



# Archdiocese of Philadelphia MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

Catholic Schools Week and Lent 2024 • Mission Resource

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*Dear Mission Moderators, Principals and Directors & Coordinators of Religious Education,*

*Happy New Year!* We hope you all had a blessed end of 2023 and celebration of Christmas. The **Missionary Childhood Association [MCA]**, recognizes that each of you are a gift to both our local and global church. Your witness and role as teachers is indispensable to passing on the faith and making Missionary disciples. As we begin a new calendar, please take a minute to look through this Mission Resource.

In this resource you will find content geared towards Celebrating **Catholic Schools Week** and then for **Lent**. Both of these events are wonderful opportunities for **Mission Animation**. As you plan for the next two months, we hope you consider incorporating Mission into your school and parish communities.

We are overjoyed by some schools who have enthusiastically collaborated with MCA this year. Inspired by their witness we have created a special recognition for schools known as **Missionary Childhood School of Distinction**. Learn more about what a school needs to do be recognized with this award on the next page.

Lastly, Lent is a wonderful time to make a sacrifice for kids around the world. Now is the time to order mite boxes for your parish or school. [Click here to order Mite Boxes.](#)

Sincerely in Christ's Mission,

*Monsignor James D. Beisel*  
Reverend Monsignor James D. Beisel  
Archdiocesan Director

*Paul Cillo*  
Paul Cillo  
Mission Education Manager

## What is Missionary Childhood Association [MCA] ?

In collaboration with OCE & OCF, MCA provides this **MISSION RESOURCE** so you can pull ideas from it, engage your children with Missionary activities and teach them about the Missions.

Archbishop Perez has asked that all Archdiocese of Philadelphia schools and PREPs **prioritize the Mission Societies**. We understand that you cannot possibly use all of our resources, but you are asked to implement them, *how many as possible*, into your curriculum to inspire the youth of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia **to be Missionary Disciples!**

# Become a Missionary Childhood School of Distinction

In order to recognize Archdiocese of Philadelphia Schools that go above and beyond in their collaboration with MCA we will be awarding Schools with our new Missionary School of Distinction Citation. Schools will automatically receive this award by completing the following tasks:

- Participate in a MCA Dress Down Day, a Mite Box Collection, or another Mission program
- Hold a MCA presentation at your school
- Participate in the MCA Christmas Art Contest
- Hold a schoolwide Religion Bee- make sure to send pictures or let MCA who your winner is!



**For more Mission ideas, contact Paul Cillo**  
**Mission Education and Communications Manager**  
**[MCA@archphila.org](mailto:MCA@archphila.org) • 215-587-3945 • [www.phillymissions.org](http://www.phillymissions.org)**

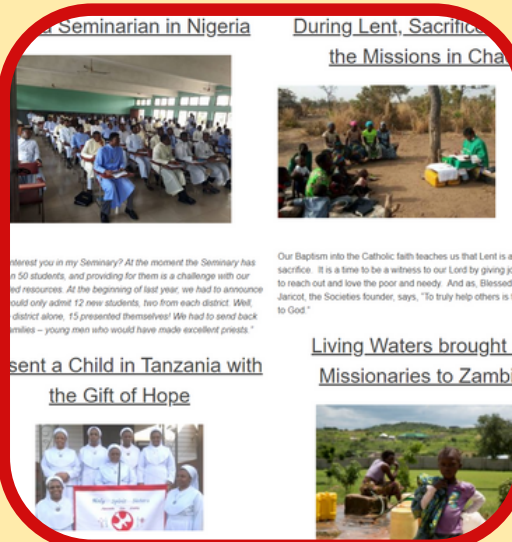
## New Year and a New Look!

We recently updated our website which you can find at [phillymissions.org](http://phillymissions.org). On the website there are several pages designed specifically for teachers and catechists. The Missionary Childhood tab has resources and information including past Mission Resources, our new Eucharistic Passport, and our Christmas Artwork Contest. Consider taking some time to explore our website and sharing it with new teachers or catechists.



### Mission Stories and Mission Saints

One way to help raise awareness about Missionaries and life in Mission Dioceses is through story telling. On our website you can find stories from all over the world. We are also blessed to have so many wonderful Saints to serve as models for us. Your students can learn more about twenty-four Saints and how they lived out their baptismal call to be Missionary disciples under the learn tab.



### 2023-2024 Christmas Art Contest

Each year we participate in the National MCA Christmas artwork contest as well as holding our own Archdiocesan contest. The contest allows students to share their faith and share their artistic gifts. The best artwork submitted to the Archdiocese is sent on to the National Contest. National winners are invited down the National Basilica to be recognized and the Archdiocesan winners are recognized at World Mission Sunday.

The all submissions must be postmarked by **January 26th** to be considered.

## Upcoming Dates and Events

### Christmas Art Contest

Submission Deadline is  
Friday January 26th

### CSW Virtual Prayer Service

Click to join on  
Wednesday January 31st,  
9:30AM

### Schedule a Mission presentation

### Religion Bee information



**Catholic Schools**  
**United in Faith and Community**

## Catholic Schools Week January 28 - February 3rd

Tuesday: Celebrate your Students

- Classroom prayer
- Affirmation Activity
- Blessing Prayer Service for your students

Wednesday: Celebrate your Nation

- Classroom prayer for our country
- Learn about countries around the world at [phillymissions.org](http://phillymissions.org)
- Learn about American Saints

Thursday: Celebrate Vocations

- Classroom prayer for Vocations
- Learn about St. Peter Apostle, one of the brother Mission societies to MCA
- Vocation Reflection activity for Students



# Lenten Resources

Over the last seven years, MCA has created numerous Lenten resources. Many of these mission resources can be year after year. Take a look at the resources below and try to include one each week of lent!

2024 MCA Lenten Calendar - This calendar helps students countdown to Easter while encouraging them to prayer and sacrifice.



## Special Saints for the Season of Lent



Lent Activities such as: crafts, word search, work sheets

Ash Wednesday and Lenten Prayers

Lenten Mission Stories

## Saint Francis de Sales

**Birth: August 21st, 1567**

**Death: December 28th 1622**

**Feast day: January 24th**

**Patron Saint Catholic Writers, Journalists**



Francis de Sales was born in 1567 and lived near Switzerland. He came from a wealthy family and was intelligent and gentle. He felt a call to the priesthood early in his life but kept it a secret from his father who wanted him to practice law. Throughout his school years he maintained his devotion to God and kept up regular mental prayer.

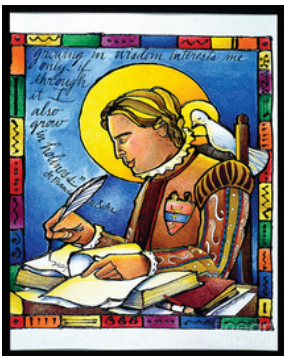
Eventually he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest to the diocese of Geneva.

As a priest he felt a strong call to go into the Calvinist territory in order to bring back the 60,000 Calvinist back to the Catholic Church. He met strong resistance and found it difficult to even talk to the people. Often doors were closed in his face as he would go house to house.

Francis' unusual patience kept him working. No one would listen to him, no one would even open their door. So, Francis found a way to get under the door. He wrote out little pamphlets to explain true Catholic doctrine and slipped them under the doors. This is one of the first records we have of religious pamphlets being used to communicate the true Catholic faith to people who had fallen away from the Church.

The parents wouldn't come to him, so Francis went to the children. When the parents saw how kind he was as he played with the children, they began to talk to him. By the time Francis returned home, it is believed he brought 40,000 people to the Catholic Church.

In 1602, Francis was appointed Bishop of Geneva. He gave spiritual direction to most people through letters, which attested to his remarkable patience. "I have more than fifty letters to answer. If I tried to hurry over it all, I would be lost. So, I intend neither to hurry or to worry. This evening, I shall answer as many as I can. Tomorrow I shall do the same and so I shall go on until I have finished."



Francis insisted that every Christian was called to holiness and sanctity, lived within their own state in life. In holding that belief, he reflected the teaching of Jesus and the early Church Fathers. He reminds us to be creative in our Missionary work and to strive for holiness in our everyday life.



## Mission Focus: The example of a school in Nebraska

We need to work with our children, talk to them about Christ, about just how many lives they can change, they can impact, through their prayer, or by making little sacrifices, like giving up that second cookie before bedtime,” said Sister Marie Jaqueline from St. Joseph’s School in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Sister Marie Jacqueline, C.K. is a School Sister of Christ the King. She has been at Saint Joseph School for over 15 years. This religious sister runs a Mission Club that gets together every last Tuesday of the month to make Mission Rosaries and posters which they hang around the school to spread the word about the millions of children throughout the world who haven’t yet heard about Jesus Christ.

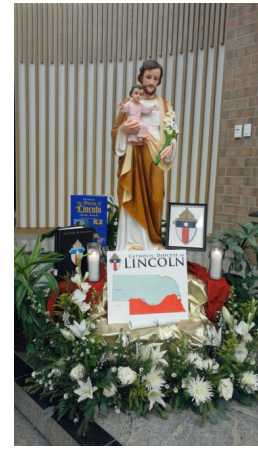
“There are poor who are poor financially, and also those who are poor in the faith,” Sister Marie Jaqueline said. “In our school here, in Saint Joseph, children know the faith, and we always try to teach them to fall in love with Jesus. Our goal here is not only to make them understand the beauty of who they are as children of God, but also their role as servants of the Father, servants in the Church, servants of Him and one another, and of the Church throughout the world.”

There are some 26-28 members in the Mission Club, and they work hard to spread the word about Mission territories, with signs, decorating envelopes for World Mission Sunday and putting little blurbs over the PA system about what Missionary priests, religious sisters and lay people are doing Africa, Latin America or Asia.

The Mission Club collects funds by holding an annual Mission Carnival on the feast of St. Joseph, on March 19. The event has grown so much, that the student council had to step in and help foresee the project. Conscious of the different realities of each student’s family, there’s no set price for the tickets or each game: the kids bring what they can, hand it to their grade teacher, and then everyone is welcomed in the gym, where the carnival is held. At the end of the school day, all the funds are counted and sent to the Missionary Childhood Association.



Despite her love for the Missions, Sister Marie Jacqueline is the first to acknowledge that “I haven’t had so many opportunities myself to go to the Missions. But one of the patrons of our community is Saint Therese of Lisieux, patroness of the Missions because she prayed for the missions. Much like she did, our role is to promote the Missions with our students, helping them see that though generous giving is important, so is praying and sacrificing for those who don’t know God’s love.”



“Our Missionary work is in the school, because there is a lot to evangelize here, but we want to be aware of and pray for the worldwide mission, with Saint Therese as the example: she didn’t necessarily go out to the Missions, but she was still a powerhouse,” Sister Marie Jacqueline said.

She also tries to teach the children at Saint Joseph’s School to make little sacrifices for the missions, the idea being that, by our baptism, we belong to the mystical body of Christ, and every person in the world is our brother and sister, and we are called to reach out to those in need.

“I always tell them the passage of scripture, from those to whom much has been given, much will be expected,” Sister Marie Jacqueline said. “We are called to give up ourselves to help those in need.”

Asked what she would say to someone unsure about praying for and giving to the Missions, Sister Marie Jacqueline shared what she often tells her students: “The joy of eternal life is going to be the souls of those to whom we gave a second chance in life, those who we fed, clothed, visited.”

“We won’t know the impact of those 50 cents we gave to a homeless man, the cookie we offered up or the check we sent to the relief fund until we run into them in the afterlife and they say ‘that day I had a warm meal thanks to you’,” she said.

“When you reach out with love to someone, you are reaching out to Jesus, because Christ is there, in that homeless person, in that pregnant woman who is alone, in that child in Africa who has no food and in that persecuted Christian in China,” Sister Marie Jacqueline said. “Christ is there, and he is longing for us to comfort him. Our monetary gift, or prayer, our sacrifice, big or small, brings comfort to Christ on Calvary. And it is a powerful gift that is ours by our baptism, that we can share in that mystery of his love.”

- Will **your students** pray a Hail Mary for kids around the world who benefit from MCA? Pope Francis asks all students in **MCA** do so.
- Can **your class** sacrifice and participate in our **Mite Box Challenge** to help support orphanages around the world??
- Can **your school** raise enough to provide books for an entire classroom?





In honor of Catholic Schools Week, the prayer pictures below have an emphasis on students around the world. MCA helps to provide educational supplies, schools meals and uniforms, training for teachers, and funds for the actual building and maintenance of schools for kids around the world.

MCA Has supported:  
26 million children in primary schools  
844,000 Catechists





## ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

July 7, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I know that many of our worthy charitable ministries seek your support each year by asking that you share information with your school and PREP families.

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, our parishes and schools are asked to support our own Catholic ministries, one of which is the Pontifical Mission Societies through the Missionary Childhood Association and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Church documents tell us that the Pontifical Mission Societies should be given "*first place*" [*Ad Gentes* no. 38] and "*the leading role*" [*Redemptoris Missio* no. 84] in the Church's work of missionary formation through their material support, benefiting the poorest in the world. Those of us with the means to do so have a responsibility to support that work as best we can.

In this light, I ask you to promote the *Missionary Childhood Association* and the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* to the best of your ability. Parish weekend appeal schedules should follow those established on the Diocesan and Extra-Diocesan Collections list where dedicated weekends are allocated to garner support for this missionary work.

Parishes, schools, and religious education programs may elect to support other worthy charities, but this should be *in addition* to their works of prayer and sacrifice through the Missionary Childhood Association, one of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

Following these guidelines should help better support the universal evangelization efforts of the Church through the Pontifical Mission Societies.

I extend my thanks to all those in our local Church that already actively participate in the works of these charities, and am ever grateful for your efforts in forming those you serve in the Catholic Faith. Please be assured of my prayers for you and your intentions.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nelson J. Pérez".

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia