



Grades 6-8 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 him.

- *Office of Teaching*
The Pope preaches the Gospel to all people and ensures that the faith is authentically taught throughout the world. This is done through his encyclicals, apostolic letters, exhortations, addresses and homilies. He is the chief shepherd and all are entrusted to his care (Mt 28:19-20).
- *Office of Governing*
Governance of the universal Church is entrusted solely to the Pope as the successor of St. Peter. By virtue of his office as the Vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire Church, the Pope possesses full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church (Mt 16:16-19). The Pope is the supreme legislator of the Church.
- *Office of Sanctifying*
By virtue of his office and through a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Pope is entrusted with forming the People of God as a holy nation. Christ imparts his own holiness to the Church through the life of prayer, worship and the Sacraments. The Church's unity under the Holy Father is a sign of unity with Christ from whom holiness flows.

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

What is the Focus of Pope Francis's Papacy?

Among other things, Pope Francis has a particular focus on showing the mercy of God. He reminds over and over that God loves us and that in His mercy He is always waiting to forgive us. Because bringing God's mercy to the world is so important to Pope Francis, he has called a special Holy Year called "The Year of Mercy" to be celebrated from Dec. 8, 2015 to Nov. 20, 2016. Pope Francis is also challenging us to make the poor a priority. He says service is the most perfect way to show the love of God and grace in our hearts in the world.

Scriptural Passages:

Apostles preaching and fellowship: Acts 2: 42-46
 Peter's confession about Jesus: Mt 16:13-18
 Jesus declares Peter "the rock" and gives him "the keys": Mt 16:18-20
 Washing of the disciples' feet: Jn 13:1-11
 "Feed my sheep"- Peter with Jesus: Jn 21:15-19
 Choosing Judas's replacement: Acts 1:15-26
 Peter's preaching: Acts 3:11-26
 Peter's escape from prison: Acts 12:6-19
 Council of Jerusalem: Acts: 15:1-35 (esp. 15:6-12)

Suggested Activities:

- Research where and when Pope Francis has visited since his time as pope – especially World Youth Days. What was his message to those countries? Create a map which documents the travels of Pope Francis from 2013 - 2015. List one important person he spoke with or event he attended in each place visited.
- Prepare and lead a prayer service for a younger group. Materials: Responsorial psalms, songs, prayer, petitions, etc.
- Research and prepare a report on Papal missions around the world or make a collage of the missions of the Church.
- On a map of the world, locate areas where the Church is being persecuted.
- Create a "Living Papal Family Tree." Given short biographies of notable popes:
 - a. Memorize key information in order to be able to speak in the first person
 - b. Dress in the papal wardrobe
 - c. Role-play the given pope
 - d. This could be extended as a Wax Museum exhibit for the entire school. Other grades would visit the museum where 6-8 graders would be dressed as popes

throughout history. When they touch a student, that student would come alive to talk about their life and work.

- If the Pope were coming to visit your class to hear about the “work of the Church” in your grade, what would you tell him? What would you show him? Plan a one hour visit for the Pope to your class. During that hour, you can show him anything you like, tell him anything you like, or take him anywhere. What would you do during that hour, to let him know that you and your classmates are personally doing things to teach others about Jesus, and to demonstrate that you intend to live as Jesus did?

Related Enrichment Resources:

- *Outreach ideas:*
<http://resources.crs.org/>
- *Vatican:*
www.vatican.va
<http://www.news.va/en>
<http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate.html>
- *A list of popes:*
<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/spope0.html>
- *St. Peter:*
<http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encyc08/htm/ii.xiv.ii.htm>
- *Catholic news:*
<http://www.catholicnews.com/>
<http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/francis/index.cfm>