



## Saint of the Month



### Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions Martyred June 3, 1886

**Goal:** To provide a lesson for children about a saint or saints who exemplify a deep relationship with God and the ability to share it with others.

**Materials Needed:** This lesson plan, accompanying story, and any necessary materials for follow up activities.

#### Objectives:

1. To assist children in developing the understanding that all of God's people are called to a life of holiness.
2. To help children respond appropriately to the question: What is a saint?  
One who:
  - is proclaimed by the Church, after their death, to have lived a life of holiness
  - teaches others about Jesus by their example
  - lives like Jesus
3. To introduce one of our Church's saints, Saint Charles Lwanga, (say La-**Wong-ga**) telling as much of, or parts of, the story that you feel will interest the children at your grade level.
4. To learn that Charles was a saint because he lived in a way that respected the Gospel of Jesus
5. To learn that we are called by God to share the Gospel with our lives
6. To help the children develop listening skills

#### Procedure:

1. Prepare the children to listen to Charles Lwanga's story. (Have map posted or globe available)
2. Read, or have read, the attached story of Saint Charles. Elaborate/abbreviate as necessary for time constraints or age level of listeners.
3. *Pray: Saint Charles, you and your companions were young – some only boys. Yet you had the courage to trust that what you had learned about God and His promise of Heaven would get you through every hardship, even the pain of sacrificing your life. Help us to trust God in our everyday decisions, no matter how small, knowing that He alone knows the path that is right for us. Amen.*
4. Use the follow up questions (below).
5. Present follow-up activity below (optional). Any follow-up activity can be substituted.

#### Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions

The 22 men and boys in the picture above are in Ugandan tribal dress. Some of them are standing in front of a backdrop of upraised spears; the rest, in front of flames as tall as they are. Though they are about to be put to death, the expressions on their faces are of peace, trust, and even joy. One of them is holding a palm branch; others have their hands folded in prayer; and others are clasping a cross or a rosary.

They are the men and boys whose martyrdom in 1886 is considered the spark that ignited the flame of Christianity in modern Africa. The Uganda Martyrs are revered for their faith, their courage, and their countercultural witness to Christ.

Their story begins in 1877 when Mutesa, the king – or Kabaka – of the kingdom of Buganda, now modern day

Uganda, invited Catholic and Protestant missionaries to his kingdom. The Catholic missionaries were called the White Fathers, now the Society of African Missionaries, because of the long white robes they wore. Unlike many missionaries of their day, the White Fathers took their time preparing their students for baptism to be sure that they understood what it meant to completely trust in Jesus and accept Him in your heart so as to change your life forever.

Charles Lwanga and the other young men—aged 14-22—worked in the palace for the king and then his son. The second king realized that his pages wanted to follow God’s rules before his own, he was displeased and tried to force them to renounce their faith. When they would not, he had them arrested. As a show of power and a warning to other Christians, Charles and his companions were bound, yoked, and forced to march 20 miles to the site where they would give their lives for their faith. Along the way, some were beaten and killed. The rest continued to sing hymns, pray loudly, and recite their catechism; they rejoiced knowing they would soon meet Jesus! One—the youngest, a boy of fourteen named Kizito—had yet to be baptized. He asked for and received the sacrament along the way to his martyrdom from Charles Lwanga.

Saint Kizito is the patron saint of Missionary Childhood in Uganda.

Canonized in 1964, St. Charles Lwanga and his Companions’ Feast Day is celebrated on June 3.

**Follow-up Questions:** (add, omit, re-word as appropriate for your grade level)

1. Saint Charles and his companions were courageous in the face of danger. Does this mean they were not afraid? Name a time you were courageous – were you afraid but used your courage anyway? Why?
2. Why is it important that the White Fathers took their time instructing their students? How do you think it made a difference in the Martyrs’ decision to remain faithful to Jesus?
3. Does it surprise you that these martyrs were so young? Why or why not?

**Follow-up Activities:**

*Younger students:*

1. The Ugandan Martyrs had to walk 20 miles before they gave their lives for Jesus. Walk around your church 20 times praying the World Mission Rosary, asking the Martyrs to help you follow Jesus. Ask your friends and family to pledge donations to the missions for each time you walk around the church. Send the funds to MCA.
2. Make a class altar for the Ugandan Martyrs. Include African cloth, a bible, a rosary, and palms. Make flames from red paper to symbolize how they died and scatter them on the altar. Pray the prayer to the Martyrs daily.

*Older students:*

1. Every year, people walk across Uganda to memorialize the Martyrs’ march of 20 miles to their death. Organize a walkathon with a Ugandan theme. Donate the proceeds to MCA. Contact Maureen at [mheil@propfaithboston.org](mailto:mheil@propfaithboston.org) for help with the Ugandan theme if needed.
2. Research the country of Uganda. How many tribes exist within the borders imposed by the English colonists? How many distinct languages are spoken there?

*All students:*

1. A Shrine was built at Namugongo, Uganda on the exact spot of the Martyr’s death. The altar inside the Shrine is positioned over the spot where Charles Lwanga died. There are stained glass windows for each martyr. The Shrine is designed in the shape of a traditional African hut. Go to: <http://www.ugandamartyrsshine.org.ug/> to learn more and to see pictures of the Shrine and the yearly celebration of the Ugandan Martyrs’ Feast.
2. Here in the Archdiocese of Boston, we have the second largest Ugandan community outside of Uganda itself. The Martyrs’ Feast is always a great celebration. This year, it will be held at St. Mary Parish in Waltham on Sunday June 11 at 1 PM. Bishop Robert Muhiirwa from the Diocese of Fort Portal, Uganda will preside over the Mass. The Boston Ugandan Catholic Community Choir will sing. The Mass is open to all and is a beautiful example of the faith and culture of the Ugandan people. Missionary Childhood will be represented there; as they say in Uganda – you are most welcome!