

Mission Together

St Thérèse of Lisieux: Story and Prayer



This story and prayer focuses on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, patron of mission. As a child St Thérèse dreamed of being a missionary. With age she understood that very few of us are called to make big and radical gestures, but that through small, loving actions we too can deliver God's love to the world. Aged seven, Thérèse joined *The Society of the Holy Childhood*, known to us now as *Mission Together*. It was as a member of *Holy Childhood* that Thérèse's faith and admiration grew for the work of the missionaries. This prayer can be used to mark the feast of St Thérèse (1 October), or as part of your *Little Way Week* celebrations. *Please note, this Mission Together prayer differs from our usual Liturgical Prayers. This is to allow the story of Saint Thérèse to be retold by pupils. Thus this resource is labelled 'Story & Prayer'.*

PRAYER PLAN

GATHER: Opening hymn or recorded music

Our suggestion: *Be still and know* (a YouTube link is provided on the slide).

Introduction: The story of St Thérèse (part one)

Print the introduction/story on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

Sign of the cross and opening prayer

Print the opening prayer on page 2 and ask a pupil to read.

WORD: Bible Reading (*Matthew 18:1-4 adapted for children from ESV*)

Print the reading on page 2 and ask a pupil to read.

The story of St Thérèse (part two)

Print the continued story on page 3 and ask pupils to read.

Bible reflection

See page 3. We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

RESPOND: Prayers of intercession

Print the prayers on page 4 and ask pupils to read.

SENT: Mission Together prayer

See to the right.

Sign of the cross

Closing hymn or recorded music

Our suggestion: *This Little Light of Mine*. See missiontogether.org.uk/sing-with-mission-together

Follow up activity

Little Flower Activities – Appendix 1



Mission Together Prayer

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love
Now and forever. **Amen.**

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio, the Pope's charity for world mission.

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Introduction—The story of Saint Thérèse

Reader 1: Today we remember a special saint called Thérèse of Lisieux. Thérèse was born in France 150 years ago. As a girl, she was a supporter of the charity *Mission Together*. To help share God’s love around the world, Thérèse would pray and share her pocket money, just as young *Mission Together* supporters do today.

Reader 2: As Thérèse grew older she wanted to do more, so she planned to become a Missionary Sister. Missionary Sisters travel to far lands to bring God’s love to those in need of help. Sadly, Thérèse struggled with illness which meant that she was unable to travel and so unable to become a Missionary Sister.

Reader 3: Although she was disappointed, Thérèse did not lose hope. She decided that she would become a nun. As a nun, Thérèse dedicated her life to God and spent her days praying for the world and reading the Bible. Let’s now hear our opening prayer and then listen to one of Saint Thérèse favourite Bible passages.

Sign of the Cross and opening prayer

Reader: Heavenly Father, today we remember your servant, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Saint Thérèse showed us how through faith, hope and love, we can make a big difference in our world, no matter how small we may be. Help us to learn from her example so that, through our acts of kindness, others might know the love you have for all your children.
Amen.

Bible reading: From the Gospel of Saint Matthew

Reader: The disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And calling to him a child, Jesus put him in the middle of them and said, ‘Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Mission Together



Opening Prayer
Heavenly Father,
today we remember your servant, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Saint Thérèse showed us how through faith, hope and love, we can make a big difference in our world, no matter how small we may be. Help us to learn from her example so that, through our acts of kindness, others might know the love you have for all your children. Amen.

Mission Together



We hear God's Word
A reading from Gospel of Saint Matthew
The disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, Jesus put him in the middle of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
The Gospel of the Lord
R/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



The story of Saint Thérèse continued

Reader 1: Thérèse liked this Bible passage because she was young and felt small.

She knew older nuns who more confident, but by growing closer to Jesus and learning from his example, Thérèse began to understand that being small need not stop her from making a big difference.

Reader 2: Encouraged by this, Thérèse came up with a great idea. She would show God's love to others through small acts of kindness. She called this her 'Little Way'. Thérèse wrote about her 'Little Way' in notebooks.

Reader 3: After she died, at the young age of 24, Thérèse's notebooks were discovered. The people who read them realised how wise she had been. They decided to print the notebooks so her words could be read by others. Soon people around the world began following Saint Thérèse's 'Little Way'. They still do today. We can too, when we share God's love by being kind to others.

Scripture and story reflection: *We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.*

Today we have learned about Saint Thérèse and her little way of kindness. I wonder if Thérèse ever thought that her little way would lead to greatness? I wonder if she imaged that millions of people would follow her example or that a few years after she died, she would be made not just a saint, but the patron saint of missionaries!



Thinking of the Bible passage we heard earlier, I suspect that Thérèse **did trust** that God would take her little acts of kindness and use them to make a big difference. In the Bible passage, Jesus teaches his disciples that the greatest in God's kingdom aren't those who are high and mighty. Rather, Jesus says the greatest in God's kingdom are those who are like children - those who are gentle, kind, who trust in others and trust in God.

Being kind with everyone wasn't always easy for Thérèse. She lived in a convent with other nuns, some of whom were cranky with her. On these occasions, Thérèse would ask God to help her respond with patience and kindness. Over time, even the crankiest nuns came to appreciate and admire little Thérèse.

Towards the end of her life, when she was very ill, Thérèse wrote in her diary 'When I die, I will send down a shower of roses from the heavens. I will spend my heaven by doing good on earth.' This is why Thérèse is often seen in paintings and statues holding roses. Thérèse was promising that in heaven, she would continue to help others through her prayers. Let us ask Saint Thérèse to pray with us and for us now.



Prayers of Intercession

Reader: The response to our prayer is: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, you helped St Thérèse perform little acts of kindness every day. Help us to be kind, so that our school, our homes, our parish, and our world might be filled with your mercy and love. **Lord, in your mercy.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, St Thérèse learned from your Son, Jesus, that true greatness isn't found in might; it is found in humility. May we learn from Jesus too, so that following his example and St Thérèse's 'Little Way', we might understand how great it is to be humble, kind, and faithful.

Lord, in your mercy.

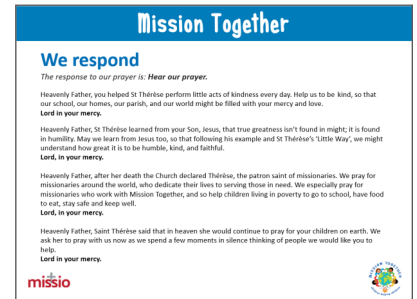
Reader: Heavenly Father, after her death the Church declared Thérèse, the patron saint of missionaries. We pray for missionaries around the world, who dedicate their lives to serving those in need. We especially pray for missionaries who work with Mission Together, and so help children living in poverty to go to school, have food to eat, stay safe and keep well. **Lord, in your mercy.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, Saint Thérèse said that in heaven she would continue to pray for your children on earth. We ask her to pray with us now as we spend a few moments in silence thinking of people we would like you to help. **Lord in your mercy.**

Reader: Let us all now say out loud the prayer the Our Father...

Our Father, Who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Closing hymn or recorded music



Appendix 1: Little Flower Activities



St Thérèse wrote many wise words in her notebooks. Amongst them was this: 'Great deeds are forbidden me. The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love.' Flowers (especially roses) became a symbol of St Thérèse's 'Little Way'. These activities take up this theme.

Scatterings of kindness (KS1&2)

- Ask pupils to think about the last little act of kindness they saw. They are to write this inside the image of the rose, trying to keep text within the outline.
- Once they have written their act of kindness, pupils can colour in the rose. They can then cut out the shape and place on / in a St Thérèse kindness display or prayer space.
- A copy of our St Thérèse cartoon is provided (Appendix 3) to include in this display. *We've also included a colour in version too.*
- Pupils are encouraged to complete a flower each time they witness an act of kindness, adding these to the kindness display as evidence of the beauty we create when we work together to shower the world with God's love.

For this activity pupils will need:

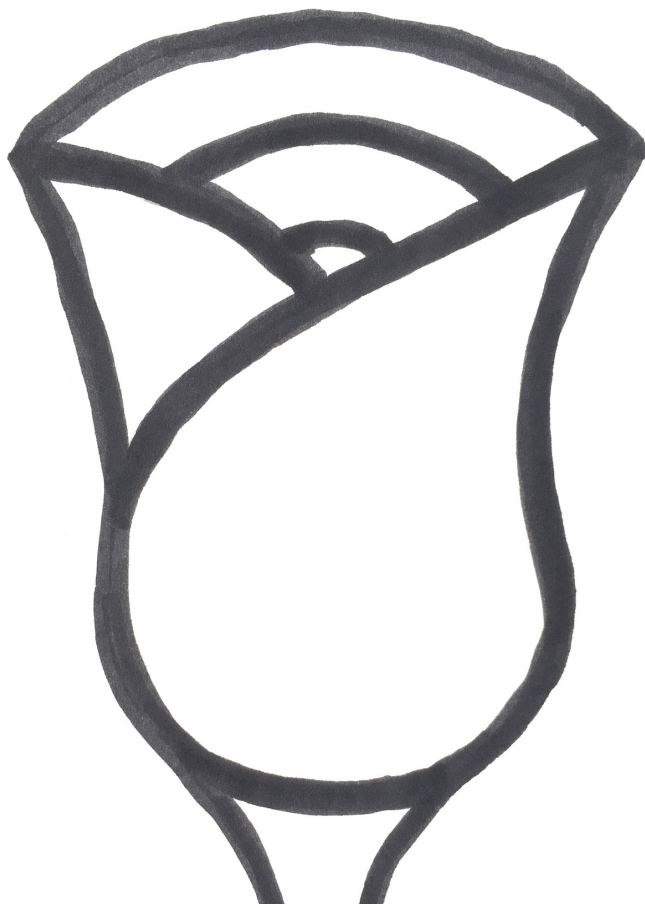
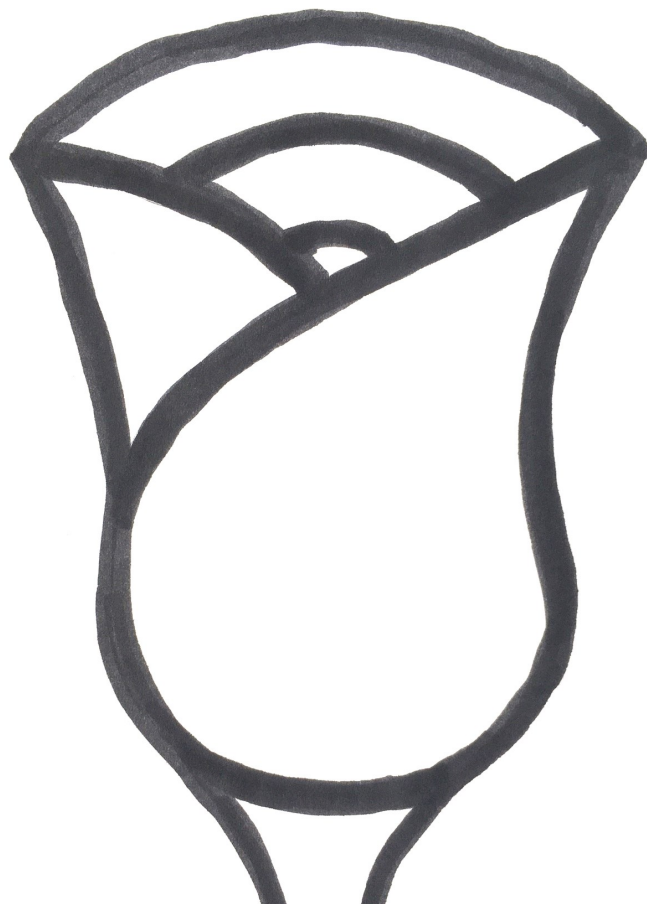
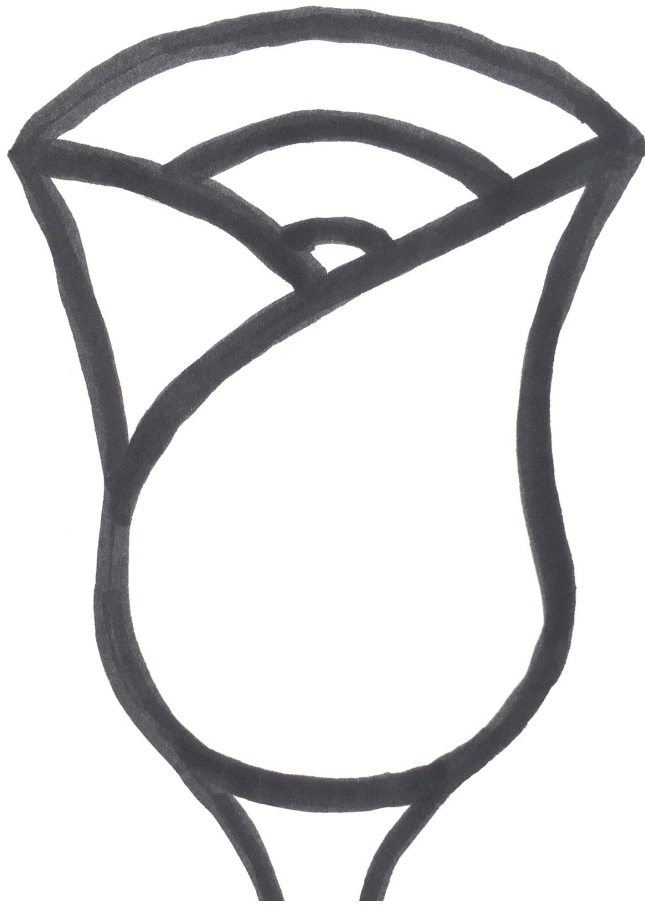
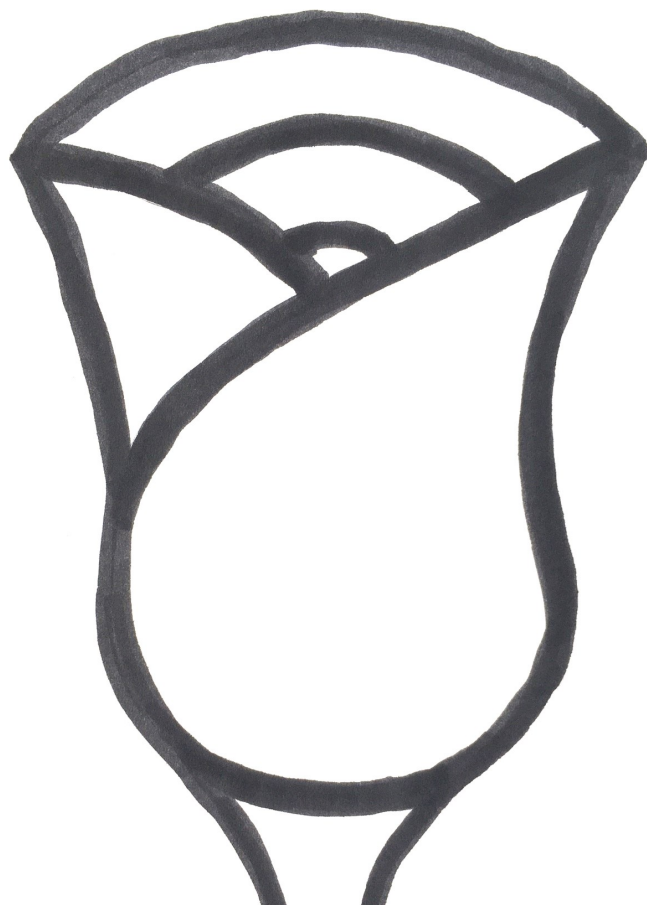
- A photocopy of roses outline (Appendix 2)
- Pencils/pens
- Scissors
- Tissue paper (for EYFS)
- Glue (for EYFS)

Kindness Flowers (EYFS)

- Ask children to name as many ways to be kind as they can e.g. share one at a time. And/or, ask children to remember the kind things that have happened to them e.g. Sam asked me to play.
- Each time a child responds, make a small (1cm) ball with tissue paper and place on one side. If you are able to ask a TA to make the balls, write some response key words e.g. caring, on a whiteboard.
- Continue until you have no less than ten small balls.
- Tell the children that these paper balls help us to remember the many ways we can be kind. When we are kind, we show God's love to others and this is beautiful. The children are going to make their own paper balls to create beautiful Kindness Flowers.
- Distribute tissue paper and one rose outline per child (Appendix 2).
- Ask the children to make ten paper balls and stick them inside the rose outline.
- Once they have completed their Kindness Flower, it can be placed on / in a St Thérèse kindness display or prayer space.
- A copy of our St Thérèse cartoon is provided (Appendix 3) to include in this display. *We've also included a colour in version too.*



Appendix 2: Kindness Flowers



‘I can prove my love by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every kind glance, word and action.’

St Thérèse of Lisieux.



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love by
scattering
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St Thérèse of Lisieux.

