



Saint of the Month



Blessed Peter To Rot

Goal: To provide a lesson for children about a blessed or saint who exemplify a deep relationship with God and the ability to share it with others

Materials Needed: This lesson plan, accompanying story, and any necessary materials for follow up activities

Objectives:

1. To assist children in developing the understanding that all of God's people are called to a life of holiness
2. To help children respond appropriately to the question: What is a saint or blessed?
One who:
 - lives like Jesus
 - teaches others about Jesus by their example
 - is proclaimed by the Church, after their death, to have lived a life of holiness
3. To introduce one of our Church's holy people, Blessed Peter To Rot, (say Tō Rōt) telling as much of the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level
4. To learn that Peter is blessed because he lived in a way that respected the Gospel of Jesus
5. To learn that we are called by God to share the Gospel with our lives
6. To help the children develop listening skills

Procedure:

1. Prepare the children to listen to Peter To Rot's story. (Have map posted or globe available)
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Blessed Peter Elaborate or abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.
3. Use the follow up questions (below).
4. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

Blessed Peter To Rot

Peter To Rot was born on March 5, 1915 in the tropical island country of Papua New Guinea. He was the third child of six born to a well-respected tribal chief and his wife. Both of Peter's parents converted to the Catholicism as adults and brought their children up in the faith.

When Peter was seven, his father sent him to school, even though it was not mandatory to do so. Peter showed himself to be a very good student who was also interested in his faith. His teachers noted that in his daily study journals, he always noted that he set aside time for morning and evening prayers. Peter was a good student and many of his peers saw him as a natural leader. He stayed immersed in his own culture while devoted to his faith.

Peter's childhood was like the same as the boys in his village—he was an altar server, enjoyed sports, had chores to do at home, and enjoyed taking part in the occasional boyhood prank among friends. When Peter turned 18, the local priest, Fr. Laufer, who was a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, asked Peter's father if Peter could study for the priesthood. Peter's father declined the invitation but allowed him to study to be a catechist. (In the missions, a catechist is a person who studies for years in order to help teach the faith to both adults and children. The ministry is more like our Permanent Deacons.)

After three years of study, Peter received his Catechist's Cross from the local bishop and returned to his village. At the age of 21, he became the area's youngest catechist. He taught in the parish school, visited the sick, and instructed people who were ready to receive the sacraments of the Church. Peter was known to always have a Bible with him and knew most of it by heart!

In 1936, Peter married a village woman named Paula; they were very happy and went on to have three children. People looked to them as a wonderful example of a strong Catholic marriage.

By 1942, World War II had come to the island country; after dropping bombs on people who had never seen airplanes before, Japanese soldiers invaded the area. They sent all missionaries, priests, and religious, to a prison camp. As a lay person, Peter was left in charge of the faith formation of the local Catholics. When people were afraid, he would remind them that God was with them. He would gather villagers to pray every day, until it became too dangerous for them to meet in large groups. He then split them into smaller prayer groups and assigned them to remote caves to gather to pray in secret.

Peter was arrested in 1945 after soldiers raided his home and found his outlawed Bible, catechism and song books, and two crucifixes. He was sentenced to several months in prison. One day, when his wife, who was pregnant with their third child visited, Peter asked her to bring his good clothes and his catechist cross to him. He told her that the Japanese were sending a doctor to visit him although he was not sick. He knew they meant to kill him because he had become the teacher of his people and was leading them to God. He was prepared to give his life for his faith.

The next morning, Peter was found dead in his bed. His Japanese captors acted surprised but the villagers knew he had given up his life rather than deny his love for Jesus.

Pray: Blessed Peter, your daily witness to the Gospel inspired so many to follow Jesus. Help us to remember that we are all called to be examples of the values we learn through our prayers and service to others. Blessed Peter To Rot, pray for us! Amen.

Follow-up Questions: (add, omit, re-word as appropriate for your grade level)

1. Blessed Peter To Rot made time to pray every day. How do you think that affected his daily actions?
2. Although the missionaries had been present in the village for years, Blessed Peter's parents weren't baptized until they were adults. What does that tell you about the perseverance of missionaries?
3. Does it surprise you that Blessed Peter devoted his life to God at such a young age? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities:

1. Catholics in Papua New Guinea are very proud of Blessed Peter To Rot— he is their first native born person on his way to sainthood. Here's a picture of him that hangs in one of their churches. During the month of October, join them in prayer for his canonization. Use the blue beads on your World Mission Rosaries—Papua New Guinea is in Oceania! Don't have World Mission Rosaries? Contact us and we'll send them to you. You can also read a prayer for Peter's canonization online here: <https://bit.ly/3CzwtE9>
2. Blessed Peter To Rot had much of the Bible memorized. Have a contest to memorize a psalm or passage from the Bible and recite them to your class.
3. Because of missionaries, Blessed Peter and his family learned about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, there are still many children who have not heard that same Gospel. Every day in October, say a prayer that missionaries will be able to teach more children about Jesus. At the end of the month, bring a donation into class and ask your teacher to gather everyone's gifts and send them to MCA, at the address below, to help missionaries do their important work.

