



Grades 3-5 Resource Guide

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE POPE?

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The office given uniquely by the Lord to St. Peter continues in the Bishop of Rome. He carries out his office of teaching, governing and sanctifying the universal Church. The other bishops of the Church are united with the Pope and assist him by carrying out the tasks of teaching, sanctifying and governing in local dioceses all the while in union with the Pope.

The Pope as Teacher

The Pope is the expert in teaching. He preaches the Gospel to all people and makes sure that the faith is carefully taught throughout the world.

The Pope as Governor

Because the Pope has the responsibility to lead the whole Church, the Pope has the final authority to lead and guide the Church in matters of faith and teaching.

The Pope as Sanctifier

To sanctify something is to make it holy. The Pope's job, with the help of the Holy Spirit, is to form the us to be holy people. Christ imparts his own holiness to the Church through the life of prayer, worship and the Sacraments.

What Roles or Titles Does the Pope Have?

- Bishop of Rome
- Vicar of Christ on Earth
- Successor to St. Peter
- Holy Father
- Supreme Pontiff
- Servant of the Servants of God
- Head of the College of Bishops
- Primate of Italy
- Sovereign of the Vatican City State

(If younger students have trouble with the concept of how the Pope leads the Church in various ways, teachers may want to begin with examples of how the pastor teaches, says Mass and celebrates the Sacraments and guides members of the parish.)

Suggested Activities:

- Make a "Pope-Mobile." Cut out cardboard shapes of papal symbols (examples: hat, miter, ring, etc.) and place titles of the Pope on the symbols. Hang these shapes on a metal hanger.
- Place a picture of the Pope on the center of a paper plate, with radiating lines, each highlighting a title of the Pope with an appropriate symbol.
- Make a three-column chart with the headings, Teach, Govern, and Sanctify. Have students place the following duties in the appropriate category: encyclicals, beatify and canonize saints, weekly audience, World Youth Day, appoint bishops, World Message of Peace on New Year's Day, celebrate Christmas Eve Mass.
- Use papal vocabulary words to make a crossword puzzle at <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>
- Create an acrostic poem based on the title "Bishop of Rome." To read more about acrostic poems go to <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/acrostic-poems-30045.html>
- On a classroom map of the world, indicate the nations and continents where the Church is present by placing a sticker or star on that area. Discuss the truly "catholic" nature of the Church. (Do the learners realize that the readings at Mass each Sunday are the same throughout the world? Have children pay special attention to the readings for the coming weekend, and then report back, particularly if they went to a different parish that weekend.)
- Design a picture that shows the relationship between the parish, the archdiocese, and the global Church. Consider making concentric circles in which parish and pastor are named, archdiocese and archbishop, then Roman Catholic Church and the pope's name.
- Choose a service project to be completed in honor of the Pope's visit (e.g., collect food for a needy family, visit a local nursing home, or make cards for a nursing home about the Pope's visit.)
- Design posters, bumper stickers or buttons promoting the Pope's visit.
- Design a bulletin board with a picture of Peter holding a net. Have each student cut a fish out of colored paper and then write a short prayer on the fish. Put the fish in the net. Each day have a child take a fish out of the net, and say that prayer in honor of the Pope's visit.
- Trace the journey of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles. Have students keep a "travel journal" as if they were Peter.
- Share with students a chart showing papal succession from Peter to Pope Francis.

Related Enrichment Resources:

- <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>
- <http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/francis/index.cfm>
- <http://ewtn.com/holysee/index.asp>
- <http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en.html>