



Venerable Cornelia Connelly Middle School Lesson Plan

Objective

Introduce Cornelia Connelly to your students, who will learn about her rich legacy and deep spirituality, including her unwavering faith in God and Cause for Sainthood.

Values

Love and Faith

Time

Thirty Minutes

Materials

[Short Bio on Cornelia Connelly](#)

Introductory Activities

1. If helpful, review all or some of the following vocabulary words as a pre-reading exercise.

Beatification – the second stage in the process of proclaiming a person a saint; occurs after a diocese or province and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints has investigated a person's life and writings to determine whether they demonstrate a heroic level of virtue, offered their life, or suffered martyrdom. A miracle attributed to the person's intercession must be proved.

Blessed – title bestowed on a person who has been beatified and accorded limited liturgical veneration.

Canonization – the formal process by which the Church declares a person to be a saint and worthy of universal veneration.

Exhumed – a body or cremated remains are removed from the ground.

Humility – freedom from pride or arrogance; the quality or state of being humble.

Independent – not requiring or relying on someone else.



Miracle – something that is scientifically inexplicable occurred by the grace of God through the intercession of a Venerable or Blessed.

Petition – a written request or call for change signed by many people in support of a shared cause or concern.

Solace – to give comfort to in grief or misfortune.

Venerable – the title given to a candidate for sainthood whose cause has not yet reached the beatification stage but whose heroic virtue has been declared by the Pope.

Well-rounded – fully or broadly develop, such as having a broad educational background.

Zeal – great enthusiasm and eagerness, especially in pursuit of something.

2. Distribute [Cornelia's short bio](#) to each student. Give students approximately 15 minutes to read the document.
3. After the students have read the short bio, discuss Cornelia's life and Cause for Canonization using the questions below as prompts.

Discussion Questions

- Do you think it was hard for Cornelia to move from Philadelphia, a large northern city, to Natchez, a small port city on the banks of the Mississippi River? Why?
- Today, Cornelia's reactions to some of her husband's decisions might seem odd to us. Do you think they were viewed as acceptable in the early 1800s?
- The Connellys were given two enslaved women while living in Natchez. The Society of the Holy Child Jesus believes that the Connellys, like many others at that time, were ignorant and blind to the sin of slavery. Why do you think the Connellys were ignorant and blind to the sin of slavery? Did other families who lived in the South in the 1800s have enslaved people, too? Do you think it would have been Cornelia's or Pierce's decision to free them?



- When Cornelia had to do hard things, she trusted in God to help her. What hard things do you have to do? How can God help you?
- Cornelia loved and trusted in God so deeply that she answered his call to start the Society of the Holy Child Jesus to “meet the wants of the age.” What do you think are some of today’s “wants” or needs?
- Cornelia showed her love for God by helping lots of people, especially children. What is one thing you can do today because you love God?

4. After a brief discussion, end the lesson by reading aloud the [prayer to obtain the beatification](#) of Venerable Cornelia Connelly (below).

O God, who chose Cornelia Connelly to found the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, inspiring her to follow the path marked out by your divine Son, obedient from the crib to the cross, let us share her faith, her obedience and her unconditional trust in the power of your love. Grant us the favor we now implore through her intercession...and be pleased to glorify, even on earth, your faithful servant, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Extension Activities

Students can learn more about Cornelia Connelly and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus by:

--Watching a short film on Cornelia’s life: www.shcj.org/american/our-story/cornelia-connelly-film.

--Visiting the Society’s website, where they can dig deeper into Cornelia’s life: www.shcj.org/american/our-story/cornelia-connelly.

--Learning how they can help with Cornelia’s Canonization Cause: www.shcj.org/american/our-story/cornelia-connelly/how-to-help-cornelias-canonization-cause.

###