

November Lesson Plan: Hope, Saints, and Eternal Life

Living in the Communion of Saints With Gratitude and Christian Hope

November invites us to reflect on **Christian hope** and the **Communion of Saints**, remembering those who have gone before us and recognizing their ongoing presence in our lives. In the Franciscan tradition, this month holds a special tenderness: St. Francis famously greeted death as a sister—**Sister Death**—not with fear, but with trust, peace, and joyful anticipation of union with God.

This month we explore:

- **The Communion of Saints, especially Franciscan saints and blessed**
- **Christian hope as a guiding force for daily living**
- **The meaning of death as a natural and holy passage**
- **Gratitude and remembrance as spiritual practices**

Key Question:

How does the promise of eternal life shape and guide my daily choices and present way of living?

Welcome & Centering Prayer

Place a candle or photo of deceased loved ones at the center to symbolize communion and remembrance.

Opening prayer:

“God of Life, You surround us with a great cloud of witnesses. Strengthen our hope in Your promise of eternal life and fill us with gratitude for the saints who guide and inspire us. Amen.”

Opening

Suggested Scripture Passages

- **John 14:1–3** — Jesus prepares a place for us.
- **Revelation 21:1–4** — A new heaven and new earth; God wipes away every tear.

Reflection prompts:

- What gives you hope as you meditate on these passages?
- How does belief in eternal life influence your daily decisions?

- Who in your life reflects the peace and hope of the Gospel?

Teaching Content

A. Communion of Saints — A Living Family

- *The saints are not distant figures; they are **companions and intercessors**.*
- *Franciscan saints and blessed offer models of joy, simplicity, mercy, and courage:*
 - *St. Clare, St. Bonaventure, St. Louis & St. Elizabeth, Bl. Solanus Casey, and many others.*
- *We walk the same Gospel path they walked, inspired by their witness.*

B. Christian Hope: Anchored in God’s Promise

- *Christian hope is not optimism; it is trust in God’s fidelity.*
- *Hope shapes our daily lives by helping us:*
 - *make choices rooted in love rather than fear*
 - *persevere in difficulties*
 - *see life through the lens of eternity*
- *Hope is strengthened through prayer, Scripture, community, and gratitude.*

C. Death as “Sister Death” : A Franciscan Perspective

- *St. Francis greets death with peace, calling her “Sister Death” in the **Canticle of the Creatures**.*
- *Death becomes a doorway to eternal life, not an end.*
- *The Franciscan approach encourages acceptance, humility, and deep trust in God’s love.*

D. Remembering and Honoring the Departed

- *November traditionally honors All Saints and All Souls.*
- *Remembering fosters:*
 - *gratitude*
 - *connection*
 - *healing*
 - *deeper awareness of our own pilgrimage*

Invite reflection and sharing:

- *How does belief in eternal life change the way I approach challenges or decisions?*
- *Which saints inspire me most, and why?*

- *How do I relate to “Sister Death”? What feelings arise?*
- *How does gratitude help me live with greater hope?*

If Extraction of Saints is practiced in your fraternity, It is a perfect opportunity to incorporate and discuss the saints chosen for the year.

Love in Action: Evangelical Simplicity

✓ **Keep a daily gratitude list.**

Notice grace in ordinary moments.

✓ **Donate food or time to a Thanksgiving outreach.**

Gratitude becomes generosity.

✓ **Give thanks intentionally to people who serve you — cashiers, janitors, delivery workers, bus drivers, teachers, etc.**

Reflect: Gratitude as a Way of Seeing

- ***End each day by recalling three moments of grace, no matter how small.***
- ***Thank God for the people who have shaped your faith—family, mentors, saints, friends, or community members.***

Monthly Prayer

“Lord, let my life speak Your Gospel without noise.”

Use this prayer to connect hope, gratitude, and quiet witness.

Encourage participants to choose:

- 1. One act of generosity, especially toward those in need during the holiday season.***
- 2. One practice of hope, such as Scripture journaling, visiting a cemetery, or praying for the departed.***

Invite them to share their commitments at the next gathering.

Prayer

“God of eternal life, fill our hearts with hope and gratitude. May the witness of the saints strengthen us, the memory of our loved ones console us, and the promise of eternity guide our

*steps in faith. Help us to live each day with joy, compassion, and deep trust in Your love.
Amen.”*

Notes: