

Saint Anthony of Padua

Book Title: *Saint Anthony of Padua: Fire and Light*

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Have you ever gotten back from vacation more tired than you were before you left? Have you heard the phrase, “I need a vacation from my vacation?” Although Anthony of Padua was hardly on vacation during his missionary work, he did travel extensively. And this was way before cars and airplanes. He *walked* almost everywhere. That thought alone makes me tired. After a long weekend of hiking I don’t even want to move for a couple of days! But what makes it even more amazing is that Anthony was in constant pain from his swollen feet, yet he kept going! Love for God pushed him onward and helped him get through the pain and difficult travels. He had important work that he was called to do at any cost. So the next time I’m feeling run-down after a plane ride, I’m going to think of how Anthony would’ve felt if he had walked the distance. Something tells me he wouldn’t be whining, he’d be praising God for the opportunity.

Discussion/Written Response Questions

1. Fernando was nervous about telling his parents that he wanted to be a priest. Why do you think he was nervous? Have you ever been nervous or scared to tell your parents something important? Did someone help you prepare to tell them like Fernando’s brother helped him? How did you feel afterwards?
2. Fernando first joined the Augustinian order but later realized that the Franciscan order was a better match for him. Also the runaway novice changed his mind and brought the notebook back to Anthony. Have you ever made a decision and then later changed your mind? There is a saying, “A wise man changes his mind, but a fool never does.” What does this saying mean to you?
3. Anthony traveled extensively despite illness and pain because people needed to hear his message. What are some things that you have done for the good of others even if you didn’t enjoy doing them? How did you feel about it after the job was done?

Geography Connection

Lisbon, Portugal

Sicily, Assisi, Rimini, Parma, Padua, Italy

Alps

Annecy, Mont Pellier, Toulouse, Le Puy en Velay, France

Morocco

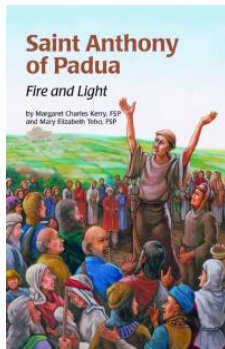
*Anthony's ship was trying to sail from Morocco to Portugal but ended up shipwrecked on Sicily. Look at these places on a map to see how far off-course they were.

Speaking Skills

Anthony was known for his passionate preaching. Students will give a short presentation about something (anything) that they are passionate about.

Team Building

Saint Anthony had a gift for preaching. We all have special God-given talents, but sometimes we don't take time to notice them. When a student is "Star of the Week" each person in the class writes that person a note telling them what they think that person does well.



This very popular saint was born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1195. When he was old enough he joined the Augustinian friars. At the age of twenty-five, Fernando's life took an exciting turn. He heard about some Franciscans who had been martyred by the Moors in Morocco. Ferdinand was so impressed with the courage of the martyrs that he got permission to transfer from the Augustinian Order to the Franciscan Order.

He went off to Africa to preach about Jesus to the Moors. But he soon became so sick that his superiors called him back to Portugal. No one in his new religious order realized how brilliant and talented Anthony was. He never spoke about himself or how much he knew.

One day Anthony was unexpectedly asked to preach in front of a crowd of priests and important people. Everyone was surprised at the wonderful things he said about God. From then on, until he died nine years later, Anthony was sent to preach all over Italy. He was so popular that people even closed their stores to go to hear him.

Anthony died at Arcella, near Padua, Italy, on June 13, 1231. He was only thirty-six years old. Pope Gregory IX proclaimed him a saint just one year later.

Saint Anthony of Padua: Fire and Light is the story of someone who put God first in life. When kids suffer because they are less popular, not as smart, or seemingly unimportant when compared to others, St. Anthony's story teaches a powerful lesson of how important we all are in God's plan for the world.

Ages 8 – 12