

## Study Guide: *Ablaze: Stories of Daring Teen Saints* by Colleen Swaim

*Instructions: Review the study guide. Answer the questions, in your own words, on a separate sheet of paper. Responses must be handwritten, neat, and legible. Answers will be due on the Friday of the week we return to school.*

### I. Purpose of the Book:

- *Ablaze* introduces readers to various Catholic saints who lived extraordinary lives of faith, courage, and service, even at a young age.
- It aims to inspire readers by showcasing how ordinary teenagers, through their commitment to God and others, achieved remarkable holiness and made a significant impact on the world around them.
- The book demonstrates that sainthood is not just for adults or historical figures, but is a calling for everyone, including teenagers, in their everyday lives.

**II. Key Figures (Saints to focus on - Note: The specific saints in the book may vary by edition, but these are common examples. Students should focus on the ones covered in their copy.):**

- **Blessed Carlo Acutis:** A modern teen who used technology (internet) to spread the Gospel, demonstrating holiness in the digital age.
- **Saint Maria Goretti:** A young girl who defended her purity with her life, forgiving her attacker.
- **Saint Joan of Arc:** A peasant girl who led the French army, demonstrating incredible courage and conviction.
- **Saint Thérèse of Lisieux ("The Little Flower"):** A Carmelite nun who taught the "Lile Way" of doing ordinary things with extraordinary love.
- **Saint Agnes of Rome:** An early Christian martyr who defied Roman paganism and died for her faith.
- **Saint Francis of Assisi:** Though he lived past his teen years, his radical conversion and renunciation of wealth often begin in his youth.
- **Saint Catherine of Siena:** A mystic and a diplomat who influenced popes and princes during a tumultuous period.
- **Saint Dominic Savio:** A student of St. John Bosco, known for his joyful piety and

commitment to holiness.

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- **Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati:** An avid outdoorsman and social activist who dedicated his life to serving the poor and working for justice.

### III. Major Themes:

- **Courage and Conviction:** Saints standing firm in their beliefs despite persecution, opposition, or societal pressure.
- **Faith in Action:** How belief translates into tangible acts of charity, service, and witness.
- **Holiness in Everyday Life:** The idea that sainthood isn't just about grand miracles, but about living an ordinary life with extraordinary love and dedication to God.
- **Youthful Zeal:** The unique energy, passion, and idealism that young people can bring to their faith and mission.
- **Sacrifice and Selflessness:** Giving up personal desires for the sake of higher values or for the good of others.
- **The Power of Forgiveness:** As exemplified by saints like Maria Goretti.
- **Social Justice and Service:** Saints who actively worked to alleviate suffering and injustice in their communities.
- **Responding to God's Call:** Each saint's unique journey in discovering and fulfilling their purpose.

### IV. Literary Aspects:

- **Biographical Narratives:** Each chapter tells the story of a particular saint, often focusing on their formative years and the challenges they faced.
- **Inspirational Tone:** The book aims to motivate readers to consider their own spiritual journeys.
- **Accessible Language:** Written for a young adult audience, making the lives of saints relatable.

### V. Key Questions for Reflection:

1. What defines "daring" in the context of these saints' lives?
2. How did their faith influence their actions and decisions?
3. What challenges did these young people face, and how did they overcome them?
4. In what ways can a teenager today live a "saintly" life in their own environment?
5. What lessons can be learned from their examples for facing peer pressure, societal expectations, or personal struggles?