

Saints Ignatius and Polycarp

When My Turn Comes

Ages about 7-11 | Video 8:52 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Ignatius strengthens Polycarp through friendship and a letter. Years of prayer and care prepare Polycarp to remain faithful, and the encouragement continues through the people he serves.

Learning goals Children will trace how encouragement passes between people, explain the anvil comparison, and choose an ordinary habit that practices courage.

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: Has someone's encouragement helped you do a hard but good thing? Watch how Ignatius helps his friend even while he is a prisoner.

Watch and notice

Pause after the letter to explain the anvil comparison. Notice the ordinary years between Ignatius's visit and Polycarp's arrest, rather than treating courage as one sudden moment.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What could Polycarp give Ignatius even though he could not free him?

Food, water, friendship, and care. Ignatius also encouraged the people who came to support him.

2. What does the anvil image mean?

Stay faithful under pressure. It does not mean become unkind, refuse wise advice, or let people hurt you.

3. What filled Polycarp's ordinary years?

Prayer, teaching, patience, and care for people who needed him. Repeated good choices shaped his faithfulness.

4. How does courage keep traveling at the end?

Ignatius strengthens Polycarp; Polycarp strengthens others. Their witness can encourage our ordinary choices now.

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

Saints Ignatius and Polycarp

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 Three panels follow encouragement from Ignatius to Polycarp to a child today. Draw a letter, an act of care, and an ordinary brave choice.

Read & Write Children paraphrase the anvil comparison, find evidence of patient courage, and write a short note of encouragement for an ordinary challenge.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: retell with friend, letter, and daily help. Choose a concrete habit such as admitting a mistake.

Ages 9-11: distinguish steadfastness from stubbornness. Ask how a person can stay faithful while accepting correction.

Let encouragement travel | Optional 4 minutes

Each child offers one sentence of encouragement for a made-up challenge: telling the truth, apologizing, or including someone. Add one practical offer of help. Explain how encouraging another person can strengthen a whole community.

Look for understanding Look for ordinary habits, mutual support, and firmness joined to kindness. Courage is not a contest about danger or suffering.

Closing prayer Jesus, teach us courage through ordinary days. Help us pray, tell the truth, and strengthen one another. Saints Ignatius and Polycarp, pray for us. Amen.

At home Choose one small faithful habit for the week. Ask a family member for encouragement, and offer encouragement in return.

Handout answer notes The anvil means faithful steadiness, not hard-heartedness or accepting harm. Prayer, patience, teaching, and care are daily practices. Accept kind encouragement with practical support.

Teach with care

Explain that both bishops face persecution and death, without describing violence. An anvil picture is optional; no tools or physical endurance demonstration is needed. The film draws on Ignatius's letter and the account of Polycarp's martyrdom; private conversations and thoughts are dramatized. It explicitly permits escaping danger. Never turn the anvil into a lesson in enduring bullying or harm; get trusted help.

Words to explain Bishop: a successor of the Apostles who teaches, sanctifies, and leads a local Church. Anvil: a strong metal block used by a blacksmith. Faithfulness: remaining true in love and responsibility.

Sources for the leader

Pastoral care and the anvil comparison: [Ignatius: Letter to Polycarp. 1-3](#)

Hospitality, prayer, and witness: [Martyrdom of Polycarp. 5-9](#)

Courage keeps traveling

Saints Ignatius and Polycarp

One Christian can help another stay close to Jesus.

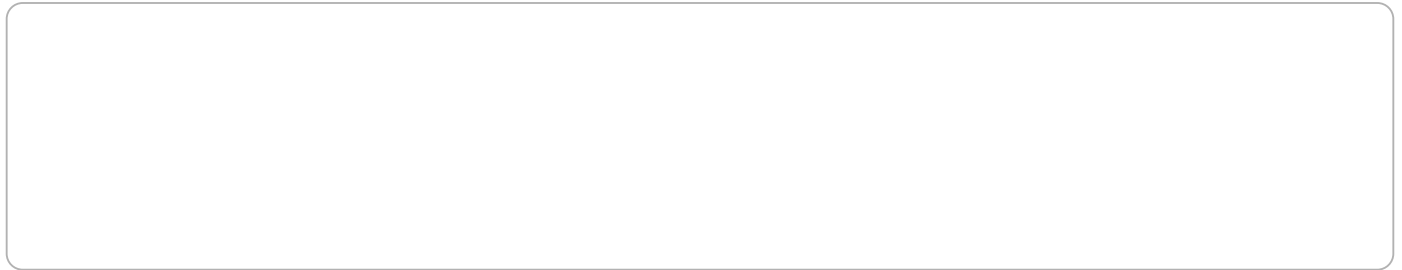
Name _____

Adult helper Read aloud. Invite drawing, pointing, or spoken answers. Writing is optional.

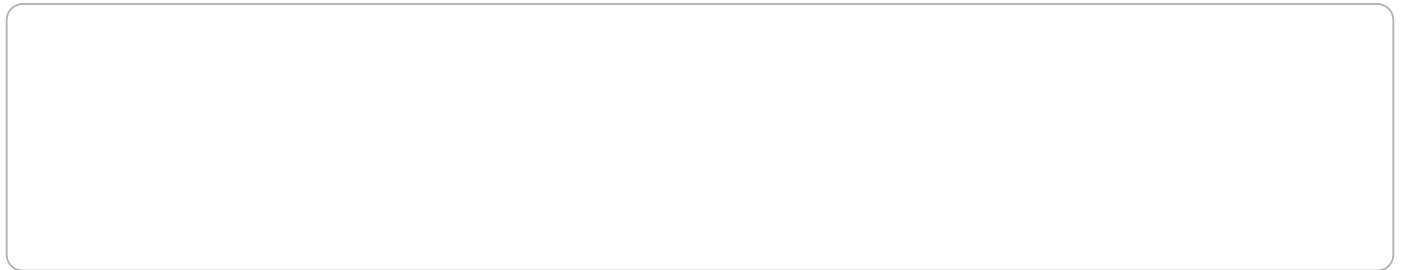
1 IGNATIUS encourages Polycarp with a letter.



2 POLYCARP cares for people on ordinary days.



3 TODAY I can practice one brave, kind choice.



Tell How does encouragement move from one person to another?

Pray Jesus, help me practice courage and encourage someone today. Amen.

At home Share your picture and one thing you learned about God or following Jesus.

A letter for an ordinary brave day

Saints Ignatius and Polycarp

Ignatius encouraged Polycarp to be faithful and caring.

Name _____

1 Explain the picture

What does standing like an anvil mean? What does it not mean?

It means ...

2 Find the daily practice

Name one way Polycarp practiced courage before his arrest.

He practiced by ...

3 Pass on encouragement

Write two sentences to encourage someone to tell the truth or apologize.

You can ...

Pray Jesus, help me practice courage and encourage someone today. Amen.

Go deeper How can accepting correction sometimes take more courage than insisting you are right?