

Saint Katharine Drexel

Book Title: *Saint Katharine Drexel: The Total Gift*

Book Author: Susan Helen Wallace, FSP

Author of Book Guide: Kim Grotbeck

Saint Katharine Drexel is best known for founding the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and her work all over the US with African Americans and Native Americans. However, what I found most intriguing about Katharine was her family life growing up. Her family prayed together, they talked about God, and they went to church. These are things that many families do or could do easily. Katharine's parents also lived their faith. Although they were wealthy, they didn't dress or decorate their home lavishly. They used their money to help others and they let their children see them doing so on a regular basis. Helping others became a natural part of Katharine and her sisters' lives. I know that when we read the Encounter book on Saint Katharine Drexel we are supposed to be inspired by *her* actions (and we are!) but I can't help but admire her parents! What wonderful role models! Don't be afraid to let your children see you living your faith, you never know—they may be little saints in the making.

Discussion/Written Response Questions

1. Katharine's parents were excellent role models for her. What events in her childhood particularly prepared Katharine for her life as a foundress? Are there things that you do with your family that could help you later in life?
2. Katharine relied on the advice of her good friend Bishop O'Connor when discerning her vocation and Archbishop Ryan supported her during the early stages of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Who do you turn to for advice? Who are the people in your life that will support you and help you in your endeavors?
3. Katharine worked hard so that poor Native and African American children could go to school. Why is getting an education so important?

History Connection

Research what post-Civil war life was like for the African and Native Americans.

Geography Connection

Using the mileage guide in the key on a US map, calculate how many miles Katharine traveled in 1912 (according to chapter 19 in the book).

PE/Geography Connection

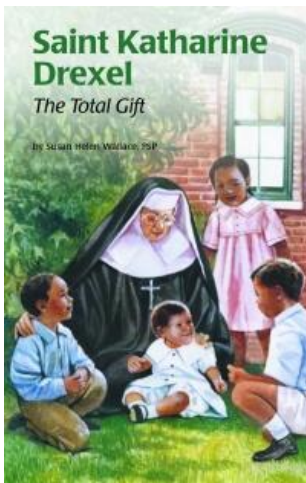
Many schools have a giant US map painted outside on the blacktop. This game works similarly to musical chairs: there won't be enough for everyone and whoever doesn't have a place, is out. Students walk around the outside of the map. The teacher calls out a clue and the students have a few seconds to stand on a state. One student per state. The teacher goes around and the students call out what state they are standing on. If what they say and where they are standing, fits the clue, they are in. If not, they are out. The clues get narrowed down more and more until there is only one state that fits the clue. (Teacher can determine pace of the game, I recommend starting with the number of students so everyone gets a state on the first round, but after that you can choose how many people will be out each time.)

Variation—Students can write their own clues, with answers, on a slip of paper. The teacher draws clues out of a hat. The first clue may narrow things down to one, there is less control and predictability, but it involves the kids more.

Sample Clue Sheet

28. States that have an I
27. States that start with M, N, A, W, or C
26. States that have an O
25. States that alphabetically precede Montana
24. States that alphabetically follow Montana, States that have an E or U
23. States that alphabetically come between Florida and North Carolina
22. States that alphabetically come between Mississippi and Washington
21. States that end in an A; States that have an R
20. States that have at least 2 A's, States that have an S
19. States that have an E
18. States that end in a consonant
17. States with consecutive vowels (2 in a row)
16. States that start with M and N
15. States that have 3 vowels

14. States that have a T; States that don't have an A, States that border the Atlantic ocean
13. Original 13 colonies
12. States that have 10 or more letters
11. States that start with a vowel; States that have a W
10. States with 2 words, States that border Canada
9. States that have 2 N's, States with double letters; States that have a C
8. States that start with M (or N); States that have a K;
7. States that have a W
6. States with 5 or fewer letters; States that have a G (or Y)
5. States that border the Pacific ocean, States that border the Gulf of Mexico
4. States that start with A (or I, W), States that border Mexico
3. States that start with C (or O), States that have a P
2. States that start with a K (or S, T, V); States that have an X (or B)
1. State that starts with D (or F, G, H, L, P, R, U); State that has a Z



Katharine Drexel was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 26, 1858. When Katharine grew up, she was a very active Catholic. She directed her energies and her fortune to helping the poor and forgotten. Her work for Jesus would be among the African American and Native American people.

In 1891, Katharine began a new religious community of missionaries. They were called the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Katharine became known as Mother Katharine. Mother Katharine inherited her family's great fortune. She used the money for wonderful works of charity. She and her sisters built schools, convents, and churches. In 1915, they established Xavier University in New Orleans.

Mother Katharine died on March 3, 1955, at the age of ninety-seven. She was declared "blessed" by Pope John Paul II on November 20, 1988, and canonized on October 1, 2000. She is the second native-born United States citizen to be declared a saint. The story of Saint Katharine will help children rethink the value of money and how it is best used, and value treating people with compassion.

Ages 8 – 12

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