Watch where I go to get the lesson for today.

This is the story of Saint Catherine of Siena. The church remembers Catherine during the season of Easter, a time of the color white. I wonder why we remember Catherine? Let's see.

Catherine was born in Italy. Her name was Caterina di Benincasa. She was born in a city called Siena, a city with tiny, narrow streets and red roofs. She had twelve brothers and sisters; the house was very crowded! But she still found plenty of time to be with God. When she was only seven years old she knew that what she wanted to do was come even closer, and get to know God better.

When she was a teenager, Catherine also began to look for ways to help people. She worked as a nurse in homes and hospitals, and she worked all the time. Catherine did this because she knew that God has a special care for the sick, and that God wanted her to help. People were amazed at all that she did. When the black plague—a frightening disease—came to her city, she worked especially hard, caring for many people who were sick and dying, and who had no one else to care for them.

People wanted to follow Catherine, and to be close to God like her, because they could see she was doing such a great thing. People noticed how holy she was, and so they also asked her to travel to other cities to help them solve their arguments, and figure out what was fair.

Many people were having arguments—even in the church! Once, there was a big fight between different leaders called the pope. One of them had moved to France, and Catherine helped convince him to go back to Rome where he belonged. Catherine was bold and argued with these men, because she knew God wanted her to.

Catherine came close to God by trying to figure out what was right to do, but she also came close to God when she prayed and had visions. In one vision, she saw a saint hold out to her a lily. The lily was on fire but didn't burn up. I wonder what it could have meant! When we see Catherine in paintings, she is often holding a
Catherine had many discussions, and wrote many letters. But one of the most important things Catherine wrote was a book called *The Dialogue*. It was a conversation she had with her soul. She talked about how Jesus was like a bridge. The bridge had stone walls and a roof, so people would not fall off of it or get wet when it rains. The bridge of Jesus is what makes it possible to go from where you are to where God is.

Finally, Catherine wore out. She was still young, but could no longer eat or even swallow water. She went to church each morning to have Eucharist, and spent the day in prayer. Finally she couldn't walk. She died in the spring when she was only 33 years old.

The Roman Catholic Church has given three women the title of Doctor of the Church. Saint Catherine was one of these.

We remember Catherine for many reasons, but most of all because she spoke up for God.

I wonder what parts of Catherine's story you like the best?

I wonder what part of the story is most important?

I wonder what part of the story is about you, or where you might be in the story?

I wonder if we could leave any part of the story out and still have all the story we need?

[This should be done only if there is plenty of time. You can go around the circle or ask kids to raise their hands. When a child brings an object, you may respond, “I see you have brought _ _ _! Tell me about this.”]

Now let me show you how to put the story away. Here is Saint
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Catherine tending the sick. Here is Catherine giving advice to the leaders of the church. Here is the lily that reminds us of Catherine's vision of the lily on fire but not burnt up. Here is the bridge that reminds us how Catherine taught that Jesus was like a bridge. Here is the picture of Catherine. And here is the white underlay, because we remember Saint Catherine during the season of Easter.

Now I wonder what you would like to do for your work today?