Faith Formation

Our Lady of Knock

Trivia Question: In the 19th century, Ireland experienced the great potato famine and a deadly epidemic of typhoid fever as well as persecution of the Catholics. On a rainy evening of August 21, 1879, in Knock, Ireland, Our Lady appeared. Fourteen witnesses, from age six to seventy-five, witnessed the apparition. Many miracles occurred after the apparition and Our Lady of Knock gave hope to the people. Two other Saints appeared with Mary, who were they?

Answer: St Joseph and St John the Evangelist appeared with Mary. St Joseph was at Mary's right with his head respectively inclined toward Mary. St John the Evangelist was to the left of Mary, vested as a bishop, his left hand holding an open book and his right hand raised in preaching. To the left of St John, a cross and a lamb were on top of an altar.

Our Lady, St Joseph and St John kept silent. But their silence spoke eloquently enough. Mary stood in silent solidarity with the greatly oppressed and suffering Irish people.

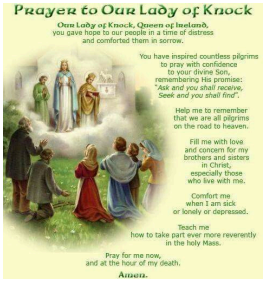
Mary appeared at Knock on the vigil of the feast of her Immaculate Heart to remind the Irish that they were close to her Heart and to encourage them to persevere in the faith.

She came as the Queen of Heaven and Ireland to remind the faithful of the grace and hope which comes from her Son and the perpetual Sacrifice of the Mass.

Our Lady of Knock came with St. Joseph and St. John to teach all of the faithful the importance of reverential prayer and of sacrifice, especially when united to the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lady of Knock feast day is celebrated tomorrow, August 17 in USA; August 21 in Ireland. For more details on this apparition:

Our Lady of Knock



Activity for Kids:

Shining Light Dolls: Our Lady of Knock and Silence

The apparition of Our Lady in Knock, Ireland, came at a time when the people desperately needed some consolation. After years of persecution and famine, many in that country were losing hope. The appearance of Our Lady reassured the people that God had not forgotten them, but the really interesting thing about the apparition is that Mary didn't speak a single word.

Many people nowadays, children and adults, are profoundly uncomfortable with silence. Our lives are full of digital distractions and days that are scheduled down to the minute. Moments of quiet and stillness are rare- but they shouldn't be!

Why would Mary appear and not say anything? Maybe that was her point. That sometimes we don't have to be "saying" or "doing" anything. Taking time out of our day to be silent, to be present, is how we reconnect with God.

God is always with us, present to us in every moment. We may not hear him, we may not see him, but he's always there. When Our Lady of Knock appeared to the Irish people it gave them courage to go on- her presence was a reminder that God IS with us. He is always present, in our struggles, in our pain, and in our joys. He never forgets us, he never leaves us- and we can find him in the silence.

When Elijah was in the cave waiting for God he ignored the earthquake and the fire- but recognized the voice of God in a "still small voice." We don't have to suffer alone thinking God has forgotten us because nothing "amazing" is happening. God is there, waiting for us, in the present moment. In the Bible God tells us, "Be still and Know I am God."

A really amazing way to teach children to practice silence is through Eucharistic adoration. Simply being in the presence of God, free from the distractions of everyday life, and allowing him to move in our hearts.

Sitting in silence, in the presence of God, is a powerful way to train ourselves to remember that we are always in the presence of God- because he is always with us, and as St. Augustine says, God is "Him who dwells within us."

Interestingly enough, scientific studies have shown that silence encourages the brain to create new cells in the hippocampus. Silence can literally grow your

brain! And the hippocampus is the area of the brain, which controls learning, memory, emotion and mood.
Spending time with God in silence is not only good for the soul, but it is good for health and development. Amazing!
Our Lady of Knock is a powerful reminder that God is always with us, he isn't just "something that happened a long time ago." We can still find him, in our hearts, in the Eucharist, in the Church, and in the silence.
This is just one example of how to use this story to explore and expand on an aspect of our faith. Together with your child, I'm sure you will discover even more! God bless!

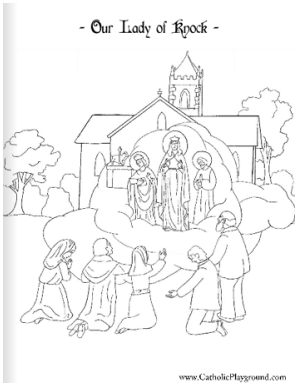


Next week we celebrate the Feasts of St Monica on August 27th and her son St Augustine on August 28th. These are two important saints that impacted our early church and continue to influence today. If you would like to pray a Novena to St Monica, it begins today. The St Augustine novena begins tomorrow. Remember, a novena is typically a prayer said for nine days in a row. By beginning these novenas today/tomorrow, they will complete on the saint's feast day.
St. Monica Novena
St. Augustine Novena

You can also download this novena app for free to your phone. It provides a handy list of novenas coming up and also walks you through the novena prayers each day. Although most novenas are free, some (including St Monica) require a subscription. You can always access those novenas directly on other free sites.

Pray: The Catholic Novena App | Pray Catholic Novenas

Activity for Kids:
Catholic Playground: Our Lady of Knock Coloring Page
The apparition of Our Lady in Knock, Ireland, is one of the few that are approved by the Church. In 1879, Our Lady, St. Joseph, and St. John the Evangelist appeared outside of a little church in Knock, Ireland. Behind them were angels adoring at an altar with a cross and a lamb. Unlike her apparition at Lourdes, Our Lady did not say anything at Knock. Fifteen people were present at the apparition. They remained there for hours, saying the rosary in the pouring rain. The first miracle, the healing of a deaf girl, occurred ten days after the apparition. Since then, hundreds of miracles have occurred and prayers have been answered at the famous pilgrimage site.



As we conclude our learnings on Our Lady of Knock, this prayer is timely to the challenges of today.

