Saint Athanasius

The Bishop Who Would Not Give Up

Ages about 7-11 | Video 6:26 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Jesus is truly God and truly human. We can hold firmly to our faith while treating people with patience and love.

Learning goals Name the truth Athanasius defended; recall how friends helped him; choose a way to speak truth kindly.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask: Can you be brave and gentle at the same time? Hear a few ideas. Explain that a bishop cares for the Church and helps people understand the faith.

Watch and notice

Notice how Athanasius cares for his people, what he teaches about Jesus, and who helps him when he must leave home.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What did Athanasius want people to know about Jesus?
Jesus is the eternal Son of God, not a creature God made. The Son truly became human to save us.

2. How did he care for people in the church?
He stayed while others needed help and urged them to leave safely. His courage served other people.

3. Who helped him when he was far from home?
Friends and monks welcomed and protected him. Prayer, friendship, and writing helped him continue serving.

4. Did being faithful mean winning every argument?
No. He defended the faith and also listened and welcomed people back. We can speak honestly without mocking others.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Saint Athanasius

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw one way friends helped Athanasius and one kind, brave choice you can make. Let children explain their pictures aloud.

Read & Write Children explain the truth about Jesus, recall help in exile, and plan a respectful response to an everyday disagreement.

Adapt by readiness

Emerging readers: ask one question at a time, offer picture choices, and write down a child's spoken answer.

Confident readers: connect the story to the Creed and explain why courage and patient listening belong together.

Practice a kind, truthful reply | Optional 4 minutes

Say: A friend gives the wrong answer in a group task. Practice, 'I think it may be different. Can we check together?' Then try, 'I want to hear what you mean.' Explain that kindness does not require agreeing with an error.

Look for understanding Each child names Jesus as God's eternal Son and gives one example of courage joined to kindness.

Closing prayer Jesus, eternal Son of the Father, strengthen our faith. Help us speak truth with love, listen patiently, and care for one another. Saint Athanasius, pray for us. Amen.

At home At Mass, listen for 'begotten, not made' in the Creed. Ask an adult how the Creed helps the Church pray with one faith.

Handout answer notes Jesus is the eternal Son, not a created being. Friends and monks offered shelter and support. Accept concrete, respectful plans for listening and truthfulness.

Teach with care

The story includes danger, soldiers, and exile without graphic violence. Preview it for your group and reassure children that they may ask a trusted adult for help. Athanasius attended Nicaea as a deacon, not a bishop. He did not write the whole Creed alone. Courage never means children must remain in danger or confront unsafe adults. Dialogue is adapted for storytelling.

Words to explain Exile: being forced away from home. Creed: the Church's statement of faith. Eternal: without beginning or end. Incarnation: God's Son truly becoming human.

Sources for the leader

Church history: Benedict XVI: Saint Athanasius (20 June 2007)
Story: Servus Dei: The Bishop Who Would Not Give Up