Saint Gertrude the Great

The Heart That Loved Jesus

Ages about 7-11 | Video 5:31 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Gertrude's love of learning grew into deeper friendship with Jesus. Prayer, the Eucharist, writing, and care for others became ways to answer the love God had already given her.

Learning goals Children will explain what changed in Gertrude's learning, name people she prayed for, and turn one truth about Jesus into a prayer and an action.

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: How is knowing facts about someone different from being their friend? Watch for learning and love growing together in Gertrude's life.

Watch and notice

Notice what changes after Gertrude experiences Jesus' closeness. She still studies, but her learning now helps her respond with love and care for others.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What did Gertrude enjoy at Helfta?
Reading, learning, Scripture, and beautiful words. These gifts could serve her friendship with Jesus and the people around her.

2. Did loving Jesus mean she should stop learning?
No. Her learning became humbler and more loving. The story invites mind and heart to work together.

3. Why does the film speak about the Heart of Jesus?
His Heart expresses his real, personal love, mercy, and patience. Gertrude wanted her own life to answer that love.

4. How did her quiet prayer reach beyond herself?
She prayed for her sisters, suffering people, sinners, and the faithful departed. Her love for Jesus opened her concern to 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 Gertrude the Great

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 Children picture a truth about Jesus and then an action that answers it. Ask them to tell the connection rather than judge artistic detail.

Read & Write Children explain how Gertrude's learning changed, compose an intercession, and connect a learned truth with a practical response.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: offer 'Jesus welcomes people' and ask for a welcoming action. An adult may write the child's prayer.

Ages 9-11: compare learning to impress others with learning to understand and serve. Discuss prayer that continues even without a strong feeling.

Know, pray, live | Optional 4 minutes

Choose one truth from the film, such as 'Jesus is patient.' Turn it into a short prayer: 'Help me be patient.' Then name one situation where patience is needed. Let each child choose a different truth or situation.

Look for understanding Look for a clear connection among something learned about Jesus, a prayer, and a loving action. Quietness alone is not the measure of good prayer.

Closing prayer Jesus, you loved us first. Help our learning lead to friendship with you and our prayer lead to love for others. Saint Gertrude, pray for us. Amen.

At home Before bedtime, pray for one person who is suffering and one person who helps you. You may keep names private.

Handout answer notes Gertrude used learning to love Jesus and help others. Accept a sincere intercession and an action clearly connected to Jesus' mercy, patience, or kindness.

Teach with care

Explain Helfta as the community where Gertrude grew, studied, and prayed. Invite a quiet moment without expecting children to feel something unusual. Gertrude's special experiences are not a requirement for holiness. Purgatory is God's final purification of those who die in his friendship, not a second chance after rejecting him. Do not attach guaranteed numbers of souls released to a prayer.

Words to explain Monastery: a community devoted to prayer and shared religious life. Eucharist: the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Intercession: prayer for another person.

Sources for the leader

Life and spirituality: Benedict XVI, audience, 6 October 2010
Love that begins with God: 1 John 4:7-19