

Family Formation

Session 14: Spiritual Warfare

Handout: “St. Michael the Archangel”

Background for Parents

Spiritual warfare can be a very delicate subject to teach your children; you are the best judge of your family. The goal is not to scare the children, but to help them understand the war between good and evil. So to begin in this session, we will speak of spiritual warfare in a general sense. Read the section, “The Fall of the Angels” (#391-395), in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

We will start first by talking about how Lucifer fell from heaven and what that means for us today. The major emphasis will be placed on the fact that there is a lot of help for us in the angels and the Communion of Saints.

In “The Call of the King” (in the children’s book, *My Path to Heaven*, by Geoffrey Bliss, S.J.), Jesus is likened to a King that is fighting a war and He asks each of us to come fight for His side. He welcomes all knights and soldiers who will come and promise to fight for Him faithfully. Whether we see it or not, there is a war going on still today between good and evil and Jesus would like us fighting on His side against the sin and evil in our lives. (This is an excellent book!)

With the family

Read Ephesians 6. If St. Paul is telling us to put on the armor, then we must be in a battle!

What kind of a battle are we in?

Tell the story of how Lucifer was kicked out of heaven—not wanting to obey God, one-third of the angels also rebelled and were kicked out. Now there is a battle between good and evil—God’s way vs. Satan’s way, and even my way vs. God’s way.

We also recall that the battle is not against each other.

- If we are fighting against each other, we are being fooled.
- We are actually on the same team.

Read the following scenarios of people hurting each other and ask—

Who is the real enemy?

- 1) You were the only one from school who wasn’t invited to a boy’s birthday party at school. You are really upset and hurt. Is this person your enemy? Who is the real enemy?
- 2) Angela’s sister just said something really mean to her. Angela’s feelings are hurt. Is your sister your enemy? Who is the real enemy?
- 3) You answer a question wrong in class and everybody laughs at you. You are so embarrassed. Is this class your enemy? Who is the real enemy?

We are being fooled if we think the enemy is other people.

- We will experience people who are normally friends who will, from time to time, act in a way that is not how they normally act and hurt you—this does not make them our enemy.
- These friends can be manipulated by bad spirits into hurting you but it doesn’t necessarily mean that they are bad OR they could just be having a bad day.
- There are going to be people who are going to treat us in a mean way all the time—they still are not our enemy—they may be immature but we are still on the same team and we need to do our best to find Jesus in them.

Then ask, what is the best way to defeat the enemy?

- How do we win this battle then?
- What are our weapons? Who are our teammates?

We are on God's team!! He is the Commander-in-Chief. The battle is the Lord's so we don't have to worry—just love and follow Jesus. Jesus has already won the victory when He died for our sins on Calvary.

It is a privilege to be part of God's team.

- What is it like to be on a team when all the players are working together?
- What it is like to be on a team when the players are all doing things their own way?
- Which way is the team most likely to win?
- We must think and act like a team!

We are not alone—there is a lot of help for us:

- Two-thirds of the angels were left behind—good angels are here to help us
- the Communion of Saints;
- Read Psalm 91:1-16. You may want to sing, “On Eagle's Wings.” Emphasize verses 11,12, “For God commands the angels to guard you in all your ways. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” This is God's command!!
- Guardian Angels—from infancy until death, we are surrounded by Guardian Angels who watch over us and pray for us. St. Basil says, “Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life.”
- Read Mt. 18:10-14, “The Parable of the Lost Sheep.”
- Read the handout, “St. Michael” and discuss who he is. Teach & pray the St. Michael prayer.

Briefly discuss the Communion of Saints, mentioning that the saints are always ready to pray for us and our prayer intentions. Close the prayer session with a litany of the Communion of Saints in whatever fashion you desire. Have your children mention saints as they think of them, for example one child prays, “St. Francis of Assisi” to which the family replies, “Pray for us” until you run out of saints!!

Throughout the week

Incorporate the Prayer to St. Michael and the Litany of Saints as it fits into your family—it can easily be incorporated into family prayers, while driving in the car, at dinnertime grace, bedtime prayers, but in the interest of time, one possible suggestion would be to allow each child to mention four saints each night. Whatever works out for you! Remind the children that if we are serious in this prayer, that these saints really will pray for us and our intentions.

To reinforce the Communion of Saints, read stories on the lives of saints. We highly recommend a series by Mary Fabyan Windeatt (published by TAN Publishing) and another series published by Ignatius Press.

St. Michael the Archangel

Angels are typically thought to be like humans but with wings, but they are pure spirits, perfectly holy creatures. They are beyond our realm of understanding. Angels obey, love, and glorify God at all times, and they serve as God's messengers, as their name means "messenger." Angels pray for us before the Father and carry our prayers to God and bring back His blessings to us. Archangels are chiefs or leaders of the angels and are entrusted with important missions.

St. Michael is one of the archangels who has been entrusted by God with an important mission. The name Michael means "Who is like unto God?" This shows us just how humble St. Michael is and reminds us of his deep reverence for God the Father. Most often we think of St. Michael as the archangel who overcame Lucifer and kicked him out of heaven. "Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon (Satan). The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven" (Rv 12:7-8).

St. Michael is still active today although we are not aware of what he is doing. The Book of Daniel describes him as "Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people" (Dan 12:1). St. Michael is the defender of the Church. He is a warrior—and as we go forth as prayer warriors, St. Michael will defend us in battle.

Whenever you go to pray, remember to call upon St. Michael and his angels. They are mighty warriors, and they will assist us in our prayers for the Church and God's people.



*“St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle!
Be our defense against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray;
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly host,
cast into hell, Satan and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about this world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”*