins) | <p>Play <a href="#">this video on St. Andre</a>.</p> <p>Circulate while students read.</p>   | <p>Take notes on the life of St. Andre.</p> <p>Read <a href="#">the story and take notes on the life of St. Andre</a></p>  |



|                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                     |  |  |
| <b>Guided Practice</b><br>(10 mins) | Circulate.   | Fill Venn Diagram (with Bessette on one side and Sorin on the other) answering the following for both men:<br>-What was his vocation?<br>-What work did he do?<br>-What motivated him? |
| <b>Independent Practice</b>         | What do you make of these similarities and differences?<br><br>What does this mean for the life of the Church? | Write exit ticket answering these questions.<br><br>Or<br><br>Discuss as a class   |

## HOPE:

| <b>The Cross, Our Only Hope (Grades 5 - 12)</b><br>SWBAT articulate the meaning of "The Cross, Our Only Hope".<br>SWBAT relate this meaning to the present challenges of the Church. |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <b>Teacher:</b>   | <b>Students:</b>  |
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)   | Circulate.  | Find the spread in <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> that has the word "hope." Read the two pages of this spread.<br><br>Answer: "What characterizes this hope?" |
| <b>Prayer</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)  | <p>"The Motto of the "Congregation of Holy Cross is "Ave Crux, Spes Unica" - often translated as - "The Cross, Our Only Hope.</p> <p>Today, we will investigate what this has meant for protagonists of the Congregation and apply it to the present moment in our church."</p> |   |
| <b>Reading</b><br>(10 mins)  | Circulate while students read and annotate.   | Read <a href="#">Constitution 8</a> and annotate for: "What does the virtue of "hope" mean for the Congregation of Holy Cross?"                             |
| <b>Reflection on Reading</b><br>(5 mins)   | Prompt students to do a "turn and talk" on their answer to "What does the virtue of "hope" mean for the Congregation of Holy Cross?"  | Do the turn and talk with a partner.  |
| <b>Introduction of Story of St. Andre</b><br>(5 mins)  | Tee up the next part of the lesson: "This courageous motto can and is lived   | Read the list.<br><br>And answer: How is each   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>differently in the lives of different Holy Cross religious.</p> <p>Read <a href="#">the following list of hopes of Blessed Basil Moreau, Edward Sorin, and Andre Bessette</a>.</p> <p>Answer: How is each men's hope distinct from the others?</p> | <p>men's hope distinct from the others?</p>  |
| <p><b>Independent Practice</b><br/>(15 mins)</p> | <p>Circulate.</p>   | <p>Write 5 hopes that they have for the present moment in the church and how the "cross" might manifest in the pursuit of each hope.</p> <p>Write these in the form of a letter to the teachers of your school.</p> <p>The letter should end with these words of Basil Moreau:</p> <p>"Hurry then; take up this work of resurrection, never forgetting that the special end of your institute is, before all, to sanctify youth. It is by this that you will contribute to preparing the world for better times than ours; for these students who now attend your school are the parents of the future, the parents of future generations, each one of whom bears within them a family. Influence them, then, by all the means of instruction and sanctification that have just been explained."</p> |

Lesson Resource:

A list of things that Fr. Moreau, Fr. Sorin, and Br. Andre' hoped for.

Fr. Moreau hoped:

- (1) that young people would be open to an education of both mind and heart.
- (2) for a France where people could be free and love God and each other.
- (3) that his religious family would grow and travel the world as educators in the faith.
- (4) that Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) would be the model for his community of religious priests, brothers, and sisters.
- (5) that all people would learn to love God and trust in God's Divine Providence (God's love and care for world.)

Fr. Sorin hoped:

- (1) that his new school, Notre Dame Du Lac, would be a force for good in the world.
- (2) that the New World would provide opportunities for a renewal of the Christian faith.
- (3) that Notre Dame, Our Mother, would watch over and guide his new school.
- (4) the work of the Congregation of Holy Cross would spread in the New World and lead to the development of schools throughout America.
- (5) that young people through a love for Jesus and His Church would grow to build a better world.

Br. Andre' hoped:

- (1) for a sense of belonging and purpose in his life and others.
- (2) that all people could feel a sense of love and care, even in the midst of suffering.
- (3) that St. Joseph would hear the prayers of all those prayed to him and asked for intercession.
- (4) for a great shrine devoted to St. Joseph to be built.
- (5) that by listening to people share their crosses the doors of their hearts could be open to God's love and healing.

**The Holy Cross in Bangladesh** (Grades 5 - 12)

SWBAT articulate the meaning of “The Cross, Our Only Hope”.

SWBAT relate this meaning to the challenges of the work of the Holy Cross in Bangladesh.

|  | <b>Teacher:</b>   | <b>Students:</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Warm-Up</b><br>(5 mins)                                 | Circulate.  | Read <a href="#">Constitution 8</a> and annotate for: “For the authors of this document, how does the cross manifest in our lives?” |
| <b>Prayer</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Frame Lesson</b><br>(5 mins)                            | “ <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> tells the story of the founding of the first Holy Cross university - the first of a number of many excellent colleges in the United States. Today we will explore the founding of the newest Holy Cross university in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and see how this founding resonates the motto of the Holy Cross - Spes unica - The Cross, Our Only Hope |   |
| <b>Introductory Video on NDUB</b><br>(5 mins)              | Play <a href="#">this video</a> , introducing students to NDUB.   | Watch video.<br><br>Take notes on the question: “How might the cross manifest in the lives of the founders and students of NDUB?”   |
| <b>Interview with a Holy Cross Missionary</b><br>(20 mins) | Play <a href="#">this video of an interview with Fr. Tom McDermott, CSC</a> .   | Watch video.<br><br>Take notes on the question: “What is the cross for Fr. Tom? What makes the cross “holy” for him?”               |
| <b>Introduction of Reading</b><br>(5 mins)                 | “The author of <i>Sorin Starts a School</i> wrote the following essay about the Holy Cross  |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <p>in Bangladesh and the witness of Fr. Tom. You will read this essay, and this create one like it of a person that you who bears the cross in a similarly joyful way, a person who is both “strange and free.”</p> <p>Take questions to clarify the task</p> | <p>Ask clarifying questions.</p>  |
| <p><b>Independent Practice</b><br/>(15 mins... and then into the next day, or finish for homework)</p> |   | <p>Read the essay: <a href="#">“The Truth Will Make You Strange”</a>: <a href="#">Appreciation of Fr. Tom McDermott, CSC</a></p> <p>Write a story of someone that they know who bears the cross in a similarly joyful way, a person who is both “strange and free.”</p> |



## “The Truth Will Make You Strange”: Appreciation of Fr. Tom McDermott, CSC and the Best of the Holy Cross in Bangladesh

By: [Paul Mitchell](#)

The history of the Congregation of Holy Cross (CSC) in Bangladesh includes so many *contributors*, serious builders. Below is a story including a few of them.

After working as a lay volunteer with the Holy Cross in East Africa, I spent a few months in Bangladesh in the summer of 2009. Once there, I looked up Fr. Tom McDermott, CSC, who had helped run our volunteer orientation in 2007, and was now working in Dhaka, the capital.

A brief note on Dhaka. It's a tough place to live. Bangladesh has half the population of the US on a land area equal to that of Illinois that seasonally floods. So, high population density. Dhaka is the most crowded city in the world. And gets real hot. Like, heat rash hot. It is a tough place to live.

And it was tough in 1851 when Blessed Basil Moreau agreed that the Congregation would take over the mission there. And it was tough in 1947 during the conflict with India and Pakistan following the partition of “British India.” And tough in 1971 when Bangladesh fought for its independence. Through all these seasons, the Holy Cross has accompanied displaced persons from conflict, marginalized indigenous people in the north, and scores of students through their excellent schools in Dhaka.

One Holy Cross missionary who dedicated his life to this accompaniment was Fr. Gene Homrich, CSC. He was born in Michigan in 1928, started at ND in 1947, was ordained a CSC priest in 1955 and later headed to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). He worked there for **sixty-one years** helping to found two parishes with the indigenous tribes in the north, Jalchatra and Pirgacha.

And that summer in 2009, I found myself on the porch of the parish house in Pirgacha, after Fr. Tom invited me to tag along with him as he oriented some summer volunteers.

The sun was setting, Tom had just acquired both of us a quarter inch of Fr. Homrich's scotch, and I settled in for a McDermott soliloquy. (If you've spent half a day with Tom, you know what I am talking about and you know that it is awesome.)

He riffed on the extraordinary history of the church in Bangladesh (“It's like... Micronesia in a sea of Islam!”), where the CSC fit into that history (appreciating the indigenous leadership), and the Christian vocation generally (“Just think about it! A life of generosity is just more fun than a life of stuff!”). He also took care to include me in it all and helped me process my two years in Uganda (“It sure was cute of the Lord to drop you by here for a few months on your way back home.”).

It was a perfect distillation of the joy he takes in his vocation, and his extraordinary ability to share this joy; that is, to include others in God's call.

I encountered this joy again some weeks later during what was ostensibly a silent retreat at the CSC house in Dhaka. Tom kept finding me to make sure I didn't get too much quiet time.

*Hey Paul – come on – let's go visit the Missionaries of Charity house.*

*Hey Paul – come over here – there is someone I want you to meet.*

*Hey Paul – come on into the common room after dinner – I told the summer volunteers you would talk to them. Your topic is "The Truth Will Make You Strange."*

I have thought often about the topic he assigned to me that night. (The line is a play, by Flanery O'Connor, on the verse in John 8: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.")

It is a grace, I think, to be both free and strange, and this grace runs deep in Tom McDermott. Free to contribute your life to extraordinary work, and strange only to the eyes of the world who is caught up in other stuff and, honestly, not having as much fun.

His current project is, along with a formidable team, building Notre Dame University Bangladesh in Dhaka. It is our joy to support these CSC builders in Bangladesh with all profits from *Sorin Starts a School*. Let's pray for the flourishing of their work, and for the grace to be made strange and free.

## **Five themes of Holy Cross spirituality:**

### **Mind: Seeking understanding through the integration of faith and reason.**

A Holy Cross education begins with a rigorous and full development of the mind. Moreau himself was a committed student who took his studies seriously and engaged energetically in the intellectual debates of his day. He perceived early on that it could only be detrimental to both Church and society were Catholics to refrain from engaging the scholarly questions and controversies of the age. Like John Henry Cardinal Newman, his contemporary, Moreau sought to instill within students the belief that reason and faith were complementary aspects of God's revelation. He resisted the post-Enlightenment tendency to compartmentalize theology and rely solely upon human knowledge. In later decades, as he fought for Holy Cross schools to gain acceptance and credibility, Moreau realized that the students who graduated from them would need to familiarize themselves even with theories and beliefs they opposed and become smarter, more determined, better debaters who could hold their ground on others' turf.

### **Heart: Discerning our personal vocation in service to the Church and world.**

Having come of age in the wake of the French Revolution, Moreau knew firsthand that an education which imparts knowledge without values and faith can produce people with sharp intellects but malformed hearts. He was undoubtedly influenced by a wise spiritual advisor who counseled him, "Our first rule must be to disregard what only tickles the ears; it is hearts that we must win." For him, the development of the heart was rooted in our essential dignity as God's children. It is a relationship that is made explicit and central in our baptism. The unfolding of our baptismal identity and call is at the core of the cultivation of the heart and the fulfillment of our deepest desire to live in union with God as citizens and leaders in service to the Church and world.

### **Zeal: Fueling the desire to offer our gifts for the good of all people.**

Zeal was the term Fr. Moreau used to express the virtue that actualizes the development of our minds and the cultivation of our hearts for the good of others. An education of minds and hearts can only set the world on fire if it has truly enkindled within a person the desire to act boldly. He benefited personally from the opportunities that followed to develop his intellect into a powerful means for communicating the gospel to disparate audiences from seminarians to poor country folk who could not sign their names.

### **Family: Embracing Christian community as the context for lifelong formation.**

But he always understood that it was one's longing for God and commitment to a life of faith that sustained the use of those gifts for the good of others. Ultimately, he believed Holy Cross schools should help a young person come to a clear understanding of his or her vocation in the Church and in the world, irrespective of our individual roles or responsibilities. He insisted on a preference for "the most abandoned, the most ignorant, the least gifted by nature ... because their needs are greater and it is only justice to give more to those who have received less."

### **Hope: Trusting in the cross and God's promise of the kingdom.**

Moreau realized that he would never have become a priest but for the influence of his family and also his parish priest who first recognized the stirrings of a vocation and arranged for his education. If people associated with Holy Cross speak frequently today about the "family-like" atmosphere they encounter in our parishes and educational institutions, that is directly traceable to Fr. Moreau's teaching philosophy and ideals for community life. His modeling of each group within the Congregation, priests, brothers, and sisters upon the image of the Holy Family, caused him to cultivate an environment at Sainte-Croix that would make it feel like the kind of home in which he was raised. It is that family-like atmosphere that constituents typically identify as the most distinguishing feature of a Holy Cross apostolate. It is, however, an elusive and ephemeral quality, felt more easily by people who have experienced it than readily describable, even for those who have enjoyed a long association with Holy Cross. Though it is arguably the community's most appealing quality, few would know that what they sense intuitively in a Holy Cross school or parish today was the product of Fr. Moreau's pastoral genius.

Moreau's spirituality was rooted in the desire to be an apostle, to pick up his cross daily and conform himself wholly to the person of Jesus Christ. He sought to make the Congregation an extension of his zeal for mission and devotion to union with mixed results, but his influence continues to permeate how Holy Cross expresses itself today. Were it not for Moreau's faith and fortitude no matter his disappointments, the other four principles of mind, heart, zeal and family would have little meaning or purpose. However, they are the foundation for a unique pedagogy that mirrors a person's natural human development and moral formation along the path of Christian discipleship. Ultimately, his vision encourages us to embrace the cross of Jesus while progressing through this world toward the light of God's kingdom. Moreau's educational philosophy was rooted in the belief that we should prepare students to act and engage fully as citizens of this world in preparation for citizenship in heaven.

*(Information on Holy Cross and Christian Education originally published by University of Notre Dame Campus Ministry.)*

**List of all resources linked in this guide:**

**Curriculum videos:**

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| <a href="#">Introduction to the Curriculum Guide</a>                                     |
| <a href="#">Called to Be Creators - Day 1 - Unit Intro</a>                               |
| <a href="#">Called to Be Creators - Day 2 - Art: Exemplars and Symbolism</a>             |
| <a href="#">Called to Be Creators - Day 3 - A Source of Inspiration</a>                  |
| <a href="#">Called to Be Creators - Day 4 - Story Structure and the Stability Stanza</a> |
| <a href="#">Sorin and His Sins: Sacrament of Reconciliation Primer - Part 1</a>          |
| <a href="#">Sorin and His Sins: Sacrament of Reconciliation Primer - Part 2</a>          |
| <a href="#">Interview with Fr. Tom McDermott, CSC</a>                                    |

**External videos:**

| <b>Video:</b>                                       | <b>Author:</b>                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">"Thoughts on Blessed Basil Moreau"</a>  | <a href="#">Holy Cross Vocations</a> |
| <a href="#">"Mission - Holy Cross: US Province"</a> | <a href="#">Holy Cross Vocations</a> |
| <a href="#">"St. Andre Bessette, CSC"</a>           | <a href="#">Holy Cross Vocations</a> |
| <a href="#">"Notre Dame University Bangladesh"</a>  | University of Notre Dame             |

**Internet resources:**

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|--|
| <a href="#">"Constitution 2: Mission" / Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross</a>                  |
| <a href="#">"Constitution 8: The Cross, Our Only Hope" / Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross</a> |
| <a href="#">"The Basilica of the Sacred Heart: From Empty Pockets to Stained Glass"</a>                      |
| <a href="#">"Five Themes of Holy Cross Spirituality"</a>   |

**Resources included from books:**

| <b>Chapter used in guide:</b>             | <b>Book:</b>                            | <b>Author:</b>                    |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">"St. André Bessette"</a>      | <a href="#">Saints Around the World</a> | <a href="#">Meg Hunter Kilmer</a> |
| <a href="#">"St. Hildegard of Bingen"</a> | <a href="#">Saints Around the World</a> | <a href="#">Meg Hunter Kilmer</a> |
| <a href="#">"Hildegard of Bingen"</a>     | <a href="#">Stories of the Saints</a>   | <a href="#">Carey Wallace</a>     |

**Sorin Starts a School Curriculum Guide**  
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For bulk orders of *Sorin Starts a School*, please inquire at:  
<https://cordepress.com/contact/>



Do you have generous, constructive feedback on how to make this curriculum guide better? We would love to hear it! Please drop Paul a line at:  
<https://paulmitchell.blog/contact/>