



Lesson Plan for Teachers: Experience at the Cabrini National Shrine - Youth (grades 7-10)

Through this lesson, students will learn about the life and works of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, as well as prayerfully experience the National Shrine.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the life and legacy of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.
- Explore the Cabrini National Shrine.
- Engage in prayer to deepen their spiritual devotion to Mother Cabrini.
- Connect with the mission of service of Mother Cabrini.



“My God...if I could only extend my arms
to embrace the world as a gift to
you...Show me the way and I will do
everything with your help!”

- St. Frances Xavier Cabrini



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO Religion Curriculum Priority Standards

Domain 3: Catholic Prayer, Liturgy and Sacramental Life: How do we worship God?

- 8.03.C: Recognize that life as a confirmed, young adult disciple compels us to pray and actively participate in the life of the Church as part of our lifelong commitment as faithful Catholics.

Domain 4: Christian Living: How does God want us to live?

- 7.04.B: Recognize that human rights are based on the equal dignity of all persons created in the image and likeness of God.
- 7.04.C: Recognize that we are obliged to use the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, and teachings of the Magisterium to develop our consciences and responsibly discern choices that are aligned to God's will.
- 8.04.B: Understand that God created humans with intelligence, free will, and a conscience make good moral decisions with the assistance of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

Domain 5: Living Discipleship: How do we journey towards God in faith and service?

- 7.05.A: Realize how personal actions, both good and sinful, have social consequences that affect others in our community.
- 7.05.B: Recognize that the Church is missionary by nature for the purpose of inviting others to share in God's love through communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit.
- 7.05.C: Acknowledge the Church's special mission to the poor and vulnerable and the duty of missionary disciples to participate in the Kingdom of God through service to the poor.
- 8.05.A: Explain what it means to discern a religious vocation and consider the possibility of a vocation to religious life for him/herself as a special way to share God's love with others.
- 8.05.B: Identify Mary and other saints as models for virtue and missionary discipleship by choosing a personal saint to study and exemplify.
- 8.05.C: Articulate the difference between meaningful versus meaningless suffering and how Christian disciples are called to respond in faith and action to suffering in the world.

Activities - Before the Visit to the Shrine

1) Who is St. Frances Xavier Cabrini?

- Invite students to do an internet search for a video to watch, or information to read about the saint.
- Students answer questions such as:
 - Who was she?
 - What did she do in her life?
 - How did that make her a saint?
- **TEACHER RESOURCES:**
 - <https://www.mothercabrini.org/who-we-are/mother-cabrini/>
 - <https://cabrinishrinenyc.org/resources-for-learning-about-mother-cabrini/>

2) What is a shrine?

- Teacher discusses the significance of shrines in the Catholic tradition and how they serve as places of pilgrimage and devotion.
- Teacher displays the website of the Cabrini Shrine, showing some pictures of the shrine and its surroundings to give students an idea of what to expect.
- Teacher discusses the etiquette and behavior expected when visiting a Catholic shrine, such as respectful behavior, quiet reflection, and appropriate dress.
- Teacher answers any questions students may have about the visit.
- **TEACHER RESOURCES:**
 - <https://www.cabrinationalshrine.org/>
 - <https://www.cabrinationalshrine.org/what-is-a-shrine-->
 - <https://www.cabrinationalshrine.org/photos>
 - <https://www.holyhill.com/visit/76-plan-a-visit/125-etiquette#:~:text=Maintain%20a%20respectful%20silence%2C%20talking,respect%20for%20these%20sacred%20spaces.>

3) Students are given a Mission.

- Pack your suitcase for a journey with Mother Cabrini...
 - At the shrine, students will receive a “passport” and will get their passport stamped at various significant spots in the Shrine.
- While at the Shrine, students will use their passport to gather notes, sketches, and photos for the purposes of creating one of the following:
 - A Mother Cabrini social media campaign with at least 3-5 posts recounting her travels and work.
 - A video about some aspect of Mother Cabrini’s life that was significant to you.
 - A brochure about the Cabrini Shrine.
 - A news story or report on some significant moments / accomplishments in Mother Cabrini’s life.
 - Draft of a letter to the Pope requesting permission to go on one of her missions. Describe the location and purpose of the mission.
 - A world map with call outs and descriptions of at least 5 significant places in the life of Mother Cabrini.
 - A Mother Cabrini trivia game.
 - A piece of art depicting some aspect of the life of Mother Cabrini.
 - A short story (creative writing), imagining the life of Mother Cabrini walking and working in the streets and neighborhoods of our city, written from her perspective.
 - A Mother Cabrini inspired service project in your community.
 - A prayer service for your class or school to honor and celebrate Mother Cabrini on her feast day.
- Instruct students to start thinking about which of the options in their Mission they have selected to create.

4) Engage students in prayer to Mother Cabrini.

- **TEACHER RESOURCES:**
 - <https://www.mothercabrini.org/spirituality/cabrini-novena/>

Activities – At the Shrine

1) Gathering and Distribution of Materials

- Upon arrival, gather students in the foyer area.
- Give students their passport.
 - Instructions given to get passport stamped at various significant spots in the Shrine.
- Give students a handout with a map of the Shrine as well as these questions / activities to complete on the tour (students may work in pairs):
 - How many miracles were attributed to Mother Cabrini?
 - What was the name of the boy who experienced the first miracle?
 - Which Cardinal was at the beatification of Mother Cabrini?
 - What article at the Shrine caught Mother Cabrini's drops of blood before her death?
 - List 3 items in Mother Cabrini's room.
 - Which item drew you in the most? Why?
 - Find the prayer to St. Francis Xavier Cabrini. Pray it silently.
 - Name or draw a sketch of what you see in one of the stained glass windows in Chapel.
 - What is the relic in the main altar in the Shrine?
 - What is the name of the congregation of sisters that was founded by Mother Cabrini?

2) Begin with a Timeline Talk

- Students and chaperones gather around the area at the Shrine with a banner containing significant moments in the life of Mother Cabrini. *(A docent or museum staff member should give this talk.)*
- **TEACHER RESOURCES:**
 - <https://www.cabrinationalshrine.org/timeline-and-her-life-s-work>

3) Guided Tour of the "Museum Area" of the Shrine

- Teacher or Docent leads students on a guided tour of the "museum area" of the shrine, pointing out important features such as her bedroom, important papers, statues, and relics associated with St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.
- Remind them of their mission!
 - Get their passport stamped at key locations.
 - Encourage students to ask questions and take notes.
- Reflect on prompts strategically and carefully "installed" throughout the museum...
 - Who or what do you stand up for?
 - What do you learn about yourself from studying the life of others?
 - How do you champion the causes that matter most to you and your community?
 - How can you be a responsible person of faith?
 - What legacy do you want to leave behind?
 - What immigrant issues exist today?
 - What people or experiences shape your beliefs?
 - How do / can you put your faith into action?
 - What kind of world do you want? And what will you do to achieve it?

3) Guided Tour of the Shrine Chapel

- Identify and explain the symbolism behind key features in the Shrine Chapel, including the stained glass, the main altar and relic, the cross, the frescos, statues, the side altars, the tabernacle, etc.
- Teacher leads students in a period of prayer and reflection in the Shrine Chapel.
 - Encourage students to pray silently or together, offering intentions for their own needs and those of others.
 - Include intentions for the poor, the sick, and immigrants.
 - Distribute rosaries or prayer cards for students to use during their time of reflection.
 - Hand out copies of the prayer to St. Francis Xavier Cabrini.
- **TEACHER RESOURCES:**
 - <https://www.cabrinationalshrine.org/history-of-the-shrine>

4) Conclusion in the Garden

- Gather at designated area near the garden with banner asking “What inspired you at the Shrine today?”
 - Have students each write one thing on a supplied Post-It using pencils provided and stick the post-it on the banner.
- Gather students in the Garden (or near it if weather is inclement) for a brief conclusion and reflection session.
 - Ask students to share their thoughts and experiences from the visit (perhaps what they wrote on the Post-It note of what inspired them).
- Remind students to be respectful as they leave the shrine grounds.
- Collect any materials or equipment used during the visit.
- Return to school.

Activities - Follow-Up Back in the Classroom

- Back in the classroom, discuss students' experiences and impressions of the Shrine visit.
- Have students identify which of the options in their Mission they have selected to create.
- Give students parameters for their assignment (i.e., deadline, if they can work in partners, etc.).
- Students further explore the life and teachings of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and her relevance to contemporary society while creating their projects.
- Students share their work with their classmates, the school, and the community.