

# SAINT OF THE MONTH



## *Saint Bathilde of France*



### Heaven's Heroes: growing in faith with a little help from the saints

#### **This month, we are inspired by**

Saint Bathilde of France

#### **Feast Day**

January 30

#### **Canonized**

In the year 880

Catholics are encouraged to pray to the saints, blessed, and venerable people for strength and guidance.

Reading about their lives can serve as inspiration to us for our daily lives. May the following lesson, follow-up questions, prayer, and activities bring us closer to Jesus and help us to grow as missionary disciples.

#### **Goals of the Lesson:**

- To inspire children to have a love for saints
- To help students understand that we are all called to holiness
- To teach children to turn to saints in prayer

#### **Materials Needed:**

- This lesson plan
- A map or globe

It may be helpful to remind students that a saint is a person who lived their lives in a way that honored Jesus' teaching and by doing so, taught others about Him. Also, it is important for them to know that it is not only those whom the Church has proclaimed a saint who are in Heaven. The official recognition simply allows us to venerate them.

#### **In the Classroom**

Prepare students to listen to Saint Bathilde's story by inviting them to remember that she was holy because she lived in a way that respected the Gospel of Jesus. Read, or have read as much of the story as you deem appropriate for children of your grade level.

Use the suggested follow-up questions and activities to begin or enhance your discussions about Saint Bathilde.



# Saint Bathilde of France



Born to a noble family in England around 626-627, Bathilde was only about 14 years old when she was kidnapped by Danish Vikings and sold into slavery in France. She became the personal servant of a prominent town's mayor of the day, caring for her every need.

Long known as a child who was caring, nurturing and sensitive to the needs of others, Bathilde did not let this awful turn in her life change her pleasant nature. Even amongst her fellow slaves, she was known for her beauty, charm, and kindness. After finishing her own daily tasks, Bathilde was known to spend time cleaning the shoes and mending the clothes of her fellow servants.

When the mayor's wife died, Bathilde's beauty and kindness impressed the mayor himself enough that he sought to marry her, though he was much older than she. Alarmed by this prospect, Bathilde dressed in rags, dirtied her face and hid herself away among lower caste servants until the mayor remarried.

When she re-emerged from her "exile", the mayor tried to impress none other than the King of France with his beautiful servant. The King was a young man himself and unmarried. He was so taken with Bathilde that he freed her and married her, making her Queen of France at age 19!

The couple had three sons and a happy marriage that lasted less than 10 years before the King, Clovis, died suddenly. Their oldest son, at just 5 years old was too young to rule but was named king, with his mother, Bathilde, acting as regent—ruling in his name until he was of age.

At the time of Bathilde's rule, many families were so poor that they would sell their children into slavery in order to pay taxes to the kingdom. When she became queen, Bathilde used public monies to ransom these children. She also reduced taxes to fair rates.

Bathilde made the practice of trading slaves illegal and decreed that any slave who was brought into France was immediately free by virtue of setting foot on French territory, making her one of the first known abolitionists.

Bathilde promoted the Christian faith by building monasteries, churches, and hospitals for the poor. In a society where land was normally owned by the wealthy, the government, or the Church, Bathilde introduced the idea of private property. This helped people own and operate a stable business as they were no longer dependent on the whims of a landlord. She also gave away land to people who promised to pray and farm the property to not only support themselves but to also feed the poor.

When her son was old enough to reign as king, Bathilde retired to a convent. While many wealthy, pious women in those days would retire to a relatively comfortable life of cloistered prayer, Bathilde became a nun like all others: she was humble and at the service of the common people and her fellow sisters. She placed herself under the obedience of the abbess (head of the convent) and always volunteered for the most menial of tasks.

Saint Bathilde was canonized in 880. Her feast day is in January 30.

Cartoon Credit: <https://lincorrect.org/partout-les-saints-sainte-bathilde-de-france-lincorrect/>



# Saint Bathilde of France



## Pray

Saint Bathilde, you are an example of how we can find ourselves in what we think are awful circumstances and still act with kindness and charity to others. You also show us how to remember that life is always changing! Help us to follow your example of kindness, fairness and devotion to the poor so that we, too, may live a life of holiness. Amen.

## Think

1. Many of us dream of “hitting the jackpot” and becoming rich as Saint Bathilde did. How might it change you? How might it change the people around you?
2. Saint Bathilde was born to a good family and had it all taken away from her. She still managed to impress those around her with her piety, kindness, and humility. Do you think it was easy? Why or why not?
3. In what ways did Saint Bathilde show her Christian faith publicly? how can you be more like her?

## Act

**All students:** One way that Bathilde found extra money to build hospitals for the poor was to sell some of her own jewelry. Make your own crafts — beaded bracelets or necklaces, friendship bracelets, fleece blankets, homemade soap, rosaries, tie-dyed tee shirts, for example — and, with your pastor’s or principal’s permission, sell them after the Masses at your parish or at school. Donate the proceeds to the Missionary Childhood Association to help missionaries build hospitals for children in the missions.

**Younger students:**

Saint Bathilde was a very good mom. Make a card for your parent or guardian with a drawing of Saint Bathilde. Thank them for loving you and tell them Bathilde’s story. Pray to this saint for their intentions.

**Older students:**

Saint Bathilde knew that to be a good leader, one must serve. Write a short paragraph about someone you know who best shows this quality. Present them with the writing as a gift and tell them the story of Saint Bathilde.