

The Saints

"When I get bigger I'm gonna be able to run really fast. Just like my favorite athletes," Terrence said.

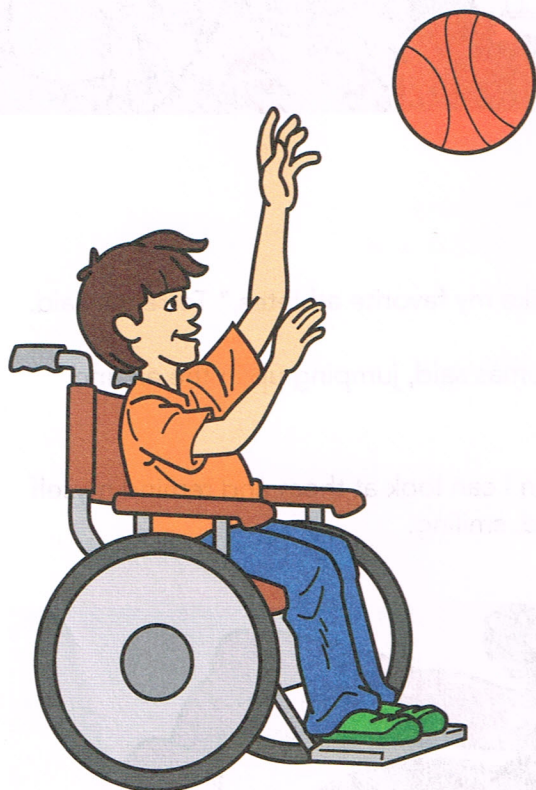
"I wanna be able to sink baskets from the three-point line!" Tomás said, jumping up in the air and pretending to shoot a basket.

"I've got posters of all my favorite players up in my room. Then I can look at them and remind myself why I need to practice! I'm getting pretty good," Terrence said, smiling.





**What are you trying to get really good at?
How do you practice?**



Choose Your Heroes

Do you like to watch the Olympics? Do you have a favorite athlete or sport?

Athletes aren't born great at their sport. They spend years learning and practicing. They may read about other athletes. They practice. It takes a lot of practice to get ready for the Olympics.

To get ready, athletes follow the examples of other great athletes. They watch videos of the game. They study all the moves. They correct their mistakes. Then they practice some more. If you want to be great at something, you do the same thing. First, you learn how to play the game. Then you learn about the people who do it best. Then you practice until you get better. Then you practice some more.

God has a team of special "athletes," too. They learned all about God. They followed Jesus' example. They studied the lives of other holy people. Sometimes they made mistakes. They weren't born perfect and holy. But they all loved God. So they kept practicing. We call these holy athletes **saints**.



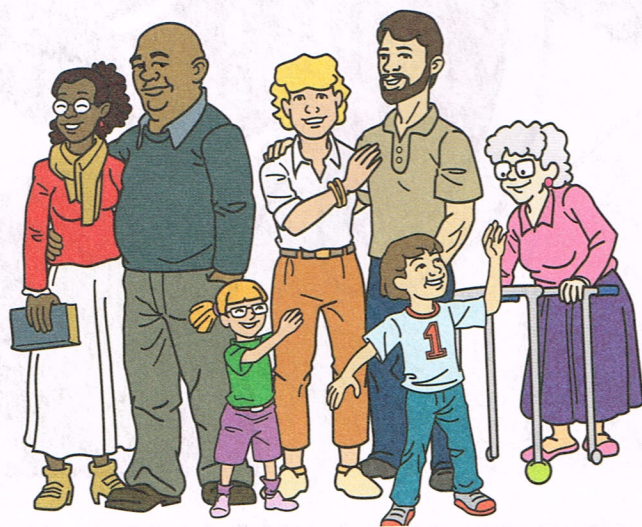
What does the word saint mean to you?

When the Church names someone a saint, it's called canonization. **Canonization** is the Church's way of officially declaring that someone has lived such a holy life that he or she is certainly in heaven with God. You can read about saints in books and study their lives.

The Church doesn't know about every saint. You might have a saint living next door! You might even be related to a saint. These living saints are people who love God, believe in Jesus, and live holy, loving, and generous lives every day.



Do you know someone who might be a saint? Who?



Saints Help Us From Heaven

Canonized saints have feast days. A feast day is a special day of the year set aside to celebrate the life of a particular saint. For example, St. Francis of Assisi's feast day is October 4. Saint Mary Magdalene's feast day is July 22.



On a saint's feast day, or any other day of the year, we ask that saint to help us live a holy life. Some saints are called **patron saints** of something or a group of people. We can pray to these saints for special help. We might pray to St. Thomas Aquinas for help with a test because he's the patron saint of students.

Some people are named after saints. Are you? You can look up your name online or in a book like *Lives of the Saints* to see which saints share your name.



Do you share your name with a saint?

What patron saint would you like to pray to?

Some Saints to Know

St. Thérèse of Lisieux: **The Little Flower of Jesus**

As a child, Thérèse wanted to serve God. Thérèse became a nun and lived in a convent. Her life in the convent wasn't always easy. Sometimes the other nuns were mean to her. But Thérèse was never mean back. In fact, she did small acts of kindness for others every day.



St. John Bosco: **Patron of Orphans**

When John Bosco was sixteen, he entered the **seminary**, a special school for boys who want to become priests. There were a lot of poor, homeless, and orphaned children near the seminary. John wanted to help them. He took them into his own home, fed them, and taught them to love God. He became the father to hundreds of orphans who had been forgotten by the world.

St. Dominic Savio: **Patron of Choir Members**

Even when he was only twelve, Dominic always knew when people needed help. He helped the poor and the homeless. He formed the Company of the Immaculate Conception, a group of boys who lived at St. John Bosco's house and helped take care of the orphans. Dominic died when he was only fifteen, but he spent all his time on earth serving others.



YOU CAN BE A SAINT, TOO!

- Learn as much as you can about God and holiness.
- Listen to Jesus' teachings and follow his example.
- Read about saints' lives to discover what makes them great.
- Imitate the living saints you know.
- Pray for God's help.
- Ask your favorite saint to pray with you.



PATRON SAINTS

Who is your patron saint? Write his or her name in the box below. If you can, find a picture of your saint and paste it in the box. If you can't find a picture, you can draw one!

Think about the saints you know. They can be canonized saints or living saints. For each category below, name one you would award a gold medal to. Under each name, write why you think that particular saint deserves a gold medal.

Gold Medal for Acts of Kindness:

Gold Medal for Listening to God:

Gold Medal for Forgiveness:

In Short



- Canonization is the official process the Church uses to name someone a saint.
- The saints weren't always perfect.
- The saints help us from heaven.

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Editors of the 2017 *Journey of Faith for Children*: Theresa Nienaber-Panuski and Pat Fosarelli, MD, DMin.

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