

# Lionel Messi

Lionel Messi is one of the world's most renowned footballers and is known for making headlines on and off the pitch. However, what many people don't know is that he is actually a devout Roman Catholic, and takes his duties as a Catholic very seriously.

Messi is known for his beliefs in helping those less fortunate than himself, especially vulnerable young people. To fulfil his prophet role as a Catholic, he hasn't just given away his money, he decided to set up the Leo Messi Foundation, fighting for justice and making sure every child has the same opportunity to achieve their dreams. This included setting up 20 classrooms in Syria to give children a chance to boost their education after being affected by the civil war. The Bible teaches us to give and fight for those living in poverty or are vulnerable, for example in Leviticus 19:15 where it states, "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly." This is significantly evident in Lionel Messi's work as the things he puts into place such as schools; football pitches; teachers, just to name a few, are to make sure not so privileged young people have the same chance to reach their goals. As well as setting up his own organization, he is also a unicef ambassador and in February 2019, Messi's foundation donated €200,000 (£175,000/\$218,000) to Unicef projects in Kenya that allowed over 2,000 citizens access to free food and water. This is very similar to the story of Jesus the five thousand, and this quote in particular, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." This shows the likeness between Jesus and Messi, despite his fame and fortune, he still had the compassion and willingness to recognise and help those in poverty, and decided to give them his money as they needed it more.



As a child, Messi grew up in a poor and poverty stricken town and his parents put every spare bit of money into his football career as it was clear he had an obvious talent. However, he had medical complications when he was young and he suffered growth deficiency so every night Messi would have a needle injecting treatment to help strengthen his legs and counter the growth deficiency he had suffered. It is because of this, that Messi has become so many young people's role models, as he proved that no matter what hardships you are going through, if you put enough hard work and effort into your dreams, you can reach them. Not only does this show that he has fulfilled his kingly role, he is also living out God's word, in particular the parable of the talents, as even though his growth deficiency tried to stop him reaching his full potential in his one talent, he made sure to have a high enough work ethic to not let it get to him, and to allow his talent to blossom. He also taught others to have enough faith to reach their dream, when he said, "You can overcome anything, if and only if you love something enough."

To live out his faith through worship, he is not only often seen visiting the Sagrada La Familia, but almost always dedicates his goals to God, by kneeling down and pointing to the sky with both hands, which refers to the uniqueness of God, and shows that there is only one God. As well as this, Messi has two sons both of which have grown up as dedicated Catholics, again fulfilling his lay duties, and his priestly role in particular. As well as this, he is living out the scriptures, to be specific, in Genesis 1:28 where it states, 'Be fruitful and multiply' meaning to have children, and raise them in the way of God, of which he has done extremely well.

