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FIRST SECTION: PREPARATION MATERIAL

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Although Sunday school is a relatively recent term in our Church, its existence is very old. The school of Alexandria is one of the most ancient Christian seminaries. Catechesis of new believers was the main function of the school.

THE RITE OF BAPTISM IS THE MODEL

From the rite of Baptism in the Coptic Church, we can identify three stages of “transformation” that must happen to the new converts before they are fully inaugurated as members of the body of Christ. The first is educational, where they get to know the Gospel and get “the Story” as told by the eyewitnesses, the story of Salvation as given to us in both the Old and the New Testament. St. Luke writes, *“In as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophorus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.”* The Gospel then is the right information, the good news. Whenever the Gospel is told, some would be moved to repentance to be “cut to the heart.” Some would be filled with joy and wonder, and speak in tongues. Some would be filled with fear and trembling. Others would be mocking. No one who hears the Gospel can be indifferent.

In this first stage, the Church anoints the “catechumens” with the sermon’s oil to guard the mind against all the work of the enemy. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in breaking down all high walls and fortified strongholds that keep humans away from the light of the Gospel of Christ.

The second stage is the stage of the movement of the heart, marked by the oil of Joy, “to be planted in the fruitful olive tree that is the Holy church of God.” The joy of Christ is what carries on with the Christians all their lives. No one can take that joy away from them. It is the joy of knowing Christ and being in Him. The joy that fills the heart more than oil and fat can satisfy the body. Our Lord becomes - to the believer in Him - the food and the drink of the spirit in the journey through the earthly life. Before the anointment with the oil of joy, the catechumen is asked to make the oath. The oath is renouncing Satan and accepting Christ. The baptized here is a spouse of Christ, pledging fidelity. It is verbalizing what he or she feels in the heart and knows in the mind. Here the Spirit brings life to the heart and satisfaction that no other can bring.

The third stage is the consecration. It starts with the immersion in the water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. In doing this, the believer is born again to God and becomes united with Christ. He or she is now a new creation, a clean vessel ready to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who should never leave, as long as, he or she lives. The next step would for the Holy Spirit to indwell in the Holy Chrism.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AS A SUPPORT AND CONTINUATION OF THE MOTHER'S WORK

When a baby is going through the rite of Baptism, the mother takes the vows for the baby. In doing this, the church recognizes the mother as the first and most important catechetical school. When the mother renounces Satan for the baby, she pledges to stand against evil work manifesting itself in her children's life. Even more importantly, she pledges to cultivate in her children a strong hate toward sin. When she accepts Christ, she pledges to bring her children to the love of Christ and all his teachings through the church. The mother does not do this alone. The divine plan had already included the help of the Comforter in achieving this goal. The teacher role is to help the student to wonder at the good news and ponder it in his/her heart. Since the greatest teacher is the Holy Spirit, Sunday school teachers should always -and as much as they can- take the place of the friend who wonders with them at the Word of God. When this is done with humility and openness, the teacher would benefit a great deal every time the lesson is taught.

Seen from this perspective, the Sunday school work is complementary to the mother's work and a continuation of it. For this reason, at the end of every lesson plan, there is a part that is taught by the mother and a homework.

The curriculum henceforth, is a catechetical process. It starts with the Gospel as a foundation. Then a process of building continues through all the grades.

THE CURRICULUM IS TRINITY-CENTERED

The Sunday school program is fundamentally Trinity centered. The teachers should always use Trinitarian language in their teaching sessions. This means being more specific in their language concerning the individual persons of the Holy Trinity whenever possible. Christ is the beginning of the learning and the center of every activity. The religious educational process should be both by words and example, reaching mind and heart. It is also both a divine and human labor. In teaching Sunday school, as well as in the mother's early work with children, we should acknowledge and trust the work of the Holy Spirit in the children's hearts and minds.

THE CURRICULUM IS BIBLE BASED

The curriculum is fundamentally biblical, therefore the concepts, the stories and the exercises are all rooted in the Word of God. As a general recommendation, all Sunday school students should have their personal bibles and should be encouraged to use it regularly in the class. To underline, highlight and learn to navigate through the Bible. Younger classes (1-4) should find an illustrated easy read version, older classes should use adult versions (New King James). It is very important, that in the class, a Bible should be placed in a special corner on a special red or white cloth. It is important that the stories are read directly from the Bible. Whenever a story is read, the bible is handled with great respect and honor, kissed before and after the reading. When the gospel is read, a special candle is lit. The Bible should never be placed on the ground or handled casually.

CHURCH TRADITION AND SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Holy Word of God is the Church's most valuable treasure. Only the church can give us the correct interpretation of the word of God. The explanation is done through words and actions. It is in the liturgies, creeds, the celebrations, in all the rites of the church and the collective writings of the church fathers that we find the correct interpretation of the word of God. Therefore Sunday school curriculum draws heavily from Church Tradition. The Feasts and the seasons of the church are at the heart of every year's course. The Sunday school should be Orthodox in the material, spirit and practices. To be an orthodox teacher is to explain Truth with awe, to teach the right glory of God and His Church by words and more by example. It goes beyond mere information or emotional movements to inspire the right honor (Zoxa) of God, which by implication means the correct preparation of the teacher before they are entrusted with this overwhelming task.

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS A SPIRALING PROCESS

The Gospel main themes of teaching are: The Revelation (Dogmatic theology), The Commandments (Moral Theology), The Mysteries (Liturgical Theology) and the Life of Prayer (Spiritual Theology). The curriculum main themes - and in every lesson- as much as possible should present these four elements as clear as possible. The user of this book can look for them in the main themes table as well in every lesson under "lesson objectives"

Many of the concepts that are given earlier in the curriculum are revisited later in the higher grades, at a higher level adding more depth and more consequence to the first message. That puts a lot of emphasis on the foundation, because in any building the foundation would shape the whole building.

In this work, the education is taken from the point of concepts. All the stories of the Gospel and of the saints are means to serve this goal. So stories are grouped according to the concept they serve. Later on, the same stories are revisited to further develop the same concept. We can envision this as a mountain with a circular road that goes around it in a spiral fashion until you reach the top. But there is no “top” to this endeavor.

The first five years in this curriculum are the most fundamental in the formation of the child dogmatically, liturgically, morally and spiritually. *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”* Proverbs 22:6

This work is not meant to replace the work of the servants, but to augment it and support it by giving them a clearer, overall view of their task and of all the side points that can distract that work. The main ingredients in our spiritual life are Christ and the Holy Spirit, the two arms of God the Father by which He gathers all humanity to Himself. Likewise in this curriculum, the love of Christ through the Church and the work of the Holy Spirit inside the human heart and in the Church as the body of Christ are heavily highlighted. By doing this we can understand that every single letter and word written in these years has one goal in mind: the salvation of the souls of the students and the teachers. Since there is no salvation possible outside the Church as the “Ark of Noah,” this work is seen and is written from the perspective of the Church. This work is not meant to be a system of beliefs nor a detailed description of our life of orthodoxy, rather, it is an attempt to organize and put in order scattered themes and ideas. It is not meant to be the only way of teaching Sunday school, but a guide on how to undertake that enormous task *“And who is sufficient for these things?”* The subjects chosen for the curriculum are the most common and much needed for our times.

It should be noted that in this series, the education and spiritual advancement of the teachers themselves are kept as a primary target. The Sunday school head servant should make every effort to educate the class servants on the purpose and goal of the curriculum in each step, a task that can be broken into group meetings before each unit. The parents of the students should also be involved in the process. Servants should solicit their cooperation and understanding of their role in the spiritual, moral and faith formation of their children.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The book has three sections. The first section deals with the overall picture and contains information related to the whole process. The second section contains the material related to the grade which the book serves. The third section contains helpful material that would be useful to the teachers during their work through the lessons.

The second section includes lessons that are grouped into units. All the units fall under one subject, which is explained in an introduction and which ties all the units together. For example, the first grade's subject is "the Revelation of God." The second grade's subject is "We Are Called the Children of God." Each unit serves part of the whole subject, and has its own purpose. This purpose is explained at the beginning of each unit and in the reflection on each of the lessons.

The units are each made up of several lessons. Each lesson brings out the unit topic from a different perspective. When teaching the lessons, the servant should bear in mind that the lesson and the story are told from the perspective of the purpose of the unit. For example, the story of the flood can be told from many different angles. If it is told from the perspective of God's power, the storyteller would stress the size of the event. But if the storyteller tells the story from the point of Noah's faith, the emphasis would be on the size of the ark and how long it took him to build it as showing obedience to God. When the story of the flood is told to younger children, all care should be taken not to convey an image of an angry, destructive and vindictive God, rather, a loving Father who cared so much about Noah's both spiritual and physical survival.

LESSON STRUCTURE

Each lesson is made up of three main sections. **The first section** deals with preparing the servant, **the second section** deals with preparing the lesson and the **Third section** is dedicated to home activities and mother/parent part of the work. In preparing the servants, the goal is to educate and edify the servant at an adult level. This section contains nourishing portions from the word of God and the Creed, Patristic Tradition and liturgical prayers. *The biblical reference* or the actual passage is presented (in most lessons), followed by other references from the *Nicene creed* and *church fathers*, followed by a simple *reflection* on the text and is concluded with *a prayer* from the church liturgies. **The second section** begins with a suggested song taken from the hymns of the Coptic Church liturgies and psalmody. The songs are chosen to follow the unit Theme and are meant to be practiced and memorized during the teaching of the unit. The new learned vocabulary is grouped in the vocabulary section. The 4 objective points (Dogmatic, Liturgical, Moral and Spiritual) of the lesson is spelled out in a table format. This table should be the objectives of the lesson. Then an introduction to the lesson, usually a review of the previous lesson and a preparation for the current one, Lesson body begins with an introduction or link to the previous lesson followed by the actual story in the language of the first graders. This section is concluded with a review questions and a

verse to remember. **The Third section** is suggestions to the mother/parent for home follow up on the topic of interest this week/unit. Sometimes reading assignments or memorization is included.

We ask the intercessions of St. Mary the Holy Theotokos, St. Mark the Evangelist, and all the saints to make this work useful and profitable to both the teachers the children and their families, who are involved in the great process of religious education and spiritual formation.

2. THEMES AND SUBJECTS OF GRADES 1-5

THE BIGGER PICTURE:

The theme of the elementary grades builds up on the revelation of God as spelled out in the gospels; the 1st grade curriculum tells of God's revelation of Himself as the Father of the Only Begotten. The Father sends the Son who reveals the Father to us. In the 2nd grade curriculum, the Son gives us the power to become Children of God; our identity (as children of God) is defined by Christ through this revelation. In order for the children to maintain the life of God within them, they need the mysteries of the church; the 3rd grade curriculum therefore examines the mysteries of reconciliation and the Eucharist. As the elementary children study their identity as children of God who partake of His life, they discover the church as the family that God has established to keep His living gifts; the 4th grade curriculum hence, focuses the definition of the church and its visible and invisible aspects and the mystery of priesthood. The children are then ready to learn more about holiness and sanctity; the 5th grade curriculum the stories in the book of Exodus become a good source of teaching on sanctification. As the education process is advanced in a spiraling manner, each year builds on the year before, and is a preparation for the year after.

GRADE THEMES AND FOCUS

	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Faith</u>	<u>Scriptures</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Virtues</u>	<u>Spiritual Life</u>
<u>1st Grade</u>	<i>Revelation: God Reveals Himself to Us</i>	The Trinity	Gospel	Baptism	Obedience & Sharing	Prayer & The Word of God
<u>2nd Grade</u>	<i>Adoption: We are the Children of God</i>	Christ	The Patriarchs: Abraham	Eucharist	The 10 Commandments	Offering
<u>3rd Grade</u>	<i>Reconciliation: God Gave us Reconciliation and Eternal life in His Son</i>	Salvation	The Patriarchs: Jacob	Confession & Liturgy	forgiveness equality & fairness	Repentance Introduction to Agpeya
<u>4th Grade</u>	<i>The Church: God in our midst</i>	The Church	The Patriarchs: Joseph	The visible Church	Faith, Respect, Faithfulness, Truthfulness & trustworthiness	The Agpeya
<u>5th Grade</u>	<i>Sanctification: God called us to be Holy</i>	Sanctification	Moses and Exodus	Baptism Chrismation Confession and the Eucharist	Sanctity of the body, Fear of God, responsibility	Fasting and Giving

3. CLASSROOM SETUP AND RULES

CLASSROOM SETUP:

The classroom should be uncluttered, well ventilated and well lit. Colors should be bright and cheering. Since the first grade children are more interested in doing things with their hands more than listening or watching (it is also known that children retain most by doing, less by watching and least by listening), it is better to have their classroom organized as work stations. Each station is made of a circular or a square table with children sitting around. It should have closets and craft boxes. The classroom should have a white dry eraser board and if possible a projector and screen at one end of the room.

CLASS STRUCTURE AND RULES:

Children at this age needs structure and consistency, teachers will do well to keep the same structure every Sunday. The most important consistency is the teachers' attendance. It is most helpful when the children see their teachers in the class every week and have the same "drill". The same structure helps them focus on the lessons best, while change of teachers, teaching style and structure distract

Example of structured class time: (total time is 60 minutes)

- Our Father & Sign of the Cross (in English and Coptic) (5 minutes)
- Sing songs (10 minutes)
- Story (20 minutes)
- Craft (15 minutes)
- Conclusion (5 minutes)
- Prayer (5 minutes)
- Maintain an accurate attendance list and contact information for parents

The rules should be clear, simple, and easy to remember:

- Raise your hand if you need to talk, move, or use the restrooms.
- Close your eyes, stand and do not move during prayers.
- Share materials with your brothers and sisters during the lesson.

- Help in keeping the class neat and clean (keep five minutes at the end, for collecting and storing)
- Do your homework.

Setting up the classroom to reflect the theme of the unit by pictures and props might be a very helpful element in teaching the units.

PROGRESS CHARTS:

Make behavioral charts in class with stickers to encourage the children desirable behaviors and build good habits. Attendance charts also should be posted on “progress wall”. Reward children’s good behaviors at the end of each unit.

DISCIPLINE:

Discipline the children after a one-time warning. It is like a traffic light. As long as they are in their “good behavior”, the teacher is encouraging by words and gestures (green). On the first sign of disruptive or inappropriate behavior, the teacher should sound a stern warning (yellow). If the behavior is continued (red), an action should be taken. The first action would be removal of the behavior sticker from the behavior chart. If it continues or repeated in the same class, the child gets five minutes time out with another servant. For that reason, each class should have more than one teacher. There should be a minimum number of stickers per unit to receive the behavior reward. The rewards for behavior should be simple and not expensive.

HYPERACTIVE CHILDREN:

If we have a hyperactive child or a child with a special need, there is a need to assign a dedicated servant. The servants of a class with a hyperactive child should have some education about hyperactive children, and they should have a plan of action at the beginning of the class year.

4. DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SECOND GRADE STUDENTS

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD: AGES 6 – 10

PRESENCE OF GOD:

Have the kids wonder at the occurring natural events. Teachers should become familiar with science topics that the kids are exposed to in school so they could provide them with the correct Christian answers. The child's mind should not be split up between the church life and the school life, there has to be some unity and the church has to provide correct explanations and information regarding the scientific issues brought up in the schools. Kids need to experience how God cares for His people, and how He saves them from temptations and sufferings.

CONCEPT OF HOLY TRINITY:

Precise doctrinal understanding is not appropriate at this age but they should be provided with correct doctrinal images and narratives to prepare them for future understanding as they get older and more mature. The Gospel is the perfect way to transmit the correct image of the Holy Trinity; God the Father loves us and sent His Son who loves us and died for us and sent the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

CHURCH SERVICES:

Kids find it very difficult to attend church services. Therefore, it is important to start teaching them about the liturgy, what is done in the liturgy, church building, and lives of saints. Pictures, diagrams, calendars, etc., are important in sending the message, and we should try to get the kids to participate and become involve in the services.

HOLY COMMUNION:

The main emphasis should be on the Last Supper. It could be explained as Christ's gift to us, the holy food He shares with us so we can live with Him. In return we should offer Him gifts too, such as obeying Him and listening to His teachings.

Every child's development is unique. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of milestones, we cannot say exactly when a child will reach each and every stage. Every child has his or her own timetable. The characteristics below are offered only as a reference to give you a better understanding of your child.

THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Great differences in the size and abilities of children may affect self-concept
- Large muscles in arms and legs are more developed than small muscles
- Learning to use small/fine muscles
- Long arms and legs may give gawky, awkward appearance
- When tired, may not want to rest
- Sometimes tense
- Many physical hurts, real and imagined
-

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Touchy; may say or think, "Nobody likes me."
- Love to talk, even exaggerate
- Work hard to please teachers, parents, and other adults
- Sensitive to adult evaluation
- More independent, but still relies heavily on the teacher
- More emphasis on fairness
- Likes structure; dislikes changes in school routines
- Compare self to others; can be self-critical
- Establishing friendships becomes very important, although they often lack the skills necessary to do so
- View things as right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- Seek a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- More serious and less impulsive than first graders
- Realize that there are many things that need to be learned, sometimes leading to less confidence than in first grade
- Begin to reason logically and organize thoughts coherently
- Most thinking is done about actual physical objects; difficulty handling abstract reasoning
- Often makes decisions based on influence of others instead of by reasoning
- Develop more skill in reading
- Want to assume more responsibility
- May reverse printed letters (b/d)
- Speaking and listening vocabulary expanding at a very rapid pace

- Like to collect, organize, and sort things
- Longer attention span
- Learn to evaluate what they do
- Need closure, want to complete assignments
- Like to work slowly
- Want work to be perfect; erase constantly
- Need manipulative to learn effectively
- Like to know how things work
- Egocentric, but beginning to understand others' perspectives

THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- High energy
- Enjoy rough and tumble games, as well as team sports
- May be physically daring
- Fine motor skills showing increased speed and smoothness
- Some write with tiny letters and artwork becomes more detailed
- Large muscles in arms and legs are more developed than small muscles
- Seven to nine-year olds are learning to use their small muscles skills (printing with a pencil; using scissors and small tools) and their large muscle skills (throwing and catching a ball)
- Large differences in size and abilities of children; may affect the way they get along with others, how they feel about themselves, and what physical activities they do
- Enjoy testing muscle strength and skills
- Good sense of balance

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Begin to define self based on certain attributes or achievements, such as "I wear glasses," etc
- Can become self-conscious based on how they believe they look in the eyes of others
- Establishing friendships is very important, although they may lack skills to do so
- Emergence of a sense of humor--telling jokes
- Less dependent on adults and more dependent on peers
- Begins to question authority and test limits
- Often overestimate abilities; "they bite off more than can chew"
- Interested in rules and rituals
- Generally girls tend to play more with girls; boys with boys

- May have a best friend
- Strong desire to perform well, do things right
- Find criticism and failure difficult to handle
- View things as right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with little middle ground
- Need a sense of security in groups, organized play and clubs; friendship groups may be larger
- Generally enjoy caring for and playing with younger children

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Concrete Operations Stage of Thinking is solidifying for most children. They can reason logically about actual objects and organize thoughts coherently. They cannot handle abstract reasoning very well unless it relates to real experiences.
- Learn best through active, concrete experiences, but are learning to see books as sources of information; reading may become a major interest
- Developing a longer attention span
- Enjoy collecting, organizing, and classifying objects and information
- Imaginative play in the form of skits, plays, and puppet shows
- Likes groups and group activities
- May reverse printed letter (b/d) (until mid-third grade)
- Enjoy planning and building
- Speaking and listening vocabularies are expanding rapidly; talkative
- Increased problem-solving ability
- Interested in magic and tricks
- Learning to plan ahead and evaluate what they do
- When something is suggested, they may say, "That's dumb" or "I don't want to do that."
- Beginning to see and understand the perspectives of others.
- Listen well, but they are so full of ideas that they cannot always recall what has been said
- Like to explain ideas--may exaggerate
- Engrossed in activity at hand; love to socialize at the same time
- Industrious; often work quickly
- Basic skills begin to be mastered; begin to feel a sense of competence with skills
- Second-graders are increasingly able to reason, listen to others, and show social give-and-take. They can display flexibility, open-mindedness, and tolerance of unfamiliar ideas to a remarkable extent
- As their faces show more individuality, the sizes and shapes of their bodies change and their personalities become more distinct.
- It's important to encourage them to accept their differences — by displaying their hand prints and family snapshots, writing 'self books' about favorite clothes, memories, trips, and the like.
- Second graders concentrate on a subject in class for 20 minutes at a time, but no longer.

- Repetition is great fun — they will return day after day to the same lesson and only move on to the next one after the last is mastered.

5. YEARLY CALENDAR

Month	Action	Notes
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for Unit I & II • Prepare for Parent's Meeting • Feast of Nyrouz 9/11 • Feast of the Cross 9/27 	
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents meeting • 	
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for Advent • Advent and Kiahk (fast starts 11/25) • Thanksgiving (4th Thursday in November) • Prepare for Unit III & IV 	
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for the Feast of Holy Nativity • Prepare for Holy Theophany 	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Nativity 1/7 • Holy Theophany 1/19 • Prepare for Unit V & VI 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonah's Fast (movable) 	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lent (movable) 	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Week and Holy Resurrection (movable) • Prepare for Unit VII & Summer 	
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast of St. Mark 5/8 	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Ascension (movable) • Pentecost (movable) • Apostles' Fast (movable beginning) • Prepare for Unit VIII 	
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast of the Apostles 7/12 	
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast of St. Mary's 8/7-8/21 • Holy Transfiguration feast 8/19 • Feast of St Mary 8/22 • Inventory of the year 	

TEACHING SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE OF SERVANTS AND LESSONS: SEPTEMBER TO FEBRUARY

#	Date	Lesson	Servant
	SEPTEMBER/	Unit Lesson	
	SEPTEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	SEPTEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	SEPTEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	OCTOBER/	Unit Lesson	
	OCTOBER /	Unit Lesson	
	OCTOBER /	Unit Lesson	
	OCTOBER /	Unit Lesson	
	NOVEMBER/	Unit Lesson	
	NOVEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	NOVEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	NOVEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	DECEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	DECEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	DECEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	DECEMBER /	Unit Lesson	
	JANUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	JANUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	JANUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	JANUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	FEBRUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	FEBRUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	FEBRUARY /	Unit Lesson	
	FEBRUARY /	Unit Lesson	

SCHEDULE OF SERVANTS AND LESSONS: MARCH TO AUGUST

#	Date	Lesson	Servant
	MARCH/	Unit Lesson	
	MARCH/	Unit Lesson	
	MARCH/	Unit Lesson	
	MARCH/	Unit Lesson	
	APRIL/	Unit Lesson	
	APRIL/	Unit Lesson	
	APRIL/	Unit Lesson	
	APRIL/	Unit Lesson	
	MAY/	Unit Lesson	
	MAY/	Unit Lesson	
	MAY/	Unit Lesson	
	MAY/	Unit Lesson	
	JUNE /	Unit Lesson	
	JUNE /	Unit Lesson	
	JUNE /	Unit Lesson	
	JUNE /	Unit Lesson	
	JULY /	Unit Lesson	
	JULY /	Unit Lesson	
	JULY /	Unit Lesson	
	JULY /	Unit Lesson	
	AUGUST /	Unit Lesson	
	AUGUST /	Unit Lesson	
	AUGUST /	Unit Lesson	
	AUGUST /	Unit Lesson	

7. THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1. PATRISTIC WRITINGS ON THE EUCHARIST:

JUSTIN MARTYR (114-165 AD) WRITINGS ON THE EUCHARIST

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss.

There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to[so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

OF THE EUCHARIST

And this food is called among us [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated; you either know or can learn. ¹ *Anti-*

Nicene fathers: Justin Martyr- introductory note to the first Apology of Justin Martyr p287

WEEKLY WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration. ¹ *Anti-Nicene fathers, first apology of Justin Martyr chapters 65-67; p340-342.*

2. PATRISTIC WRITINGS ON THE WRITTEN COMMANDMENTS:

A. FATHER TADRUS MALATY, PATRISTIC COMPILATION ON THE BOOK OF EXODUS: NOTES ON RECEIVING THE LAW

1- NEED FOR THE LAW:

It was not possible for those who get out of the land of bondage; who walk along the way of wilderness, to reach the land of promise, and to settle down in Jerusalem, without receiving the divine commandment and Law. That is why the Psalter, in the land of sojourn, cries out saying: *"I am stranger in the earth; Do not hide your commandments from me"* (psalm 119: 19). The people received the Mosaic Law, presented to them in a way that suited their spiritual childhood; yet, at

the same time, carried in its depths the secrets of the “Divine Word”. For, what is the Law, but the Word of God, who is alone, the Leader, the Savior of the soul; who leads her to the bosom of the Father, and brings her into His divine glories. That is why St. Mark, the hermit, says: [The commandment carries in it the Lord Christ; Whoever enters into its depths, and lives it with Spirit, would encounter the divine Word Himself]. And the scholar Origen says: [In the depths of the commandment, the soul discovers its heavenly Groom, and enters with Him into His secret place]

The Psalter in psalm 119 (118) speaks of the divine Law, as his support in his sojourn; and sees in it:

a- A secret of his joy amid the sufferings of the wilderness: *“I will delight myself in your statutes; I will not forget your word”* (v. 16); *“And I will delight myself in your commandments which I love”* (v. 47); *“How sweet are your words to my taste; sweeter than honey in my mouth”* (v. 103).

b- A secret of his praise and rejoice: *“Your statutes have been my songs, in the house of my pilgrimage”* (v. 54).

c- A secret of his inner wealth: *“The Law of Your mouth is better to me, than thousands of shekels of gold and silver:”* (v. 72).

d- A benefit for the soul, and a guide amid the afflictions of enemies: *“Your word, I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You”* (v. 11); *“The cords of the wicked have bound me, but I have not forgotten Your Law”* (v. 61); *“Unless Your Law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction”* (v. 92)

e- A secret of his life: *“My soul clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word”* (25)

f- A secret of enlightenment: *“Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path”* (v. 105); *“Make Your face shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes”* (v. 135).

g- And finally, the commandment, in its Spirit and depths, present to us the person of the Savior, the Groom of the soul, and its fulfiller; So he says: *“I have seen the consummation of all perfection, but Your commandment is exceedingly broad”* (v. 96).

2- THE LAW OF SINAI:

“In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day they came to the wilderness of Sinai” (Ex. 19: 1, 2)

Number 3, as we said before, refers to the resurrection of the Lord Christ, the divine Word, on the third day. It is as though God wants us to encounter with Him through the commandment, in the glory of resurrection; so as not to look at it as orders, statutes, and laws; but as a secret of

resurrection in the divine glories. Through resurrection, the commandment, with all its cross and burdens, becomes sweet and enjoyable; its difficult way would turn into an easy yoke, a light burden, and a fellowship in the passions of Christ, to enjoy His glories.

The choice of the location (the Mount of Sinai), was not without meaning; According to the scholar Origen, 'Sinai' , like the wilderness of 'Sin', means (bush) or (temptation), where man is committed to have the spirit of sound discernment, in order not to fall into temptation, through visions of a false bush. According to him, 'Sinai' means that the soul started to acquire the 'sound judgment', through receiving the divine commandment or Law; to become capable of enjoying the divine secrets and the heavenly visions.

3- THE GOAL OF THE LAW:

Before speaking of the goal of the Law, God proclaimed His practical love for His people, saying: *"I bore you on eagle's wings"* (Ex. 19: 4)

As though He wanted to clarify that mutual love, is the basis of that Law. He loved us, and bore us by the Holy Spirit (eagle's wings), and brought us to Himself, namely, to His divine bosoms, in order to experience His love, and to recognize His fatherhood. The goal of the Law is: *"You shall be a special treasure to me above all people; For all the earth is Mine. And you shall to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (Ex. 19: 5, 6)

Although He does not need that, as all the earth is His; Yet He desires us to be His own, with the privilege of sonship; a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, dedicated to Him, and bearing His holy nature.

4- PREPARATIONS FOR THE LAW:

(1) *"So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord had spoken we will do'"* (Ex. 19: 7, 8)

Unfortunately, they received God's covenant with them, only by words, but rejected it in practice; the Law thus became for them of no avail. They said, *"All that the Lord had spoken we will do"* ; but they broke the commandment, and did not respect the covenant; until the Savior came, who,

alone, is able to consummate the will of God and His commandment in perfection; and in Him, we would also be perfect, and keepers of the Law

(2) Then the Lord said to Moses:

“Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day, the Lord will come down upon Mount of Sinai in the sight of all the people” (Ex. 19: 10, 11)

As it was on the (third month) of their departure from the land of Egypt, they had to be ready for God’s coming down in their sight, on the (third day) ... Thus, this Book, bore several confirmations of our receiving the power of resurrection in us. The people would not have benefited from the Law, unless they recognize the possibility of keeping it through Christ, risen from the dead; Grantor of the new nature; Capable of keeping the divine commandment. Concerning the sanctification and washing the clothes; all that reveal the need for internal and external preparations, before ascending the Mountain of Knowledge (as Moses did), and recognizing the divine secrets. The scholar Origen says: [If you come with dirty clothes, you would hear this word: *“Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment ? ”* (Matthew 22: 12). Thus, no man can listen to God’s words, unless he is holy both in body and in spirit (1 Corinthians 7: 34); washes his clothes, in order to enter into the banquet of the Groom, and eats the flesh of the Lamb, and drink the chalice of salvation; Nobody can attend that banquet with dirty clothes. The wisdom confirmed that, saying on another occasion: *“Let your clothes always be white”*. Your garments were washed once you gained the grace of Baptism; Your body was purified, and you got rid of all defilement of the flesh and spirit; Therefore, *“What God has cleansed, you must not call common (impure) ”* (Acts 10: 15)].

And in a talk by St. Ambrose, concerning the duties of the Clergy, he says: [You should learn, O priest, and deacon, the significance of washing your clothes. It is also fitting for you to approach the holy sacraments with a pure body. If the congregation were warned against approaching the sacrifice with dirty clothes; can you request that from others, while there is defilement in your own heart and body, and dare to offer a sacrifice on their behalf ? !].

Pope St. Athanasius sees in this preparation a symbol of entering the virtuous life, without which, it would have been impossible for Moses, to enter into the presence of God, to receive the Law; saying: [Through virtue man can enter into the presence of God, as Moses did in the thick cloud, where God was. But through wickedness, man would exit from His presence, as did Cain, when he killed his brother (Genesis 4: 16), and his soul got disturbed].

The command was clear: *“Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives”* (Ex. 19: 15)

That does not imply that marital relationships are defiled, but for the sake of dedicating all energies, and thoughts in anticipation of the divine commandment. Fathers saw in this commandment a reference to keeping body relationships pure, not doing it with lust, in order, for the soul to ascend with Moses the mount of knowledge, to recognize God. In a talk by St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa concerning virginity, he says: [If you yearn to God, proclaiming Himself to you, why don't you listen to Moses instructing his people to refrain from marital relationships, before being taken to behold God ? !]. And as the people of the old days, prepared themselves for receiving the word of God, engraved on the two tablets, by refraining from marital relationships, and cleansing their bodies, the Church is instructing her children to do the same on the eve before they approach the "divine Word"; It has also established a beautiful rite, for priests to cleanse their hands, before receiving the "Lamb", in which the priest watches the purity of his own soul, and his inner readiness for the service.

(3) *"Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death; whether man or beast, he shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain"* (Ex. 19: 12, 13)

In order for our inner Moses to ascend the mountain of knowledge, and to enjoy the divine secrets, we shall have to keep our senses, like seeing or hearing, from getting preoccupied by material things, or carnal thoughts; By that, no man nor beast would ascend with us; only our inner Moses, to get to enjoy *"what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man"* (1 Corinthians 2: 9); Our inner man would be lifted up to seek what is greater than senses and tangible things, namely, even the divine things.

Therefore, you should never allow man or beast inside you, to hinder your vision of God on the holy mountain in you, and your dialogue with Him face to face.

As to his saying: *"When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain"*, This means that our inner man, enjoying the vision of God, hearing the divine voice, and enjoying direct conversation with Him; all our senses, yearnings, and emotions, would be sanctified in the Lord. Things that were before, obstacles to life with God, would become holy in the Lord, and tools to His account.

5- SPEAKING TO GOD:

(1) The fathers compared between the encounters of God with people in the Old Testament, and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Moses set boundaries for the people all around, saying: *"Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death, he shall surely be stoned or shot with*

an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live” (Ex. 19: 12, 13). But in the New Testament, the Word of God, Himself, comes and sits on the mountain (Matthew 5), surrounded by sinners as His children; He opens His door to all, seeking their sonship to Him. In the Old Testament, “there were thundering and lightning’s, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled” (Ex. 19: 16)

“They said to Moses: ‘We speak with us and we shall hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Ex. 20: 19)

But in the New Testament, the Lord spoke in a gentle and meek voice, that drew all to Him. And as St. Augustine says: [Then, He gave the Law externally, to let the wicked tremble; But now, He gives it internally to justify them]. In the old days, He dealt with humanity as though with little children, who become afraid as they hear the terrifying voice; But in the New Testament, He speaks to us as mature children, seeking our love and friendship. Comparing between the two calls: in the old, with the narrow ranges, fear and trembling and in the new, with the invitation open to all, St. John Chrysostom says: [He is inviting us to heaven, to the banquet of the great and amazing King; Shall we linger and hesitate, instead of making haste and running to it ? ! In that case, how much hope do we have for our salvation ? We cannot excuse ourselves on the basis of our weakness, nor our nature; It is actually only laziness that makes us unworthy].

Thanks to God who opens before us the way to the holy mountain, and makes His Word call us all, without exception; not to receive the Law engraved on two tablets of stone, but to be given His Word living within us, and His commandment written on our hearts.

(2) God used the sound of very loud trumpet, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled ... *“And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice” (Ex. 19: 16, 19). Why did God use the sound of a trumpet ? Pope St. Athanasius answers this, saying: [The sound of trumpets brings with it alertness and awe, more than any other sound; This way was used to teach them, having been still like little children]. St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, believes the sound of trumpet symbolizes the preaching of divine incarnation, something that prophets sounded high, to proclaim to humanity its imminent coming. But, with the coming of the apostles, and their ascension to the holy mountain, “*The blast of the trumpet louder” (Ex. 19: 19); namely they proclaimed it more strongly, so that their voice and message reached the end of the world.**

(3) God descended on the Mount Sinai by fire; Himself being Fire, and His ministers around, preceding Him as a flame of fire (Psalm 104: 4); consuming everything that is wood, weed, or straw; and purifying at the same time, what is gold, silver or precious stone.

(4) God says to Moses: *"I come to you in the thick cloud"* (Ex. 19: 9); *"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thundering and lightning and a thick cloud on the mountain"* (Ex. 19: 16). The Book says: *"And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up"* (Ex. 19: 20). What is that cloud to which Moses approached to listen to the voice of God ?

St. Jerome answers this question in his comment on the words of the Psalter: *"Clouds and darkness surround Him"* (Psalm 97: 2); saying: [Two things surround the Lord: clouds and darkness. I assume that it is the same cloud, that was mentioned in the Bible, *"A bright cloud overshadowed them"* (Matthew 17: 5), that happened when the Lord transfigured, and His disciples fell on their faces before Him. I assume that it is similar to the cloud, spoken of in another situation: *"Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds"* (Psalm 36: 5); the faithfulness of the Lord, spoken of in the Bible: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"* (John 14: 6). The faithfulness of God is Christ, reaching to the cloud, namely, to the apostles and the prophets; those who were like the cloud, commanded by God to *"rain no rain on Israel"* (Isaiah 5: 6). That conforms with what came in the Book of Judges, when the fleece of wool on the threshing floor was dry, while rain came down on all the world (Judges 6: 39); which implies that Israel became dry, while it rained over all the world. *"Clouds and darkness surrounded Him"*; *"Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud"* (Isaiah 19: 1). Let us meditate in the meaning of this; The Lord is coming to Egypt where we live; coming to the land of darkness, of Pharaoh; But He is coming riding on a swift cloud; What is this swift cloud ? I think it is the Virgin St. Mary, who conceived the Word without human seed. That swift cloud came to the world, bringing with it the Creator of the world. What does Isaiah say ? *"The Lord will come into Egypt ..The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence; and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst"* (Isaiah 19: 1). That cloud that destroyed the temple of 'Serapes' in Alexandria, which was not destroyed by a human hand, but by that cloud, that was carrying Christ. Having known the cloud, let us now deal with the darkness. The Lord is in the light as well as in the darkness; He is in the light, for the beginners, with whom He speaks clearly; But for the more advanced, He speaks mystically; With the apostles, he does not speak as He does with the multitude. With the apostles He speaks mystically; saying what ? *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear"* (Luke 8: 8. This is the meaning of *"... darkness surrounded Him"*, meaning mistiness surrounded Him. That is why the Book of Exodus says that the people were down at the base of the mountain, while Moses alone went up the Mount of Sinai in a thick cloud; because all the people of God, except for Moses, were still not capable of recognizing the secret That is why the Book says: *"He made darkness His secret place"* (Psalm 18: 11).

6- A WARNING TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PRIESTS:

“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the Lord, and many of them perish; ... Also let the priests who come near the Lord sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break out against them” (Ex. 19: 21, 22)

The mountain was transformed into a ‘Most Holy’ place, through God’s descending on it; So the Lord feared for His people and priests, lest they perish because of their curiosity, by breaking through the awesome divine sanctuaries. Only Moses and Aaron ascended the mountain; Moses, as a representative of the divine Word, and Aaron, as a representative of the priesthood of the Lord Christ; Christ is alone, the divine Word, and the Priest, who enters into the divine sanctuaries; and without Whom we perish.

HOMILY I

IT were indeed not worthy for us at all to require the aid of the written Word, but to exhibit a life so pure, that the grace of the Spirit should be instead of books to our souls, and that as these are inscribed with ink, even so should our hearts be with the Spirit. But, since we have utterly put away from us this grace, come, let us at any rate embrace the second best course. For that the former was better, God had made manifest, both by His words, and by His doings. Since unto Noah, and unto Abraham, and unto his offspring, and unto Job, and unto Moses too, He discoursed not by writings, but Himself by Himself, finding their mind pure. But after the whole people of the Hebrews had fallen into the very pit of wickedness, then and thereafter was a written word, and tables, and the admonition which is given by these. And this one may perceive was the case, not of the saints in the Old Testament only, but also of those in the New. For neither to the apostles did God give anything in writing, but instead of written words He promised that He would give them the grace of the Spirit: for "He," says our Lord, "shall bring all things to your remembrance." And that you may learn that this was far better, hear what He says by the Prophet: "I will make a new covenant with you, putting my laws into their mind, and in their heart I will write them," and, "they shall be all taught of God." And Paul too, pointing out the same superiority, said, that they had received a law "not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." But since in process of time they made shipwreck, some with regard to doctrines, others as to life and manners, there was again need that they should be put in remembrance by the written word.

2. Reflect then how great an evil it is for us, who ought to live so purely as not even to need written words, but to yield up our hearts, as books, to the Spirit; now that we have lost that honor, and are come to have need of these, to fail again in duly employing even this second remedy. For if it be a blame to stand in need of written words, and not to have brought down on ourselves the grace of the Spirit; consider how heavy the charge of not choosing to profit even after this assistance, but rather treating what is written with neglect, as if it were cast forth without purpose, and at random, and so bringing down upon ourselves our punishment with increase. But that no such effect may ensue, let us give strict heed unto the things that are written; and let us learn how the Old Law was given on the one hand, how on the other the New Covenant.

3. How then was that law given in time past, and when, and where? After the destruction of the Egyptians, in the wilderness, on Mount Sinai, when smoke and fire were rising up out of the mountain, a trumpet sounding, thunders and lightning's, and Moses entering into the very depth of the cloud. But in the new covenant not so, — neither in a wilderness, nor in a mountain, nor with smoke and darkness and cloud and tempest; but at the beginning of the day, in a house, while all were sitting together, with great quietness, all took place. For to those, being more unreasonable, and hard to guide, there was need of outward pomp, as of a wilderness, a mountain, a smoke, a sound of trumpet, and the other like things: but they who were of a higher character, and submissive, trod who had risen above mere corporeal imaginations, required none of these. And if even in their case there was a sound, it was not for the sake of the apostles, but for the Jews, who

were present, on whose account also the tongues of fire appeared. For if even after this, some said, "they are filled with new wine," much more would they have said so, had they seen none of these things. And in the Old Testament, it was upon Moses' going up, that God came down; but here, when our nature hath been carried up into Heaven, or rather unto the royal throne, then the Spirit makes His descent. Now had the Spirit been an inferior being, the results would not have been greater and more wonderful. For indeed these tables are far better, and the achievements more illustrious. Since the apostles came not down from a mountain, as Moses, bearing monuments of stone in their hands, but carrying about the Spirit in their mind, and pouring forth a kind of treasure and fountain of doctrines and of gifts and of all things that are good, so they went everywhere around, and became, through that grace, living books and laws. Thus they won over "the three thousand," thus "the five thousand," thus the nations of the world; God, by their tongue, discoursing with all that approached them.

4. By whom Matthew also, being filled with the Spirit, wrote, what he did write: — Matthew the Publican, for I am not ashamed to name him by his trade, neither him nor the others. For this in a very special way indicates both the grace of the Spirit, and their virtue. And He hath properly called His work by a name (which signifies) good tidings. Yea, for it was removal of punishment, and remission of sins, and "righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," and adoption, and an inheritance of Heaven, and a relationship unto the Son of God, which he came declaring unto all; to enemies, to the perverse, to them that were sitting in darkness. What then could ever be equal to these good tidings? God on earth, man in Heaven; and all became mingled together, angels joined the choirs of men, men had fellowship with the angels, and with the other powers above: and one might see the long war brought to an end, and reconciliation made between God and our nature, the devil brought to shame, demons in flight, death destroyed, Paradise opened, the curse blotted out, sin put out of the way, error driven off, truth returning, the word of godliness everywhere sown, and flourishing in its growth, the polity of those above planted on the earth, those powers in secure intercourse with us, and on earth angels continually haunting, and hope abundant touching things to come. Therefore he hath called the history good tidings, forasmuch as all other things surely are words only without substance; as, for instance, plenty of wealth, greatness of power, kingdoms, and glories, and honors, and whatever other things among men are accounted to be good: but those which are published by the fishermen would be legitimately and properly called good tidings: not only as being sure and immovable blessings, and beyond our deserts, but also as being given to us with all facility. For not by laboring and sweating, not by fatigue and suffering, but merely as being beloved of God, we received what we have received.

5. And why can it have been, that when there were so many disciples, two write only from among the apostles, and two from among their followers? (For one that was a disciple of Paul, and another of Peter, together with Matthew and John, wrote the Gospels.) It was because they did nothing for vainglory, but all things for use. "What then? Was not one evangelist sufficient to tell all?" One indeed was sufficient; but if there be four that write, not at the same times, nor in the same places, neither after having met together, and conversed one with another, and then they speak all things as it were out of one mouth, this becomes a very great demonstration of the truth.

6. “But the contrary,” it may be said, “hath come to pass, for in many places they are convicted of discordance.” Nay, this very thing is a very great evidence of their truth. For if they had agreed in all things exactly even to time, and place, and to the very words, none of our enemies would have believed but that they had met together, and had written what they wrote by some human compact; because such entire agreement as this cometh not of simplicity. But now even that discordance which seems to exist in little matters delivers them from all suspicion, and speaks clearly in behalf of the character of the writers. But if there be anything touching times or places, which they have related differently, this nothing injures the truth of what they have said. And these things too, so far as God shall enable us, we will endeavor, as we proceed, to point out; requiring you, together with what we have mentioned, to observe, that in the chief heads, those which constitute our life and furnish out our doctrine, nowhere is any of them found to have disagreed, no not ever so little. But what are these points? Such as follow: That God became man, that He wrought miracles, that He was crucified, that He was buried, that He rose again, that He ascended, that He will judge, that He hath given commandments tending to salvation, that He hath brought in a law not contrary to the Old Testament, that He is a Son, that He is only-begotten, that He is a true Son, that He is of the same substance with the Father, and as many things as are like these; for touching these we shall find that there is in them a full agreement. And if amongst the miracles they have not all of them mentioned all, but one these, the other those, let not this trouble thee. For if on the one hand one had spoken of all, the number of the rest would have been superfluous; and if again all had written fresh things, and different one from another, the proof of their agreement would not have been manifest. For this cause they have both treated of many in common, and each of them hath also received and declared something of his own; that, on the one hand, he might not seem superfluous, and cast on the heap to no purpose; on the other, he might make our test of the truth of their affirmations perfect.

7. Now Luke tells us also the cause wherefore he proceeds to write: “that you may hold,” says he, “the certainty of the words wherein thou hast been instructed;” that is, that being continually reminded you may hold to the certainty, and abide in certainty. But as to John, he hath himself kept silence touching the cause; yet, (as a tradition says, which hath come down to us from the first, even from the Fathers,) neither did he come to write without purpose; but forasmuch as it had been the care of the three to dwell upon the account of the dispensation, and the doctrines of the Godhead were near being left in silence, he, moved by Christ, then and not till then set himself to compose his Gospel. And this is manifest both from the history itself, and from the opening of his Gospel. For he doth not begin like the rest from beneath, but from above, from the same point, at which he was aiming, and it was with a view to this that he composed the whole book. And not in the beginning only, but throughout all the Gospel, he is more lofty than the rest.

Of Matthew again it is said, that when those who from amongst the Jews had believed came to him, and besought him to leave to them in writing those same things, which he had spoken to them by word, he also composed his Gospel in the language of the Hebrews. And Mark too, in Egypt, is said to have done this self-same thing at the entreaty of the disciples. For this cause then Matthew, as writing to Hebrews, sought to show nothing more, than that He was from Abraham, and David; but Luke, as discoursing to all in general, traces up the account higher, going on even to Adam. And the one begins with His generation, because nothing was so soothing to the Jew as to be told that

Christ was the offspring of Abraham and David: the other doth not so, but mentions many other things, and then proceeds to the genealogy.

8. But the harmony between them we will establish, both by the whole world, which hath received their statements, and by the very enemies of the truth. For many sects have had birth, since their time, holding opinions opposed to their words; whereof some have received all that they have said, while some have cut off from the rest certain portions of their statements, and so retain them for themselves. But if there were any hostility in their statements, neither would the sects, who maintain the contrary part, have received all, but only so much as Seemed to harmonize with themselves; nor would those, which have parted off a portion, be utterly refuted by that portion; so that the very fragments cannot be hid, but declare aloud their connection with the whole body. And like as if you should take any part from the side of an animal, even in that part you would find all the things out of which the whole is composed; — nerves and veins, bones, arteries, and blood, and a sample, as one might say, of the whole lump; — so likewise with regard to the Scriptures; in each portion of what is there stated, one may see the connection with the whole clearly appearing. Whereas, if they were in discord, neither could this have been pointed out, and the doctrine itself had long since been brought to naught: “for every kingdom,” He said, “divided against itself shall not stand.” But now even in this shines forth the might of the Spirit, namely, in that it prevailed on these men, engaged as they were in those things which are more necessary and very urgent, to take no hurt at all from these little matters.

Now, where each one was abiding, when he wrote, it is not right for us to affirm very positively. But that they are not opposed to each other, this we will endeavor to prove, throughout the whole work. And thou, in accusing them of disagreement, art doing just the same as if thou wert to insist upon their using the same words and forms of speech.

9. And I do not yet say, that those likewise who glory greatly in rhetoric and philosophy, having many of them written many books touching the same matters, have not merely expressed themselves differently, but have even spoken in opposition to one another (for it is one thing to speak differently and another to speak at variance); none of these things do I say.

Far be it from me to frame our defense from the frenzy of those men, neither am I willing out of falsehood to make recommendations for the truth.

But this I would be glad to inquire: how were the differing accounts believed? how did they prevail? how was it that, while saying opposite things, they were admired, were believed, were celebrated everywhere in the world? And yet the witnesses of what they said were many, and many too were the adversaries and enemies thereof. For they did not write these things in one corner and bury them, but everywhere, by sea and by land, they unfolded them in the ears of all, and these things were read in the presence of enemies, even as they are now, and none of the things which they said offended any one. And very naturally, for it was a divine power that pervaded all, and made it to prosper with all men.

10. For if it had not been so, how could the publican, and the fisherman, and the unlearned, have attained to such philosophy? For things, which they that are without have never been able to imagine, no not in a dream, are by these men with great certainty both published and made

convincing, and not in their lives only, but even after death: neither to two men, nor twenty men, nor an hundred, nor a thousand, nor ten thousand, but to cities, nations, and people, both to land and sea, in the land both of Greeks and barbarians, both inhabited and desert; and all concerning things far beyond our nature. For leaving the earth, all their discourse is concerning the things in heaven, while they bring in unto us another principle of life, another manner of living: both wealth and poverty, freedom and slavery, life and death, our world and our polity, all changed. Not like Plato, who composed that ridiculous Republic, or Zeno, or if there be any one else that hath written a polity, or hath framed laws. For indeed, touching all these, it hath been made manifest by themselves, that an evil spirit, and some cruel demon at war with our race, a foe to modesty, and an enemy to good order, oversetting all things, hath made his voice be heard in their soul. When, for example, they make their women common to all, and stripping virgins naked in the Palaestra, bring them into the gaze of men; and when they establish secret marriages, mingling all things together and confounding them, and overturning the limits of nature, what else is there to say? For that these their sayings are all inventions of devils, and contrary to nature, even nature herself would testify, not tolerating what we have mentioned; and this, though they write not amidst persecutions, nor dangers, nor fighting's, but in all security and freedom, and deck it out with many ornaments from many sources. But these doctrines of the fishermen, chased as they were, scourged and in jeopardy, both learned and unlearned, both bond and free, both kings and private soldiers, both barbarians and Greeks, have received with all good will.

11. And you cannot say, that it was because these things were trifling and low, that they were easily to be received by all men: nay, for these doctrines are far higher than those. For as to virginity, they never imagined even the name thereof so much as in a dream, nor yet of voluntary poverty, nor of fasting, nor of any other of those things that are high. But they that are of our part not only exterminate lust, they chastise not only the act, but even an unchaste look, and insulting language, and disorderly laughter, and dress, and gait, and clamor, and they carry on their exactness even to the smallest things, and have filled the whole earth with the plant of virginity. And touching God too, and the things in heaven, they persuade men to be wise with such knowledge as no one of those hath at any time been able so much as to conceive in his mind. For how could they, who made for gods images of beasts, and of monsters that crawl on the earth, and of other things still more vile? Yet these high doctrines were both accepted and believed, and they flourish every day and increase; but the others have passed away, and perished, having disappeared more easily than spiders' webs. And very naturally, for they were demons that published these things; wherefore besides their uncleanness, their obscurity is great, and the labor they require greater. For what could be more ridiculous than that "republic," in which, besides what I have mentioned, the philosopher, when he hath spent lines without number, that he may be able to show what justice is, hath over and above this prolixity filled his discourse with much indistinctness? This, even if it did contain anything profitable, must needs be very useless for the life of man. For if the husbandman and the smith, the builder and the pilot, and everyone who subsists by the labor of his hands, is to leave his trade, and his honest toils, and is to spend such and such a number of years in order to learn what justice is; before he has learnt he will often times be absolutely destroyed by hunger, and perish because of this justice, not having learnt anything else useful to be known, and having ended his life by a cruel death.

12. But our lessons are not such; rather Christ have taught us what is just, and what is seemly, and what is expedient, and all virtue in general, comprising it in few and plain words: at one time saying that, “on two commandments hang the Law and the Prophets; that is to say, on the love of God and on the love of our neighbor: at another time, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. And these things even to a laborer, and to a servant, and to a widow woman, and to a very child, and to him that appears to be exceedingly slow of understanding, are all plain to comprehend and easy to learn. For the lessons of the truth are like this; and the actual result bears witness thereto. All at least have learned what things they are to do, and not learned only, but been emulous also of them; and not in the cities alone nor in the midst of the market places, but also in the summits of the mountains.

Yea, for there wilt thou see true wisdom abounding, and choirs of angels shining forth in a human body, and the commonwealth of Heaven manifested here on earth. For a commonwealth did these fishermen too write for us, not with commands that it should be embraced from childhood, like those others, nor making it a law that the virtuous man must be so many years old, but addressing their discourse generally to every age. For those lessons are children’s toys, but these are the truth of things. And as a place for this their commonwealth they have assigned Heaven, and God they have brought in as the framer thereof, and as lawgiver of the statutes there set; as indeed was their duty. And the rewards in their commonwealth” are not leaves of bay nor olive, nor an allowance of meat in the public hall, nor statues of brass, these cold and ordinary things, but a life which hath no end, and to become children of God, to join the angels’ choir, and to stand by the royal throne, and to be always with Christ. And the popular guides of this commonwealth are publicans, and fishermen, and tent-makers, not such as have lived for a short time, but such as are now living for ever. Therefore even after their death they may possibly do the greatest good to the governed. This republic is at war not with men, but with devils, and those incorporeal powers. Wherefore also their captain is no one of men, nor of angels, but God Himself. And the armor too of these warriors suits the nature of the warfare, for it is not formed of hides and steel, but of truth and of righteousness, and faith, and all true love of wisdom.

13. Since then the aforesaid republic is both the subject on which this book was written, and it is now proposed for us to speak thereof, let us give careful heed to Matthew, discoursing plainly concerning this: for what he says is not his own, but all Christ’s, who hath made the laws of this city. Let us give heed, I say, that we may be capable of enrollment therein, and of shining forth among those that have already become citizens thereof, and are awaiting those incorruptible crowns. To many, however, this discourse seems to be easy, while the prophetic writings are difficult. But this again is the view of men who know not the depth of the thoughts laid up therein. Wherefore I entreat you to follow us with much diligence, so as to enter into the very ocean of the things written, with Christ for our guide at this our entering in. But in order that the word may be the more easy to learn, we pray and entreat you, as we have done also with respect to the other Scriptures, to take up beforehand that portion of the Scripture which we may be going to explain, that your reading may prepare the way for your understanding (as also was the case with the eunuch), and so may greatly facilitate our task.

3. PATRISTIC WRITINGS ON FAITH AND SONSHIP TO GOD:

A. ST CYRIL COMMENTARY ON ST JOHN'S GOSPEL CHAPTER 1:12,13

12 *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to them that believe on His Name.*

A right judgment verily and worthy of God! The firstborn, Israel, is cast out; for he would not abide with God, nor did he *receive* the Son, Who *came* among *His own*, he rejected the Bestower of Nobility, he thrust away the Giver of Grace: the Gentiles *received* Him by faith. Therefore will Israel with reason receive the wages of their folly, they will mourn the loss of good things, they will receive the bitter fruit of their own ill-counsel, bereft of the sonship; and the Gentiles will delight themselves in the good things that are through faith, they shall find the bright rewards of their obedience and shall be planted out in his place. For they shall be *cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature*, and be *grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree*. And Israel shall hear, *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger: but one of Christ's disciples shall say to the Gentiles, But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light*. For since they received the Son through faith, they receive the *power to be ranked among the sons of God*. For the Son gives what is His alone and specially and of nature to be in their *power*, setting it forth as common, making this a sort of image of the love for man that is inherent to Him, and of His love for the world. For in none other way could we who bore *the image of the earthy* escape corruption, unless the beauty of *the image of the heavenly* were impressed upon us, through our being called to sonship. For being partakers of Him through the Spirit, we were sealed unto likeness with Him and mount up to the primal character of the Image after which the Divine Scripture says we were made. For thus hardly recovering the pristine beauty of our nature, and re-formed unto that Divine Nature, shall we be superior to the ills that have befallen us through the transgression. Therefore we mount up unto dignity above our nature for Christ's sake, and we too shall be *sons of God*, not like Him in exactitude, but by grace in imitation of Him. For He is Very Son, existing from the Father; we adopted by His Kindness, through grace receiving *I have said, Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High*. For the created and subject nature is called to what is above nature by the mere nod and will of the Father: but the Son and God and Lord will not possess this being God and Son, by the will of God the Father, nor in that He wills it only, but beaming forth of the Very Essence of the Father, He receives to Himself by Nature what is Its own Good. And again He is clearly seen to be Very Son, proved by comparison with ourselves. For since that which is by Nature has another mode of being from that which is by adoption, and that which is in truth from that which is by imitation, and we are called *sons of God* by adoption and imitation: hence He is Son by Nature and in truth, to Whom we made sons too are compared, gaining the good by grace instead of by natural endowments.

13 *Which were begotten, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.*

They who, he says, have been called by faith in Christ unto sonship with God, put off the littleness of their own nature, and adorned with the grace of Him Who honors them as with a splendid robe mount up unto dignity above nature: for no longer are they called children of *flesh*, but rather offspring of God by adoption.

But note how great guardedness the blessed Evangelist used in his words. For since he was going to say that those who believe *are begotten of God*, lest any should suppose that they are in truth born of the Essence of God the Father and arrive at an exact likeness with the Only-Begotten, or that of Him too is less properly said, *From the womb before the Day star begat I Thee*, and so at length He too should be brought down to the nature of creatures, even though He be said to be begotten of God, needs does he contrive this additional caution. For when he had said that *power* was given to them from Him Who is by Nature Son, to become *sons of God*, and had hereby first introduced that which is of adoption and grace, without peril does he afterwards add *were begotten of God*; that he might show the greatness of the grace which was conferred on them, gathering as it were into kinness of nature that which was alien from God the Father and raising up the bond to the nobility of its Lord, by means of His warm love to it.

What more then, will one perchance say, or what special have they who believe in Christ over Israel, since he too is said to have been begotten of God, as in, *I begat and exalted sons, but they rejected Me*? To this I think one must say, first, that *the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*, did not give to the children of Israel to have even this in truth, but limned as in type and outline upon them, *until the time of reformation*, as it is written, wherein they should at length be manifested who should more fitly and truly call God Father, because the Spirit of the Only-Begotten dwells in them. For the one had *the spirit of bondage to fear*, the other *the spirit of adoption* unto liberty, *whereby we cry Abba, Father*. Therefore the people who should attain unto sonship through faith that is in Christ, were fore-described in Israel as it were in shadow, even as we conceive that the circumcision in Spirit was fore-typified in theirs of old in the flesh, and in short, all of ours were in them in type. Besides, we say that Israel was called to sonship typically through the mediator Moses. Wherefore they *were baptized into* him too, as Paul says, *in the cloud and in the sea*, and were refashioned out of idolatry unto the law of bondage, the commandment contained in the letter being ministered *by angels*: but they who by faith in Christ attain unto sonship with God, are baptized into naught originate, but into the Holy Trinity Itself, through the Word as Mediator, Who conjoined to Himself things human through the Flesh which was united to Him, being conjoined of nature to the Father, in that He is by Nature God. For so mounts up the bond unto sonship, through participation with the in truth Son, called and so to say raised up to the dignity which is in Him by Nature. Wherefore we who have received the regeneration by the Spirit through faith, are called and are begotten of God.

But since some in mad peril dare to lie, as against the Son, so against the Holy Ghost too, saying that He is originate and created, and to thrust Him forth altogether from. Consubstantiality with God the Father, come let us again arraying the word of the true Faith against their unbridled tongues, beget occasions of profit both to ourselves and to our readers. For if neither God by Nature, O sirs, nor yet of God, is He Who is His Own Spirit and therefore Essentially inexistent in

Him, but is other than He, and not removed from being connatural with things made, how are we who are begotten through Him said to be *begotten of God*? For either we shall say that the Evangelist certainly lies, or (if he is true and it be so and not otherwise), the Spirit will be God and of God by Nature, of Whom we too being accounted worthy to partake through faith to Christward, are rendered *partakers of the Divine Nature* and are said to be *begotten of God*, and are therefore called gods, not by grace alone winging our flight to the glory that is above us, but as having now God too indwelling and lodging in us, according to what is said in the prophet, *I will dwell in them and walk in them*.

For let them tell us who are filled full with so great unlearning, how, having the *Spirit dwelling in us*, we are according to Paul *temples of God*, unless He be God by Nature. For if He be a creature and originate, wherefore does *God destroy us, as defiling the temple of God* when we defile the body wherein the Spirit indwells, having the whole Natural Property of God the Father and likewise of the Only-Begotten? And how will the Savior be true in saying: *If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him and we will come unto him and make Our abode with him and rest in him?* albeit it is the Spirit Who dwells in us, and through Him do we believe that we have the Father and the Son, even as John himself said again in his epistles, *Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit*. And how at all will He be called Spirit of God, if He be not of Him and in Him by Nature and therefore God? For if being, as those say, originate, He is the Spirit of God, there is nothing to hinder the other creatures too from being called spirits of God. For this will have already overtaken them in potential, if it is at all possible that originate essence should be Spirit of God.

And it were meet in truth to set forth a long discourse upon these things and to satiate more at length, overturning the uncounsels of the heretics. But having already sufficiently gone through what relates to the Holy Ghost, in the *De Trinitate*, we shall therefore forbear to say much yet.

B. ST. AUGUSTINE ON 1 JOHN 3:1-3

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God: therefore the world does not know us not, because it knew not Him, the world does not know not us also. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it is not yet manifested what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure."

4. Hear. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath given us, that we should be called sons of God, and be (such). For whoso are called sons, and are not sons, what profits them the name where the thing is not? How many are called physicians, who know not how to heal! how many are called watchers, who sleep all night long! So, many are called Christians, and yet in deeds are not found such; because they are not this which they are called, that is, in life, in manners, in faith, in hope, in charity. But what have ye heard here, brethren? "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God: therefore the world does not know us, because it had not known Him, us also the world does not know." There is a whole

world Christian, and a whole world ungodly; because throughout the whole world there are ungodly, and throughout the whole world there are godly: those know not these. In what sense, think we, do they not know them? They deride them that live good lives. Mark well and see: for haply there are such also among you. Each one of you who now lives godly, who despises worldly things, who does not choose to go to spectacles, who does not choose to make himself drunken as it were by solemn custom, yea, what is worse, under countenance of holy days to make himself unclean: the man who does not choose to do these things, how is he derided by those who do them! Would he be scoffed at if he were known?

But why is he not known? "The world knows Him not." Who is "the world"? Those inhabitants of the world. Just as we say, "a house;" meaning, its inhabitants. These things have been said to you again and again, and we forbear to repeat them to your disgust. By this time, when you hear the word "world," in a bad signification, you know that you must understand it to mean only lovers of the world because through love they inhabit, and by inhabiting have become entitled to the name. Therefore the world hath not known us, because it hath not known Him. He walked here Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh; He was God, He was latent in weakness. And wherefore was He not known? Because He reproved all sins in men. They, through loving the delights of sins, did not acknowledge the God: through loving that which the fever prompted, they did wrong to the Physician.

5. For us then, what are we? Already we are begotten of Him; but because we are such in hope, he said, "Beloved, now are we sons of God." Now already? Then what is it we look for, if already we are sons of God? "And not yet," said he, "is it manifested what we shall be." But what else shall we be than sons of God? Hear what follows: "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." Understand, my beloved. It is a great matter: "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." In the first place mark, what is called "is." Ye know what it is that is so called. That which is called "is," and not only is called but is so, is unchangeable: It ever remains, It cannot be changed, It is in no part corruptible: It hath neither proficiency, for It is perfect; nor hath deficiency, for It is eternal. And

what is this? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And what is this? "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." To see Christ in this sort, Christ in the form of God, Word of God, Only-Begotten of the Father, equal with the Father, is to the bad impossible. But in regard that the Word was made flesh, the bad also shall have power to see Him: because in the day of judgment the bad also will see Him; for He shall so come to judge, as He came to be judged. In the selfsame form, a man, but yet God: for "cursed is every one that put his trust in man." A man, He came to be judged, a man, He will come to judge. And if He shall not be seen, what is this that is written, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced?" For of the ungodly it is said, that they shall see and be confounded. How shall the ungodly not see, when He shall set some on the right hand, others on the left? To those on the right hand He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom:" to those on the left He will say, "Go into everlasting fire." They will see but the form of a servant, the form of God they will not see. Why? because they were ungodly; and the Lord Himself said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Therefore, we are to see a certain vision, my brethren, "which neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man:" a certain vision, a vision surpassing all earthly beautifulness, of gold, of silver, of groves and fields; the beautifulness of sea and air, the beautifulness of sun and moon, the beautifulness of the stars, the beautifulness of angels: surpassing all things: because from it are all things beautiful.

6. What then shall "we" be, when we shall see this? What is promised to us? "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." The tongue has done what it could, hath sounded the words: let the rest be thought by the heart. For what hath even John himself said in comparison of That which Is, or what can be said by us men, who are so far from being equal to his merits? Return we therefore to that unction of Him, return we to that unction which inwardly teach that which we cannot speak: and because you cannot at present see, let your part and duty be in desire. The whole life of a good Christian is an holy desire. Now what thou longest for, you don 't yet see: howbeit by longing, you are made capable, so that when that is come which thou may see, you shall be filled. For just as, if you would fill a bag, and know how great the thing is that shall be given, you stretch the opening of the sack or the skin, or whatever else it be; you know how much thou would put in, and sees that the bag is narrow; by stretching you make it capable of holding more: so God, by deferring our hope, stretches our desire; by the desiring, stretches the mind; by stretching, makes it more capacious. Let us desire therefore, my brethren, for we shall be filled. See Paul widening, as it were, his bosom, that it may be able to receive that which is to come. He said, namely, "Not that I have already received, or am already perfect: brethren, I deem not myself to have apprehended." Then what art thou doing in this life, if you have not yet apprehended? "But this one thing [I do]; forgetting the things that are behind, reaching forth to the things that are before, upon the strain I follow on unto the prize of the high calling." He says he reaches forth, or stretches himself, and says that he follows "upon the strain." He felt himself too little to take in that "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man." This is our life, that by longing we should be exercised. But holy longing exercises us just so much as we prune off our longings from the love of the world. We have already said, "Empty out that which is to be filled." With good thou art to be filled: pour out the bad. Suppose that God would fill thee with honey: if you are full of vinegar, where wilt you put the honey? That which the vessel bore in it must be poured out: the vessel itself must be cleansed; must be cleansed, albeit with labor, albeit with hard rubbing, that it

may become fit for that thing, whatever it be. Let us say honey, say gold, say wine; whatever we say it is, being that which cannot be said, whatever we would fain say, It is called — God. And when we say” God,” what have we said? Is that one syllable the whole of that we look for? So then, whatever, we have had power to say is beneath Him: let us stretch ourselves unto Him, that when He shall come, He may fill us. For “we shall be like Him; because we shall see Him as He is.”

7. “And every one that hath this hope in Him.” Ye see how he hath set us our place, in “hope.” Ye see how the Apostle Paul agrees with his fellow apostle, “By hope we are saved. But hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man sees, why doth he hope for? For if what we see not, we hope for, by patience we wait for it.” This very patience exercise desire. Continue thou, for He continues: and persevere thou in walking, that thou may reach the goal: for that to which thou tend will not remove. See: “And every one that hath this hope in Him, purify himself even as He is pure.” See how he has not taken away free-will, in that he said, “purify himself.” Who purify us but God? Yea, but God doth not purify thee if you be unwilling. Therefore, in that you join your will to God, in that you purify yourself. You purify yourself, not by thyself, but by Him who comes to inhabit you. Still, because thou doest somewhat therein by the will, therefore is somewhat attributed to thee. But it is attributed to thee only to the end you should say, as in the Psalm, “Be You my helper, forsake me not.” If you say, “Be You my helper,” thou doest somewhat: for if thou be doing nothing, how should He be said to “help” thee?

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON ROMANS 8:14-20

Verse 14. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”*

Now this is again a much greater honor than the first. And this is why he does not say merely, As many as live by the Spirit of God, but, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God,” to show that he would have Him use such power over our life as a pilot doth over a ship, or a charioteer over a pair of horses. And it is not the body only, but the soul itself too, that he is for setting under reins of this sort. For he would not have even that independent, but place its authority also under the power of the Spirit. For lest through a confidence in the Gift of the Font they should turn negligent of their conversation after it, he would say, that even supposing you receive baptism, yet if you are not minded to be “led by the Spirit” afterwards, you lose the dignity bestowed upon you, and the preeminence of your adoption. This is why he does not say, As many as have received the Spirit, but, “as many as are led by the Spirit,” that is, as many as live up to this all their life long, “they are the sons of God.” Then since this dignity was given to the Jews also, for it says, “I said ye are Gods, and all of you children of the Most High” (Psalm 82:6); and again, “I have nourished and brought up children” (Isaiah 1:2); and so, “Israel is My first-born” (Exodus 4:22); and Paul too says, “Whose is the adoption” (Romans 9:4) — he next asserts the great difference between the latter and the former honor. For though the names are the same, he means, still, the things are not the same. And of these points he gives a clear demonstration, by introducing a comparison drawn both from the persons so advanced and from what was given them, and from what was to come. And first he shows what they of old had given them. What then was this? “A spirit of bondage:” and so he thus proceeds,

Verse 15. *“For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.”*

Then not staying to mention that which stand’s in contradistinction to bondage, that is, the spirit of freedom, he has named what is far greater, that of adoption, through which he at the same time brings in the other, saying, “But ye have received the Spirit of adoption.” But this is plain. But what the spirit of bondage may be, is not so plain, and there is need of making it clearer. Now what he says is so far from being clear, that it is in fact very perplexing. For the people of the Jews did not receive the Spirit. What then is his meaning here? It is the letter he gives this name to, for spiritual it was, and so he called the Law spiritual also, and the water from the Rock, and the Manna. “For they did eat,” he says, “of the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink.” (1 Corinthians 10:3, 4.) And to the Rock he gives this name, when he says, “For they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them.” Now it is because all the rites then wrought were above nature that he calls them spiritual, and not. because those who then partook of them received the Spirit. And in what sense were those letters, letters of bondage? Set before yourself the whole dispensation, and then you will have a clear view of this also. For recompenses were with them close at hand, and the reward followed forthwith, being at once proportionate, and like a kind of daily ration given to domestic servants, and terrors in abundance came to their height before their eyes, and their purifications concerned their bodies, and their continence extended but to their actions. But with us it is not so, since the imagination even and the conscience gets purged out. For He does not say, “You shall do no murder,” only, but even thou shall not be angry: so too, it is not, “Thou shall not commit adultery,” but you shall not look unchastely. So that it is not to be from fear

of present punishment, but out of desire towards Himself, that both our being habitually virtuous, and all our single good deeds are to come. Neither doth he promise a land flowing with milk and honey, but makes us joint-heir with the Only-Begotten, so making us by every means stand aloof from things present, and promising to give such things especially as are worth the acceptance of men made sons of God, nothing, that is, of a sensible kind or corporeal, but spiritual all of them. And so they, even if they had the name of sons, were but as slaves; but we as having been made free, have received the adoption, and are waiting for Heaven. And with them He discoursed through the intervention of others, with us by Himself. And all that they did was through the impulse of fear, but the spiritual act through a coveting and a vehement desire. And this they show by the fact of their overstepping the commandments. They, as hirelings and obstinate persons, so never left murmuring: but these do all for the pleasing of the Father. So too they blasphemed when they had benefits done them: but we are thankful at being jeopardded; And if there be need of punishing both of us upon our sinning, even in this case the difference is great. For it is not on being stoned and branded and maimed by the priests, as they were, that we are brought round. But it is enough for us to be cast out from our Father's table, and to be out of sight for certain days. And with the Jews the honor of adoption was one of name only, but here the reality followed also, the cleansing of Baptism, the giving of the Spirit, the furnishing of the other blessings. And there are several other points besides, which go to show our high birth and their low condition. After intimating all these then by speaking of the Spirit, and fear, and the adoption, he gives a fresh proof again of having the Spirit of adoption. Now what is this? That "we cry, Abba, Father." And how great this is, the initiated know (St. Cyr. Jeremiah Cat. 23, 11, p. 276, O.T.), being with good reason bidden to use this word first in the Prayer of the initiated. What then, it may be said, did not they also call God Father? Dost thou not hear Moses, when he says, "You deserted the God that begot you?" (Deuteronomy 32:15. LXX.) Do you not hear Malachi reproaching them, and saying, that "one God formed you," and there is "one Father of you all?" (Malachi 2:10. LXX.)

Still, if these words and others besides are used, we do not find them anywhere calling God by the name, or praying in this language. But we all, priests and laymen, rulers and ruled, are ordered to pray herein. And this is the first language we give utterance to, after those marvelous throes, and that strange and unusual mode of labor. If in any other instances they so called Him, that was only of their own mind. But those in the state of grace do it through being moved by the in-working of the Spirit. For as there is a Spirit of Wisdom, after which they that were unwise became wise, and this discloses itself in their teaching: and a Spirit of Power there is, whereby the feeble raised up the dead, and drove out devils; a Spirit also of the gift of healing, and a Spirit of prophecy, and a Spirit of tongues, so also a Spirit of adoption. And as we know the Spirit of prophecy, in that he who hath it foretells things to come, not speaking of his own mind, but moved by the Grace; so too is the Spirit of adoption, whereby he that is gifted with it calls God, Father, as moved by the Spirit.

Wishing to express this as a most true descent, he used also the Hebrew tongue, for he does not say only, "Father," but "Abba, Father," which name is a special sign of true-born children to their fathers. After mentioning then the diversity resulting from their conversation, that resulting from the grace which had been given, and that from their freedom, he brings forward another demonstration of the superiority which goes with this adoption. Now of what kind is this?

Verse 16. *"The Spirit Itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*

For it is not from the language merely, he says, that I make my assertion, but from the cause out of which the language has its birth; since it is from the Spirit suggesting it that we so speak. And this in another passage he has put into plainer words, thus: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father." (Galatians 4:6.) And what is that, "Spirit bears witness with spirit?" The Comforter, he means, with that Gift, which is given unto us. For it is not of the Gift alone that it is the voice, but of the Comforter also who gave the Gift, He Himself having taught us through the Gift so to speak. But when the "Spirit bears witness" what farther place for doubtfulness? For if it were a man, or angel, or archangel, or any other such power that promised this, then there might be reason in some doubting. But when it is the Highest Essence that bestows this Gift, and "bears witness" by the very words He bade us use in prayer, who would doubt any more of our dignity? For not even when the Emperor elects any one, and proclaims in all men's hearing the honor done him, does anybody venture to gainsay.

Verse 17. *"And if children, then heirs."*

Observe how he enhances the Gift by little and little. For since it is a possible case to be children, and yet not become heirs (for it is not by any means all children that are heirs), he adds this besides — that we are heirs. But the Jews, besides their not having the same adoption as we, were also cast out from the inheritance. For "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen" (Matthew 21:41): and before this, He said that "many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, but the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out." (ib. 8:11, 12.) But even here he does not pause, but sets down something even greater than this. What may this be then? That we are heirs of God; and so he adds, "heirs of God." And what is more still, that we are not simply heirs, but also "joint heirs with Christ." Observe how ambitious he is of bringing us near to the Master.

For since it is not all children that are heirs, he shows that we are both children and heirs; next, as it is not all heirs that are heirs to any great amount, he shows that we have this point with us too, as we are heirs of God. Again, since it were possible to be God's heir, but in no sense "joint heir with" the Only-Begotten, he shows that we have this also. And consider his wisdom. For after throwing the distasteful part into a short compass, when he was saying what was to become. of such as "live after the flesh," for instance, that they "shall die," when he comes to the more soothing part, he leads forth his discourse into a large room, and so expands it on the recompense of rewards, and in pointing out that the gifts too are manifold and great. For if even the being a child were a grace unspeakable, just think how great a thing it is to be heir! But if this be great, much more is it to be "joint heir." Then to show that the Gift is not of grace only, and to give at the same time a credibility to what he says, he proceed. "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." If, he would say, we be sharers with Him in what is painful, much more shall it be so in what is good. For He who bestowed such blessings upon those who had wrought no good, how, when He sees them laboring and suffering so much, shall he do else than give them greater requital? Having then shown that the thing was a matter of return, to make men give credit to what was said, and prevent any from doubting, he shows further that it has the virtue of a gift. The one he showed that what was said might gain credit even with those that doubted, and that the receivers of it might not feel ashamed as being evermore receiving salvation for naught; and the other, that you might see that God outdoes the toils by His recompenses. And the one he has

shown in the words, "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." But the other in proceeding to add;

Verse 18. *"The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

In what went before, he requires of the spiritual man the correcting of his habits (Mar. and 6 Mss. passions), where he says, "Ye are not debtors to live after the flesh," that such an one, for instance, should be above lust, anger, money, vainglory, grudging. But here having reminded them of the whole gift, both as given and as to come, and raised him up aloft with hopes, and placed him near to Christ, and showed him to be a joint-heir of the Only-Begotten; he now leads him forth with confidence even to dangers. For to get the better of the evil affections in us, is not the same thing with bearing up under those trials, scourges, famine, plundering, bonds, chains, executions. For these last required much more of a noble and vigorous sprat. And observe how he at once allays and rouses the spirit of the combatants. For after he had shown that the rewards were greater than the labors, he both exhorts to greater efforts, and yet will not let them be elated, as being still outdone by the crowns given in requital. And in another passage he says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17): it being the deeper sort of persons he was then speaking to. Here, however, he does not allow that the afflictions were light; but still he mingles comfort with them by the compensation which good things to come afford, in the words, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared," and he does not say, with the rest that is to come, but what is much greater, "with the glory which is to come." For it does not follow, that where rest is there is glory; but that where glory is there is rest, does follow: then as he had said that it is to come, he shows that it already is. For he does not say, that which is to be, but "which shall be revealed in us," as if already existing but unrevealed. As also in another place he said in clearer words, "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Be then of a good heart about it. For already has it been prepared, and awaits your labors. But if it vexes you that it is yet to come, rather let this very thing rejoice you. For it is owing to its being great and unutterable, and transcending our present condition, that it is stored up there. And so he has not put barely "the sufferings of this present time," but he speaks so as to show that it is not in quality only, but in quantity also, that the other life has the advantage. For these sufferings, whatever they are, are attached to our present life; but the blessings to come reach themselves out over ages without end. And since he had no way of giving a particular description of these, or of putting them before us in language, he gives them a name from what seems to be specially an object of desire with us, "glory." For the summit of blessings and the sum of them, this seems to be. And to urge the hearer on in another way also, he gives a loftiness to his discourse by the mention of the creation, gaining two points by what he is next saying, the contempt of things present, and the desire of things to come, and a third beside these, or rather the first, is the showing how the human race is cared for on God's part and in what honor He holds our nature. And besides this, all the doctrines of the philosophers, which they had framed for themselves about this world, as a sort of cobweb or child's mound, he throws down with this one doctrine. But that these things may stand in a clearer light, let us hear the Apostle's own language.

Verse 19, 20. *“For the earnest expectation of the creation waits,” he says, “for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.”*

And the meaning is something of this kind. The creation itself is in the midst of its pangs, waiting for and expecting these good things whereof we have just now spoken. For “earnest expectation” (looking out) implies expecting intensely. And so his discourse becomes more emphatic, and he personifies this whole world as the prophets also do, when they introduce the floods clapping their hands, and little hills leaping, and mountains skipping, not that we are to fancy them alive, or ascribe any reasoning power to them, but that we may learn The greatness of the blessings, so great as to reach even to things without sense also. The very same thing they do many times also in the case of afflicting things,

since they bring in the vine lamenting, and the wine too, and the mountains, and the boarding of the Temple howling, and in this case too it is that we may understand the extremity of the evils. It is then in imitation of these that the Apostle makes a living person of the creature here, and says that it groans and travails: not that he heard any groan conveyed from the earth and heaven to him, but that he might show the exceeding greatness of the good things to come; and the desire of freedom from the ills which now pervaded them. “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same.” What is the meaning of, “the creation was made subject to vanity?” Why that it became corruptible. For what cause, and on what account? On account of thee, O man. For since thou hast taken a body mortal and liable to suffering, the earth too hath received a curse, and brought forth thorns and thistles. But that the heaven, when it is waxen old along with the earth, is to change afterwards to a better portion hear from the Prophet in his words; “Thou, O Lord, from the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but you shall endure; and they all shall wax old as does a garment, and as a cloak shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed.” (Psalm 102:25, 26.) Isaiah too declares the same, when he says, “Look to the heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, for the heavens are as a firmament of smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner. (Isaiah 51:6.). Now you see in what sense the creation is “in bondage to vanity” and how it is to be freed from the ruined state. For the one says, “You shall fold them up as a garment, and they shall be changed;” and Isaiah says, “and they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner,” not of course meaning an utter perishing. For neither do they that dwell therein, mankind, that is, undergo such an one, but a temporary one, and through it they are changed into an incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:53) state, and so therefore will the creature be. And all this he showed by the way, by his saying “in like manner” (2 Peter 3:13), which Paul also says farther on. At present, however, he speaks about the bondage itself, and shows for what reason it became such, and gives ourselves as the cause of it. What then? Was it harshly treated on another’s account? By no means, for it was on my account that it was made. What wrong then is done it, which was made for my sake, when it suffers these things for my correction? Or, indeed, one has no need to moot the question of right and wrong at all in the case of things void of soul and feeling. But Paul, since he had made it a living person, makes use of none of these topics I have mentioned, but another kind of language, as desiring to comfort the hearer with the utmost advantage. And of what kind is this? What have you to say? he means. It was evil intreated for your sake, and became corruptible; yet it has had no wrong done it. For incorruptible

will it be for thy sake again. This then is the meaning of “in hope.” But when he says, it was “not willingly” that it was made subject, it is not to show that it is possessed of judgment that he says so, but that you may learn that the whole is brought about by Christ’s care. and this is no achievement of its own. And now say in what hope?

SECOND SECTION: CORE MATERIALS

FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM THEME AND OBJECTIVES

God Reveals Himself to Us

Lesson List (50 lessons)

During the first year, students learn about the Trinity, the story of Salvation, and develop the right image of God, which is no other but His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father sends the Son and the Son sends the Spirit from the Father. Through the Son and the Spirit we are reconciled to the Father.

UNIT I: GOODNESS OF GOD THE FATHER (6 LESSONS)

1. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is a Friend of Children
2. God is the Creator of Good Things
3. God Loves Us and Cares for Us; God Is Our Father
4. God Our Father Is powerful
5. God Looks Out for Us When We Are in Trouble
6. Unit Review

UNIT II: GOD CALL US HIS CHILDREN (5 LESSONS)

7. Baptism is When We Became Children of God
8. Honoring and Worshipping Our Holy God
9. We Talk to God Our Father
10. God Talks to Us: We Listen
11. Unit Review

UNIT III: (ADVENT) GOD SENDS HIS SON (6 LESSONS)

12. The Fall of Man and the Need for a Savior
13. God Prepares for the Coming of His Son (I): Archangel Gabriel Announces the Birth of St. John
14. God Prepares for the Coming of His Son (II): Archangel Gabriel Announces the Birth of Our Lord
15. God Prepares for the Coming of His Son (III): The Visitation of St Mary to Elizabeth
16. Our Lord is Born in Bethlehem
17. Unit Review

UNIT IV: OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST IS GOOD AND LOVES US (6 LESSONS)

18. Holy Baptism of Our Lord (Theophany)
19. Our Lord Calls His Helpers - Making Fishers of Men
20. Our Lord Looks Out for Us When We Are in Trouble
21. Our Lord Reveals the Father's Care
22. Our Lord, Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and to love our neighbor
23. Unit Review

UNIT V: OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST GIVES HIMSELF UP FOR US: (6 LESSONS)

24. Our Lord Raises Lazarus from the Dead
25. Mary Anoints the Feet of Our Lord
26. Our Lord Enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday
27. Our Lord Makes the First Eucharist on Covenant Thursday of Pascha
28. Our Lord is Crucified and Buried on Great Friday of Pascha
29. Unit Review

UNIT VI: OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN (5 LESSONS)

30. Our Lord Is Raised from the Dead on Sunday of Resurrection.
31. Our Lord Appears After His Resurrection I: Thomas Sunday
32. Our Lord Appears After His Resurrection II: 2 Disciples on the Road to Emmaus
33. Our Lord Appears After His Resurrection III: by the Sea of Tiberius
34. Our Lord Ascended to Heaven

35. Unit Review

UNIT VII: OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SENT US THE HOLY SPIRIT FROM THE FATHER (6 LESSONS)

36. Our Lord Sends the Holy Spirit on His disciples on Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church
37. The Holy Spirit Continued the Work of Our Lord in the Church I: Healing the Lame Man
38. The Holy Spirit Continued the Work of Our Lord in the Church II: Deacon Philip's Mission
39. The Holy Spirit Continued the Work of Our Lord in the Church III: Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
40. The Holy Spirit Continued the Work of Our Lord in the Church IV: St. Mark Taught Egypt About Our Lord
41. Unit Review


UNIT VIII: OUR LORD SHALL COME AGAIN (1 LESSON)

42. Our Lord shall come again

UNIT VIII: THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US TO BE LIKE OUR LORD (8 LESSONS)

43. The Holy Spirit Gave Kindness and Love to St. Bishoy
44. The Holy Spirit Gave patience and Obedience to St. John the Short
45. The Holy Spirit Gave Courage to St. Barsuma the Naked
46. The Holy Spirit Gave Joy and Kindness to St. Nicholas
47. The Holy Spirit Gave Faith to St. Simon the Cobbler

UNIT IX: SEASONAL AND ACTIVITY LESSONS (3 LESSONS)

48. The Feast of Nyrouz (Help the students celebrate the feast processional with colored icons of martyrs)
 49. The Feast of the Holy Cross (Help the students celebrate the vespers processional with wooden crosses and color coded ribbons)
 50. The Feast of the Holy Theotokos (How to make an icon of the Theotokos)
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We are Children of God

Lesson List (46 Lessons)

In this year, the second graders will explore their calling as the children of God. With the revelation of God as Trinity, we as Christians find the revelation of our sonship to God. We picked our sonship in Baptism. The Eucharist is the main source of the grace of sonship that maintains and builds us in our calling. Children of God are those who know His will that is in His Word. They are lead by His Spirit (Roman 8:14). Faith, as trusting our lives to Christ, is the first sign of our Christian confession as the children of God (John 1:12). These Ingredients: The Holy Spirit, Baptism, Eucharist, Commandments, and Faith make the recipe for this years' curriculum.

UNIT I: CHRIST GIVES US THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD (9 LESSONS)

Purpose: The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, *the offering, the receiving and the remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

*"12But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "14And the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. " "16And of His fullness we have all **received**, and grace for grace. 17For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." John 1:12, 13, 14, 16*

1. Theophany- In Baptism we become the children of God
2. The Bread from Heaven
3. Our Lord Feeds the Multitude with Five Loaves and Two Fish
4. The First Eucharist
5. The Eucharist, what we receive
6. The Eucharist, what we offer
7. The Eucharist, what we remember
8. The Eucharist, how to prepare
9. Unit Review

UNIT II: OUR FATHER'S COMMANDMENTS (7 LESSONS)

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us.

10. Introduction: Moses receives the 10 commandments
11. Commandments 1 and 2
12. Commandments 3 and 4
13. Commandment 5
14. Commandment 6
15. Commandment 7, 8, 9, 10
16. Unit Review

UNIT III: THE JOURNEY OF LENT - RETURNING TO THE FATHER (5 LESSONS)

Purpose: To make the journey of the children of God in the wilderness with our Lord and find our true identity through temptation

17. The Temptation
18. The Prodigal son
19. The Samaritan woman
20. Holy Week of Pascha
21. Palm Sunday

UNIT IV: THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP (9 LESSONS)

Purpose: God sent His Spirit to our hearts. We experience the fruits of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. The fruit of the Spirit is called fruit because it is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit as the temple of God. It is the fruit of the Spirit that gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmit to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ, to the Father.

22. Introduction
23. Love
24. Peace & Joy
25. Patience,
26. Kindness and Goodness

27. Faithfulness
28. Meekness
29. Self control
30. Unit Review

UNIT IV: ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF FAITH (7 LESSONS)

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham, the first Patriarch, is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple follow me - all the way to offer your only son. Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice (of the heavenly Father of His only begotten) would be for us.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”¹, 4For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.”²

31. The Role of the Earthly Father - Abraham is called
32. Abraham and Lot
33. Abraham & the promises
34. Abraham and the visitors
35. Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah
36. Isaac is sacrificed - the Covenant
37. Review

UNIT V: SEASONAL AND ACTIVITY LESSONS. (14 LESSONS)

38. The feast of Nyrouz: (Help the students celebrate the feast processional with colored icons of Martyrs)
39. The feast of the Holy Cross: (Help the students celebrate the vespers processional with Wooden crosses and color coded ribbons)
40. The Month of Kiahk
41. The Holy Nativity

¹ John 1:12

² 1 John 5:4-5

39. The Flight to Egypt
40. The Holy Theophany
41. The Holy Resurrection
42. The Holy fifty days
43. The Holy Ascension and The Holy Pentecost
44. Visiting the Temple at 12
45. The fast and feast of the holy apostles
46. The feast of the Holy Theotokos (How to make an Icon of the Theotokos)
47. The feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord

God Gives Us Reconciliation & Eternal Life In His Son

Lesson List (43 Lessons)

UNIT I: REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION:

1. Who is the sinner? Our Lord Loves the Sinners (I): The Story of Zacchaeus
2. Who is the sinner? Our Lord loves the sinners (II): The Pharisee and the Tax Collector
3. Our Lord Jesus Christ Loves All Sinners, No Matter How Bad They Are (Luke 15:7 & Mt 9:12)
4. Stories of Sinners Who Became Friends of Our Lord Jesus Christ: St. Moses the Black
5. The Mystery of Repentance and Confession (I): The Work of the Holy Spirit
6. The Mystery of Repentance and Confession (II): The Confession (in steps)
7. The Mystery of Repentance and Confession (III): Becoming Better Persons (include unit review)

UNIT 2: THE DIVINE LITURGY

8. Introduction to the liturgy
9. The offertory:
10. The liturgy of the word: (We listen carefully)
11. The Reconciliation prayer: (forgive us as we forgive)
12. The litanies and The commemoration of the saints and the departed –
13. The fraction and The confession
14. How to receive communion / review unit

UNIT 3: THE OLD TESTAMENT FATHERS OF GOD'S FAMILY:

15. Review of Abraham's life as God chosen to father his earthly family from last year.
16. God renew His covenant with Isaac to continue to lead the family of God. Genesis: 26.
17. God renew the covenant with Jacob. The ladder to heaven Genesis 28:10-22.
18. Jacob leaves Laban. Genesis 31- 33.
19. Review Unit

UNIT 4: THE MYSTERY OF BAPTISM

20. All mysteries
21. The crossing of the red sea- as a baptism
22. Naaman the Syrian (2 kings)
23. The Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch
24. The baptism of Christ and our baptism
25. Unit Review

UNIT 5: UNITY IN CHRIST

26. Old and Young
27. Colored & White
28. Egyptian or non Egyptian
29. Rich and Poor
30. Healthy and Sick
31. Female and male
32. Weak and strong

UNIT 5: SEASONAL AND ACTIVITY LESSONS.

33. The feast of Nyrouz
34. The feast of the Holy Cross
35. The month of Kiahk
36. The Holy Nativity
37. The Holy Theophany
38. The Lent
39. The Holy week of Pascha
40. The Holy Resurrection
41. The Holy Ascension

42. The Holy Pentecost
43. Feast of St Moses the Ethiopian
44. The fast and feast of the holy apostles
45. The feast of the Holy Theotokos (How to make an Icon of the Theotokos)

We Are Children of God

UNIT I: CHRIST GIVES US THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD (9 LESSONS)

Purpose: In Baptism we are born again to God through water & Spirit. Now we are the children of God. The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the *offering*, the *receiving* and the *remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..." "12But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "14And the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. " "16And of His fullness we have all **received**, and grace for grace. 17For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." John 1:12, 13, 14, 16

1. Theophany- In Baptism We Become the Children of God
2. The Bread From Heaven
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4. The First Eucharist
5. The Eucharist, What We Receive
6. The Eucharist, What We Offer
7. The Eucharist, What We Remember
8. The Eucharist, How To Prepare
9. Unit Review

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

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1. THEOPHANY- IN BAPTISM WE BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD

SERVANT PREPARATION:



VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 3:13-17

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" 15But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. 16When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

CHURCH FATHERS:

"God in his love to man provided for us a way of salvation and of life. For believing in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and making this confession before many witnesses, we wash away all the filth of sin, and are enriched by the communication of the Holy Spirit, and made partakers of the divine nature, and gain the grace of **adoption**. It was necessary therefore that the Word of the Father, when He humbled Himself unto emptiness, and deigned to assume our likeness, should become for our sakes the pattern and way of every good work. For it follows that He Who in everything is first, must in this also set the example. In order therefore that we may learn both the power itself of holy baptism, and how much we gain by approaching so great a grace, He commences the work Himself; and, having been baptized, prays that you, my beloved, may learn that never-ceasing prayer is a thing most fitting for those who have once been counted worthy of holy baptism. And the Evangelist says that the heavens were opened, as having long been closed. For Christ said, "Forthwith shall ye see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon

the Son of man." For both the flock above and that below being now made one, and one chief Shepherd appointed for all, the heavens were opened, and man upon earth brought near to the holy angels. And the Spirit also again came down as at a second commencement of our race: and upon Christ first, Who received it not so much for His own sake as for ours: for by Him and in Him are we enriched with all things. Most suitably therefore to the economy of grace does He endure with us the things of man's estate: for where otherwise shall we see Him emptied, Whose in His divine nature is the fullness? How became He poor as we are, if He were not conformed to our poverty? How did He empty Himself, if He refused to endure the measure of human littleness? Having taken therefore Christ as our pattern, let us draw near to the grace of holy baptism, that so we may gain boldness to pray constantly, and lift up holy hands to God the Father, that He may open the heavens also unto us, and send down upon us too the Holy Spirit, to receive us as sons. For He spoke unto Christ at the time of holy baptism, as though having by Him and in Him **accepted man upon earth to the sonship**, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." For He Who is the Son by nature and in truth, and the Only-begotten, when He became like unto us, is specially declared to be the Son of God, not as receiving this for Himself:---for He was and is, as I said, very Son:---but that He might ratify the glory unto us. For He has been made our first fruits, and firstborn, and second Adam: for which reason it is said, that "in Him all things have become new:" for having put oil the oldness that was in Adam, we have gained the newness that is in Christ: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be glory and dominion with the Holy Ghost, forever and ever, Amen." *St Cyril of Alexandria commentary on St. Luke sermon XI*

REFLECTION:

We start this year with the Baptism of our Lord. It is in the Baptism of our Lord, that our childhood to God is revealed together with the revelation of the Holy Trinity. The words of the Father bore witness of Christ as the beloved Son. St Cyril tells us, how by His baptism our Lord provided the pattern and way of every good work. *"God in his love to man provided for us a way of salvation and of life. For believing in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and making this confession before many witnesses, we wash away all the filth of sin, and are enriched by the communication of the Holy Spirit, and made partakers of the divine nature, and gain the grace of adoption."* He wrote.

It is vital that both church and family bring to the second graders the experience of their baptism, most especially the baptismal pledge to Christ

PRAYER:

O Master, Lord, God the Pantocrator, the Only Eternal One, the Father of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, who have commanded that Your servants be born of the baptism of the new birth, and

have granted them the forgiveness of their sins, and the robe of incorruption, and the grace of adoption.

Now our King renew in them the grace of the Holy Spirit, the comforter, and grant that they share in the eternal life; through the Name, power and grace of Your Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; for He is glorified with You and the Holy Spirit now and always and forever and ever Amen.
From the prayer after the Holy Chrism.

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Zoxa Patri Ke Eyo Ke Agio Epnivmati.

Ke nin Ke aei Ke Estos eona estos eonon Amen

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

Now and forever and unto ages of ages Amen

VOCABULARY:

Holy, preach, baptize, the Holy Trinity

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Trinity
Liturgical:	Baptismal pledge
Moral:	Honoring Parents
Spiritual:	Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Does anyone here have a little brother or sister? If you do, maybe you remember what it was like before he or she came. What was it like? [Let the kids get excited answering these questions.] Did you talk about your new baby brother (or sister) with your parents a lot? Were you excited? [Yes!] Were your parents excited? [Yes!]

LESSON BODY:

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Option: *Read Matthew 3 with the children*

I'm going to tell you a story now about another baby who was born, a very long time ago. This baby did not have any big brothers or sisters to be excited about him being born (like you were excited for your little brother); instead, there was a whole *country* full of people who were excited for him to come! Can you believe that? That's because even before he was in his mother's belly, God had told people that he was coming, and to be ready to welcome him because he was going to be a very special boy, a very **holy** boy (special and belong to God). And actually, before he was even born, his father (who was a priest) was praying and Angel Gabriel came to him and told him that he was going to have this baby *and* told him what he should name him. [Maybe some of the kids will have guessed by this point who the story is about- let them say if they know]. The baby was going to be named John.

John grew up to love God very much. When he was a grownup, he started to **preach** to all the people (tell them about God) in his country how to love God and what they needed to do to live a good life. Everyone listened to him and respected him very much. They knew that he was special, that he was holy, and that what he was telling them was very important. Everyone also came to him to be **baptized** (dipping the whole person in holy water for them to become holy).

OUR LORD'S BAPTISM

One day St. John was baptizing people in a river called Jordon. This day ended up being the most special day in St. John's life, because something very wonderful happened: our Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to St. John to be baptized by him. St. John was very surprised because he knew that our Lord was God and he didn't think that he was good enough to be able to baptize Him. He said to our Lord, "Lord I am the one who needs to be baptized by *You*, but *You* are coming to *me*? How can this be?" Our Lord said to him, "Let it be like this for now."

Now when our Lord went into the water to be baptized, something happened. Who here has ever seen a little child being baptized before? What happens? [the baby goes under water]. Well, our Lord did the same thing: He let St. John put his hand on His head and bring Him under water. But here is the remarkable thing that happened: when our Lord came out of the water, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit came like a dove and rested on His holy Head, and God's Voice came from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." {This part can be acted out}

THE HOLY TRINITY

There is a special name that we say for our Lord, the Holy Spirit and God the Father – all three together. Does anyone know what it is? [The Holy **Trinity**]. When our Lord was baptized, it was a very special thing to happen – that was why He wanted St. John to do it. It was very special because in His baptism, we saw the **Trinity**: we heard the Father’s Voice, we saw the Holy Spirit coming like a dove, and we saw our Lord in the river – all three together. God wanted to show to us that He is Three.

WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we say that we believe in God, we mean that we believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

WE BECAME CHILDREN OF GOD IN OUR BAPTISM

Just like our Lord’s baptism was a very special day, our own baptism is also very special. You know there are some people who do not celebrate their birthdays? Instead, they choose to remember the day they were baptized to celebrate it! They do this because they know a secret that they are very excited about: on the day that each one of us was baptized, we became children of the most perfect Father – our Father in Heaven, God. God took us as His own beautiful children and He will take care of us for the rest of our lives. On that day, your mother made a promise to Christ for you, with you on her right arm. and she said to our lord:

“I confess to you O Christ my God and to all Your redeeming laws and life-giving service and works.”



What does this vow mean?

It means that my mother gave me to Christ for Him to be my king, my Lord and my savior. from that time -on I do not live for myself but for Him and with Him. Baptism is when we all gave ourselves to Christ who loves us. Our lord gave us the right to become the children of God in our Baptism so we can call His Father, our Father.

How about if we say the pledge of our baptism to Him right now? (see if any of them would like to ask a question about the pledge if they need to, then guide the class to stand up and raise their right hands and repeat after you the Baptismal pledge)

HONORING THE HEAVENLY FATHER AND MY EARTHLY PARENTS

So being a child of God, I need to always remember that my Father is God, in Heaven, and I need to thank Him for my life and go to Him for my needs and I need to do those things which please Him: especially to love my brothers and/or sisters and my parents. Honoring and loving my parents is pleasing to God. I also love my family, the members of the church – all my brothers and sisters in my Sunday school class, and the Sunday school servants and the abounas.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** Find out from the kids' parents the dates of their baptism. Make laminated pins or framed picture of their Baptism with the writing: " This is my beloved son/daughter....." with the date of their baptism and "On this day: _____, I became the son/daughter of God!"
- **Acting:** with a doll and a basin
- **Scrap book building: Coloring page with the verse "this is my beloved son.."**
- **Coloring:** a coloring page of the Holy Theophany icon
- **Puppets**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What is the meaning of holy? Preach? Baptism?

A. *Holy: special and belong to God, preach: tell people about God, Baptism: dipping the whole person in holy water to make them holy*

Q. Who is our God?

A. *Our God is the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit*

Q. When did we learn about the Holy Trinity?

A. *In the Baptism of our Lord by John the Baptist.*

Q. When did you become a child of God the Father?

A. *In my Baptism*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:22

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READINGS

Communicate with the mothers to share with their children their baptism photos, video clips and especial focus should be on the baptismal pledge to Christ. let the mothers share the feelings- they had as they did this- with their children.

1. The Baptism of three thousand *Acts 2*
2. The Baptism of an Ethiopian Eunuch *Acts 8:26-40*
3. The Baptism of Saul of Tarsus *Acts 9:10-19*

4. The Baptism of Cornelius and his house *Acts 10*
5. The Baptism of Lydia *Acts 16:11-15*
6. The Baptism of the Philippians jailer and his house *Acts 16:16-34*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

Purpose: In Baptism we are born again to God through water & Spirit. Now we are the children of God. The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the *offering*, the *receiving* and the *remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

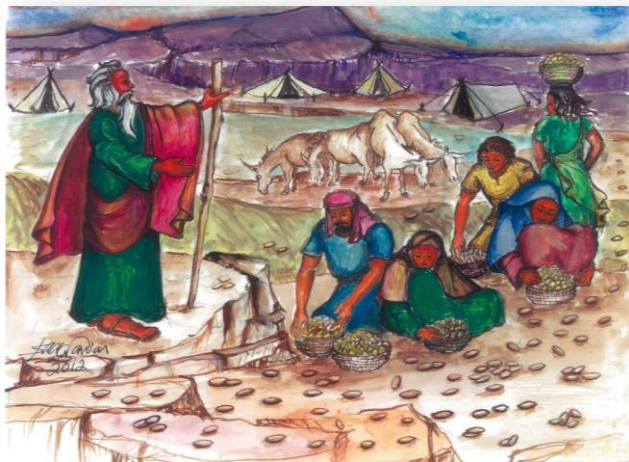
2. THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 16

And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.



Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not."

And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?" Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."

9Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, "Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.10Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12"I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.""

13So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. 14And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. 16This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: "Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent." 17Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. 19And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." 20Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. 21So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted. 22And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD has said: "Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning." 24So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none." 27Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? 29See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30So the people rested on the seventh day.

31And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. 32Then Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: "Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt." 33And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." 34As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. 35And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36Now an omer is one tenth of an ephah.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria on St John's Gospel - CHAPTER II. That the Holy Body of Christ is Life-giving, wherein He speaks of His Own Body as of Bread.

John6: 48, 49, 50 *I am the Bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and died: This is the Bread Which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.*

Full clearly may one herein behold that which was spoken afore by the Prophet Isaiah, *I was made manifest to them that seek Me not, I was found of them that asked not for Me, I said, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My Name: all the day spread I out My Hands unto a rebellious and opposing people.* For, removing the whole case from His speech, and having taken away (so to say) all that cloaked it. He at length reveals Himself unveiled to them of Israel, saying, *I am the Bread of life*, that they may now learn that if they would be superior to corruption, and would put off the death which from the transgression fell upon us, they must need approach to the participation of Him who is mighty to quicken, and destroys corruption, and brings to naught death: for this verily is a work proper and most fit for that which is by Nature Life. But since they, affirming that the manna was given to their fathers in the wilderness, received not the Bread which of a truth came down from heaven, that is, the Son, He makes a necessary comparison between the type and the truth, that so they might know that not that is the Bread which is from heaven, but He Whom the trial shows to be so by Nature. For your fathers (says He) and ancestors by eating the manna, gave to the bodily nature its need, gaining thereby life for a season, and imparting to the flesh its daily sustenance, with difficulty effected that it should not die at once. But it will be (He says) the clearest proof of its not being the Bread which is from heaven in a truer sense, that they who partook were no way benefited thereby unto incorruption: a token again in like way that the Son is properly and truly the Bread of Life, that they who have once partaken, and been in some way immingled with Him through the communion with Him have been shown superior to the very bonds of death. For that the manna again is taken rather as an image or shadow of Christ, and was typifying the Bread of Life, but was not itself *the Bread of Life*, has been often said by us: and the Psalmist supports us, crying out in the Spirit, *He gave them bread of Heaven, man did eat angels' bread.* For it seems to have been said to them of Israel by the Spirit-clad, but in truth it is not so, but to us rather is the aim of the words directed. For is it not foolish and utterly senseless to suppose that the holy angels which are in heaven, albeit they have an incorporeal nature, should partake grosser food, and need such aid in order to prevail unto life, as this body of earth desires? But I think it nothing hard to conceive, that, since they are spirits, they should need like food, spiritual (I mean) and of wisdom. How then is angels' bread said to have been given to the ancestors of the Jews, if the Prophet speaks truly in so crying? But it is manifest, that since the typical manna was an image of Christ, Which contains and upholds all things in being, nourishing the angels and quickening the things on earth, the Prophet was calling that which is signified by shadows by the name of the truth,---from the fact that the holy angels could not partake of the more earthly food, drawing off his hearers even against their will from any gross conception as to the manna, and bringing them up to the spiritual meaning, that of Christ, Who is the Food of the holy Angels themselves also.

They then who *ate the manna* (He says) *are dead*, not having received any participation of life (for it was not truly life-giving, but rather taken as an aid against carnal hunger and in type of the true); but they who receive in themselves the Bread of Life, will have immortality as their prize, wholly setting at naught corruption and its consequent evils, and will mount up unto boundless and unending length of Life in Christ. Nor will it at all damage our words on this subject that they who have been made partakers of Christ, need to taste bodily death on account of what is due to nature; for even though they falling into this end undergo the lot of humanity, yet, as Paul says, they that shall live, live to God. 51 *I am the Living Bread Which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever.*

To say the same things unto you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe, writes the Divine Paul to certain, in this too (I suppose) instructed by these very words of the Savior. For as those who are diseased with wounds, need not the application of a single plaister, but manifold tending, and that not once applied, but by its continuance of application expelling the pain: so for the soul most rugged, and withered mind, should many aids of teaching be contrived and come one after the other: for one will avail to soften it not by one and the first leading, but through its successive coming to it, even if it come in the same words. Oftentimes then does the Savior bringing round the same manner of speech to the Jews set it before them in different ways, sometimes darkly, and clad in much obscurity, at other times freed delivered and let loose from all double meaning, that they still disbelieving, might lack nothing yet unto their condemnation, but being evil evily might be destroyed, themselves against their own soul thrusting the sword of perdition.

Christ therefore no longer concealing anything says, *I am the Living Bread Which came down from heaven.* That was (He says) a type and a shadow and an image. Hear Him now openly and no more veiled, *I am the Living Bread, if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever.* They who ate of that died, for it was not life giving: he that eats of This Bread, that is Me, or My Flesh, *shall live forever.* We must then beware of and reject alike hardening ourselves to the words of piety, since Christ not once only, but oftentimes persuades us. For there is no doubt, that they will full surely be open to the severest charges, who turn aside to the uttermost folly, and through boundless unbelief, refuse not to rage against the Author of the most excellent things. Therefore says He of the Jews, *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.* For they who have never by hearing received the word of salvation into their heart, will haply find the Judge milder, while they plead that they heard not at all, even though they shall specially give account for not having sought to learn: but they who often instructed by the same admonitions and words to the seeking after what is profitable, senselessly imagine that they ought to deprive themselves of the most excellent good things, shall undergo most bitter punishment, and shall meet with an offended judge, not able to find an excuse for their folly which may shame Him.

And the Bread which I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.

I die (He says) for all, that I may quicken all by Myself, and I made My Flesh a Ransom for the flesh of all. For death shall die in My Death, and with Me shall rise again (He says) the fallen nature of

man. For "for this became I like to you, Man (that is)" and of the seed of Abraham, that I might *be made like in all things unto My brethren*. The blessed Paul himself also, well understanding what Christ just now said to us says, *Forasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*. For no otherwise was it possible that he that hath the power of death should be destroyed, and death itself also, had not Christ given Himself for us, a Ransom, One for all, for He was in behalf of all. Wherefore He says in the Psalms too, offering Himself as a spotless Sacrifice to God the Father, *Sacrifice and offering Thou would not, but a Body prepared Thou Me. In whole burnt-offerings and offerings for sin Thou took no pleasure: then said I, Lo I come (in the chapter of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God, was My choice*. For since the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sufficed not unto the purging away of sin, nor yet would the slaughter of brute beasts ever have destroyed the power of death, Christ Himself came-in in some way to undergo punishment for all. For *with His stripes WE were healed*, as says the Prophet, and *His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the tree*; and He was crucified for all and on account of all, that *if One died for all*, all we might live in Him. For it was not possible that He should be *held by death*, neither could corruption over-master that Which is by Nature Life. But that Christ gave His Own *Flesh for the Life of the world*, we shall know by His words also, for He says, *Holy Father keep them*; and again, *For their sakes I sanctify Myself*. He here says that He sanctifies Himself, not aiding Himself unto sanctification for the purification of the soul or spirit (as it is understood of us), nor yet for the participation of the Holy Ghost, for the Spirit was in Him by Nature, and He was and is Holy always, and will be so ever. He here says, *I sanctify Myself*, for, I offer Myself and present Myself as a spotless Sacrifice for an odor of a sweet smell. For that which is brought to the Divine Altar was sanctified, or called holy according to the law.

Christ therefore gave His Own Body for the life of all, and again through It He makes Life to dwell in us; and how, I will say as I am able. For since the life-giving Word of God indwelt in the Flesh, He transformed it into His Own proper good, that is life, and by the unspeakable character of this union, coming wholly together with It, rendered It life-giving, as Himself is by Nature. Wherefore the Body of Christ gives life to all who partake of It. For it expels death, when It cometh to be in dying men, and removes corruption, full in Itself perfectly of the Word which abolishes corruption.

But a man will haply say, fixing the eye of his understanding upon the resurrection of them that have slept: They who received not the faith in Christ, and were not partakers of Him, will not live again at the time of the resurrection. What? shall not every created thing that has fallen into death return again to life?

To these things we say, Yes, all flesh shall live again: for Prophecy foretells that *the dead shall be raised*. For we consider that the Mystery through the resurrection of Christ extends over the whole nature of man, and in Him first we believe that our whole nature has been released from corruption. For all shall rise, after the likeness of Him That was raised for our sakes, and hath all in Himself, in that He is Man. And as in the first-formed we fell down into death, so in the First-born again, who was so for our sakes, all shall rise again from the dead: but *they that did good, unto the resurrection of life (as it is written), and they that wrought evil, unto the resurrection of doom*. And I

will grant, that in no passing degree bitterer than death is the resurrection unto punishment, and the receiving life again unto disgrace alone. In the stricter sense then we must understand the Life that is really so, the life in Christ, in holiness and bliss and unfailing delight. For that this is truly life the wise John too knows, saying, *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God shall abide on him.* For lo, lo, he says that he which is in unbelief shall not see life: although every creature looks to return again to life, and to rise again. It is then manifest, that the Savior with reason called that the life which is prepared for the Saints, I mean that in glory and in holiness, which that we ought to pursue after by coming to the participation of the Life-giving Flesh, no right-minded person will doubt.

But since the Savior called Himself Bread in many of the passages that have already been before us, let us see whether He would not hereby too bring to our mind any one of the things fore-announced and is reminding us of the things in Holy summons, wherein He was long ago signified under the form of bread. It is written then in Numbers, *And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and you shall say unto them., When you come into the land whither I bring you, then it shall be, that when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall offer up an heave-offering a separation unto the Lord: a cake the first-fruit of your dough shall you offer for an heave-offering: as an heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it, a first fruit of your dough, and ye shall give unto the Lord, an heave offering unto your generations.* Obscurely then, and bearing a gross covering as of the letter, did the law typify these things: yet did it proclaim afore the true *Very Bread That cometh down from heaven*, i. e., Christ, *and gives life unto the world.* For observe how He made Man like us by reason of His Likeness to us, a certain First-fruits of our dough and *heave offering*, as it is written, was offered up to God the Father, set forth the First-Begotten of the dead, and the First-fruits of the resurrection of all ascending into heaven itself. For He was taken of us, *He took hold of the seed of Abraham*, as Paul says, He was offered up, as of all, and in behalf of all, that He might quicken all, and might be offered to God the Father, as it were the first handful of the floor. But as He being in truth Light, put that grace upon His disciples; for He says, *you are the light of the world:* so too He being the Living Bread, and That quickens all things and keeps them in being, by a likeness and through the shadow of the Law, was typifying in the twelve loaves the holy choir of the Apostles. For thus He says in Leviticus, *And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee oil olive pure beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually without the veil in the tabernacle of the testimony.* And then He proceeds, *And ye shall take fine flour, and make twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And ye shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before the Lord, and shall put pure frankincense upon each row, and salt, and it shall be on the loaves for a memorial unto the Lord.*

The lamp then in the holy tabernacle, and giving light without the veil, we said in the foregoing was the blessed John, nourished with the purest oil, that is, the illumination through the Spirit: outside the veil, because his doctrine was catechetical: for he says, *Prepare you the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God.* But the things within the veil, that is, the hidden Mystery of Christ, he shows not much. For I (he says) *baptize you with water unto repentance, but He That cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptize you with the Holy*

Ghost and with fire. Do you see then how he shines, as in simpler speech calling unto repentance; but the things within the veil he commits to Him That baptizes with fire and the Spirit, to lay open? And these things we have set forth more at large, on the words, at the beginning of the book, *He was the burning and the shining light:* yet we touched on them now briefly, since it was necessary, on John's passing away, to show that the preaching of the holy Apostles was near and straightway present.

For, for this reason, I suppose, the Scripture, having first signified him by the lamp puts before us the consideration of the twelve loaves. *Ye shall make (it says) twelve cakes: two tenth deals shall be in one cake.* It is the custom of the Divine Scripture, to receive ever the number ten as perfect, and to acknowledge it as the fullest, since the series and order of the consecutive numbers, receiving a kind of revolution and multiplication of the same into the same, advances and is extended to whatsoever one will. He commands then that each *cake* be of *two tenth deals*, that you may see perfection in the disciples, in the even pair, I mean both active virtue, and that of contemplation. He bids *two rows* to be made (and profitably so) well nigh indicating the very position, which it was (as is like) their custom to take, ever receiving the Lord in the midst of them, and accustomed ever to surround Him as their Master. And that we may know that, as Paul says, they *are unto God* the Father *a sweet savor of Christ*, He bids frankincense to be put on the cakes, and that they be sprinkled also with salt. For it is said to them, *you are the salt of the earth.* Yea and with reason does He bid it be offered upon the Sabbath day, for they were made manifest in the last times of the world: and the last day of the week is the Sabbath. And not only so, but because at the time of our Savior's coming we held a Sabbath spiritually: for we rested from sin. And then were the holy Apostles also made manifest unto us, by whose Divine writings also we nourished attain unto the life in holiness. Therefore on the Sabbath day specially He commanded the cakes to be set out upon the holy table, that is, in the Church. For the whole is often signified by a part. But what is holier than the holy Table of Christ? Therefore the Savior was pre-typified as bread by the Law: the Apostles again as cakes by their likeness to Him. For all things were in verity in Christ, but by likeness to Him, they belong to us too through His grace.

58 This is the Bread Which came down from heaven, not as your fathers ate the manna and died; he that eats of This My Bread shall live forever.

Great (said He) ought to be the effects of great things, and the gifts of the Grace from above, should appear God-befitting and worthy of the Divine Munificence. For if you have wholly received in faith that *the Bread came, down from heaven*, let it produce continuous life in them that long after it, and have the unceasing Operation of immortality. For this will be a clear proof of its being *the Bread from heaven*, that is from God: since we say that it befits the Eternal to give what is eternal, and not the enjoyment of temporary food, which is barely able to last for just the least moment. For one will no longer wisely suppose that that was the bread from God and from above, which our forefathers eating, were overcome by death, and repelled not the evil of corruption, and no wonder; for that was not the Bread which avails to render immortal. Hence neither will it be rightly conceived and said by any to be from heaven. For it was a work befitting that which came down thence, to render the partakers of It superior to death and decay. By undoubted proof again

will it be confirmed, that this was *the Bread from Heaven*, that to come through Christ, i. e., His Body. For It makes him that tastes thereof to live forever. Herein too is seen a great pledge of the Divine Nature, Which vouchsafes not to give a little thing, but everything wonderful, even surpassing our understanding, so as for the greatness of the Grace, to be even disbelieved by the more simple. For with so wealthy a Hand how should not the Will to give largely be present? Wherefore Paul too says in amazement, *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God prepared for them that love Him*. By little examples was the Law typifying great ones, *having the shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things*, as it is written: as in the food of manna is seen the Blessing that is through Christ. For *the shadow of the good things to come* was prefigured to them of old.

REFLECTION:

“The bread from heaven” is what our Lord called the Eucharist. In many ways, the Manna is a “type” of the Eucharist. The following is a comparison between the old and the new manna:

a- After crossing over the Red Sea, the people had to eat a new food, other than that which they used to eat in the land of bondage. And we also, as we entered into a new covenant (*through Baptism*), the Lord presented us with a true spiritual food, capable of fulfilling the soul, and of granting it eternal life.

It is amazing that manna started to come down on the people on a Sunday, as is obvious from the words of God to Moses: “*And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily*” (Ex. 16: 5) The day of preparation for the Sabbath (Friday) was the sixth day of the manna coming down; which means that it started coming down on a Sunday. By the resurrection of the

Lord Christ from the dead on the dawn of Sunday, He presented to us His body, risen from the dead, as a secret of resurrection to our souls and bodies; and Sunday became the weekly feast of the Church, in which we enjoy the heavenly manna.

b- The manna came down from heaven (Ex. 16: 4), and “*every man gathered according to each one’s need*” (Ex. 16: 18); and all of them were fulfilled. The Lord Christ, the Word of God, descended from heaven, and offered Himself, a secret of fulfillment to all. He offered Himself as milk to the babes, and solid fat food to the grown-ups, to leave no soul hungry or in need.

c- For those who took the manna without faith, contrary to the commandment, and left part of it until morning, it bred worms and stank. In the same way, whoever eats from the flesh of the Lord without faith or worthiness, he will carry in it the stink of death, instead of the life and sweetness, that the believers taste, when they enjoy it. The Word of God is like manna; a secret of life for the repentant believers, and a secret of perish for the unbelieving (Egyptians).

Concerning this the scholar Origen says: [In the manna, now, there is the sweetness of honey for the believers; and worms for the unbelievers. The Word of God (the Lord Christ), discerns the thoughts, pierces the conscious of sinners with sharp goads, and enflames the hearts of those who open them to him, to get them to say, *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us on*

the road, and expounded to us in all the scriptures ? “ (Luke 24: 32; 27). On the other hand He is fire to consume the thorns on the bad soil. Whoever gathers from it, to keep without eating it, namely, does contrary to the commandment and without faith, would be like someone who studies the Holy Book, and recognizes the Christian faith on a theoretical basis; to have a dead faith, according to the apostle St. James (James 2: 14, 15, 26). Concerning this the scholar Origen says: [If the unbeliever takes the word of God and did not eat it (namely, did not live according to it), but hid it, worms would breed in it].

d- The prophet Moses says:

“The Lord shall give you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full” (Ex. 16: 8)
What is that evening but the end of days or the fulfillment of time, in which the Word of God carried a body, offered Himself to us to eat and be fulfilled ! By His coming at the fulfillment of time, amid the darkness of the evening, He shone with His light on us, turned our evening into daylight, and we entered a new morning, offering us a new bread by which the believing humanity was fulfilled.

Once more he says:

“At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord” (Ex. 16: 6, 7)

What is that evening but those moments in which the Lord Christ delivered His Spirit to the hands of the Father, when the darkness covered the face of the earth; when He got us out of the servitude of the devil, and set free those who were in Hades ? ! And what is that morning, in which we saw the glory of the Lord, but the dawn of Sunday, in which He rose from the dead, and granted us the power and joy of His resurrection ? !

e- The people did not know what was that manna (Ex. 16: 15); and the people could not recognize the true nature of the Lord Christ (1 Corinthians 2: 8).

f- The manna came down over the tents, that refer to our bodies; and the Lord Christ came to our homes, and into our bodies; He became as one of us.

g- The manna came down after the murmur of the people; and the Lord Christ came after animosity prevailed between us and God; And according to the apostle Paul: *“When we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son” (Romans 5: 10)*. By the coming down of the manna, God proclaimed His love and compassion; and the coming of the Lord Christ to us, is a sign of God’s care and eternal love.

h- The manna was described as *“fine as frost on the ground” (Ex. 16: 14)*; and the Lord’s robe, as He transfigured on the mount, *“became white and glistening” (Luke 9: 29)*.

i- The manna *“tasted like wafers made with honey” (Ex. 16: 31)*; As for the Lord Christ, *“His mouth is most sweet, Yes, He is altogether lovely” (Songs 5: 16)*.

j- The people gathered the manna every morning; and our fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ is renewable every day, and our encounter with Him is very early *“Those who seek Me diligently (early) will find me” (Proverb 8: 17)*.

k- The manna after it was gathered, was ground, and cooked, to be fit for eating; and the Lord Christ came incarnated, crucified, suffered, and died, and became bread and a secret of life to those who eat Him.

l- When the people despised the manna, God struck them with a very great plague (Number 11: 33); and whoever unworthily eats from the flesh of the Lord; will face judgment (1 Corinthians 11).

Finally, when we speak of the manna, we find in it a living portrait of fulfillment and satisfaction, yet without excess luxury or greed. St. John Chrysostom says: [We have only one stomach to fill; But you, who intend to feed it with excess luxury, are giving it what it can do without. As those who gathered more than they should have of the manna, gathered only worms and stench; those who live a life of luxury, and greed, are gathering for themselves corruption and not delicious food]. *Fr. Tadros Malaty on Exodus 16*

It was also: 1. A food brought by a miracle. 2. The food of the journey to the promise land. 3. The manna kept in the Ark is a type of the Eucharist (*hidden manna*)

PRAYER:

Receive me today, Son of God, as a partaker of Your mystical Supper. I will not reveal Your mystery to Your enemies. Nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas. But as the thief I confess to You: "Remember me O Lord in your kingdom." *a hymn from Holy Thursday of the covenant*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Promised Land, desert, dew, review baptized, Christian, Eucharist

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God takes care of us
Liturgical:	Eucharist
Moral:	Behavior during Communion
Spiritual:	Prayer (during communion)

CONNECTION POINT

Last week we learned how we became the special children of the heavenly Father in our Baptism. This week and in the rest of the unit we are currently studying we are going to learn of how our heavenly Father always provide food for His family on earth.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What is the meaning of holy? Preach? Baptism?

A. Holy: special and belong to God, preach: tell people about God, Baptism: dipping the whole person in holy water to make them holy

Q. Who is our God?

A. Our God is the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit

Q. When did we learn about the Holy Trinity?

A. In the Baptism of our Lord by John the Baptist.

Q. When did you become a child of God the Father?

A. In my Baptism

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:22

LESSON BODY:

Who here has ever been to Egypt? Was anyone born in Egypt? Who has seen the pyramids? Who has seen a camel? What else did you see in Egypt? [Let the kids get excited about remembering Egypt; bring in some pictures of the land of Egypt to show the kids – if possible, even of the current location of Goshen]. Well, today I am going to tell you a story about a family that lived in Egypt very long time ago. They lived in a place that looked like this (show them a picture) and this family grew and grew and grew until it had a lot of people in it. Maybe when you were in Egypt you had a fun time, and you saw nice things and the people you were visiting were nice to you there. But, actually when this family was living in Egypt, it was not like that for them at all. They did not have any fun, they were forced to work very, very hard and they did not get paid for their work. They were miserable.

THE ISRAELITES CAME OUT OF EGYPT (OUT OF SLAVERY) AND TRAVELED THROUGH THE DESERT.

God, our Father who is in Heaven, saw that these people, His family, were not being treated very nicely in Egypt. He wanted to bring them out from there to a different place, a place that would be better for them, a place where they would be very happy and where no one would be mean to them. God wanted to do this because He cares very much for His people and always wants them to have a good life. So He sent a man named Moses to bring His family out of Egypt and to lead them to this new place. This new place was called the **Promised Land** (because God had made a promise to give it to their grandfather Abraham). Moses came to this family of God's people and told them that God knew all of their pains and all of their hurts and even knew how mean the Egyptians had been to them, and that now was finally the time for them to escape; he told all the people to get ready and not to try to bring a lot of things with them. All the people listened to Moses, they knew he was from God and they liked him a lot; they got ready like he said and they all started on the big journey to leave Egypt and go to the Promised Land.

THEY HAD NO FOOD; MOSES PETITIONS GOD FOR FOOD

But, very quickly, the people started to notice that there was a big problem. To get from Egypt to the Promised Land they had to walk a very, very, very long way through a **desert**. (A desert is a place that is very hot and there is no water or food there.) The people found themselves in the middle of the desert and they started to get very scared and worried! They couldn't see any food or water around them! They thought, 'how are we going to be able to cross this huge desert with no food and no water? What are we going to eat? What if we get lost? We are not going to make it!' And, since they were feeling all of these things, their feelings about Moses also changed – how do you think they started to feel about him now? [They got very mad at him! They stopped believing that he was going to bring them somewhere safely and all they could think about was that they had no food!]

Moses was a very caring man, and he knew right away how the people were feeling. Right away, he prayed to God and asked God to help and give the people food! He was very close to God, and he knew that all he needed to do was ask God for help and God would help. He knew that God would never forget about them and that He was always ready to help His people.

GOD SENDS MANNA

God heard Moses. He answered Moses and He did a very great thing. Listen to this and see if you can find out the great thing that God did: God said to Moses, "I will rain *bread* out of *heaven* for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain amount every day." [Give the kids a minute to realize that bread does not rain down from the sky. [May need to repeat the sentence a few times]. Who noticed what the great thing that God said He was going to do? [Rain bread out of heaven]. Right! Bread doesn't ever come from heaven! That had never happened before in the whole world! Only our God can do something amazing like that.

This is what happened: the people woke up the next morning and they noticed that there was **dew** (*water drops on the ground early morning*) on the ground where they had all their tents set up. [Explain what dew is to them and tell them to try and see if they can find dew on the ground before they go to school in the mornings from now on]. But, when the layer of dew lifted up, right there, on the ground of the desert, there was small, round, white pieces of *something*. When the people saw it, they all looked at each other and asked each other, "What is that?" They had never seen something like that before. Then Moses came and told them, "This is the bread that our Lord gives you to eat. Let every father in each family gather enough for his whole family." The people were very puzzled. They didn't think that it looked like food; but when the first person tried it, he thought to himself, "this is the most delicious food that I have ever eaten!" and pretty soon, everyone was eating it! Our Lord had sent them very special bread right in the middle of the desert, when there was no food to be seen at all!

GOD CALLED US TO BE HIS PEOPLE AND HE IS LEADING US TO HEAVEN

How many of you are thinking now that you wish you could have been part of this family and seen this amazing thing that God did? [hopefully the kids will raise their hands. If no one does, the servants can raise their hands and say that they wish they could have been]. Well, you actually *are* already part of this family! All of us because we are **baptized** and because we are **Christians**, are part of God's very special family. And God takes care of us the same way He took care of the people in this story. Just like when He knew that the Egyptians were being mean to the people in the story, God sees when we are hurt and when people are mean to us and when we are crying and also when we are happy. He sees us and He loves us *all* the time. When we are sleeping, and when we are awake. And, even more, just like He sent Moses to the people in this story to bring them away from Egypt and to the Promised Land, He is leading us also somewhere, somewhere very special

where none of us will ever be sad again and where no one will be mean to us or will be able to make fun of us or hurt us or scare us. It is a beautiful place, a perfect place, where you could do anything you wanted to do! Who thinks they know what the name of this place is, where God wants to take us, where He is leading us? [if no one knows, point up with your finger]. Heaven! Our God is holding our hands (even though we can't see Him or even feel Him doing that) and taking each one of us to heaven where we will be with Him and be able to see Him all the time.

GOD STILL TAKES CARE OF US

Do you know that God had taken care of your own family. you might know some stories but your mother and father, your grandmother and grandfather, aunts and uncles might have more things to tell you. How about asking you mothers when you go home about what God had done with your own family. I am going to share one story with you today (prepare a story of God's care to tell them)

THE EUCHARIST IS OUR BREAD FROM HEAVEN (IT IS OUR FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY)

Ok here is my last question and it is a much harder question – just like the family in this story, God is also feeding us with very special bread from Heaven. [pause] We eat this Bread when we come to church on Sundays – who thinks they know? [It is Communion!] It is also called the **Eucharist**, and it is *from heaven*. This bread, even though it looks like regular bread, regular Korbana, on the outside, is very special. It doesn't come to us in the **dew** like the bread came to the family in the story; it comes to us from Heaven in another way: The Holy Spirit.

That is why we can't touch it; only abouna can touch it. And that is why we can't eat anything regular before we eat it because this is the most important food that we eat in our lives. Our tummy needs to be empty so that when the Eucharist enters in, it comes in *first*. Imagine that the President of the United States or a King is going to eat dinner with some other people. What would happen? All the other people who were invited would be there very early, before the King came, and would wait for him to come; they would wait to go into the dining room until the King went in first and the people would not even think about touching their food until the King had started eating first. Why? Because he is the most important person in the room. With things that are important, they come first. That is why the **Eucharist** is the first thing that we eat in the day – nothing else should go in there before it.

So the next time you are waiting in line to take communion [also called what?], I want you to think to yourself: God is giving me this bread because He is my Father and He loves me and wants to bring me to Heaven to be with Him. Just like He did with the people in the story. They got to the **Promised Land** safely, with God feeding them this bread from Heaven every day until they got there. And God will bring us to Heaven safely too!

ATTENTION AND PRAYER DURING COMMUNION

When I am about to take communion, I need to prepare myself to pay attention. I also should be praying to the Father that He would make my heart ready to receive the bread from heaven. We can pray the following prayer:

O giver of life, King of ages, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. The true bread which has come down from Heaven, that gives life to whoever partakes of it. Let my communion from Your holy sacraments unite me with You forever. Bless me; You are the Son of God. To You is the glory, with Him and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** illustrate the Manna using either frosted corn flakes or oats (*a servant sprinkles it on a clean plastic sheet on the ground*) and let the children collect it in bowls but not to eat it.
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:** a coloring page of the manna picking
- **Prepare a time line (a 5 foot laminated sheet) that has a horizontal line in the middle has an icon of Christ and on the left side an image of Adam and Eve. At the other end a simple image of the heavenly Jerusalem and each lesson would add an icon that represent each of the lessons (Holy Theophany, Manna, feeding the multitude, our baptism, etc..) in this year. this is to give the students the bigger picture of the chronological order of the events studied. Laminated icons of events studied can be removed and added every year.**
- **Prepare a card with the communion prayer to give to the students to memorize and pray before communion.**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the name of the bread that God gave to His family in the desert?

A: *Manna*

Q: What is the name of the bread from heaven that God gives us today?

A: *Eucharist*

Q: What is the name of the place that God wanted to take His family in the story I told you?

A: *The Promised Land*

Q: What is the name of the place that God wants to take us one day?

A: *Heaven*

Q: What is the dew?

A: *water drops on the ground early morning*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READINGS

The mother would help her children gather stories of God's care in their bigger family life. These stories would be written or drawn with a short prayer of thanksgiving to God the Father for His care.

1. The creation of life *Genesis 1:11-13*
2. The Garden of Eden *Genesis 2:8-17*
3. The permission to eat meat *Genesis 9:1-5*
4. Abraham and the visitors *Genesis 18*
5. The ravens feed Elijah *1Kings 17:1-7*
6. Elijah and the widow in Zarephath *1Kings 17:8-16*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

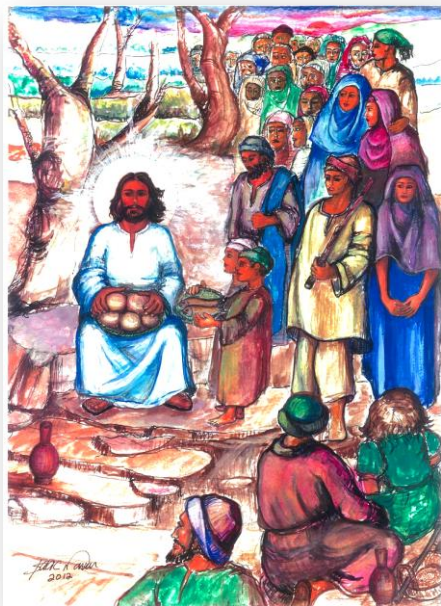
Purpose: In Baptism we are born again to God through water & Spirit. Now we are the children of God. The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the *offering*, the *receiving* and the *remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

3. OUR LORD FEEDS THE MULTITUDE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

John 6:1-14



After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ²Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. ⁷Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." ⁸One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" ¹⁰Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

¹¹And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." ¹³Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five

barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria on St. John's Gospel, Chapter 6:5-15

5, 6, 7 When Jesus therefore lifted up His Eyes and saw that a great company cometh unto Him, He said unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? and this He said to prove him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him,

A lesson most excellent did Christ again devise for His disciples, and fittest for the most holy men, both persuading them in utter straits to overcome cowardice in respect of hospitality, and to cast far away hesitation, rather with more zealous motions to attain unto the virtue thereof. For what is there greater than this among those who know and will the things whereby it befits to purchase unto themselves the friendship from above? For when no small *crowd* came to Him, and an innumerable multitude is pouring forth like waters upon the parts, wherein He was stopping, He immediately ordered them to make preparations for feeding them. And in truth it was not unlikely that the zeal even of a very rich man would numb, by the multitude of those he saw startled into fear of not being able to be hospitable. But Christ showed that it is nothing at all great, when our brotherly love comes to a few, but wills that we should overcome with manful courage also things that surpass our expectation, firmly grounded by confidence in Him to boldness unto all good things.

In regard then of the narrative, the force of what is said, aims not away from the mark; but changing again these things unto their spiritual significance, and cutting away the gross typical dress, we say more openly, that those who by good zeal and faith seek Him, God fore-behold, as from a mountain, that is from His high and God-befitting foreknowledge, according to that which is said by Paul, *For whom He did foreknow and predestined to be conformed to the Image of His Son, these He also called.* Christ then *lifts up* His Eyes as showing that they who love Him are worthy of the Divine Gaze, even as in blessing it was said to Israel, *The Lord lift up His Countenance upon you and give you peace.* But not by the mere looking on them is His grace toward them that honor Him bounded, but the blessed Evangelist adding something more, shows that the Lord was not unmindful of the multitudes, but well prepared for their food and entertainment: that hereby again you may understand that which is delivered us in Proverbs, *The Lord will not suffer the righteous soul to famish.* For He sets before them Himself, as Bread from Heaven, and will nourish the souls of them that fear Him: and prepares all things sufficient to them for sustenance; as he says in the Psalms, *You prepares their food, for thus is Your provision.* And Christ Himself somewhere said, *Verily, verily I say unto you, he that comes to Me shall never hunger.* For He will give, as we said before, food from heaven, and will richly bestow the manifold grace of the Spirit. He prepares moreover to give food to them that come to Him, not even awaiting their asking. *For*

we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but He prepared for us those things which preserve us unto eternal life.

He said then unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread? We must needs see, why to Philip, although the rest of the disciples were standing by and cleaving to Him: *Philip* then was a questioner and apt to learn, but not over quick in ready power of understanding the more Divine. This you will learn, if you consider with yourself that he, after having followed the Savior for a long time and gathered manifold lessons concerning His Godhead and gotten to himself apprehension through both deeds and words, as though he had learned nothing yet, in the last times of the economy says to Jesus, *Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us;* but as saying it in his simplicity he was fitly re-instructed, *So long time am I with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip?* said Christ. Therefore as to one duller of understanding, and advancing more slowly than he ought to the apprehension of things more Divine, He puts forth the question, exercising the disciple in faith. For this is one meaning of, *To prove him,* in this passage, although as the blessed Evangelist affirmed, *He Himself knew what He would do.*

But His saying *from where shall we buy* proves the lack of care for money of them that were with Him, and their voluntary poverty for God's sake, in that they had not even wherewithal to buy necessary food. Together with this He works something, and orders it skillfully. For He says *from where,* not emptily, as to those who had taken no trouble to provide anything at all, but as to those who were accustomed to entire lack of care for money. Excluding then, and cutting short most skillfully expectation arising from money, He well nigh persuades them to go on to entreat the Lord, that He would, if He wills them when they have nothing to feed those that come to Him, by His unspeakable Power and God-befitting Might create food. For this was what yet remained, and He was calling them at length to see that their only remaining hopes were thence, according to the Greek poets, the iron wound of necessity.

Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Feebly again does Philip advance, not to the power of Jesus to do all things, and that easily, but on hearing *Whence shall we buy* said *to prove him,* therefore he gets it, and looks at the means by money alone, not conceiving that the nature of the thing may be accomplished otherwise than by the common law, and that practiced by all, to wit, prodigality of expenditure. Therefore as far as regards the disciples' lack of care for money and their possessing nothing, and Philip's own apprehension, which did not as yet with perfect clearness view the exceeding dignity of our Savior, liberality towards the multitudes is turned into an impossibility. But it was not so, the will of the Savior conducts it to its completion. *The impossible with men is possible with God,* and the Divine Power proves on all sides superior to the natural order of things with us, strong to accomplish all things wondrously, even what overleap our understanding.

8, 9, 10 *One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said unto Him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many? Jesus said,*

He both thinks and reasons akin to Philip, and is convicted of having a kindred apprehension of the Savior Christ. For neither considering the power, nor yet led by the greatness of His preceding works unto Jesus' being able for all things, and that most easily; he points out what the *lad* has, but is evidently weak in faith: for *what are these* (he says) *among so many?* Albeit (for we must say it) in no unready way but resolutely rather ought he to go forth to the memory of those things which had been already miraculously wrought, and to consider that it was a work by no means strange or foreign from Him Who had transformed into wine the nature of water, had healed the palsied and driven away so great an infirmity by one word, that He, I say, should create food of that which had no being, and multiply Divinely the exceeding little that was found ready to hand. For the Authority that wrought in the one, how should it not be able to work in the other? Wherefore the pair of disciples answered more feebly than was meet. But herein we must consider this again. For those things which appear to have been little falls in the Saints, are oftentimes not without their share of profit, but have something wrapped up with them, helpful to the nature of that in regard to which is the charge of their apparent infirmity. For the above mentioned holy disciples, having considered, and openly said, one, that *Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little*, the other, of the *five loaves and two little fishes*, that *what are these among so many?* raise the marvel to its height, and make the Might of the Savior most marked, indicating by their own words the multitude that but now was to be filled, and the strength of their unbelief is converted into good testimony unto Christ. For in that they confessed that so large money would not suffice the multitude for even a slight enjoyment, by this very thing do they crown the Ineffable Might of the Host, when He, while there was nothing (for, as Andrew says, *what were the lad's supplies among so many?*) very richly outdid His work of love towards the multitude.

The like littleness of faith we shall find in the wilderness in the all-wise Moses too. For they of Israel were weeping and, excited to a foul lusting after the tables of Egypt, were picturing to themselves unclean dishes of flesh, and turning aside after most strange pleasure, of onions and garlic, and the like unseemly things, and disregarding the Divine good things, were attacking Moses their mediator and leader. But God was not ignorant, for what the multitude were eagerly groaning, and promised to give them flesh. But since the promise of liberality was made in the wilderness, and the thing appeared hard of accomplishment, as regards man's understanding, Moses came to Him crying out, *The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen, and YOU said, I will give them flesh, and they shall eat a whole month: shall the flocks and the herds he slain for them, and shall it suffice them?* And what said God to these things? *Will the Lord's Hand suffice not?* For unto what can God be powerless?

Therefore one may well say to the words of Philip and Andrew also, *Will the Lord's Hand suffice not?* And let us too taking the nature of the thing by way of example, hold that littleness of faith is the worst of sicknesses and surpasses all evil, and if God work or promise to do, be it full surely received in simple faith, and let not the Deity be accused, from our inability to conceive how what is above us shall happen, by reason of our own powerlessness unto ought. For it becomes the good and sober-minded and him that hath his reason sound, to consider this too in his mind, how the bodily eye too sees not surely as far as one would like, but as far as it can, and as the limit of

our nature permits. For the things that are situated at too great a height, it cannot distinguish, even if it imagine them, with difficulty snatching even the slightest view of them. So do you conceive of the mind of man also, so far as the bounds given it by its Maker it attains and stretches forth, even if it be wholly purified; for it will see none of those things that are beyond, but will give way, even against its will, to what is above nature, wholly unable to grasp them. The things then that are above us are received by faith, and not by investigation, and as he that so believes is admired, so he that falls into the contrary is by no means free from blame. And this will the Savior Himself testify, saying, *He that believeth on the Son is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already.*

Now having once taken up the discourse upon the duty of not mistrusting God, come, let us again showing forth somewhat out of the sacred writings, put it forward, and blazon forth the punishment of the unbelief for the profit of our readers. Therefore (for I will go again to the hierophant Moses) he was once bidden, in the wilderness, when the people were oppressed with intolerable thirst, to take Aaron, and smite the rock with his rod, that it might gush forth fountains of water. But he, not wholly believing the words of Him Who bade Him, but fainthearted by reason of human nature, said, *Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he smote the rock once and again, and much water came out: and the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* Is it not hence clear to everyone, how bitter the wages of unbelief? And if Moses so great as he was, was reprov'd, whom shall God spare, upon whom will not He who thus doe not respect persons, inflict His wrath for their unbelief, since He would not spare even that Moses, to whom He had said, *I know you above all, and you didst find grace in My Sight.*

Make the men sit down: and there was much grass in the place: the men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand.

The Savior practiced His accustomed gentleness, and takes away the sharpness of His reproaches. For He doth not rebuke bitterly His disciples, albeit they were deeply slumbering in respect of their faintheartedness and littleness of faith in Him: but rather He leads them by His deeds to the apprehension of the things which as yet they believe not. For the words *Make the men sit down* have no slight force, and nearly show Jesus saying something like this, O slow to understand My Power, and to perceive Who it is that speaks, *Make the men sit down*, that ye may see them filled with the nothing that lies before you and marvel. *Make the men sit down.* For it is what is lacking to them. For not two hundred pence would have sufficed to get means of life for the multitudes, but the lack of money such as men use, in respect of its being able to preserve life, My Power shall attain, which calls all things into being, and creates out of things which are not. Nor did Elias the Prophet render the widow's cruse of oil unfailling, and make the barrel the source of limitless food: but He, Who gave him the power, shall He not be able to multiply nothing, and to render any mere chance supply a fount of His ineffable Bounty and the principle and root of unlooked for grace?

It is not incredible that such were Christ's thoughts in what He said. Profitably does the blessed Evangelist mention, that *there was much grass in the place*, showing that the country was fit for the men to sit down in. But observe how, whereas the multitude of them that were fed was of men, women and their children, he numbered the men only, following I suppose the custom of the Law. For God commanded the hierophant Moses, saying, *Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upwards*. The Prophet did as he was commanded, and collected a great list of names, and is seen to have completely passed over females and childhood, and enrolls the multitude that are of full age. For honorable in the book of God too is all that is manly and vigorous, and not what is infantile in purpose after good things. Therefore did he honor the custom of the Law also herein, and form again some spiritual conception. For shall we not with reason say, if we look to the whole mind of the passage, that the violent and vainglorious people of the Jews Christ rightly turns away from and leaves: but receives very graciously them that come to Him, and fattens them with heavenly Food, reaching them the Spiritual *Bread*, which *strengthened man's heart*? For He does not feed them not sadly, but joyously and freely and with much enjoyment in piety. For this the reclining of the multitudes on *the grass* signifies, so that now too it is fit that each one to whom such grace has been granted should say that in the Psalms, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: in a grassy spot there He settled me*. For in much enjoyment and delight through the gifts of the Spirit is the mind of the Saints fed, as it is said in the Song of Songs, *Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!*. But while there were many, and they sitting down freely, as we said before, he mentioned the men alone, passing over in silence the women and children profitably for the idea [conveyed thereby]. For he teaches us, as in a riddle, that to those who quit them as men, that is, in good, will the food be supplied by the Savior more fittingly and specially, and not to those who are effeminate unto no good habit of life, nor yet to those who are infantile in understanding, so as to be thereby able to understand none of the things that are necessary to be known.

11 *Jesus therefore took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed⁷ to them that were set down; likewise of the fishes also as much as they would.*

He *gives thanks*, as an ensample to us and a pattern of the piety which ought to be in us: and attributes again as Man the Power of the miracle to the Divine Nature. For this was His custom, both helping by an example of piety, as we have said, those to whom He was manifested as a Teacher of what is most excellent, and by an economy concealing yet His God-befitting Dignity, till the time of His Passion should be at hand: for it was His earnest care that it should be hid from *the prince of this world*. For this reason, does He elsewhere too use words befitting men, as a Man, and heals again the understanding of His hearers, sometimes making most wise alluring as in the words, *Father, I thank You that You heard Me*. do you see how in human guise He speaks, and well calculated to trouble the understanding of the more simple? But when He says this, as Man, then again He straightway unfolds the mode of the economy, and the object of His will to lie hidden, by most excellent arrangement fortifying the mind of the more simple which had received a shock. For *I knew* (He said) *that You hears Me always*. Why then do You speak these things? *Because of the multitude which stood by I said it, that they may believe* (said He) *that You sent Me*. Is it not

then hereby plain, that with a different ways He is to assist us, and to fulfill, as befitted Him, the secret economy with Flesh, He sometimes speaks more lowly, than He really is? As therefore in that passage, *I thank You*, is taken economically, so here too. [*He blessed* is understood of the bread.]

But we must observe that instead of *gave thanks*, Matthew has said, *blessed*, but the edition of the saints will in no wise differ. For Paul will show that they are both one, saying that *every meat*⁹ *of God is good, and nothing to be refused: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer*. But that which is sanctified through the prayer in supplication, which we are wont ever to make over the table, is surely blessed..

But since it is fit that nothing profitable be left uninvestigated by us; come let us say a little of *the five loaves* which the *lad* had and of *the two little fishes*: for both the species itself, and besides the numbers are replete with mystery. For why (will some more studious person say) were not the loaves rather five, and the fishes three? why not five, and the fishes four? what occasion was there at all for recounting the number found, and why did not he rather say more simply and absolutely that the innumerable multitude of them that followed Him were fed off exceeding few chance things? But the fact that the blessed Evangelist recounted very diligently these things too, gives us something surely to think of, which we must needs search into.

He says then that the *loaves* are *five*, and they of *barley*, and the *fishes* *two*, and with these Christ fed them that love Him. And I think (and let the lover of wisdom look out for something better) that by the *five barley loaves* are signified the five-fold book of the all-wise Moses, that is, the whole Law, bringing in as it were coarser food, that by the letter and history. For this the *barley* hints at. But by the *little fishes* is signified the food got through the fishermen, that is, the more delicate books of the disciples of the Savior; and these two (he says), the apostolic and Evangelic preaching, shine forth among us. And both these are draughts and spiritual writings of the fishermen. The Savior therefore mingling the new with the old, by the Law and the teachings of the New Testament nourishes the souls of them that believe on Him, unto life, plainly eternal life. That the disciples were of fishermen, is (I suppose) plain and clear: and though all were not so, yet since there are some such among them, our argument will not recede from truth in what has been said.

12, 13 *When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

To some one Christ may seem out of sparing of the *fragments* to have bidden His disciples to gather them together. Yet (I think) everyone will fitly imagine, that Christ would not endure to descend to such littleness: and why say I Christ? not even one of us would do so: for what would be supposed to be the remnant of *five barley loaves*? But the verse has a great economy, and makes the miracle evident to the hearers. For so great is the efficacy of God-befitting Authority in this matter, that not only was so great a multitude sated from *five barley loaves and two little fishes*, but *twelve*

baskets full of fragments were gathered besides. Moreover the miracle repelled another (as is like) suspicion, and by the finding of the fragments confirmed the belief of there having been really and truly an abundance of food, and not rather the appearance of a vision deceiving both the eye of the feasters and of those who minister to them. But greater yet and more noteworthy, and of exceeding profit to us, is this: consider how by this miracle He makes us most zealous in our desire to exercise hospitality most gladly, well nigh calling aloud to us by the things that were done, that the things of God shall not fail him that is ready to communicate, and rejoices in habit of neighborly love, and readily fulfilled what is written, *Break your bread to the hungry*. For we find that the disciples at the beginning were hampered by reluctance about this, but seeing they were thus minded, the Savior gave them, a rich gathering from the fragments: and teaches us too thereby, that we, on expending a little for the glory of God, shall receive richer grace according to the saying of Christ, *Good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom*. We must not be slothful therefore unto the communion of love to the brethren, but rather advance unto good resoluteness, and put as far as possible from us the cowardice and fear that dispose us to inhospitality and, confirmed in hope through faith in the power of God to multiply little things too, let us open our bowels to the needy, according to the appointment of the Law, for He says, *You shall open your bowels wide to your needy brother within you*. For when will you be found merciful, if you remain hard in this life? when will you fulfill the commandment, if you suffers the time of being able to do it to slip by in idleness? Remember the Psalmist saying. *For in death there is none that remembers You: in the grave who shall confess to You?* For what fruit is there yet of the dead, or how shall one of them that have gone down into the pit remember God by fulfilling His Commandments? For *God closed upon him*, as it is written. Therefore did the most wise Paul too instruct us, writing to certain, *While we have opportunity let us do good*.

And these things shall be said for profit from the narrative. But since we taking what has been said in a spiritual sense (for so we ought, and not otherwise) said that by the *five barley loaves* the book of Moses was hinted at, and by the *two little fishes*, the wise writings of the holy Apostles: in the gathering together of the fragments too, I suppose we ought to perceive some mystical and spiritual conception, agreeing with the order of the account. The Savior then commanded the multitudes to sit down, and having blessed, He distributed the bread and the fishes, i. e., through the ministry of the disciples: but when they that had eaten were miraculously filled, He commands them to gather together the fragments, and *twelve baskets* are filled, one (it seems) for each of the disciples: for so many were they too. What then shall we understand from thence, save surely this, and truly, that Christ is the President of them that believe on Him, and nourishes them that come to Him with Divine and heavenly food? doctrines plainly of the Law and Prophets, Evangelic and Apostolic. But He does not altogether Himself appear as the Worker of these things, but the disciples minister to us the grace from above (for it is not they *that speak*, as it is written, *but the Spirit of the Father which speak in them*) yet not without reward to the holy Apostles shall be their labor therein. For they having dispensed to us the spiritual food, and ministered the good things of our Savior, will receive richest recompense and obtain the fullest grace of bounty from God. For this and nothing else, I think, is the meaning of the gathering together of a basketful by each at the commandment of Christ, after their toils and the service expended upon the feasters. But there is

no doubt, that after them the things typically signified will pass also to the rulers of the holy Churches.

14 *The men therefore, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth the Prophet that should come into the world.*

They marvel at the sign who know how to approve things God-befitting, and regulate themselves by human reason, who, when they ought to have profited by the publicity of the things wrought, lost even the power of right judgment. For they deemed that Jesus ought now to be stoned also, because He so often appeared as a Worker of miracles. Superior then, and that in no small degree, to the folly of those men, are they who marvel, soberly persuaded by this one great miracle, that He it surely was Whose coming *into the world as a Prophet* was foretold. But observe, how great a difference hence appears, I mean, between the race of Israel, and those situate out of Judaea; for the one, although they were spectators of many things, and those not unworthy of admiration, are not only hard of heart and inhuman, but also desire unjustly to slay Him Who was zealous to save them, driving Him with their wild folly from their city and country: while they who dwelt away from Jerusalem, and hence signify the race of aliens, from one miracle alone glorify Him, and nobly determine that their conceptions of Him should be received with faith unhesitatingly. From all these things, was Israel shown to be self-condemned and self-invited to her final just rejection, and that it was due to the Gentiles to obtain at length their share of mercy from above and love through Christ.

15 *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a King, He departed again into the mountain Himself Alone.*

Most praiseworthy judgment would one give, and full rightly, to those who had been easily brought by the great miracle to believe, that it was indeed befitting that their very choicest should be Christ's, and their highest offered to Him as an honor. For what else but this does their desire to choose *Him for their King* signify to us? But among other things one may admire this too; for Christ is made an example to us of contempt of glory, in that He flees from those who desire to give Him due honor, and refuses a kingdom that highest earthly prize, although to Him it was in truth no object of envy, in that He with the Father reign over all things, yet give He to them too who look for the hope to come, to understand that little to them is worldly greatness, and that it is not good to accept honors in this life, that is, in the world, though they offer themselves, that they may mount up to honor from God. For unseemly is it in truth that they should wish to shine in these things, who are pressing on to the Divine grace, and thirsting for everlasting glory.

We must then avoid the love of glory, sister and neighbor of arrogance, and not far distant from its borders. And illustrious honor in this present life let us avoid as hurtful, let us rather seek for a holy lowliness, giving way to one another as the blessed Paul too admonish, saying, *Be each among you so minded according to what was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be Equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking servant's form, made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, made obedient*

unto death, even the death of the Cross: wherefore God also highly exalted Him and gave Him the Name which is above every Name. Do you see how His voluntary abasement hath a glorious consummation, and His lowly-mindedness shows itself a root of many good things to us? For the Only-Begotten being in the Form of God the Father hath humbled Himself, being made Man for our sakes, but even though He appeared in this life with Flesh, yet He remained not lowly: for He hasted back to His ancient Dignity and to His God-befitting glory, even though He became Man: this same way may one suppose will it be as to us too. For when we bring ourselves down from the empty heights of the present life and seek low things, then shall we surely receive in return the glory from above, and mount up unto being gods by grace, receiving after likeness so to say to Him Who is truly and by Nature Son, the being called children of God. And that I may say something akin to the subject before us, let us refuse, if it offer itself, Excellency upon earth, the mother of all honor, if we mind heavenly things, and live for things above rather than those on the earth.

But our discourse is not devoid of spiritual thought, therefore we will repeat, summing up as it were the whole force of what has been done, and again going through from the beginning the account before us. For so will it become clear to us what is about to be said, specially as the blessed Evangelist has added, as though hinting at something necessary and not to be rejected, that He *withdrew into the mountain Himself Alone*. Therefore rejecting the cruelty of the Jews, Christ began to depart from Jerusalem, which plainly is, *I have forsaken Mine House, I have left Mine heritage*. When He had crossed *the sea of Tiberius*, and was very far removed from their folly, He goes up *into a mountain together with His disciples*. This we said signified the impassable so to say and impracticable nature of the way to Him unto the Jews, and Christ's withdrawal from them in anger at His Passion, for a season, that is, the fit time, and that Christ will be manifest, together with His disciples, when He departs from Judaea, and goes unto the Gentiles, transferring His grace to them. From the mountain did He look on them that followed Him, and moreover take thought for their food. And this again we said signified as it were typically, the supervision from above which is due to the Saints according to, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous*, and that Christ is not without thought for them that fear Him. Next much people were miraculously fed with *the five loaves and two little fishes*; of which we defined that they ought to be conceived to be the writings of the Saints *old and new* set by the Apostles before them that love Christ. Moreover, that the choir of the disciples will receive from God the rich fruit of their ministry, and after them, the overseers of the holy churches of God: for the type was in the beginning to all in them. Next the spectators marvel at the miracles, and devise to *take Jesus by force for a king*. This He understanding, *departs alone into the mountain*, as it is written; for when Christ was marveled at by the Gentiles, as Wonder-worker and God, when all enrolled Him their King and Lord, then was He received up *Alone into Heaven*, no one at all following Him thither. For He, the Firstfruits of the dead, hath gone up *Alone into the great and truer mountain*, according as is said by the Psalmist, *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart*. For such an one shall follow Christ, and shall go up into *the spiritual mountain* also, at the time of the Kingdom of Heaven. But *He hath withdrawn into the mountain*, that is, hath gone up into Heaven, not refusing to reign over them that believed on Him, but delaying the time of His more manifest kingdom, until His return to us from above, when He

shall descend in the glory of the Father, no longer by miracles, as before, known to be truly and by Nature Lord, but by God-befitting glory confessed that He is undoubtedly King.

Therefore (for I will say it again briefly, compressing the multitude of words), when by His miracles He was believed on and acknowledged to be God, having gone away from the Jewish people, then do all press forward to receive Him for their King, but He ascends into Heaven *Alone*, laying up for its fitting time the more open manifestation of His Kingdom. to Him is glory with His good Father and the Holy Spirit from now and unto the ages of ages amen.

REFLECTION:

Being Spiritually Smart

The Disciples have not seen Jesus multiply food yet. It is hard to accept a new supernatural action if we have not seen it done before. Likewise when our Lord spoke about the gift of His body and blood, the majority of His disciples would not accept His sayings because their hearts were not open to: "For with God nothing will be impossible." Luke 1:37. It is the same response humans had been giving God throughout all the history of salvation.

The miracle of feeding the five thousand men is a preparation for our Lord discourse on the Eucharist:

A sign points to a greater matter. When visible, tangible signs are performed, they lead the witnesses to believe Christ regarding invisible, intangible matters like forgiveness of sins, Baptism and the gift of His body and blood in the Eucharist.

Examples: The healing of the paralytic and forgiveness of sins:

"Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." ³ And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" ⁴ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵ For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? ⁶ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." ⁷ And he arose and departed to his house. ⁸ Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men". (Matt 9:2-8),

Also, the miracles of healing in Jerusalem (Jn. 2:23) and the discourse with Nicodemus on the Baptism in water and Spirit (Jn 3:5); In the Old Testament it was written " *Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses*" Ex 13:31. This is how they were initiated into believing in God and Moses to take care of them, of their needs and to bring them to the Promised Land.

That by seeing signs, the people would be open to God's new revelation through His Son: the Mystery of Baptism in Jn:3, and the Eucharist in Jn:6. That is why He rebuked those who followed Him saying, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.*" Jn 6:40. Rather than filling their heart with more of

God's will for them, they are interested in filling their stomach instead. While they were thinking of food for physical life, the Trinity thinks of food for eternal life.

When the crowd saw the miracle (sign) of the multiplication of the loaves, they perceived the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:15. That prophecy foretold the coming of "a prophet" who will do many marvels like Moses, and that God would demand that the people would *listen* to this "prophet" in whatever He would say, and that they should believe whatever the prophet says in God's name are God's truthful words to them. *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."* John 6:29.

¹⁵*"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,* ¹⁶ *according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'* ¹⁷*"And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. **Deuteronomy 18:15-19***

It is Christ, but the Israelites were not ready to perceive that Christ is more than a prophet. Later, Christ would confess Himself to be the Son of the Living God before the high priest and the Sanhedrin (Matt 26:63-64). Christ is the ultimate Prophet, High Priest, and King of Kings.

In His life: Our Lord as a newly born child was sought by the king, who wanted to kill Him, and had to flee to Egypt; He ascended a mountain to give the Commandments (sermon on the mount); His first miracle was to turn water to wine; He fed the people miraculously, etc. These are but a few similarities to point the Israelites to the fulfillment of Deut.18:15.

PRAYER:

Blessed are You, O Christ our God the *Pantocrator*, the Savior of this Church, which is Yours. O comprehensible *Logos* and perceptible Man. Who through Your incarnation, which is beyond comprehension, have prepared for us heavenly bread: Your holy Body which is mysterious and holy in everything.

You mixed for us a cup from a true grape vine, that is Your divine and unblemished side. From which, after You had given up the spirit, water and blood overflowed for us. These which have become a purification for the whole world.

Acquire us to Yourself, O Good One, we who are Your unworthy servants. Make us for Yourself a gathered people, a kingdom, a priesthood, a holy nation Amen. *from the fraction of the Gregorian liturgy*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Healing, Disciples, Resurrection

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Resurrection
Liturgical:	Eucharistic offering
Moral:	Sharing
Spiritual:	Prayer

INTRODUCTION

COLLECT THEIR HOMEWORK

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What is the meaning of holy? Preach? Baptism?

A. *Holy: special and belong to God, preach: tell people about God, Baptism: dipping the whole person in holy water to make them holy*

Q. Who is our God?

A. *Our God is the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit*

Q. When did we learn about the Holy Trinity?

A. *In the Baptism of our Lord by John the Baptist.*

Q. When did you become a child of God the Father?

A. *In my Baptism*

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:22

LESSON BODY:

INTRODUCTION

Bring in an icon of Christ depicting Him as a teacher. If possible, bring in another icon of Christ performing a healing miracle.

Also bring in loaves of bread to demonstrate to the kids, and 2 life-size pictures of a small fish

CHRIST THE TEACHER AND THE HEALER

[Show the icon of Christ to the children and ask them to describe what it looks like Christ is doing in this icon. If they do not get it, guide them to say that it looks like He is teaching, or giving directions by saying things like, “when do people usually use their hands when they are speaking? When they are trying to do what?” or, “what kinds of people have books in their hands?"]. Yes, Christ had many things to do when He was on earth, and one of those things was teaching the people; He was a teacher, a good teacher. What kinds of things do you think He taught? [how to be good, how to love God, how to love others, etc..]. [[Next, show the kids the icon of Christ healing the people and ask them to describe what it looks like He is doing in that picture.]] Yes, Christ is **healing** people – what does it mean to heal? It means to make someone feel better, to cure someone of a sickness or a disease. It is what a doctor does. But a doctor does it with medicine. Did our Lord have to use medicine? No, all He had to do was *touch* someone or *say a word* and the person would feel much better – if they had a broken bone, it would be healed immediately! If they were sick in bed and couldn’t get up, they would feel better right away! If they couldn’t walk because something was wrong with their legs, they would jump up and run! *Even* if someone had died, they would come back to life when Christ told them to.

So because our Lord was doing all these things, what do you think the people that lived around Him started to think about Him? Do you think they wanted to be around Him? Yes! They started to realize that they could go to Him with ANY problem, problems that no one had ever been able to help them with, and He would make things better. They followed Him everywhere, and they didn’t leave Him alone. They *couldn’t* leave Him alone – they needed Him.

THE FIVE THOUSAND FOLLOW OUR LORD

One day, all the people in the towns near the place our Lord lived, woke up and said to each other, “Where is Jesus going to be today? We want to go find Him and listen to Him teach us these great things! We need Him to heal our family members and our friends.” They left their houses to look for Him, and do you know where they found Him? Our Lord was next to a lake with His **disciples**. He saw the huge crowd of people coming towards Him, and He loved them very much because He knew they needed help. He started to walk towards a mountain; our Lord did this on purpose because He wanted the people to follow Him there. He sat down to wait for them to come, and He had His disciples with Him. When the people came to Him - there were more than five

thousand people! - They sat down all around Him and waited for Him to speak to them. Even though there were so many people, [[help the kids try to imagine how much five thousand is]] there was not a single sound to be heard. All the people were very quiet because they were very excited to listen to our Lord; they loved all the things He would say to them. Christ stayed with them and talked to them and healed the sick people among them for the *whole day*!

OUR LORD MULTIPLY THE FIVE LOAVES AND THE TWO FISH

When it started to get close to evening, our Lord's disciples came to Him and told Him that it was time for the people to leave because they had not eaten for the whole day and they were very hungry. Our Lord told the disciples, "You give them something to eat." So the disciples looked around them – they were on top of a mountain. Has anyone ever been on top of a mountain before? Is there any food up there? Not at all! There are no stores or restaurants on top of a mountain! The disciples started to look around nervously. The Lord had asked them to feed the people and they didn't want to let Him down, but where to find food? They started to ask each other, "Where are we going to find food for all these people? There are just so many of them!" (Remember – there were *thousands* of people there). Then one of the disciples, his name was Andrew, noticed something. He saw that there was a boy there in the crowd, a boy about the same age as you, and this boy had with him 5 **loaves** of bread [[show the kids a loaf of bread]] and 2 small fish. Andrew noticed this and because he trying to find *anything* that could help the situation, he said, "Well, there is a boy here who has 5 loaves and 2 fish, but how are they going to feed *all* these people?" What do you think? Do you think it is possible for these 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish about this size [[hold up the loaves and the pictures]] to feed thousands of people, and for each person to have enough to be full? [[if the kids say, "no" then tell them that they felt just like Christ's disciples did at that time! If some of the kids say "yes," tell them that they must know something special about our Lord and ask them to share why they said yes. What do they know about what our Lord can do?]]

After Andrew asked this question – what question did he ask? – Our Lord told His disciples "have the people sit down in groups of 50 each." So the disciples thought to themselves, 'ok we can do *that*. That's not as hard as trying to find enough food!' so they organized the huge group of people and everyone sat down. After this, our Lord took the 5 loaves of bread and the 2 small fish, which the young boy had shared with the disciples, and He gave thanks to God for the food. Then He started to give bread and fish to the disciples for them to pass out to the people. But, this is where something very special happened. If right now, I decided to divide this bread and cut up this fish and share it with all of you, we would run out pretty quickly right? Would we have enough to share with the 1st grade class next door? [No]. What about with the 3rd grade class? [Definitely not]. Ok, BUT when our Lord did this, guess what? The food did not run out! He kept giving more and more and more and more and more to the disciples and they kept giving it out to all the people until everyone had enough and was full!! Thousands of people got full! Our Lord did a

wonderful and awesome miracle – He multiplied the little food that was there until it was enough to feed everyone. No one went home hungry. And even more, the disciples cleaned up the food after the people and they picked up all the leftover pieces, and there was enough left over to fill up *twelve whole baskets!* [Discuss with the students how the young boy shared his food with the disciples, and he even may not have known the miracle that was about to happen but he shared anyway. As far as he knew, he had just given up his food.]

Not only were the disciples in awe of Christ because He did this, but all of the people were too. They had never seen or heard of anything like this before. So they followed our Lord around and didn't want to leave Him. They wanted to make Him a king! But our Lord did not want to be king. He wanted something else, and that something else is the most interesting part of the story today. Our Lord did not want the people to get so excited about this food. He told them some interesting things, "Don't work so hard for food that is not going to last forever." What did He mean by that? Do you know what will happen to this bread in a few weeks? Is it going to stay good like this? No, it is going to get moldy and rotten and smell very bad and it we won't be able to eat it! What about milk? Has anyone ever had milk in their refrigerator that was in there for too long and started to smell very bad? Milk doesn't last forever! All food only remains for a small amount of time, and then it goes bad and has to be thrown away. Right? So our Lord started to tell them not to be so excited for that kind of food because it's not the best kind of food there is.

THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

He told them that instead, there is a greater food, a food that does not *ever* get rotten or go bad, but a food that lasts forever and that is the food that they should seek and work hard for, and be excited about. Let's think about this for a minute. What is the food that we have been talking about for the past two weeks that we receive in Church in the liturgy, and that comes to us from Heaven? What is the food that our Lord was talking about? [Communion / Eucharist!] Right! *This* is the food that our Lord started talking to the people about – BECAUSE this food will keep me alive *forever*. Even when we get older and we die, God willing, we will **resurrect** and be with our Lord forever in Heaven. When I take communion in the liturgy, it stays inside me and *will* stay with me forever, and it will change me and make me much stronger and healthier. People who eat communion will live forever with our Lord in Heaven!

LITTLE OFFERING

The five loaves and the two fish were very small but when they gave them to our Lord they were more than enough. We too should always come to church with something to give Christ. How about a gift of little money (a dollar) that we prepare every Sunday and bring with us to the collection box?

WHAT TO DO IN COMMUNION

Knowing this, it means that when we are coming to communion, we do not just go to it as if we were going to any other regular thing, like school or my friend's house or to the store. When I am waiting for communion, I need to be praying and be very aware of what I am doing. [explain to the students that one of the servants will be with them in communion line, giving them the prayer they should be praying and reminding them to stay focused].

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Bring in an icon of Christ depicting Him as a teacher. If possible, bring in another icon of Christ performing a healing miracle.**
- **Bring a loaf of bread in to show to the kids and 2 life-size pictures of a small fish**
- ***Scrap book building: coloring page with the memory verse.***
- ***Coloring***
- ***Magnet board***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: How many loaves of bread and how many fish did Christ start with to feed the thousands?

A: *5 loaves and 2 fish*

Q: What did Christ do before He gave the people the food?

A: *He gave thanks to God*

Q: How many baskets of food were left over?

A: *12 baskets*

Q: What is the food that lasts forever?

A: *The Eucharist/Communion*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Parents make a point to prepare a dollar on Saturday for the children to give to God on Sunday morning in remembrance of the five loaves and the two fish.

1. Christ feeds the five thousands *Matthew 14:13-21*
2. Feeding four thousands *Matthew 15:32-39*
3. The last supper *Matthew 26:17-30*
4. The dinner at Emmaus *Luke 24: 13-31*
5. The breakfast by the sea of Tiberius *John 21:11-13*
6. The Apostolic church *Acts 2:40-45*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

Purpose: In Baptism we are born again to God through water & Spirit. Now we are the children of God. The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the *offering*, the *receiving* and the *remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

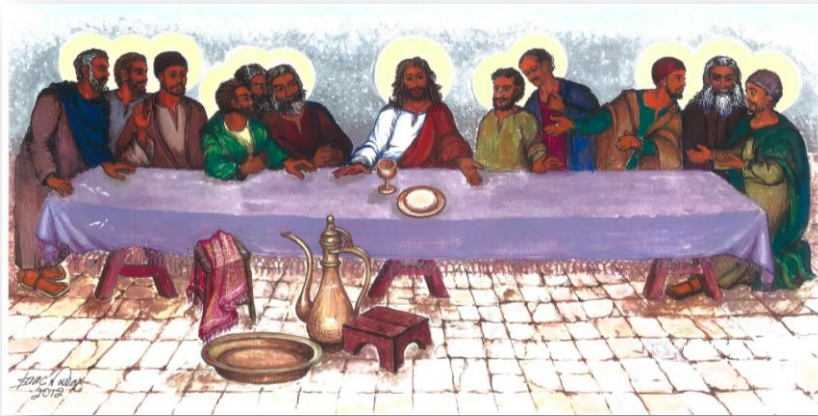
4. THE FIRST EUCHARIST

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 22:7-23

"7Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the



city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11Then you shall say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"" 12Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make

ready." 13So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. 14When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new

covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. 21But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing."

CHURCH FATHERS:

THE law by its shadows prefigured from of old the mystery of Christ: and of this He is Himself the witness where He said to the Jews, "If you had believed Moses, you would have believed also Me: for he wrote concerning Me." For everywhere He is set forth, by means of shadows and types, both as slain for us, as the Lamb without blame and true; and as sanctifying us by His life-giving blood. And we further find the words of the holy prophets in complete accordance with those of most wise Moses. But when "the fullness of time was come," as Paul says, in which the Only-begotten Word of God was about to submit to the emptying of Himself, and to endure the birth in the flesh of a woman, and subjection also to the law, according to the measure that was fitting for human nature, then He was also sacrificed for us, as the lamb without blame and true, on the fourteenth day of the first month. And this feast-time was called Phasek, a word belonging to the Hebrew language, and signifying the passing over: for so they explain it, and say that this is its meaning.

We must explain then what it is from which we pass over, and on our journey to what country, and in what manner we effect it.

As then Israel was delivered from the tyranny of the Egyptians, and having loosed its neck from the yoke of bondage, was now free; and fleeing from the violence of the tyrant passed with dry foot in a manner wonderful and beyond the power of language to describe through the midst of the sea, and journeyed onwards to the promised land: so must we too, who have accepted the salvation that is in Christ, be willing no longer to abide in our former faults, nor continue in our evil ways, but manfully cross over the sea, as it were, of the vain trouble of this world, and the tempest of affairs that is therein. We pass over therefore from the love of the flesh to temperance; from our former ignorance to the true knowledge of God; from wickedness to virtue: and in hope at least, from the blame of sin to the glories of righteousness, and from death to incorruption. The name therefore of the feast on which Emmanuel bore for us the saving cross, was the Passover.

But let us behold Him Who is the Truth still honoring the types, and Him Who was represented therein still permitting the shadows to hold good. "For when the day, it says, had come, on which it was fitting for the Passover to be sacrificed, He sent to the city two men chosen from the holy apostles, Peter namely and John, saying, that there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him to the house into which he enters; and say to the master of the house, The Teacher says to you, where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" 'But why, someone perchance may say, did He not plainly mention the man to those whom He sent? For He did not say, Having gone to such and such a person, whoever it might be, there prepare for us at his house the Passover: but simply gave them a sign,----a man bearing a pitcher of

water.' To this then what do we reply? That lo! already Judas the traitor had promised the Jews to deliver Him to them, and was continuing in His company watching for an opportunity; and while still making profession of the love that was the duty of a disciple, he had admitted Satan into his heart, and was travelling with the crime of murder against our common Savior Christ. He gives a sign therefore, to prevent him from learning who the man was, and running to tell those who had hired him. "For there shall meet you, He says, a man carrying a pitcher of water."

Or even perchance He so speaks signifying something mystical and necessary thereby. For whither the waters enter, even those of holy baptism, there lodges Christ. How, or in what manner? In that they free us from all impurity, and we are washed by them from the stains of sin, that we may also become a holy temple of God, and partakers of His divine nature, by participation of the Holy Spirit. In order therefore that Christ may rest and lodge in us, let us receive the saving waters, confessing moreover the faith that justifies the wicked, and raises us aloft so as for us to be accounted "an upper room." For those in whom Christ dwells by faith have a mind raised aloft, unwilling to creep upon the dust, and refusing, so to speak, to be set upon the earth, and everywhere seeking that which is exalted in virtue. For it is written, that "the mighty ones of God are raised high above the earth." "For here they have no abiding city, but seek that which is to come:" and while walking upon earth, their thoughts are set upon those things which are above, and "their dwelling is in heaven."

We may also notice something true, but wonderful, that happens, so to speak, constantly among us: namely that those who prize their carnal life are often puffed up, and have their heart full of pride accursed and hated of God; but yet perhaps they are brought to humiliation even upon earth: while those who are poor in spirit obtain exaltation by the honor and glory which comes from God. For as the disciple of Christ writes, "Let the humble brother glory in his exaltation, but "the rich in suffering humiliation: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away." He therefore would not miss the truth, who should say that the soul of every saint is "an upper room."

When then the disciples had prepared the Passover, Christ ate it with them, being long-suffering towards the traitor, and deigning to admit him to the table from His infinite loving-kindness: for he was already a traitor, because Satan was lodging within him. And what did Christ also say to the holy apostles? "I have desired a desire to eat this Passover with you." Let us examine the deep claim of this expression: let us search out the meaning concealed therein, and what it is which the Savior intends.

As then I have already said that covetous disciple was seeking an opportunity to betray Him: and, that he might not deliver Him to His murderers before the feast of the Passover, the Savior did not declare either the house or the person with whom He would celebrate the feast. To explain therefore to them the cause of His unwillingness openly to tell them with whom He would lodge, He says, "I have desired a desire to eat with you this Passover:" apparently meaning, I have used all diligence to enable me to escape the wickedness of the traitor, that I might not endure My passion before the time.

"But I will not eat of this Passover until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And in this again Christ utters a profound and mysterious truth, of which He Himself, however, reveals to us the meaning. For it is His custom to give the name of "the kingdom of heaven" to justification by faith, to the cleansing that is by holy baptism and the participation of the Holy Spirit, and to the offering of spiritual service, now rendered possible by the entering in of the gospel laws. But these things are the means of our being made partakers of the promises, and of our reigning together with Christ: and therefore He says, "I will no more draw near to such a Passover as this," one namely that consisted in the typical eating,---for a lamb of the flock was slain to be the type of the true Lamb,-- --"until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God:" that is, until the time has appeared in which the kingdom of heaven is preached. For this is fulfilled in us, who honor the worship that is superior to the law, even the true Passover; nor is it a lamb of the flock which sanctifies those who are in Christ, but Himself rather, being made a holy sacrifice for us, by the offering of bloodless oblations, and the mystical giving of thanks, in which we are blessed and quickened with life. For He became for us "the living bread that came down from heaven, and gives life to the world:" by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXLII.

22:17-22. And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it with one another: for I say to you, that I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God is fulfilled. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you: do this in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you. But, behold! the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me at the table. And the Son of man indeed goes, according to that which was determined: but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!

TO be made partakers of Christ, both intellectually and by our senses, fills us with every blessing. For He dwells in us, first, by the Holy Spirit, and we are His abode, according to that which was said of old by one of the holy prophets. "For I will dwell in them, He says,. and lead them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people."

But He is also within us in another way by means of our partaking in the oblation of bloodless offerings, which we celebrate in the churches, having received from Him the saving pattern of the rite, as the blessed Evangelist plainly shows us in the passage which has just been read. For He tells us that "He took a cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it with one another." Now by His giving thanks, by which is meant His speaking to God the Father in the manner of prayer, He signified to us that He, so to speak, shares and takes part in His good pleasure in granting us the life-giving blessing which was then bestowed upon us: for every grace, and every perfect gift comes to us from the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit. And this act then was a pattern for our use of the prayer which ought to be offered, whenever the grace of the mystical and life-giving oblation is about to be spread before Him by us: and so accordingly we are wont to do. For first offering up our thanksgivings, and joining in our praises to God the Father both the Son and the Holy Spirit, we so draw near to the holy tables, believing that we receive life and blessing both spiritually and

corporeally: for we receive in us the Word of the Father, Who for our sakes became man, and Who is Life, and the Giver of life.

Let us then enquire, to the best of our ability, what is the view held among us of this mystery: for it is our duty to be "ready to give an answer concerning the hope that is in us," as the wise Peter says. "The God of all therefore created all things for immortality, and the beginnings of the world were life; but by the envy of the devil death entered the world:" for it was that rebel serpent who led the first man to the transgression of the commandment, and to disobedience, by means of which he fell under the divine curse, and into the net of death: for it was said to him, "Earth you are, and to the earth you shall return." Was it then right that one who was created for life and immortality should be made mortal, and condemned to death without power of escape? Must the envy of the devil be more unassailable and enduring than the will of God? Not so: for it has been brought to naught; and the clemency of the Creator has transcended the evil effects of his malignity. He has given aid to those upon earth. And what then was the manner in which He aided them? One truly great, and admirable, and worthy of God; yes, worthy in the very highest degree of the supreme Mind. For God the Father is by His own nature Life; and as alone being so, He caused the Son to shine forth Who also Himself is Life: for it could not be otherwise with Him Who is the Word That proceeded substantially from the Life: for He must, I say must, also Himself be Life, as being One Who sprang forth from Life, from Him Who begot Him.

God the Father therefore gives life to all things by the Son in the Holy Spirit: and everything that exists and breathes in heaven and on earth, its existence and life is from God the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit. Neither therefore the nature of angels, nor anything else whatsoever that was made, nor aught that from non-existence was brought into being, possesses life as the fruit of its own nature: but, on the contrary, life proceeds, as I said, from the Substance which transcends all: and to it only it belongs, and is possible that it can give life, because it is by nature life.

In what manner therefore can man upon earth, clothed as he is with mortality, return to incorruption? I answer, that this dying flesh must be made partaker of the life-giving power which comes from God. But the life-giving power of God the Father is the Only-begotten Word: and Him He sent to us as a Savior and Deliverer. And how He sent Him, the blessed John the Evangelist clearly tells us, saying, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us." But He became flesh, not by having undergone any change or alteration into what He had not been, nor again by having ceased to be the Word;---for He knows not what it is to suffer the shadow of a change;---but rather by having been born in the flesh of a woman, and taken to Himself that body which He received from her, in order that, having implanted Himself in us by an inseparable union, He might raise us above the power both of death and corruption. And Paul is our witness, where he says of Him and of us, "For inasmuch as the children are partakers of blood and flesh, so He in like manner was partaker of the same, that by death He might bring him to naught who has dominion over death, that is, the devil; and deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For He does not take hold of angels, "but He took hold of the seed of Abraham: for which reason it was right for Him in all things to be made like to His brethren:" that is, to us. For He was made in our likeness, and clothed Himself in our flesh, that by raising it from the dead He might prepare a way

henceforth, by which the flesh which had been humbled to death might return anew to incorruption. For we are united to Him just as also we were united to Adam, when he brought upon himself the penalty of death. And Paul testifies thus writing on one occasion, "For because by man is death, by man is also the resurrection of the dead:" and again upon another, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all live." The Word therefore, by having united to Himself that flesh which was subject to death, as being God and Life drove away from it corruption, and made it also to be the source of life: for such must the body of (Him Who is) the Life be.

And do not disbelieve what I have said, but rather accept the word in faith, having gathered proofs thereof from a few examples. When you cast a piece of bread into wine or oil, or any other liquid, you find that it becomes charged with the quality of that particular thing. When iron is brought into contact with fire, it becomes full of its activity; and while it is by nature iron, it exerts the power of fire. And so the life-giving Word of God, having united Himself to His own flesh in a way known to Himself, endowed it with the power of giving life. And of this He certifies us Himself, saying, "Verily, I say to you, he that believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life." And again, "I am the living bread, that came down from heaven; if a man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I shall give is My flesh for the life of the world. Verily, I say to you, that if you eat not the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He that eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so He that eats Me shall also live because of Me." When therefore we eat the holy flesh of Christ, the Savior of us all, and drink His precious blood, we have life in us, being made as it were, one with Him, and abiding in Him, and possessing Him also in us.

And let none of those whose wont it is to disbelieve say, 'Since therefore the Word of God, being by nature life, dwells in us also, is the body of each one of us too endowed with the power of giving life?' Rather let him know that it is a perfectly different thing for the Son to be in us by a relative participation, and for Himself to become flesh, that is, to make that body His own which was taken from the blessed Virgin. For He is not said to become incarnate and be made flesh by being in us: but rather this happened once for all when He became man without ceasing to be God. The body therefore of the Word was that assumed by Him from the holy virgin, and made one with Him; but how, or in what manner this was done, we cannot tell: for it is incapable of explanation, and altogether beyond the powers of the mind, and to Himself alone is the manner of the union known. It was titling therefore for Him to be in us both divinely by the Holy Spirit, and also, so to speak, to be mingled with our bodies by His holy flesh and precious blood: which things also we possess as a life-giving Eucharist, in the form of bread and wine. For lest we should be terrified by seeing (actual) flesh and blood placed upon the holy tables of our churches, God, humbling Himself to our infirmities, infuses into the things set before us the power of life, and transforms them into the efficacy of His flesh, that we may have them for a life-giving participation, and that the body of (Him Who is the) Life may be found in us as a life-producing seed. And do not doubt that this is true, since Himself plainly says, "This is My body: "This is My blood:" but rather receive in faith the Savior's word; for He, being the Truth, cannot lie. And so will you honor Him; for as the very wise John says, "He that receives His witness has set his seal that God is true. For He Whom God sent

speaks the words of God." For the words of God are of course true, and in no manner whatsoever can they be false: for even though we understand not in what way God works acts such as these, yet He Himself knows the way of His works. For when Nicodemus could not understand His words concerning holy baptism, and foolishly said, "How can those things be?" he heard Christ in answer say, "Verily I say to you, that we speak that which we know, and testify that which we see, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you the earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I tell you the heavenly things?" For how indeed can a man learn those things which transcend the powers of our mind and reason? Let therefore this our divine mystery be honored by faith.

But Judas the traitor, who was eating with Him, was reprov'd in those words which Christ spoke, "But behold the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me at the table." For he imagin'd perchance in his great senselessness, or rather as being filled with the haughtiness of the devil, that he could deceive Christ, though He be God. But, as I said, he was convicted of being altogether wicked, and hateful to God, and traitorous: and yet admission was permitted him to the table, and he was counted worthy of the divine gentleness even to the end: but thereby is his punishment made the more severe. For Christ has somewhere said of him by the Psalmist's voice, "That if an enemy had reproach'd Me, I had borne it: and if he that hated Me had spoken against Me proud things, I had hid myself from him. But it was you, My like in soul, My neighbor and My acquaintance, who in My company had sweeten'd for Me meats, and we went to the house of the Lord in concord." Woe therefore to him, according to the Savior's word! For He indeed, according to the good will of God the Father, gave Himself in our stead, that He might deliver us from all evil: but the man who betray'd into the hands of murderers the Savior and Deliverer of all, will have for his inheritance the condemnation which is the devil's fitting punishment. For his guilt was not against one such as we are, but against the Lord of all: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen.

REFLECTION:

A hard teaching:

Many of our Lord's initial disciples will leave Him because they could not accept His words on the Eucharist. Some of them are going to come back and see Him as He ascends to heaven, "*After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once*" 1Corinth 18:6. Some of those who had seen Him after His resurrection "doubted" "*When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted*". Matt 28:17. It was much harder for them to accept His resurrection than to accept His words on the Eucharist. Since our Lord had spilled all His blood through the flogging, crown of thorns, nails and eventually the spear, He had no blood left in Him. According to the Jewish definition, physical life depends on the blood. "*But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood*". Gen 9:4. How can they understand the life of Christ's risen flesh. In the new creation - the life of resurrection - the source of life is not the blood, but the Spirit of God.

⁶³ *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.. We confess " yes we believe in The Holy Spirit, The Lord, The Giver of Life" in the creed. It was the work of the life-giving Spirit on the flesh of Christ that raised His flesh from the dead. One of the symbols of the Holy Spirit is fire from heaven. In the consecration of the Old Testament church, we see the first burnt offering consumed by fire from heaven. The priests and Levites had to keep this divine fire alive by sacrifices, fat and wood. They were not to use a foreign fire. This happened at the dedication of the Tabernacle " and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" Leviticus 9:24-10:2. The same thing happened in the dedication of the Temple; "When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple." 2nd Chr 7:1. The New Testament Church was consecrated with a more excellent Sacrifice. The slain body of Christ was lain on a stone in the tomb, the Holy Spirit (the fire of God) assuming the body transforming it to the new life of the resurrected body, to make of Christ's body the first fruit of our future resurrection. He became the consecrating sacrifice of the New Testament Church.*

"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." The words that Christ spoke on that day carry the power of the Spirit. They are the words of Christ in the Last Supper that would transform the bread and wine. The first creation came into existence by the "word" and the "Spirit," "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible". Heb. 11:3

If the word of God to the first creation (to bless it with, "Be fruitful and multiply") had an everlasting effect, so also the words "this is my body..this is my blood..do this" must have the same everlasting effect.

Did Jesus explain the word he said about the Eucharist?

He did not. Our Lord gave the words to be accepted and believed, not to be any more understood than how He multiplied the loaves and the fishes, walked on water, came from heaven, or resurrected from the dead. These actions are supernatural actions of the Holy Spirit and occasions for perfect faith on our part so we can say with saint Peter: " Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ^{68,69}

How do you explain the Eucharist if you are asked?

I do not understand how it happens (manna). But I believe our Lord in that the Eucharist is His True Body And True Blood.

PRAYER:

We thank You, O Lord Christ, our God the true *Logos* Who is of the unblemished essence of the holy Father. For You loved us in such a way and gave Yourself to the slaughter because of our sins. You healed us by Your stripes and we were healed through Your wounds. You granted us the gift of life through Your holy Body and Your precious Blood.

These from which You have granted us to receive. Therefore we thank you, O God who loves man, whom he has formed. *And we send up to You the glory and the honor and the worship, with Your God Father, and the Holy Spirit, the Life- Giver and consubstantial with You, now and at all times and unto the ages of all ages. Amen. Prayer of thanksgiving after communion, Gregorian Liturgy*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Passover

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ loves us to the end
Liturgical:	Eucharist
Moral:	Unity
Spiritual:	Praise

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: How many loaves of bread and how many fish did Christ start with to feed the thousands?

A: 5 loaves and 2 fish

Q: What did Christ do before He gave the people the food?

A: He gave thanks to God

Q: How many baskets of food were left over?

A: 12 baskets

Q: What is the food that lasts forever?

A: The Eucharist/Communion

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" John 6:51

LESSON BODY

THE PASSOVER AS THE CELEBRATION OF THE OLD FAMILY OF GOD

[Bring in an icon of the Last Supper to show the kids after the lesson ends. If it is not too much, have smaller picture icons of the Last Supper to hand out to the kids to take home.]

What does your family do on big holidays, like Resurrection (Easter) or Nativity (Christmas)? {some of the kids will say "that they all get together and eat." When one of the kids say that, say} Well, just like you do that with your family and friends for big celebrations, our Lord Jesus Christ did the same thing with His disciples one day on a big feast, a big celebration. That big feast was not called Christmas or Easter, but it was called **Passover**. Passover used to be the most important holiday for God's people because on that day, the people would remember and celebrate something that was very important to them: how God had freed the people from Egypt (where they had been very miserable and had to work very, very hard) a long time ago {Remind the kids about the lesson about Moses and the Bread from Heaven}. So just like you celebrate the big feasts with your family, our Lord wanted to do the same thing when Passover came. But guess who our Lord considered His family? His disciples – His disciples were the closest people to Him and He loved them very much because they were the beginning of the Church, the beginning of *us*. So, *we* are also part of our Lord's family.

CHRIST SENDS TWO DISCIPLES TO PREPARE

When the people would celebrate Passover, they would eat a very big meal together. This was the meal that our Lord was going to eat with His disciples. So I have a question for you – at your house, before you can eat a meal with your family, what has to happen first? [someone has to cook, someone has to set the table; if they don't come up with these answers, guide them to them] Right! It was the same with our Lord. He needed to have two of His disciples go get everything

ready for Passover before they all arrived there. He picked St. Peter and St. John, and He told them to do this: “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” So St. Peter and St. John said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?” They didn’t know whose house they were going to go to! So our Lord said to them, “When you enter the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher (meaning Christ) says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” And do you know who that man was? It was actually St. Mark! The one who our church is named after. Our Lord and His disciples ate in St. Mark’s house.

ST PETER AND ST. JOHN PREPARE FOR THE PASSOVER

So St. Peter and St. John went and they found everything to be just as our Lord had told them it would be. And they prepared the Passover meal for our Lord and the rest of the disciples. The disciples worked together and helped each one another: not everyone needed to prepare the meal, so two went and did it while the others were doing other things that they needed to take care of as a group. This is something very important, and we, as a Sunday school class, need to also be looking to help one another, and share the jobs that we need to do. [Provide an example with something the kids do in the class on a regular basis – coloring, or passing out the food]. We too need to prepare for the coming to church to prepare for the Eucharist, how?

sleep early, prepare your gifts, pray before sleep, come early, clean before you come.

THE WASHING OF THE FEET

When it was time to eat, Christ and the rest of the disciples came. They said “thank you” to St. Peter and St. John for getting everything ready, and then they all sat down together to eat.

After our Lord and the disciples ate, our Lord Jesus did something very interesting. Before we talk about it though, we need to figure out who was the leader among the disciples. Who did they all look up to and follow and listen to? {Christ of course}. And not just the disciples, but most of the people listened to Him and took the things He said very seriously. Now think of your principal at school. Do all the teachers listen to him? All the kids? He is very important, right? Now try to imagine this: could you ever see your principal washing the teacher’s feet? {give them time to be shocked by this image}. Would he ever do that? {Probably not!} Well, Christ did that. He is very important, too, even more important than a principal and He washed the disciples’ feet. Why? Because He loved them very much and wanted to serve them, wanted to help them. He showed us what true leaders are like. And people who really want to be Christian and be like Jesus will follow what He did. This is why abouna wipes the deacons’ feet on Thursday in Holy Week. Has anyone ever been there or seen that?

St. Peter was uncomfortable with having our Lord wash his feet. He felt that this was too much and that he should be washing Christ's feet. But our Lord told him that unless he allowed Him to wash his feet, he would have no part with Him. Because our Lord was going to do something very important after washing their feet. He had wanted, more than anything, to be able to share this meal with them and wash their feet, because He had been planning on doing something very special with them. What do you think the special thing was? [let them make some guesses]. While they were sitting and eating, our Lord took bread, gave thanks to God His Father, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you." The disciples did not know what He meant, but they could see that our Lord was being very serious and that something very important was happening. They were very quiet, and a little bit nervous, 'what do you mean, Lord?' they wanted to ask. But they didn't ask; they took the bread from Him and ate it, just like He said to do. Then, when they had finished supper, our Lord took the cup that was in front of Him on the table, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood, which is shed for you." Again, the disciples could see that our Lord was still very serious and He was giving them something very important. They each took the cup from Him and drank.

THE FIRST EUCHARIST

The very important question: does anybody know what our Lord just did? What was the very special, very important thing that our Lord had wanted, more than anything, to be able to give His disciples (the church)? [maybe the kids will know, maybe they won't; if no one says it, tell them it is Communion! Or, the Eucharist]. In the story that we just said, our Lord gave His disciples the very first communion. He gave them *Himself*. The disciples didn't know what was happening then, but they learned after a while. They learned that this was the most important meal they would eat, and later, they gave it to all the churches in the world, all the people who are Christ's family.

Our Lord also told His disciples that they would need to keep having the same Communion, that same meal, regularly. So, they did this with each other and with the other people who belonged to our Lord.

WE RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST

I have a question for you – do we still eat this same meal today? [see what they say; this is a moment of assessment to see if the kids understood the lesson and what you were trying to teach them]. Yes, we do. We take communion when we come to the liturgy. And every time we do this, it means that we are taking our Lord inside us, and He is bringing us very close to Himself. And just like the disciples were very serious, and were very quiet when our Lord was giving them the very first communion *ever*, we should also be that way when we are going to take communion, because something very important and very special is happening both by the eating and in our hearts at the same time.

So how do you think the disciples felt after this whole evening with our Lord? He fed them, He washed them, He gave them Himself. {They felt very comfortable and safe. Like the way you feel when your mom gives you dinner and then helps you take a bath and you feel very warm and cozy and she tells you that she loves you}. That's how the disciples felt.

After they finished everything, our Lord and the disciples sang a hymn together to God. Now I want you to think about this: do we do the same thing after we eat our Lord's Supper every Sunday? Do we sing hymns just like the disciples did? {Yes. The song we sing right when we start communion is "Praise God for..."} }

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** Bring in an icon of the Last Supper to show the kids after the lesson ends. If possible, have smaller picture icons of the Last Supper to hand out to the kids to take home.
- Invite the students to the table of the last supper
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Whose house did our Lord celebrate the Passover in?

A: *St. Marks'*

Q: What was the meal that Christ and His disciples had in the Passover?

A: *Christ's Body and Blood*

Q: When do we take Christ's Body and Blood?

A: *Communion*

Q: What did Christ do after He and His disciples took communion?

A: *Sing hymns*

Q: What do we do after we take communion?

A: *Sing hymns*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READINGS

Parents would share with their children their feelings and actions before, during and after holy communion. They should help them memorize a short preparatory prayer and a short thanksgiving prayer to be recited before and after holy communion. *Please find examples at the end of this book.*

1. Melchizedek blesses by bread and wine *Genesis 14:18-20*
2. Isaac blesses Jacob by the meal *Genesis 27*
3. Passover meal *Exodus 12*
4. The meal before the Lord God of Israel *Exodus 24:9-12*
5. Wisdom meal *Proverbs 9:1-6*
6. The Manna, bread from heaven *Exodus 16*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

Purpose: In Baptism we are born again to God through water & Spirit. Now we are the children of God. The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the *offering*, the *receiving* and the *remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

5. THE EUCHARIST, WHAT WE RECIEVE

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:



John 6:53-58, The Bread of Life

53Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

1 Cor 10:16, Communion

16The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

Isaiah 6:6-7, Forgiveness of sins

6Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

Ex 12:1-30, Gift of life

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: "On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 4And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire--its head with its legs and its entrails. 10You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. 12"For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 14"So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. 15Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat--that only may be prepared by you. 17So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread." 21Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. 22And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. 23For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. 24And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He

promised, that you shall keep this service. 26And it shall be, when your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" 27that you shall say, "It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households." So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. 28Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. 29And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. 30So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria on St John's Gospel Chapter 6

CHAPTER II. That the Holy Body of Christ is Life-giving, wherein He speaks of His Own Body as of Bread.

52, 53 The Jews therefore were striving among themselves saying, How can This Man give us His Flesh to eat? Jesus therefore said unto them,

THIS MYSTERY REQUIRES FAITH

*All things are plain to him that understands, and right to them that find knowledge, as it is written, but darksome to the foolish is even that which is exceeding easy. For the truly wise hearer shuts up the more obvious teaching in the treasury of his understanding, not admitting any delay in respect of this: but as to the things the meaning whereof is hard, he goes about with his enquiries, and does not cease asking about them; and he seems to me profitably to press on to do much the same as they say that the fleetest dogs of the chase do, who having from nature great quickness of scent, keep running round the haunts of their game. And does not the wise and prophetic oracle call to some similar habit, *Seeking seek and dwell with Me?* For the seeker must seek, that is, must bring a most unflinching zeal thereto, and not go astray after empty speculations, but in proportion as anything is more rugged in its difficulty, with so much the more vigorous mind must he apply himself and carry by storm with more resolute onset of his thoughts that which is concealed. But the unpracticed and unreachable mind, whatever starts up before it, rages at it with its unbelief, rejects the word conquering as spurious, from undisciplined daring mounting up to the last degree of arrogance. For that which will give way to none, nor think that ought is greater than it, how will it not at last be, what we have just said?*

And we shall find by looking into the nature of the thing that the Jews too fell into this disorder. For when they ought to have accepted unhesitatingly the words of the Savior, having already through many things marveled at His God-befitting Power and His incontestable Authority over all, and to have enquired what was hard of attainment, and to have besought instruction wherein they were perplexed: they senseless repeat *How* to God, as though they knew not that it is a word replete with all blasphemy. For the Power of accomplishing all things without toil belongs to God, but they,

being *natural* men, as the blessed Paul said, *received not the things of the Spirit of God*, but the so dread Mystery seems *folly* to them.

We then ought, to derive benefit wherefrom, and reestablishing our own life by others' falls, to hold without question our faith in the teaching of the Divine Mysteries and not to apply *How* to ought that is told us (for it is a Jewish word, and therefore deserving of extreme punishment). And when the ruler of the synagogue of the Jews, Nicodemus by name, on hearing the Divine words, said, *How can these things be?* with justice was he ridiculed hearing, *Art THOU a master of Israel, and knows not these things?* Let us then, found more skilful in the search after what is profitable, even by others' folly, beware of saying *How*, to what God works, but rather study to attribute to Him the knowledge of the mode of His Own Works. For as no one will know what God is by Nature, but he is justified who *believeth that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*: so again will one be ignorant of the mode of His several acts, but by committing the issue to faith, and by confessing the Almighty Power of God Who is over all, will he receive the not contemptible reward of so good a decision. For the Lord of all Himself willing us so to be affected says by the Prophet Isaiah, *For My Counsels are not as your counsels, neither as your ways are My Ways, says the Lord, but as the heaven is far from the earth, so are My Ways far from your ways, and your thoughts from My Mind*. But He That so greatly surpasses us in wisdom and might, how shall He not also work wonderfully, and overpass our understanding?

I would fain introduce yet an argument besides, no mean one, as I think. For they who in this life take up the knowledge of mechanics (as it is called) often engage to perform some great thing, and the way of doing it is hidden from the mind of hearers, till they have seen it done; but they looking at the skill that is in them, even before the trial itself, accept it on faith, not venturing to contradict. How then (may one say) will not they with reason be open to heavy charges, for daring to dishonor with their unbelief God the Highest Worker of all things, who refuse not to say *how* to those things which He works, albeit they acknowledge Him to be the Giver of all wisdom, and are taught by the whole Divine Scripture that He can do all things? But if you persists, O Jew, saying *How!* I too will imitate for thy sake your ignorance, and say to thee, *how* earnest thou out of Egypt? *how* (tell me) was the rod of Moses changed into a serpent? *how* became the hand leprous, and was again restored, as it is written? *how* passed the water into the nature of blood? *how* did you pass *through the Red Sea, as through dry land?* *how* by means of a tree was the bitter water of Mara changed into sweet? *how* too was water supplied to thee from the breasts of the rocks? *how* was the manna brought down to thee? *how* again stood the Jordan in his place? or *how* through a shout alone was the impregnable wall of Jericho shattered? And will that *how* never fail thee? For thou wilt be detected, already amazed at many mighty works, to which if thou applies the *how*, thou wilt wholly disbelieve all Divine Scripture, and wilt overthrow all the words of the holy Prophets, and, above all, the holy writings of your own Moses himself. It were therefore far more fitting, that, believing in Christ and assenting unhesitatingly to His words, you should be zealous to learn the mode of the blessing, and not be inconsiderately intoxicate saying, *How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?* for the word *this Man* too they say in condescension. For some such meaning again does their arrogant speech hint at.

53 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have not life in you.*

A LIFE GIVING MYSTERY

Long-suffering truly and of great mercy is Christ, as one may see from the words now before us. For in no wise reproaching the littleness of soul of the unbelievers, He again richly gives them the life-giving knowledge of the Mystery, and having overcome, as God, the arrogance of them that grieve Him, He tells them those things whereby they shall (He says) mount up to endless life. And how He will give them His Flesh to eat, He tells them not as yet, for He knew that they were in darkness, and could never avail to understand the ineffable: but how great good will result from the eating He shows to their profit, that haply inciting them to a desire of living in greater preparation for unfading pleasures, He may teach them faith. For to them that have now believed there follows suitably the power of learning. For so the prophet Isaiah said, *If ye will not believe neither yet shall ye understand.* It was therefore right, that faith having been first rooted in them, there should next be brought in understanding of those things whereof they are ignorant, and that the investigation should not precede faith.

FAITH BEFORE EXAMINATION

For this cause (I suppose) did the Lord with reason refrain from telling them how He would give them His Flesh to eat, and calls them to the duty of believing before seeking. For to them that had at length believed He *brake bread, and gave to them, saying, Take, eat, This is My Body.* Likewise handing round the Cup to them all, He said *Drink of it all of you, for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is being shed for many for the remission of sins.* Do you see how to those who were yet senseless and thrust from them faith without investigation. He did not explain the mode of the Mystery, but to those who had now believed, He is found to declare it most clearly? Let them then, who of their folly have not yet admitted the faith in Christ, hear, *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.* **For wholly destitute of all share and taste of that life which is in sanctification and bliss, do they abide who do not through the mystical Blessing receive Jesus.** For He is Life by Nature, inasmuch as He was begotten of a Living Father: no less quickening is His Holy Body also, being in a manner gathered and ineffably united with the all-quickening Word. Wherefore It is accounted His, and is conceived of as One with Him. For, since the Incarnation, it is inseparable; except as regards the knowledge that the Word Which came from God the Father, and the temple from the Virgin, are not indeed the same in nature (for the Body is not consubstantial with the Word from God), yet are they One by that coming-together and ineffable concurrence. And since the Flesh of the Savior hath become life-giving (as being united to That which is by Nature Life, the Word from God), when we taste It, then have we life in ourselves, we too united to It, as It to the indwelling Word. For this cause also, when He raised the dead, the Savior is found to have operated, not by word only, or God-befitting commands, but He laid a stress on employing His Holy Flesh as a sort of co-operator unto this, that He might show that It had the power to give life, and was already made one with Him. For it was in truth His Own Body, and not another's. And verily when He was raising the little daughter of the chief of the Synagogue saying, *Maid, arise,* He laid hold of her hand, as it is written, giving life, as God, by His All-Powerful command, and again, giving life through the touch of His Holy Flesh, He shows that there was one

kindred operation through both. Yea and when He went into the city called Nain, and one was being carried out dead, *the only son of his mother*, again He *touched the bier*, saying, *Young man, to you I say, Arise*. And not only to His Word gives He power to give life to the dead, but that He might show that His Own Body was life-giving (as I have said already), He touches the dead, thereby also infusing life into those already decayed. And if by the touch alone of His Holy Flesh, He gives life to that which is decayed, how shall we not profit yet more richly by the life-giving Blessing when we also taste It? For It will surely transform into Its own good, i. e., immortality, those who partake of It.

And do not wonder, nor ask yourself in Jewish manner, *How?* but rather consider that water is cold by nature, but when it is poured into a kettle and brought to the fire, then it all but forgets its own nature, and goes away unto the operation of that which has mastered it. We too then in the same way, even though we be corruptible through the nature of our flesh, yet forsaking our own infirmity by the immingling of life, are trans-elemented to Its property, that is, life. For it needed, it needed that not only should the soul be re-created through the Holy Ghost into newness of life, but also that this gross and earthly body should by the grosser and kindred participation be sanctified and called to incorruption. But let not the Jew sluggish of understanding ever suppose that a mode of some new mysteries has been discovered by us. For he will see it in the older books, I mean those of Moses, already fore-shadowed out and bearing the force of the truth, for that it was accomplished in outward forms too. For what (tell me) shamed the destroyer? what provided that their forefathers also should not perish along with the Egyptians, when death, the conqueror of all, was arming himself against the firstborn? is it not manifest to all, that when they, in obedience to the Divine Law sacrificed the lamb, and having tasted of its flesh anointed the doorposts with the blood, death was compelled to pass them by, as sanctified? For the destroyer, that is, the death of the body, was arrayed against the whole nature of man, by reason of the transgression of the first-formed man. For, first we did hear, *you are dust, and unto dust you shall return*. But since Christ was about to overthrow the so dire tyrant, by existing in us as Life through His Holy Flesh, the Mystery was fore-typified to them of old, and they tasted of the flesh of the lamb, and were sanctified and preserved by its blood, he that was appointed to destroy passing by, by the appointment of God, those who were partakers of the lamb. Why then are you angry, O Jew, at being now called from the types to the truth, when Christ says, *Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have not life in you?* albeit you ought to come with more confidence to the comprehending of the Mystery, pre-instructed by the books of Moses, and by most ancient figures led most undoubtingly to the duty of faith.

54 *Whoso eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

IN WHICH WAY THE MYSTERY GIVES LIFE

Herein too ought we specially to admire the holy Evangelist openly crying, *And the Word was made Flesh*. For he did not shrink from saying, not that He was made in Flesh, but that He was made Flesh, that he might show the Union. And we do not say either that God the Word, of the Father, was transformed into the nature of the Flesh, or that the flesh passed into the Word (for Each remains that which it is by nature, and One Christ of Both); but in a manner unspeakable and passing human understanding, the Word united to His Own Flesh, and having, as it were,

transformed It all into Himself (according to the operation which lies in His power of quickening things lacking life) drove forth of our nature the corruption, and dislodged too death which of old prevailed by means of sin. *He therefore that eats the Holy Flesh of Christ, has eternal life:* for the Flesh has in Itself the Word Which is by Nature Life. Wherefore He said, *I will raise him up at the last day.* Instead of saying, My Body shall raise him up, i. e., him that eats It, He has put *I:* not as though He were other than His Own Flesh (and not wholly so by nature), for after the Union He cannot at all be severed into a pair of sons. I therefore (He said) Who am become in him, through Mine Own Flesh, that is, will *raise up* him who eats thereof, *in the last day.* For it were indeed even impossible that He Which is by Nature Life, should not surely overcome decay, and master death. Wherefore even though death which by the transgression sprang on us compel the human body to the debt of decay, yet since Christ is in us through His Own Flesh, we shall surely rise. For it were incredible, yea rather impossible, that Life should not make alive those in whom It is. For as if one took a spark and buried it amid much stubble, in order that the seed of fire preserved might lay hold on it, so in us too our Lord Jesus Christ hides life through His Own Flesh, and inserts it as a seed of immortality, abolishing the whole corruption that is in us.

55 *For My Flesh is True Meat and My Blood True Drink.*

Again does He contrast the Mystic Blessing with the supply of manna, and the savor of the cup with the founts from rocky beds. And what He said afore in other words, this He again says here, in different ways, fashioning the same discourse. For He does not advise them to marvel overmuch at the manna, but rather to receive Him, as Bread from Heaven, and the Giver of eternal life. For *Your fathers (He says) ate the manna in the wilderness and died: this is the Bread Which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die.* For the food of manna (says He) having for a very little time sported with the need of the body, and driven away the hurt of want, was again powerless, and did not engraft eternal life in them that had eaten thereof. That then was not the *true Food*, and Bread from heaven, that is; but the Holy Body of Christ, Which nourishes to immortality and life everlasting, is verily the *true Food*. 'Yea and they drank water also from the rock.' 'And what then' (He says) 'or what the profit to them who drank? for they have died.' That too then was not *true drink*; but *true Drink* in truth is found to be the Precious Blood of Christ, Which uproots from the foundation all corruption, and dislodges death which dwelt in the flesh of man. For it is not the Blood of any chance man, but of the Very Life that is by Nature. Wherefore we are entitled both the Body and the members of Christ, as receiving through the Blessing the Son Himself in ourselves.

56 *He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood dwells in Me and I in him.*

In diverse ways does Christ initiate us by these words, and since His Discourse is hard of attainment by the more unlearned, asking for itself rather the understanding of faith than investigation, He revolving again and again over the same ground makes it easy in divers ways, and from all parts illumines what is useful therein, fixing as a kind of foundation and groundwork the most excellent desire for it. For *he that eats My Flesh (said He) and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him.* For as if one should join wax with other wax, he will surely see (I suppose) the one in the other; in like

manner (I deem) he who receives *the Flesh* of our Savior Christ and *drinks His Precious Blood*, as He said, is found one with Him, commingled as it were and immingled with Him through the participation, so that he is found in Christ, Christ again in him. Thus was Christ teaching us in the Gospel too according to Matthew, saying, *The Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened*. Who then the woman is, what the three measures of meal, or what the measure at all, shall be spoken of in its proper place: for the present we will speak only of the leaven. As then Paul said that *a little leaven leavens the whole lump*, so the least portion of the Blessing blends our whole body with itself, and fills it with its own mighty working, and so Christ cometh to be in us, and we again in Him. For one may truly say that the leaven is in the whole lump, and the lump by like reasoning is in the whole leaven: you have in brief the sense of the words. And if we long for eternal life, if we pray to have the Giver of immortality in ourselves, let us not like some of the more heedless refuse to be blessed nor let the Devil deep in wickedness, lay for us a trap and snare a perilous reverence.

WE GAIN POWER OVER SIN AND GAIN FIRE FOR PIETY

Yea (says he) for it is written, *He that eats of the Bread, and drinks of the Cup unworthily, eats and drinks doom unto himself*: and I, having examined myself, see that I am not worthy.

When then will you be worthy (will he who thus speaks hear from us) when will you present yourself to Christ? for if you are always going to be scared away by your stumbling, you will never cease from stumbling (for *who can understand his errors?* as said the holy Psalmist) and will be found wholly without participation of that wholly-preserving sanctification. Decide then to lead a holier life, in harmony with the law, and so receive the Blessing, believing that it has power to expel, not death only, but the diseases in us. For Christ thus coming to be in us calms the law which rages in the members of the flesh, and kindles piety to God-ward, and deadens our passions, not imputing to us the transgressions in which we are, but rather, healing us, as sick. For He binds up that which was crushed, He raises what had fallen, as a Good Shepherd and One that has laid down His Life for His sheep.

59 These things said He in the Synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

The most wise Evangelist introducing to us the exposition of marvelous mysteries, with reason attributes to our Savior Christ, the commencement of the doctrine thereof, by the clear view of His Person shaming the gainsayer, and scaring off beforehand those who should come with a view to refute: for sometimes the renown of the teachers makes the hearer more ready to believe, and demands a more earnest assent on the part of the learners. Full well too does he add, *In the Synagogue*. For the expression well-nigh shows that not one chance person, or two, heard Christ say these things: but He is seen teaching openly in the synagogue to all, as Himself said by the Prophet Isaiah too, *Not in secret have I spoken nor in a dark place of the earth*. For He was discoursing openly of these things, rendering their judgment without excuse to the Jews, and rendering the charges of not believing on Him heavier to the disobedient. For they, if not yet instructed in so dread Mystery, might reasonably have deprecated punishment, and pleading utter ignorance, have undergone a lighter sentence from the Judge: but since they knowing, and often initiated, still outraged Him with their unbelief, how will they not reasonably be punished, all mercy at last taken away, and pay most bitter penalty to Him that was dishonored of them? some such

thing hath the Savior Himself too said of them, *If I had not come (He says) and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.*

We must then guard against, yea rather renounce, disobedience, as the bringer in of death, and look upon faith in what Christ teaches, as the giver of life. For thus shall we escape being punished with them. But he adds that Christ had spoken *these things in Capernaum*, that he may be proved to have remembered accurately. For he that knows both place and village, how shall he fail in the relation of the things taught?

60, 61 *Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, Hard is this saying, who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples are murmuring at it, He said unto them,*

This is the custom of the simple: they ever find fault with the more subtle doctrines and foolishly tear in pieces any thought that is above them, because themselves understand it not: although they ought rather to have been eager to learn, and to have loved to search diligently the things spoken, not on the contrary to rise up against so wise words, and call that *hard*, which they ought to have marveled at. For they are somewhat in the same plight, as one may see those in who have lost their teeth. For the one hurrying to the more delicate food, often reject the more wholesome, and sometimes blame the more excellent, not acknowledging the disease, whereby they are compelled to decline it: and these, the foster-brethren of unlearning and bereft of sound mind, shrink from knowledge, which they ought to have pursued with exceeding much toil, and to have attained by intent zeal. The spiritual man then will delight himself in the words of our Savior, and will justly cry out, *How sweet are Thy words unto my throat, yea, above honey and the comb to my mouth*; while the carnal Jew ignorantly esteeming the spiritual Mystery to be foolishness, when admonished by the Words of the Savior to mount up to the understanding befitting man, ever sinks down to the folly which is his foster-brother, *calling evil good, and good evil*, according to the Prophet's voice. He follows again his fathers, and herein too is he detected imitating the unlearning of his forefathers. For the one on receiving the manna from God, and being made partakers of the blessing from above, were dragged down to their wonted coarseness, and sought for the tastelessness of Egypt, desiring to behold onions, leeks, and kettles of fish: and these on being exhorted to receive the life-giving Grace of the Spirit, and taught to feed on the Very Bread, which cometh from God the Father, turn aside after their own error, *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*; and as their forefathers used to find fault with the very food of manna, daring to say, *And our soul is dried away* with this manna: so do these too again reject the Very Bread, and blush not to say, *Hard is this saying.*

The hearers therefore of the Divine Mysteries must be wise, they must be *approved exchangers*, so as to know the approved and counterfeit coin, and neither unseasonably to bring inextricable questioning on those things which are to be received in faith, nor to lavish a faith sometimes harmful upon those things that require investigation, but to render to everything that is said its due, and to advance as it were by a straight path, refusing to turn aside on either hand. For by a royal road beseems it him to travel who runs to uprightness of faith which is in Christ.

St. John Chrysostom on 1 Corinth 10:16

"For we, who are many, are one bread, one body." "For why speak I of communion?" said he, "we are that self-same body."

For what is the bread? The Body of Christ. And what do they become who partake of it? The Body of Christ: not many bodies, but one body. For as the bread consisting of many grains is made one, so that the grains nowhere appear; they exist indeed, but their difference is not seen by reason of their conjunction; so are we conjoined both with each other and with Christ: there not being one body for thee, and another for thy neighbor to be nourished by, but the very same for all. Wherefore also he adds, "For we all partake of the one bread." Now if we are all nourished of the same and all become the same, why do we not also show forth the, same love, and become also in this respect one? For this was the old way too in the time of our forefathers: "for the multitude of them that believed," said in the text, "were of one heart and soul." (Acts 4:32.) Not so, however, now, but altogether the reverse. Many and various are the contests betwixt.

St Cyril commentary on St John's Gospel

CHAPTER II. That the Son is Consubstantial with God the Father, and not of an alien or foreign nature, as some of the perverse assert.

xv. 1 I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.

And since the deluded heretic chooses to propound his false views in his folly, and says that no argument will induce those who as it were distort the aim of the words which are before us from their right meaning, and attribute to them a reference to the Incarnation of Christ, for we were not united to Him in the body, nor yet did the Apostles as branches abide in the body of Christ, nor were they after this fashion connected with Him, but in temper of mind and faith unfeigned; let us briefly reply to this, and show him that he is altogether astray, and does not follow aright the holy writings. For that we are spiritually united with Christ in a disposition made conformable to perfect love, in true and uncorrupted faith, in virtue and purity of mind, the statement of our doctrine will no way deny. For we confess that he is quite right in saying this; but in venturing to say that no reference is intended to our union with Him after the flesh, we will point out that he is wholly out of harmony with the inspired writings. For how could it be disputed, or what right-minded man could deny, that Christ is the Vine in this relation? And we, as being branches after a figure, receive into ourselves life out of and proceeding from Him, as Paul says: *For we are all one body in Christ, seeing that we who are many are one bread: for we all partake of the one bread.* And let any one account for this and give us an interpretation of it without reference to the power of the blessed mystery. Why do we receive it within us? Is it not that it may make Christ to dwell in us corporeally also by participation and communion of His Holy Flesh? Rightly would he answer, I deem. For Paul writes, *that the Gentiles have become fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers, and fellow-heirs of Christ.* How are they shown to be "embodied"? Because, being admitted to share the Holy Eucharist, they become one body with Him, just as each one of the holy Apostles. For why did he (S. Paul) call his own, yea, the members of all as well as his own, the members of Christ? For he writes thus: *Know ye not that your members are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid.* And the Savior Himself says:

He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, abides in Me, and I in him. For here it is especially to be observed that Christ said that He shall be in us, not by a certain relation only, as entertained through the affections, but also by a natural participation. For as, if one entwines wax with other wax and melts them by the fire there results of both one, so through the participation of the Body of Christ and of His precious Blood, He in us, and we again in Him, are co-united. For in no other way could that which is by nature corruptible be made alive, unless it were bodily entwined with the Body of That Which is by nature Life, the Only-begotten. And if any be not persuaded by my words, give credence to Christ Himself, crying aloud: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up in the last day.* Thou nearest now Himself plainly declaring that, unless we "eat His Flesh, and drink His Blood," we "have not in ourselves," that is, in our flesh, "Eternal Life." But Eternal Life may be conceived to be, and most justly, the Flesh of that which is Life, that is, the Only-begotten. And how or in what manner this raises us up on the last day hear now; and I will not scruple to tell you. For since the Life, that is the Word which shone forth from God the Father, took unto Himself flesh, the flesh became transformed into a living principle, and it is inconceivable that the life should be vanquished by death. Therefore, since the life is in us, it will not endure the bondage of death, but will wholly vanquish corruption, since it cannot endure its results. For *corruption* does not *inherit incorruption*, as Paul says. For if Christ uses the emphatic expression, *I will raise him up*, He not only invested His own Flesh with the power of raising those who are asleep, but the Divine and Incarnate Word, being one with His own Flesh, says, *I will raise him up*, and with good reason. For Christ is not severed into a duality of Sons, nor can anyone think that His Body is alien from the Only-begotten, as no doubt no one could maintain that the body in which the soul dwells is alien from it.

When then by these disquisitions Christ has been shown to us to be the Vine in this sense, and we the branches, inasmuch as we partake in a fellowship with Him that is not merely spiritual but also corporeal, why does he talk so vainly, asserting that, since our dependence on our fellowship with Him is not corporeal, but consisting rather in faith and disposition to love according to the law, He did not call His own Flesh, he says, the vine, but rather His Godhead? And yet, why, someone may say, does he reject the interpretation that is more fitting and appropriate to the passage, and hasten to adopt one widely divergent? For shall we not grant that Christ is the Vine in a more appropriate way also according to the fellowship of the flesh, and that we are branches through the similarity of our nature? For that which proceeds from the vine is of like nature with it. And this we say, not as attempting to deny the possibility of union with Christ by right faith and sincere love, but rather from a wish to point out that Christ is the Vine and we are the branches, both in a spiritual and corporeal sense.

Further, the statement of the truth is simple and obvious; but our adversary, in his wickedness, disdains the admission that Christ was the Vine in a corporeal sense also, as conferring His own Life on the branches, that is to say on us, just as the visible and earthly vine confers life on the branches that cling to it. He distorts and does violence to the meaning of the thought, making it have reference only to His Godhead. For he thought that he might thus bring a calumny against it, raising this ignorant contention: "If the Son is the Vine," he says, "and the Father the Husbandman, and

the Son differs in nature from Him, as in the figure of the vine, the Son will not be of the same Substance with the Father."

REFLECTION:

In this lesson the teacher should focus on the gift of Eternal life. Every effort should be directed toward what eternal life could mean for little Christians. The most beautiful place and the best people ever. God in the gift of communion is giving us a way to get to heaven and live forever with Him and with His Son and His Spirit. We shall also enjoy the company of St. Mary, the angels and all the saints that we heard about and love.

PRAYER:

O God, Who has preordained us to sonship, through Jesus Christ our Lord, according to Your goodwill; a honor to the glory of Your grace, that which You granted unto us through Your Beloved. He by Whom we were redeemed, through His Holy Blood for the remission of sins. *St Cyril Fraction prayer-Intro.*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Devotion, deliver, twilight, doorposts and lintel (will need to draw a picture of this on the board),

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God Gives us Eternal life in His Son
Liturgical:	Eucharist
Moral:	Obedience
Spiritual:	Prayer - Thanksgiving

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Whose house did our Lord celebrate the Passover in?

A: *St. Marks'*

Q: What was the meal that Christ and His disciples had in the Passover?

A: *Christ's Body and Blood*

Q: When do we take Christ's Body and Blood?

A: *Communion*

Q: What did Christ do after He and His disciples took communion?

A: *Sing hymns*

Q: What do we do after we take communion?

A: *Sing hymns*

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

LESSON BODY:

THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN THE WORLD

What would you say is the most **precious** thing in the world? (The most valuable, the most prized above all else)? [Let the kids give some ideas of things. For each suggestion, ask questions that would lead the child to see how what they mentioned is not really that valuable. For example: a play-station or a new car, would break if it falls, would get old and stop working after a while.] So, all the things that regular people say are very precious are actually not. They will break, they will get old, they will let us down in some way.

There is actually only one thing that is the most precious in the entire universe, not just the world. But, here is the catch: *on the outside, it looks very normal*. It doesn't look special at all. You don't even have to pay any money for it. If someone just looked at it, and didn't know the secret, didn't know what it really was, he would think it was just some every-day *food* (here is a hint).

Do you think you can figure out what it is? What is the food that on the outside looks very normal, maybe even boring, but what it actually is, is something that is worth so, so, so much?
[communion]

COMMUNION IS OUR TREASURE FROM GOD:

By taking communion we abide in our Lord Jesus Christ *"⁵⁶He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."* John 6:56 and receive:

1. Eternal Life : *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."* John 6: 54
2. Forgiveness of our sins
3. Unity with each other

1. COMMUNION IS WHAT MAKES US LIVE FOREVER

I'm going to tell you a story now which may not seem to be a story about what we receive during the Eucharist, but if you are able to pay careful attention and if you are just a little bit clever, you will be able to discover that it is truly a lesson about what we receive during the Eucharist.

One time, a very long time ago, thousands of years ago in fact, there lived a family of people. This family was very large – there were thousands of people who belonged to it – and they were called the children of Israel, because one of their very first fathers had been named Israel (his name when he was born had been Jacob, but then the Lord changed his name to Israel). The children of Israel had been made into **slaves** for the people of the land of Egypt and there they lived in **captivity**. They were not free to leave, even though they were miserable. They were miserable because they were forced to work very hard for the Egyptians and do whatever they commanded them to do.

Now it happened that God heard the cries of the children of Israel and it was time to **deliver** them. God had a servant named Moses and He sent this Moses to the **Pharaoh** (the king of the Egyptians) to ask him to let His people go. God gave to Moses the power to work many signs and Moses showed to Pharaoh over and over again that God is true and that he needed to obey Him and let the people go, but Pharaoh had a very hard heart and did not listen. He did not listen, that is, until the very last horrible thing had happened to the Egyptians and then he let the children of Israel go. It is this last thing that we are going to talk about today.

Moses had pleaded with Pharaoh to let the people go; he had warned him repeatedly and also shown him by the signs but Pharaoh refused to listen. The Lord then told Moses what was going to happen: "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here." Then Moses went to Pharaoh and warned him about what was going to happen, to give him one more time to change his mind before great sadness and heartache came; This is what Moses said to Pharaoh (he is going to tell him what the Lord said): "Thus says the LORD: *"About **midnight** I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the **firstborn** in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the hand-mill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."* (This is the end of what the Lord said. The next two sentences are Moses' words to Pharaoh) And all these your servants shall come

down to me and bow down to me, saying, "Get out, and all the people who follow you!" After that I will go out." [Make sure to explain this part to the students so that they understand exactly what was said and that God had told Pharaoh exactly what was going to happen before it happened and Pharaoh still would not listen].

So in Egypt that night, at midnight all the firstborn would die. *Except* for the firstborn of the children of Israel. Why? How? Listen very carefully and you will find out:

God had also given to Moses very clear instructions on how the children of Israel would be saved that night: Every family would take a lamb (a male lamb in the first year of its life and that has nothing wrong with it at all), all the families of Israel would kill their lambs at the same time, **twilight**, and they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two **doorposts** and on the **lintel** of the houses where they eat it. [Draw a picture a door with posts and a lintel on the board]. Then they would eat the lamb after it had been roasted in fire. This is called the Lord's Passover. Because during the night, the Angel of the Lord would pass through the land of Egypt, killing all the firstborn, but when He sees the blood on the door, He would pass over that house and those inside would not be destroyed.

This is exactly what happened that night. All the firstborn of the Egyptians, man and animal, were killed and there was great sadness and crying and mourning in the houses of the Egyptians. But in the houses of the children of Israel, everyone was safe. This is how the children of Israel were saved on that night and how they were given the gift of life. After this event happened, Pharaoh told Moses to get out of Egypt with all the people. They were finally free.

The children of Israel continued to celebrate this feast every year as a memorial of what happened to them and how God had saved them.

Now let us talk about us. How do you think the children of Israel felt that night when all around them, the firstborn of the Egyptians were dying? And they could hear people crying? [scared, sad]. In the same way that the children of Israel were surrounded by death that night when all the firstborn were dying, we too are surrounded by bad things, scary things, sad things, in this world. And in the same way that the children of Israel ate the Passover lamb and were saved, we also eat something and are granted life when we eat it. Does anybody know what that is that we eat? This is the most important question and whoever answers it has truly understood [keep asking questions to probe the children to answer]. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ- This is what saves us and grants us life. We must eat the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the true Passover Lamb, who came to save us from everything that is bad and evil and to grant us everlasting life in Heaven forever.

So this is what we receive in the Eucharist: the most precious and most important gift from God. And just like the children of Israel continued to celebrate the Passover over and over, we too continue to celebrate the Eucharist over and over, because every time we eat this Food, we are **renewed** (made new) on the inside.

For Christians, dying is just considered taking a trip, going from here to Paradise where there is nothing bad or scary.

Option: *Tell a story of a saint, for example Pope Kyrillos, who had a difficult life but relied on communion (he prayed a liturgy every day!). Now, because he took communion, Pope Kyrillos is alive in Heaven and he appears to people today and still helps them (tell a story about a modern day miracle).*

2. FORGIVENESS

we are forgiven by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

{list different sins students may be facing: lying, selfishness, disobedience, etc...}

Let's count all of the things we receive when we take communion: 1. Living forever, 2. Forgiveness, 3:

3. UNITY :

We become one family (one body, **unity**) with the rest of the church, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, Abouna and the deacons when we share the one body and blood of our Lord.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** magnet pictures
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the most precious thing in the world?

A: *The Body and the Blood of Christ*

Q: Who can list all 3 things we receive when we take the most precious thing in the world?

A: *Eternal life, forgiveness of sins, unity*

Q: What saves us and grants us eternal life?

A: *The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Q: What is death considered for Christians?

A: *Something that is not scary, taking a trip to another place.*

Q: How do we become one family?

A: *When we take communion*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Parents to share their experience of Life through the Eucharist with their children. How Sunday is the day when they get recharged, mainly because of their communion of the Eucharist. How this experience is the foretaste of the eternal life in Christ. Mothers to help their children write a list of the gifts they receive in communion.

1. God blesses Adam and Eve *Genesis 1:26-31*
2. God blesses Noah *Genesis 8:20 - 9:17*
3. Abraham receives the promise of a child *Genesis 18:9-15*
4. Jacob receives the blessing *Genesis 27:26-29*
5. Ephraim and Manasseh receive the blessing and inheritance *Genesis 48:1-20*
6. Moses receives the Ten Commandments *Deuteronomy 4:11-16*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

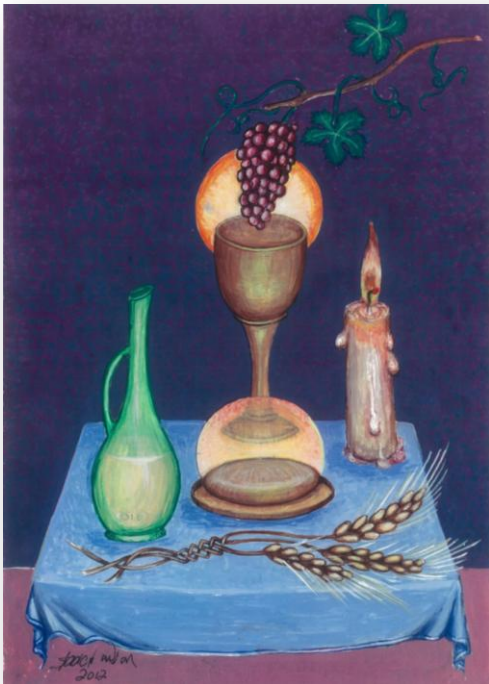
Purpose: In Baptism we are born again to God through water & Spirit. Now we are the children of God. The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the *offering*, the *receiving* and the *remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

6. THE EUCHARIST, WHAT WE OFFER

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Genesis 1:11-13



11Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 12And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Genesis 8:18-22

18Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

Proverbs 9:1-6

Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; 2 She has slaughtered her meat, She has mixed her wine, She has also furnished her table. 3 She has sent out her maidens, She cries out from the highest places of the city, 4" Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, 5" Come, eat of my bread And drink of the wine I have mixed. 6 Forsake foolishness and live, And go in the way of understanding.

John 12: 24-25

Assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 15:1-4

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Jeremiah 33:10-11

"Praise the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His mercy endures forever"-- and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.

Hebrews 13:15-16

15Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Deuteronomy 16:16,17

And they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

Luke 17:11-19

Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Gregory of Nazienzene: Oration 45:IV (on the Resurrection of Christ our Lord)

IV. Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him; yesterday I died with Him; today I am quickened with Him; yesterday I was buried with Him; today I rise with Him. But let us offer to Him Who suffered and rose again for us— you will think perhaps that I am going to say gold, or silver, or woven work or transparent and costly stones, the mere passing material of earth, that remains here below, and is for the most part always possessed by bad men, slaves of the world and of the Prince of the world. Let us offer OURSELVES, the possession most precious to God, and most fitting; let us give back to the Image what is made after the Image. Let us recognize our Dignity; let us honor our Archetype; let us know the power of the Mystery, and for what Christ died.

JUSTIN MARTYR (114-165 AD) WRITINGS ON THE EUCHARIST

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss.

There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to[so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

OF THE EUCHARIST

And this food is called among us [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called

Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated; you either know or can learn. ¹ *Anti-Nicene fathers: Justin Martyr- introductory note to the first Apology of Justin Martyr p287*

WEEKLY WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration. ¹ *Anti-Nicene fathers, first apology of Justin Martyr chapters 65-67; p340-342.*

- The Didache on the offering :

CHAPTER 9. THE EUCHARIST.

Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way. First, concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever..

And concerning the broken bread: We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church

be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever..

But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

CHAPTER 10. PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION.

But after you are filled, give thanks this way:

We thank You, holy Father, for Your holy Name which You did cause to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. You, Master almighty, did create all things for Your name's sake; You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to You; but to us You did freely give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Your Servant. Before all things we thank You for You are mighty; to You be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, Your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Your love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Your kingdom which You have prepared for it; for Thine is the power and the glory forever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.

But permit the prophets to make Thanksgiving as much as they desire.

REFLECTION:

Offering is the spiritual goal of this year. In this lesson, the teachers should have this goal in their mind. The success of this lesson is measured by how the students understand that they offer themselves with purity and thanksgiving. Purity is practiced in keeping the commandments of God (will be taught later this year). Thanksgiving is practiced in cheerful giving. They should learn how to come to church with a gift every Sunday. The example of the 10 lepers should highlight the point. The effort is exercised to maintain the good habit of offering from a cheerful heart.

PRAYER:

You have bestowed upon us the gift of sonship through the new birth by baptism and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Now also make us worthy without hypocrisy, with a pure heart, with intimacy and a clean mouth to address You O Abba, our Father. That we may give up the vain repetitions of the Gentiles and the pride of the Jews. To be able to offer You the supplication of prayer as the commandment of Your only-begotten Son, which is full of salvation. Therefore with a humble voice befitting Christians, and with purity of soul, body and spirit. We dare without fear to address You who is uncreated, You who is infinite, You who is unborn, You who is the Master of everybody, You who is God the Father in Heaven, and say; Our Father.

Fraction prayer of Theophany to the Father

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Offer, thanksgiving, Leprosy

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God, the Pantocrator and Lover of Mankind
Liturgical:	The Offertory
Moral:	Loving God
Spiritual:	Thanksgiving

CONNECTION POINT

Last week we talked about what we receive from God when we come to the liturgy. This week, we will talk about what *God* receives in the liturgy – what *we* give *Him*.

Does that surprise any of you? Did you ever think you could give God something? Let me ask you a question – what do you think the *best* thing you can give God would be? [Let the kids really think about this for a few minutes. If they give wrong answers, explain why the answer would be wrong and redirect]. Here is the answer: the best thing we can give to God is ourselves. How? Think about this, and we will talk about this in a few minutes.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the most precious thing in the world?

A: *The Body and the Blood of Christ*

Q: Who can list all 3 things we receive when we take the most precious thing in the world?

A: *Eternal life, forgiveness of sins, unity.*

Q: What saves us and grants us eternal life?

A: *The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Q: What is death considered for Christians?

A: *Something that is not scary, taking a trip to another place.*

Q: How do we become one family?

A: *When we take communion*

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

LESSON BODY:

WE OFFER OURSELVES

Let's go back to that question that we asked at the very beginning: How do we give ourselves to God? [Let the children share their answers]. A child gives himself to his parents to enjoy him. When his parents open their arms wide, he runs to them, opens his arms also, and they hug. What do parents look like when they open their arms wide for their child to run into their arms? [the kids should model this]. What does the child look like? [the kids should model this]. This is exactly what we are doing when we come to God in prayer. Isn't this how we stand when we pray? And you can know that God is opening His arms to me (as my Father) and I am quick to go to the liturgy to give myself to Him. When I come to pray, in the liturgy or at home, I **offer** myself to God, I give myself to God for Him to enjoy me as His own child.

Who is the One who had His arms spread out like this? Who do we also see looking like this in pictures? Our Lord Jesus! Our Lord Jesus, by opening His arms on the Cross, He offered Himself for

us to go to Him (like the parents' wide open arms). But, at the same time, He was also opening His arms to offer Himself to His Father (like the child). He is doing both at the same time: opening His arms for us to run to Him, and opening His arms to give Himself to His Father. And, when we go to Christ, we offer ourselves *with* Him to the Father. We are truly offering ourselves to God our Father as His children and as brothers and sisters of Christ.

[Option: act out how Christ is accomplishing both positions at once, with 1 child acting out us, 1 child acting out Christ, and one child acting out the Father]

WE OFFER OURSELVES IN PRAYER: THANKSGIVING

We offer ourselves to God in prayer. We can pray at home by ourselves, or with our family, or in the church in the liturgy. In the liturgy, we offer ourselves with the bread and wine to God. Aouna and the rest of the church offer the bread and wine on the altar to God, and at the same time, all of the people in the church are offering themselves as well. We are standing and praying.

When we pray, we say different things at different times. One very important thing we say to God is, "Thank You." We offer to God **Thanksgiving**. How important do you think Thanksgiving is to God? Let's listen to this story and see (Luke 17:11-19): Once when Christ was going to a certain village, 10 men who had a very bad disease called **leprosy** saw Him. Leprosy was a very bad disease that could not be healed. No one knew the cure. This disease was so bad, that anyone who had it was forced to live outside the town, away from everyone so no one would get it from them. So these 10 men were standing far away from everyone. When they saw our Lord from far away, they shouted out to Him, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" They wanted Him to heal them. When He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going on their way to the priests, guess what happened? They were cleansed, they were healed. All 10 of them! Just by one word from Jesus! Now, there was *one* of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned back to Christ and glorified God in a very loud voice. And he fell down on his face before our Lord's feet and thanked Him. He was so very happy to be healed. Jesus said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the other nine? Where there not any found who returned to give glory to God except for this one?"

So, what was our Lord looking for? [He wanted the others to come and say thank you, just like that one did].

It is very important to thank God for everything He has done for us. Maybe we did not need to be healed from a very bad disease like the men in this story but there are so many other things that God does for us that we do not even notice! Let's look at what some of these things are that He has been doing for us all our lives and that we thank Him for [have the students look with you at the first part of the Thanksgiving prayer]:

1. He has **covered** us. What does this mean? Although He knows and sees everything, when we do something bad that is embarrassing and shameful, He doesn't tell *anyone* else about it. This is what it means that God *covers* us.
2. He has **helped** us – what do we need help with? Homework, doing good works, trying to help others, being good to our parents. He is always helping us by giving us strength and power.
3. He has **protected** us – from danger. He also sends us a guardian angel to guard us and be with us. Whenever we ask, He also sends His saints to help us and be with us.
4. He has **accepted** us to Himself - whenever we offer ourselves, He accepts us and when we do something wrong and come and say sorry, He receives us
5. He has **had compassion** upon us - when we are in trouble, He cares for us and He feels our pain
6. He has **supported** us - whenever we do something good, He encourages us; and when we do something bad, He encourages us to say sorry and start over again
7. And He has **brought us to this hour** - He gives us food, drink, shelter, parents, school, the church

Possible options for stories to tell:

1. Covered us:
 - i. When we confess, abouna never tells our sins to anyone OR
 - ii. Christ defending the sinful woman in front of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50)
2. Helped us: personal story from the servant
3. Protected us:
 - i. Anba Abraam and St Simon the Tanner – God moved the Mukatam mountain and protected the Christians in Egypt from persecution by the governor who had said that if they couldn't move the mountain, it would mean the Christian religion was false and he would have reason to persecute the Christians. (see synaxar 6th day of Kiakh), OR
 - ii. Christ protecting the disciples when they were in the boat (Matt 8:23-27)
4. Accepted us to Himself:
 - i. The prodigal son
 - ii. St Moses the Black
5. Compassion:
 - i. Raising Lazarus from the dead (Jesus grieved and wept and went all the way to Lazarus in order to raise him. Who else could have done this? Only our Lord.)
6. Supported us:
 - i. St. Peter denying Christ and Christ encouraging him – Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee” and John 21:15-19
7. Brought us to this hour:

- i. Christ telling St. Peter where to find money (in the mouth of the first fish he catches) to pay their tax: Matt 17:24-27 “When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?” Peter said to Him, “From strangers.” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”
- ii. Feeding the 5,000

Ask for stories on how the students believe these aspects are shown in their lives.

Here is the thing to remember: Whenever you enter the door of the church, imagine that you have a key that you use to close your mind from thinking of other things and to close your mouth from talking, and then only look to the altar so that you can truly offer yourself to God and to no one else during that time.

WHEN WE OFFER, WE RECEIVE BACK MUCH MORE THAN WE GAVE

Besides thanksgiving, there are other things we can offer to God. When we love someone, we want to offer things to them; we want to give them things. For example, at Christmas we give (and receive) gifts to and from people we love. What do you think you can offer to God? [Let the kids come up with ideas. Encourage them to think about the things the church needs as things that can be offered]. Answers: all kinds of material things for the church, as well as other types of prayer such as praise.

When Christ was on earth, there was one time when He was with a huge crowd of people and they were very hungry. There was a little boy, probably just a little bit older than you, and he had his food with him – five loaves and two fish. What did he do with this food, though? Did he keep them and eat them all by himself? No – he gave them to Christ and Christ did a very big miracle with them! Because he gave all what he had to our Lord, that little boy *got back* much more than what he gave – our Lord multiplied his offering until thousands of people ate and there were 12 baskets left over! What do we learn from this? Whenever we give to God, we receive back *much* more than what we gave.

[Options of other examples to give: the widow and Elijah, offerings of the people to the tabernacle in the Old Testament, in the early church offering all their money (Acts), widow and two mites.]

I PREPARE AND BRING A GIFT TO CHURCH EVERY TIME I COME

This point should be done by both example and teaching the students to prepare for their coming to church by bringing money (a dollar), good food, new toys, new cloths etc...

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** Have the students discover how they can offer themselves to God in prayer using the liturgy books.
- Liturgy books
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the best thing we can give to God?

A: *Ourselves*

Q: When and how do we give ourselves to God?

A: *In prayer, as a child gives himself to his parents for a hug*

Q: What should we do when we enter the church doors?

A: *Imagine that we have a key and we close our minds from thinking of other things, close our mouth from talking and we just focus on the altar*

Q: What are the different things I can offer to God?

A: *Myself in Prayer - thanksgiving, and other things for the church*

Q: What happens when I give something to God?

A: *I end up getting back much more than I gave in the first place*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

This week the mothers would help their children to prepare canned food to give to the food drive for the poor. This could be arranged to be done on regular basis. Mothers should explain to their children how some families are living in great poverty, and we ought to think of them as we prepare for the Eucharist.

1. Abel's offering *Genesis 3:1-5*
2. Noah's offering *Genesis 8:20-21*
3. Melchizedek offer bread and wine *Genesis 14:18-20*
4. Abraham offer Isaac *Genesis 22:3-14*
5. Jacob make s a vow of offering *Genesis 28:10-22*
6. Zachariah's offering of incense *Luke 1*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

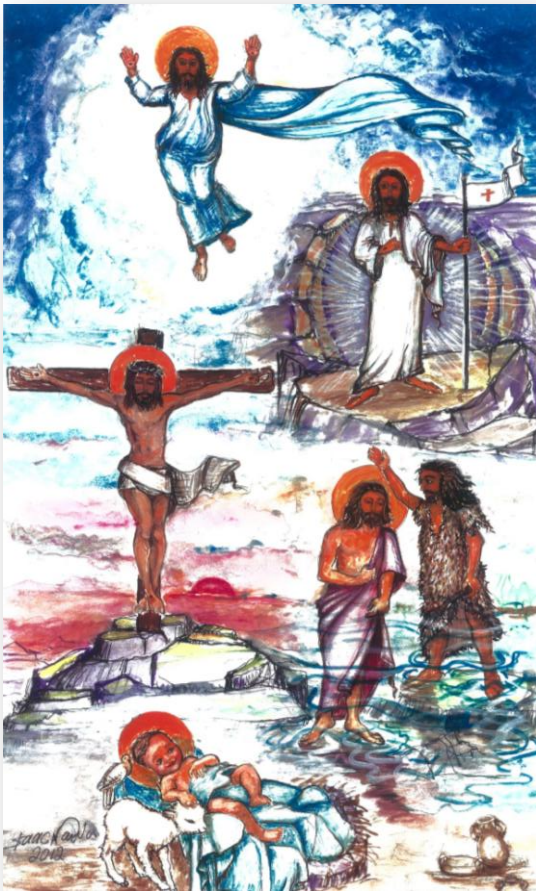
Purpose: The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the offering, the receiving and the remembering. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

7. THE EUCHARIST - WHAT WE REMEMBER

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

"ANAMNESIS" REMEMBRANCE OF THE FATHER'S WORK AS THE CREATOR: **WISDOM 9:1-3**



"O God of my fathers and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things by thy word, and by thy wisdom hast formed man, to have dominion over the creatures thou hast made, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness"

"ANAMNESIS" REMEMBRANCE OF THE SAVIOR - **LUKE 22:19-20**

*"¹⁹And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in **remembrance of Me.**"
²⁰Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."*

"ANAMNESIS" REMEMBRANCE OF THE SAVIOR TILL HE COMES- 1

CORINTH 10: 23-26

*"²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in **remembrance of Me.**" ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in **remembrance of Me.**" ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."*

"ANAMNESIS" REMEMBRANCE OF OUR CONGREGATION (ASSEMBLY) - PHILIPPIANS 1:3

*"³I thank my God upon every **remembrance of you**, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,"*

"ANAMNESIS" REMEMBRANCE OF THE LEADERS AND ALL PEOPLE - 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."

COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS - MATTHEW 26:6-13

*"⁶And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, ⁷a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. ⁸But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? ⁹For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor." ¹⁰But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. ¹¹For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. ¹²For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. ¹³Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a **memorial to her.**"*

COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS - SIRACH 49:1,2,3 &13

*"¹**The memory** of Josiah is like a blending of incense prepared by the art of the perfumer; it is sweet as honey to every mouth, and like music at a banquet of wine. ²He was led aright in converting the people, and took away the abominations of iniquity. ³He set his heart upon the Lord; in the days of wicked men he strengthened godliness."*

*"¹³**The memory of** Nehemiah also is lasting; he raised for us the walls that had fallen, and set up the gates and bars and rebuilt our ruined houses."*

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEPARTED - 2ND TIMOTHY 1:16-18

"¹⁶The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; ¹⁷but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. ¹⁸The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day--and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus."

SAMPLES FROM THE PRAYERS OF REMEMBRANCE IN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS

The Prayer of Moses, Deuteronomy 32,

Song of Deborah, Judges 5

Prayer of Hanna 1 Samuel 2

Psalm 67, 68, 78, 92, 105, 106, 107, 136

Prayer of David: 1 Chronicles 16: 7-36

Songs of Isaiah 12, 25

Song of St. Mary, Luke 1: 46-55

CHURCH FATHERS:

Commentary of St. John Chrysostom on 1st Corinthians 11:24-25

Verse 24. *“And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”*

Wherefore does he here make mention of the Mysteries? Because that argument was very necessary to his present purpose. As thus: “Thy Master,” said he, “counted all worthy of the same Table, though it be very awful and far exceeding the dignity of all: but you considered them to be unworthy even of Your own, small and mean as we see it is; and while they have no advantage over You in spiritual things, you robs them in the temporal things. For neither are these your own.” However, he does not express himself thus, to prevent his discourse becoming harsh: but he frames it in a gentler form, saying, that “the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread.” And wherefore does he remind us of the time, and of that evening, and of the betrayal? Not indifferently nor without some reason, but that he might exceedingly fill them with compunction, were it but from consideration of the time. For even if one be a very stone, yet when he considers that night, how He was with His disciples, “very heavy,” how He was betrayed, how He was bound, how He was led away, how He was judged, how He suffered all the rest in order, he became softer than wax, and is withdrawn from earth and all the pomp of this world. Therefore he leads us to the remembrance of all those things, by His time, and His table, and His betrayal, putting us to shame and saying, “Thy Master gave up even Himself for you: and you do not even share a little meat with your brother for your own sake.” But how said he, that “he received it from the Lord?” since certainly he was not present then but was one of the persecutors. That you may know that the first table had no advantage above that which cometh after it. For even to-day also it is He who does all, and delivers it even as then. And not on this account only does he remind us of that night, but that he may also in another way bring us to compunction. For as we particularly

remember those words which we hear last from those who are departing; and to their heirs if they should venture to transgress their commands, when we would put them to shame we say, "Consider that this was the last word that your father uttered to you, and until the evening when he was just about to breathe his last he kept repeating these injunctions:" just so Paul, purposing hence also to make his argument full of awfulness; "Remember," said he, "that this was the last mysterious rite He gave unto you, and in that night on which He was about to be slain for us, He commanded these things, and having delivered to us that Supper after that He added nothing further." Next also he proceeds to recount the very things that were done, saying, "He took bread, and, when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you." If therefore thou comes for a sacrifice of thanksgiving, do you on your part nothing unworthy of that sacrifice: by no means either dishonor your brother, or neglect him in his hunger; be not drunken, insult not the Church. As you comes giving thanks for what thou have enjoyed: so do you yourself accordingly make return, and not cut yourself off from thy neighbor. Since Christ for His part gave equally to all, saying, "Take, eat." He gave His Body equally, but dost not thou give so much as the common bread equally? Yea, it was indeed broken for all alike, and became the Body equally for all.

Verse 25. *"In like manner also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood: this do, as oft as ye drink of it, in remembrance of Me."*

What do you say? Are you making a remembrance of Christ, and despises the poor and trembles not? Why, if a son or brother had died and you were making a remembrance of him, you would have been smitten by thy conscience, had you not fulfilled the custom and invited the poor: and when you are making remembrance of thy Master, does you not so much as simply give a portion of the Table? But what is it which He said, "This cup is the New Covenant?" Because there was also a cup of the Old Covenant; the libations and the blood of the brute creatures. For after sacrificing, they used to receive the blood in a chalice and bowl and so pour it out. Since then instead of the blood of beasts He brought in His own Blood; lest any should be troubled on hearing this, He reminds them of that ancient sacrifice.

[6.] Next, having spoken concerning that Supper, he connects the things present with the things of that time, that even as on that very evening and reclining on that very couch and receiving from Christ himself this sacrifice, so also now might men be affected; and he said,

Verse 26. *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."*

For as Christ in regard to the bread and the cup said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," revealing to us the cause of the giving of the Mystery, and besides what else He said, declaring this to be a sufficient

cause to ground our religious fear upon: — (for when you consider what your Master had suffered for you, you will the better deny yourself:) — so also Paul said here: "as often as you eat you do proclaim His death." And this is that Supper. Then intimating that it abides unto the end, he said, "till He come."

REFLECTION:

As we continue our meditation of what the Eucharist is, we come to the "Anamnesis" the remembering. The remembering is very essential element in the liturgical work of the people of God in the old and the new. The Passover celebration as its ritual contains a very detailed remembrance of the Exodus using the same elements i.e. the lamb (bisach), the bitter herbs (maroar) and the unleavened bread (mazzo). The Lord instituted for us a new Passover with remembrance to God's salvation story accomplished in Him with the same elements (his body and His blood).

PRAYER:

Amen, Amen, Amen. We preach Your Death O' Lord. Your holy Resurrection and Ascension we acknowledge. We praise You, we bless You, we thank You, O' Lord, and supplicate before You, O' our God. *St Basil Liturgy*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Liturgy, Reverence

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Suffered, was buried and Resurrected
Liturgical:	Anamnesis (remembrance)
Moral:	Loving God
Spiritual:	Prayer

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the most precious thing in the world?

A: *The Body and the blood of Christ*

Q: Who can list all 6 things we receive when we take the most precious thing in the world?

A: *Eternal life, forgiveness of sins, unity, devotion, love and care from other members of the church
the Word of God*

Q: What is the best thing we can give to God?

A: *Ourselves*

Q: When and how do we give ourselves to God?

A: *In prayer, as a child gives himself to his parents for a hug*

Q: What should we do when we enter the church doors?

A: *Imagine that we have a key and we close our minds from thinking of other things, close our mouth from talking and we just focus on the altar*

Q: What are the different things I can offer to God?

A: *Myself in Prayer - thanksgiving, and other things for the church*

Q: What happens when I give something to God?

A: *I end up getting back much more than I gave in the first place*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

LESSON BODY: WE REMEMBER

The teachers should focus on the first three points, the rest of the points are optional

WE PRAY TO THE FATHER AND WE REMEMBER

Did you know that whenever you come to the **liturgy**, you are actually doing a very important work? But it is not the kind of work that your parents do when they leave in the morning, and it is not physical work like working outside in the yard or moving things around or fixing things. It is a

very different kind of work; it is the work your heart does when it remembers Someone you love. And that Someone is our Lord Jesus Christ. Once there was a priest and every time he would pray a liturgy, he would take a very, very, very long time – hours, much more time than the people were used to. Why do you think this happened? Because whenever he would pray to God the Father, he was remembering Christ, he was so glad to remember Him and so content and filled with His love, that he didn't want to stop!

WE REMEMBER CHRIST

When we come to the liturgy, the first part is all about Christ; we remember –bring into our minds and hearts – the birth, the life, the death and the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. How do we do this? Let me ask you a question and then hopefully we will understand: does anyone remember at what event the angels came down from heaven and appeared to shepherds in Bethlehem and said, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men”? They said this when our Lord was born in the manger. *And* we pray these same exact words at the beginning of the liturgy right before we greet each other with our hands (act this out so the children understand what part is meant). So when we do this, we remember the birth of our Lord right at the beginning of the liturgy. Then we continue and remember how our when our Lord was on earth, He loved the church and gathered all her people together and died for us on the Cross and then rose from the dead on the third day. And how He will come back a second time and take His people with Him to live in Heaven forever. The most important thing we remember, the event that we focus most of our attention on, is when our Lord had the Last Supper with His disciples and gave them His Body and Blood. Abouna says what our Lord did and we all respond and say “Amen;” (for example: Abouna says, “He (our Lord Jesus Christ) looked up toward heaven to You, O God, who are His Father and Master of everyone and He gave thanks.” And we say, “Amen”). This is the most important part that we remember, because He is also giving His Body and Blood to us at the same time.

REMEMBER THE WHOLE CHURCH ALL OVER THE WORLD

Then after this most focused time of remembering and Christ Himself is here with us on the altar, we start to remember the whole church all over the world. And we pray for the pope, the bishops, the priests, the deacons, the nuns, the monks, the servants, all the families, and every single person in the church.

WE PRAY FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

Then we move even further and we pray for the whole world – all the cities, countries, and islands and every one of God's people who are living in them. We pray for the waters, that the earth has

enough water for everyone, for the crops, the plants and the seeds, the fruits and vegetables that Christ will bless them and bring them to grow perfectly. We even pray for the air! And for the earth. We also pray for the people on the earth – people who are traveling, people who are strangers and alone, orphans who don't have any parents to take care of them.

REMEMBERING ALL THE SAINTS

Next we move to remembering all the saints who have lived on earth and are now in Paradise. We remember them by name, starting with St. Mary. We never forget them even though they are not on earth anymore; they are our family in heaven.

THEN WE MOVE TO REMEMBER OUR OWN FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY

And are now with our Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone in the church can write the name of someone who passed away who they want to remember and give the paper to a deacon and Abouna will read his/her name in the liturgy. (Servants can mention if they have personally done this in the past).

During the liturgy, we stand in awe and **reverence** – awe, respect, worship.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** It is possible to make this lesson more interactive for the kids. For example, after explaining point 1 above (about how we remember Christ), if the kids are good readers, you can ask them to flip to the page in the liturgy book where the litanies begin and ask *them* to find what is the next thing we remember. You can continue doing this for each numbered point. It would be important to have the pages prepared ahead of time to give the kids if going with this plan.
- Bring Korban and wine (grape juice)
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the work that we all do when we come to pray in the liturgy?

A: *Remembering – a work of the heart*

Q: What do we remember in the liturgy?

A: 1. *The Life of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2. *The Church*, 3. *The whole world*, 4. *The Saints*, 5. *Our family members who have passed away*

Q: What event do we give most of our attention and focus on remembering? What is the most important?

A: *When our Lord Jesus Christ gave His disciples His Body and Blood, because He is also giving it to us.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to help the children prepare a list of prayer requests to be offered on the altar & to remember them in prayer during the liturgy: the church, the country, the president, the family, etc.

1. The Prayer of Moses *Deuteronomy 32*
2. Song of Deborah *Judges 5*
3. Prayer of Hanna *1 Samuel 2*
4. Prayer of David *1 Chronicles 16:7-36*
5. *Isaiah 12*
6. Song of St. Mary *Luke 1:46-55*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

Purpose: The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the offering, the receiving and the remembering. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

8. THE EUCHARIST, HOW TO PREPARE

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 22:7-13



7Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11Then you shall say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"" 12Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready." 13So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Jerusalem on the Mysteries LECTURE 23 (ON THE MYSTERIES V)
ON THE SACRED LITURGY AND COMMUNION.

1 PETER 2:1. ***Wherefore putting away all filthiness, and all guile, and evil speaking, etc.***

1. BY the loving-kindness of God ye have heard sufficiently at our former meetings concerning Baptism, and Chrism, and partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ; and now it is necessary to pass on to what is next in order, meaning today to set the crown on the spiritual building of your edification.

2. Ye have seen then the Deacon who gives to the Priest water to wash, and to the Presbyters who stand round God's altar. He gave it not at all because of bodily defilement; it is not that; for we did not enter the Church at first with defiled bodies. But the washing of hands is a symbol that ye ought to be pure from all sinful and unlawful deeds; for since the hands are a symbol of action, by washing them, it is evident, we represent the purity and blamelessness of our conduct. Didst thou not hear the blessed David opening this very mystery, and saying, *I will wash my hands in innocence, and so will compass Your Altar, O Lord?* The washing therefore of hands is a symbol of immunity from sin.

3. Then the Deacon cries aloud, "Receive ye one another; and let us kiss one another." Think not that this kiss is of the same character with those given in public by common friends. It is not such: but this kiss blends souls one with another, and courts entire forgiveness for them. The kiss therefore is the sign that our souls are mingled together, and banish all remembrance of wrongs. For this cause Christ said, *If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there remembers that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift upon the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* The kiss therefore is reconciliation, and for this reason holy: as the blessed Paul somewhere cried, saying, *Greet ye one another with a holy kiss; and Peter, with a kiss of charity.*

4. After this the Priest cries aloud, "Lift up your hearts." For truly ought we in that most awful hour to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earth and earthly things. In effect therefore the Priest bids all in that hour to dismiss all cares of this life, or household anxieties, and to have their heart in heaven with the merciful God. Then ye answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord:" assenting to it, by your avowal. But let no one come here, who could say with his mouth, "We lift up our hearts unto the Lord," but in his thoughts have his mind concerned with the cares of this life. At all times, rather, God should be in our memory but if this is impossible by reason of human infirmity, in that hour above all this should be our earnest endeavor.

5. Then the Priest says, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord." For verily we are bound to give thanks, that He called us, unworthy as we were, to so great grace; that He reconciled us when we were His foes; that He vouchsafed to us the Spirit of adoption. Then ye say, "It is meet and right:" for in giving thanks we do a meet thing and a right; but He did not right, but more than right, in doing us good, and counting us meet for such great benefits.

6. After this, we make mention of heaven. and earth, and sea; of sun and moon; of stars and all the creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible; of Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Thrones; of the Cherubim with many faces: in effect repeating that call of David's *Magnify the Lord with me.* We make mention also of the Seraphim, whom Isaiah in the Holy Spirit saw standing around the throne of God, and with two of their wings veiling their face, and

with twain their feet, while with twain they did fly, crying *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Sabaoth*. For the reason of our reciting this confession of God, delivered down to us from the Seraphim, is this, that so we may be partakers with the hosts of the world above in their Hymn of praise.

7. Then having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual Hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before Him; that He may make the Bread the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ; for whatsoever the Holy Ghost has touched, is surely sanctified and changed.

8. Then, after the spiritual sacrifice, the bloodless service, is completed, over that sacrifice of propitiation we entreat God for the common peace of the Churches, for the welfare of the world; for kings; for soldiers and allies; for the sick; for the afflicted; and, in a word, for all who stand in need of succor we all pray and offer this sacrifice.

9. Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition. Then on behalf also of the Holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and in a word of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to the souls, for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is set forth.

10. And I wish to persuade you by an illustration. For I know that many say, what is a soul profited, which departs from this world either with sins, or without sins, if it be commemorated in the prayer? For if a king were to banish certain who had given him offence, and then those who belong to them should weave a crown and offer it to him on behalf of those under punishment, would he not grant a remission of their penalties? In the same way we, when we offer to Him our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, though they be sinners, weave no crown, but offer up Christ sacrificed for our sins, propitiating our merciful God for them as well as for ourselves.

11. Then, after these things, we say that Prayer which the Savior delivered to His own disciples, with a pure conscience entitling God our Father, and saying, *Our Father, which art in heaven*. O most surpassing loving-kindness of God! On them who revolted from Him and were in the very extreme at misery has He bestowed such a complete forgiveness of evil deeds, and so great participation of grace, as that they should even call Him Father. *Our Father, which art in heaven*; and they also are a heaven who *bear the image of the heavenly*, in whom is God, *dwelling and walking in them*.

12. *Hallowed be Thy Name*. The Name of God is in its nature holy, whether we say so or not; but since it is sometimes profaned among sinners, according to the words, *Through you My Name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles*, we pray that in us God's Name may be hallowed; not that it comes to be holy from not being holy, but because it becomes holy in us, when we are made holy, and do things worthy of holiness.

13. *Thy kingdom come*. A pure soul can say with boldness, *Thy kingdom come*; for he who has heard Paul saying, *Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body*, and has cleansed himself in deed, and thought, and word, will say to God, *Thy kingdom come*.

14. *Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth*. God's divine and blessed Angels do the will of God, as David said in the Psalm, *Bless the Lord, all ye Angels of His, mighty in strength, that do His pleasure*. So then in effect thou meanest this by thy prayer, "as in the Angels Thy will is done, so likewise be it done on earth in me, O Lord."

15. *Give us this day our substantial bread.* This common bread is not substantial bread, but this Holy Bread is substantial, that is, appointed for the substance of the soul. For this Bread *goes not into the belly and is cast out into the draught*, but is distributed into thy whole system for the benefit of body and soul. But by *this day*, he means, “each day,” as also Paul said, *While it is called today*.

16. *And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.* For we have many sins. For we offend both in word and in thought, and very many things we do worthy of condemnation; and *if we say that we have no sin*, we lie, as John says. And we make a covenant with God, entreating Him to forgive us our sins, as we also forgive our neighbors their debts. Considering then what we receive and in return for what, let us not put off nor delay to forgive one another. The offenses committed against us are slight and trivial, and easily settled; but those which we have committed against God are great, and need such mercy as His only is. Take heed therefore, lest for the slight and trivial sins against thee thou shut out for thyself forgiveness from God for thy very grievous sins.

17. *And lead us not into temptation, O Lord.* Is this then what the Lord teaches us to pray, that we may not be tempted at all? How then is it said elsewhere, “a man un-tempted, is a man unproved;” and again, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fail into divers temptations?* But does perchance the entering into temptation mean the being overwhelmed by the temptation? For temptation is, as it were, like a winter torrent difficult to cross. Those therefore who are not overwhelmed in temptations, pass through, showing themselves excellent swimmers, and not being swept away by them at all; while those who are not such, enter into them and are overwhelmed. As for example, Judas having entered into the temptation of the love of money, swam not through it, but was overwhelmed and was strangled both in body and spirit. Peter entered into the temptation of the denial; but having entered, he was not overwhelmed by it, but manfully swam through it, and was delivered from the temptation. Listen again, in another place, to a company of unscathed saints, giving thanks for deliverance from temptation, *Thou, O God hast prayed us; Thou hast tried us by, fire like as silver is tried. You brought us into the net; Thou laid afflictions upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; and thou brought us out into a place of rest.* You see them speaking boldly in regard to their having passed through and not been pierced. *But Thou brought us out into a place of rest; now their coming into a place of rest is their being delivered from temptation.*

18. *But deliver us from the evil.* If *Lead us not into temptation* implied the not being tempted at all, He would not have said, *But deliver us from the evil*. Now evil is our adversary the devil, from whom we pray to be delivered. Then after completing the prayer you say, *Amen*; by this *Amen*, which means “So be it,” setting thy seal to the petitions of the divinely-taught prayer.

19. After this the Priest says, “Holy things to holy men.” Holy are the gifts presented, having received the visitation of the Holy Ghost; holy are you also, having been deemed worthy of the Holy Ghost; the holy things therefore correspond to the holy persons. Then ye say, “One is Holy, One is the Lord, Jesus Christ.” For One is truly holy, by nature holy; we too are holy, but not by nature, only by participation, and discipline, and prayer.

20. After this ye hear the chanter inviting you with a sacred melody to the communion of the Holy Mysteries, and saying, *O taste and see that the Lord is good*. Trust not the judgment to thy bodily palate no, but to faith unflinching; for they who taste are bidden to taste, not bread and wine, but the and-typical Body and Blood of Christ.

21. In approaching therefore, come not with thy wrists extended, or thy fingers spread; but make thy left hand a throne for the King, as for that which is to receive a King. And having hollowed thy palm, receive the Body of Christ, saying over it, *Amen*. So then after having carefully hollowed your eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake of it; giving heed lest you lose any portion thereof; for whatever you lose, is evidently a loss to you as it were from one of your own members. For tell me, if any one gave you grains of gold, would you not hold them with all carefulness, being on thy guard against losing any of them, and suffering loss? Wilt thou not then much more carefully keep watch, that not a crumb fall from thee of what is more precious than gold and precious stones?

22. Then after thou hast partaken of the Body of Christ, draw near also to the Cup of His Blood; not stretching forth your hands, but bending, and saying with an air of worship and reverence, *Amen*, hallow yourself by partaking also of the Blood of Christ. And while the moisture is still upon your lips, touch it with your hands, and hallow your eyes and brow and the other organs of sense. Then wait for the prayer, and give thanks unto God, who hath accounted thee worthy of so great mysteries.

23. Hold fast these traditions undefiled and, keep yourselves free from offense. Sever not yourselves from the Communion; deprive not yourselves, through the pollution of sins, of these Holy and Spiritual Mysteries. *And the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved entire without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: — To whom be glory and honor and might, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and world without end.*

REFLECTION:

Why the need to prepare? the better the preparation the deeper the communion and the more lasting the effects. On the opposite side a person who comes to communion in grave sin without repentance and confession is in danger of sickness or even death, not discerning the body and the blood of our Lord. We prepare to give ourselves to God and to receive His Son and His Spirit in us. We need to be pure and thankful.

PRAYER:

Yet again we ourselves return to You, O good God, by approaching Your Holy Altar, and we beseech You, O Eternal Logos; Purify us at this time that we might come to You. You are the One who, without alteration, came to us in His flesh. And You filled everything with Your unlimited divinity. May the bitterness of envy which is full of blemish, and the stench of detestable slander, be far from us. Cleanse our hearts from every defilement, and our souls from every evil and our bodies from every uncleanness. And send to us the precious gift of Your Holy Spirit, so that we might come near Your Holy Altar; That we may complete this service before You according to Your will. And may our sacrifice be acceptable before You, for the forgiveness of our sins, and as a glory of Your Holy Name. For You are generous toward everyone who asks of You. And You are the One to whom is due the Kingdom, the authority and the worship, with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit. Now and at all times and unto the ages of all ages. Amen - Prayer of the veil, Gregorian liturgy

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Night of the last supper

VOCABULARY:

Paten, corporal

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God Gives us His Son
Liturgical:	Eucharist
Moral:	Reverence
Spiritual:	Prayer, giving and fasting

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the work that we all do when we come to pray in the liturgy?

A: *Remembering – a work of the heart*

Q: What do we remember in the liturgy?

A: *1. The Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2. The Church, 3. The whole world, 4. The Saints, 5. Our family members who have passed away*

Q: What event do we give most of our attention and focus on remembering? What is the most important?

A: *When our Lord Jesus Christ gave His disciples His Body and Blood, because He is also giving it to us.*

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" John 6:51

LESSON BODY

When we are getting ready to come to communion, we should pray that our Lord helps us to receive Him in a holy and joyful way. Our Lord is coming to us, to be with us and inside us; how should we feel? [Let the kids give their ideas].

He is the most special Person in our lives and we give Him our most special attention and love. How exactly do we do that?

1. *The Eucharistic Fasting:* We fast 9 hours before Communion. We fast because we are invited to eat at the Table of the Lord. If someone you like invites you to eat dinner at their house, would you eat before you go? No! You would make sure that you *don't* eat before you go so that you could be hungry and have an appetite to eat what they give you.
2. On the day before Taking communion, we prepare by attending vespers prayers, sleeping early, washing our body and at confessing my sins (beginning at third grade.) We prepare our prayers:
 - Thanksgiving: we go to the Eucharist with all the things that we need to thank our Father for.
 - Things we need to ask our Father for ourselves, families and others.
 - Things we need to ask forgiveness for.
3. While we are waiting to take communion, we should pray the "Prayer Before Communion." In this prayer I ask our Lord to help me be ready to receive Him into my body and
4. We shouldn't talk to anyone or look around at anyone.
5. We use the **corporal** on our hands to receive any pieces of the Body (Jewels) that fall during communion. We open our mouths widely to receive the Body. I should not move quickly or close my mouth until abouna has finished placing the body in my mouth and be very careful when moving from the communion place.
6. When we receive the Blood, we want to make sure we do not have Chap Stick on or anything else on our lips (Emphasize not touching lips until you drink water). I should keep my hands at my chest in the position of the cross and do not move them until I am about to drink water. I should drink water immediately after the communion of blood and avoid talking or opening my mouth till then.
7. We pray the "Prayer After Communion" in which I thank our Lord for the gift of His most precious body and blood.

8. After we take communion, we should not spit or put anything in our mouths and then take it out.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: How do we get our hearts ready to receive communion?

A: *Eucharistic fasting,*

sleeping early,

getting our best clothes ready,

preparing our gift and prayers of thanksgiving, petitions and confessions

Attending vespers the night before (if we can),

not talking to anyone during communion,

praying the prayer before communion

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to help children plan a good preparation for the liturgy. Plan should include, Body (shower and fasting), Mind (prayer; to express our hunger for Christ's Holy Eucharist and readings), Heart (thinking of Christ.) Preparing prayer requests and offerings.

Preparing to meet God

1. Moses prepare the people to meet God *Exodus 19:10-15*

2. John the Baptist prepare the people for Christ *Mark 1:1-11*
3. Two disciples prepare for the Lord to enter Jerusalem *Matthew 21:1-10*
4. Moses prepares to build the Tabernacle *Exodus 36*
5. Solomon prepares to build the Temple *1 Kings:5*
6. God prepares for the coming of His Son *Luke 1*

Unit I: Christ Gives Us the Right to Become Children of God

Purpose: The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, the offering, the receiving

and the remembering. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

9. THE EUCHARIST, REVIEW

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Jesus said: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* John 6:51

"You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:22

PRAYER TO REMEMBER

O giver of life, King of ages, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. The true bread which has come down from Heaven, that gives life to whoever partakes of it. Let my communion from Your holy sacraments unite me with You forever. Bless me; You are the Son of God. To You is the glory, with Him and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

REVIEW MAIN POINTS OF EACH LESSON IN THE UNIT:

1. LESSON 1: THEOPHANY: IN BAPTISM WE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD

- St. John the Baptist
- Our Lord's Baptism
- The Holy Trinity
- We became children of God in our baptism
- Baptismal pledge to Christ

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What is the meaning of holy? Preach? Baptism?

A. *Holy: special and belong to God, preach: tell people about God, Baptism: dipping the whole person in holy water to make them holy*

Q. Who is our God?

A. *Our God is the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit*

Q. When did we learn about the Holy Trinity?

A. *In the Baptism of our Lord by John the Baptist.*

Q. When did you become a child of God the Father?

A. *In my Baptism*

2. LESSON 2: THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

- God brought the Israelites out of slavery and led them through the desert
- They had no food; Moses petitioned God for food
- God sent Manna; He takes care of His people
- God called us to be His people and is leading us to Heaven
- The Eucharist is our Bread from Heaven (food for the journey)

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the name of the bread that God gave to His family in the desert?

A: *Manna*

Q: What is the name of the bread from heaven that God gives us today?

A: *Eucharist*

Q: What is the name of the place that God wanted to take His family in the story I told you?

A: *The Promised Land*

Q: What is the name of the place that God wants to take us one day?

A: *Heaven*

Q: What is the dew?

A: *water drops on the ground early morning*

3. LESSON 3: OUR LORD FEEDS THE MULTITUDE WITH 5 LOAVES AND 2 FISH

- Our Lord teaches and heals
- The people would follow our Lord everywhere He went; they needed Him
- Our Lord fed thousands of people with 5 loaves and 2 fish
- Our Lord talks about the Eucharist

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: How many loaves of bread and how many fish did Christ start with to feed the thousands?

A: *5 loaves and 2 fish*

Q: What did Christ do before He gave the people the food?

A: *He gave thanks to God*

Q: How many baskets of food were left over?

A: *12 baskets*

Q: What is the food that lasts forever?

A: *The Eucharist/Communion*

4. LESSON 4: THE FIRST EUCHARIST

- Passover
- The disciples ate the Passover with our Lord
- Our Lord washed the disciples' feet; He cleansed them
- Our Lord gave His body and blood to the disciples

5. LESSON 5: THE EUCHARIST: WHAT WE RECEIVE

- The Most Precious Thing in the World
- Communion is what makes us live forever
- Forgiveness
- Unity
- Devotion
- Love and Care from others
- The Word of God

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the most precious thing in the world?

A: *The Body and the blood of Christ*

Q: Who can list all 6 things we receive when we take the most precious thing in the world?

A: *Eternal life, forgiveness of sins, unity, devotion, love and care from other members of the church the Word of God*

Q: What is the best thing we can give to God?

A: *Ourselves*

Q: When and how do we give ourselves to God?

A: *In prayer, as a child gives himself to his parents for a hug*

Q: What should we do when we enter the church doors?

A: *Imagine that we have a key and we close our minds from thinking of other things, close our mouth from talking and we just focus on the altar*

Q: What are the different things I can offer to God?

A: *Myself in Prayer - thanksgiving, and other things for the church*

Q: What happens when I give something to God?

A: *I end up getting back much more than I gave in the first place*

6. LESSON 6: THE EUCHARIST: WHAT WE OFFER

- Giving oneself to God in prayer
- Thanksgiving
- When we offer, we receive back much more than what we gave

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the best thing we can give to God?

A: *Ourselves*

Q: When and how do we give ourselves to God?

A: *In prayer, as a child gives himself to his parents for a hug*

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7. LESSON 7: THE EUCHARIST: WHAT WE REMEMBER

- In the liturgy, we remember Christ
- We remember the whole church all over the world
- We remember the whole world
- We remember the saints
- We remember our own family members who have passed and are now with our Lord

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the work that we all do when we come to pray in the liturgy?

A: *Remembering – a work of the heart*

Q: What do we remember in the liturgy?

A: *1. The Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2. The Church, 3. The whole world, 4. The Saints, 5. Our family members who have passed away*

Q: What event do we give most of our attention and focus on remembering? What is the most important?

A: *When our Lord Jesus Christ gave His disciples His Body and Blood, because He is also giving it to us.*

8. LESSON 8: THE EUCHARIST: HOW TO PREPARE

- The disciples prepare for communion
- How to prepare for communion
- How to behave when waiting for communion

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: How do we get our hearts ready to receive communion?

A: *Attending vespers the night before (if we can),
sleeping early,
getting our best clothes ready,
preparing our gifts
fasting,
not talking to anyone during communion,
praying the prayer before communion*

We Are Children of God

UNIT II: OUR FATHER'S COMMANDMENTS (8 LESSONS)

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

10. [Introduction: Moses receives the 10 commandments](#)
11. [Commandments 1 and 2](#)
12. [Commandments 3 and 4](#)
13. [Commandment 5](#)
14. [Commandment 6](#)
15. [Commandment 7, 8, 9, 10](#)
16. [Unit Review](#)

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

10. INTRODUCTION: MOSES RECIEVES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 19:20 - 20:21

"²⁰Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. ²¹And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. ²²Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." ²³But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, "Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it." ²⁴Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." ²⁵So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

And God spoke all these words, saying: ²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³"You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

⁷"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

⁸"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made

the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13"You shall not murder.

14"You shall not commit adultery.

15"You shall not steal.

16"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

18Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." 20And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

CHURCH FATHERS:

[Then, He gave the Law externally, to let the wicked tremble; But now, He gives it internally to justify them]. *St. Augustine*

[Through virtue man can enter into the presence of God, as Moses did in the thick cloud, where God was. But through wickedness, man would exit from His presence, as did Cain, when he killed his brother (Genesis 4: 16), and his soul got disturbed]. *St Athanasius*

[If you yearn to God, proclaiming Himself to you, why don't you listen to Moses instructing his people to refrain from marital relationships, before being taken to behold God? !] *St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa concerning virginity*

[Two things surround the Lord: clouds and darkness. I assume that it is the same cloud, that was mentioned in the Bible, "*A bright cloud overshadowed them*" (Matthew 17: 5), that happened when the Lord transfigured, and His disciples fell on their faces before Him.] *St. Jerome*

"How then was that law given in time past, and when, and where? After the destruction of the Egyptians, in the wilderness, on Mount Sinai, when smoke and fire were rising up out of the mountain, a trumpet sounding, thunders and lightning's, and Moses entering into the very depth of the cloud. But in the new covenant not so, — neither in a wilderness, nor in a mountain, nor with smoke and darkness and cloud and tempest; but at the beginning of the day, in a house, while all were sitting together, with great quietness, all took place. For to those, being more unreasonable, and hard to guide, there was need of outward pomp, as of a wilderness, a mountain, a smoke, a sound of trumpet, and the other like things: but they who were of a higher character, and submissive, trod who had risen above mere corporeal imaginations, required none of these. And if even in their case there was a sound, it was not for the sake of the apostles, but for the Jews, who were present, on whose account also the tongues of fire appeared. For if even after this, some said,

“they are filled with new wine,” much more would they have said so, had they seen none of these things. And in the Old Testament, it was upon Moses’ going up, that God came down; but here, when our nature hath been carried up into Heaven, or rather unto the royal throne, then the Spirit makes His descent. Now had the Spirit been an inferior being, the results would not have been greater and more wonderful. For indeed these tables are far better, and the achievements more illustrious. Since the apostles came not down from a mountain, as Moses, bearing monuments of stone in their hands, but carrying about the Spirit in their mind, and pouring forth a kind of treasure and fountain of doctrines and of gifts and of all things that are good, so they went everywhere around, and became, through that grace, living books and laws. Thus they won over “the three thousand,” thus “the five thousand,” thus the nations of the world; God, by their tongue, discoursing with all that approached them.

By whom Matthew also, being filled with the Spirit, wrote, what he did write: — Matthew the Publican, for I am not ashamed to name him by his trade, neither him nor the others. For this in a very special way indicates both the grace of the Spirit, and their virtue. And He hath properly called His work by a name (which signifies) good tidings. Yea, for it was removal of punishment, and remission of sins, and “righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” and adoption, and an inheritance of Heaven, and a relationship unto the Son of God, which he came declaring unto all; to enemies, to the perverse, to them that were sitting in darkness. What then could ever be equal to these good tidings? God on earth, man in Heaven; and all became mingled together, angels joined the choirs of men, men had fellowship with the angels, and with the other powers above: and one might see the long war brought to an end, and reconciliation made between God and our nature, the devil brought to shame, demons in flight, death destroyed, Paradise opened, the curse blotted out, sin put out of the way, error driven off, truth returning, the word of godliness everywhere sown, and flourishing in its growth, the polity of those above planted on the earth, those powers in secure intercourse with us, and on earth angels continually haunting, and hope abundant touching things to come. Therefore he hath called the history good tidings, forasmuch as all other things surely are words only without substance; as, for instance, plenty of wealth, greatness of power, kingdoms, and glories, and honors, and whatever other things among men are accounted to be good: but those which are published by the fishermen would be legitimately and properly called good tidings: not only as being sure and immovable blessings, and beyond our deserts, but also as being given to us with all facility. For not by laboring and sweating, not by fatigue and suffering, but merely as being beloved of God, we received what we have received." *St. John Chrysostom commentary on St Matthew's gospel - introduction*

REFLECTION:

When God our Lord was about to give His commandments to His people, He asked their preparedness both inside and out through the washing and the detachment from physical pleasures

as well as the “fear of the Lord.” We too, should always prepare ourselves whenever we approach the Holies of God; the Eucharist and the mysteries, the Word of God and His altar.

PRAYER:

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways. You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes! Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments. I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

Psalm 118-aleph

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Ten Theno:

- + Behold bless the Lord all you servants of the Lord. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + By night lift up your hands O you saints and bless the Lord. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + The Lord bless you from Zion, who created heaven and earth. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + Let my cry come before You O Lord, give me understanding according to Your word. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to Your word. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + My lips shall overflow with praise, when You have taught me Your statutes. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.
- + My tongue shall speak of Your words for all Your commandments are righteous. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let Your hand help me for I have chosen Your precepts. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have longed for Your salvation O Lord, and Your Law is my delight. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let Your judgments help me. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant for I do not forget Your commandments. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

VOCABULARY:

Consecrate,

Boundary,

Trembled,

Sapphire stone (bring in a picture),

Mount Sinai,

Commandments,

Moses

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God gave us commandments
Liturgical:	Honoring God's Holy space and Holy time
Moral:	Keeping the commandments= memorizing and doing the commandments
Spiritual:	Prayer and the Word of God

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. And what are those things that when we do them, they would separate us from Him and saddens His heart. He told us of the 10 wrong things that can really hurt the relationship with our Father and hurt us too.

LESSON BODY:

Has anybody heard of the 10 commandments before? Does anybody know where they came from? Let's listen to this story and find out.

[Briefly recount the Story of Exodus and the Journey to Mount Sinai]

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, HOW WE GOT THEM:

50 days after the children of Israel escaped from Egypt, they came to a mountain. Its name was **Mount Sinai**. Now the people of Israel had been traveling for a long time, and they would continue to travel after receiving the commandments as well. How do people who travel have to spend the night? Would they have a house to sleep in? No - the people camped out in their tents in front of the mountain. Has anyone ever been camping? This is what it was like for God's people for many years – continuous traveling and sleeping in tents. So at Mount Sinai **Moses** went up to the mountain to talk with God and the Lord gave him a message to give to the people of Israel: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." So Moses went down and told this to the people and guess what they all answered? Yes! "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." [Make sure the students understand everything from this part of the Bible]. They said they would listen to everything He would tell them. So Moses went back and told this to the Lord. The Lord told Moses that he needed to go and prepare the people to *receive* God. God wanted to give something of Himself to the people, and there were things the people needed to do to be ready for God to come to them. Just like us, when we need to prepare ourselves to receive our Lord in Communion because He is giving Himself to us. So what did they, many years ago, need to do to be prepared to see God? Moses needed to **consecrate** them. They needed to make sure they would be very clean for when God would come – They washed their clothes and did not spend much time talking with each other or coming near each other for 3 days. Everyone kept themselves separate. Moses also set a **boundary** around the base of the mountain so that no one would come near the mountain (because this was where God was going to come). Then it happened that on the third day, in the morning, that there were thundering and lightning, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp **trembled**. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet

sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. (God asked him to come up). And all the people of Israel were very afraid because of all the thundering and lightening, and the loud sound of the trumpet and the smoke! Moses was up on the mountain and God spoke to Moses the 10 **commandments** as well as many other laws for the people to follow (how to treat each other, how the people should worship God; all these laws are written in the Old Testament). Then Moses went back down to the people and told them what God had said and the people said all together in once voice, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord (this is how we have the books of the Old Testament).

MOSES RECEIVE THE TEN COMMANDMENT

Then Moses went back up to God on the mountain and he took with him Aaron (his brother the priest), Joshua his servant, and the leaders of the people (there were 70 of them). Now when they went back up to the mountain, they saw a marvelous sight: they saw God. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of **sapphire stone**, [show the picture] and it was like the very heavens in its clarity...So they saw God, and they ate and drank in His presence. This must have been very beautiful.

Then Moses alone with Joshua his servant went further up the mountain to receive from God the 10 **commandments** on the stone tablets. Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai and to the children of Israel, the sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights and he received from the Lord the 10 commandments on the stone tablets as well as many other instructions for how to build the temple of the Lord and how the priests should be dressed (meaning Aaron and his sons).

Now while Moses was receiving from the Lord all these precious sayings, the people started to do something very wrong when they noticed that Moses was up on the mountain for such a long time. They came all together to Aaron and asked him to make for them a false god for them to worship. And Aaron listened to them! He asked all the people to bring their gold and he melted it all together and formed a golden calf and they all announced that *this* was the god who had brought them out of Egypt! Aaron even went so far as to build an altar for it. And the people started to do many sins and do many very wrong things. At the very same time that Moses was working very hard to receive for them the truth, they had already turned away from God and went a different way.

THE ISRAELITES WORSHIP IDOLS

Then the Lord spoke to Moses who was still with Him on the mountain and told him what was happening! He said, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said,

"This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" God told Moses every single thing that was happening with the people down at the bottom of the mountain.

When Moses came down, he was very angry and he took the tablets that had the 10 commandments on them and he threw them to the ground and broke them to pieces. Then he took the calf which they had made, burned *it* in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. And the people were punished for what they did and they repented.

MOSES RECEIVES THE SECOND SET OF TABLETS

Then because Moses had broken the first tablets that had the 10 commandments, he went back up to God on the mountain. God told Moses to cut two stone tablets so that He could write on them the words (of the commandments). So Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God again, God gave him the 10 commandments written on those tablets of stone. Moses was up on the mountain for a long time, 40 days and 40 nights, with God, and he did not eat or drink the entire time (what do we call this? He was fasting!). During this time, God was also speaking with him about many things that the children of Israel should follow (feasts they would observe) and what would happen when they entered the Promised Land.

After the 40 days and 40 nights ended, Moses came down from the mountain back to the people of Israel with the 10 commandments written by the finger of God on the two tablets of stone in his hands. Now here is the interesting part: Moses did not know this, but do you know what had happened to his face when he had been with God on the mountain? His face and started to shine! To glow even! And when he came down, his face shone very brightly. It was so bright, that the people of Israel were afraid to come near him! Because our Lord is all light and so beautiful, when Moses had been with Him for so long and had been very lovingly listening to Him and serving Him, Moses himself started to become like God and become lit up as well.

The 10 commandments were given to us in a very special way, with much suffering, and Moses and the people went through much toil and hardship before receiving them.

[Possible activity: have the kids choose one of these very powerful scenes to draw what they imagine it to look like – the mountain covered in smoke and the thunder and lightning or the Lord with the sapphire stone under His feet or Moses coming down with his face shining very brightly and the people being afraid of him.]

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, AN INTRODUCTION:

Review each Commandment quickly: (Exodus 20)

1. "You shall have no other gods before Me."
2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.
3. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain

4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
5. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
6. "You shall not murder.
7. "You shall not commit adultery.
8. "You shall not steal.
9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. "You shall not covet"

Ask the students to write down what they *think* each one asks of them. [The commandments should be either written out on the board or written on pieces of paper and handed out to the students for them to refer to. Collect their papers after they finish and after the discussion. At the end of the unit, hand the papers back to the students and ask them how their understanding of the commandments has changed.]

Tell the students that if someone breaks one of the commandments, they will soon after break others as well. Give an example of how this happens (or ask the kids to give an example) and discuss with them.

Before leaving, tell the kids to memorize the first 2 commandments for next week.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- **Acting:**
- **Scrap book building:** *The students can have a scrapbook of this unit - the 10 commandments. The first picture in it can be the picture they draw from this lesson, and they can continue to add pictures every week.*
- **Coloring:** Possible activity: have the kids choose one of these very powerful scenes to draw what they imagine it to look like – the mountain covered in smoke and the thunder and lightning or the Lord with the sapphire stone under His feet or Moses coming down with his face shining very brightly and the people being afraid of him.
- **Puppets**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Who is Moses?

A. God asked him to lead the people out of Egypt, God spoke to him and gave him the 10 commandments

Q. Which mountain did God give Moses the 10 commandments on?

A. Mount Sinai

Q. What did Moses see on the mountain?

A. They saw God. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of **sapphire stone**, [show the picture] and they ate and drank with Him.

Q. How did we get the 10 commandments?

A. God gave Moses the 10 commandments on 2 tablets on Mount Sinai and they were written by the finger of God

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

" I have hidden Your word in my heart, That I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes." Psalm 119:11,12

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to help the children write, color and discuss the ten commandment on a sheet of paper to be hung in their bedroom. They bring the sheets to the class to show the class.

1. Moses gives the Law to the priests to read to people every seven years Deuteronomy 31:9-13
2. Joshua reads the Torah to the people, Joshua 8:30-35
3. Josiah the king finds the Torah, 2Chronicles 34: 8-21
4. Ezra the scribe reads the Torah, Nehemiah 8:1-9
5. Our Lord reads scriptures in Nazareth, Luke 4:16-20
6. St Paul asks Timothy to read scriptures, 1Timothy 4:13-16

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

11. COMMANDMENTS: 1 & 2

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 19:3-6

³You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria commentary on St John's Gospel chapter 17

*"THAT THE SON WILL NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM BEING TRUE GOD, EVEN THOUGH HE NAMED GOD THE FATHER **THE ONLY TRUE GOD.**"*

³ And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. John 17:3

He defines faith as the mother of eternal life, and says that the power of the true knowledge of God will be such as to cause us to remain forever in a state of incorruption, and blessedness, and sanctification. And we say that that is true knowledge of God, which cannot incur the reproach of turning aside to anything else, or running after inappropriate things. For some have *worshipped*

the creature rather than the Creator, and have dared to say to a block of wood: You are my Father; and to a stone, You have begotten me. For to such terrible ignorance did miserable men decline, that they even gave, in all its fullness, the great Name of God, to senseless blocks of wood; and invested them with the ineffable glory of that Nature, which is over all. He calls God the Father, then, the only true God, by contrast to false gods, and with the intention to distinguish the true God, from those who are so named in error; for this is the object of His words. Very appropriately, then, He first speaks of God as being One and One only, and then makes mention of His own glory in the words: *And Jesus Christ Whom You have sent.* For a man can in no manner attain to complete knowledge of the Father, unless side by side, and in most intimate connection with it, he lay hold on the knowledge of His Offspring; that is, the Son. For, if a man know what the Father is, he cannot but know also the Son. When, then, He said that the Father was the true God, He did not exclude Himself. For being in Him, and of Him, by Nature, He will be also Himself the true God and the only God, as He is the only God: for beside Him, there is none other god who is the only true God. *For the gods of the heathen are devils.* For the creation is enslaved, and I know not how any worship them, or sink into such a swamp of unreasoning and deep folly. With the many gods, then, in this world, who are erroneously so conceived, and have won this false title, the only true God is brought into contrast; and the Son also, Who is by Nature in Him, and of Him, at once in diversity and in identity of Nature, according to a natural Unity. I say in diversity of Nature, because He has in fact an individual Existence; for the Son *is* the Son, and not the Father. In identity of Nature also, because the Son, Who came forth from Him, is inseparably joined by Nature, with the existence of His Father. For the Father is one with the Son, even though He is the Father; and is so spoken of, because He did in fact beget Him.

This, then, He says, is eternal life, that they should know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou have sent. Then one of those who are never weary of listening to the Scripture, and seriously pursue the study of Divine doctrines, will ask: Do we say that knowledge is eternal life; and that to know the one true and living God will suffice to give us complete security of expectation, and nothing else be lacking? Then how is *faith apart from works dead*? And when we speak of faith, we mean the true knowledge of God, and nothing else; for by faith comes knowledge: and the prophet Isaiah bears us witness, who said to some: *If you do not believe, you shall not understand.* And that the writings of the holy men are referring to the knowledge which consists in barren speculations, a thing wholly profitless, I think you will perceive from what follows. For one of the holy disciples said: *you believe that God is one; you do well: the devils also believe and shudder.* What then shall we say to this? How does Christ speak truth, when He says that eternal life is the knowledge of God the Father, the One true God, and (with Him) of the Son? I think, indeed, we must answer that the saying of the Savior is wholly true. For this knowledge is life, working hard as it were in birth of the whole meaning of the mystery, and promising unto us participation in the mystery of the Eucharist, whereby we are joined unto the living and life-giving Word. And for this reason, I think, Paul says that the Gentiles are made *fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers* of Christ; inasmuch as they partake in His blessed Body and Blood; and our members may in this sense be conceived of, as being *members of Christ*. This knowledge, then, which also brings to us the Eucharist by the Spirit, is life. For it dwells in our hearts, shaping anew those who receive it into sonship with Him, and molding them into incorruption and piety towards

God, through life according to the Gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, knowing that the knowledge of the One true God brings unto us, and, so to speak, promotes our union with, the blessings of which we have spoken, says that it is eternal life; insomuch as it is the mother and nurse of eternal life, being in its own power and nature pregnant with those things which cause life, and lead unto it.

And I think we ought attentively to observe in what way Christ says that the knowledge of the One true God is perfected in us in all its fullness. For see how it cannot exist apart from the contemplation of the Son, and it is clear that it cannot exist apart from the Holy Spirit; for such is the nature of the belief in each Person of the Trinity, according to the Scripture. The Jews indeed, following in the steps of Moses' commandments, rejected the many false gods, and betook themselves to the worship of the One true God, under his guidance. *You shall worship the Lord thy God, said the Law, and Him only shall You serve.* But those who still cling to the worship of the One true God, as not yet having complete knowledge of Him they worship, are called thereto to know not that the Creator of all things is one only, the One true God, but that He is a Father and has begotten a Son; and moreover, and yet more than all this, to gaze attentively on Him in His unchangeable Likeness, that is, the Son. For through the Characteristic features of that which is modeled, we can readily attain to perfect knowledge of the model. Very necessary then was it, for our Lord Jesus Christ to tell us, that those who have been called through faith to sonship and eternal life, not only ought to learn that the true God is One only, but that He is also a Father; and is the Father of One Who became flesh for our sakes, and Who was sent to restore the corrupted nature of rational beings, that is, of mankind.

REFLECTION:

The first two commandments forbid the worship of other gods and of worshipping images. Our Lord prays for us to know the Father and Himself, meaning the invisible Father and His only true image, that is Christ His Son. This knowledge according to St. Cyril is the partaking of the Eucharist, through which we become members of the body of the Son. Only then we are true children of the Father and fulfill the first commandment. Only then we can, in a mystery, behold the image of God as in a mirror.

PRAYER:

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.
With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.
Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.
With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth.
I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.
I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.

I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.
Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.
How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word
Psalm 118 – b

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Ten Theno:

+Let my cry come before You O Lord, give me understanding according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+My lips shall overflow with praise, when You have taught me **Your statutes**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ My tongue shall speak of Your words for all Your **commandments** are righteous. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let Your hand help me for I have chosen **Your precepts**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have longed for Your salvation O Lord, and **Your Law** is my delight. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let **Your judgments** help me. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant for I do not forget **Your commandments**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

VOCABULARY:

worship, Poverty, Idol, idolize, icons, prostrations

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We believe in one God
Liturgical:	The role of Icons
Moral:	Loving God
Spiritual:	Prayer

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Who is Moses?

A. *God asked him to lead the people out of Egypt, God spoke to him and gave him the 10 commandments*

Q. Which mountain did God give Moses the 10 commandments on?

A. *Mount Sinai*

Q. What did Moses see on the mountain?

A. *They saw God. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of **sapphire stone**, [show the picture] and they ate and drank with Him.*

Q. How did we get the 10 commandments?

A. *God gave Moses the 10 commandments on 2 tablets on Mount Sinai and they were written by the finger of God*

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image" Exodus 20: 3-4

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. And what are those things that when we do them, they would separate us from Him and saddens His heart. He told us of the 10 wrong things that can really hurt the relationship with our Father and hurt us too. We learned that they are called the ten commandments and the God gave them written on two tablets of stone to Moses on the Holy mountain. Today we start studying the ten commandments to know what our heavenly Father better.

LESSON BODY:

Does anybody know what that means, “You shall have no other gods before Me”? [Get their ideas first and then tell them:] This commandment means very simply that we should not love anything else more than God. We should love God more than anything and everything else.

How would I know if I love something more than God? For example, if it is time for me to pray, I should not continue to sleep or watch TV or play with my friend or anything! If I *did*, that would mean that I love something else more than my Lord. What are some other examples? If on Sunday, I ask my parents if I can do something else instead of going to church, that would mean I love something more than God. [Try to get the kids to come up with their own examples]. There is a saint in the church named St. Antony. Does anyone know his story? His life shows *one way* that it means to love God more than everything else. He was a young man living with his parents and his one sister. When he had grown up a little bit, his parents passed away and he was left with his sister. His parents had been very rich, so they left him much land and many possessions, and he was also taking care of his sister. He used to go to church a lot. One day as he was walking to church, he was thinking to himself about how the apostles had left everything to follow Christ. When he was in church, he heard the Bible reading for that day. One of the verses he heard was Jesus saying to a rich young man: *“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”* So what do you think he did when he heard this verse? What would someone do, who felt God inside telling them to listen to this verse? He went and sold everything he had, gave the money to the poor, brought his sister to live with some other women to take care of her, and went to live in the desert to dedicate his entire life to our Lord. He left everything! His house, everything he had in his room, the land he owned, his sister. In the desert, he lived completely alone for a time; he lived a life of **poverty** and fasting. Why would he do this? Why would someone do this? [Let them try to answer and then say:] He did all of this so that nothing could take him away from loving God and from praying to Him and being with Him. Can you imagine that?

The second commandment is related to the first one: “You shall not make for yourself a carved image.” A carved image is an idol. People in the ancient times and even some people today, made statues and called them gods and worshipped them. It sounds a little bit funny, right? Calling a statue ‘god.’ It sounds funny because *we* do not do this, but what this commandment means is that we should not have *any* idols at all, we should not **idolize** anyone. And this is something that maybe we do. For example, when I hang up a poster of someone, a movie star or a famous singer, in my room, I am making an idol of him/her. I am putting this person up very high in my mind and

maybe even, God forbid, trying to be like this person. The pictures that we should hang up in our rooms should be pictures of saints.

There have been many, many saints in our church history that were willing to give their lives in order to not become like anyone else except the person who God made them. This is how much they desired to stay with God. Let's listen to one story.

Options of stories to tell:

DANIEL BEING THROWN TO THE LIONS BECAUSE HE REFUSED TO WORSHIP IDOLS (DANIEL 6)

Daniel had a very high position in the king's government and because he had an excellent spirit in him, the king wanted to put him in charge of the entire kingdom. Because of this, the other rulers who were lower than Daniel became jealous of him and tried to look for a way to make him look bad in front of the king. But they could not find him doing anything wrong! After they spent some time thinking, they realized that the only way to harm Daniel was to make a law saying that no one could worship any god except for the king (the people he lived with thought of their kings as gods). If anyone disobeyed this law, they would be thrown in to a lions' den full of very hungry, angry lions. They *knew* that Daniel worshipped God in heaven and they wanted to make him fall in this law of theirs. Now when Daniel knew that this law had been made, he went to his room, where his window were open towards Jerusalem (in the Old Testament the people needed to pray toward s Jerusalem, like we today pray towards the east), and he knelt down 3 times and prayed and gave thanks to God, as he used to do every day. He was not afraid of this new law! No one would keep him from praying to the true God and worshipping Him. He did not even try to hide that he was praying, but kept his windows open just as he had done usually. Can you imagine this courage? He was very brave because God was with him and made him strong and not afraid of anyone. Now the men who had made this law were watching Daniel and saw him doing this and went and told the king that Daniel had broken the new law. The king was very sad to hear this because he loved Daniel very much but there was nothing he could do! The law could not be changed! So the king had to give the command to throw Daniel in the lions' den. They did this, and the king went home the entire night and could not sleep but spent the night fasting for Daniel. As soon as it was morning, the king ran to see if Daniel had been saved by his God and he called out to him from above the hole of the lions' den, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" and Daniel answered the king and said, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." God saved Daniel because Daniel trusted in Him and had not done anything against God. Daniel, when things got very tough and maybe when other people would have gotten scared, did not leave God, even though he knew what the punishment was going to be.

We should ask our Lord to help us follow His commandment as much as Daniel did, and not let anyone change us and take us away from loving our Lord.

THE 3 YOUNG MEN WERE THROWN INTO A VERY HOT FIRE (DANIEL 3)

There was a king named Nebuchadnezzar who worshipped statues as if they were gods. In his kingdom he built a special, *huge* statue and set it up in Babylon, and he called for all the important people (governors, judges, and all officials) to come for the dedication of the statue. Then a messenger of the king cried out to all the people of the kingdom and said, "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." So the people listened to this and whenever they heard the music, they would fall down and worship the statue. Now in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom there were Jews living there that refused to worship the statue. There were 3 boys in particular whose names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and they were 3 friends (teenagers). Why do you think they refused to worship the statue with *everyone* else in the kingdom? [Because they loved God very much and were following the first two commandments: *You shall have no other gods before Me and You shall not make for yourself a carved image.*] Now a problem arose: certain people from Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom saw that they were not worshipping the statue and came and told on them to the king. Now the king became very angry! In rage and fury, he gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego before him. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." They were very brave! They were not scared at all by what the king said he would do to them. They loved their Lord and God and they would not disobey Him no matter what.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed- Nego. (He became very angry towards them). He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain

mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego high positions in the province of Babylon.

See how they changed even this very evil king because of their faith and because they kept God's commandments and did not let anyone change them!

WE WORSHIP THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

We worship the Holy trinity by prayers and by [prostrations](#) (bowing down).

WE HAVE ICONS OF OUR LORD AND OF THE SAINTS

We have [icons](#) (pictures) of our family members as well as of the saints who are our heavenly family. We love our Lord and the saints and honor their icons.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- **Acting:**

- **Scrap book building:** *The students can have a scrapbook of this unit - the 10 commandments. The first picture in it can be the picture they drew from the first lesson, and they can continue to add pictures every week.*
- **Coloring:** *the students can draw a picture of one of the images from the story they heard and write the first two commandments on the top of the picture.*
- Before the students leave, ask them to memorize commandments 3 and 4 for next week.
- **Puppets**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is the 1st Commandment?

A: *"You shall have no other gods before Me."*

Q: What does this mean?

A: *You should not love anything else more than God.*

Q: What is the 2nd Commandment?

A: *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image."*

Q: What does this mean?

A: *We should not have any idols at all, we should not idolize anyone. We should not let anyone change us to become like them.*

Q: What is an icon?

A: *a painted picture of or Lord or the saints*

Q: What is a prostration?

A: *Bowing down before the Lord*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image" Exodus 19:3-4

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to share a story from the greater family life that show that God ought to be more important than anyone or anything. Mothers would share with children how to venerate the icons both in church and home.

1. Joseph refused to sin and honored God *Genesis 39*
2. Daniel refuse to worship idols and remain faithful to God *Daniel 6*

3. The Blind man believe in Christ *John9*
4. St Peter witnessed for our Lord before thousands in Jerusalem *Acts 2*
5. The disciples refuse to abstain from talking about our Lord *Acts 4*
6. St Paul & St Silas are imprisoned for Christ *Acts 16*

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

12. COMMANDMENTS 3 & 4

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 19:7-11

7"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

John 17: 6

6"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world."

John 5: 16-18

"16For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." 18Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

Matthew 12: 1-8

"At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him,

"Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!" 3But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? 5Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. 7But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Luke 13:10-17

"10Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. 12But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." 15The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Augustine LETTER 55 (A.D. 400) *Or Book II of Replies to Questions of Januarius* CHAPTER 10

18. Nevertheless the seventh day was appointed to the Jewish nation as a day to be observed by rest of the body, that it might be a type of sanctification to which men attain through rest in the Holy Spirit. We do not read of sanctification in the history given Genesis of all the earlier days: of the Sabbath alone it is said that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Now the souls of men, whether good or bad, love rest, but how to attain to that which they love is to the greater part unknown: and that which bodies seek for their weight, is precisely what souls seek for their love, namely, a resting-place. For as, according to its specific gravity, a body descends or rises, until it reaches a place where it can rest,— oil, for example, falling if poured into the air, but rising if poured into water, — so the soul of man struggles towards the things which it loves, in order that, by reaching them, it may rest. There are indeed many things which please the soul through the body, but its rest in these is not eternal, nor even long continued; and therefore they rather debase the soul and weigh it down, so as to be a drag upon that pure imponderability by which it tends towards higher things. When the soul finds pleasure from itself, it is not yet seeking delight in that which is unchangeable; and therefore it is still proud, because it is giving to itself the highest place, whereas God is higher. In such sin the soul is not left unpunished, for "God resist the

proud, but give grace to the humble.” When, however, the soul delights in God, there it finds the true, sure, and eternal rest, which in all other objects was sought in vain. Therefore the admonition is given in the book of Psalms, “Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of your heart.”

19. Because, therefore, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us,” sanctification was associated with the seventh day, the day in which rest was enjoined. But inasmuch as we neither are able to do any good work, except as helped by the gift of God, as the apostle says, “For it is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,” nor will be able to rest, after all the good works which engage us in this life, except as sanctified and perfected by the same gift to eternity; for this reason it is said of God Himself, that when He had made all things “very good,” He rested “on the seventh day from all His works which He had made? For He, in so doing, presented a type of that future rest which He purposed to bestow on us men after our good works are done; For as in our good works He is said to work in us, by whose gift we are enabled to work what is good, so in our rest He is said to rest by whose gift we rest.

CHAPTER 11

20. This, moreover, is the reason why the law of the Sabbath is placed third among the three commandments of the Decalogue which declare our duty to God (for the other seven relate to our neighbor, that is, to man; the whole law hanging on these two commandments). The first commandment, in which we are forbidden to worship any likeness of God made by human contrivance, we are to understand as referring to the Father: this prohibition being made, not because God has no image, but because no image of Him but that One which is the same with Himself, ought to be worshipped; and this One not in His stead, but along with Him. Then, because a creature is mutable, and therefore it is said, “The whole creation is subject to vanity,” since the nature of the whole is manifested also in any part of it, lest anyone should think that the Son of God, the Word by whom all things were made, is a creature, the second commandment is, “You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” And because God sanctified the seventh day, on which He rested, the Holy Spirit- in whom is given to us that rest which we love everywhere, but find only in loving God, when “His love is shed abroad in us, by the Holy Ghost given unto us” — is presented to our minds in the third commandment, which was written concerning the observance of the Sabbath, not to make us suppose that we attain to rest in this present life, but that all our labors in

what is good may point towards nothing else than that eternal rest. For I would specially charge you to remember the passage quoted above: “We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope.

21. For the feeding and fanning of that ardent love by which, under a law like that of gravitation, we are borne upwards or inwards to rest, the presentation of truth by emblems has a great power: for, thus presented, things move and kindle our affection much more than if they were set forth in bald statements, not clothed with sacramental symbols. Why this should be, it is hard to say; but it is the fact that anything which we are taught by allegory or emblem affects and pleases us more, and is more highly esteemed by us, than it would be if most clearly stated in plain terms. I believe that the emotions are less easily kindled while the soul is wholly involved in earthly

things; but if it be brought to those corporeal things which are emblems of spiritual things, and then taken from these to the spiritual realities which they represent, it gathers strength by the mere act of passing from the one to the other, and, like the flame of a lighted torch, is made by the motion to burn more brightly, and is carried away to rest by a more intensely glowing love.

CHAPTER 12

22. It is also for this reason, that of all the ten commandments, that which related to the Sabbath was the only one in which the thing commanded was typical; the bodily rest enjoined being a type which we have received as a means of our instruction, but not as a duty binding also 'upon us. For while in the Sabbath a figure is presented of the spiritual, rest, of which it is said in the Psalm, "Be still, and know that I am God," and unto which men I are invited by the Lord Himself in the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: so shall ye find rest [unto your souls; "a as to all the things enjoined in the other commandments, we are to yield to [them an obedience in which there is nothing typical. For we have been taught literally not to worship idols; and the precepts enjoining us not to take God's name in vain, to honor our father and mother, not to commit adultery, or kill, or steal, or bear false witness, or covet our neighbor's wife, or covet anything that is our neighbor's, are all devoid of typical or mystical meaning, and are to be literally observed. But we are not commanded to observe the day of the Sabbath literally, in resting from bodily labor, as it is observed by the Jews; and even their observance of the rest as prescribed is to be deemed worthy of contempt, except as signifying another, namely, spiritual rest. From this we may reasonably conclude, that all those things which are figuratively set forth in Scripture, are powerful in stimulating that love by which we tend towards rest; since the only figurative or typical precept in the Decalogue is the one in which that rest is commended to us, which is desired everywhere, but is found sure and sacred in God alone.

CHAPTER 13

23. The Lord's day, however, has been made known not to the Jews, but to Christians, by the resurrection of the Lord, and from Him it began to have the festive character which is proper to it. For the souls of the pious dead are, indeed, in a state of repose before the resurrection of the body, but they are not engaged in the same active exercises as shall engage the strength of their bodies when restored. Now, of this condition of active exercise the eighth day (which is also the first of the week) is a type, because it does not put an end to that repose, but glorifies it. For with the reunion of the body no hindrance of the soul's rest returns, because in the restored body there is no corruption: for "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Wherefore, although the sacramental import of the 8th number, as signifying the resurrection, was by no means concealed from the holy men of old who were filled with the spirit of prophecy (for in the title of Psalms we find the words "for the eighth," and infants were: circumcised on the eighth day; and in Ecclesiastes it is said, with allusion to the two covenants, "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight"); nevertheless before the resurrection of the Lord, it was reserved and hidden, and the Sabbath alone was appointed to be observed, because before that 'event there was indeed the repose of the dead (of which the Sabbath rest was a type), but there was not any instance of the resurrection of one who, rising from the dead, was no more to

die, and over whom death should no longer have dominion; this being done in order that, from the time when such a resurrection did take place in the Lord's own body (the Head of the Church being the first to experience that which His body, the Church, expects at the end of time), the day upon which He rose, the eighth day namely (which is the same with the first of the week), should begin to be observed as the Lord's day.

The same reason enables us to understand why, in regard to the day of keeping the Passover, on which the Jews were commanded to kill and eat a lamb, which was most clearly a foreshadowing of the Lord's Passion, there was no injunction given to them that they should take the day of the week into account, waiting until the Sabbath was past, and making the beginning of the third week of the moon coincide with the beginning of the third week of the first month; the reason being, that the Lord might rather in His own Passion declare the significance of that day, as He had come also to declare the mystery of the day now known as the Lord's day, the eighth namely, which is also the first of the week.

CHAPTER 14

24. Consider now with attention these three most sacred days, the days signalized by the Lord's crucifixion, rest in the grave, and resurrection. Of these three, that of which the cross is the symbol is the business of our present life: those things which are symbolized by His rest in the grave and His resurrection we hold by faith and hope. For *now* the command is given to each man, "Take up thy cross, and follow me." But the flesh is crucified, when our members which are upon the earth are mortified, such as fornication, uncleanness, luxury, avarice, etc., of which the apostle says in another passage: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Hence also he says of himself: "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And again: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The period during which our labors tend to the weakening and destruction of the body of sin, during which the outward man is perishing, that the inward man may be renewed day by day, - that is the period of the cross.

25. These are, it is true, good works, having rest for their recompense, but they are meanwhile laborious and painful: therefore we are told to be "rejoicing in hope," that while we contemplate the future rest, we may labor with cheerfulness in present toil. Of this cheerfulness the breadth of the cross in the transverse beam to which the hands were nailed is an emblem: for the hands we understand to be symbolical of working, and the breadth to be symbolical of cheerfulness in him who works, for sadness straitens the spirit. In the height of the cross, against which the head is placed, we have an emblem of the expectation of recompense from the sublime justice of God, "who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life." Therefore the length of the cross, along which the whole body is extended, is an emblem of that patient continuance in the will of God, on account of which those who are patient are said to be long-suffering. The depth also, *i.e.* the part which is fixed in the ground, represents the occult nature of the holy mystery. For you remember, I suppose, the words of the apostle, which in this description of the cross I aim at expounding: "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." Those things which we do not yet

see or possess, but hold in faith and hope, are the things represented in the events by which the second and third of the three memorable days above mentioned were signaled [viz. the Lord's rest in the grave, and His resurrection]. But the things which keep us occupied in this present life, while we are held fast in the fear of God by the commandments, as by nails driven through the flesh (as it is written, "Make my flesh fast with nails by fear of Thee", are to be reckoned among things necessary, not among those which are for their own sakes to be desired and coveted. Hence Paul says that he desired, as something far better, to depart and to be with Christ: "nevertheless," he adds, "to remain in the flesh is expedient for you" necessary for your welfare. This departing and being with Christ is the beginning of the rest which is not interrupted, but glorified by the resurrection; and this rest is now enjoyed by faith, "for the just shall live by faith." "Know ye not," said the same apostle, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death." How? By faith. For this is not actually completed in us so long as we are still "groaning within ourselves, and waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body: for we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

26. Remember how often I repeat this to you, that we are not to think that we ought to be made happy and free from all difficulties in this present life, and are therefore at liberty to murmur profanely against God when we are straitened in the things of this world, as if He were not performing what He promised. He hath indeed promised the things which are necessary for this life, but the consolations which mitigate the misery of our present lot are very different from the joys of those who are perfect in blessedness. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me," said the believer, "Thy comforts, O Lord, delight my soul." Let us not therefore murmur because of difficulties; let us not lose that breadth of cheerfulness, of which it is written, "Rejoicing in hope," because this follows,—"patient in tribulation." The new life, therefore, is meanwhile begun in faith, and maintained by hope: for it shall only then be perfect when this mortal shall be swallowed up in life, and death swallowed up in victory; when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed; when we shall be changed, and made like the angels: for "we shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed." Again, the Lord says, "They shall! be equal unto the angels." We now are apprehended by Him in fear by faith: then we shall apprehend Him in love by sight. For "whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight." Hence the apostle himself, who says, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," confesses frankly that he has not attained to it. "Brethren," he says, "I count not myself to have apprehended." Since, however, our hope is sure, because of the truth of the promise, when he said elsewhere, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death," he adds these words, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We walk, therefore, in actual labor, but in hope of rest, in the flesh of the old life, but in faith of the new. For he says again: "The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you."

27. Both the authority of the Divine Scriptures and the consent of the whole Church spread throughout the world have combined to ordain the annual commemoration of these things at

Easter, by observances which are, as you now see, full of spiritual significance. From the Old Testament Scriptures we are not taught as to the precise day of holding Easter, beyond the limitation to the period between the 14th and 21st days of the first month; but because we know from the Gospel beyond doubt which days of the week were signalized in succession by the Lord's crucifixion, His resting in the grave, and His resurrection, the observance of these days has been enjoined in addition by Councils of the Fathers, and the whole Christian world has arrived unanimously at the persuasion that this is the proper mode of observing Easter.

CHAPTER 15

28. The Fast of Forty Days has its warrant both in the Old Testament, from the fasting of Moses and of Elijah, and in the Gospel from the fact that our Lord fasted the same number of days; proving thereby that the Gospel is not at variance with the Law and the Prophets. For the Law and the Prophets are represented in the persons of Moses and Elijah respectively between whom also He appeared in glory on the Mount, that what the apostle says of Him, that He is "witnessed unto both by the Law and the Prophets," might be made more clearly manifest. Now, in what part of the year could the observance of the Fast of Forty Days be more appropriately placed, than in that which immediately precedes and borders on the time of the Lord's Passion? For by it is signified this life of toil, the chief work in which is to exercise self-control, in abstaining, from the world's friendship, which never ceases deceitfully caressing us, and scattering profusely around us its bewitching allurements. As to the reason why this life of toil and self-control is symbolized by the number 40, it seems to me that the number ten (in which is the perfection of our blessedness, as in the number eight, because it returns to the unit) has a like place in this number [as the unit has in giving its significance to eight];" and therefore I regard the number forty as a fit symbol for this life, because in it the creature (of which the symbolical number is seven) cleaves to the Creator, in whom is revealed that unity of the Trinity which is to be published while time lasts throughout this whole world, — a world swept by four winds, constituted of four elements, and experiencing the changes of four seasons in the year. Now four times ten [seven added to three] are forty; but the number forty reckoned in along with [one of] its parts adds the number ten, [as seven reckoned in along with one of its parts adds the unit,] and the total is fifty, — the symbol, as it were, of the reward of the toil and self-control. For it is not without reason that the Lord Himself continued for forty days on this earth and in this life in fellowship with His disciples after His resurrection, and, when He ascended into heaven, sent the promised Holy Spirit, after an interval of ten days more, when the day of Pentecost was fully come. This fiftieth day, moreover, has wrapped up in it another holy mystery for 7 times 7 days are 49. And when we return to the beginning of another seven, and add the eighth, which is also the first day of the week, we have the 50 days complete; which period of fifty days we celebrate after the Lord's resurrection, as representing not toil, but rest and gladness. For this reason we do not fast in them; and in praying we stand upright, which is an emblem of resurrection. Hence, also, every Lord's day during the fifty days, this usage is observed at the altar, and the Alleluia is sung, which signifies that our future exercise shall consist wholly in praising God, as it is written: "Blessed are they who dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they will be still (*i.e.* eternally) praising Thee."

CHAPTER 16

29. The fiftieth day is also commended to us in Scripture; and not only in the Gospel, by the fact that on that day the Holy Spirit descended, but also in the books of the Old Testament. For in them we learn, that after the Jews observed the first passover with the slaying of the lamb as appointed, 50 days intervened between that day and the day on which upon Mount Sinai there was given to Moses the Law written with the finger of God; and this “finger of God” is in the Gospels most plainly declared to signify the Holy Spirit: for where one evangelist quotes our Lord’s words thus, “I with the finger of God cast out devils,” another quotes them thus, “I cast out devils by the Spirit of God.” Who would not prefer the joy which these divine mysteries impart, when the light of healing truth beams from them on the soul to all the kingdoms of this world, even though these were held in perfect prosperity and peace? May we not say, that as the two seraphim answer each other in singing the praise of the Most High, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts,” so the Old Testament and the New, in perfect harmony, give forth their testimony to sacred truth? The lamb is slain, the Passover is celebrated, and after 50 days the Law is given, which inspires fear, written by the finger of God. Christ is slain, being led as a lamb to the slaughter as Isaiah testifies; the true Passover is celebrated; and after 50 days is given the Holy Spirit, who is the finger of God, and whose fruit is love, and who is therefore opposed to men who seek their own, and consequently bear a grievous yoke and heavy burden, and find no rest for their souls; for love “seeks not her own.” Therefore there is no rest in the unloving spirit of heretics, whom the apostle declares guilty of conduct like that of the magicians of Pharaoh, saying, “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was.” For because through this corruptness of mind they were utterly disquieted, they failed at the third miracle, confessing that the Spirit of God which was in Moses was opposed to them: for in owning their failure, they said, “This is the finger of God.” The Holy Spirit, who shows Himself reconciled and gracious to the meek and lowly in heart, and gives them rest, shows Himself an inexorable adversary to the proud and haughty, and vexes them with disquiet. Of this disquiet those despicable insects were a figure, under which Pharaoh’s magicians owned themselves foiled, saying, “This is the finger of God.”

30. Read the book of Exodus, and observe the number of days between the first Passover and the giving of the Law. God speaks to Moses in the desert of Sinai on the first day of the third month. Mark, then, this as one day of the month, and then observe what (among other things) the Lord said on that day: “Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.” The Law was accordingly given on the third day of the month. Now reckon the days between the 14th day of the first month, the day of the Passover, and the 3d day of the third month, and you have 17 days of the first month, 3 of the second, and 3 of the third- in all. The Law in the Ark of the Testimony represents holiness in the Lord’s body, by whose resurrection is promised to us the future rest; for our receiving of which, love is breathed into us by the Holy Spirit. But the Spirit had not then been given, for Jesus had not yet been glorified.” Hence that prophetic song, “Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy strength” [holiness, LXX.]. Where there is rest, there is holiness. Wherefore we have now received a pledge of it, that we may love and desire it. For to the rest belonging to the other life,

whereunto we are brought by that transition from this life of which the Passover is a symbol, all are now invited in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

REFLECTION:

Moses the arch-prophet asked God to reveal His name. He was given the name Jehovah which means "I am who I am." It was both an answer and a refusal of an answer. The Name of God that Christ Have revealed to the Church is Father. With the revelation of The Fatherhood of God, both the Son and the Spirit are revealed also. This revelation is life giving and sanctifying. As Orthodox, we use the name of God in the sign of the Cross to sanctify ourselves and everything else in our lives.

The Jewish Sabbath was a shadow and symbol of Christ the true resting place for the people of God. In Christ both us and God's Spirit find rest. When the reality is presented the shadows should disappear.

PRAYER:

Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.
Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.
I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.
My soul breaks with longing For Your judgments at all times.
You rebuke the proud— the cursed, Who stray from Your commandments.
Remove from me reproach and contempt, For I have kept Your testimonies.
Princes also sit and speak against me, But Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors.

Psalm 118-c

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Ten Theno:

+Let my cry come before You O Lord, give me understanding according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+My lips shall overflow with praise, when You have taught me **Your statutes**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ My tongue shall speak of Your words for all Your **commandments** are righteous. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let Your hand help me for I have chosen **Your precepts**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have longed for Your salvation O Lord, and **Your Law** is my delight. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let **Your judgments** help me. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant for I do not forget **Your commandments**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

VOCABULARY:

Vain, swear

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Trinity
Liturgical:	Sunday is the day of The Lord
Moral:	Loving God
Spiritual:	Prayer

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. And what are those things that when we do them, they would separate us from Him and saddens His heart. He told us of the 10 wrong things that can really hurt the relationship with our Father and hurt us too. We learned that

they are called the ten commandments and the God gave them written on two tablets of stone to Moses on the Holy mountain. we learned the first and second commandments Today we learn the third and the fourth commandments.

INTRODUCTION

The third commandment is very important: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in **vain**.” Jesus taught us never to use the Name of God to **swear** by (to use His Name in vain). We should never use His name to make a point or to make people believe us. Or, we should not say “Oh my God!” for no reason. God’s Name is very special, and it belongs only to Him. His name is also very powerful. Our Lord Jesus Christ told us that whenever we ask for anything in His name, God will hear us.

God’s name is very special and God’s *day* is also very special. The fourth commandment is “Remember the Lord’s day, to keep it holy.” When is the Lord’s day? [Sunday].

LESSON BODY:

Today we will talk about things that we need to respect about God: His name and His day. When you know someone’s name, this means that you know something very personal about them. You have a close relationship with that person if you are able to call him/her by his/her name. Mention how Moses asked God about His name (Ex 3:13,14): Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, "What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you.'"

Options for stories to tell highlighting the power in the name of God:

1. St. Peter and St. John healing the man at the door of the temple with the Name of Christ: “silver and gold I do not have; in the **Name** of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” & “His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (Acts 3:1-16)

- Emphasize how the Name of the Lord is powerful and His people call upon Him using it when they need Him and need His care, love, support and help.

{Option: have the students brainstorm, individually, times when they would need the Name of the Lord; for example, when they are afraid, when they have a test in school, when they need help, etc... Have them come up with specific instances}

2. David and Goliath, highlighting how David went to fight him under the **Name** of the Lord of Hosts. (1 Sam 17)

- David was not even a soldier in Saul's army, but was the youngest of his brothers and his father had sent him to bring cheese and bread to his brothers who were in the army.
- David was zealous for the name of God: (verse 26) "Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?""
- Verse 45: Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the **name** of the LORD of hosts..."

{Option: have the students draw a picture of this image – Goliath arrayed mightily for battle and young David with nothing but a slingshot and the Name of his God}

Which day of the week is most important for God? [Sunday] For many, many years, God has asked His people to keep the day of the Lord holy. In the 10 commandments, the 4th commandment is "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Keep the day of the Lord holy (Sunday).

How do we keep the day of the Lord holy? [Put the kids into groups and have them brainstorm ideas of things that they can do on Sunday to make it specially dedicated for Christ. After 10 minutes, bring the class back together and list their ideas on the board in the classroom]: Go to church, attend the liturgy, take Communion, read the Bible, enjoy time with our family and friends, visit sick people, help those who are in need, etc...

On the Sabbath, our Lord Jesus used to always do a certain kind of miracle. Our Lord would always go to the Temple and heal people on the Sabbath.

Options to tell:

1. The paralytic at Bethesda (John 5)
2. The man with the withered hand in the synagogue (Luke 6:6-8)
3. The Woman with the bent back for many years (Luke 13:10-17)

Sunday is also important because some of our Lord's major feasts occur on that day. There are 3:

1. Palm Sunday
2. Resurrection
3. Pentecost

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- **Acting:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***
- ***Puppets***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What does it mean to say the Lord's name in vain?

A. *To say it without meaning to call on Him; saying things like "Oh my God!" or disrespecting His name*

Q. What gave St. Peter and St. John power to heal the man? Or What gave David the power to defeat Goliath?

A. *Calling on the name of God*

Q. How should we treat the Lord's name and the Lord's day?

A. *With respect and to keep both Holy*

Q. What are some things we can do on the Lord's day to keep it holy?

A. *Go to church, take communion, go to Sunday school, read the Bible, visit those who are sick, spend time with our family*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain... remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." *Exodus 20: 7, 8*

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss and show by example the reverence given to the Holy Name. The holiness of Sunday and what ought to be done on the Day of the Lord

1. Moses asked God about His Name Exodus 3
2. God speak to Moses on mount Sinai Exodus 33:7-23
3. The disciples cast out daemons in the name of Christ Luke 10:1-20

4. St Peter heals a lame man in the name of Christ, Acts 3
5. St Paul Baptizes in the Name of Christ Acts 19:1-10
6. The Christians celebrate Sunday as the day of the Lord Acts 20:7-12 Verse to remember:

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

13. COMMANDMENT 5

Note: *In this lesson the servant can use lesson 48 @ page 585*

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 19:12

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: ³"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." ⁴And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Mark 7:8-13

"⁸For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." ⁹He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother'; and, "He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' ¹¹But you say, "If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"--' (that is, a gift to God), ¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Genesis 22:8-10

"And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. ⁹Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid

him on the altar, upon the wood. 10And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St John Chrysostom Commentary on the letter to the Ephesians HOMILY 21 EPHESIANS 6:1-3. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and you may live long on the earth."*

As a man in forming a body, places the head first, after that the neck, then the feet, so does the blessed Paul proceed in his discourse. He has spoken of the husband, he has spoken of the wife, who is second in authority, he now goes on by gradual advances to the third rank — which is that of children. For the husband has authority over the wife, and the husband and the wife over the children. Now then mark what he is saying. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is the first commandment with promise."

Here he has not a word of discourse concerning Christ, not a word on high subjects, for he is as yet addressing his discourse to tender understandings. And it is for this reason, moreover, that he makes his exhortation short, inasmuch as children cannot follow up a long argument. For this reason also he does not discourse at all about a kingdom, (because it does not belong to the tender age of childhood to understand these subjects,) but what a child's soul most especially longs to hear, that he says, namely, that it shall "live long." For if any one shall enquire why it is that he omitted to discourse concerning a kingdom, but set before them the commandment laid down in the law, he does this because he speaks to them as infantile, and because he is well aware that if the husband and the wife are thus disposed according to the law which he has laid down, there will be but little trouble in securing the submission of the children. For whenever any matter has a good and sound and orderly principle and foundation, everything will thenceforward go on with method and regularity, with much facility: the more difficult thing is to settle the foundation, to lay down a firm basis. "Children," said he, "obey your parents in the Lord," that is, according to the Lord. This, he means to say, is what God commands you. But what then if they shall command foolish things? Generally a father, however foolish he may be himself, does not command foolish things. However, even in that case, the Apostle has guarded the matter, by saying, "in the Lord"; that is, wherever you will not be offending against God. So that if the father be a gentile or a heretic, we ought no longer to obey, because the command is not then, "in the Lord." But how is it that he says, "Which is the first commandment"? For the first is, "You shall not commit adultery; — You shall not kill." He does not speak of it then as first in rank, but in respect of the promise. For upon those others there is no reward annexed, as being enacted with reference to evil things, and to departure from evil things. Whereas in these others, where there is the practice of good, there is further a promise held out. And observe how admirable a foundation he has laid for the path of virtue, that is, honor and reverence towards parents. When he would lead us away from wicked practices, and is just about to enter upon virtuous ones, this is the first thing he enjoins, honor towards parents; inasmuch as they before all others are, after God, the authors of our being, so that it is reasonable they should be the first to reap the fruits of our right actions; and then all the

rest of mankind. For if a man have not this honor for parents he will never be gentle toward those unconnected with him. However, having given the necessary injunctions to children, he passes to the fathers, and says,

Verse 4. *“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.”* He does not say, “love them,” because to this nature draws them even against their own will, and it were superfluous to lay down a law on such subjects. But what does he say? “Provoke not your children to wrath,” as many do by disinheriting them, and disowning them, and treating them overbearingly, not as free, but as slaves. This is why he says, “Provoke not your children to wrath.” Then, which is the chief thing of all, he shows how they will be led to obedience, referring the whole source of it to the head and chief authority. And in the same way as he has shown the husband to be the cause of the wife’s obedience, (which is the reason also why he addresses the greater part of his arguments to him, advising him to attach her to himself by the power of love,) so, I say, here also, he refers the efficiency to him, by saying, “But bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.” You see that where there are spiritual ties, the natural ties will follow. Do you wish your son to be obedient? From the very first “Bring him up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.” Never deem it an unnecessary thing that he should be a diligent hearer of the divine Scriptures. For there the first thing he hears will be this, “Honor your father and your mother”; so that this makes for thee. Never say, this is the business of monks. Am I making a monk of him? No. There is no need he should become a monk. Why be so afraid of a thing so replete with so much advantage? Make him a Christian. For it is of all things necessary for laymen to be acquainted with the lessons derived from this source; but especially for children. For theirs is an age full of folly; and to this folly are super added the bad examples derived from the heathen tales, where they are made acquainted with those heroes so admired amongst them, slaves of their passions, and cowards with regard to death; as, for example, Achilles, when he relents, when he dies for his concubine, when another gets drunk, and many other things of the sort. He requires therefore the remedies against these things. How is it not absurd to send children out to trades, and to school, and to do all you can for these objects, and yet, not to “bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord”? And for this reason truly we are the first to reap the fruits, because we bring up our children to be insolent and profligate, disobedient, and mere vulgar fellows. Let us not then do this; no, let us listen to this blessed Apostle’s admonition. “Let us bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.” Let us give them a pattern. Let us make them from the earliest age apply themselves to the reading of the Scriptures. Alas, that so constantly as I repeat this, I am looked upon as trifling! Still, I shall not cease to do my duty. Why, tell me, do ye not imitate them of old? Ye women, especially, emulate those admirable women. Has a child been born to any one? Imitate Hannah’s example (1 Samuel 1:24); look at what she did. She brought him up at once to the temple. Who amongst you would not rather that his son should become a Samuel than that he should be king of the whole world ten thousand times over? “And how,” you will say, “is it possible he should become such a one?” Why is it not possible? It is because you do not choose it thyself, nor commit him to the care of those who are able to make him such a one. “And who,” it will be said, “is such a one as this?” God. Since she put him into the hands of God. For not even Eli himself was one of those in any great degree qualified to form him; (how could he be, he who was not able to form even his own children?) No, it was the faith of the mother and her earnest zeal that wrought the whole. He

was her first child, and her only one, and she knew not whether she should ever have others besides. Yet she did not say, "I will wait till the child is grown up, that he may have a taste of the things of this life, I will allow him to have his pastime in them a little in his childish years." No, all these thoughts the woman repudiated, she was absorbed in one object, how from the very beginning she might dedicate the spiritual image to God. Well may we men be put to the blush at the wisdom of this woman. She offered him up to God, and there she left him. And therefore was her married state more glorious, in that she had made spiritual objects her first care, in that she dedicated the first-fruits to God. Therefore was her womb fruitful, and she obtained other children besides. And therefore she saw him honorable even in the world. For if men when they are honored, render honor in return, will not God much more, He who does this, even without being honored? How long are we to be mere lumps of flesh? How long are we to be stooping to the earth? Let everything be secondary with us to the provident care we should take of our children, and to our "bringing them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." If from the very first he is taught to be a lover of true wisdom, then wealth greater than all wealth has he acquired and a more imposing name. You will effect nothing so great by teaching him an art, and giving him that outward learning by which he will gain riches, as if you teach him the art of despising riches. If you desire to make him rich, do this. For the rich man is not he who desires great riches, and is encircled with great riches; but the man who has need of nothing. Discipline your son in this, teach him this. This is the greatest riches. Seek not how to give him reputation and high character in outward learning, but consider deeply how you shall teach him to despise the glory that belongs to this present life. By this means would he become more distinguished and more truly glorious. This it is possible for the poor man and the rich man alike to accomplish. These are lessons which a man does not learn from a master, nor by art, but by means of the divine oracles. Seek not how he shall enjoy a long life here, but how he shall enjoy a boundless and endless life hereafter. Give him the great things, not the little things. Hear what Paul says, "Bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord"; study not to make him an orator, but train him up to be a philosopher. In the want of the one there will be no harm whatever; in the absence of the other, all the rhetoric in the world will be of no advantage. Tempers are wanted, not talking; character, not cleverness; deeds, not words. These gain a man the kingdom. These confer what are benefits indeed. Whet not his tongue, but cleanse his soul. I do not say this to prevent your teaching him these things, but to prevent your attending to them exclusively. Do not imagine that the monk alone stands in need of these lessons from Scripture. Of all others, the children just about to enter into the world specially need them. For just in the same way as the man who is always at anchor in harbor, is not the man who requires his ship to be fitted out and who needs a pilot and a crew, but he who is always out at sea; so is it with the man of the world and the monk. The one is entered as it were into a wave-less harbor, and lives an untroubled life, and far removed from every storm; whilst the other is ever on the ocean, and lives out at sea in the very midst of the ocean, battling with billows without number. And though he may not need it himself, still he ought to be so prepared as to stop the mouths of others. Thus the more distinguished he is in the present life, so much the more he stands in need of this education. If he passes his life in courts, there are many Heathens, and philosophers, and persons puffed up with the glory of this life. It is like a place full of sick people. Such in some sort is the court. All are, as it were, puffed up, and in a state of inflammation. And they who are not so are studying to become so. Now then

reflect how vast a benefit it is, that your son on entering there, should enter like an excellent physician, furnished with instruments which may allay every one's peculiar inflammation, and should go up to everyone, and converse with him, and restore the diseased body to health, applying the remedies derived from the Scriptures, and pouring forth discourses of the true philosophy. For with whom is the recluse to converse? with his wall and his ceiling? yea, or again with the wilderness and the woods? or with the birds and the trees? He therefore has not so great need of this sort of discipline. Still, however, he makes it his business to perfect this work, not so much with a view of disciplining others as himself. There is then every need of much discipline of this sort to those that are to mix in the present world, because such an one has a stronger temptation to sin than the other. And if you have a mind to understand it, he will further be a more useful person even in the world itself. For all will have a reverence for him from these words, when they see him in the fire without being burnt, and not desirous of power. But power he will then obtain, when he least desires it, and will be a still higher object of respect to the king; for it is not possible that such a character should be hid. Amongst a number of healthy persons, indeed, a healthy man will not be noticed; but when there is one healthy man amongst a number of sick, the report will quickly spread and reach the king's ears, and he will make him ruler over many nations. Knowing then these things, "bring up your children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." "But suppose a man is poor." Still he will be in no wise more insignificant than the man who lives in kings' courts, because he is not in kings' courts; no, he will be held in admiration, and will soon gain that authority which is yielded voluntarily, and not by any compulsion. For if a set of Greeks, men worthless as they are, and dogs, by taking up that worthless philosophy of theirs, (for such the Grecian philosophy is,) or rather not itself but only its mere name, and wearing the threadbare cloak, and letting their hair grow, impress many; how much more will he who is a true philosopher? If a false appearance, if a mere shadow of philosophy at first sight so catches us, what if we should love the true and pure philosophy? Will not all court it, and entrust both houses, and wives, and children, with full confidence to such men? But there is not, no, there is not such a philosopher existing now. And therefore, it is not possible to find an example of the sort. Amongst recluses, indeed, there are such, but amongst people in the world no longer. And that amongst recluses there are such, it would be possible to adduce a number of instances. However, I will mention one out of many. You know, doubtless, and have heard of, and some, perhaps, have also seen, the man whom I am now about to mention. I mean, the admirable Julian. This man was a rustic, in humble life, and of humble parentage, and totally uninstructed in all outward accomplishments, but full of unadorned wisdom. When he came into the cities, (and this was but rarely,) never did such a concourse take place, not when orators, or sophists, or anyone else rode in. But what am I saying? Is not his very name more glorious than that of any king's, and celebrated even to this day? And if these things were in this world, in the world in which the Lord promised us no one good thing, in which He hath told us we are strangers, let us consider how great will be the blessings laid up for us in the heavens. If, where they were sojourners they enjoyed so great honor, how great glory shall they enjoy where their own city is! If, where He promised tribulation, they meet with such attentive care, then where He promises true honors, how great shall be their rest! And now would you have me exhibit examples of secular men? At present, indeed, we have none; still there are perhaps even secular men who are excellent, though not arrived at the highest philosophy. I shall therefore quote you examples from the saints

of the ancient times. How many, who had wives to keep and children to bring up, were inferior in no respect, no, in no respect to those who have been mentioned? Now, however, it is no longer so, "by reason of the present distress" (1 Corinthians 7:26), as this blessed Apostle says. Now then whom would ye have me mention? Noah, or Abraham? The son of the one or of the other? Or again, Joseph? Or would ye have me go to the Prophets? Moses I mean, or Isaiah? However, if you will, let us carry our discourse to Abraham, whom all are continually bringing forward to us above all others. Had he not a wife? Had he not children? Yes, for I too use the same language to you, as you do to me. He had a wife, but it was not because he had a wife that he was so remarkable. He had riches, but it was not because he had riches that he pleased God. He begat children, but it was not because he begat children that he was pronounced blessed. He had three hundred and eighteen servants born in his house, but it was not on this account that he was accounted wonderful. But would you know why it was? It was for his hospitality, for his contempt of riches, for his chastened conduct. For what, tell me, is the duty of a philosopher? Is it not to despise both riches and glory? Is it not to be above both envy and every other passion? Come now then, let us bring him forward and strip him, and show you what a philosopher he was. First of all, he esteemed his fatherland as nothing. God said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred" (Genesis 12:1), and immediately he went forth. He was not bound to his house, (or surely he would never have gone forth,) nor to his love of familiar friends, nor to anything else whatever. But what? glory and money he despised above all others. For when he had put an end to war by turning the enemy to flight, and was requested to take the spoil, he rejected it. (Genesis 14:21-23.)

Again, the son of this great man was revered, not because of his riches, but for his hospitality: not because of his children, but for his obedience: not because of his wife, but for the barrenness inflicted on his wife. (Genesis 25:21.) They looked upon the present life as nothing, they followed not after gain, they despised all things. Tell me, which sort of plants are the best? Are not those which have their strength from themselves and are injured neither by rains, nor by hailstorms, nor by gusts of wind, nor by any other vicissitude of the sort, but stand naked in defiance of them all, and needing neither wall nor fence to protect them? Such is the true philosopher, such is that wealth of which we spoke. He has nothing, and has all things: he has all things, and has nothing. For a fence is not within, but only without; a wall is not a thing of nature, but only built round from without. And what again, I ask, what sort of body is a strong one? Is it not that which is in health, and which is overcome neither by hunger nor repletion, nor by cold, nor by heat; or is it that which in view of all these things, needs both caterers, and weavers, and hunters, and physicians, to give it health? He is the rich man, the true philosopher, who needs none of these things. For this cause it was that this blessed Apostle said, "Bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Surround them not with outward defenses. For such is wealth, such is glory; for when these fall, and they do fall, the plant stands naked and defenseless, not only having derived no profit from them during the time past, but even injury. For those very shelters that prevented its being injured to the attacks of the winds, will now have prepared it for perishing all at once. And so wealth is injurious rather, because it renders us undisciplined for the vicissitudes of life. Let us therefore train up our children to be such, that they shall be able to bear up against every trial, and not be surprised at what may come upon them; "let us bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." And great will be the reward which will be thus laid up in store for us. For

if men for making statues and painting portraits of kings enjoy so great honor, shall not we who adorn the image of the King of kings, (for man is the image of God,) receive ten thousand blessings, if we effect a true likeness? For the likeness is in this, in the virtue of the soul, when we train our children to be good, to be meek, to be forgiving, (because all these are attributes of God,) to be beneficent, to be humane; when we train them to regard the present world as nothing. Let this then be our task, to mold and to direct both ourselves and them according to what is right. Otherwise with what sort of boldness shall we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? If a man who has unruly children is unworthy to be a Bishop (Titus 1:6), much more is he unworthy of the kingdom of Heaven. What do you say? If we have an unruly wife, or unruly children, shall we have to render account? Yes, we shall, if we do not with exactness bring in that which is due from ourselves; for our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation. If the man who laid aside the one talent gained nothing, but was punished even in such a manner, it is plain that one's own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation, but there is need of that of another also. Let us therefore entertain great solicitude for our wives, and take great care of our children, and of our servants, and of ourselves. And in our government both of ourselves and of them, let us beseech God that He aid us in the work. If He shall see us interested in this work, and solicitous about it, He will aid us; but if He shall see us paying no regard to it, He will not give us His hand. For He does not vouchsafe us His assistance when we sleep, but when we labor also ourselves. For a helper, (as the name implies,) is not a helper of one that is inactive, but of one who works also himself. But the good God is able of Himself to bring the work to perfection, that we may be all counted worthy to attain to the blessings promised us, through the grace and compassions of His only begotten Son, with Whom together with the Holy Ghost be unto the Father, glory, might, and honor, now and ever, and throughout all ages. Amen.

REFLECTION:

The first of the commandments about loving our neighbor is about the parents, because the parents are the image of God to the children. If we are unable to honor our parents, we will never be able to honor God.

PRAYER:

My soul clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word.
I have declared my ways, and You answered me; Teach me Your statutes.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wondrous works.
My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your word.
Remove from me the way of lying, And grant me Your law graciously.
I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me.
I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame!
I will run in the way of Your commandments, For You shall enlarge my heart.
Psalms 118 – d

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Ten Theno:

+Let my cry come before You O Lord, give me understanding according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+My lips shall overflow with praise, when You have taught me **Your statutes**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ My tongue shall speak of Your words for all Your **commandments** are righteous. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let Your hand help me for I have chosen **Your precepts**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have longed for Your salvation O Lord, and **Your Law** is my delight. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let **Your judgments** help me. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant for I do not forget **Your commandments**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

VOCABULARY:

Obedient, respect, monk, monastery

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ is the only begotten Son of God
Liturgical:	The Church is the house of God
Moral:	Honoring Parents
Spiritual:	The Word of God

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. And what are those things that when we do them, they would separate us from Him and saddens His heart. He told us of the 10 wrong things that can really hurt the relationship with our Father and hurt us too. We learned that they are called the ten commandments and the God gave them written on two tablets of stone to Moses on the Holy mountain. We have learned the first four commandments, today we study the fifth commandments.

INTRODUCTION

The first 4 commandments were about how to honor and worship and serve God; who can recite them? [You shall have no other gods before Me, You shall not make for yourself an idol, You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, Remember the Lord's day, to keep it holy].

The last 6 commandments are about how we love others around us. And the very first commandment we are going to talk about is about the people who are the closest to us – our parents.

LESSON BODY:

Do you always listen to your mom and dad? Do you fight with them?

Our Lord Jesus Christ was once young like you. He had His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. [Luke 2:41] A long time ago when Jesus was 12, he and his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. (Who remembers what the church in the Old Testament would celebrate during Passover?) When Passover was over, Jesus and his parents went to go back home to Nazareth, but Jesus wanted to stay at the temple. Jesus stayed behind with the teachers in the Temple [teachers like us, Sunday School teachers] and asked questions to learn more, like you all are learning in Sunday School every week. But instead of just asking questions, He was also teaching and explaining to all the adults! Can you picture this? And He was only 12.

Now there were no cars or planes or anything back then, so Mary, Joseph, and the rest of Jesus' family were on their way walking home. They had been walking for a day until they realized that Jesus was not with them. They had thought that Jesus was right with them among the rest of their family, but he was not! Just like other parents, they started to worry. They walked all the way back to Jerusalem. It took them 3 whole days to get back to the temple and there they finally found Jesus talking with the others and praying. When his parents asked him why he had not come home with them, he said that he had to stay and be around his Heavenly Father, God, and to listen to what He wanted Him to do. Even though Jesus was in the temple, doing what His Father in Heaven

wanted Him to do, his earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, were very worried about him after they had been searching for him for 3 days. So after this, Jesus listened to St. Mary and St. Joseph and went back home with them to Nazareth.

Our Lord Jesus was **obedient** to the Heavenly Father *and* to His earthly parents. Jesus stayed at the temple to be with God and he listened to his parents, Mary and Joseph, when He was told to come home.

If Jesus obeyed his Heavenly Father, and his parents, Mary and Joseph, then we must learn to follow Jesus and obey our parents. To obey our parents is obeying what God asked us to do. He is the One who wants us to listen to them. Sometimes it is easy to obey them, sometimes it is difficult. Do you want to show your parents that you love them? The way to do that is to obey them. Who gives you the money to buy presents? ... of course your parents. Who gave you the body that you hug them with? ... of course your parents. What can you give your parents, that you didn't get from them?

In the Bible, the 5th commandment says to honor your mother and father. How do you honor your mom and dad? [have the kids give their ideas first and then tell them that it is about respect]. By **respecting** them. Respecting our parents is very important – to hold them up very high in our minds and treat them very well.

Signs of dishonor:

In Talking:

- Talking back and arguing
- Using loud voice in conversation
- Using inappropriate words

In Action:

- lack of submission
- ignoring them
- lying to parents
- Speaking bad about them

Our mom and dad help us with everything. They give you food, money, a home, and everything that you need. The only thing that you can do in return is making them happy by listening to them. You can work hard in school, make your bed, clean your room, and just helping mom and dad instead of them having to do everything. Even our Lord helped St. Mary in the house and helped St. Joseph with his work!

Honoring parents is in fact honoring God who told us to honor them.

There was once a man called St. John the Short. He was born in Egypt, just like many of your parents and family members. When he was 18, he became a **monk**. He was a very obedient man. He always did as he was told. One time, he was writing a letter in the **monastery** (where the

monks live and pray), and he heard the head of the monastery calling him. He needed something from him. As soon as St. John heard him, he put his pen down right away and ran to go see the head monk. He didn't even finish the word he was writing! That is like if you were playing a game or watching a show on TV and your mom or dad called you and they said they needed something from you. Would you be able to stand up and go to your parents in the middle of a game or TV show?

Another time, another monk in the monastery told St. John the Short to take a dry piece of wood that he was given and plant it in the ground and water it. But think about it, if someone asked you to plant a plain stick in the ground and you were sure it would not grow into a flower or another plant, why would you plant it? But St. John the Short did as he was told and planted the piece of wood and watered it every day. And guess what? A miracle happened because of his obedience. Eventually, it actually grew into a fruit tree and it was called the Tree of Obedience.

So it's not just mom and dad that we listen to. Who did St. John obey? (the head monk). Who else do you have to be obedient to? Think of other people in your life. [grandparents, school teachers, Sunday School teachers, Abouna, etc...]

How are we obedient? [Make a list together on the board]. Answers to include:

1. Work hard at school
2. Come when you are called- like St. John
3. Do as you are told – like St. John
4. Help in the work of your parents: making your bed, cleaning up the house when it is messy, and if you see something that needs to be done, do it instead of expecting your parents to do it

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- **Acting:**
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**
- **Puppets**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Who was Christ obedient to?

A. *His Heavenly Father, and His earthly parents*

Q. How do we honor our parents?

A. *We respect and obey them*

Q. What are signs of dishonoring parents?

A. *using loud voice, inappropriate words, arguing and talking back. Also disobeying, talking bad about them, lying to them, ignoring them and whatever they ask from us.*

Q. Which saint was a good role model of obedience? Who did he listen to?

A. *St John the Short; the head monk – he didn't even finish writing what he was writing when he was called and he watered a dry, plain stick in the ground for years*

Q. What are ways we need to be obedient?

A. *Working hard in school, coming when we are called, doing what we are told, and helping with our parents' work in the house and yard.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you." Exodus 19:12

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READINGS

Mothers to explain to Children that God expect us to honor our parents. what it means to honor and dishonor parents, and how honoring parents is honoring God.

1. Adam and Eve disobey God their Father
2. Ham dishonor his father and Shem honor him
3. Isaac obey and honor Abraham even to death
4. Jacob submit to his parents and Esau does as he pleases
5. Joseph obey and honor Jacob while his brothers dishonor him
6. Joseph seek the blessing of his father for his 2 sons

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

14. COMMANDMENT 6

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 20:13

"You shall not murder."

Matthew 5:21-26

21" You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment." 22But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, "Raca!" shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, "You fool!" shall be in danger of hell fire. 23Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

CHURCH FATHERS:

7. And now after threatening the transgressors, and setting great rewards for them that do right, and signifying that He justly requires of us something beyond the former measures; He from this point begins to legislate, not simply. but by way of comparison with the ancient ordinances, desiring to intimate these two things: first, that not as contending with the former, but rather in great harmony with them, He is making these enactments; next, that it was meet and very seasonable for Him to add thereto these second precepts. And that this may be made yet clearer, let us hearken to the words of the Legislator. What then doth He Himself say? *"Ye have heard that*

it was said to them of old time, Thou shall not kill." And yet it was Himself who gave those laws also, but so far He states them impersonally. For if on the one hand He had said, *"Ye have heard that I said to them of old,"* the saying would have been hard to receive, and would have stood in the way of all the hearers. If again, on the other hand, after having said, *"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old by my Father,"* He had added, *"But I say,"* He would have seemed to be taking yet more on Himself. Wherefore He hath simply stated it, making out thereby one point only; the proof that in fitting season He had come saying these things. For by the words, *"It was said to them of old,"* He pointed out the length of the time, since they received this commandment. And this He did to shame the hearer, shrinking from the advance to the higher class of His commandments; as though a teacher should say to a child that was indolent, *"Knowest thou not how long a time thou hast consumed in learning syllables?"* This then He also covertly intimates by the expression, *"them of old time,"* and thus for the future summons them on to the higher order of His instructions: as if He had said, *"Ye are learning these lessons long enough, and you must henceforth press on to such as are higher than these."* And it is well that He doth not disturb the order of the commandments, but begins first with that which comes earlier, with which the law also began. Yea, for this too suits with one showing the harmony between them.

"But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." do you see authority in perfection? do you see a bearing suited to a legislator? Why, which among prophets ever spake on this wise? which among righteous men? which among patriarchs? None; but, *"Thus says the Lord."* But the Son not so. Because they were publishing their Master's commands, He His Father's. And when I say, *"His Father's,"* I mean His own. *"For mine,"* says He, *"are Yours, and what is Yours are mine."* And they had their fellow-servants to legislate for, He His own servants. Let us now ask those who reject the law, *"is, 'Be not angry' contrary to 'Do no murder'? or is not the one commandment the completion and the development of the other?"* Clearly the one is the fulfilling of the other, and that is greater on this very account. Since he who is not stirred up to anger, will much more refrain from murder; and he who bridles wrath will much more keep his hands to himself. For wrath is the root of murder. And you see that He who cuts up the root will much more remove the branches; or rather, will not permit them so much as to shoot out at all. Not therefore to abolish the law did He make these enactments, but for the more complete observation of it. For with what design did the law enjoin these things? Was it not, that no one might slay his neighbor? It follows, that he who was opposing the law would have to enjoin murder. For to murder, were the contrary to doing no murder. But if He doth not suffer one even to be angry, the mind of the law is established by Him more completely. For he that studies to avoid murder will not refrain from it equally with him that hath put away even anger; this latter being further removed from the crime.

8. But that we may convict them in another way also, let us bring forward all their allegations. What then do they affirm? They assert that the God who made the world, who *"makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, who sends the rain on the just and on the unjust,"* is in some sense an evil being. But the more moderate (forsooth) among them, though declining this, yet while they affirm Him to be just, they deprive Him of being good. And some other one, who is not, nor made any of the things that are, they assign for a Father to Christ. And they say that he, who is not good, abides in his own, and preserves what are his own; but that He, that is good, seeks what are another's, and desires of a sudden to become a Savior to them whose Creator He was not. Do you

see the children of the devil, how they speak out of the fountain of their father, alienating the work of creation from God: while John cries out, *"He came unto His own,"* and, *"The world was made by Him?"*

In the next place, they criticize the law in the old covenant, which bids put out *"an eye for an eye,"* and *"a tooth for a tooth;"* and straightway they insult and say, *"Why, how can He be good who speaks so?"* What then do we say in answer to this? That it is the highest kind of philanthropy. For He made this law, not that we might strike out one another's eyes, but that fear of suffering by others might restrain us from doing any such thing to them. As therefore He threatened the Ninevites with overthrow, not that He might destroy them. (for had that been His will, He ought to have been silent), but that He might by fear make them better, and so quiet His wrath: so also hath He appointed a punishment for those who wantonly assail the eyes of others, that if good principle dispose them not to refrain from such cruelty, fear may restrain them from injuring their neighbors' sight. And if this be cruelty, it is cruelty also for the murderer to be restrained, and the adulterer checked. But these are the sayings of senseless men, and of those that are mad to the extreme of madness. For I, so far from saying that this comes of cruelty, should say, that the contrary to this would be unlawful, according to men's reckoning. And whereas, you say, *"Because He commanded to pluck out "an eye for an eye," therefore He is cruel;"* I say, that if He had not given this commandment, then He would have seemed, in the judgment of most men, to be that which you say He is. For let us suppose that this law had been altogether done away, and that no one feared the punishment ensuing thereupon, but that license had been given to all the wicked to follow their own disposition in all security, to adulterers, and to murderers, to perjured persons, and to parricides; would not all things have been turned upside down? Would not cities, market-places, and houses, sea and land, and the whole world, have been filled with unnumbered pollutions and murders? Everyone sees it. For if, when there are laws, and fear, and threatening, our evil dispositions are hardly checked; were even this security taken away, what is there to prevent men's choosing vice? and what degree of mischief would not then come reveling upon the whole of human life?

The rather, since cruelty lies not only in allowing the bad to do what they will, but in another thing too quite as much; to overlook, and leave uncared for, him who hath done no wrong, but who is without cause or reason suffering ill. For tell me; were any one to gather together wicked men from all quarters, and arm them with swords, and bid them go about the whole city, and massacre all that came in their way, could there be anything more like a wild beast than he? And what if some other should bind, and confine with the utmost strictness those whom that man had armed, and should snatch from those lawless hands them, who were on the point of being butchered; could anything be greater humanity than this?

Now then, I bid thee transfer these examples to the law likewise; for He that commands to pluck out *"an eye for an eye,"* hath laid the fear as a kind of strong chain upon the souls of the bad, and so resembles him, who detains those assassins in prison; whereas he who appoints no punishment for them, doth all but arm them by such security, and acts the part of that other, who was putting the swords in their hands, and letting them loose over the whole city.

Don't you see, how the commandments, so far from coming of cruelty, come rather of abounding mercy? And if on account of these you call the Lawgiver grievous, and hard to bear with; tell me which sort of command is the more toilsome and grievous, *"Do no murder,"* or, *"Be not even*

angry”? Which is more in extreme, he who exacts a penalty for murder, or for mere anger? He who subjects the adulterer to vengeance after the fact, or he who enjoins a penalty even for the very desire, and that penalty everlasting? See ye not how their reasoning comes round to the very contrary? how the God of the old covenant, whom they call cruel, will be found mild and meek: and He of the new, whom they acknowledged to be good, will be hard and grievous, according to their madness? Whereas we say, that there is but one and the same Legislator of either covenant, who dispensed all fittingly, and adapted to the difference of the times the difference between the two systems of law. Therefore neither are the first commandments cruel, nor the second hard and grievous, but all of one and the same providential care.

For that He Himself gave the old covenant also, hear the affirmation of the prophet, or rather (so we must speak), of Him who is both the one and the other: *“I will make a covenant with you, not according to the covenant which I made with your fathers.”* But if he receive not this, who is diseased with the Manichean doctrines, let him hear Paul saying the very same in another place, *“For Abraham had two sons, one by the bondmaid, and another by the freewoman; and these are two covenants.”* As therefore in that case the wives are different, the husband the same; so here too the covenants are two, the Lawgiver one.

And to prove to you that it was of one and the same mildness; in the one He says, *“An eye for an eye,”* but in this other, *“If one smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”* For as in that case He checks him that cloth the wrong with the fear of this suffering, even so also in this. *“How so,”* it may be said, *“when He bids turn to him the other cheek also?”* Nay, what of that? Since not to take away his fear did He enjoin this, but as charging yourself to allow him to take his fill entirely. Neither did He say, that the other continues unpunished, but, *“do not thou punish;”* at once both enhancing the fear of him that smites, if he persist, and comforting him who is smitten.

9. But these things we have said, as one might say them incidentally, concerning all the commandments. Now we must go on to that which is before us, and keep to the thread of what had been affirmed. *“He that is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:”* so He speaks. Thus He hath not altogether taken the thing away: first, because it is not possible, being a man, to be freed from passions: we may indeed get the dominion over them, but to be altogether without them is out of the question. Next, because this passion is even useful, if we know how to use it at the suitable time. See, for instance, what great good was wrought by that anger of Paul, which he felt against the Corinthians, on that well-known occasion; and how, as it delivered them from a grievous pest, so by the same means again he recovered the people of the Galatians likewise, which had fallen aside; and others too beside these. What then is the proper time for anger? When we are not avenging ourselves, but checking others in their lawless freaks, or forcing them to attend in their negligence. And what is the unsuitable time? When we do so as avenging ourselves: which Paul also forbidding, said *“Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved, but rather give place unto wrath.”* When we are contending for riches: yea, for this hath he also taken away, where he says, *“Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?”* For as this last sort is superfluous, so is the first necessary and profitable. But most men do the contrary; becoming like wild beasts when they are injured themselves, but remiss and cowardly when they see despite done to another: both which are just opposite to the laws of the Gospel. Being angry then is not a transgression, but being so unseasonably. For this cause the prophet also said, *“Be ye angry, and sin not.”*

10. And whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council." By the council in this place He means the tribunal of the Hebrews: and He hath mentioned this now, on purpose that He might not seem everywhere to play the stranger and innovator. But this word, "*Raca*," is not an expression of a great insolence, but rather of some contempt and slight on the part of the speaker. For as we, giving orders either to our servants, or to any very inferior person, say, "*Away with you; you here, tell such an one:*" so they who make use of the Syrians' language say, "*Raca*," putting that word instead of "*you*." But God, the lover of man, roots up even the least faults, commanding us to behave to one another in seemly manner, and with due respect; and this with a view of destroying hereby also the greater. "*But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*" To many this commandment hath appeared grievous and galling, if for a mere word we are really to pay so great a penalty. And some even say that it was spoken rather hyperbolically. But I fear lest, when we have deceived ourselves with words here, we may in deeds there suffer that extreme punishment. For wherefore, tell me, doth the commandment seem over burdensome? Don't you know that most punishments and most sins have their beginning from words? Yea, for by words are blasphemies, and denials are by words, and reviling, and reproaches, and perjuries, and bearing false witness. Regard not then its being a mere word, but whether it have not much danger, this do thou inquire. Art thou ignorant that in the season of enmity, when wrath is inflamed, and the soul kindled, even the least thing appears great, and what is not very reproachful is counted intolerable? And often these little things have given birth even to murder, and overthrown whole cities. For just as where friendship is, even grievous things are light, so where enmity lies beneath, very trifles appear intolerable. And however simply a word be spoken, it is surmised to have been spoken with an evil meaning. And as in fire: if there be but a small spark, though thousands of planks lie by, it doth not easily lay hold of them; but if the flame have waxed strong and high, it readily seizes not planks only, but stones, and all materials that fall in its way; and by what things it is usually quenched, by the same it is kindled the more (for some say that at such a time not only wood and tow, and the other combustibles, but even water darted forth upon it doth but fan its power the more); so is it also with anger; whatever any one may say, becomes food in a moment for this evil conflagration. All which kind of evils Christ checking beforehand, had condemned first him that is angry without a cause to the judgment, (this being the very reason why He said, "*He that is angry shall be in danger of the judgment*"); then him that says "*Raca*," to the council. But as yet these are no great things; for the punishments are here. Therefore for him who calls "*fool*" He hath added the fire of hell, now for the first time mentioning the name of hell. For having before discoursed much of the kingdom, not until then did He mention this; implying, that the former comes of His own love and indulgence towards man, this latter of our negligence.

11. And see how He proceeds by little and little in His punishments, all but excusing Himself unto thee, and signifying that His desire indeed is to threaten nothing of the kind, but that we drag Him on to such denunciations. For observe: "*I bade thee,*" says He, "*not be angry for naught, because thou art in danger of the judgment. Thou hast despised the former commandment: see what anger hath produced; it hath led thee on straightway to insult, for thou hast called thy brother 'Raca.'* Again, I set another punishment, '*the council.*' If thou overlook even this, and proceed to that which is more grievous, I visit thee no longer with these finite punishments, but with the undying penalty of hell, lest after this thou should break forth even to murder." For there is nothing, nothing in the

world more intolerable than insolence; it is what hath very great power to sting a man's soul. But when the word too which is spoken is in itself more wounding than the insolence, the blaze becomes twice as great. Think it not then a light thing to call another "*fool*." For when of that which separates us from the brutes, and by which especially we are human beings, namely, the mind and the understanding, — when of this thou hast robbed thy brother, thou hast deprived him of all his nobleness. Let us not then regard the words merely, but realizing the things themselves, and his feeling, let us consider how great a wound is made by this word, and unto how much evil it proceeds. For this cause Paul likewise cast out of the kingdom not only "*the adulterous*" and "*the effeminate*," but "*the revilers*" also. And with great reason: for the insolent man mars all the beauty of charity, and casts upon his neighbor unnumbered ills, and works up lasting enmities, and tears asunder the members of Christ, and is daily driving away that peace which God so desires: giving much vantage ground unto the devil by his injurious ways, and making him the stronger. Therefore Christ Himself, cutting out the sinews of the devil's power, brought in this law. For indeed He makes much account of love: this being above all things the mother of every good, and the badge of His disciples, and the bond which holds together our whole condition. With reason therefore doth He remove with great earnestness the roots and the sources of that hatred which utterly spoils it.

Think not therefore that these sayings are in any wise hyperbolic, but consider the good done by them, and admire the mildness of these laws. For there is nothing for which God takes so much pains, as this; that we should be united and knit together one with another. Therefore both in His own person, and by His disciples, as well those in the Old, as in the New Testament, He makes so much account of this commandment; and is a severe avenger and punisher of those who despise the duty. For in truth nothing so effectually gives entrance and root to all wickedness, as the taking away of love. Wherefore He also said, "*When iniquity abounds, the love of the many shall wax cold*." Thus Cain became his brother's murderer; thus Esau; thus Joseph's brethren; thus our unnumbered crimes have come reveling in, this bond being dissevered. You see why He Himself also roots out whatever things injure this, on every side, with great exactness.

12. Neither doth He stop at those precepts only which have been mentioned, but adds also others more than those: whereby He signifies how much account He makes thereof. Namely, having threatened by "*the council*," by "*the judgment*," and by "*hell*," He added other sayings again in harmony with the former, saying thus: "*If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go away; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*."

O goodness! O exceeding love to man! He makes no account of the honor due unto Himself, for the sake of our love towards our neighbor; implying that not at all from any enmity, nor out of any desire to punish, had He uttered those former threatening, but out of very tender affection. For what can be milder than these sayings? "*Let my service*," says he, "*be interrupted, that thy love may continue; since this also is a sacrifice, thy being reconciled to thy brother*." Yea, for this cause He said not, "*after the offering*," or "*before the offering*;" but, while the very gift lies there, and when the sacrifice is already beginning, He sends thee to be reconciled to thy brother; and neither after removing that which lies before us, nor before presenting the gift, but while it lies in the midst, He bids thee hasten thither.

With what motive then doth He command so to do, and wherefore? These two ends, as it appears to me, He is hereby shadowing out and providing for. First, as I have said, His will is to point out that He highly values charity and considers it to be the greatest sacrifice: and that without it He doth not receive even that other; next, He is imposing such a necessity of reconciliation, as admits of no excuse. For whoso hath been charged not to offer before he be reconciled, will hasten, if not for love of his neighbor, yet, that this may not lie unconsecrated, to run unto him who hath been grieved, and do away the enmity. For this cause He hath also expressed it all most significantly, to alarm and thoroughly to awaken him. Thus, when He had said, *"Leave thy gift,"* He stayed not at this, but added, *"before the altar"* (by the very place again causing him to shudder); *"and go away."* And He said not merely, *"Go away,"* but He added, *"first, and then come and offer thy gift."* By all these things making it manifest, that this table receives not them that are at enmity with each other. Let the initiated hear this, as many as draw nigh in enmity: and let the uninitiated hear too: yea, for the saying hath some relation to them also. For they too offer a gift and a sacrifice: prayer, I mean, and alms-giving. For as to this also being a sacrifice, hear what the prophet saith: *"A sacrifice of praise will glorify me;"* and again, *"Sacrifice to God a sacrifice of praise;"* and, *"The lifting up of mine hands is an evening sacrifice."* So that if it be but a prayer, which thou art offering in such a frame of mind, it were better to leave thy prayer, and become reconciled to thy brother, and then to offer thy prayer. For to this end were all things done: to this end even God became man, and took order for all those works, that He might set us at one. And whereas in this place He is sending the wrong doer to the sufferer, in His prayer He leads the sufferer to the wrong doer, and reconciles them. For as there He saith, *"Forgive men their debts;"* so here, *"If he hath ought against thee, go thy way unto him."* Or rather, even here too He seems to me to be sending the injured person: and for some such reason He said not, *"Reconcile thyself to thy brother,"* but, *"Be thou reconciled."* And while the saying seems to pertain to the aggressor, the whole of it really pertains to him that is aggrieved. Thus, *"If thou art reconciled to him,"* said Christ, *"through thy love to him thou wilt have me also propitious, and wilt be able to offer thy sacrifice with great confidence. But if thou art still irritated, consider that even I readily command that which is mine to be lightly esteemed, that ye may become friends; and let these thoughts be soothing to your anger."* And He said not, *"When thou hast suffered any of the greater wrongs, then be reconciled; but, "Though it be some trifle that he hath against thee."* And He added not, *"Whether justly or unjustly; but merely, "If he hath ought against thee."* For though it be justly, not even in that case aught you not to protract the enmity; since Christ also was justly angered with us, yet nevertheless He gave Himself for us to be slain, *"not imputing those trespasses."* For this cause Paul also, when urging us in another way to reconciliation, said, *"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."* For much as Christ by this argument of the sacrifice, so there Paul by that of the day, is urging us on to the self-same point. Because in truth he fears the night, lest it overtake him that is smitten alone, and make the wound greater. For whereas in the day there are many to distract, and draw him off; in the night, when he is alone, and is thinking it over by himself, the waves swell, and the storm becomes greater. Therefore Paul, you see, to prevent this, would fain commit him to the night already reconciled, that the devil may after that have no opportunity, from his solitude, to rekindle the furnace of his wrath, and make it fiercer. Thus also Christ permits not, though it be ever so little delay, lest, the sacrifice being accomplished, such an one become

more remiss, procrastinating from day to day: for He knows that the case requires very speedy treatment. And as a skillful physician exhibits not only the preventives of our diseases, but their correctives also, even so doth He likewise. Thus, to forbid our calling "*fool*," is a preventive of enmity; but to command reconciliation is a means of removing the diseases that ensue on the enmity. And mark how both commands are set forth with earnestness. For as in the former case He threatened hell, so here He receives not the gift before the reconciliation, indicating great displeasure, and by all these methods destroying both the root and the produce. And first of all He saith, "*Be not angry*;" and after that, "*revile not*." For indeed both these are augmented, the one by the other: from enmity is reviling, from reviling enmity. On this account then He heals now the root, and now the fruit; hindering indeed the evil from ever springing up in the first instance: but if perchance it may have sprouted up and born its most evil fruit, then by all means He burns it down the more.

13. Therefore, you see, having mentioned, first the judgment, then the council, then hell, and having spoken of His own sacrifice, He adds other topics again, thus speaking: "*Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him*." That is, that thou mayest not say, "*What then, if I am injured*;" "*what if I am plundered, and dragged too before the tribunal*?" even this occasion and excuse He hath taken away: for He commands us not even so to be at enmity. Then, since this injunction was great, He draws His advice from the things present, which are wont to restrain the grosser sort more than the future. "*Why, what do you say*?" said He. "*That your adversary is stronger, and wronged you*?" Of course then he will wrong you more, if thou do not make it up, but art forced to go into court. For in the former case, by giving up some money, thou wilt keep thy person free; but when you come under the sentence of the judge, thou wilt both be bound, and pay the utmost penalty. But if thou avoid the contest there, thou wilt reap two good results: first, not having to suffer anything painful: and secondly, that the good done will be thereafter your own doing, and n longer the effect of compulsion on his part. But if thou wilt not be ruled by these sayings, thou wrong not him, so much as thyself." And see here also how He hastens him; for having said, "*Agree with your adversary*," He added, "*quickly*;" and He was not satisfied with this, but even of this quickness He hath required a further increase, saying, "*Whilst thou art in the way with him*;" pressing and hastening him hereby with great earnestness. For nothing doth so much turn our life upside down, as delay and procrastination in the performance of our good works. Nay, this hath often caused us to lose all. Therefore, as Paul for his part says, "*Before the sun set, do away the enmity*;" and as He Himself had said above, "*Before the offering is completed, be reconciled*;" so He says in this place also, "*Quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him*," before you come to the doors of the court; before thou stand at the bar and come to be thenceforth under the sway of him that judge. Since, before entering in, thou hast all in your own control but if thou set thy foot on that threshold, thou wilt not by ever so earnest efforts be able to arrange your matters at thy will, having come under the constraint of another. But what is it "*to agree*?" He means either, consent rather to suffer wrong?" or, "*so plead the cause, as if thou weft in the place of the other*;" that you may not corrupt justice by self-love, but rather, deliberating on another's cause as your own, may so proceed to deliver your vote in this matter. And if this be a great thing, marvel not; since with this view did He set forth all those His blessings, that having

beforehand smoothed and prepared the hearer's soul, he might render it more apt to receive all His enactments.

Now some say that He obscurely signifies the devil himself, under the name of the adversary; and bids us have nothing of his, (for this, they say, is to "agree" with him): no compromise being possible after our departure hence, nor anything awaiting us, but that punishment, from which no prayers can deliver. But to me He seems to be speaking of the judges in this world, and of the way to the court of justice, and of this prison. For after he had abashed men by higher things, and things future, he alarms them also by such as are in this life. Which thing Paul also cloth, using both the future and the present to sway his hearer: as when, deterring from wickedness, he points out to him that is inclined to evil, the ruler armed: thus saying, *"But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God."* And again, enjoining us to be subject unto him, he sets forth not the fear of God only, but the threatening also of the other party, and his watchful care. *"For ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."* Because the more irrational, as I have already said, are wont to be sooner corrected by these things, things which appear and are at hand. Wherefore Christ also made mention, not of hell only, but also of a court of justice, and of being dragged thither, and of the prison, and of all the suffering there; by all these means destroying the roots of murder. For he who neither reviles, nor goes to law, nor prolongs enmity, how will he ever commit murder? So that from hence also it is evident, that in the advantage of our neighbor stands our own advantage. For he that agrees with his adversary, will benefit himself much more; becoming free, by his own act, from courts of law, and prisons, and the wretchedness that is there.

14. Let us then be obedient to His sayings; let us not oppose ourselves, nor be contentious; for first of all, even antecedently to their rewards, these injunctions have their pleasure and profit in themselves. And if to the more part they seem to be burdensome. and the trouble which they cause, great; have it in thy mind that thou art doing it for Christ's sake, and the pain will be pleasant. For if we maintain this way of reckoning at all times, we shall experience nothing burdensome, but great will be the pleasure we reap from every quarter; for our toil will no longer seem toil, but by how much it is enhanced, so much the sweeter and pleasanter doth it grow. When therefore the custom of evil things, and the desire of wealth, keep on bewitching thee; do thou war against them with that mode of thinking which tells us, *"Great is the reward we shall receive, for despising the pleasure which is but for a season;"* and say to thy soul; *"Art thou quite dejected because I defraud thee of pleasure? Nay, be of good cheer, for I am introducing thee into Heaven. Thou does it not for man's sake, but for God's. Be patient therefore a little while, and thou shall see how great is the gain. Endure for the present life, and you shall receive an unspeakable confidence."* For if we would thus discourse with our own soul, and not only consider that which is burdensome in virtue. but take account also of the crown that comes thereof, we shall quickly withdraw it from all wickedness. For if the devil, holding out pleasure for a season, but pain for ever, is yet strong, and prevails; seeing our case is just the reverse in these matters, the labor temporary, the pleasure and profit immortal, what plea shall we have, if we follow not virtue after so great encouragement? Why, the object of our labors is enough to set against all, and our clear persuasion that for God's sake we are enduring all this. For if one having the king his debtor, thinks he hath sufficient security for all his life; consider how great will he be, who hath made the Gracious and Everlasting God a debtor to himself, for good deeds both small and great. Do not

then allege to me labors and sweats; for not by the hope only of the things to come, but in another way also, God hath made virtue easy, assisting us everywhere, and putting His hand to our work. And if thou wilt only contribute a little zeal, everything else follows. For to this end He will have thee too to labor a little, even that the victory may be yours also. And just as a king would have his own son present indeed in the array; he would have him shoot with the bow, and show himself, that the trophy may be reckoned his, while he achieves it all Himself: even so doth God in our war against the devil: He requires of you one thing alone, that thou show forth a sincere hatred against that foe. And if you contribute this to Him, He by Himself brings all the war to an end. Though thou burn with anger, with desire of riches, with any tyrannical passion whatever; if He see you only stripping yourself and prepared against it, He comes quickly to thee, and makes all things easy, and sets thee above the flame, as He did those children of old in the Babylonian furnace: for they too carried in with them naught but their good will. In order then that we also may extinguish all the furnace of disordered pleasure here, and so escape the hell that is there, let these each day be our counsels, our cares, and our practice, drawing towards us the favor of God, both by our full purpose concerning good works, and by our frequent prayers. For thus even those things which appear insupportable now, will be most easy, and light, and lovely. Because, so long as we are in our passions, we think virtue rugged and morose and arduous, vice desirable and most pleasing; but if we would stand off from these but a little, then both vice will appear abominable and unsightly, and virtue easy, mild, and much to be desired. And this you may learn plainly from those who have done well. Hear, for instance, how of those passions Paul is ashamed, even after his deliverance from them, saying, *“For what fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?”* But virtue, even after his labor, he affirms to be light, calling the laboriousness of our affliction momentary and *“light,”* and rejoicing in his sufferings, and glorying in his tribulations, and taking a pride in the marks wherewith he had been branded for Christ’s sake. In order then that we too may establish ourselves in this habit, let us order ourselves each day by what hath been said, and *“forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us press on towards the prize of the high calling:”* unto which God grant that we may all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTION:

God is life and the Giver of life, which makes murder a very grievous sin. And any inclination of hate, which is the beginning of murder, would be very grievous to the Holy Spirit. Satan was described as the “killer of men” from the beginning and he is the source of all hate; as opposing to God, Who is Love.

PRAYER:

Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.
Incline my heart to Your testimonies, And not to covetousness.
Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.
Establish Your word to Your servant, Who is devoted to fearing You.
Turn away my reproach which I dread, For Your judgments are good.
Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me in Your righteousness
Psalms 118 - e

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Ten Themo:

+Let my cry come before You O Lord, give me understanding according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+My lips shall overflow with praise, when You have taught me **Your statutes**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ My tongue shall speak of Your words for all Your **commandments** are righteous. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let Your hand help me for I have chosen **Your precepts**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have longed for Your salvation O Lord, and **Your Law** is my delight. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let **Your judgments** help me. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant for I do not forget **Your commandments**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

VOCABULARY:

Pagan, Reputation, St. Macarius the Great, disciple

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God is Love
Liturgical:	Prayer of reconciliation and the Kiss of Peace
Moral:	Loving the neighbor
Spiritual:	Prayer

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. And what are those things that when we do them, they would separate us from Him and saddens His heart. He told us of the 10 wrong things that can really hurt the relationship with our Father and hurt us too. We learned that they are called the ten commandments and the God gave them written on two tablets of stone to Moses on the Holy mountain. Today we study commandment number 6.

INTRODUCTION

Has anyone here ever had their feelings hurt? How did it feel? [Let the kids answer, and ask them how it made them feel. Let them talk about].

Now let's ask a more difficult question – can anyone remember a time when they hurt someone *else's* feelings? How do you think it made that person feel?

There is nothing that hurts more than when someone's feelings get hurt by mean words. This makes everyone, without exception, very hurt – sad, upset, confused.

It is so important to our Lord Jesus Christ that we love one another and that we do not hurt others, that if we remember that someone in the church is upset with us, we should leave whatever we are doing – even if we are in the line to take communion! – and go and make up with that person.

LESSON BODY:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who created us and knows that nothing is more hurtful than mean words or actions, taught us what it means to kill somebody *inside*. It means to:

1. Hurt their feelings on purpose,
2. Talk badly about them (ruining their **reputation**),
3. Insult them, or
4. Be angry without good reason.

What would a good reason be? If they are doing something that would hurt them – doing something wrong that they should not be doing. Our Lord even showed us that being angry for someone when *they* hurt *our* feelings is not “a good reason” because He, our King, prayed for those who were crucifying Him and asked God to forgive them.

This is what the 6th commandment, “You shall not murder” means.

I know a story of someone who really got his feelings hurt. A long, long time ago there was a **pagan** priest. (Pagan means someone who did not believe in God; he worshipped idols and other false gods). He lived in the middle of a very hot desert. There was also a great monk who lived in this desert named **St. Makarios**. He was a very holy and blessed man who loved God very much. One day the pagan priest was carrying a lot of firewood and working very hard; one of St. Makarios’ **disciples** saw him. The disciple yelled at the pagan priest and called him a lot of bad words! He was saying these things to him because he was not a Christian and did not worship God, and did very many wrong things. The pagan priest was so upset and his feelings were so hurt that he started to hit the disciple, and he beat him up very badly. When he was done, he left the disciple lying there and picked up his firewood and left. Later St. Makarios, not knowing what happened to his disciple, saw the pagan priest carrying all that firewood. St. Makarios started to speak very kindly to the priest, encouraging him for all his hard work and saying how he wished he could learn to work as hard as him. St. Makarios gave him lots of compliments. He didn’t say anything about the bad things he did or try to tell him that he was not a good person. He was kind to him and made him feel better. The priest became so happy; he confessed to St. Makarios everything that he had done to his disciple. He also started to visit St. Makarios and spend time with him. Then he asked St. Makarios to make him a Coptic monk! He wanted to become a Christian! So St. Makarios baptized him and made him a monk.

What made the pagan priest leave the wrong things he was doing and become a Christian? It is the love that St. Makarios showed him. While the disciple had murdered the priest emotionally, St. Makarios showed him love. He truly understood the Lord’s commandment, “You shall not murder.” He knew how much it hurts people when we put them down.

Let us always pray and ask our Lord to help become loving people and help us never to:

1. Hurt peoples’ feelings on purpose,
2. Talk badly about them,

3. Insult them, or
4. Be angry without good reason

In the Church on Sunday, before we pray the Liturgy, we make sure that we love one another from all our hearts, that is why we kiss one another with the kiss of peace (act it out)

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- **Acting:**
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**
- **Puppets**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What does the 6th commandment, “you shall not murder,” mean?

A. *To kill somebody on the inside*

Q. What are ways that we can hurt others and that we should take care not to do?

A. *Hurting their feelings, talking badly about them, insulting them, being angry at them without a good reason*

Q. What is a “good reason” for being angry at someone?

A. *To be angry when someone is doing something to hurt themselves – when they are doing something wrong (a sin)*

Q. What did we see in the story of St. Makarios and the pagan priest?

A. *How God’s love can touch someone and change their lives*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“You shall not murder.” Exodus 20:13

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to explain to children what it means to be gentle, kind, forgiving and loving. They should make a practical goal for the week to chose a person who is not of the immediate family and would even be better if it was an "enemy". In addition to praying for that person on daily basis. They can also make a list of words that should never be used like "stupid"

1. St Moses the strong feed the thieves - *life of St Moses*
2. Joseph forgives his brother *Genesis 50*
3. Our Lord asks us to forgive - as our heavenly Father forgives us *Matthew 6:14*
4. Abraham is kind to strangers *Genesis 18*
5. Our Lord did not hurt people's feeling even when they hurt his *John 8:48-50*
6. St Paul tell his jailer about our Lord *Acts 16: 25-31*

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

15. COMMANDMENTS 7, 8, 9, 10

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Exodus 20:14-17

"You shall not commit adultery."

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Matthew 5:27-32

27" You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery.' 28But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

31"Furthermore it has been said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

Revelation 22:14,15

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."

John 8:43-44

"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

Colossians 3:8-9

"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,"

Revelation 21:7

"But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

Revelation 22:14-15

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."

CHURCH FATHERS:

Saint John Chrysostom HOMILY 17: MATTHEW 5:27, 28

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, You shall not commit adultery; but I say unto you, that everyone who look upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Having now finished the former commandment, and having extended it unto the height of self-denial, He, advancing in course and order, proceeds accordingly unto the second, herein too obeying the law.

"And yet," it may be said, *"this is not the second, but the third; for neither is the first, "Thou shall not kill."* but *"The Lord thy God is one Lord."* Wherefore it is worth inquiring too, why He did not begin with that. Why was it then? Because, had He begun from thence, He must have enlarged it also, and have brought in Himself together with His Father. But it was not as yet time to teach any such thing about Himself.

And besides, He was for a while practicing His moral doctrine only, being minded from this first, and from His miracles, to convince the hearers that He was the Son of God. Now, if He had said at once, before He had spoken or done anything, *"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, "I am the Lord thy God, and there is none other but me,"* but I say unto you, Worship me even as Him; this would have made all regard Him as a madman. For if, even after His teaching, and His so great miracles, while not even yet was He saying this openly, they called Him possessed with a devil; had He before all these attempted to say any such thing, what would they not have said? what would they not have thought?

But by keeping back at the proper season His teaching on these subjects, He was causing that the doctrine should be acceptable to the many. Wherefore now He passed it by quickly, but when He

had everywhere established it by His miracles, and by His most excellent teaching, He afterwards unveiled it in words also. For the present, however, by the manifestation of His miracles, and by the very manner of His teaching, He unfolds it on occasion, gradually and quietly. For His enacting such laws, and such corrections of laws, with authority, would lead on the attentive and understanding hearer, by little and little, unto the word of His doctrine. For it is said, *“they were astonished at Him, because He taught not as their Scribes.”*

2. For beginning from those passions, which most belong to our whole race, anger, I mean, and desire (for it is these chiefly that bear absolute sway within us, and are more natural than the rest); He with great authority, even such as became a legislator, both corrected them, and reduced them to order with all strictness. For He said not that the adulterer merely is punished; but what He had done with respect to the murderer, this He doth here also, punishing even the unchaste look: to teach thee wherein lies what He had more than the scribes. Accordingly, He says, *“He that looks upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her:”* that is, he who makes it his business to be curious about bright forms, and to hunt for elegant features, and to feast his soul with the sight, and to fasten his eyes on fair countenances. For He came to set free from all evil deeds not the body only, but the soul too before the body. Thus, because in the heart we receive the grace of the Spirit, He cleanses it out first.

“And how,” one may say, *“is it possible to be freed from desire?”* I answer, first, if we were willing, even this might be deadened, and remain inactive. In the next place, He doth not here take away desire absolutely, but that desire which springs up in men from sight. For he that is curious to behold fair countenances, is himself chiefly the enkindler of the furnace of that passion, and makes his own soul a captive, and soon proceeds also to the act. Thus we see why He said not, *“whosoever shall lust to commit adultery,”* but, *“whosoever shall look to lust.”* And in the case of anger He laid down a certain distinction, saying, *“without a cause,”* and *“for naught;”* but here not so; rather once for all He took away the desire. Yet surely both are naturally implanted, and both are set in us for our profit; both anger, and desire: the one that we may chastise the evil, and correct those who walk disorderly; the other that we may have children, and that our race may be recruited by such successions. Why then did He not make a distinction here also? Nay, very great is the distinction which, if thou attend, thou wilt see here also included. For He said not simply, *“whosoever shall desire,”* since it is possible for one to desire even when sitting in the mountains; but, *“Whosoever shall look to lust;”* that is to say, he who gathers in lust unto himself; he who, when nothing compels him, brings in the wild beast upon his thoughts when they are calm. For this comes no longer of nature, but of self-indulgence. This even the ancient Scripture corrects from the first, saying, *“Contemplate not beauty which is another’s.”* And then, test any one should say, *“what then, if I contemplate, and be not taken captive,”* He punishes the look, lest confiding in this security thou should some time fall into sin. *“What then,”* one may say, *“if I should look, and desire indeed, but do no evil?”* Even so thou art set among the adulterers. For the Lawgiver hath pronounced it, and thou must not ask any more questions. For thus looking once, twice, or thrice, thou wilt perhaps have power to refrain; but if thou art continually doing this, and kindling the furnace, thou wilt assuredly be taken; for thy station is not beyond that nature which is common to men. As we then, if we see a child holding a knife, though we do not see him hurt, beat him, and forbid his ever holding it; so God likewise takes away the unchaste look even before the act,

lest at any time you should fall in act also. For he who has once kindled the flame, even when the woman whom he has beheld is absent, is forming by himself continually images of shameful things, and from them often goes on even to the deed. For this cause Christ takes away even that embrace which is in the heart only. What now can they say, who have those virgin inmates? Why, by the tenor of this law they must be guilty of ten thousand adulteries, daily beholding them with desire. For this cause the blessed Job also laid down this law from the beginning, blocking out from himself on all sides this kind of gazing. For in truth greater is the struggle on beholding, and not possessing the object of fondness: nor is the pleasure so great which we reap from the sight, as the mischief we undergo from increasing this desire; thus making our opponent strong, and giving more scope to the devil, and no longer able to repulse him, now that we have brought him into our inmost parts, and have thrown our mind open unto him. Therefore He says, *“commit no adultery with your eyes, and thou wilt commit none with thy mind.”* For one may indeed behold in another way, such as are the looks of the chaste; wherefore he did not altogether prohibit our seeing, but that seeing which is accompanied with desire. And if He had not meant this, He would have said simply, *“He who looks on a woman.”* But now He said not thus, but, *“He who looks to lust,” “he who looks to please his sight.”* For not at all to this end did God make you eyes, that you should thereby introduce adultery, but that, beholding His creatures, you should admire the Artificer. Just then as one may feel wrath at random, so may one cast looks at random; that is, when you do it for lust. Rather, if you desire to look and find pleasure, look at your own wife, and love her continually; no law forbids that. But if you are to be curious about the beauties that belong to another, thou art injuring both thy wife by letting your eyes wander elsewhere, and her on whom you have looked, by touching her unlawfully. Since, although you have not touched her with the hand, yet you caressed her with your eyes; for which cause this also is accounted adultery, and before that great penalty draws after it no slight one of its own. For then all within him is filled with disquiet and turmoil, and great is the tempest, and most grievous the pain, and no captive nor person in chains can be worse off than a man in this state of mind. And oftentimes she who hath shot the dart is flown away, while the wound even so remains. Or rather, it is not she who hath shot the dart, but you gave yourself the fatal wound, by your unchaste look. And this I say to free modest women from the charge: since assuredly, should one deck herself out, and invite towards herself the eyes of such as fall in her way; even though she smite not him that meets with her, she incurs the utmost penalty: for she mixed the poison, she prepared the hemlock, even though she did not offer the cup. Or rather, she did also offer the cup, though no one were found to drink it.

3. *“Way then doth He not discourse with them also?”* it may be said. Because the laws which He appoints are in every case common, although He seem to address Himself unto men only. For in discoursing with the head, He makes His admonition common to the whole body also. For woman and man He knows as one living creature, and nowhere distinguishes their kind. But if you desire to hear also His rebuke for them in particular, listen to Isaiah, in many words inveighing against them, and deriding their habit, their aspect, their gait, their trailing garments, their tripping feet, their drooping necks. Hear with him the blessed Paul also, setting many laws for them; and both *about garments, and ornaments of gold*, and plaiting of hair, and luxurious living, and all other such things, vehemently rebuking this sex. And Christ too, by what follows next, obscurely

intimated this very same; for when He said, *“pluck out and cut off the eye that offends you,”* He speaks as indicating His anger against them.

4. Wherefore also He subjoins, *“If your right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from you.”* Thus, lest you should say, *“But what if she be akin to me? what if in any other way she belong to me?”* therefore He hath given these injunctions; not discoursing about our limbs; — far from it, — for nowhere doth He say that our flesh is to be blamed for things, but everywhere it is the evil mind that is accused. For it is not the eye that sees, but the mind and the thought. Often, for instance, we being wholly turned elsewhere, our eye sees not those who are present. So that the matter does not entirely depend upon its working. Again, had He been speaking of members of the body, He would not have said it of one eye, nor of the right eye only, but of both. For he who is offended by his right eye, most evidently will incur the same evil by his left also. Why then did He mention the right eye, and add the hand? To show thee that not of limbs is He speaking, but of them who are near unto us. Thus, *“If,”* says He, *“You so love any one, as though he were instead of a right eye; if you think him so profitable to you as to esteem him in the place of a hand, and he hurts thy soul; even these do thou cut off.”* And see the emphasis; for He says not, *“Withdraw from him,”* but to show the fullness of the separation, *“pluck it out,”* says He, *“and cast it from you.”* Then, forasmuch as His injunction was sharp, He shows also the gain on either hand, both from the benefits and from the evils, continuing in the metaphor. *“For it is profitable for thee,”* said He, *“that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”* For while he neither saves himself, nor fails to destroy thee too, what kindness is it for both to sink, whereas if they were separated. one at least might have been preserved? But why did Paul then, it may be said, choose to become accursed? Not on condition of gaining nothing, but with a view to the salvation of others. But in this case the mischief pertains to both. And therefore He said not, *“pluck out”* only, but also *“cast from you:”* to receive him again no more, if he continue as he is. For so shall you both deliver him from a heavier charge, and free yourself from ruin. But that you may see yet more clearly the profit of this law; let us, if you please, try what hath been said, in the case of the body itself, by way of supposition. I mean, if choice were given, and thou must either, keeping your eye, be cast into a pit and perish, or plucking it out, preserve the rest of thy body; would you not of course accept the latter? It is plain to everyone. For this were not to act as one hating the eye, but as one loving the rest of the body. This same reckoning do thou make with regard to men also and women: that if he who harms thee by his friendship should continue incurable, his being thus cut off will both free thee from all mischief, and he also will himself be delivered from the heavier charges, not having to answer for thy destruction along with his own evil deeds.

Do you see how full the law is of gentleness and tender care, and that which seems to men in general to be severity, how much love towards man it discloses?

Let them hearken to these things, who hasten to the theaters, and make themselves adulterers every day. For if the law commands to cut off him, whose connection with us tends to our hurt; what plea can they have, who, by their haunting those places, attract towards them daily those even that have not yet become known to them, and procure to themselves occasions of ruin without number? For henceforth, He not only forbids us to look unchastely, but having signified

the mischief thence ensuing, He even straitens the law as He goes on, commanding to cut off, and dissever, and cast somewhere far away. And all this He ordains, who hath uttered words beyond number about love, that in either way you might learn His providence, and how from every source He seeks your profit.

St John Chrysostom Commentary on Colossians HOMILY 8 COLOSSIANS 3:5-7

“Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things’ sake, cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience; in the which ye also walked aforesaid, when ye lived in these things.”

I KNOW that many are offended by the foregoing discourse, but what can I do? you heard what the Master enjoined. Am I to blame? what shall I do? See ye not the creditors, when debtors are obstinate, how they wear collars? Heard ye what Paul proclaimed today? “Mortify” he says, “your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” What is worse than such a covetousness? This is worse than any desire. This is still more grievous than what I was speaking of, the madness, and the silly weakness about silver. “And covetousness,” he says, “which is idolatry.” See in what the evil ends. Do not, I pray, take what I said amiss, for not by my own goodwill, nor without reason, would I have enemies; but I was wishful ye should attain to such virtue, as that I might hear of you the things I ought. So that I said it not for authority’s sake, nor of imperiousness, but out of pain and of sorrow. Forgive me, forgive! I have no wish to violate decency by discoursing upon such subjects, but I am compelled to it. Not for the sake of the sorrows of the poor do I say these things, but for your salvation; for they will perish, will perish, that have not fed Christ. For what, if thou dost feed some poor man? still so long as you live so voluptuously and luxuriously, all is to no purpose. For what is required is, not the giving much, but not too little for the property thou hast; for this is but playing at it. “Mortify therefore your members,” he says, “which are upon the earth.” What do you say? Was it not you that said, “Ye are buried; ye are buried together with Him; ye are circumcised: we have put off the body of the sins of the flesh” (c. 2:11, 12; Romans 6:4); how then again you say “Mortify”? Art thou sporting? you speak thus, as though those things were in us? There is no contradiction; but like as if one, who has clean scoured a statue that was filthy, or rather who has recast it, and displayed it bright afresh, should say that the rust was eaten off and destroyed, and yet should again recommend diligence in clearing away the rust, he does not contradict himself, for it is not that rust which he scoured off that he recommends should be cleared away, but that which grew afterwards; so it is not that former putting to death he speaks of, nor those fornications, but those which do afterwards grow. He said that this is not our life, but another, that which is in heaven. Tell me now. When he said, Mortify your members that are upon the earth, is then the earth also accused? or does he speak of the things upon the earth as themselves sins? “Fornication, uncleanness,” he says. He has passed over the actions which it is not becoming even to mention, and by “uncleanness” has expressed all together. “Passion,” he said, “evil desire.” Lo! he has expressed the whole in the class. For envy, anger, sorrow, all are “evil desire.” “And covetousness,” he says, “which is idolatry. For which things’ sake comes the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.” By many things he had been withdrawing them; by the benefits which are already given, by the evils to come from which we had been delivered, being who, and wherefore; and all those considerations, as, for instance, who we were, and in

what circumstances, and that we were delivered there from, how, and in what manner, and on what terms. These were enough to turn one away, but this one is of greater force than all; unpleasant indeed to speak of, not however to disservice, but even serviceable. "For which things' sake cometh," he says, "the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." He said not, "upon you," but, "upon the sons of disobedience." "In the which ye also walked aforetime, when ye lived in them." In order to shame them, he says, "when ye lived in them," and implying praise, as now no more so living: at that time they might.

Verse 8. *"But now put ye also away all these."* He speaks always both universally and particularly; but this is from earnestness.

Verse 8, 9. *"Anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth. Lie not one to another."* "Shameful speaking," he says, "out of your mouth," clearly intimating that it pollutes it.

Verse 9, 10. *"Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."* It is worth enquiring here, what can be the reason why he calls the corrupt life, "members," and "man," and "body," and again the virtuous life, the same. And if "the man" means "sins," how is it that he says, "with his doings"? For once he said, "the old man," showing that this is not man, but the other. The moral choice doth rather determine one than the substance, and is rather "man" than the other. For his substance casts him not into hell, nor leads him into the kingdom, but men the themselves: and we neither love nor hate any one so far as he is man, but so far as he is such or such a man. If then the substance be the body, and in either sort cannot be accountable, how doth he say that it is evil? But what is that he says, "with his doings"? He means the choice, with the acts. And he calls him "old," on purpose to show his deformity, and hideousness, and imbecility; and "new," as if to say, Do not expect that it will be with this one even as with the other, but the reverse: forever as he farther advances, he hastens not on to old age, but to a youthfulness greater than the preceding. For when he hath received a fuller knowledge, he is both counted worthy of greater things, and is in more perfect maturity, in higher vigor; and this, not from youthfulness alone, but from that "likeness" also, "after" which he is. Lo! the best life is styled a creation, after the image of Christ: for this is the meaning of, "after the image of Him that created him," for Christ too came not finally to old age, but was so beautiful as it is not even possible to tell.

Verse 11. *"Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all."*

Lo! here is a third encomium of this "man." With him, there is no difference admitted either of nation, or of rank, or of ancestry, seeing he hath nothing of externals, nor need them for all external things are such as these, "circumcision, and uncircumcision, bondman, freeman, Greek," that is, proselyte, "and Jew," from his ancestors. If thou have only this "man," thou wilt obtain the same things with the others that have him. "But Christ," he says, "is all, and in all" Christ will be all things to you, both rank, and descent, "and" Himself "in you all." Or he says another thing, to wit, that ye all are become one Christ, being His body.

Verse 12. *"Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved."* He shows the easiness of virtue, so that they might both possess it continually, and use it as the greatest ornament. The exhortation is accompanied also with praise, for then its force is greatest. For they had been before holy, but not elect; but now both "elect, and holy, and beloved." "A heart of compassion."

He said not "mercy," but with greater emphasis used the two words. And he said not, that it should be as towards brethren, but, as fathers towards children. For tell me not that he sinned, therefore he said "a heart." And he said not "compassion," lest he should place them in light estimation, but "a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

Again, he speaks after the class, and he always does it; for from kindness comes humbleness of mind, and from this, longsuffering. "Forbearing," he says, "one another," that is, passing things over. And see, how he has shown it to be nothing, by calling it a "complaint," and saying, "even as Christ forgave you." Great is the example! and thus he always does; he exhorts them after Christ. "Complaint," he calls it. In these words indeed he showed it to be a petty matter; but when he has set before us the example, he has persuaded us that even if we had serious charges to bring, we ought to forgive. For the expression, "Even as Christ," signifies this, and not this only, but also with all the heart; and not this alone, but that they ought even to love. For Christ being brought into the midst, brings in all these things, both that even if the matters be great, and even if we have not been the first to injure, even if we be of great, they of small account, even if they are sure to insult us afterwards, we ought to lay down our lives for them, (for the words, "even as," demand this;) and that not even at death only ought one to stop, but if possible, to go on even after death.

Verse 14. *"And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."*

Do you see that he says this? For since it is possible for one who forgives, not to love; yea, he says, you must love him too, and he points out a way whereby it becomes possible to forgive. For it is possible for one to be kind, and meek, and humble minded, and longsuffering, and yet not affectionate. And therefore, he said at the first, "A heart of compassion," both love and pity. "And above all these things, love, which is the bond of perfectness." Now what he wishes to say is this; that there is no profit in those things, for all those things fall asunder, except they be done with love; this it is which clenches them all together; whatsoever good thing it be thou mentions, if love be away, it is nothing, it melts away. And it is as in a ship, even though her rigging be large, yet if there be no girding ropes, it is of no service; and in an house, if there be no tie beams, it is the same; and in a body, though the bones be large, if there be no ligaments, they are of no service. For whatsoever good deeds any may have, all do vanish away, if love be not there. He said not that it is the summit, but what is greater, "the bond"; this is more necessary than the other. For "summit" indeed is an intensity of perfectness, but "bond" is the holding fast together of those things which produce the perfectness; it is, as it were, the root.

Verse 15. *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful."*

"The peace of God." This is that which is fixed and steadfast. If on man's account indeed thou hast peace, it quickly comes to dissolution, but if on God's account, never. Although he had spoken of love universally, yet again he comes to the particular. For there is a love too which is immoderate; for instance, when out of much love one makes accusations without reason, and is engaged in contentions, and contracts aversions. Not this, says he, not this do I desire; not overdoing things, but as God made peace with you, so do ye also make it. How made He peace? Of His own will, not having received anything of you. What is this? "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." If two

thoughts are fighting together, set not anger, set not spitefulness to hold the prize, but peace; for instance, suppose one to have been insulted unjustly; of the insult are born two thoughts, the one bidding him to revenge, the other to endure; and these wrestle with one another: if the Peace of God stand forward as umpire, it bestows the prize on that which bids endure, and puts the other to shame. How? by persuading him that God is Peace, that He hath made peace with us. Not without reason he shows the great struggle there is in the matter. Let not anger, he says, act as umpire, let not contentiousness, let not human peace, for human peace cometh of avenging, of suffering no dreadful ill. But not this do I intend, he says, but that which He Himself left. He hath represented an arena within, in the thoughts, and a contest, and a wrestling, and an umpire. Then again, exhortation, "to the which ye were called," he says, that is, for the which ye were called. He has reminded them of how many good things peace is the cause; on account of this He called thee, for this He called thee, so as to receive a worthy prize. For wherefore made He us "one body"? Was it not that she might rule? Was it not that we might have occasion of being at peace? Wherefore are we all one body? and now are we one body? Because of peace we are one body, and because we are one body, we are at peace. But why said he not, "Let the peace of God be victorious," but "be umpire"? He made her the more honorable. He would not have the evil thought to come to wrestle with her, but to stand below. And the very name "prize" cheered the hearer. For if she have given the prize to the good thought, however impudently the other behave, it is thereafter of no use. And besides, the other being aware that, perform what feats he might, he should not receive the prize; however he might puff, and attempt still more vehement onsets, would desist as laboring without profit. And he well added, "And be ye thankful." For this is to be thankful, and very effectively, to deal with his fellow-servants as God doth with himself, to submit himself to the Master, to obey; to express his gratitude for all things, even though one insult him, or beat him. For in truth he that confesses thanks due to God for what he suffers, will not revenge himself on him that has done him wrong, since he at least that takes revenge, acknowledges no gratitude. But let not us follow him (that exacted) the hundred pence, lest we hear, "Thou wicked servant," for nothing is worse than this ingratitude. So that they who revenge are ungrateful. But why did he begin his list with fornication? For having said, "Mortify your members which are upon the earth" (c. 3:5), he immediately says, "fornication"; and so he does almost everywhere. Because this passion hath the greatest sway. For even when writing his Epistle to the Thessalonians he did the same. (1 Thessalonians 4:3.) And what wonder? since to Timothy even he says, "Keep thyself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22); and again elsewhere, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification," without which "no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14.) "Put to death," he says, "your members." You know of what sort that is which is dead, namely, hated, loathed, dropping to decay. If thou put anything to death, it doth not when dead continue dead, but presently is corrupted, like the body. Extinguish then the heat; and nothing that is dead will continue. He shows one having the same thing in hand, which Christ wrought in the Layer; therefore also he calls them "members," as though introducing some champion, thus advancing his discourse to greater emphasis. And he well said, "Which are upon the earth," for here they continue, and here they are corrupted, far rather than these our members. So that not so truly is the body of the earth, as sin is earthly, for the former indeed appears even beautiful at times, but those members never. And those members lust after all things that are upon the earth. If the eye be such, it sees not the things in the heavens; if the ear, if the hand, if you mention any other

member whatsoever. The eye sees bodies, and beauties, and riches; these are the things of earth, with these it is delighted: the ear with soft strains, and harp, and pipe, and filthy talking; these are things which are concerned with earth. When therefore he has placed his hearers above, near the throne, he then says, "Mortify your members which are upon the earth." For it is not possible to stand above with these members; for there is nothing there for them to work upon. And this clay is worse than that, for that clay indeed becomes gold, "for this corruptible," he says, "must put on incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:53), but this clay can never be retempered more. So that these members are rather "upon the earth" than those. Therefore he said not, "of the earth," but, "which are upon the earth," for it is possible that these should not be upon the earth. For it is necessary that these should be "upon the earth," but that those should, is not necessary. For when the ear hears nothing of what is here uttered, but only in the heavens, when the eye sees nothing of what is here, but only what is above, it is not "upon the earth"; when the mouth speaks nothing of the things here, it is not "upon the earth"; when the hand doeth no evil thing — these are not of things "upon the earth," but of those in the heavens. So Christ also says, "If thy right eye causes you to stumble," that is, if you look unchastely, "cut it out" (Matthew 5:29), that is, your evil thought. And he (Paul) seems to me to speak of "fornication, uncleanness, passion, desire" as the same, namely fornication: by means of all these expressions drawing us away from that thing. For in truth this is "a passion"; and like as the body is subject to any affection, either to fever or to wounds, so also is it with this. And he said not Restrain, but "Mortify" (put to death), so that they never rise up more, and "put them away." That which is dead, we put away; for instance, if there be callosities in the body, their body is dead, and we put it away. Now, if thou cut into that which is quick, it produces pain, but if into that which is dead, we are not even sensible of it. So, in truth, is it with the passions; they make the soul unclean; they make the soul, which is immortal, passable. How covetousness is said to be idolatry, we have oftentimes explained. For the things which do most of all Lord it over the human race, are these, covetousness, and unchasteness, and evil desire. "For which things' sake comes," he says, "the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." Sons of disobedience, he calls them, to deprive them of excuse, and to show that it was because they would not be obedient, that they were in that condition. "In the which ye also," he says, "walked aforetime," and (afterward) became obedient. He points them out as still in them, and praises them, saying, "But now do ye also put away all these, anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking." But against others he advances his discourse. Under the head of "passion and railing" he means reviling, just as under "wrath" he means wickedness. And in another place, to shame them, he says, "for we are members one of another." (Ephesians 4:25.) He makes them out to be as it were manufacturers of men; casting away this one, and receiving that. He spoke of a man's "members" (v. 5); here he says, "all." He spoke of his heart, wrath, mouth, blasphemy, eyes, fornication, covetousness, hands and feet, lying, the understanding itself, and the old mind. One royal form it hath, that, namely, of Christ. They whom he has in view, appear to me rather to be of the Gentiles. For like as earth, being but sand, even though one part be greater, another less, losing its own previous form, doth afterwards become gold; and like as wool, of whatever kind it be, receives another aspect, and hides its former one: so truly is it also with the faithful. "Forbearing," he says, "one another"; he shows what is just. you for-bear him, and he thee; and so he says in the Epistle to the Galatians, "Bear ye one another's burdens." (Galatians 6:2.) "And be ye thankful," he says. For this is what he everywhere especially seeks; the

chief of good things. Give we thanks then in all things; whatever may have happened; for this is thankfulness. For to do so in prosperity indeed, is no great thing, for the nature of the circumstances of itself impels one thereto; but when being in extremities we give thanks, then it is admirable. For when, in circumstances under which others blaspheme, and exclaim discontentedly, we give thanks, see how great philosophy is here. First, thou hast rejoiced God; next, you have shamed the devil; thirdly, thou hast even made that which has happened to be nothing; for all at once, you both give thanks, and God cuts short the pain, and the devil departs. For if you have exclaimed discontentedly, he, as having succeeded to his wish, stand close by you, and God, as being blasphemed, leave you, and thy calamity is heightened; but if thou have given thanks, he, as gaining naught, departs; and God, as being honored, requites you with greater honor. And it is not possible, that a man, who gives thanks for his evils should be sensible of them. For his soul rejoices, as doing what is right; forthwith his conscience is bright, it exults in its own commendation; and that soul which is bright, cannot possibly be sad of countenance. But in the other case, along with the misfortune, conscience also assails him with her lash; whilst in this she crowns, and proclaims him.

Nothing is holier than that tongue, which in evils give thanks to God; truly in no respect doth it fall short of that of martyrs; both are alike crowned, both this, and they. For over this one also stands the executioner to force it to deny God, by blasphemy; the devil stands over it, torturing it with executioner thoughts, darkening it with despondencies. If then one bear his grief, and give thanks, he has gained a crown of martyrdom. For instance, is her little child sick, and doth she give God thanks? this is a crown to her. What torture so bad that despondency is not worse? still it does not force her to vent forth a bitter word. It dies: again she hath given thanks. She hath become the daughter of Abraham. For if she sacrificed not with her own hand, yet was she pleased with the sacrifice, which is the same; she felt no indignation when the gift was taken away.

Again, is her child sick? She has made no amulets. It is counted to her as martyrdom, for she sacrificed her son in her resolve. For what, even though those things are unavailing, and a mere cheat and mockery, still there were nevertheless those who persuaded her that they do avail. and she chose rather to see her child dead, than to put up with idolatry. As then she is a martyr, whether it be in her own case, or in her son's, that she hath thus acted; or in her husband's, or in any other's of her dearest; so is that other one an idolatress. For it is evident that she would have done sacrifice, had it been allowed her to do sacrifice; yea, rather, she hath even now performed the act of sacrifice. For these amulets, though they who make money by them are forever rationalizing about them, and saying, "we call upon God, and do nothing extraordinary," and the like; and "the old woman is a Christian," says he, "and one of the faithful"; the thing is idolatry. Are you one of the faithful? sign the Cross; say, this I have for my only weapon; this for my remedy; and other I know none. Tell me, if a physician should come to one, and, neglecting the remedies belonging to his art, should use incantation, should we call that man a physician? By no means: for we see not the medicines of the healing art; so neither, in this case, do we see those of Christianity. Other women again tie about them the names of rivers, and venture numberless things of like nature. Lo, I say, and forewarn you all, that if any be detected, I will not spare them again, whether they have made amulet, or incantation, or any other thing of such an art as this. What then, says one, is the child to die? If he have lived through this means, he did then die, but if he have died without this, he then lived. But now, if you see him attaching himself to harlots, you

wish him buried, and say, "why, what good is it for him to live?" but when you see him in peril of his salvation, do you wish to see him live? did you not Hear Christ saying, "He that loses his life, shall find it; and he that finds it, shall lose it"? (Matthew 16:25.) Do you Believe these sayings, or do they seem to you fables? Tell me now, should one say, "Take him away to an idol temple, and he will live"; would you endure it? No! she replies. Why? "Because," she says, "he urges me to commit idolatry; but here, there is no idolatry, but simple incantation:" this is the device of Satan, this is that wiliness of the devil to cloak over the deceit, and to give the deleterious drug in honey. After he found that he could not prevail with you in the other way, he hath gone this way about, to stitched charms, and old wives' fables; and the Cross indeed is dishonored, and these charms preferred before it. Christ is cast out, and a drunken and silly old woman is brought in. That mystery of ours is trodden under foot, and the imposture of the devil dances. Wherefore then, says one, does not God reprove the aid from such sources? He has many times reprov'd, and yet has not persuaded you; He now leaves you to your error, for It says, "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind." (Romans 1:28.) These things, moreover, not even a Greek who has understanding could endure. A certain demagogue in Athens is reported once to have hung these things about him: when a philosopher who was his instructor, on beholding them, rebuked him, expostulated, satirized, made sport of him. For in so wretched a plight are we, as even to believe in these things!

Why, says one, are there not now those who raise the dead, and perform cures? Yes, then, why, I say: why are there not now those who have a contempt for this present life? Do we serve God for hire? When man's nature was weaker, when the Faith had to be planted, there were even many such; but now he would not have us to hang upon these signs, but to be ready for death. Why then do you cling to the present life? why do you look not on the future? and for the sake of this indeed canst bear even to commit idolatry, but for the other not so much as to restrain sadness? For this cause it is that there are none such now; because that (future) life hath seemed to us honorless, seeing that for its sake we do nothing, whilst for this there is nothing we refuse to undergo. And why too that other farce, ashes, and soot, and salt? and the old woman again brought in? A farce truly, and a shame! And then, "an eye," say they, "hath caught the child." Where will these satanical doings end? How will not the Greeks laugh? how will they not gibe when we say unto them, "Great is the virtue of the Cross"; how will they be won, when they see us having recourse to those things, which themselves laugh to scorn? Was it for this that God gave physicians and medicines? What then? Suppose they do not cure him, but the child depart? Whither will he depart? tell me, miserable and wretched one! Will he depart to the demons? Will he depart to some tyrant? Will he not depart to heaven? Will he not depart to his own Lord? Why then will you grieve? why do you weep? why do you mourn? why do you love your infant more than your Lord? Is it not through Him that you have this also? Why are you ungrateful? Do you love the gift more than the Giver? "But I am weak," she replies, "and cannot bear the fear of God." Well, if in bodily evils the greater covers the less, much rather in the soul, fear destroyed fear, and sorrow, sorrow. Was the child beautiful? But be it what it may, not more beautiful is he than Isaac. and he too was an only one. Was it born in your old age? So too was he. But is it fair? Well. however fair it may be, it is not lovelier than Moses (Acts 7:20), who drew even barbarian eyes unto a tender love of him, and this too at a time of life when beauty is not yet disclosed; and yet this beloved thing did the parents cast into the river. You indeed both see it laid out, and deliver it

to the burying, and go to its monument; but they did not so much as know whether it would be food for fishes, or for dogs, or for other beasts that prey in the sea; and this they did, knowing as yet nothing of the Kingdom, nor of the Resurrection. But suppose it is not an only child; but that after thou hast lost many, this also hath departed. But not so sudden is thy calamity as was Job's, and (his was) of sadder aspect? It is not when a roof has fallen in, it is not as they are feasting the while, it is not following on the tidings of other calamities.

But was it beloved by thee? But not more so than Joseph, the devoured of wild beasts; but still the father bore the calamity, and that which followed it, and the next to that. He wept; but acted not with impiety; he mourned, but he uttered not discontent, but stayed at those words, saying, "Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? all these things are against me." (Genesis 42:36.) Do you See how the constraint of famine prevailed with him to be regardless of his children? and doth not the fear of God prevail with thee as much as famine? Weep: I do not forbid thee: but aught blasphemous neither say nor do. Be your child what he may, he is not like Abel; and yet naught of this kind did Adam say; although that calamity was a sore one, that his brother should have killed him. But I am reminded of others also that have killed their brothers; when, for instance, Absalom killed Amnon the eldest born (2 Samuel 13), and King David loved his child, and sat indeed in sackcloth and ashes, but he neither brought soothsayers, nor enchanters, (although there were such then, as Saul shows,) but he made supplication to God. So do you likewise: as that just man did, so do thou also; the same words you say, when your child is dead, "I shall go to him, but he will not come to me." (2 Samuel 12:23.) This is true wisdom, this is affection. However much you may love your child, thou wilt not love so much as he did then. For even though his child were born of adultery, yet that blessed man's love of the mother was at its height, and ye know that the offspring shares the love of the parents. And so great was his love toward it, that he even wished it to live, though it would be his own accuser, but still he gave thanks to God. What, do you think, did Rebecca suffer, when his brother threatened Jacob, and she grieved not her husband, but bade him send her son away? (Genesis 27:46; 28:1.) When thou hast suffered any calamity, think on what is worse than it; and thou wilt have a sufficient consolation; and consider with thyself, what if he had died in battle? what if in fire? And whatsoever our sufferings may be, let us think upon things yet more fearful, and we shall have comfort sufficient, and let us ever look around us on those who have undergone more terrible things, and if we ourselves have ever suffered heavier calamities. So doth Paul also exhort us; as when he saith, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4): and again, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear." (1 Corinthians 10:13.) Be then our sufferings what they may, let us look round on what is worse; (for we shall find such,) and thus shall we be thankful. And above all, let us give thanks for all things continually; for so, both these things will be eased, and we shall live to the glory of God, and obtain the promised good things, whereunto may all we attain, through the grace and love toward man, etc.

REFLECTION:

The seventh commandment might be very confusing to young believers and difficult to teach all what it means. It should be an occasion to teach the basis for this commandment as sanctity of the

body and appropriate dressing in and outside the church. In this way they would be prepared for the more comprehensive understanding of it in the following years. The eighth through the tenth commandments can be explained from the Sermon on the mount.

PRAYER:

Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life. The proud have me in great derision, Yet I do not turn aside from Your law. I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD, And have comforted myself. Indignation has taken hold of me Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law. Your statutes have been my songs In the house of my pilgrimage. I remember Your name in the night, O LORD, And I keep Your law. This has become mine, Because I kept Your precepts. *Psalm 118 -g*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Ten Themo:

+Let my cry come before You O Lord, give me understanding according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to **Your word**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+My lips shall overflow with praise, when You have taught me **Your statutes**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ My tongue shall speak of Your words for all Your **commandments** are righteous. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let Your hand help me for I have chosen **Your precepts**. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have longed for Your salvation O Lord, and **Your Law** is my delight. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let **Your judgments** help me. Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

+ I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant for I do not forget **Your commandments**.
Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind.

VOCABULARY:

Bear false witness, thresh, vineyard,

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	God is Truth
Liturgical:	Confession
Moral:	Contentment
Spiritual:	Prayer readiness

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. And what are those things that when we do them, they would separate us from Him and saddens His heart. He told us of the 10 wrong things that can really hurt the relationship with our Father and hurt us too. We learned that they are called the ten commandments and the God gave them written on two tablets of stone to Moses on the Holy mountain. Today we study the last four commandments 7, 8, 9 and 10

INTRODUCTION:

Materials: Several pictures of young saints (St. Abanoub, St. Wannis, and St. Mohrayel)

Start by showing the kids all the pictures of the saints and ask them what do they notice about the way they are dressed? Tell them to look very carefully and spend a long time looking at all the pictures.

The last 4 commandments are: You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, and you shall not covet (want something that your friend has and you do not need).

There are different forms of stealing: stealing material objects, cheating on a test, copying homework, being nosy (means putting yourself in someone else's business without invitation). We

should not do any of these things. Have you ever had something stolen from you? How did you feel? How do you think people feel when something is stolen from them?

Bear false witness means lying, and all forms of lying: forgery (signing your parents' name on letters), hiding the truth when it needs to be revealed, saying the wrong thing about others out of hate.

The last commandment - you shouldn't covet – means that we should be satisfied with what we have and stop comparing ourselves to other kids, because they have a “better house, better game, better toy.” We should be thankful. If we are not satisfied, we will always be miserable and unhappy. When we are satisfied, it means that we have different gifts. Not all the gifts are material gifts- God gives inner wisdom, beauty and light.

Try to remember all 4 of these because we are going to hear a story now and you will need to find all 4 of these commandments in the story.

LESSON BODY:

If the kids are having a hard time coming up with the desired answer, ask them if any of the saints are dressed in not a very good way? Are any of the girls wearing very tight clothes or have their shoulders showing? Are any of the boys wearing anything that reveals a part of their body? No! of course not. They are wearing very beautiful clothing that covers them.

So, what does this mean? It means that they **respect** their bodies. They care very much to be dressed in a decent, nice way.

They are God's family, and we are God's family. This means that we should also not dress any differently.

Children of God respect their bodies *and* respect the bodies of others. How do we respect our body? By dressing in a **modest** way, in a decent way: girls should not wear tight pants, tight shirts, clothes that reveal the thighs and/or the shoulders, boys should not wear tight shirts, tight pants, clothes that reveal the thighs and the chest.

All around us on TV and in magazines people dress in a very inappropriate way. You see girls and boys (teenagers and older) almost naked, showing things that should not be shown to anyone except their parents. This is awful! It means that they have no **respect** for themselves. They do not value their own selves. Can you imagine that? It's horrible. If you had something new, like a new toy or a new stuffed animal or a Nintendo DS, or something that you loved – would you run around with it let everyone touch it or try to play with it and maybe ruin it?! Of course not! And we are talking about material things now, not a human beings' body. What do we have that is

more precious than the gift of ourselves, our life. This should be preserved and kept covered from others, and kept safe.

So, we should wear modest clothes. But this is not the only thing that needs modesty. We need to also have modesty of the eye. What does this mean? It means that we should avoid looking at bad things on TV or in magazines, etc... We also need modesty of the ear – not listening to bad things (swear words, inappropriate joking, filthy language, etc...). Modesty of the hands: we should not reach out our hands to hit people or grab something.

Something else that is very important that we need to talk about –you should never allow anyone to touch you inappropriately, especially strangers. Never.

Our bodies are the body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit

The Paten and the chalice:

How do you feel if a regular person came to the church and went directly to the altar and took the cup and the paten (where abouts put the body and blood of our Lord) and started to use them to eat his dinner and drink his soda in them. Would you be ok with that?

And where does the body and the blood go from the paten and the chalice? our bodies are more holy than the paten and the chalice and we need to respect and protect our body by appropriate cloths and care.

My Body is Holy because I carry Christ since my baptism and it is the Temple of the Holy Spirit of God that lives in me.

We sanctify our bodies by fasting, prayer, reading the bible and above all by taking communion

Let's hear a story about how many horrible things can happen when people do not obey these 3 commandments.

King Ahab and Naboth (1 Kings 21:1-16):

Once there was a man who was used to getting everything he wanted. His name was King Ahab. Yes, he was a king but instead of being a good and kind king who helped the people of his kingdom, he used his position to make himself richer and more powerful. Everything was about *him*. He didn't care if he hurt people to get what he wanted, he didn't care if he went against what God said. His wife the queen, her name was Jezebel, was even more evil than he was and she helped him to do wrong things, as we will see from this story.

One day King Ahab was walking outside of his palace, in the place where his servants used to **thresh** the wheat, and as he looked over his shoulder, he noticed a very beautiful **vineyard** that belonged to his neighbor, Naboth. This was not the first time that he had seen this very good land but for some reason, when he saw it this time, he wanted it. Even though he had a lot of other

land and a lot of other vineyards, he wanted what his neighbor had. He immediately went to go find his neighbor, Naboth, to talk to him about giving him the vineyard. Now Naboth was a very different kind of man than the king. He was kind, he was honest, he was hard-working, and he was courageous. He knew the king could not be trusted but he was not afraid of him. So when he saw the king coming towards him, he told himself, "Naboth, get ready now, here comes the king. I wonder what he wants? It can't be anything good, that's for sure." (As you can see, his subjects knew that the king did evil things and they were wary of him. At least, the good-hearted ones were). As soon as the king came to where Naboth was, he said to him in a rough, hard voice, "Give me your vineyard and it will be my garden for herbs, because it is near my house. In return, I will give you a better vineyard; or if you would prefer I will give you money for it instead, and it will be *my* garden." There was no "How are you?" or "How is your family doing?" or even, "Are you *interested* in selling your vineyard?" The king expected that Naboth would just do for him whatever he wanted and what he wanted was his vineyard. (Let's see if we can keep track of all the things that King Ahab will be doing wrong in this story; I will give you a hint, I have already said one of them).

Naboth, who was very brave, answered the king and said, "No, that will not work. God forbid that I would give the inheritance of my family to you." This vineyard had been in Naboth's family for generations and it was very important to his family. He couldn't just give it to the king. So when the king heard Naboth's answer, he left feeling very depressed. He was so miserable that when he went home, he lay down on his bed, covered his face, and refused to eat any food. (He was acting like a big baby). Coveting other's things make us very unhappy. Coveting leads to jealousy, envy and even murder.

When the queen, Jezebel, came in and saw her husband in this state, she asked him what was wrong, and King Ahab told her all about how Naboth would not give him his vineyard. The queen stood up very straight and tall and fierce looking. "Are you not a king?!" She shouted. "Do you not have power and authority over all of Israel?! Get up and eat and be yourself. I will get you Naboth's vineyard."

Now, what do you think her evil plan was? I will tell you: she wrote a letter as if it was from King Ahab, announcing to certain people of Naboth's city that there would be a fast and that they should take Naboth and seat him in a much honored place among the people, so that everyone would be looking at him. This seems nice, right? *But* she then instructed them to get two men, **scoundrels**, to make up horrible lies about Naboth and say that they had heard him saying very bad things about God and about the king. Why did she tell them to do this? Because in their country, the punishment for this kind of crime was death. So after the people would hear from the two liars that Naboth had said these things, even though he did not, what would they have to do? Kill him. And this is exactly what happened. The queen Jezebel had Naboth killed and she then

came and told her husband that he was free to take Naboth's vineyard! And he just took it, like that.

What do you think of this story? How many things did this king and queen do wrong in the sight of God? (see how many the kids can find) 1. The king **coveted** what his neighbor had, 2. The king and the queen lied, which can also be called "bearing false witness." 3. They killed, 4. They stole. And they did all of this just to get a piece of land.

One sin leads to another. What was the king's first sin in this story? Who noticed? *He was not satisfied with everything he had.* He went against the commandment: You shall not covet. Because he was not satisfied, he was miserable! He couldn't even eat! God must have blessed him with so much, he was king, and yet he was not content, he was not thankful. And this *seemingly* little sin led to murder.

God our Father has commanded us not to do these things: covet, lie, kill, steal, because when people do these things it hurts other people very much. And we do not have the right to hurt one another's feelings or say anything to put them down.

God wants us to be happy with what we have because He gives us all we need; He wants us to always tell the truth because nothing is more important than the truth. He wants us to protect people and save their lives, because this is what He does. And He asks us never to steal what is not ours.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- **Acting:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***
- ***Puppets***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. How should the children of God dress?

A. *In appropriate and modest clothing*

Q. How should girls and boys dress?

A. Girls should not wear tight pants, tight shirts, clothes that reveal the thighs and/or the shoulders, boys should not wear tight shirts, tight pants, clothes that reveal the thighs and the chest.

Q. How should we treat our body?

A. We should keep it preserved and covered from others – kept safe.

Q. What does modesty of the eye, ear, and hand mean?

A. Modesty of the Eye: We should avoid looking at bad things on TV or in magazines, etc... Modesty of the ear: we should not listen to bad things (swear words, inappropriate joking, filthy language, etc...). Modesty of the hands: we should not reach out our hands to hit people or grab something.

Q. What does it mean to “covet”?

A. To want what someone else has when we do not really need it.

Q. What does it mean to “bear false witness”?

A. To say something that is untrue, to lie.

Q. What was the first sin that King Ahab did?

A. He was not satisfied with what he had – even though he was a king!

Q. Why is God pleased when we are satisfied with what we have?

A. Because He has given us everything we need, and is ready to give us every good thing

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Exodus 20:15-17

"You shall not commit adultery

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbors..."

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss with their children the last four commandments. They should help their children understand the meaning and the consequences of inappropriate dressing, stealing, lying and coveting. Stories of ancestors, family members and friends who were honest and content might help greatly. Parents should first examine themselves for any sign of breaking of these commandments before teaching their children. Mothers might bring their children coveting other children toys and games to the light and show them the results of it in their own feelings and actions.

1. Eve looked to the tree and desired its fruit and stole it *Genesis 3*
2. Joseph honesty made everyone love him *Genesis 39*

3. Abraham refuses the gift of the king because he was content *Genesis 14*
4. Balaam coveting the money displeased God *Numbers 22*
5. Gehazi greed *2kings5: 20-27*
6. Judas was a thief *John12*

Unit II: Our Father's Commandments

Purpose: God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused mainly on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us. *"³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

16. COMMANDMENTS REVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Q. Who is Moses?

A. *God asked him to lead the people out of Egypt, God spoke to him and gave him the 10 commandments*

Q. Which mountain did God give Moses the 10 commandments on?

A. *Mount Sinai*

Q. What did Moses see on the mountain?

A. *They saw God. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of **sapphire stone**, [show the picture] and they ate and drank with Him.*

Q. How did we get the 10 commandments?

A. *God gave Moses the 10 commandments on 2 tablets on Mount Sinai and they were written by the finger of God*

Verse to remember: *" I have hidden Your word in my heart, That I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes." Psalm 119:11,12*

COMMANDMENTS 1 & 2

Q: What is the 1st Commandment?

A: *"You shall have no other gods before Me."*

Q: What does this mean?

A: *You should not love anything else more than God.*

Q: What is the 2nd Commandment?

A: *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image."*

Q: What does this mean?

A: We should not have any idols at all, we should not idolize anyone. We should not let anyone change us to become like them.

Q: What is an icon?

A: a painted picture of or Lord or the saints

Q: What is a prostration?

A: Bowing down before the Lord

Verse to remember: *"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image"* Exodus 19:3-4

COMMANDMENT 3&4

Q. What does it mean to say the Lord's name in vain?

A. To say it without meaning to call on Him; saying things like "Oh my God!" or disrespecting His name

Q. What gave St. Peter and St. John power to heal the man? Or What gave David the power to defeat Goliath?

A. Calling on the name of God

Q. How should we treat the Lord's name and the Lord's day?

A. With respect and to keep both Holy

Q. What are some things we can do on the Lord's day to keep it holy?

A. Go to church, take communion, go to Sunday school, read the Bible, visit those who are sick, spend time with our family

Verse to remember: *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain... remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy."* Exodus 20: 7, 8

COMMANDMENT # 5

Q. Who was Christ obedient to?

A. His Heavenly Father, and His earthly parents

Q. How do we honor our parents?

A. We respect and obey them

Q. What are signs of dishonoring parents?

A. using loud voice, inappropriate words, arguing and talking back. Also disobeying, talking bad about them, lying to them, ignoring them and whatever they ask from us.

Q. Which saint was a good role model of obedience? Who did he listen to?

A. St John the Short; the head monk – he didn't even finish writing what he was writing when he was called and he watered a dry, plain stick in the ground for years

Q. What are ways we need to be obedient?

A. Working hard in school, coming when we are called, doing what we are told, and helping with our parents' work in the house and yard.

Verse to remember: *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you." Exodus 19:12*

COMMANDMENT #6

Q. What does the 6th commandment, "you shall not murder," mean?

A. To kill somebody on the inside

Q. What are ways that we can hurt others and that we should take care not to do?

A. Hurting their feelings, talking badly about them, insulting them, being angry at them without a good reason

Q. What is a "good reason" for being angry at someone?

A. To be angry when someone is doing something to hurt themselves – when they are doing something wrong (a sin)

Q. What did we see in the story of St. Makarios and the pagan priest?

A. How God's love can touch someone and change their lives

Verse to remember: *"You shall not murder." Exodus 20:13*

COMMANDMENTS 7,8,9 AND 10

Q. How should the children of God dress?

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Q. How should girls and boys dress?

A. Girls should not wear tight pants, tight shirts, clothes that reveal the thighs and/or the shoulders, boys should not wear tight shirts, tight pants, clothes that reveal the thighs and the chest.

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Q. What was the first sin that King Ahab did?

A. *He was not satisfied with what he had – even though he was a king!*

Q. Why is God pleased when we are satisfied with what we have?

A. *Because He has given us everything we need, and is ready to give us every good thing*

Verse to remember: *"You shall not commit adultery You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbors..."* Exodus 20:15-17



We Are Children of God

UNIT III: THE JOURNEY OF HOLY LENT AND PASCHA (5 LESSONS)

Purpose: Through baptism, we die as children of the world and rise again as children of our Heavenly Father. Through the Eucharist, we partake of Christ's holy Body and Blood and share in His Sonship. This unit takes us on the journey of the Holy Lent, teaching us about the Father's unconditional love and acceptance, as well as the importance of relying on our Father for our needs. The lessons of this unit are designed to affirm our identity as children of the Father. As we embark on the journey of the Lent, we immerse ourselves in our Heavenly Father's care, and we trust that our Father will always accept us as His children. The unit also reminds us of the important Lenten theme to love and care for each other, trusting that the Father will support us and work through us. The unit concludes with a review of the ultimate sign of the Father's unconditional love and acceptance of us: the sacrifice of His Only Son.

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" Matthew

17. [Temptation Sunday](#)

18. [The Prodigal Son](#)

19. [The Samaritan Woman](#)

20. [Palm Sunday](#)

21. [Pascha Week & Unit Review](#)

Unit III: The Journey of Holy Lent and Pascha

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17. THE TEMPTATION

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 4:1-15:

"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. 3And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.' 4But Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" 5Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.' 8And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" 9Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. 10For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,' 11and, "In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 12And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It has been said, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" 13Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

"14Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all."

Matthew 4:1-11:

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' ⁴But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" ⁵Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: " He shall give His angels charge over you," and, "In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" ⁷Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" ⁸Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" ¹¹Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom: HOMILY 13 on MATTHEW 4:1 *"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil."*

THEN. When? After the descent of the Spirit, after the voice that was born from above, and said, *"This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* And what was marvelous, it was of the Holy Spirit; for this, he here said, led Him up. For since with a view to our instruction He both did and underwent all things; He endures also to be led up thither, and to wrestle against the devil: in order that each of those who are baptized, if after his baptism he have to endure greater temptations may not be troubled as if the result were unexpected, but may continue to endure all nobly, as though it were happening in the natural course of things. Yea, for therefore thou didst take up arms, not to be idle, but to fight. For this cause neither doth God hinder the temptations as they come on, first to teach thee that thou art become much stronger; next, that you may continue modest neither be exalted even by the greatness of thy gifts, the temptations having power to repress thee; moreover, in order that that wicked demon, who is for a while doubtful about thy desertion of him, by the touchstone of temptations may be well assured that thou hast utterly forsaken and fallen from him; fourthly, that you may in this way be made stronger, and better tempered than any steel; fifthly, that you may obtain a clear demonstration of the treasures entrusted to thee.

For the devil would not have assailed you, unless he had seen you brought to greater honor.

Hence, for example, from the beginning, he attacked Adam, because he saw him in the enjoyment of great dignity. For this reason he arrayed himself against Job, because he saw him crowned and proclaimed by the God of all. How then said He, *"Pray that you do not enter into temptation."* For this cause he doth not show thee Jesus simply going up, but *"led up"* according to the principle of the Economy; signifying obscurely by this, that we ought not of ourselves to leap upon it, but being dragged thereto, to stand manfully.

And see whither the Spirit led Him up, when He had taken Him; not into a city and forum, but into a wilderness. That is, He being minded to attract the devil, gives him a handle not only by His hunger, but also by the place. For, then most especially the devil assail, when he sees men left alone, and by themselves. Thus did he also set upon the woman in the beginning, having caught her alone, and found her apart from her husband. Just as when he sees us with others and banded together, he is not equally confident, and makes no attack. Wherefore we have the greatest need on this very account to be flocking together continually, that we may not be open to the devil's attacks.

2. Having then found Him in the wilderness, and in a pathless wilderness (for that the wilderness was such, Mark hath declared, saying, that He *"was with the wild beasts"*), behold with how much craft he draws near, and wickedness; and for what sort of opportunity he watches. For not in his fast, but in his hunger he approaches Him; to instruct thee how great a good fasting is, and how it is a most powerful shield against the devil, and that after the font, men should give themselves up, not to luxury and drunkenness, and a full table, but to fasting. For, for this cause even He fasted, not as needing it Himself, but to instruct us.

Thus, since our sins before the font were brought in by serving the belly: much as if any one who had made a sick man whole were to forbid his doing those things, from which the distemper arose; so we **see here likewise that He Himself after the font brought in fasting.** For indeed both Adam by the incontinence of the belly was cast out of paradise; and the flood in Noah's time, this produced; and this brought down the thunders on Sodom. For although there was also a charge of whoredom, nevertheless from this grew the root of each of those punishments; which **Ezekiel also signified when he said, "But this was the iniquity of Sodom, that she waxed wanton in pride and in fullness of bread, and in abundance of luxury."** Thus the Jews also perpetrated the greatest wickedness, being driven upon transgression by their drunkenness and delicacy.

On this account then even He too fasts forty days, pointing out to us the medicines of our salvation; yet proceeds no further, lest on the other hand, through the exceeding greatness of the miracle the truth of His Economy should be discredited. For as it is, this cannot be, seeing that both Moses and Elias, anticipating Him, could advance to so great a length of time, strengthened by the power of God. And if He had proceeded farther, from this among other things His assumption of our flesh would have seemed incredible to many. Having then fasted forty days and as many nights, *"He was afterwards an hungered;"* affording him a point to lay hold of and approach, that by actual conflict He might show how to prevail and be victorious. Just so do wrestlers also: when teaching their pupils how to prevail and overcome, they voluntarily in the lists engage with others, to afford these in the persons of their antagonists the means of seeing and learning the mode of conquest. Which same thing then also took place. For it being His will to draw him on so far, He both made His hunger known to him, and awaited his approach, and as He waited for him, so He dashed him to earth, once, twice, and three times, with such ease as became Him.

3. But that we may not, by hurrying over these victories, mar your profit, let us begin from the first assault, and examine each with exact care. Thus, after He was an hungered, it is said, *"The tempter came, and said unto Him, If Thou be Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* **For, because he had heard a voice born from above, and saying, "This is My beloved Son;" and had heard also John bearing so large witness concerning Him, and after that saw Him an hungered;**

he was thenceforth in perplexity, and neither could believe that He was a mere man, because of the things spoken concerning Him; nor on the other hand receive it that He was Son of God, seeing Him as he did in hunger.

Whence being in perplexity he utters ambiguous sounds. **And much as when coming to Adam at the beginning, he feigns things that are not, that he may learn the things that are;** even so here also, not knowing clearly the unutterable mystery of the Economy and who He may be that is come, he attempts to weave other nets, whereby he thought to know that which was hidden and obscure. And what said he? *“If Thou be Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”* He said not, because thou art an hungered, but, *“if Thou be Son of God;”* thinking to cheat Him with his compliments. Wherefore also he was silent touching the hunger, that he might not seem to be alleging it, and upbraiding Him. For not knowing the greatness of the Economy which was going on, he supposed this to be a reproach to Him. Wherefore flattering Him craftily, he makes mention of His dignity only. What then said Christ? To put down his pride, and to signify that there was nothing shameful in what had happened, nor unbecoming His wisdom; that which the other had passed over in silence to flatter Him, He brings forward and sets it forth, saying, *“Man shall not live by bread alone.”*

So that He begins with the necessity of the belly. But mark, I pray thee, the craft of that wicked demon, and whence he begins his wrestling, and how he doth not forget his proper art. **For by what means he cast out also the first man, and encompassed him with thousands of other evils, with the same means here likewise he weaves his deceit;** I mean, with incontinence of the belly. So too even now one may hear many foolish ones say their bad words by thousands because of the belly. But Christ, to show that the virtuous man is not compelled even by this tyranny to do anything that is unseemly, first hungers, then submits not to what is enjoined Him; teaching us to obey the devil in nothing. **Thus, because the first man did hereby both offend God, and transgress the law, as much and more doth He teach thee: — though it be no transgression which he commands, not even so to obey.** And why say I, *“transgression”*? *“Why, even though something expedient be suggested by the devils, do not thou,”* said He, *“even so give heed unto them.”* Thus, for instance, He stopped the mouths of those deals also, proclaiming Him Son of God. And Paul too again rebuked them, crying this self-same thing; and yet what they said was profitable; but he more abundantly dishonoring them, and obstructing their plot against us, drove them away even when doctrines of salvation were preached by them, closing up their mouths, and bidding them be silent. And therefore neither in this instance did He consent to what was said. But what said He? *“Man shall not live by bread alone.”*

Now His meaning is like this: *“God is able even by a word to nourish the hungry man;”* bringing him a testimony out of the ancient Scripture, and teaching us, though we hunger, yea, whatever we suffer, never to fall away from our Lord. But if a man say, *“still He should have displayed Himself;”* I would ask him, with what intent, and for what reason? **For not at all that he might believe did the other so speak, but that he might, as he thought, over-argue Him into unbelief. Since the first of mankind were in this way beguiled and over-argued by him, not putting earnest faith in God. For the contrary of what God had said he promised them, and puffed them up with vain hopes, and brought them to unbelief, and so east them out of the blessings they actually possessed.** But Christ signifies Himself not to have consented, either to him then or afterwards to the Jews his

partisans, in their demand of signs: invariably instructing us, whatever we may have power to do, yet to do nothing vainly and at random; nor even when want urges to obey the devil.

4. What then doth this accursed one? Overcome, and unable to persuade Him to do his bidding, and that when pressed by such violent hunger, he proceeds to another thing, saying, *“If Thou be Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up.”* What can the reason be, that at each temptation He adds this, *“If Thou be Son of God?”* Much the same as he did in that former case, he doth also at this time. That is, **as he then slandered God, saying, “In the day ye eat, your eyes shall be opened;” thereby intending to signify, that they were beguiled and overreached, and had received no benefit;** even so in this case also he insinuates this same thing, saying, *“in vain God hath called Thee Son, and hath beguiled Thee by His gift; for, if this be not so, afford us some dear proof that Thou art of that power.”* Then, because Christ had reasoned with him from Scripture, he also brings in a testimony of the prophet. How then does Christ? He is not indignant, nor provoked, but with that extreme gentleness He reasons with him again from the Scriptures, saying, *“You shall not tempt the Lord thy God:”* teaching us that we must overcome the devil, not by miracles, but by forbearance and long-suffering, and that we should do nothing at all for display and vainglory.

But mark thou his folly, even by the very testimony which he produced. For while the testimonies cited by the Lord were both of them spoken with exceeding fitness: his, on the other hand, were chance and random sayings, neither did he bring forward on his par that which applied to the matter in hand. For that it is written, *“He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee,”* this surely is not advice to dash and toss one’s self down headlong; and moreover, this was not so much as spoken concerning the Lord. However, this for the time He did not expose, although there was both insult in his manner of speech, and great inconsistency. For of God’s Son no man requires these things: but to cast one’s self down is the part of the devil, and of demons. Whereas God’s part is to raise up even them that are down. And if He ought to have displayed His own power, it would not have been by casting and tossing Himself down at random, but by saving others. But to cast ourselves down precipices, and into pits, pertains properly to his troop. Thus, for example, the juggler among them doth everywhere.

But Christ, even when these things are said, doth not yet reveal Himself, but as man for a while discourses with him. For the sayings, *“Man shall not live by bread alone;”* and, *“You shall not tempt the Lord thy God,”* suited one not greatly revealing Himself, but representing Himself as one of the many. But marvel thou not, if he in reasoning with Christ oftentimes turn himself about. For as pugilists, when they have received deadly blows, reel about, drenched in much blood, and blinded; even so he too, darkened by the first and the second blow, speaks at random what comes uppermost: and proceeds to his third assault.

5. *“And he lead Him up into a high mountain, and shows Him all the Kingdoms, and said, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then He said, Get you behind me, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall you serve.”*

For since he was now come to sinning against the Father, saying, that all that is the Father’s was his, and was endeavoring to make himself out to be God, as artificer of the universe; He then rebuked him: but not even then with vehemence, but simply, *“Get thee hence, Satan;”* which itself had in it something of command rather than of rebuke. For as soon as He had said to him, *“Get*

thee hence," He caused him to take to flight; since he brought not against Him any other temptations. And how said Luke, that *"he ended all temptation."* **To me it seems that in mentioning the chief of the temptations, he had spoken of all, as though the rest too were included in these. For the things that form the substance of innumerable evils are these: to be a slave to the belly, to do anything for vainglory, to be in subjection to the madness of riches** Which accordingly that accursed one considering, set last the most powerful of all, I mean the desire of more: and though originally, and from the beginning, he was travailing to come to this, yet he kept it for the last, as being of more force than the rest. For in fact this is the manner of his wrestling, to apply those things last, which seem more likely to overthrow. And this sort of thing he did with respect to Job likewise. Wherefore in this instance too, having begun with the motives which seem to be viler and weaker, he goes on to the more prevailing.

How then are we to get the better of him? In the way which Christ that taught us, by fleeing to God for refuge; and neither to be depressed in famine, as believing in God who is able to feed even with a word; nor amidst whatever good things we may receive to tempt Him who gave them, but to be content with the glory which is from above, making no account of that which is of men, and on every occasion to despise what is beyond our need. For nothing doth so make us fall under the power of the devil, as longing for more, and loving covetousness. And this we may see even by what is done now. For now also there are those who say, *"All these things will we give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship;"* who are indeed men by nature, but have become his instruments. Since at that time too he approached Him, not by himself only, but also by others. Which Luke also was declaring, when he said, that *"he departed from Him for a season;"* showing that hereafter he approached Him by his proper instruments.

"And, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." For when the assault was going on, He suffered them not to appear, that He might not thereby drive away the prey; but after He had convicted him in all points, and caused him to take to flight, then they appear: that thou also may learn, that after thy victories which are copied from His, angels will receive thee also applauding thee, and waiting as guards on thee in all things. Thus, for example, angels take Lazarus away with them, after the furnace of poverty and of famine and of all distress. **For as I have already said, Christ on this occasion exhibits many things, which we ourselves are to enjoy.**

6. Forasmuch then as all these things have been done for thee, do thou emulate and imitate His victory. And should any one approach thee of those who are that evil spirit's servants, and savor the things that be of him, upbraiding thee and saying, *"If thou art marvelous and great, remove the mountain;"* be not troubled, nor confounded, but answer with meekness, and say some such thing as thou hast heard thy Lord say: *"You shall not tempt the Lord thy God."* Or should he, offering glory and dominion, and an endless amount of wealth, enjoin thee to worship him, do thou stand again manfully. For neither did the devil deal so with the common Lord of us all only, but every day also he brings these his machinations to bear on each of His servants, not in mountains only and in wildernesses, nor by himself: but in cities likewise, in market-places, and in courts of justice, and by means of our own kindred, even men.

What then must we do? Disbelieve him altogether, and stop our ears against him, and hate him when he flatters, and when he proffers more, then so much the more shun him. Because in Eve's case also, when he was most lifting her up with hopes, then he cast her down, and did her the greatest evils. Yea, for he is an implacable enemy, and hath taken up against us such war as

excludes all treaty. And we are not so earnest for our own salvation, as he is for our ruin. Let us then shun him, not with words only, but also with works; not in mind only, but also in deed; and let us do none of the things which he approves, for so shall we do all those which God approves. Yea, for he makes also many promises, not that he may give, but that he may take. **He promises by rapine, that he may deprive us of the kingdom, and of righteousness; and sets treasures in the earth as a kind of gins or traps, that he may deprive us both of these and of the treasures in Heaven, and he would have us be rich here, that we may not be rich there. And if he should not be able by wealth to cast us out of our portion there, he comes another way, the way of poverty;** as he did with respect to Job. That is, when he saw that wealth did him no harm, he weaves his toils by poverty, expecting on that side to get the better of him. But what could be more foolish than this? Since he that hath been able to bear wealth with moderation, much more will he bear poverty with manliness; and he who desires not riches when present, neither will he seek them when absent; even as that blessed man did not, but by his poverty, on the other hand, he became still more glorious. For of his possessions that wicked demon had power indeed to deprive him, but his love toward God he not only could not take away, but made it even stronger, and when he had stripped him of all, he caused him to abound with more blessings; wherefore also he was in perplexity. For the more plagues he brought upon him, the more mighty he then saw him become. And therefore, as you know, when he had gone through all, and had thoroughly tried his metal, because he made no way, he ran to his old weapon, the woman, and assumes a mask of concern, and makes a tragical picture of his calamities in most pitiable tone, and feigns that for removal of his evil he is introducing that deadly counsel. But neither so did he prevail; nay, for his bait was perceived by that wondrous man, who with much wisdom stopped the mouth of the woman speaking at his instigation.

Just so we likewise must act: though it be a brother, a tried friend, a wife, whom you will of those nearest to us, whom he hath entered into, and so utters something not convenient, we must not receive the counsel for the person of him who so speaks, but for the deadly counsel turn away from

the speaker. Since in fact now also he doth many such things, and puts before him a mask of sympathy, and while he seems to be friendly, he is instilling his pernicious words, more grievous than poisons. Thus, as to flatter for evil is his part, so to chastise for our good, is God's.

7. Let us not then be deceived, neither let us by every mean seek after the life of ease. For "*whom the Lord love,*" it is said, "*He chasten.*" Wherefore when we enjoy prosperity, living in wickedness, then most of all should we grieve. For we ought ever to be afraid while we sin, but especially when we suffer no ill. For when God exacts our penalties by little and little, he makes our payment for these things easy to us; but when he is long-suffering for each of our negligence's, He is storing us up, if we continue in such things, unto a great punishment. Since, if for the well-doers affliction be a necessary thing, much more for them that sin.

See for instance how much long-suffering Pharaoh met with, and afterwards underwent for all most extreme punishment: in how many things Nebuchadnezzar offended, yet at the end expiated all; and the rich man, because he had suffered no great ill here, for this very cause chiefly became miserable, for that having lived in luxury in the present life, he departed to pay the penalty of all these things there, where he could not obtain anything at all to soothe his calamity. Yet for all this some are so cold and senseless, as to be always seeking only the things that are here, and uttering

those absurd sayings, *“Let me enjoy all things present for a time, and then I will consider about things out of sight: I will gratify my belly, I will be a slave to pleasures, I will make full use of the present life; give me to -day, and take tomorrow.”* Oh excess of folly! Why, wherein do they who talk so differ from goats and swine? For if the prophet permits not them to be accounted men, that *“neigh after their neighbors wife,”* who shall blame us for esteeming these to be goats and swine, and more insensible than assess, by whom those things are held uncertain, which are more evident than what we see? Why, if you believe nothing else, attend to the devils in their scourging, to them who had our hurt for their object in all their practice, both in word and deed. For you wilt not, I am sure, contradict this, that they do all to increase our security, and to do away with the fear of hell, and to breed disbelief of the tribunals in that world. Nevertheless, they that are so minded, by cryings and wailings do oftentimes proclaim the torments that are there. Whence is it then that they so speak, and utter things contrary to their own will? From no other cause, but because they are under the pressure of stronger compulsion. For they would have not been minded of their own accord to confess either that they are tormented by dead men, or that they at all suffer anything dreadful.

Wherefore now have I said this? Because evil demons confess hell, who would fain have hell disbelieved; but thou who enjoy honor so great, and hast been a partaker in unutterable mysteries, dost not so much as imitate them, but art become more hardened even than they.

8. *“But who,”* one will say, *“have come from those in hell, and have declared these things?”* Why, who hath arrived here from heaven, and told us that there is a God who created all things? And whence is it Gear that we have a soul? **For plainly, if thou art to believe the things only that are in sight, both God and angels, and mind and soul, will be matter of doubting to thee, and in this way thou wilt find all the doctrines of the truth gone.** Yet surely, if thou art willing to believe what is evident, the things invisible ought to be believed by thee, rather than those which are seen. Even though what I say be a paradox, nevertheless it is true, and among men of understanding is fully acknowledged. For whereas the eyes are often deceived, not in the things unseen only (for of those they do not so much as take cognizance), but even in those which men think they actually see, distance and atmosphere, and absence of mind, and anger, and care, and ten thousand other things impeding their accuracy; **the reasoning power of the soul on the other hand, if it receive the light of the divine Scriptures, will prove a more accurate, an unerring standard of realities.** Let us not then vainly deceive ourselves, neither in addition to the carelessness of our life, which is the offspring of such doctrines as these, heap up to ourselves, for the very doctrines themselves, a more grievous fire. For if there be no judgment, and we are not to give account of our deeds, neither shall we receive rewards for our labors. Observe which way your blasphemies tend, when ye say, that God, who is righteous, and loving, and mild, overlooks so great labors and toils. And how can this be reasonable? Why, if by nothing else, at any rate by the circumstances of thine own house, I bid thee weigh these things, and then thou wilt see the savage and inhuman beyond measure, and wilder than the very wild beasts, you would not choose at thy death to leave un-honored the servant that had been affectionate to you, but requite him both with freedom, and with a gift of money; and forasmuch as in thine own person hereafter, having departed, thou wilt be able to do him no good, thou gives charge concerning him to the future inheritors of thy substance, beseeching, exhorting, doing everything, so that he may not remain unrewarded.

So then thou, who art evil, art so kind and loving towards thy servant; and will the Infinite Goodness, that is, God, the Unspeakable Love to man, the kindness so vast: will He overlook and leave uncrowned His own servants, Peter and Paul, and James, and John, those who every day for His sake suffered hunger, were bound, were scourged, were drowned in the sea, were given up to wild beasts, were dying, were suffering so great things as we cannot so much reckon up? And whereas the Olympic judge proclaims and crowns the victor, and the master rewards the servant, and the king the soldier, and each in general him that hath done him service, with what good things he can; shall God alone, after those so great toils and labors, repay them with no good thing great or small? shall those just and pious men, who have walked in every virtue, lie in the same state with adulterers, and parricides, and manslayers, and violators of tombs? And in what way can this be reasonable? Since, if there be nothing after our departure hence, and our interests reach no further than things present, those are in the same the same. For what though hereafter, as thou say, they fare alike? yet here, the whole of their time, the wicked have been at ease, the righteous in chastisement. And this what sort of tyrant, what savage and relentless man did ever so devise, touching his own servants and subjects? Didst thou mark the exceeding greatness of the absurdity, and in what this argument issues?

Therefore if thou wilt not any other way, yet by these reasonings be instructed to rid thyself of this wicked thought, and to flee from vice, and cleave to the toils which end in virtue: and then shall thou know certainly that our concerns are not bounded by the present life. And if any one ask thee, *“Who hath come from thence and brought word what is there?”* say unto him, *“of men not one; for surely he would have been often disbelieved, as vaunting, and exaggerating the thing; but the Lord of the angels hath brought word with exactness of all those things.”* **What need then have we of any man, seeing He, that will demand account of us, cried aloud every day, that He hath both made ready a hell, and prepared a kingdom; and affords us great demonstrations of these things?** For if He were not hereafter to judge, neither would he have exacted any penalty here.

9. *“Well, but as to this very point how can it be reasonable? that of the wicked some should be punished, others not? I mean, if God be no respecter of persons, as surely He is not why can it be that of one He exacts a penalty, but another He suffers to go away unpunished? Why, this is again more inexplicable than the former.”* Yet if you are willing to hear what we say with candor, we will solve this difficulty also. What then is the solution? He neither exacts penalty of all here, lest thou should despair of the resurrection, and lose all expectation of the judgment, as though all were to give account here; nor doth He suffer all to go away unpunished, lest on the other hand thou should account all to be without His providence; but He both punishes and abstains from punishing: by those whom He punishes, signifying that in that world also He will exact a penalty of such as are unpunished here; and by those whom He doth not punish, working upon thee to believe that there is some fearful trial after our departure hence.

But if He were altogether indifferent about our former deeds, He neither would have punished any here, nor have conferred benefits. But now you see Him for thy sake stretching out the heaven, kindling the sun, founding the earth, pouting forth the sea, expanding the air, and appointing for the moon her courses, setting unchangeable laws for the seasons of the years, and all other things too performing their own courses exactly at a sign from Him. For both our nature, and that of creatures irrational, of them that creep, that walk, that fly, that swim, in marshes, in

springs, in rivers, in mountains, in forests, in houses, in the air, in plains; plants also, and seeds, and trees, both wild and cultivated, both fruitful and unfruitful; and all things in general, moved by that unwearied Hand, make provision for our life, affording to us of themselves their ministry, not for our need only, but also for our feeling of high station.

Seeing therefore order so great and fair (and yet we have not mentioned so much as the least portion thereof), dare you say, that He who for thy sake hath wrought things so many and great will overlook thee in the most critical points, and suffer thee when dead to lie with the asses and swine: and that having honored thee with so great a gift, that of godliness, whereby He hath even equaled thee with the angels, He will overlook thee after thy countless labors and toils?

And how can this be reasonable? Why, these things, if we be silent *“the stones will immediately cry out;”* so plain are they, and manifest, and more lurid than the sunbeam itself. Having then considered all these things, and having convinced our own soul, that after our departure hence, we shall both stand at the fearful judgment-seat, and give account of all that we have done, and shall bear our penalty, and submit to our sentence, if we continue in our negligence's; and shall receive crowns and unutterable blessings, if we are willing to give a little heed to ourselves; let us both stop the mouths of them who gainsay these things, and ourselves choose the way of virtue; that with due confidence departing to that tribunal, we may attain unto the good things that are promised us, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion, now and ever, world without end.

Amen.

REFLECTION:

Each time the devil tempted Christ, he challenged His sonship to the Father, saying: “If you are the Son of God...” This is the temptation we are each confronted with, especially during the Lent.

Satan also tempted Christ using those very same concerns that keep man’s heart most anxious: food, glory, and pride. Satan knows that man is anxious over what he eats, what glorious riches he can attain, and what his stature is in the world. The gospel reveals that Satan is cunning, but redundant – He tempted Christ with the same three temptations by which Eve fell in the Garden when she ate of the tree.

God warned Adam in the garden that the day he eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He will surely die. Adam instructed Eve of this command. But the serpent approached Eve questioning her confidence and trust in the sincerity of God’s intention and her identity as His beloved creation. The serpent told Eve that, contrary to what God had warned them of, Eve would not die but her eyes would be opened, “and you will be like God [or as gods], knowing good and evil.” The book of Genesis tells us what happens next: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.”(Genesis 3:6) Eve was tempted first by her stomach, then by her sight of something beautiful, and finally by her pride.

This sequence of temptations is identical to the temptations of Christ as recounted by St. Luke: 1) Knowing that Christ was hungry from His fast, Satan tells Christ that IF He is the Son of God, he should command the stone to bread. Satan sought to tempt Christ by enticing His appetite because

Eve ate of the tree when she saw that it was good for food. 2) Satan then takes Christ to a high point and **shows** Christ all the kingdoms of the world in a single moment, offering all the kingdoms “and their glory” (as in their physical beauty, such as the beauty of Egypt and its pyramids, Rome and its palaces, and Greece and its temples), if Christ were to denounce His identity and sonship to the Father and worship Satan. In this manner, Eve succumbed to temptation when she saw that the tree was “pleasant to the eyes,” as glorious riches and empires of the earth are found pleasant to the eyes of those who are not of the Kingdom of Heaven 3) The final temptation challenged Christ’s sonship again, instructing Him to jump off the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, so that all of Israel may watch Him elevate above them as “in [the angels’] hands they shall bear you up.” Unlike Christ who was truly secure in His sonship to the Father, Eve succumbed to the temptation when she saw an opportunity to elevate herself, because the tree was “desirable to make one wise.” Eve wished to appear elevated (or greater) than others and so ate from the tree, whereas Christ responded by citing the Father’s true superiority over all creation, saying “you shall not tempt the LORD your God.” St. John, in his first epistle, warns us against this temptation: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world.** And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

In all three passages – the disobedience of Eve (Genesis 3), the Temptations of Christ (Luke 4), and the letter of St. John (1 John 2) – there is an intimate connection between keeping the commandments of God and protecting our relationship and identity as sons and daughters of Christ. Adam and Eve distorted their identity when they disobeyed the command of God. As a result, they were separated from Him. St. John teaches us that the world and all that appears desirable in it is passing away, so we should not love the world because the world is not of the Father. Love of the world leads to separation from the Father and death. Love of the world consists of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; in Christ, the world ceases to find a place in our hearts.

Christ taught us how to conquer the temptations that conquered Eve– by obeying the commands of the Father (“It is written...”). Christ, as the true Son of God, was confident in His sonship to the Father; He therefore did not need to prove Himself to Satan, the prince of the world. Instead, Christ taught us to stand firm in our sonship and to trust in the protection and care of the Father, as expressed through His commands. We as humans are suffering from an identity crisis, not knowing our worth to God, and so our value as His children. When we begin to question the sincerity of our Father’s commandments, our relationship to Him is threatened and our identity shaken. The truth is that the Father loves us because we are His beloved children. All He commands and wills is for our benefit, and we should be convinced of this. Let us not be like Eve who distrusted God’s commandments, but rather like Christ, who is the divine model of a true child of God.

PRAYER:

You are the merciful God, the Savior of everybody, who was incarnated for our salvation and became the light for us who are sinners. Who fasted for us forty days and forty nights in secrecy unheard of. Who rescued us from death and gave us His holy body and honored blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Who spoke to the multitudes of His saintly disciples and honored apostles saying, 'This is the bread of life which came down from Heaven. Unlike your fathers who ate the manna in the wilderness and died, whoever eats My body and drinks My blood The Coptic Liturgy of Saint Basil will live forever, and I will raise him up on the last day.' For this we ask and entreat Your goodness O Lover of- mankind, purify our souls, bodies and spirits.

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

The Lent Gospel response:

Blessed are those who have Mercy who gives to the poor and fast and pray
 The Holy Spirit will fill their hearts The Son will show them mercy on judgment day

VOCABULARY:

Temptation, Satan

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Trust in the Father's love and care for His children
Liturgical:	The word of God
Moral:	Be thankful for who you are and what you have
Spiritual:	God's word as our spiritual weapon

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. The Journey of Lent reminds us of our true identity as children of God, and describes the Father's love, acceptance and care

throughout our lives. He is our Father, and all that He does for us is for our benefit. We should trust in His love and be careful to follow His commands. We should not become too attached to the world and our place in it, but remember to love God before all, and to love one another. The more we grow in our relationship with the Father, the more we will grow as His children in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON BODY:

The gospel on Temptation Sunday is very special because it reminds us of how the devil will try to make us doubt the Father's love. What is very nice about this story is that we can see how Christ dealt with the temptations that we will have to face. We will learn how Christ defeated the devil, and how we can too.

THE TEMPTATION ON THE MOUNT

[Read the story of the temptation on the mountain. Be sure to emphasize how **Satan** (explain who he is—someone who decided not to follow God and decided to try and make others not follow God) directed his temptation at Christ's sonship, challenging Him saying, "If you are the Son of God..."]

THE FATHER'S WORDS

Just as Christ was tempted by Satan, every child of God is also tempted by good versus evil. There will be many times when we wonder if God is really watching over us and protecting us. Sometimes a tragedy in our lives can lead us to wonder if we really are the children of God: "If God is my Father, why does He let this happen?" [Use examples of difficult times, such as a sick family member, getting a bad grade, being hurt by a friend or classmate.] Whenever you feel this way, remember how the devil asked Christ that same question when He was fasting and hungry on the mountain: If you are the Son of God, why are you so hungry?

But how did Christ answer this question? He used the words of the Bible. The Bible is the message from our Father in heaven to us, His children. Every time we feel alone or abandoned, remember that Christ Himself taught us that the Father is always with us, and loves us more than we can ever imagine. It just isn't always easy to see. That is why Christ gave us the most important tool – the words of God in the Bible. Whenever we feel tempted or alone or afraid, we should pull out our Bibles and read. By reading and learning His words, we will learn how much our Father really loves us and will be protected by Him.

The commandments of our Father are our greatest protection against temptation. They will preserve us and keep us strong and ready to face every challenge that Satan might show us. Let

me give you an example of how valuable the commandments are to us, as children of God. Do you know what squirrels eat throughout the year? Tree nuts! And we see the squirrels eat all the nuts lying around on the ground during the summer, spring, and fall seasons. But what about the winter season, when the ground is covered with so much snow, and the trees are already dry and withered? How do the squirrels find food then? How do they stay alive all winter if they can't find nuts to eat? Well, when God created the squirrels, He showed them how to prepare for the winter. He showed them that they have to collect enough nuts during the fall season to keep them in their trees so that during the winter, when the weather is harsh and the food is scarce, they will always have food to eat to keep them alive.

Like the squirrels, we too have to prepare for harsh times – for times of temptations. Christ taught us, as children of God, exactly how to do this – by learning the words of our Father. When we memorize the commandments of God, we are storing for ourselves enough food to help us during times of temptation. And when temptations do come to us (as when the squirrel faces the cold winter season), the only way we will really make it out okay is if we go back to pull out the commandments that we learned when we were young. We use these commandments that we memorized just as the squirrel uses the nuts that he stores in his tree.

TRUSTING IN OUR FATHER'S LOVE

After reading from the Bible, praying for help, and looking for advice from our parents and the Church, we should confidently face the temptation, relying on our Father's love and care. He will always protect us, and will always do what is best for us. Follow the teachings of the Church and the commandments, and trust that the Father is always caring for you; even in difficult times of disease or death, we must always have faith in the love of the Father. We rely on our Heavenly Father's promises to those who keep His commandments - He will always be with them. Faith in the Father and keeping His commandments strengthens us in times of suffering and guards us from bad thoughts. Keep the commands, have faith, and rely on God.

E.g. If you are worried about a test in school, don't consider cheating. Instead, pray to your Father for help, ask your favorite saint to be with you, prepare as best as you can, and trust that your Father will take care of you.

DO NOT TEMPT ONE ANOTHER

As children of God, we are commanded to love, and not harm, one another. We should be careful with what we say to others and how we act around others so that we don't make others jealous or cause others to feel lonely. Since we are all children of God, we should not say things to each other that will put our brothers and sisters down. If one of your brothers and sisters picks on you in your family, your parents will not be happy with them because they made you feel bad about

yourself. The same with the family of God; we are all His children and we should always show it to one another.

E.g. Sharing and Bullying: When you know that your classmate does not have something that you have, you should not tease your friend to make him jealous. Or when you are with your friends at school, you should not bully someone who is sitting alone or might not have as many friends as you do. If you do that, you may make them feel that they are not loved by God, and they will be hurt. Always remember that God the Father loves all of us as His children; we are all brothers and sisters in God's family, so we should always treat one another with love and care.

E.g. Overconfidence: Don't overestimate your ability to finish your homework in one night. Don't procrastinate. Be honest with yourself and your goals. Before you begin your homework, read and learn from the Bible, then work honestly and diligently to do your work.

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What's one benefit of going to Sunday School (just like a benefit for the squirrels of collecting acorns)?

A. So that we are prepared for times of temptation

Q. If you have something that a classmate doesn't have, should you say, 'Haha I have this but you don't?' What can you do instead?

A. Share what you have with your classmate if it's food or a toy for example.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

- Memorization of Psalm 50

Unit III: Lent Journey And Pascha

Purpose: Through baptism, we die as children of the world and rise again as children of our Heavenly Father. Through the Eucharist, we partake of Christ's holy Body and Blood and share in His Sonship. This unit takes us on the journey of the Holy Lent, teaching us about the Father's unconditional love and acceptance, as well as the importance of relying on our Father for our needs. The lessons of this unit are designed to affirm our identity as children of the Father. As we embark on the journey of the Lent, we immerse ourselves in our Heavenly Father's care, and we trust that our Father will always accept us as His children. The unit also reminds us of the important Lenten theme to love and care for each other, trusting that the Father will support us and work through us. The unit concludes with a review of the ultimate sign of the Father's unconditional love and acceptance of us: the sacrifice of His Only Son.

18. THE PRODIGAL SON

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 15

11Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. 13And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 17"But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."

20"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 22"But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry. 25"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and

sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' ²⁸"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' ³¹"And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. ³²It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."

Isaiah 61-62:5

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." ⁴ And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. ⁵ Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, And the sons of the foreigner *shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers. ⁶But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast. ⁷Instead of your shame *you shall have* double honor, And *instead of* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs. ⁸" For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they *are* the posterity *whom* the LORD has blessed." ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments, And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

CHAPTER 62

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp *that* burns. ²The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name. ³You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem In the hand of your God. ⁴You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married. ⁵For *as* a young man marries a virgin, *So* shall your sons marry you; And *as* the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, *So* shall your God rejoice over you.

CHURCH FATHERS:

H.H. Pope Shenouda III – *Return to God*, Chapter 3

What was the work of all the prophets and apostles whom God sent to the world, except to establish peace between God and man? Look at St. Paul, who says: *"we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God."* (2 Cor. 5:20). It is the Lord Jesus, then, who sends these ambassadors to us, asking us to be reconciled to Him. What a wonderful love this is! It can be quite difficult for you if you decide to go to a person to make it up. You keep wondering whether he will accept your overtures of peace or not. Here it is God who wants reconciliation and who asks for it and who sends messengers for that very purpose, through whom He works with His grace and Holy Spirit. He says to mankind, *"Come now, and let us reason together"*. (Isa. 1:18).

Not only this, but God even strives to be reconciled with those who are disobedient and stubborn, for He continues: *"All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."* (Rom. 10:21). Imagine God stretching out His hand all day long to befriend these stubborn people. The *"all day long"* means that He does not get tired of striving to reconcile sinners. It is He who looks at your heart and says: *"This is My resting place forever, Here I will dwell, for I have desired it."* (Ps. 132:14). It is He who says to your soul, which is so precious to Him, *"Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house The King will greatly desire your beauty "* (Ps. 45:10-11).

In actual fact, the reconciliation of the Lord with man, was the reason for the divine incarnation.

Saint James Al-Sarugi said, "There was a rift between God and man and since mankind was unable to restore peace and be reconciled to God, God came down to man, in order to be reconciled to him."

The reconciliation of man with God, is also the aim of the redemption. The blood of our Lord Jesus was the price of this reconciliation. The Apostle says concerning this: For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him *"and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."* (Col. 1:20). See how dear the price of your reconciliation was and how precious your soul is to God. For we *"were reconciled to God through the death of His Son."* (Rom. 5:10) *"that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them."* (2 Cor. 5:19). What part did Christ take in this reconciliation? The Apostle says: *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation... through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity..."* (Eph. 2:14-16). Christ reconciled us to the Father by putting an end to the hostility and removing the barrier which divided us from Him. **But we still sin and need to be reconciled with God every day. This is why there is the "ministry of reconciliation" which is the work of the apostles and the various orders of priests.**

St. Paul says concerning this, that God *"has given us the ministry of reconciliation"* and that he *"has committed to us the word of reconciliation"*. *"We implore you on Christ's behalf..Be reconciled to God"* (2 Cor. 5:18, 19-20). All the pastoral work of the priests, preachers and teachers is this "ministry of reconciliation" in pursuit of peace between God and man and for the most part, this is also the work of the holy sacraments.

God wants to be reconciled to you by every possible means. He says to you: "This rift between us has gone on for long enough, let us begin a new relationship, however much you run away from me, even if you go to a distant country, or hide behind the trees, or take your heart far away from me, I shall still send messengers and prophets for the sake of your reconciliation. I shall send you ministers and shall send you my blessing. I shall provide the spiritual means and prepare the opportunities." What else will God do?

God is also ready to send difficulties, either to us or to our loved ones, if need be, for the sake of our reconciliation. Perhaps a person will not come to God out of love, but will come after a blow of some sort, like Joseph's brothers, who were led to reconciliation through adversity. (*Gen. 44*). The Lord says: "*.. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*" (*Ps. 50:15*). When adversities oppress you and you find that only God's tender loving heart shows you kindness, you will become reconciled with Him as you remember His love. Every adversity whispers in your ear: Be reconciled with God.

Remember, too, that God reconciles you to Him, for your own sake. He also reconciles you to Him in order to restore you, to cleanse you, to purify you and to make you holy. His love for you is so great that He will not abandon you, in case you go astray, or the enemy of Goodness, the Devil, preys upon you. God is afraid that you will perish if you go far away from Him and that you will change your principles and ideals and become like the other people in the world, worldly, materialistic and concerned with physical things. Thus He seeks reconciliation with you in order to save your soul. It would be a great pity if you were to lose this opportunity to be reconciled with God.

Great are the benefits that you will gain from this reconciliation. In making peace with God, you will find forgiveness and salvation. The Lord will wash you so that you become whiter than snow. (*Ps. 51*). He will wipe away your sin and not remind you of your previous sins. (*Jer. 31:34*). In reconciliation you will gain inner peace and you will be reconciled to your own soul too. There will no longer be a struggle inside you. Through reconciliation you will return to God's fold, you will no longer feel estranged from His house and His kingdom. In fact you will become one of those who dwells in the house of the Lord. (*Eph. 2:19*) Through reconciliation you will win eternal life, because according to the Lord: "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*" (*Mark 8:36*).

If on occasions you spend a great deal of effort to make it up with other people, with whom you have only a temporary relationship on earth, then it stands to reason that you should be much more concerned about being reconciled to God, with whom you can have an eternal relationship that will never end! Be sure that you realize, then, how important God is for you and how important it is for you to be reconciled to Him. Just look at how much effort the Lord has spent for the reconciliation of man, who is really only dust and ashes. **But does man, this pile of dust and ashes, feel the same about being reconciled with his Creator?!** I fear that what the Lord said to Jerusalem and her people applies to us: "*How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*" (*Matt. 23:37*).

St. Clement of Alexandria – Fragments - Macarius Chrysocephalus: Parable Of The Prodigal Son, Luke 15.

1. What choral dance and high festival is held in heaven, if there is one that has become an exile and a fugitive from the life led under the Father, knowing not that those who put themselves far from Him shall perish; if he has squandered the gift, and substance, and inheritance of the Father; if there is one whose faith has failed, and whose hope is spent, by rushing along with the Gentiles into the same profligacy of debauchery; and then, famished and destitute, and not even filled with what the swine eat, has arisen and come to his Father! But the kind Father waits not till the son comes to Him. For perchance he would never be able or venture to approach, did he not find Him gracious. Wherefore, when he merely wishing, when he straightway made a beginning, when he took the first step, while he was yet a great way off, He [the Father] was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And then the son, taking courage, confessed what he had done. Wherefore the Father bestows on him the glory and honor that was due and meet, putting on him the best robe, the robe of immortality; and a ring, a royal signet and divine seal, — impress of consecration, signature of glory, pledge of testimony (for it is said, “He hath set to his seal that God is true,”) and shoes, not those perishable ones which he hath set his foot on holy ground is bidden take off, nor such as he who is sent to preach the

kingdom of heaven is forbidden to put on, but such as wear not, and are suited for the journey to heaven, becoming and adorning the heavenly path, such as unwashed feet never put on, but those which are washed by our Teacher and Lord.

Many, truly, are the shoes of the sinful soul, by which it is bound and cramped. For each man is cramped by the cords of his own sins. Accordingly, Abraham swears to the king of Sodom, “I will not take of all that is thine, from a thread to a shoe-latchet.” On account of these being defiled and polluted on the earth, every kind of wrong and selfishness engrosses life. As the Lord reproves Israel by Amos, saying, “For three iniquities of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn him back; because they have given away the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, which tread upon the dust of the ground.”

2. Now the shoes which the Father bids the servant give to the repentant son who has betaken himself to Him, do not impede or drag to the earth (for the earthly tabernacle weighs down the anxious mind); but they are buoyant, and ascending, and waft to heaven, and serve as such a ladder and chariot as he requires who has turned his mind towards the Father. For, beautiful after being first beautifully adorned with all these things without, he enters into the gladness within. For “Bring out” was said by Him who had first said, “While he was yet a great way off, he ran and fell upon his neck.” For it is here that all the preparation for entrance to the marriage to which we are invited must be accomplished. He, then, who has been made ready to enter will say, “This my joy is fulfilled.” But the unlovely and unsightly man will hear, “Friend, how did you come in here, without having a wedding garment?” And the fat and unctuous food, — the delicacies abundant and sufficing of the blessed, — the fatted calf is killed; which is also again spoken of as a lamb (not literally); that no one may suppose it small; but it is the great and greatest. For not small is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” who “was led as a sheep to the slaughter,” the sacrifice full of marrow, all whose fat, according to the sacred law, was the Lord’s. For He was wholly devoted and consecrated to the Lord; so well grown, and to such excessive size, as to reach

and extend over all, and to fill those who eat Him and feed upon Him. For He is both flesh and bread, and has given Himself as both to us to be eaten.

To the sons, then, who come to Him, the Father gives the calf, and it is slain and eaten. But those who do not come to Him He pursues and disinherits, and is found to be a most powerful bull. Here, by reason of His size and prowess, it is said of Him, "His glory is as that of an unicorn." And the prophet Habakkuk sees Him bearing horns, and celebrates His defensive attitude — "horns in His hands." Wherefore the sign shows His power and authority, — horns that pierce on both sides, or rather, on all sides, and through everything. And those who eat are so strengthened, and retain such strength from the life-giving food in them, that they themselves are stronger than their enemies, and are all but armed with the horns of a bull; as it is said, "In thee shall we butt our enemies."

3. Gladness there is, and music, and dances; although the elder son, who had ever been with and ever obedient to the Father, takes it ill, when he who never had himself been dissipated or profligate sees the guilty one made happy. Accordingly the Father calls him, saying, "Son, thou art ever with me."

And what greater joy and feast and festivity can be than being continually with God, standing by His side and serving Him? "And all that is mine is thine." And blessed is the heir of God, for whom the Father holds possession, — the faithful, to whom the whole world of possessions belongs. "It was meet that we should be glad, and rejoice; for thy brother was dead, and is alive again." Kind Father, who gives all things life, and raises the dead. "And was lost, and is found." And "blessed is the man whom Thou hast chosen and accepted," and whom having sought, Thou dost find. "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered." It is for man to repent of sins; but let this be accompanied with a change that will not be checked. For he who does not act so shall be put to shame, because he has acted not with his whole heart, but in haste.

And it is ours to flee to God. And let us endeavor after this ceaselessly and energetically. For He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And prayer and confession with humility are voluntary acts. Wherefore it is enjoined, "First tell thy sins, that thou mayest be justified." What afterwards we shall obtain, and what we shall be, it is not for us to judge.

4. Such is the strict meaning of the parable. The repentant son came to the pitying Father, never hoping for these things, — the best robe, and the ring, and the shoes, — or to taste the fatted calf, or to share in gladness, or enjoy music and dances; but he would have been contented with obtaining what in his own estimation he deemed himself worth. "Make me," he had made up his mind to say, "as one of thy hired servants." But when he saw the Father's welcome meeting him, he did not say this, but said what he had in his mind to say first, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee." And so both his humility and his accusation became the cause of justification and glory. For the righteous man condemns himself in his first words. So also the publican departed justified rather than the Pharisee.

The son, then, knew not either what he was to obtain, or how to take or use or put on himself the things given him; since he did not take the robe himself, and put it on. But it is said, "Put it on him." He did not himself put the ring on his finger, but those who were bidden "Put a ring on his hand." Nor did he put the shoes on himself, but it was they who heard, "and shoes on his feet." And these things were perhaps incredible to him and to others, and unexpected before they took place; but gladly received and praised were the gifts with which he was presented.

5. The parable exhibits this thought, that the exercise of the faculty of reason has been accorded to each man. Wherefore the prodigal is introduced, demanding from his father his portion, that is, of the state of mind, endowed by reason. For the possession of reason is granted to all, in order to the pursuit of what is good, and the avoidance of what is bad. But many who are furnished by God with this make a bad use of the knowledge that has been given them, and land in the profligacy of evil practices, and wickedly waste the substance of reason, — the eye on disgraceful sights, the tongue on blasphemous words, the smell on foetid licentious excesses of pleasures, the mouth on swinish gluttony, the hands on thefts, the feet on running into plots, the thoughts on impious counsels, the inclinations on indulgence of the love of ease, the mind on brutish pastime. They preserve nothing of the substance of reason unsquandered.

Such an one, therefore, Christ represents in the parable, — as a rational creature, with his reason darkened, and asking from the Divine Being what is suitable to reason; then as obtaining from God, and making a wicked use of what had been given, and especially of the benefits of baptism, which had been vouchsafed to him; whence also He calls him a prodigal; and then, after the dissipation of what had been given him, and again his restoration by repentance, [He represents] the love of God shown to him.

6. For He says, "Bring hither the fatted calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son" — a name of nearest relationship, and significative of what is given to the faithful — "was dead and lost," — an expression of extremist alienation; for what is more alien to the living than the lost and dead? For neither can be possessed any more.

But having from the nearest relationship fallen to extremist alienation, again by repentance he returned to near relationship. For it is said, "Put on him the best robe," which was his the moment he obtained baptism. I mean the glory of baptism, the remission of sins, and the communication of the other blessings, which he obtained immediately he had touched the font.

"And put a ring on his hand." Here is the mystery of the Trinity; which is the seal impressed on those who believe.

"And put shoes on his feet," for "the preparation of the Gospel of peace," and the whole course that leads to good actions.

7. But whom Christ finds lost, after sin committed since baptism, those Novatus, enemy of God, resigns to destruction. Do not let us then reckon any fault if we repent; guarding against falling, let us, if we have fallen, retrace our steps. And while dreading to offend, let us, after offending, avoid despair, and be eager to be confirmed; and on sinking, let us haste to rise up again. Let us obey

the Lord, who calls to us, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest." Let us employ the gift of reason for actions of prudence. Let us learn now abstinence from what is wicked, that we may not be forced to learn in the future. Let us employ life as a training school for what is good; and let us be roused to the hatred of sin. Let us bear about a deep love for the Creator; let us cleave to Him with our whole heart; let us not wickedly waste the substance of reason, like the prodigal. Let us obtain the joy laid up, in which Paul exulting, exclaimed, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" To Him belongs glory and honor, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

St. John Chrysostom – Homily on Philippians – HOMILY 11

Verse 12. *"Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus."*

...Alas! How great nobility did He confer on us!

We were born, we were nurtured, why do we again fly from our Benefactor? He then, who hath done all these things, give us strength too, for it was not possible, for a soul bowed down by the disease to endure it, did not He Himself give us the strength. He gave us remission of our sins. We devoured all things. He gave us strength, we wasted it. He gave us grace, we quenched it; and how? we consumed it upon naught that was fitting, we used it for no useful end. These things have destroyed us, and what is more dreadful than all, when we are in a foreign country, and feeding on husks, we say not, Let us return to our Father, and say, "We have sinned against Heaven, and against Thee." (Luke 15:18.)

And that too, when we have so loving a Father, who eagerly desires our return. If we will only return to Him, He does not even bear to call in question our former deeds, only let us quit them.

It is sufficient apology with Him, that we have returned. Not only He Himself calls not in question, but if another does so, He stops his mouth, though the accuser be one of good repute. Let us return! How long do we stand afar off? Let us perceive our dishonor, let us be sensible of our vileness. Sin makes us swine, sin brings famine to the soul; let us regain ourselves, and be sober again, and return to our former high birth, that we may obtain the good things which are to come, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever and world without end.

St. Cyril of Alexandria – Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, SERMON CVII (107).

I HEAR one of the holy prophets trying to win unto repentance those who are far from God, and saying, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God: for you have become weak in your iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the Lord our God." What sort of words then did he, under the influence of the Spirit, command them to take with them? Or were they not such as become those who wish to repent; such namely, as would appease God, Who is gentle, and loves mercy. For He even said by one of the holy prophets, "Return you returning children, and I will heal your breaches." And yet again by the voice of Ezekiel, "Return you altogether from your wickedness's, O house of Israel. Cast away from you all your iniquities which you have committed, that they be not

to you for a punishment of iniquity. For I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, as that he should turn from his evil way and live." And the same truth Christ here also teaches us, by this most beautifully composed parable, which I will now to the best of my ability endeavor to discuss, briefly gathering up its broad statements, and explaining and defending the ideas which it contains...

...What then is the object of the parable? Let us examine the occasion which led to it; for so we shall learn the truth. The blessed Luke therefore had himself said a little before of Christ the Savior of us all, "And all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured saying, This man receives sinners and eats " with them." As therefore the Pharisees and Scribes made this outcry at His gentleness and love to man, and wickedly and impiously blamed Him for receiving and teaching men whose lives were impure, Christ very necessarily set before them the present parable, to show them clearly this very thing, that the God of all requires even him who is thoroughly steadfast, and firm, and who knows how to live holily, and has attained to the highest praise for sobriety of conduct, to be earnest in following His will, so that when any are called unto repentance, even if they be men highly blame-able, he must rejoice rather, and not give way to an unloving vexation on their account.

For we also sometimes experience something of this sort. For some there are who live a perfectly honorable and consistent life, practicing every kind of virtuous action, and abstaining from everything disapproved by the law of God, and crowning themselves with perfect praises in the sight of God and of men: while another is perhaps weak and trodden down, and humbled unto every kind of wickedness, guilty of base deeds, loving impurity, given to covetousness, and stained with all evil. And yet such a one often in old age turns unto God, and asks the forgiveness of his former offences: he prays for mercy, and putting away from him his readiness to fall into sin, sets his affection on virtuous deeds. Or even perhaps when about to close his mortal life, he is admitted to divine baptism, and puts away his offences, God being merciful unto him. And perhaps sometimes persons are indignant at this, and even say, 'This man, who has been guilty of such and such actions, and has spoken such and such words, has not paid unto the judge the retribution of his conduct, but has been counted worthy of a grace thus noble and admirable: he has been inscribed among the sons of God, and honoured with the glory of the saints.' Such complaints men sometimes give utterance too from an empty narrowness of mind, not conforming to **the purpose of the universal Father. For He greatly rejoices when He sees those who were lost obtaining salvation, and raises them up again to that which they were in the beginning, giving them the dress of freedom, and adorning them with the chief robe, and putting a ring upon their hand, even the orderly behaviour which is pleasing to God and suitable to the free.**

It is our duty, therefore, to conform ourselves to that which God wills: for He heals those who are sick; He raises those who are fallen; He gives a helping hand to those who have stumbled; He brings back him who has wandered; He forms anew unto a praiseworthy and blameless life those who were wallowing in the mire of sin; He seeks those who were lost; He raises as from the dead those who had suffered the spiritual death. Let us also rejoice: let us, in company with the holy

angels, praise Him as being good, and loving unto men; as gentle, and not remembering evil. For if such is our state of mind, Christ will receive us, by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

REFLECTION:

Christ uses the story of the prodigal son to not only remind us of the Father's unconditional love and acceptance, but to teach us that the Father will wait for our return to Him in any condition or state. The son was motivated to return home first and foremost because of his hunger (Luke 15:16-17). The son didn't repent because he reflected on the morality of his past actions and realized he made a mistake. But the repentance that led to the son's return came when he, being starved, discovered that his needs cannot be satisfied without his father's help. It is only from his father's house that he can receive his nourishment.

We, like the prodigal son, can only receive our nourishment from the Father and His house [the food, shelter, servants, and family – the Church]. As His created children, our bodies and souls ache for nourishment from the Father, *"My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You, In a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water."* (Psalm 63:1) St. Paul writes to the Romans, *"²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."* (Romans 8:22-23)

The Father knows of our hunger and thirst for His nourishment And the Father will wait on us to welcome us back regardless of the time or condition in which we return. If our conscience will not lead us to repent, then our needy bodies will. And if in our confusion we are lead to the wrong source, then Christ Himself will meet us there as He did with the Samaritan woman. This will be the next lesson's theme.

Notice the manner with which the father received his son, and the son's expectations of the father. When the son had made up his mind to return to the father's house to ask for food, he thought to himself that his father would only accept him as a servant. So he says, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" It is not that the son believes that his father has forgotten about him, but that the son believes his father no longer desires his sonship.

Then, to the son's surprise, the father runs out to embrace him before the son even has a chance to make his plea. The son then changes his apology; seeing that his father loves him so much, he only says "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son." The father's expression of his love convinced him of his acceptance back into the house as his father's son, not his servant.

As children of the Heavenly Father, we too ought not to take our sonship for granted. The first two Sundays of Lent emphasized our identity as sons and daughters of the King of Kings and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. This week, we are reminded that God is not only a powerful and glorious King, but also a tender and loving Father who eagerly desires our presence beside Him in His kingdom. Let us not wait to the point where we have wasted all our gifts in vain and temporary delights. Let us not wait to the point of physical humiliation and starvation to return to Him. He is always watching for us, waiting to spot us approaching from the horizon. Let us not keep Him waiting, but run back home crying out, "Father!" That is all He needs to hear.

PRAYER:

O' our Master and Lord, the Almighty God, who sent His Only-Begotten Son unto the world; He taught us the Law and the Commandments of the Holy Scriptures. He taught us that fasting and prayers expel the Devil and the evil spirits. As He said: "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." By fasting and praying, Elijah was taken up to heaven and Daniel was saved from the lion's den. Fasting and prayer are those that Moses pursued until he received the commandments inscribed by the Finger of God. Also the people of Nineveh adopted fasting and praying so that God spared them, remitted their sins and turned His wrath away from them.

Fasting and praying were pursued by the prophets that they were foretold the advent of Christ many years before His incarnation. Aided by fasting and praying, the apostles evangelized all nations, converted them to Christianity and baptized them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Likewise the Martyrs gave their lives up for the name of Christ, Who declared the proper confession before Pontius Pilate. By practicing fasting and praying the righteous, and the Cross-bearers escaped to the mountains, wilderness and caves to pursue their tremendous love for the King Christ.

Let us also pursue fasting by uprooting of every evil, and by living in purity and righteousness.

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

The Lent Gospel response:

Blessed are those who have Mercy	who gives to the poor and fast and pray
The Holy Spirit will fill their hearts	The Son will show them mercy on judgment day

VOCABULARY:

Pharisee, Parable, Prodigal son, Unconditional

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Trusting the heavenly Father
Liturgical:	Themes of the Holy Lent
Moral:	God loves us
Spiritual:	In the Holy Lent I pray, fast and give

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. He also told us of the ten wrong things that can really hurt our relationship with our Father, and hurt our lives too. The Journey of Lent reminds us of our true identity as children of God, and describes the Father's love, acceptance and care throughout our lives. We should be careful to follow His commands and to love Him and others, trusting in His care. The more we grow in this relationship, the more we will grow as His children and in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON BODY:

The Prodigal Son's story teaches us that no matter how much we sin or disobey the Father, He always loves us unconditionally, and earnestly awaits our return to Him. He will always accept us with open arms and a loving heart.

THE STORY OF THE WASTEFUL SON

Draw (or bring in) two pictures, of two girls who look the same. Tell the kids that one girl goes to church every Sunday, always listens to her parents, does all her Bible readings, and never gets anyone upset with her. The other girl doesn't go to church Sunday because she has dance practice then, watches cartoon movies instead of doing her Bible readings after school, doesn't listen to her parents, cheats on tests at school because she doesn't study, copies her friend's homework, steals erasers that she likes from the school box, etc. *Does God love both of these girls?* Then ask those who said yes, *Which one of them does He love more?* It's likely that a lot of them will say the 'good' girl. This isn't true. God loves each and every one of us exactly the same no matter what we do. He loves us because we are His children and He will always love us, again, no matter what we do.

There were a group of people who lived at the time of Jesus who also thought that God doesn't love people who do bad things. They also would have thought that God hates this girl (the mischievous one). These people were called **Pharisees**. The Pharisees followed the law very closely, but they were wrong in their thinking that God doesn't love everyone.

One day as Jesus was talking to the people, there came tax collectors and other people in the city who were known to do many bad things. The Pharisees weren't happy that Jesus was sitting with these people that were known to do bad things.

So Jesus, because He loves the Pharisees wanted to correct their wrong way of thinking and wanted to make them understand that God doesn't hate sinners, but that He rather loves everyone. So He told them a story about a boy who was kind of like this little girl (point to the mischievous one). I'm going to narrate this story and 4 kids will act it out as I narrate it.

(Before class, tell the children that you need four volunteers who are very good listeners to help you with something. Explain to the four that you pick that they will be acting out a story to the class that day while you narrate it, but they'll have to listen very, very closely to the story as you read it or else they won't know what to act. Tell them that they also can't laugh during the story or else it'll distract everyone in class. Ask them if they're up for the challenge. If they don't want to, choose replacements from the class. Walk through a sample of how you would narrate it and what they'd do while you narrated it. Then do a quick run through of the entire story and have them act it out in the hallway. –it should take about ten minutes to do this, which means the children who are acting would likely miss the song that day.)

Pause after every part that needs to be acted out:

There once was a certain wealthy father (father actor stand up so they know his role) who had two sons—only one will be in the skit— that he loved very much. One day, one of the sons told the father, "Father, give me my share of your money." The son was asking for the father to give him all of his allowance for the rest of his life in that one day. And because the father loved his son, he didn't want to refuse his request. So he gave him his share of the money and told him to be careful of how he would spend it. But the son didn't listen to the father's advice, and after a few days, he packed all his clothes and took all of his allowance and left his father and brother in the father's house, and went to live in a far country. There he made some friends who didn't know God and he spent all his money and belongings on eating and drinking and games and fun with them...until there was nothing left for him. His friends left him as soon as he had no more money. The son was suddenly very poor and very alone. And what's worse, there was a great famine in that far country where the son lived, so there wasn't enough food to feed everyone in the country. The son began to starve.

The son thought to himself, "Where am I going to get food? How am I going to live without any food or money?" So he wandered the country until he found a farmer who raised pigs for a living. The farmer agreed to let the son work for him by feeding and cleaning after the pigs in the farm. As

he was feeding the pigs, he watched them eat and eat and eat, while he felt his stomach grumble inside him, knowing he hadn't eaten for a long time. He thought to himself maybe he could try some of the food that the pigs were eating. But it wasn't long before he came to his senses and realized that this food was not for people but for pigs. He needed real food, food from his father's house.

"My father has so many hired servants that have more than enough bread to eat, and here I am, my father's son, sitting in farm soil beside pigs, starving, and thinking of eating their food." The son became very sad when he thought about how he is living his life and has nothing to eat. So he decided: "I will get up and go back to my father's house! There I will tell him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But please hire me like one of your hired servants."

So the son got up, left the pigs and the farm, and began running back to his old country and to his father's house. In the meantime, his father was worried sick about him because he knew of the famine. The father kept watching by the window of his house, hoping to one day see his son again. And then suddenly, as he was waiting, the father saw someone coming from very, very far away...could it be? It looked like his son! He was dressed in dirty and torn clothes, and had nothing with him, no shoes on his feet or bag on his back. He looked skinny and sick. But the father knew that it was his son! When he saw his son coming towards him from far down the road, his love made him jump to his feet and run out the door of the house. The father ran far down the road, towards his son, with arms wide open and calling, "My son, my son! You're finally back. Welcome back." The son didn't know how to react. He wasn't expecting to see his father like this. He didn't think his father actually missed him or wanted him back. But when his father was close enough, he gave the son a great big hug and kissed him. The son didn't know what to say. He tried remembering what he decided earlier, so he said to his father, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son."

The father didn't wait for his son to say anything else, but he called out to his servants in the house. "Quick, bring out the best robe from the house and put it on my son's back, and put a ring on his hands and sandals on his feet. And bring the big cow that we've fattened up all year and cook it. Come, let us eat and be merry. For this is my son; he was dead and is now alive again. He was lost, and is now found." And the father and the servants all rejoiced and ate from the big feast.

Now, who do you think the father was? *God, the Father*. What about the son that left and lost all the money that his father had given him while living a bad life? *Us (this may be difficult for them, so help them along)*. What did we say Jesus was trying to teach the Pharisees in this story? *God doesn't hate sinners, He loves everyone just the same.*

This parable is called the story of the **prodigal son**.

We've been learning about Lent and how Lent teaches us about how much God loves us and how He can take care of all our needs.

Two lessons ago, we heard a story of a little boy who fell asleep in church and had a dream that he was in a big kingdom. What did that kingdom represent? *Heaven*. What was our role in that kingdom? *To be princes and princesses*. That Kingdom of God is our home as a prince or princess and there we'll get to be with God who loves us, forever.

Adam and Eve, when they didn't listen to God and ate from the tree that they weren't supposed to eat from started to think that they weren't good anymore. The same thing happened with the Pharisees who thought that God hated people, like this little girl and like the prodigal son, who did things that God tells us not to do. But Jesus, in this story that we just saw, was teaching all of us that that isn't true, but that God loves us and will always absolutely, positively love us no matter anything that we do.

Our Father in Heaven has given us everything we need, and watches as we do what we want with His gifts. Sometimes we take these gifts for granted, and don't really appreciate our Father's love for us, like the prodigal son did. After wasting our gifts, we wonder why they didn't make us happy. This is because we didn't use them that way our Father intended for us to use them when He gave them to us. When we realize this, we must go back to our Father and tell Him about our mistake and ask Him for help, again just like the prodigal son did. This is called repentance. Our Father will always accept us if we choose to repent – to realize our mistake and to regret it. In the story of the prodigal son, the son had everything he needed when he lived with his father. But it wasn't enough for him; he wanted to live his life his own way and spend all his money on himself without his father's guidance and care. But eventually the son lost everything, and he felt very hungry and lonely. He realized that something went wrong in his life – that he made a mistake. He remembered that at least everyone in his father's house – even the servants – had enough food and drink to fill their bellies, and there he was eating with pigs. Because the son was hungry, he realized that he did something wrong and had to go back to his father's house to ask for help. The father, who had been worried sick about his son for so long, ran out to meet him as soon as he saw him coming. **He didn't yell at him, and he didn't tell him that he was disappointed. All he did was accept him with open arms and tears of joy. Our Father in Heaven is always waiting for us to come back if we make a mistake. It is important for us to know that the Father will always be ready to embrace us and accept us, even after we make a mistake – no matter how large. We might forget or disobey the Father, but He will never abandon us.**

Knowing that, as children of God, we try to make our actions like the princes and princesses of God that we are. To do that, we need to learn what princes and princesses should do. Last lesson, we heard a story about how squirrels gather acorns to prepare for winter and how we come to Sunday School and read the Bible to learn about what we should do to prepare ourselves as daughters and sons of God. She told us how important it is to control ourselves when we are

tempted to do something that doesn't befit a prince/princess, just like Jesus controlled Himself when He was tempted.

Of course though, we all do make mistakes. We aren't perfect. Next week, we'll learn about what we can do when we are very ashamed of our mistakes.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Act out the story of the prodigal son.

Complete the journey map.

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Why did Jesus tell the Pharisees the story of the Prodigal Son? What was wrong about the way the Pharisees thought about God?

A. The Pharisees incorrectly believed that God hates those who do wrong things. Jesus wanted to show them that this isn't true, but that God loves everyone no matter what.

Q. Does God love you? And you? (point to a couple children individually) Does God love the man on the street who steals and hurts people?

A. Yes. God loves everyone.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." Luke 15:22

Unit III: Lent Journey And Pascha

Purpose: Through baptism, we die as children of the world and rise again as children of our Heavenly Father. Through the Eucharist, we partake of Christ's holy Body and Blood and share in His Sonship. This unit takes us on the journey of the Holy Lent, teaching us about the Father's unconditional love and acceptance, as well as the importance of relying on our Father for our needs. The lessons of this unit are designed to affirm our identity as children of the Father. As we embark on the journey of the Lent, we immerse ourselves in our Heavenly Father's care, and we trust that our Father will always accept us as His children. The unit also reminds us of the important Lenten theme to love and care for each other, trusting that the Father will support us and work through us. The unit concludes with a review of the ultimate sign of the Father's unconditional love and acceptance of us: the sacrifice of His Only Son.

19. THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

John 4:5-42

⁵So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. ¹⁰Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

¹¹The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹²Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" ¹³Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." ¹⁵The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, "I have no husband,' ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

¹⁹The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." ²¹Jesus

said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

²⁷And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" ²⁸The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰Then they went out of the city and came to Him. ³¹In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³²But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." ³³Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" ³⁴Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. ³⁵Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! ³⁶And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word. ⁴²Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Isaiah 12

And in that day you will say: " O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. ² Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; " For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation." ³ Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation. ⁴And in that day you will say: " Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted.

⁵ Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth. ⁶ Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. Augustine – Tractates on St. John, Tractate 15

6. "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour." Now begin the mysteries. For it is not without a purpose that Jesus is weary; not indeed

without a purpose that the strength of God is weary; **not without a purpose that He is weary, by whom the wearied are refreshed; not without a purpose is He weary, by whose absence we are wearied, by whose presence we are strengthened.** Nevertheless Jesus is weary, and weary with His journey; and He sits down, and that, too, near a well; and it is at the sixth hour that, being wearied, He sits down. All these things hint something, are intended to intimate something, they make us eager, and encourage us to knock. May Himself open to us and to you; He who has deigned to exhort us, so as to say, "Knock, and it shall be opened to you." **It was for thee that Jesus was wearied with His journey.** We find Jesus to be strength, and we find Jesus to be weak: we find a strong and a weak Jesus: strong, because "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: the same was in the beginning with God." Would you see how this Son of God is strong? "All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made:" and without labor, too, were they made.

Then what can be stronger than He, by whom all things were made without labor? Would you know Him weak? "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The strength of Christ created thee, the weakness of Christ created thee anew. The strength of Christ caused that to be which was not: the weakness of Christ caused that what was should not perish. He fashioned us by His strength, He sought us by His weakness...

9. But why at the sixth hour? Because at the sixth age of the world. In the Gospel, count up as an hour each, the first age from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the removing to Babylon; the fifth, from the removing to Babylon to the baptism of John: thence is the sixth being enacted. Why dost thou marvel? Jesus came, and, by humbling Himself, came to a well. He came wearied, because He carried weak flesh. At the sixth hour, because in the sixth age of the world. To a well, because to the depth of this our habitation. For which reason it is said in the psalm: "From the depth have I cried unto Thee, O Lord." He sat, as I said, because He was humbled.

10. "And there came a woman." Figure of the Church not yet justified, but now about to be justified: for this is the subject of the discourse. She comes ignorant, she finds Him, and there is a dealing with her. Let us see what, and wherefore. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water." The Samaritans did not belong to the nation of the Jews: they were foreigners, though they inhabited neighboring lands. It would take a long time to relate the origin of the Samaritans; that we may not be detained by long discourse of this, and leave necessary matters unsaid, suffice to say, then, that we regard the Samaritans as aliens...It is pertinent to the image of the reality, that this woman, who bore the type of the Church, comes of strangers: for the Church was to come of the Gentiles, an alien from the race of the Jews. In that woman, then, let us hear ourselves, and in her acknowledge ourselves,

and in her give thanks to God for ourselves. For she was the figure, not the reality; for she both first showed forth the figure and became the reality. For she believed on Him who, of her, set the figure before us. "She cometh, then, to draw water." Had simply come to draw water, as people are wont to do, be they men or women.

11. "Jesus said unto her, Give me to drink. For His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat. Then said the Samaritan woman unto Him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." You see that they were aliens: indeed, the Jews would not use their vessels. And as the woman brought

with her a vessel with which to draw the water, it made her wonder that a Jew sought drink of her, — a thing which the Jews were not accustomed to do. But He who was asking drink was thirsting for the faith of the woman herself.

12. At length, hear who it is that ask drink: “Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to thee, Give me to drink, thou would, it may be, have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.” **He asks to drink, and promises to give drink. He longs as one about to receive; He abounds as one about to satisfy.** “If thou knew,” said He, “the gift of God.” The gift of God is the Holy Spirit. **But as yet He speaks to the woman guardedly, and enters into her heart by degrees. It may be He is now teaching her. For what can be sweeter and kinder than that exhortation?** “If thou knew the gift of God,” etc.: thus far He keeps her in suspense. That is commonly called living water which issues from a spring: that which is collected from rain in pools and cisterns is not called living water. And it may have flowed from a spring; yet if it should stand collected in some place, not admitting to it that from which it flowed, but, with the course interrupted, separated, as it were, from the channel of the fountain, it is not called “living water:” but that is called living water which is taken as it flows. Such water there was in that fountain.

Why, then, did He promise to give that which He was asking?

13. The woman, however, being in suspense, said to Him, “Lord, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.” See how she understood the living water, simply the water which was in that fountain. “Thou wouldst give me living water, and I carry that with which to draw, and thou dost not. The living water is here; how art thou to give it me?” **Understanding another thing, and taking it carnally, she does in a manner knock, that the Master may open up that which is closed.** She was knocking in ignorance, not with earnest purpose; she is still an object of pity, not yet of instruction.

14. The Lord speaks somewhat more clearly of that living water. Now the woman had said, “Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, his children, and his cattle?” Thou canst not give me of the living water of this well, because thou hast nothing to draw with: perhaps thou promise another fountain? Canst thou be better than our father, who dug this well, and used it himself, and his? Let the Lord, then, declare what He called living water. “Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drink of this water shall thirst again: but he that drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst forever; but the water which I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life.” The Lord has spoken more openly: “It shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life. He that drink of this water shall not thirst forever.” What more evident than that it was not visible, but invisible water, that He was promising? What more evident than that He was speaking, not in a carnal, but in a spiritual sense?

15. Still, however, the woman has her mind on the flesh: she is delighted with the thought of thirsting no more, and fancies that this was promised to her by the Lord after a carnal sense;

which it will be indeed, but in the resurrection of the dead. She desired this now. God had indeed granted once to His servant Elias, that during forty days he neither hungered nor thirsted. Could not He give this always, seeing He had power to give it during forty days? She, however, sighed for it, desiring to have no want, no toil. To be always coming to that fountain, to be burdened with a weight with which to supply her want, and, when that which she had drawn is spent, to be obliged to return again: this was a daily toil to her; because that want of hers was to be relieved, not extinguished. Such a gift as Jesus promised delighted her; she asks Him to give her living water.

16. Nevertheless, let us not overlook the fact that it is something spiritual that the Lord was promising. What means, "Whoso shall drink of this water shall thirst again?" It is true as to this water; it is true as to what the water signified. Since the water in the well is the pleasure of the world in its dark depth: from this men draw it with the vessel of lusts. Stooping forward, they let down the lust to reach the pleasure fetched from the depth of the well, and enjoy the pleasure and the preceding lust let down to fetch it. For he who has not dispatched his lust in advance cannot get to the pleasure.

Consider lust, then, as the vessel; and pleasure as the water from the depth of the well: when one has got at the pleasure of this world, it is meat to him, it is drink, it is a bath, a show, an amour; can it be that he will not thirst again? Therefore, "Whoso shall drink of this water," said He, "will thirst again;" but if he shall receive water of me, "he shall never thirst." "We shall be satisfied," it said, "with the good things of Thy house." **Of what water, then, is He to give, but of that of which it is said, "With Thee is the fountain of life"? For how shall they thirst, who "shall be drunk with the fatness of Thy house"?**

17. What He was promising them was a certain feeding and abundant fullness of the Holy Spirit: but the woman did not yet understand; and not understanding, how did she answer? "The woman said unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." **Want forced her to labor, and her weakness was pleading against the toil. Would that she heard the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you!" This is, in fact, what Jesus was saying to her, that she might no longer labor: but she did not yet understand...**

St. John Chrysostom – On the Gospel of St. John, Homily 32

...What then said He? "Whosoever shall drink of the Water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." This and what was said next especially showed the superiority, for material water possesses none of these qualities. And what is it that follows? "It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." **For as one that hath a well within him could never be seized by thirst, so neither can he that hath this Water.**

The woman straightway believed, showing herself much wiser than Nicodemus, and not only wiser, but more manly. For he when he heard ten thousand such things neither invited any others to this hearing, nor himself spoke forth openly; but she exhibited the actions of an Apostle, preaching the Gospel to all, and calling them to Jesus, and drawing a whole city forth to Him. Nicodemus when he had heard said, "How can these things be?" And when Christ set before him a clear illustration, that of "the wind," he did not even so receive the Word. But the woman not so; at first she doubted, but afterwards receiving the Word not by any regular demonstration, but in

the form of an assertion, she straightway hastened to embrace it. For when Christ said, "It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting Life," immediately the woman said,

Verse 15. *"Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."*

Do you See how little by little she is led up to the highest doctrines? First she thought Him some Jew who was transgressing the Law; then when He had repelled that accusation, (for it was necessary that the person who was to teach her such things should not be suspected,) having heard of "living water," she supposed that this was spoken of material water; afterwards, having learnt that the words were spiritual, she believed that the water could remove the necessity caused by thirst, but knew not yet what this could be; she still doubted, deeming it indeed to be above material things, but not being exactly informed. But here having gained a clearer insight, but not yet fully perceiving the whole, (for she said, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw,") she for the time prefer Him to Jacob. "For" (said she) "I need not this well if I receive from thee that water." Do See you how she set Him before the Patriarch? This is the act of a fairly-judging soul. She had shown how great an opinion she had of Jacob, she saw One better than he, and was not held back by her prepossession.

Thus this woman was neither of an easy temper, (she did not carelessly receive what was said, how can she have done so when she inquired with so great exactness?) nor yet disobedient, nor disputatious, and this she showed by her petition. Yet to the Jews once He said, "Whosoever shall eat of My flesh shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (c. 6:35); but they not only did not believe, but were offended at Him. The woman had no such feeling, she remains and petitions. **To the Jews He said, "He that believeth on Me shall never thirst"; not so to the woman, but more grossly, He that drink of this Water shall never thirst.** For the promise referred to spiritual and unseen things. Wherefore having raised her mind by His promises, He still lingers among expressions relating to sense, because she could not as yet comprehend the exact expression of spiritual things. Since had He said, "If you believe in Me you shall not thirst," she would not have understood His saying, not knowing who it could be that spoke to her, nor concerning what kind of thirst He spoke...

REFLECTION:

The Samaritan woman was truly among the first evangelists of the Gospel. As soon as she heard the good news from Christ, she boldly ran into the city and gathered the men saying, "Come and see a man who has told me all that I have done. Could this be the Christ?" The gospel does not suggest that the woman had to persuade the men that Jesus at the well is the Messiah. Instead, she only presented an invitation: "Come and see!" The gospel attests to this when the men, after having seen and heard Christ speak, told the Samaritan woman: *"Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."*

Through this thirsty woman who had shamefully committed adulterous acts, Christ was revealed to the fathers and husbands of Samaria. Christ, knowing her to be at the well, went to rest there

and asked her for water, when in fact He knew that this water from Jacob's well would not quench His or her thirst. His thirst is the thirst of the Loving Father, and the Father thirsts for His children. Therefore Christ later told His disciples who urged Him to eat, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work."

Before her encounter with Christ, the Samaritan woman was thirsty and confused; she was thirsty for God, but did not know how to quench this thirst. So she lived a sad and meaningless routine; shunned by the people for her sins, she walked alone to the well under the blazing noontime sun to fill her water pot and return to her sinful lifestyle. She had grown dry and dead inside, settling for satisfying her bodily thirst without seeking to quench her thirsty soul. Christ knew this, but Christ also loved her. So He Himself went to see her so that He may offer her the true Living Water that would quench her thirst and bring salvation to her and to all of Samaria.

The Gospel teaches that the Father always longs for us, and Christ is always searching for us, inviting us to be with Him. When we struggle to find Christ because of the confusion or despair or shame cast upon us by our sins, Christ Himself will find us. He will come to us at the spot where we waste our lives in vain efforts, and will invite us to follow Him and to inherit that which is meaningful and eternal: the life, nourishment, and grace of the Holy Spirit. We never have to go too far to find Him because it is actually He who comes to us. We just need to be receptive and proactive. We need to inquire and desire to know Christ, just as the Samaritan woman desired to know Him. And when we have received the good news of hope, we need to be proactive.

Because we share in Christ's sonship, our nourishment too is to do the will of the Father – to love our neighbors and to share the invitation to the Heavenly Father's kingdom. This doesn't mean we should walk into the streets and knock on doors looking for opportunities to present our arguments for Christianity and to persuade the masses. The Samaritan woman did no such thing; instead, her message was simple and clear: "Come and see!" The Samaritan's sudden joy, courage and excitement about her encounter with Christ was what truly persuaded the men of the city to go hear Christ, who was sitting with His disciples at the well [an image of the Church]. Her message was merely an invitation to go the Christ to learn the truth. Through the sinful Samaritan's simple invitation, the Samaritans became the first city to recognize Jesus as "the Savior of the world."

LESSON PREPARATION:

VOCABULARY:

Samaritan, Well

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Trusting the heavenly Father
Liturgical:	Themes of the Holy Lent
Moral:	God loves us
Spiritual:	In the Holy Lent I pray, fast and give

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father told us who He is and how to be like Him. He also told us of the ten wrong things that can really hurt our relationship with our Father, and hurt our lives too. The Journey of Lent reminds us of our true identity as children of God, and describes the Father's love, acceptance and care throughout our lives. We should be careful to follow His commands and to love Him and others, trusting in His care. The more we grow in this relationship, the more we will grow as His children and in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON BODY:

The Samaritan woman was embarrassed and confused by her sin to recognize Christ when He came to her, offering her the Living Water. But as Christ teaches, even when we are too ashamed or can't see our mistakes, our Father Himself comes to us through Christ, who traveled through the land of Samaria to Jacob's well to see the Samaritan woman.

The Samaritan woman was embarrassed and confused by her sin to recognize Christ when He came to her, offering her the Living Water. But as Christ teaches, even when we are too ashamed or can't see our mistakes, our Father Himself comes to us through Christ, who traveled through the land of Samaria to Jacob's well to see the Samaritan woman.

INTRODUCTORY STORY

Imagine a young boy named Peter. He is sitting in math class when he hears his teacher remind the class about tomorrow's math quiz. Peter suddenly felt scared because he wasn't ready to take the quiz. Unlike his friends, Peter didn't take the time to study and do his homework well enough to prepare for tomorrow's quiz. So on his way home, Peter wondered what he could do. He decided he would try to do all the homework he's missed in the few hours he had left before bed

time to prepare for the quiz tomorrow. So when Peter got home, he ran straight to his bedroom to do all his old homework. But because he was rushing, he kept making mistakes and he became very frustrated. So he gave up on studying and went to the living room to watch television. His mom called out, "Peter, have you done your homework?" "Yes mom!" "What about that quiz tomorrow, are you ready for it or do you need help with anything?" "I'm ready for tomorrow's quiz, mom, so I'm just watching television." Peter spent the rest of the night watching television and then went to bed – not remembering to pray or read the Bible first.

The next morning, Peter went to school and sat at his desk in math class and pulled out a pencil to write with. The teacher walked in with the quizzes in her hand. "Everyone ready for today's quiz? No last minute questions?" No one said anything and Peter didn't even care at this point. He just wanted to get the quiz over with. The teacher passed out the quizzes and the students began filling in their answers. Peter got stuck on question number 3. He had no idea what the answer was, but he looked around him and saw that everyone was still writing their answers. Then it hit him. "What if I just take a quick peak at my friend's paper, see what he got for an answer." Peter quickly glanced at the quiz in front of his friend and saw that his friend wrote down a big "7." Peter copied down that answer on his own quiz. The quiz was over and the teacher collected everyone's paper. She handed them back at the end of the day...Peter got all three questions right.

He went home with the quiz in his hand and showed his mom. She was very proud of him, and she gave him a great big hug. But something about the quiz and the hug made Peter feel very uncomfortable. He wasn't too proud about what he did during the quiz, but he was too embarrassed to tell anyone. So he stayed quiet about it and went up to his room. Something about what he did made him feel unhappy. He felt that what he did was not what a child of God would do. It bothered him very much that his mom was proud of him for something he didn't earn, but he was too embarrassed to talk to anyone about it. So he hid up in his room for the rest of the night.

Later that night when his dad came home, Peter's mom told him about Peter's quiz, but she didn't understand why Peter stayed in his room all day instead of enjoying the day outside with his friends. Peter's dad was worried about him. He went into Peter's room to congratulate him for doing a good job on the quiz and to see if everything was okay. But Peter didn't really want to talk to his dad about it, and just wanted to sleep. His dad said, "Okay son. But did you read your Bible and pray before going to bed?" Peter answered, "No. Not yet. Can you read it to me?" So Peter's dad opened the Bible and flipped through the pages until he came to the last verse where they left off. And he began th next story...the story of the Samaritan woman. (See below).

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Quickly tell the story of the Samaritan woman, being sure to emphasize that Christ went to visit the Samaritan at the well, where she was all alone from everyone else because she had done things that she knew were wrong. She knew that her actions were not the actions did not follow God's commandments. But Jesus helped her realize that although she did things against the

Father's commandments, the Father still loves her very much and wants her to learn more about Him. That is why He sent her Jesus to talk with her and to teach her.

THE FATHER'S CARE AND LOVE

The Samaritan woman realized that her actions were wrong because they were against God's commandments. She didn't really understand this at first. She only knew that there was a feeling inside of her...that she was embarrassed because of the things she did. And because she was embarrassed, she felt very alone. She did not have any friends and was afraid of talking to anyone about herself or her life. Jesus went to her to change that.

Jesus walked all the way down to the well of Samaria to find her. And when He found her, He slowly and gently began to talk to her, asking her about herself and her life. But the Samaritan woman didn't really want to open up to him. She knew that she had done things that were against God's commandments, and she was too embarrassed to talk to Jesus about them. She thought Jesus wouldn't understand or would judge her or blame her for those bad things, just as everyone else did to her. But Jesus was very different. He gently talked to her about Himself, and about the Father in Heaven. He talked to her about how the Heavenly Father has sent Jesus to the world so that Jesus could tell the world all about the Father's love for them. Jesus taught her about Himself, and about the Father's loving heart. And then the Samaritan woman began to open up. And Jesus helped her talk about her mistakes to Him, and reminded her that the Father loves her no matter what she's done. But He taught her that it was important to tell Jesus about her mistakes, so that He could help her with it.

After they talked, the Samaritan woman was so relieved and joyful and excited that she left the well and told everyone in the city about Jesus and what He had told her. Then she invited everyone to go with her back to Jesus so that they could all hear what Jesus had to say about the Father's loving heart. And everyone did follow her back to Jesus where they listened and learned and began to realize their mistakes. But none of them were embarrassed or afraid about talking to Jesus about their mistakes because Jesus showed them how much He and the Heavenly Father love every one of them.

WE SHOULD ACT AS CHILDREN OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Jesus helped the Samaritan woman realize something very important – He helped her understand that when we feel a bit afraid or embarrassed because of something we did, we should think back to see if what we did was against the Father's commandments. The Father loves all of us and wants us all to be His children. He gave us this gift for free, because He loves us very much and wants us to be with Him. But if we are going to be with Him as His children, we must act like His children. That is why God gave us commandments – to help us know how the children of God should act, and to help us stay away from the devil and his temptations.

The Samaritan woman forgot about God’s commandments and she made many mistakes. And what’s worse, although she knew her mistakes she didn’t try to correct herself. She knew that she was not acting as a true child of the Father, but she didn’t try to change. And she was too embarrassed to ask for help or to admit her mistakes to anyone. She didn’t think anyone would help her. She didn’t think that God her Father would still love her and be with her. So she decided to stay away from everyone, even from God. But Jesus went straight to her; she may have been too embarrassed to go to God, but God was very eager to be with her. But when Jesus went to see her, He did not want to frighten or embarrass her. So He didn’t really tell her who He was until after they started talking together and she began to trust Him and open up. It was then that Jesus reminded her about how special she was to the God. He taught her about that God always loves her, and that she should never feel alone, even if she breaks His commandments. But He also helped her understand that she ought to always act like a child of God. And if she makes a mistake, she should quickly think about God’s commandments and His love, and remember that she was a child of God. Then she should talk to God about her mistake. Once she does that, God will help her change and will give her strength to help her act as His child.

CONCLUSION OF INTRODUCTORY STORY

After Peter’s dad finished reading the story of the Samaritan woman, he closed the Bible and put it beside Peter’s bed. He looked at Peter in the eyes and said to him, “Peter, God the Father always loves you, no matter what. That is why He sent us Jesus – to teach us that. Now, is there anything you want to talk about? Why have you been hiding in your room all day? Why are you so sad?”

Peter thinks for a while and remembers the story of the Samaritan woman. What do you think Peter will do next? [Guide the kids to answer that Peter will tell his father the truth, and that his father will gently teach him what Peter ought to have done instead of cheating. Then they should both pray together before Peter goes to bed.]

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Did Jesus judge or accuse the Samaritan woman? What did He do instead?

A. *No, He was gentle and loving.*

Q. Did Jesus accept the Samaritan woman?

A. He did, despite the things that she had done wrong.

Unit III: Lent Journey and Pascha

Purpose: Through baptism, we die as children of the world and rise again as children of our Heavenly Father. Through the Eucharist, we partake of Christ's holy Body and Blood and share in His Sonship. This unit takes us on the journey of the Holy Lent, teaching us about the Father's unconditional love and acceptance, as well as the importance of relying on our Father for our needs. The lessons of this unit are designed to affirm our identity as children of the Father. As we embark on the journey of the Lent, we immerse ourselves in our Heavenly Father's care, and we trust that our Father will always accept us as His children. The unit also reminds us of the important Lenten theme to love and care for each other, trusting that the Father will support us and work through us. The unit concludes with a review of the ultimate sign of the Father's unconditional love and acceptance of us: the sacrifice of His Only Son.

20. PALM SUNDAY

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 21:1-17

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. ³And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

⁴All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ⁵"Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. ⁸And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." ¹²Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" ¹⁴Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. ¹⁵But when the

chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant ¹⁶and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?" ¹⁷Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

John 12:12-19

¹²The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!" ¹⁴Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵"Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. ¹⁷Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. ¹⁸For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. ¹⁹The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

CHURCH FATHERS:

Justin Martyr, Dialogue of Justin CHAPTER 135

CHRIST IS KING OF ISRAEL, AND CHRISTIANS ARE THE ISRAELITIC RACE

And when Scripture says, 'I am the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, who have made known Israel your King,' (Is 43:15) will you not understand that truly Christ is the everlasting King? For you are aware that Jacob the son of Isaac was never a king. And therefore Scripture again, explaining to us, says what king is meant by Jacob and Israel: 'Jacob is my Servant, I will uphold Him; and Israel is mine Elect, my soul shall receive Him. I have given Him my Spirit; and He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, and His voice shall not be heard without. The bruised reed He shall not break, and the smoking flax He shall not quench, until He shall bring forth judgment to victory. He shall shine, and shall not be broken, until He set judgment on the earth. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust' (Is 42:1-4). Then is it Jacob the patriarch in whom the Gentiles and yourselves shall trust? or is it not Christ?

As, therefore, Christ is the Israel and the Jacob, even so we, who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelite race. But let us attend rather to the very word: 'And I will bring forth,' He says, 'the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah: and it shall inherit My holy mountain; and Mine Elect and My servants shall possess the inheritance, and shall dwell there; and there shall be folds of flocks in the thicket, and the valley of Achor shall be a resting-place of cattle for the people who have sought Me. But as for you, who forsake Me, and forget My holy mountain, and prepare a table for demons, and fill out drink for the demon, I shall give you to the sword. You shall all fall with a slaughter; for I called you, and you hearkened not, and did evil

before me, and did choose that wherein I delighted not' (Is 65:9-12).

Such are the words of Scripture; understand, therefore, that the seed of Jacob now referred to is something else, and not, as may be supposed, spoken of your people. For it is not possible for the seed of Jacob to leave an entrance for the descendants of Jacob, or for [God] to have accepted the very same persons whom He had reproached with unfitness for the inheritance, and promise it to them again; but as there the prophet says, 'And now, O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord; for He has sent away His people, the house of Jacob, because their land was full, as at the first, of soothsayers and divinations (Is 2:5);' even so it is necessary for us here to observe that there are two seeds of Judah, and two races, as there are two houses of Jacob: the one begotten by blood and flesh, the other by faith and the Spirit.

REFLECTION:

In this lesson, which should be given two weeks before Palm Sunday (the Resurrection lesson should be given the week before Palm Sunday), the children will spend the time preparing for the Palm Sunday procession. They can color pictures to carry with their palms.

While it is important for the children to be ready for Palm Sunday and feel excited about participating in the procession, it is also important that they are told about Holy Week and how important and special this week is for the church so that they have some idea of what is coming.

PRAYER:

O Lord, our Lord, how wondrous has become Your name in all the earth, for the greatness of Your beauty is exalted above the heavens. Out of the mouth of little children and babes You have prepared praise. Prepare also, O Lord, our souls for praising You, hymning You, blessing You, serving You, worshiping You, glorifying You, giving thanks to You every day and every hour. Amen.

Fraction to the Father for Hosanna Sunday

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

He who is above the Cherubim, today appeared in Jerusalem, riding on a colt in great glory, surrounded by ranks of ni-angelos! -Hymn for Palm Sunday

VOCABULARY:

Palm Sunday, Hosanna (save now! / save now, we pray! / save, we beseech You!), Holy Week, (Pascha)

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Jesus Christ is the King of Kings
Liturgical:	Processions
Moral:	We serve our church
Spiritual:	Sharing with our Lord in His passion

CONNECTION POINT

Our Lord spent His life serving people, teaching them, and curing their sicknesses. When it came closer to the time for Him to be crucified, He knew it. The week before our Lord was crucified especially is a very important one for the church. It is called Holy Week, and in that week, we remember hour by hour the events that our Lord experienced. It begins with Palm Sunday.

INTRODUCTION

Children are to spend this lesson time preparing for the Palm Sunday procession.

LESSON BODY:

Each servant should give the children a short introduction to Palm Sunday and then Holy Week while they are preparing for the procession. This can be done one-on-one with a child or in small groups. The servants could share with the children how special Holy Week is for them personally and why they feel very close to Christ during this week. Also, it is important to mention that as a church, we are sharing with our Lord His sufferings that He experienced.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: Children prepare for the palm procession

Alternative plans:

CONCLUSION

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 12:13

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss Kingship with the children. They should help them understand that Jesus Christ is King of kings, meaning that He is more important and has more authority than the President or any other ruler. They can help them understand that He is king of the entire universe, all the galaxies and the stars, the places that no one has ever seen. So He is also infinitely more powerful than any ruler on earth. For the daily readings, the children can try to draw what is written.

1. God is Creator of everything *Genesis 1*
2. Isaiah saw a vision of our Lord on His throne *Isaiah 6:1-4*
3. Ezekiel also saw a vision of our Lord *Ezekiel 1:1-28*
4. Daniel also saw a vision of our Lord *Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14*
5. St. John saw our Lord *Revelation 1:9-20*

The glory of the Lord would appear, and it would be something people could see *Exodus 24:16-18, 2 Chronicles 7:1-6*

Unit III: Lent Journey And Pascha

Purpose: Through baptism, we die as children of the world and rise again as children of our Heavenly Father. Through the Eucharist, we partake of Christ's holy Body and Blood and share in His Sonship. This unit takes us on the journey of the Holy Lent, teaching us about the Father's unconditional love and acceptance, as well as the importance of relying on our Father for our needs. The lessons of this unit are designed to affirm our identity as children of the Father. As we embark on the journey of the Lent, we immerse ourselves in our Heavenly Father's care, and we trust that our Father will always accept us as His children. The unit also reminds us of the important Lenten theme to love and care for each other, trusting that the Father will support us and work through us. The unit concludes with a review of the ultimate sign of the Father's unconditional love and acceptance of us: the sacrifice of His Only Son.

21. HOLY WEEK OF PASCHA

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

John 11,12: Raising Lazarus and Palm Sunday

Mark 11: 12-26: The fig tree

Matthew 26:1,2 Our Lord foretell His Cross

Mark 14,15:

REFLECTION

Holy Week, or Pascha, is the week before Easter - Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. What is Pascha? It literally means passing over

Where did we get this term from? it is a reminder for when the angel of death passed over the Israelites during the 10th plague and did not kill them.

So with Jesus, in Him and through Him, we passed over death to eternal life. Jesus came to conquer death for us so that we may live eternally with him.

We're going to review the days of Holy Week today. We'll start with the Saturday before Palm Sunday.

Lazarus Saturday

- It is the last big and public miracle the Lord performed before His last journey to Jerusalem. Jesus gave life back to Lazarus at Bethany. How long was Lazarus dead for?

Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday events actually begins Saturday night during the vespers when the church gives us palms to celebrate the next day.
- Palm Sunday: He entered into Jerusalem riding on a donkey and people laid clothes and palm branches. Do you know what they were shouting? "Hosanna King of David, Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord"
- Jesus is a king but not of this world. We'll talk much more about Palm Sunday next week.

Sunday Night:

- Cleansed the temple When the Lord entered into the temple, He drove out those who were buying and selling.

Holy Monday of Pascha

- Jesus cursed the Fig tree. On the way from Bethany to the temple He cursed the fig tree because it had nothing but leaves –
 - (1) it immediately dies because it is fruitless. It is a warning to us of what will happen to those who do not follow and listen to Christ.
 - (2) It is also a symbol of hypocrisy: usually when a tree has a lot of leaves, it should also have fruit with it. but this tree had just leaves and no fruit – it was showing off, pretending to be something it wasn't
 - (3) Teaches us to have faith in God: as soon as Christ cursed it, it withered away and the disciples were shocked. Jesus told the disciples that if they have faith, whatever you ask when you pray, you will receive

Holy Tuesday of Pascha

- Jesus is tested by many people and He is able to answer each one of them while talking to us about Salvation, Resurrection of the dead, and the Kingdom of God. They eventually have nothing else to test Him on - He is asked what the greatest commandment is and gives us: "you have only one God, love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself"
- He uses parables to teach them about salvation that comes through Christ Jesus
- He gives a lot of warnings about the end of time & used many parables to explain the Kingdom of God and the end of ages to them
- Jesus reveals the day of His crucifixion.

Holy Wednesday of Pascha

2 events happen on Wednesday.

- In the morning Mary anoints Jesus' Holy head:
- she uses expensive oil
- Jesus says she anointed Him for His burial
- Judas (disciples) see this as a waste of \$ but Jesus corrects them

- there will be a memorial to this woman wherever the Gospel is preached She gave Jesus something very special, it was something from the depth of her heart. We don't have to spend a lot of money to truly give to Christ from our hearts, as long as we give Him something that means something to us. It can be anything at all, including money, time, acts of service... "whatever you do to the least of these you are doing to Me."
- Judas Betrayal - Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest to discuss how to hand the Lord Jesus to them.
- for 30 pieces of silver
- the Bible emphasizes that Judas was "one of the twelve" - he was close to Jesus, emphasizes the depth of the betrayal
- in contrast to the woman from the morning who spent a lot of money to anoint Jesus
- reason we fast on Wednesday's - we, like Judas, betray Christ every time we sin

Holy Thursday of Pascha

Prepares for the Last Supper/Passover

- Jesus told two disciples, Peter and John, to go into the village and follow a man carrying a pitcher of water to the house and there they will be lead to the an upper room to prepare the Passover meal
- Last Supper: what was the first thing Jesus did at the start of the Last Supper?
- Jesus starts by washing the feet of the disciples - shows LOVE and HUMILITY. act done by servants and he commands His disciples to wash each others feet - those who serve are greater than those who sit at the table. We can do acts of service all around, by helping others in Church, cleaning up around us, taking care of one another - loving one another.
- The Lord teaches us that before partaking of the new sacrament, washing or repentance should be preceded: St. Peter said "You shall never wash my feet" and Jesus responded and said "if I do not wash you, you have no part in Me." but Jesus would not wash all of St. Peter, just his feet. Likewise we are not re-baptized every time we confess.
- Jesus knows that one there will betray Him

Thursday Night

- The church reads the chapters of the Holy Spirit (John 14-17) on the 1st hour of Friday Eve. The Holy Spirit is described as the Helper and the Spirit of Truth. Christ promises the disciples the Holy Spirit will come after He leaves them to help guide them and bring many to Him.
- After they were done eating, Jesus took the disciples and went to the garden.
- Suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Jesus took Peter, James and John a little farther than the rest, told them to keep watch "lest they fall into temptation" - but the fell asleep do to our weak flesh, 3 times He went and prayed and every time He came back and found them sleeping.
- Christ went alone and prayed one of the best examples of prayer, - "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as You will" (Matt 26:39) - completely submits His will to the Father's

- He was sent help - an angel came to strengthen Him, it is important to remember that Christ, while fully divine, was also fully human and was going through this much pain as a human
- Christ prayed so earnestly that he was sweating blood, was in agony as a human

Arrest and Examination by Annas

- They came to arrest Him with a "great multitude with swords and clubs" (Matt 26: 47) with Judas leading them
- Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss, Jesus knows he is betraying Him and still calls him friend saying "Friend, why have you come?" (Matt 26:50) giving Judas even to the very last moment to repent
- Simon Peter pulled out a sword and cut the ear off one of the soldiers, but Jesus corrects him saying "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (Matt 26:52-54) 12 legions = 72,000 angels - Jesus went willingly to His death and resurrection in order to save us! He was in control of His death every single moment
- Annas, the previous high priest is the first to question Jesus. Jesus was very open about His teachings, and asks him why he doesn't ask those who heard His teachings instead. Jesus here receives the first kind of physical abuse for talking back, although He did nothing wrong.

Great Friday

- The church is clothed in black till the 12th hour on Fri, when the alter veil is opened indicating the reconciliation with the Father.
- On Good Friday we go hour by hour with Christ during his crucifixion.
- Who knows what happened during the 1st hour?
 - Because of this, Pilate and Herod – who were not friends – became friends
- 3rd hour: The hour of the trial
- 6th hour: The Hour of the Cross
- Jesus is placed on the cross and darkness covered all the land for the next 3 hours. Remember this is called Pascha week, a reflection of the Passover in the Old Testament. What was the second to last plague?
 - It was darkness - came as a warning to the Egyptians that the next plague was the last and biggest of them all. It was death of the first born, however the Israelites were saved. As Christ is the only begotten of the Father, through His death we are saved.

9th Hour

- Jesus Dies
- It is finished
- The prophecies said not a bone of Jesus' body would be broken
- Usually they would break the legs of those crucified to speed up the dying process. But Jesus, in control of the whole process, died without his legs being broken – shows He voluntarily gave up His spirit.

- Pierced His side: They pierced His side and out came what?
- Blood and WATER

11th and 12th Hours

- Jesus Body is taken down from the Cross
- The Burial
- Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus, wound it in linen with spices, as the manner of Jews to bury and laid him in a new tomb.

Bright Saturday

- Christ's body lays in the Tomb
- Christ Himself went down to Hades, to free all those who were waiting for Him, took them and opened back the door of paradise.
- You have conquered death, and humiliated Satan with your power. Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

Glorious Resurrection Sunday

- Visits to the Tomb
- Christ appears to:
- Mary Magdalene -
- Disciples of Emmaus -
- The Apostles –

How to benefit?

- Prepare your mind by going over the main theme of the day before you leave your house. know the theme of each day, or the subject, the readings go around.
- During the lengthy melody of the psalm try to meditate on the link between the prophecies the bible, the psalms of the day. Study the messages of the prophets, psalms, and gospel
- Use your imagination actively so each hour you are picturing what Christ and the disciples went through. Listen to what Christ is teaching us, it is very relevant to our lives today!

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ ΘΩΚ ΙΕ ΙΧΟΥ ΝΕΥ ΠΙΩΟΤ ΝΕΥ ΠΙΣΟΥΤ ΝΕΥ ΠΙΔΥΑΖΙ ΨΑ ΕΝΕΣ ΔΥΗΝ:
ΕΥΑΔΗΟΤΗΛ ΠΕΝΗΟΤΙ ΠΕΝΟΤΡΟ.

+ Thine is the power, the glory, the blessing, and the majesty, forever Amen. Emmanuel our God and our King.

VOCABULARY:

Pascha, Holy Thursday, Great Friday, Saturday of Light

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ suffered and was buried
Liturgical:	Holy week themes and events (summary)
Moral:	Our Lord suffered for us
Spiritual:	Celebrating the Holy week of Pascha

LESSON BODY:

Use the white Board to write the days and themes of holy Week:

Lazarus Saturday: remembering the miracle of raising Lazarus (morning) and the feast at Bethany (night)

Palm Sunday: The Great Entrance into Jerusalem

Monday of Holy Pascha: The Fig tree

Tuesday of Holy Pascha: Our Lord tells the day of His cross (Friday)

Wednesday of Holy Pascha: Judas betrays our Lord

Thursday of Holy Pascha: Our Lord make the First Eucharist

Great Friday of Holy Pascha: Our Lord is Crucified died and was buried

Joyous Saturday of Light: Our Lord's body is in the tomb

Holy Resurrection Sunday: Our Lord is Risen from the dead on Sunday early morning.

Help the students memorize the days and the themes

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Icons of the Holy week: raising Lazarus, Palm Sunday, Fig tree, Parables(ten virgins) The woman pouring the perfume, Holy Eucharist/last supper, Gethsemane, the Cross, The Burial, Christ in Hades, and the Holy Resurrection**
- **White Board and dry eraser or booster board and color markers**
- **Prepare a pack of paper icons for the Holy week for each student to take home to be used at home for each day of the holy Pascha.**

HOME ACTIVITY

Instruct mothers to review the Holy week days and themes with their children. also to use an icon for each day at home to highlight the importance of the Holy week and keep the themes clear in the minds and hearts of the second graders. Use the same icons that was used in the class.

We Are Children of God

UNIT IV: THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP (9 LESSONS)

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we are in union with our Lord and Savior Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, charitable deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

22. Introduction

23. Love

24. Peace & Joy

25. Patience

26. Kindness and Goodness

27. Faithfulness

28. Gentleness

29. Self control

30. Unit Review

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, charitable deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

22. INTRODUCTION TO THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Galatians 5:22,23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Romans 8:1-17

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body,

you will live. 14For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 2 CHAPTER IV. That not by participation are the Properties of God the Father in the Son, but Essentially and by Nature.

4:10, 11 *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."* The woman said to Him, But He calls the quickening gift of the Spirit living water, whereby alone human nature, albeit well nigh parched to its very roots, rendered now dry and barren of all virtue by the villainies of the devil, run back to its pristine beauty of nature, and drinking in the life-giving grace, is adorned with varied forms of good things, and shooting forth into a virtuous habit puts forth most thriving shoots of love towards God. Some such thing as this God says to us by the Prophet Isaiah also, *"The beast of the field shall honor Me, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen, whom I have formed for Myself to declare Mine excellencies.* And another of the Saints says that the soul of the righteous *shall be as a fruitful tree, and shall spring up as grass among the waters, and shall appear as the willow by running water."*

The Book of St. Basil, *On the Spirit*: CHAPTER 9 *Definitive conceptions about the Spirit which conform to the teaching of the Scriptures.*

22. LET us now investigate what are our common conceptions concerning the Spirit, as well those which have been gathered by us from Holy Scripture concerning It as those which we have received from the unwritten tradition of the Fathers. First of all we ask, who on hearing the titles of the Spirit is not lifted up in soul, who does not raise his conception to the supreme nature? It is called "Spirit of God," "Spirit of truth which proceed from the Father," "right Spirit," "a leading Spirit." Its proper and peculiar title is "Holy Spirit;" which is a name specially appropriate to everything that is incorporeal, purely immaterial, and indivisible. So our Lord, when teaching the woman who thought God to be an object of local worship that the incorporeal is incomprehensible, said "God is a spirit." On our hearing, then, of a spirit, it is impossible to form the idea of a nature circumscribed, subject to change and variation, or at all like the creature. We are compelled to advance in our conceptions to the highest, and to think of an intelligent essence, in power infinite, in magnitude unlimited, unmeasured by times or ages, generous of Its good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by Its inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end; perfecting all other things, but Itself in nothing lacking; living not as needing restoration, but as Supplier of life; not growing by additions; but straightway full, self-established, omnipresent, origin of sanctification, light perceptible to the mind, supplying, as it were, through Itself, illumination to every faculty in the search for truth; by nature unapproachable, apprehended by reason of goodness, filling all things with Its power, but communicated only to the worthy; not shared in one

measure, but distributing Its energy according to “the proportion of faith;” in essence simple, in powers various, wholly present in each and being wholly everywhere; impassively divided, shared without loss of ceasing to be entire, after the likeness of the sunbeam, whose kindly light falls on him who enjoys it as though it shone for him alone, yet illumines land and sea and mingles with the air. So, too, is the Spirit to everyone who receives it, as though given to him alone, and yet It sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind, and is enjoyed by all who share It, according to the capacity, not of Its power, but of their nature.

23. Now the Spirit is not brought into intimate association with the soul by local approximation. How indeed could there be a corporeal approach to the incorporeal? This association results from the withdrawal of the passions which, coming afterwards gradually on the soul from its friendship to the flesh, have alienated it from its close relationship with God. Only then after a man is purified from the shame whose stain he took through his wickedness, and has come back again to his natural beauty, and as it were cleaning the Royal Image and restoring its ancient form, only thus is it possible for him to draw near to the Paraclete. And He, like the sun, will by the aid of your purified eye show you in Himself the image of the invisible, and in the blessed spectacle of the image you shall behold the unspeakable beauty of the archetype. Through His aid hearts are lifted up, the weak are held by the hand, and they who are advancing are brought to perfection. Shining upon those that are cleansed from every spot, He makes them spiritual by fellowship with Himself. Just as when a sunbeam falls on bright and transparent bodies, they themselves become brilliant too, and shed forth a fresh brightness from themselves, so souls wherein the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual, and send forth their grace to others. Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and, highest of all, the being made God. Such, then, to instance a few out of many, are the conceptions concerning the Holy Spirit, which we have been taught to hold concerning His greatness, His dignity, and His operations, by the oracles of the Spirit themselves.

REFLECTION:

The Holy Spirit is the communicator between us and the Father, through Christ the mediator. The Church fathers speak of two core relationships: the relationship of the Father and Son, and the relationship of the children of God with the Father *through the Son*.

The next few lessons will teach us about what it means have the qualities of our Heavenly Father as part of us. We said the qualities are: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, patience, and self-control. How would you describe each of these qualities? Can you give me examples of what each one means?

PRAYER:

Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! 28Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: 29that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, "My name shall be there," that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. 30And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive. A Prayer of King Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:27-30):

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

- + Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.
He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.
- + He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...
- + Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens
- + This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens
- + Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Holy Spirit, Trinity, Heir

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Spirit is the source of <i>the Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Liturgical:	We are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the Chrismation and is renewed in us in the Eucharist
Moral:	The Fruit of the Spirit help us to keep the Commandments
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

CONNECTION POINT

Through baptism we become adopted as children of God, and the Divine Eucharist provides us with the nourishment and union with Christ and His Church. Thus, we become part of the Father's holy family. The ten commandments teach us how to act as true children of God – they are the Father's instructions to His children, which allow them to live a holy life. Not only do we learn to obey the commandments, but we learn to trust in our Heavenly Father just as Abraham trusted in God when he called him to the promised land. The Fruit of the Spirit unit teaches us the spiritual qualities of the children of God, which are shown outwardly through our actions and obedience to his commandments, manifesting our sonship of the Father to the world.

INTRODUCTION

THE TREE METAPHOR

When you think of "fruit", what comes to mind? [Let the kids share what comes to mind. If and when someone says, 'tree,' say] ok, let's think about the image of a tree that is bearing fruit for now. Keep that picture in your head: there is a big tree with a very strong trunk and all kinds of branches and nice, juicy, sweet fruit hanging of all the branches. [Draw this picture on the board] Now, what if I told you that *we* are the branches of the tree. [Label the branches of your tree with the students' and servants' names]. Our Lord Jesus Christ is like the trunk of the tree [Label it]. Now for the question that we are going to be talking about today and for the next several weeks – what are the fruits? [Let the kids try to guess for a few minutes].

The fruit is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. [Label on the drawing]. All of these nice things that we feel inside when we are connected to our Lord Jesus Christ and we have His Holy Spirit within us and flowing through us, just like the sap flows through a natural tree and goes throughout to all of its branches and leaves even. What happens when a branch is broken off of a tree? Is the fruit that was on the branch going to survive? No – the branch can't live on its own, it won't be able to get water so it certainly cannot sustain fruit. The same thing happens to us when we are not connected to Christ and have His Holy Spirit within us: these beautiful fruits – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control – start to die in us.

LESSON BODY:

Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8)

Solomon built an enormous temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. During the dedication ceremony, the priests brought the ark into the temple, and everyone offered sacrifices. What was in the ark? Only two tablets. What were written on the two tablets? The Ten Commandments! (This connects the unit to the Ten Commandments unit). As the priests left, the Spirit of God filled the temple with a glorious cloud.

The same happens in baptism, we are cleansed in the baptismal font and are rebuilt as a temple of God. Abouna anoints us with Myron oil and the Spirit of God is planted in our bodies like new seeds. If we nurture it with the Eucharist and prayer and follow the commandments, we will cultivate the various fruit seed and grow them. We have to be careful because if we lose one fruit, we will slowly lose them all.

Distribute the paper with the verse from Galatians 5:22-23 and a table with the 9 fruits on the back. Put kids into groups and have them fill out the table: "What the Fruit of the Spirit means to me." They should brainstorm what each fruit means. This analysis from the students will become the introduction to each following lesson. The students will be able to see if their word understanding is the true meaning.

After they finish, the teachers put 9 columns on the whiteboard with each fruit at the top of a column. Then the individual groups come to the board and write what they think the fruit means. Discuss the following: they are called "fruit" not "fruits"; if you lose one fruit, you start to lose all of them. Example: if I yell at my friend, I lose peace, patience, love, kindness, etc...

Have the kids explain which ones you lose and why you lose it in different scenarios (as a test of their understanding).

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, do you think He ever lost His patience? Or was unloving with anyone? Never. He is always so, so loving and gentle, even when He was dying on the Cross. People said that His face was very peaceful and gentle, even though He was in so much pain. And He was very loving, even to the people who were hurting Him. He asked His Father to forgive Him, even while they were making fun of Him and nailing Him to the Cross.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Idea: Handout with the Galatians 5:22-23 verse to be written by the child, the tree with the 9 Fruit of the Spirit in it (the child adds his/her name to the center of the tree) and the chart entitled "What the Fruit of the Spirit mean to me" (this is a timeline of the unit and includes the Bible/Saint stories for each Fruit.)

- Blackboard and markers
- Worksheet "What the Fruit of the Spirit means to me"
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS: CAN BE USED AS STUDY QUESTIONS

Q. Name three of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

A. *love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*

Q. What part of the tree is Christ?

A. *the trunk*

Q. What part of the tree are we?

A. *the branches*

Q. Can the branches live without the trunk of the tree?

A. *No*

Q. What happens to these fruits within us when we are not connected to Christ?

A. *They start to die*

Q. What do we need to grow a BIG tree?

A. *Seeds, water, sun and good soil*

Q. How do we get the gift of the Holy Spirit seeds in us?

A. *Baptism when we become children of God*

Q. How many Fruit of the Spirit parts are there?

A. *Nine*

Q. What happens when we lose one part of the Fruit of the Spirit?

A. *We slowly start to lose all of them because they are all connected and related.*

Q. Why are they called Fruit of the Spirit, not Fruits?

A. *They work together → you can't have some only, you have to have them all working together ALWAYS.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

III - HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Children will take home today's activity sheet. They are asked to look at it each Saturday night to be reminded of the story related to that Fruit and see what it means to them.

Memorization: *5*"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. *6*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. *7*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done

for you. 8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." John 15:5-8

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, charitable deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

23. LOVE

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

1 Cor 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Luke 10:25-37

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when

he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, translated by Benedicta Ward, SLG – Page 79

Abba Theodore of Enaton said, 'When I was young, I lived in the desert. One day I went to the bakery to make two loaves, and there I found a brother also wanting to make bread, but there was no one to help him. So I put mine on one side, to lend him a hand. When the work was done, another brother came, and again I lent him a hand in cooking his food. Then a third came, and I did the same; and similarly one after the other, I baked for each of those who came. I made six batches. Later I made my own two loaves, since no one else came.'

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom,

Commentary on John, Book 11, CHAPTER IX. That the dignity of Godhead is inherent in the Son; even though He is said to have received this from the Father, because of His humanity and the form of His humiliation.

17: 11 *Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.*

He wishes indeed the disciples to be kept in unity of mind and purpose, being blended, as it were, with one another in soul and spirit and the bond of brotherly love; and to be linked together in an unbroken chain of affection, so that their unity may be so far perfected as that their elective affinity may resemble the natural unity which exists between the Father and the Son; and, remaining undebased and invincible, may not be distorted by anything whatever that exists in the world, or by the lusts of the flesh, into dissimilarity of purpose; but rather preserving in the unity of true piety and holiness the power of love intact, which also came to pass. For, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, *the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul*, in the unity that is of the Spirit. And this is what Paul himself also meant, when he said: *One body and one Spirit; for we who are many are one body in Christ, for we all partake of the one bread*, and we have all received the unction of one Spirit, that is, the Spirit of Christ. As, then, they were to be one body, and to partake of one and the selfsame Spirit, He desires His disciples to be preserved in a unity of spirit which nothing could disturb, and in unbroken singleness of mind. And if any man suppose that after this manner the disciples are united even as the Father and the Son are One, not merely in Substance, but also in purpose (for the holy Nature of God has one Will, and one and the selfsame purpose altogether), let him so think. For He will not stray wide of the mark, since we

can see identity of purpose among true Christians, though we have not consubstantiality as the Father and the Word That proceeded from Him, and is in Him.

The Book of St. Basil, *On the Spirit*:

CHAPTER 22 - *Establishment of the natural communion of the Spirit from His being, equally with the Father and the Son, unapproachable in thought.*

53. MOREOVER the surpassing excellence of the nature of the Spirit is to be learned not only from His having the same title as the Father and the Son, and sharing in their operations, but also from His being, like the Father and the Son, unapproachable in thought. For what our Lord says of the Father as being above and beyond human conception, and what He says of the Son, this same language He uses also of the Holy Ghost. "O righteous Father," He says, "the world has not known You," meaning here by the world not the complex whole compounded of heaven and earth, but this life of ours subject to death, and exposed to innumerable vicissitudes. And when discoursing of Himself He says, "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me" again in this passage, applying the word *world* to those who being bound down by this material and carnal life, and beholding the truth by material sight alone, were ordained, through their unbelief in the resurrection, to see our Lord no more with the eyes of the heart. And He said the same concerning the Spirit. "The Spirit of truth," He says, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." For the carnal man, who has never trained his mind to contemplation, but rather keeps it buried deep in lust of the flesh, as in mud, is powerless to look up to the spiritual light of the truth. And so the world, that is life enslaved by the affections of the flesh, can no more receive the grace of the Spirit than a weak eye the light of a sunbeam. But the Lord, who by His teaching bore witness to purity of life, gives to His disciples the power of now beholding and contemplating the Spirit. For "now," He says, "You are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you," wherefore "the world cannot receive Him, because it sees Him not,... but you know Him, for He dwells with you." And so says Isaiah; — "He that spread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that gives breath unto the people upon it, and Spirit to them that trample on it"; for they that trample clown earthly things and rise above them are borne witness to as worthy of the gift of the Holy Ghost. What then ought to be thought of Him whom the world cannot receive, and Whom saints alone can contemplate through pureness of heart? What kind of honors can be deemed adequate to Him?

REFLECTION:

Loving God and Neighbor

The greatest example of the expression of God's love is Jesus Christ – the only-begotten Son of God. Christ's ministry here on earth among both the Jews and the Gentiles, as well as His death and Resurrection, are all expressions of the Father's love for us, His adopted children. But it goes both ways; just as the Father loves us, we must also love the Father – that is how the Holy Spirit gives this gift. Christ Himself taught us how to love the Father, just as Christ Himself loves the Father. Through living in union with Christ we love the Father just as Christ loves the Father. Love must not only come from the Father, but must be directed back to the Father. (Mark 12:28-34) We

show our love to the Father the same way Christ showed His love to the Father. We follow in the footsteps of Christ, serving all, caring for all, and above all, and loving all.

Making space in our hearts for God's love

It will be very difficult for us to really love one another when our hearts are not filled with God's love for us. The more space in our hearts that we reserve for other things in the world, the less space we allow for God's love to fill. And the less space in our hearts that God fills, the more difficult it will be for us to love our neighbors and love God Himself. We must try to empty our hearts from our worldly attachments and from our selfish desires so that God can fill our entire heart with His love. The more I empty my heart of things that have to do with **ME** and what **I** want, the more the Holy Spirit will fill my heart for **GOD** and **OTHERS**. But if my heart is cramped up with many things, there will be less and less space for God's love to fill, and it will be impossible for us to follow God's commandments to love Him and neighbor.

PRAYER:

"O' Good Lord, do not take Your Holy Spirit away from us, this which You sent upon Your holy disciples and honorable apostles at the third hour. Create a pure heart in me, O' God and put a new and loyal Spirit within me, do not banish me from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." Litany - 3rd hour

II LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

- + Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.
He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.
- + He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...
- + Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens
- + This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens
- + Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Love, Samaritan, compassion

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Spirit is the source of <i>the Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Liturgical:	We are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the Chrismation and is renewed in us in the Eucharist
Moral:	The first fruit is Love
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

CONNECTION POINT

REVIEW TREE METAPHOR

The Holy Spirit gives us the Fruit of the Spirit and we receive this gift as seeds that are implanted in us by the Holy Baptism and Chrismation. We must nurture and grow the seeds continually by reading the bible, keeping God's Commandments, partaking of the Eucharist continually and continuing in charitable deeds. There are 9 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. If you lose one Fruit you slowly start to lose others. They are named "**fruit**" not FRUITS because they work together and must always be together.

INTRODUCTION

Be a good mirror! Let God's love for you reflect on others through your loving deeds towards others. Love is not just a feeling to be said often like "I love my bike" or "I love ice cream". Godly love is an action that we chose to do. We should always chose the Godly way and love someone even when we don't think they deserve our love. We should look for ways to be able to constantly show God's love to others.

LESSON BODY:

- Ask the children what they think **love** is or what love means and let them share their answers. Last week we learned about the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, and how they are given to us from God the Father.
- We also learned that only God can grant us these gifts through the Holy Spirit, and that it is up to us to ask for them and to allow God to use them through us. Today we will talk about the first fruit of the Holy Spirit – Love.
- We hear and use the word "Love" many times without thinking carefully about its meaning. We say that we love this or that toy, this or that food, this or that person, but we don't really think about the meaning of Love as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Christ taught us that God is Love; so whenever we think of Love, we must keep God in our minds. Love is the way God cares for His children, and the way God works through His children. Love is the way God talks to His children,

and the way God helps His children. Whenever we think of Love, we should think of God and how He called us to be His family, as well as how He asked us to act toward each other.

- Love should be in all of God's children. And we will know when it is inside of us because we will feel it deep in our hearts – we will feel God working through us when we interact with our family, friends, and strangers –whoever they may be. This gift of the Holy Spirit, if it is truly in us, will work through us to express the Father's love to all.
- Explain that they are going to hear a story about how love shows itself truly and that you will ask them after the story is over to explain how this story was the same as *and* different from their ideas or answers they just shared, so they will need to really pay attention.

Option A: Read with them Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)

Our Lord told a story that illustrates that LOVE IS KIND, even to an enemy. In this story, the Jews had an enemy that lived very near to them. They were called Samaritans. When they traveled, Jewish people would do their best to walk around the land where the Samaritans lived.

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. Soon a Levite also came to the place and saw him and again passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Option B: Read the story of Abba Theodore

- Discuss the story with the children. Then ask them to describe love the way Abba Theodore showed it, and ask them to point out how this love was different from or the same to the way they described love at the beginning of class.

So we too can have this kind of love, because it is from God and He will give it to us!

Discussion questions

Q. What happened to the man who was traveling to Jericho?

A. *He was robbed and beaten nearly to death.*

Q. How did the priest and Levite react when they saw the wounded man lying on the road?

A. *They passed on the other side and did not help.*

Q. Who finally offered help?

A. *The enemy, a Samaritan*

Q. What did the Samaritan do for the wounded man?

A. *Cleaned him up and took him to an inn, then gave money for his care.*

Q. Who showed love and kindness in this story, a relative or an enemy?

A. *An enemy*

Q. What did the Samaritan expect in return for his kindness?

A. *Nothing*

Q. Is it enough to love those who love us? Why?

A. *No, Jesus commands us to show love to everyone.*

Q. What do we need to be filled with in order to love people with God's love?

A. *The Holy Spirit*

Q. How can we show love to someone this week?

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea: Handout:**

Page 1: 3 sections: a. Today's bible story b. Today's verse c. What did I learn about Love?

Page 2: "Love is ..." Word Search

Collect this handout to be placed in a Fruit of the Spirit packet for each child. The child will receive the packet at the conclusion of the Fruit of the Spirit Unit.

- **Scrap book building**

- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What did the good Samaritan do for the man who had been robbed and hurt?

A: When this Samaritan saw the man lying there, he had **compassion**. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, and he set the man on his own donkey (what was used to travel sometimes) and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day, when the Samaritan was getting ready to leave, he took out some money (two denarii), gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you send, when I come again, I will repay you.'

Q: Did the good Samaritan show love to the man?

A: Yes

Q: If we ask Christ for a fruit of the Holy Spirit what will He do?

A: He will give it to us, all we must do is ask and He will give.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

III HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

At home, children should continue to review the Introduction Lesson activity sheet. The servants should reiterate to the students that they should look at it every week on Saturday night to be reminded of the story and how it is related to that Fruit and see what it means to them and to review the previous week's fruit and story.

Memorization:

Love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34

"⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

24. PEACE AND JOY

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

A. Acts 16:26-34

¹⁶Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." ¹⁸And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. ¹⁹But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. ²⁰And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; ²¹and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." ²²Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." ²⁹Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴Now when he had brought

them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

B. The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, translated by Benedicta Ward, SLG – Page 131

Abba Macarius while he was in Egypt discovered a man who owned a beast of burden engaged in plundering Macarius' goods. So he came up to the thief as if he was a stranger and he helped him to load the animal. He saw him off in great peace of soul, saying, 'We have brought nothing into this world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.' (1 Tim 6:7) 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' (Job 1:21)

CHURCH FATHERS:

The Book of St. Basil, *On the Spirit*: Chapter 16

38. Moreover, from the things created at the beginning may be learnt the fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. The pure, intelligent, and super-mundane powers are and are styled holy, because they have their holiness of the grace given by the Holy Spirit. Accordingly the mode of the creation of the heavenly powers is passed over in Silence, for the historian of the cosmogony has revealed to us only the creation of things perceptible by sense. But do you, who has power from the things that are seen to form an analogy of the unseen, glorify the Maker by whom all things were made, visible and invisible, principalities and powers, authorities, thrones, and dominions, and all other reasonable natures whom we cannot name. And in the creation you should think first, I pray you, of the original cause of all things that are made, the Father; of the creative cause, the Son; of the perfecting cause, the Spirit; so that the ministering spirits subsist by the will of the Father, are brought into being by the operation of the Son, and perfected by the presence of the Spirit. Moreover, the perfection of angels is sanctification and continuance in it. And let no one imagine me either to affirm that there are three original hypostases or to allege the operation of the Son to be imperfect. For the first principle of existing things is One, creating through the Son and perfecting through the Spirit. The operation of the Father who work all in all is not imperfect, neither is the creating work of the Son incomplete if not perfected by the Spirit. The Father, who creates by His sole will, could not stand in any need of the Son, but nevertheless He wills through the Son; nor could the Son, who works according to the likeness of the Father, need co-operation, but the Son too wills to make perfect through the Spirit. "For by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath [the Spirit] of His mouth." The Word then is not a mere significant impression on the air, borne by the organs of speech; nor is the Spirit of His mouth a vapor, emitted by the organs of respiration; but the Word is He who "was with God in the beginning" and "was God," and the Spirit of the mouth of God is "the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father." You are therefore to perceive three, the Lord who gives the order, the Word who creates, and the Spirit who confirms. And what other thing could confirmation be than the perfecting according to holiness? This perfecting expresses the confirmation's firmness, unchangeableness, and fixity in good. But there is no sanctification without the Spirit. The powers of the heavens are not holy by nature; were it so there would in this respect be no difference between them and the Holy Spirit. It is in proportion to their relative excellence that they have their need of holiness from the Spirit. The branding-iron is conceived of

together with the fire; and yet the material and the fire are distinct. Thus too in the case of the heavenly powers; their substance is, peradventure, an aerial spirit, or an immaterial fire, as it is written, "Who makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire;" wherefore they exist in space and become visible, and appear in their proper bodily form to them that are worthy.

But their sanctification, being external to their substance, super induces their perfection through the communion of the Spirit. They keep their rank by their abiding in the good and true, and while they retain their freedom of will, never fall away from their patient attendance on Him who is truly good. It results that, if by your argument you do away with the Spirit, the hosts of the angels are disbanded, the dominions of archangels are destroyed, all is thrown into confusion, and their life loses law, order, and distinctness. For how are angels to cry "Glory to God in the highest" without being empowered by the Spirit? For "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and no man speaking by the Spirit of God call Jesus accursed;" as might be said by wicked and hostile spirits, whose fall establishes our statement of the freedom of the will of the invisible powers; being, as they are, in a condition of equipoise between virtue and vice, and on this account needing the succor of the Spirit. I indeed maintain that even Gabriel in no other way foretells events to come than by the foreknowledge of the Spirit, by reason of the fact that one of the boons distributed by the Spirit is prophecy. And whence did he who was ordained to announce the mysteries of the vision to the Man of Desires derive the wisdom whereby he was enabled to teach hidden things, if not from the Holy Spirit? The revelation of mysteries is indeed the peculiar function of the Spirit, as it is written, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." And how could "thrones, dominions, principalities and powers" live their blessed life, did they not "behold the face of the Father which is in heaven"? But to behold it is impossible without the Spirit! Just as at night, if you withdraw the light from the house, the eyes fall blind and their faculties become inactive, and the worth of objects cannot be discerned, and gold is trodden on in ignorance as though it were iron, so in the order of the intellectual world it is impossible for the high life of Law to abide without the Spirit. For it so to abide were as likely as that an army should maintain its discipline in the absence of its commander, or a chorus its harmony without the guidance of the coryphaeus. How could the Seraphim cry "Holy, Holy, Holy," were they not taught by the Spirit how often true religion requires them to lift their voice in this ascription of glory? Do "all His angels" and "all His hosts" praise God? It is through the co-operation of the Spirit. Do "thousand thousand" of angels stand before Him, and "ten thousand times ten thousand" ministering spirits? They are blamelessly doing their proper work by the power of the Spirit. All the glorious and unspeakable harmony of the highest heavens both in the service of God, and in the mutual concord of the celestial powers, can therefore only be preserved by the direction of the Spirit. Thus with those beings who are not gradually perfected by increase and advance, but are perfect from the moment of the creation, there is in creation the presence of the Holy Spirit, who confers on them the grace that flows from Him for the completion and perfection of their essence.

39. But when we speak of the dispensations made for man by our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who will gainsay their having been accomplished through the grace of the Spirit? Whether you wish to examine ancient evidence; — the blessings of the patriarchs, the succor given through the legislation, the types, the prophecies, the valorous feats in war, the signs wrought through just men; — or on the other hand the things done in the dispensation of the coming of our Lord in the flesh; — all is through the Spirit. In the first place He was made an unction, and being inseparably

present was with the very flesh of the Lord, according to that which is written, "Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is" "my beloved Son;" and "Jesus of Nazareth" whom "God anointed with the Holy Ghost." After this every operation was wrought with the co-operation of the Spirit. He was present when the Lord was being tempted by the devil; for, it is said, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted." He was inseparably with Him while working His wonderful works; for, it is said, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils." And He did not leave Him when He had risen from the dead; for when renewing man, and, by breathing on the face of the disciples, restoring the grace, that came of the inbreathing of God, which man had lost, what did the Lord say? "Receive the Holy Ghost: whose so ever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever you retain, they are retained." And is it not plain and incontestable that the ordering of the Church is effected through the Spirit? For He gave, it is said, "in the church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," for this order is ordained in accordance with the division of the gifts that are of the Spirit.

40. Moreover by anyone who carefully uses his reason it will be found that even at the moment of the expected appearance of the Lord from heaven the Holy Spirit will not, as some suppose, have no functions to discharge: on the contrary, even in the day of His revelation, in which the blessed and only potentate will judge the world in righteousness, the Holy Spirit will be present with Him. For who is so ignorant of the good things prepared by God for them that are worthy as not to know that the crown of the righteous is the grace of the Spirit, bestowed in more abundant and perfect measure in that day, when spiritual glory shall be distributed to each in proportion as he shall have nobly played the man? For among the glories of the saints are "many mansions" in the Father's house, that is differences of dignities: for as "star differs from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." They, then, that were sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, and preserve pure and undiminished the first fruits which they received of the Spirit, are they that shall hear the words "well done thou good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things." In like manner they which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, or have not wrought for Him that gave to them, shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others; or, according to one of the evangelists, they shall even be wholly cut asunder, — the cutting asunder meaning complete separation from the Spirit. The body is not divided, part being delivered to chastisement, and part let off; for when a whole has sinned it were like the old fables, and unworthy of a righteous judge, for only the half to suffer chastisement. Nor is the soul cut in two, — that soul the whole of which possesses the sinful affection throughout, and works the wickedness in co-operation with the body. The cutting asunder, as I have observed, is the separation for aye of the soul from the Spirit. For now, although the Spirit does not suffer admixture with the unworthy, He nevertheless does seem in a manner to be present with them that have once been sealed, awaiting the salvation which follows on their conversion; but then He will be wholly cut off from the soul that has defiled His grace. For this reason "In Hell there is none that makes confession; in death none that remembers God," because the succor of the Spirit is no longer present. How then is it possible to conceive that the judgment is accomplished without the Holy Spirit, wherein the word points out that He is Himself the prize of the righteous, when instead of the earnest is given that which is perfect, and the first condemnation of sinners, when they are deprived of that which

they seem to have? But the greatest proof of the conjunction of the Spirit with the Father and the Son is that He is said to have the same relation to God which the spirit in us has to each of us. "For what man" it is said, "knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God know no man but the Spirit of God." On this point I have said enough.

The Late Anba Youanis, Bishop of Gharbia *Paradise of the Spirit*, Book III, Chapter 7

Great joy always accompanies peace, which the Apostle Peter describes as: "Inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8). It is inexpressible because it is inside the innermost part of the soul. It is not revealed easily and does not show on the outside. It is a deep joy established in the heart: "And your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:22). It is also inexpressible because no one can describe it. To a great extent, it may be pictures as our teacher Paul recounted: "surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

When the angels were singing the Eternal Song: "And on earth peace" (Luke 2:14), another angel was "bringing good tidings of great joy" to the shepherds (Luke 2:10). The birth of Christ brings both joy and peace which is to us from Him and through Him.

We nearly feel the same joy and peace in the house of Zachariah the Priest. When the Virgin Mary visited her relative Elizabeth and gave her peace immediately Elizabeth said: "For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:44).

One may say: "How can peace and joy accompany the believer, when previously our Lord prophesied that we can only follow Him with trials and that He commanded us to carry the Cross the sign of pain?"

There is no contradiction in that. The trials and difficulties which the Lord spoke about, are outside difficulties which do not seep to the soul of the believer who is a temple to the Lord. But peace with exceeding joy is a picture of the inner state of man. The Apostle Paul said: "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10). Notice the word "as" before the word sorrowful and in fact we are always rejoicing! The world has its means in measuring joy, yet for the believer his joy is an inner one.

From this point the Christian resembles the green Bush from which God appeared to the Prophet Moses (Exodus 3:2-4). The Bush was burning with fire, but it was not consumed. Its beauty was not gone and its greenery did not disappear. Likewise for the believer, the difficulties which surround him are like the fire from the outside which is not able to let him lose his inner peace and joy!

Do you know that he who goes to the Mount of Olive (Mount of Resurrection) has first to go through the Garden of Gethsemane, and with difficulty goes higher to the summit of Golgotha, then goes down to the Garden of the Tomb? In doing that we can keep our peace like Our Lord who at the time of His severe suffering was keeping His perfect peace and His calmness, to the

extent that He made a miracle at the time His enemies came to arrest Him. He healed the right ear of the servant of the high priest which Peter had hastily cut with his sword (Luke 22:50, 51; John 18:10, 11).

The saints lived the life of peace and inner joy. Hence they disregarded everything. They lived on earth with their bodies as if they had no bodies. All their care was for the inside, not for the outside, and thus they lived the life of peace and joy. Their literal and speaking abilities did not help them to express their feelings.

John Saba (the Spiritual Elder) tried to describe the state of peace, joy, pleasure and glory of the saints which reflected on them as a result of their life with Christ, but he could not. Finally he did his best and said:

“I wished to write down but I could not. I tried different ways but still I could not. That which fills everyone, I tried to describe on paper as food for my people, but I could not. There is nothing like it in the outside world, and nobody knows about it in the inner world. There is nothing like it in our world and nobody can match what is in the spiritual world. I do not know how to douse my inflamed heart which burns and boils. You cannot express it by words, no one sees the signs, it cannot be pictured, and no one hears the movement of the conscience. I am totally defeated. I do not talk about it like a person who is not good enough for it. I am very sad as I do not know how to picture or describe it. And if it cannot be described, ask for it dear brothers. Ask for it to be part of you. The blessing of its grace is greater than all other blessings. It does not resemble anything else in its pleasure. That is the explanation. It is said, you may father are in me and I in you, and also so that they become one in us. Blessed is he who enjoys its blessings. Blessed is he whose soul with his flesh and bones enjoy this pleasure which cannot be explained.”

And now dear brother, you know that the Lord of Glory gave you the gift of peace which is inexpressible. Do you feel this peace inside you and do you enjoy this holy gift? Know well that the only thing which takes away peace from your heart is sin. If you still suffer from anxiety and difficulties, sit down with yourself and search it well. Be open with yourself, and if you have failed to know the reason or the loss of peace lift up your heart to God in prayer so that He will show you your weaknesses and unveil to you your iniquities and sins. God’s love will work in you and He will give “peace which passes all understanding” according to His Holy and true call.

REFLECTION:

Joy is everlasting because it comes from the everlasting God. On the other hand, happiness is transient and superficial. As children of God, be a good mirror and reflect the joy of your Father onto others. We should have joy during both good and bad times or when things are difficult or scary. Our joy should be so great that it overflows and people near us also see that God has given us amazing

True joy and peace are (is) everlasting. We experience happiness as a result of changes in our external circumstances, but true joy – when it has been sown and nurtured in the heart – remains imbedded deep within, growing roots that are too deep to express. And so, where the Spirit of God is, there too must also be joy and peace. As Christ says, “If these remain silent, then the stones would immediately cry out!” It is an imperative; when creation is touched or confronted with the Spirit of God, it *must* react out with joy and glorification. Like St. John the Baptist, despite only still developing in the womb, leaped for joy in His mother’s womb as a model of mankind’s truest response to the coming of Christ the King, who filled the womb of the Virgin Mary with the Divine Glory of God.

PRAYER:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." Luke 1:47-55

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

- + Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.
- He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.
- + He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...
- + Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens
- + This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens
- + Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Abba Macarius, joy, peace, St. Paul, Silas

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Spirit is the source of <i>the Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Liturgical:	We are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the Chrismation and is renewed in us in the Eucharist
Moral:	The Fruit of the Spirit help us to keep the Commandments
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

INTRODUCTION

The Tree Metaphor

The Holy Spirit gives us the Fruit of the Spirit and we receive this gift as seeds that are implanted in us by the Holy Baptism and Chrismation. We must nurture and grow the seeds continually by reading the bible, keeping God's Commandments, partaking of the Eucharist continually and continuing in charitable deeds. There are 9 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. If you lose one Fruit you slowly start to lose others. They are named “**fruit**” not FRUITS because they work together and must always be together.

[Prepare a clip from Tasbeha to play for the kids later on in the lesson]

LESSON BODY:

Tell the story of Abba Macarius and the thief - Verse and References B

Then discuss with the students:

What do you think of that story? [Let the kids give their feelings]. It is very unusual for someone to behave that way, right? What are the two fruit that Abba Macarius showed in this story? [You may need to repeat the story 2 or 3 more times until they are able to find the two fruit: peace and joy; give them hints such as, ‘they are mentioned at the very end.’ If they mention praising, ask them, ‘how would someone who is praising feel on the inside?’ – Joyful].

Now, do you think that any person could act like this – think of it – if all their belongings were being stolen? [No! of course not!] how do people usually act when things are being taken from them? [They get very angry and upset]. Ok, so what do you think Abba Macarius had that let him be this way? [Give the kids a chance to answer and then explain that] It is the Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit, our relationship with God, fills us with joy and peace, and all the fruit, so that we are never bothered by anything!

[Review with them how to get the fruit – prayer, coming to church and attending the liturgy, taking communion, reading the Bible]. And the joy and peace that comes from God is real and true

– it does not just last while everything is going well. It is with us all the time, as long as we are with God and in a relationship with Him. Some people who do not have God in their lives may be very joyful when something good happens to them, but the secret for a Christian is that they are joyful and peaceful even when bad things are happening! Because they trust in God and they feel His love for them inside so nothing can bother them or hurt them. As Christians, we are not able to just magically have this joy and peace with us, by just *trying* really hard to be good or to be happy. Or by pretending to be peaceful. It is only when we have our relationship with God and when we are always praying to Him and being with Him that we have these fruit.

- Tell another story to illustrate this point - *Verse and References A*
- Options: Paul and Silas in the prison, David bringing peace to King Saul, the 3 youth, Daniel in the lion's den.
- One example is provided below

Example 1, Paul and Silas in the Prison:

St. Paul the apostle and Silas were preaching to people in a region called Philippi. Now it happened that some of the people of the city who did not know God got angry at St. Paul and Silas because they were turning people to God. So they seized St. Paul and St. Silas and beat them up and treated them very badly, ripping their clothing. They whipped them also, and then threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. So the jailer put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks so they could not even move!

Now how would someone who is not close with God feel in this situation? Or what would they do? [They would probably be very upset and maybe even angry, hurt, sad, depressed, etc...]. But what were Paul and Silas actually doing? They were praying and singing hymns to God! They were very Peaceful and joyful! Where was their peace and joy coming from? [Let the kids try to answer so you can gauge their understanding]. It was coming from God, by their prayers and their openness to Him. They were overflowing with peace and joy, so much so, that the other prisoners were feeding off of their joy and peace while they were listening to their singing. And again, we know that they were not even in the least bit sad because they were singing hymns! They were praising God! When someone is always with God and is always praying to Him and talking with Him and praising Him, he or she is filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are filled with love and peace and joy, and all the good fruit of the Spirit. (If the kids ask about what happens next in the story, tell them).

In our church, we have something called the Tasbeha on Saturday nights before the liturgy. Has anyone ever been with their parents to Tasbeha?

- Explain to the kids that it is a service of singing hymns and praises to our God and gives people great joy to sing it.
- Play a clip of the tasbeha for the kids to hear it – in English – and make sure they understand what they heard.

Our joy and our peace comes from prayer and our relationship with God. It is not something that is found in us naturally. Look at the peace and joy Abba Macarius showed and that St. Paul and Silas showed – that is not natural peace or natural joy. It is *super* – and it is from our good and loving God who is always ready to give it to us when we ask Him.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Hand-out

Page 1: 3 sections: a. Today's bible story b. Today's verse c. What did I learn about Joy?

Page 2: Picture multiple choice questions regarding Paul and Silas in prison

Collect this handout to be placed in a Fruit of the Spirit packet for each child. The child will receive the packet at the conclusion of the Fruit of the Spirit Unit.

- Tasbeha clip
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What did St. Macarius do when he saw thieves robbing his cell?

A: He helped them to steal his own things!

Q: Name the two fruits which St. Macarius had which led him to behave this way.

A: Peace and joy

Q: What is tasbeha?

A: it is a service of singing hymns and praises to our God and gives people great joy to sing it.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

At home, children should continue to review the Introduction Lesson activity sheet. The servants should reiterate to the students that they should look at it every week on Saturday night to be reminded of the story and how it is related to that Fruit and see what it means to them and to review the previous week's fruit and story.

Memorization:

The Gospel of the Third hour:

"²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you." John 14:26-15:4

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

25. PATIENCE

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Luke 21:19

By your patience possess your souls.

James 1:2-7, 12-20

2My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways... 12Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. 18Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of Firstfruits of His creatures. 19So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Hebrews 13:2-3

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Genesis 18:1-8

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ²So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. ⁴Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." ⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." ⁷And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. ⁸So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

1 Samuel 24:1-22

Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." ²Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. ³So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) ⁴Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, "Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁵Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. ⁶And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." ⁷So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And

Saul got up from the cave and went on his way. 8David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, "Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, "I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.' 11Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. 13As the proverb of the ancients says, "Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? 15Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand." 16So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." 22So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

CHURCH FATHERS:

The Book of St. Basil, *On the Spirit*: CHAPTER 19 *Against those who assert that the Spirit ought not to be glorified.*

48. "BE it so," it is rejoined, "but glory is by no means so absolutely due to the Spirit as to require His exaltation by us in doxologies." Whence then could we get demonstrations of the dignity of the our Spirit, "passing all understanding," if His communion with the Father and the Son were not reckoned by our opponents as good for testimony of His rank? It is, at all events, possible for us to arrive to a certain extent at intelligent apprehension of the sublimity of His nature and of His unapproachable power, by looking at the meaning of His title, and at the magnitude of His operations, and by His good gifts bestowed on us or rather on all creation. He is called Spirit, as "God is a Spirit," and "the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord." He is called holy, as the Father is holy, and the Son is holy, for to the creature holiness was brought in from without, but to the Spirit holiness is the fulfillment of nature, and it is for this reason that He is described not as being sanctified, but as sanctifying. He is called good, as the Father is good, and He who was begotten of the Good is good, and to the Spirit His goodness is essence. He is called upright, as "the Lord is upright," in that He is Himself truth, and is Himself Righteousness, having no divergence nor leaning to one side or to the other, on account of the immutability of His

substance. He is called Paraclete, like the Only begotten, as He Himself says, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another comforter." Thus names are borne by the Spirit in common with the Father and the Son, and He gets these titles from His natural and close relationship. From what other source could they be derived? Again He is called royal, Spirit of truth, and Spirit of wisdom. "The Spirit of God," it is said "hath made me," and God filled Bezalel with "the divine Spirit of wisdom and understanding and knowledge." Such names as these are super-eminent and mighty, but they do not transcend His glory.

49. And His operations, what are they? For majesty ineffable, and for numbers innumerable. How shall we form a conception of what extends beyond the ages? What were His operations before that creation whereof we can conceive? How great the grace which He conferred on creation? What the power exercised by Him over the ages to come? He existed; He pre-existed; He co-existed with the Father and the Son before the ages. It follows that, even if you can conceive of anything beyond the ages, you will find the Spirit yet further above and beyond. And if you think of the creation, the powers of the heavens were established by the Spirit, the establishment being understood to refer to disability to fall away from good. For it is from the Spirit that the powers derive their close relationship to God, their inability to change to evil, and their continuance in blessedness. Is it Christ's advent? The Spirit is forerunner. Is there the incarnate presence? The Spirit is inseparable. Working of miracles, and gifts of healing are through the Holy Spirit. Demons were driven out by the Spirit of God. The devil was brought to naught by the presence of the Spirit. Remission of Sins was by the gift of the Spirit, for "ye were washed, ye were sanctified,... in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the holy Spirit of our God." There is close relationship with God through the Spirit, for "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." The resurrection from the dead is effected by the operation of the Spirit, for "You send forth thy spirit, they are created; and You renewed the face of the earth." If here creation may be taken to mean the bringing of the departed to life again, how mighty is not the operation of the Spirit, Who is to us the dispenser of the life that follows on the resurrection, and attunes our souls to the spiritual life beyond? Or if here by creation is meant the change to a better condition of those who in this life have fallen into sin, (for it is so understood according to the usage of Scripture, as in the words of Paul "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature"), the renewal which takes place in this life, and the transmutation from our earthly and sensuous life to the heavenly conversation which takes place in us through the Spirit, then our souls are exalted to the highest pitch of admiration. With these thoughts before us are we to be afraid of going beyond due bounds in the extravagance of the honor we pay? Shall we not rather fear lest, even though we seem to give Him the highest names which the thoughts of man can conceive or man's tongue utter, we let our thoughts about Him fall too low?

It is the Spirit which says, as the Lord says, "Get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." Are these the words of an inferior, or of one in dread? "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Does a slave speak thus? And Isaiah, "The Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me," and "the Spirit came down from the Lord and guided them." And pray do not again understand by this guidance some humble service, for the Word witnesses that it was the work of God; — "You led your people," it is said "like a flock," and "You that lead Joseph like a flock," and "He led them on safely, so that they feared not." Thus

when you hear that when the Comforter is come, He will put you in remembrance, and “guide you into all truth.” Do not misrepresent the meaning.

50. But, it is said that “He makes intercession for us.” It follows then that, as the suppliant is inferior to the benefactor, so far is the Spirit inferior in dignity to God. But have you never heard concerning the Only-begotten that He “is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us”? Do not, then, because the Spirit is in you, — if indeed He is at all in you, — nor yet because He teaches us who were blinded, and guides us to the choice of what profits us, — do not for this reason allow yourself to be deprived of the right and holy opinion concerning Him. For to make the loving kindness of your benefactor a ground of ingratitude were indeed a very extravagance of unfairness. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit;” hear the words of Stephen, the first fruits of the martyrs, when he reproaches the people for their rebellion and disobedience; “you do always,” he says, “resist the Holy Ghost;” and again Isaiah, — “They vexed His Holy Spirit, therefore He was turned to be their enemy;” and in another passage, “the house of Jacob angered the Spirit of the Lord.” Are not these passages indicative of authoritative power? I leave it to the judgment of my readers to determine what opinions we ought to hold when we hear these passages; whether we are to regard the Spirit as an instrument, a subject, of equal rank with the creature, and a fellow servant of ourselves, or whether, on the contrary, to the ears of the pious the mere whisper of this blasphemy is not most grievous. Do you call the Spirit a servant? But, it is said, “the servant does not know what his Lord doeth,” and yet the Spirit knows the things of God, as “the spirit of man that is in him.”

Anba Mattaou El Souryani’s *How to Benefit from the Holy Liturgy,*” page 212

“He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob whom He loves.” What a great choice for the Lord to choose us to partake of His Holy Body and Blood, to abide and unite with Him for Eternal Life. The Lord who loved the spiritual beauty of Jacob, such as patience in affliction, persistence in prayers, trust in God and humbleness, also loves to see us bearing the fruits of the Spirit, to be adorned by virtues, wearing the wedding clothes and qualified to enter into the presence of the bridegroom.

Anba Youanis of El-Gharbia, *Paradise of the Spirit,* Book III, Patience and Longsuffering, page 72

The love of man to God and also our love to others – does not show itself except by patience and longsuffering, since love bears all things (1 Corinthians 13:7). Besides, love makes it easier for us to bear difficulties, pains and troubles. For the sake of the love of God, one is ready to accept pains and all its consequences. The Apostle Paul says: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:36, 37).

We have an excellent example in the Old Testament in the marriage of Jacob (the father of the tribes) to Rachel. When Jacob wanted to marry Rachel, his uncle Laban asked Jacob to first serve him for seven years. Jacob did, and the Bible says: “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her” (Genesis 19:20). The story

did not end here, because Laban deceived Jacob and made Jacob marry Leah, Rachel's older sister. Again when Jacob requested to marry Rachel, the Laban asked him to serve another seven years, and Jacob did. So, Jacob served his uncle Laban fourteen years for his great love to Rachel.

Pope Shenouda III's The Spiritual Man, page 159 KINDNESS AND STRENGTH

The Lord Jesus Christ was very kind hearted. *"He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not quench"* (Mt 12:19,20). And at the same time, He was very strong. His personality was strong. He was strong in His words, in His conviction, in His love and in His effect on others...He was kind hearted, loved children, embraced them and was compassionate towards them. His Disciple, John, used to lean on His bosom and He defended the sinful woman. At the same time, His dignity never departed from Him. **He allowed Satan to tempt Him. And when he overdid it, He rebuked Him (Mt 4).**

He allowed the soldiers to arrest Him. And at the same time, when He said to them : *"I am He", they drew back and fell to the ground"* (Jn 18:6). Parents and teachers are supposed to have kindness, but also to have dignity. **It is not good for them to lose their dignity because of their kindness.** Dignity is essential to maintain discipline and to uphold principles. Kindness is essential so people would obey because of their love and not because of fear.

REFLECTION:

The Gospel tells of Christ the tender and patient Teacher. In the beginning of His ministry, Christ's expression of kindness and tenderness attracted His disciples to Him to the extent that the only words he would need to invite them to Him were "Follow Me," or "Come." Throughout His ministry, thousands of individuals would follow Him up and down mountainsides and across rivers and lakes to continue to listen to Him describe the Father's tender love for them. One can only imagine how charismatic Christ must have been, and more. It certainly was not human charisma that brought countless followers to Him, but rather the Spirit of God that overflowed in Him and emanated outwardly towards all that were exposed to Him.

Often throughout the Gospel Christ's tenderness, kindness, and goodness would motivate those around Him to likewise be kind and good.

Because we carry on Christ's name and Spirit in our hearts and bodies, we too, when exposed to Christ, will experience His kindness and tenderness and will emanate it onto those who come into contact with us. If we receive the Spirit of God through our relationship with the Son, we too will be able to be true fishers of men, attracting all to Christ who mysteriously lives within us.

PRAYER:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever."
 Psalm 23

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

- + Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.
 He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.
- + He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...
- + Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens
- + This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens
- + Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Patience, kindness, goodness, Saint Monica, Saint Augustine, Saint Bishop, King David, King Saul

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Spirit is the source of <i>the Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Liturgical:	We receive the Holy Spirit in the Chrismation and we nurture it in the Eucharist
Moral:	The Fruit of the Spirit help us to keep the Commandments
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

CONNECTION POINT

The Tree Metaphor

The Holy Spirit gives us the Fruit of the Spirit and we receive this gift as seeds that are implanted in us by the Holy Baptism and Chrismation. We must nurture and grow the seeds continually by reading the bible, keeping God's Commandments, partaking of the Eucharist continually and continuing in charitable deeds. There are 9 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. If you lose one Fruit you slowly start to lose others. They are named "fruit" not FRUITS because they work together and must always be together.

INTRODUCTION

Review the fruit of the Spirit up to this point (Love, Joy, Peace).

Review with the students how to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit by abiding in Christ. Remind them that it is about attaching themselves to God, and not trying really hard to be loving, or to be joyful. When we are attached to God and filled from within, these fruit grow inside us naturally, just like when a tree is fed and watered, fruit grows on it naturally. Our food and water is God and we get Him when we pray, when we go to the liturgy and take communion, when we read the Bible.

Remind them that when we do not see these fruit in us, it means we are not filled with the Holy Spirit – we are not being fed or watered!

LESSON BODY:

Today we are going to add one more fruit to our list: Patience.
[Review what does it mean].

PATIENCE

Who has a story about a time when they were patient and waited a long time for something? [Let the kids share their stories].

Option 1 Building Ark:

Noah was ridiculed for many years as he built the ark when there was no rain. But he trusted in God's words and promise, that there will be rain and that his family would be saved if he builds the ark. So he worked hard and built it and waited until the time was right and the ark was put to use and his family was the first to walk on the new earth.

Soon there was a population explosion upon the earth. And as time went on, people drifted farther and farther away from God. They became selfish, hateful, evil and sinful.

When God saw the extent of human wickedness, He was sorry He had made them. It filled His heart with pain. He decided to blot out from the face of the earth all mankind and the animals, too.

But God knew Noah was the only truly righteous man living on the earth at that time. He always tried to follow God's will. So, God warned Noah that He would destroy the world and wanted him to build a very specific boat.

The ark had three decks and was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It was built with one door and one window. Over 400 railroad box cars could fit on this boat; plenty of room for two of every kind of animal in the world. It took 120 years (Genesis 6:3) for Noah to build the ark. While he was working on it his neighbors must have wondered what he was doing. Until that time there had never been any rain and probably no clouds either. So, when Noah told them what God was going to do they must have thought he was crazy. This must have been frustrating for Noah. All his friends were making fun of him for doing God's work and even his family didn't believe it was true. The people probably laughed at Noah and made fun of the boat he was building. But Noah continued to obey God. He spent so many years trying to do this work and he always believed that God would do amazing work with this large ark! He knew that no matter what other people thought about him, it's important to obey God.

Others around you may not be doing what is right, and they may even think you're foolish. But God says to keep doing right and not give up. Noah did just that! People no doubt made fun of him and even hated him, but he continued to be faithful to God by doing right. Finally the day came to get in the ark. God closed the big door of the ark.

When the rain started it didn't seem that it would ever stop! This was no ordinary rainstorm. Water was rising up from beneath the ground and coming down from the heavens in torrents. Remember that on the second day of creation God separated the waters below from the waters above to make a space for the sky? Well, it is at this point that the waters above the sky came down to flood the whole earth. The water rose up until it covered everything and everybody outside of the ark.

But Noah and his family (all 8 of them – Noah, his wife, 3 sons and their wives) and all the animals were safe inside the ark because they had followed God's directions. They were resting in God's love and care. The waters covered the earth for 150 days. Imagine five months of being stuck in a boat with a lot of stinky animals!

When the rain finally stopped, Noah opened the window. The ark was surrounded by water so they couldn't leave the boat yet. One day Noah set a raven free, then a dove. The dove came back with some fresh leaves in her beak, so Noah knew that plants were beginning to grow again. When Noah released another dove, it didn't come back, so Noah knew that it had found good food and a place to live. Finally, it was time to get off the boat.

So from Noah's family and the animals that were put on the ark, the whole earth was repopulated. Noah was so thankful to be alive and to be off the boat that the first thing he wanted to do was worship God. He built an altar to God and offered sacrifices. God promised Noah that He would never destroy the earth by water again. God showed this by sending a rainbow!

Has it ever been hard for you to obey God because you knew your friends didn't understand? Sometimes we have to make hard choices to do the right thing, even when all our friends want to do something else. It may seem easier to copy someone else's homework or cheat on a test like a lot of kids do, but what would be the right thing for you to do? Why? Or, it may seem easier to do a halfway job on your chores to get them done faster, especially if your friends do, but what would be the right thing for you to do? Why?

Q. Which book in the Bible tells us about Noah?

A. *Genesis*

Q. How did God feel about the evil on the earth?

A. *He was sorry He made humans.*

Q. What is an Ark?

A. *large boat*

Q. Who designed the Ark?

A. *God*

Q. Who built the Ark?

A. *God asked Noah to build the ark with one window and one door.*

Q. Why did God wait one more week to send the rain?

A. *He wanted people to repent.*

Q. How big was the Ark?

A. *450 feet long; 400 railroad box carts could fit on this boat.*

Q. Why did Noah find favor with God?

A. *He lived his life in a way that pleased God.*

Q. Did Noah ignore all the wicked people that lived around him?

A. *No, he preached to them.*

Q. What do you think Noah's neighbors thought about him?

A. *That he was crazy.*

Q. How did Noah ever find two of every kind of animal to bring on the Ark?

A. *He didn't; God brought them to the Ark.*

Q. Who closed the door of the Ark?

A. *God*

Q. How long did they stay in the ark?

A. *They were in the Ark 375 days.*

Q. How did Noah feel when he stepped back on land?

A. *He built an altar and sacrificed to God.*

Q. What does the rainbow mean?

A. *A reminder of God's promise not to flood the earth again.*

Q. How many doors did the Ark have?

A. One

Q. And, Jesus said, "I am the door."

Q. Did the flood cover the entire earth?

A. Yes, it went 22 feet above the highest mountain.

Q. How many people survived the Flood?

A. 8 – Noah and his 3 sons and their wives.

Option 2: St. Monica

Let me tell you a story about a saint who was very patient:

Her name was Saint Monica and she had a son named Augustine. As Augustine was growing up, he was not in the church and he was very far away from God. St. Monica was very sad about Augustine because he was not going to church and he was not living a good life. He was living in sin and he did not know God. She prayed for him all the time, she would cry in her prayers; she also tried helping him and talking to him to try to let him change his mind and stop the way he was living, but he would not listen to her. For 18 years, she prayed about him and cried over him. 18 years! Finally, after her long life of praying for her son and not losing hope that God would hear her prayer and help her son, Augustine became a Christian and gave his life to God. And not only that, but he became a great saint in the church and wrote many works that the church depends on. And we have his icon, with Saint Monica, upstairs in the church – they are in one icon together. [Idea – take the students upstairs to look at the icon at the end of class].

What do you think about Saint Monica's life? [Let the kids share their feelings. Tell them that what we learn from her story is that God always answers prayers, even though it may take a very long time. As Christians, as children of God, we learn to have patience and to wait for Him and for His perfect timing. And what gives us the ability to wait? It is when we are connected with God in prayer and we are filled with His Spirit within us – this is what makes it possible for us to have patience].

[Have the kids review each story to make sure they remember the points].

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Idea: Page 1: 3 sections: a. Today's bible story b. Today's verse c. What did I learn about Patience?

Page 2: Noah's Ark coloring page

Collect this handout to be placed in a Fruit of the Spirit packet for each child. The child will receive the packet at the conclusion of the Fruit of the Spirit Unit.

- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: St. Monica cried and prayed for her son St. Augustine for 18 years, what does this show about her?

A: She was patient on the Lord

Q: How can we be like St. Monica?

A: Pray for others, be patient and wait for the Lord to answer our prayers in His perfect timing

Q: King Saul was trying to hurt David but David was still kind to him, what does this show about David?

A: David was filled with goodness

Q: What can we learn from David?

A: To be kind to everyone- even those who are trying to hurt us or are mean to us

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

HOME ACTIVITY AND MEMORIZATION

At home, children should continue to review the Introduction Lesson activity sheet. The servants should reiterate to the students that they should look at it every week on Saturday night to be reminded of the story and how it is related to that Fruit and see what it means to them and to review the previous week's fruit and story.

Memorization:

PSALM 27: 2nd 1/2

*Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me. Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence. I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD! **Alleluia.***

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

26. KINDNESS AND GOODNESS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Matthew 5:43-48

43" You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." 44But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Hebrews 13:2-3

"Let brotherly love continue. 2Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. 3Remember the prisoners as if chained with them- those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also."

1 Samuel 24:1-22

"Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, "Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had

cut Saul's robe. ⁶And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." ⁷So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.

⁸David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. ⁹And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, "Indeed David seeks your harm'? ¹⁰Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, "I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.'" ¹¹Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. ¹²Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. ¹³As the proverb of the ancients says, "Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.'" But my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? ¹⁵Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand." ¹⁶So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. ¹⁸And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. ¹⁹For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." ²²So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St John Chrysostom Commentary on St Matthew HOMILY 38:3,4

3. Next, having brought them by His words to an earnest desire, and having signified His unspeakable power, He after that invites them, saying. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Not this or that person, but all that are in anxiety, in sorrows, in sins. Come, not that I may call you to account, but that I may do away your sins; come, not that I want your honor, but that I want your salvation. "For I," said He, "will give you rest." He said not, "I will save you," only; but what was much more, "I will place you in all security." "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Thus, "be not afraid," said He, "hearing of a yoke, for it is easy: fear not, because I said, "a burden," for it is light. And how said He before, "The gate is narrow and the way strait?" While you are careless, while you are supine; whereas, if you duly perform His words, the burden will be light; wherefore also He hath now called it so. But how are they duly performed? If thou art become lowly, and meek, and gentle. For this virtue is the mother

of all strictness of life. Wherefore also, when beginning those divine laws, with this He began. And here again He did the very same, and exceeding great is the reward He appoints. *"For not to another only you become useful; but you refresh yourself also above all,"* said He. *"For ye shall find rest for your souls."*

Even before the things to come, He gives you here your recompense, and bestows the prize already, making the saying acceptable, both hereby, and by setting Himself forward as an example. For, *"what are you afraid of?"* said He, *"lest you should be a loser by thy low estate? Look to me, and to all that is mine; learn of me, and then you shall know distinctly how great is your blessing."* do you see how in all ways He is leading them to humility? By His own doings: *"Learn of me, for I am meek."* By what themselves are to gain; for, *"You shall find,"* said He, *"rest for your souls."* By what He bestows on them; for, *"I too will refresh you,"* said He. By rendering it light; *"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* So likewise did Paul, saying, *"For the present light affliction, which is but for a moment, work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* And how, someone may say, is the burden light, when He said, *"Except one hate father and mother;"* and, *"Whosoever takes not up his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me:"* and, *"Whosoever does not forsake all that he has, cannot be my disciple:"* when He commands even to give up our very life? Let Paul teach you, saying, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* And that, *"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."* Let those teach you, who return from the council of the Jews after plenty of stripes, and *"rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ."* And if you art still afraid and tremble at hearing of the yoke and the burden, the fear comes not of the nature of the thing, but of your remissness; since if you are prepared, and in earnest, all will be easy to you and light. Since for this cause Christ also, to signify that we too must need labor ourselves, did not mention the gracious things only, and then hold His peace, nor the painful things only, but set down both. Thus He both spoke of *"a yoke,"* and called it *"easy;"* both named a burden, and added that it was *"light;"* that you should neither flee from them as toilsome, nor despise them as over easy. But if even after all this, virtue seem to you an irksome thing, consider that vice is more irksome. And this very thing He was intimating, in that He said not first, *"Take my yoke upon you,"* but before that, *"Come, ye that labor and are heavy laden;"* implying that sin too has labor, and a burden that is heavy and hard to bear. For He said not only, *"Ye that labor,"* but also, *"that are heavy laden."* This the prophet too was speaking of, when in that description of her nature, *"As an heavy burden they weighed heavy upon me."* And Zacharias too, describing her, said she is *"A talent of lead."* And this moreover experience itself proves. For nothing so weighs upon the soul, and presses it down, as consciousness of sin; nothing so much gives it wings, and raises it on high, as the attainment of righteousness and virtue.

And mark it: what is more grievous, I pray you, than to have no possessions? to turn the cheek, and when smitten not to smite again? to die by a violent death? Yet nevertheless, if we practice self-command, all these things are light and easy, and pleasurable.

But be not disturbed; rather let us take up each of these, and inquire about it accurately; and if you will, that first which many count most painful. Which then of the two, tell me, is grievous and burdensome, to be in care for one belly, or to be anxious about ten thousand? To be clothed with one outer garment, and seek for nothing more; or having many in one's house, to mourn one's self

every day and night in fear, in trembling, about the preservation of them, grieved, and ready to choke about the loss of them; lest one should be moth-eaten, lest a servant purloin and go off with them?

4. But whatever I may say, my speech will present no such proof as the actual trial. Wherefore I would there were present here with us some one of those who have attained unto that summit of self-restraint, and then you would know assuredly the delight thereof; and that none of those that are enamored of voluntary poverty would accept wealth, though ten thousand were to offer it. But would these, say you, ever consent to become poor, and to cast away the anxieties which they have? And what of that? This is but a proof of their madness and grievous disease, not of anything very pleasurable in the thing. And this even themselves would testify to us, who are daily lamenting over these their anxieties, and accounting their life to be not worth living. But not so those others; rather they laugh, leap for joy, and the wearers of the diadem do not so glory, as they do in their poverty. Again, to turn the cheek is, to him that gives heed, a less grievous thing than to smite another; for from this the contest hath beginning, in that termination: and whereas by the former thou hast kindled the other's pile too, by the latter thou hast quenched even thine own flames. But that not to be burnt is a pleasanter thing than to be burnt, surely plain to every man. And if this hold in regard of bodies, much more in a soul.

And whether is lighter, to contend, or to be crowned? to fight, or to have the prize? and to endure waves, or to run into harbor? Therefore also, to die is better than to live. For the one withdraws us from waves and dangers, while the other adds unto them, and makes a man subject to numberless plots and distresses, which have made life not worth living in thine account. And if you disbelieve our sayings, hearken to them that have seen the countenances of the martyrs in the time of their conflicts, how when scourged and flayed, they were exceeding joyful and glad, and when exposed upon hot irons, rejoiced, and were glad of heart, more than such as lie upon a bed of roses. Wherefore Paul also said, when he was at the point of departing hence, and closing his life by a violent death, joy, and rejoice with you all; for the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." Do you see with what exceeding strength of language he invites the whole world to partake in his gladness? So great a good did he know his departure hence to be, so desirable, and lovely, and worthy of prayer, that formidable thing, death.

5. But that virtue's yoke is sweet and light, is manifest many other ways also; but to conclude, if you please, let us look also at the burdens of sin. Let us then bring forward the covetous, the retailers and second-hand dealers in shameless bargains. What now could be a heavier burden than such transactions? how many sorrows, how many anxieties, how many disappointments, how many dangers, how many plots and wars, daily spring up from these gains? how many troubles and disturbances? For as one can never see the sea without waves, so neither such a soul without anxiety, and despondency, and fear, and disturbance; yea, the second overtakes the first, and again others come up, and when these are not yet ceased, others come to a head.

Or would you see the souls of the revilers, and of the passionate? Why, what is worse than this torture? what, than the wounds they have within? what, than the furnace that is continually burning, and the flame that is never quenched?

Or of the sensual, and of such as cleave unto this present life? Why, what more grievous than this bondage? They live the life of Cain, dwelling in continual trembling and fear at every death that happens; the kinsmen of the dead mourn not so much, as these do for their own end. What again

fuller of turmoil, and more frantic, than such as are puffed up with pride? *“For learn,”* said He, *“of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”* Because long-suffering is the mother of all good things.

Do not be afraid therefore, neither start away from the yoke that lightens thee of all these things, but put thyself under it with all forwardness, and then you shall know well the pleasure thereof. For it doth not at all bruise thy neck, but is put on thee for good order’s sake only, and to persuade thee to walk seemly, and to lead thee unto the royal road, and to deliver thee from the precipices on either side, and to make thee walk with ease in the narrow way.

Since then so great are its benefits, so great its security, so great its gladness, let us with all our soul, with all our diligence, draw this yoke; that we may both here *“find rest unto our souls,”* and attain unto the good things to come, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

Pope Shenouda III’s *The Spiritual Man*, page 159

The Lord Jesus Christ was very kind hearted. *“He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not quench”* (Mt 12:19,20). And at the same time, He was very strong. His personality was strong. He was strong in His words, in His conviction, in His love and in His effect on others...He was kind hearted, loved children, embraced them and was compassionate towards them. His Disciple, John, used to lean on His bosom and He defended the sinful woman. At the same time, His dignity never departed from Him. **He allowed Satan to tempt Him. And when he overdid it, He rebuked Him (Mt 4).** He allowed the soldiers to arrest Him. And at the same time, when He said to them : *“I am He”, they drew back and fell to the ground”* (Jn 18:6). Parents and teachers are supposed to have kindness, but also to have dignity. **It is not good for them to lose their dignity because of their kindness.** Dignity is essential to maintain discipline and to uphold principles. Kindness is essential so people would obey because of their love and not because of fear.

REFLECTION:

Kindness, Meekness and Gentleness are the qualities of our Lord most noticeable on first encounter. They are the marks of true Christian interactions on daily basis. In a violent, arrogant world, a true disciple of Christ shines out.

PRAYER:

PSALM 23 (22)*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.*

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. Alleluia.

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.

He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

+ He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...

+ Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens

+ This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens

+ Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Gentleness, Goodness

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Spirit is the source of <i>the Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Liturgical:	We receive the Holy Spirit in the Chrismation and we nurture it in the Eucharist
Moral:	The Fruit of the Spirit help us to keep the Commandments
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

CONNECTION POINT

The Tree Metaphor

The Holy Spirit gives us the Fruit of the Spirit and we receive this gift as seeds that are implanted in us by the Holy Baptism and Chrismation. We must nurture and grow the seeds continually by reading the bible, keeping God's Commandments, partaking of the Eucharist continually and continuing in charitable deeds. There are 9 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. If you lose one Fruit you slowly start to lose others. They are named "**fruit**" not FRUITS because they work together and must always be together.

INTRODUCTION

Review the fruit of the Spirit up to this point (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience).

LESSON BODY:

St. Bishoy and the Stranger

The monks knew about the Lord's previous appearances to Abba Bishoy. One day, they asked him to plead to the Lord on their behalf so that He might bless them with such an appearance. When Abba Bishoy saw their eagerness, he mentioned to the Lord their desire and pleaded for them, saying that such an appearance would increase their enthusiasm and encourage them in their spiritual life. The Lord Jesus Christ promised to appear to them on the mountain on a certain day and at a certain time.

On the appointed day, early in the morning, all the monks raced to reach the mountain as early as possible. It happened that Abba Bishoy, being a fairly old man, was walking at the end of the group of monks. He saw an old, bony Man who looked too weak to walk. Abba Bishoy stopped and asked Him where He wanted to go. When he learned that the old Man wanted to go to the same mountain, he had pity on the old Man and offered to carry Him. The old Man refused at first but agreed when Abba Bishoy insisted.

At the beginning of the climb, Abba Bishoy did not feel any weight, but gradually he felt that the old Man was getting heavier and heavier until he could not continue. At that moment, the saint realized that he was carrying the Lord Himself. He said, "My Lord, heaven is too small for You and earth trembles at Your glory. How can a sinner like me carry You?" The Lord replied, "Because you carried Me, my beloved Bishoy, your body will **never** decay."

Abba Bishoy continued his journey to the mountain where he saw all the monks waiting with eagerness to see the Lord. Their disappointment came when Abba Bishoy told them that the Lord had already appeared and that they had all seen Him, but having closed their hearts, they did not recognize Him.

Another day, while he was sitting outside his cell, he saw a Stranger tired from walking so long. He stood up and invited the stranger to his cell. Then he got a basin, filled it with water and insisted on washing the stranger's feet. While washing His feet, he heard the Lord's voice saying, "My chosen Bishoy! You are an honorable man." Realizing that he was washing Lord Jesus' feet, he knelt down and worshiped Him. The Lord gave him peace and comforted him.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** Page 1: 3 sections: a. Today's bible story b. Today's verse c. What did I learn about Kindness and Goodness?

Page 2: Coloring picture of St Bishoy and Goodness sheet

Collect this handout to be placed in a Fruit of the Spirit packet for each child. The child will receive the packet at the conclusion of the Fruit of the Spirit Unit.

- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Discussion questions:

Q. Who passed the Stranger up the mountain?

A. *All the other monks*

Q. Why were the other monks in a hurry?

A. *St Bishoy told them that Christ would appear on the top of the mountain.*

Q. Who did St Bishoy carry?

A. *Jesus*

Q. How did St Bishoy know it was Jesus he was carrying?

A. *He was getting heavier.*

B. St Bishoy's body has not decayed why?

A. *Since he carried Jesus*

Q. Why were the other monks so upset?

A. *St Bishoy told them they had all passed Christ hurrying up the mountain!*

St Bishoy washes the Stranger's feet:

Q. Why did St Bishoy ask the Stranger into his cell?

A. *He was tired from walking so long.*

Q. What did he do to wash the Stranger's feet?

A. *Setup a basin and filled it with water.*

Q. Who's feet did St Bishoy wash?

A. *Jesus*

Q. What did the Stranger say to St Bishoy?

A. *You are an honorable man.*

Q. What did St Bishoy do when he realized that He was washing Christ's feet?

A. He knelt down and worshipped Him

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

HOME ACTIVITY AND MEMORIZATION

At home, children should continue to review the Introduction Lesson activity sheet. The servants should reiterate to the students that they should look at it every week on Saturday night to be reminded of the story and how it is related to that Fruit and see what it means to them and to review the previous week's fruit and story.

Memorization:

PSALM 23 (22)*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. Alleluia.*

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

27. FAITHFULNESS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

John 17:1-19

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ²as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. ⁶"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. ⁹"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸As You sent Me into the world,

I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Ruth 1:1-18

Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion--Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. ³Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. ⁴Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. ⁵Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband. ⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. ⁷Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go--for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, ¹³would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!" ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. ¹⁷Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." ¹⁸When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

Matthew 1:1-6

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: ²Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 11 - CHAPTER II. That His Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, is naturally in the Son and in His Substance, as He is also in the Substance of the Father.

16:15 *All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

The Son once more shows to us herein the complete and perfect character of the Person of the Father Himself also, and allows us to see why He said that He, being the fruit of the Father's Substance, engrosses in Himself all that belongs to It, and says that It is all His own, and with reason. For, as there is nothing to dis sever or estrange the Son from the Father, so far as their complete similarity and equality is concerned, save only that He is not Himself the Father, and as the Divine Substance does not show Itself differently in the Two Persons, surely Their attributes are common, or rather identical; so that what the Father hath is the Son's, and what He That begat hath, belongs also to Him that is begotten of Him. For this reason, I think, in His watchful care over us, He has thus spoken to us concerning this. For He did not say, *All things whatsoever the Father hath* I have also, in order to prevent our imagining He meant a mere likeness founded on similarity, only molded by adventitious graces into conformity with the Archetype, as is the case with us; for we are after God's likeness. Rather, when He says, *All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine*, He illustrates hereby the perfect union which He hath with His Father, and the meaning of their Consubstantiality existing in unchangeable attributes. And this you may see, that He clearly says elsewhere, when addressing the Father, *All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine*. For surely they are identical in nature, in whom there is no severance at all, but complete and perfect essential equality and likeness. God the Father then hath, of Himself, and in Himself, His own Spirit; that is, the Holy Spirit, through Whom He dwells in the Saints, and reveals His mysteries to them; not as though the Spirit were called to perform a merely ministerial function (do not think this), but rather, as He is in Him essentially, and proceeds from Him inseparably and indivisibly, interpreting what is in reality His own when He interprets that which belongs to Him in Whom He exists, and from Whom He springs. For God only has union with the creation through His Son in the Spirit. And this Spirit is also an attribute of the Only-begotten, for He is Consubstantial with the Father.

Since then, He says, it is seen to be natural to God the Father to reveal Himself in His own Spirit to those who are worthy of Him, and to accomplish through Him all His purposes, and since this kind of action belongs to Me also, for this cause I said, "He receives of Me and will show it unto you." And let no man be perplexed when he here hears the word "receives," but rather let him consider the following fact, and he will do well. The things of God are spoken of in language as though God were even as we are; but this is not really the case, for His ways are superhuman. We say then that the Spirit receives of the Father and the Son the things that are Theirs in the following way; not as though at one moment He were devoid of the knowledge and power inherent in Them, and at the next hardly acquires such knowledge and power when He is conceived of as receiving from Them. For the Spirit is wise and powerful, nay, rather, absolute Wisdom and Power, not by participation in anything else, but by His own Nature. But, rather, just as we should say that the fragrance of sweet-smelling herbs which assails our nostrils is distinct from the herbs so far as their conception in thought is concerned, but proceeds from the herbs in which it originates only by being a recipient of their faculty of giving scent in order to its display, and is not in fact distinct from them, because its existence is due to, and is wrapped up in, them; even such an idea, or

rather one transcending this, must you imagine about the relation of God to the Holy Spirit. For He is, as it were, a sweet savor of His Substance, working plainly on the senses, conveying to the creature an effluence from God, and instilling in him through Himself participation in the Sovereign Substance of the Universe. For if the fragrance of sweet herbs imparts some of its power to garments with which it comes in contact, and in some sort transforms its surroundings into likeness with itself, surely the Holy Ghost has power, since He [is by nature of God, to make those in whom He abides partakers in the Divine Nature through Himself. The Son then, being the Fruit and express Image of the Father's Person by nature, engrosses all that is His. And therefore He says, *All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I unto you, that He takes of Mine and shall declare it unto you*---the Spirit, that is, Who is through Him and in Him, by Whom He personally dwells in the Saints. For His Spirit is not distinct from Him, even though He may be conceived of as having a separate and independent existence: for the Spirit is Spirit, and not the Son.

Pope Shenouda III's Words of Spiritual Benefit (Vol. 1), page 14

The Bible says, "You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things." (Matt. 25:21) This means that, as you have been faithful in earthly things, I will set you over the heavenly. You have been faithful in this present world, I will set you over eternity... This principle could be applied in many fields... If you are faithful in loving your relative, God will set you over loving the enemy. He will give you the grace which enables you to love your enemy... If you are faithful in serving God during your leisure time God may grant you the love to consecrate all your life for Him. If you are faithful in rejecting willful sins, God will deliver you from unwillful sins... If you are faithful in keeping your conscious mind from evil thoughts, God will grant you purity of the subconscious mind and God will also grant you purity of dreams... If you are faithful in childhood, God will grant you faithfulness in your youth, which has more combats. If you are faithful in not judging others by words, God will enable you not to judge by thoughts, which is more difficult. Likewise, if you are faithful in controlling yourself from external anger, then God will grant you freedom from internal anger, freedom from rage, envy and thoughts of anger. If you are faithful in the ordinary spiritualities (the fruits of the Spirit), God may grant you gifts of the Spirit; and without faithfulness in the first, you can never get the second.

REFLECTION:

By seeing Naomi's faithfulness to God, Ruth was able to be influenced to love the same God. Christ, Himself first and foremost to our Heavenly Father and His Will and also be faithful to one another always. He taught us that those who are faithful over the small things will be granted larger things. In the story of Ruth and Naomi, Ruth accepts Naomi's God because she sees that Naomi is a God fearing woman and yearns to develop that same relationship with her new God. A children of God we are called to show the same dedication to God as Naomi's dedication God, which resembles Christ's dedication to the Father. Seeing that Naomi was dedicated to her God

encouraged Ruth to adopt Naomi's God as her own. Ruth's faithfulness was shown both to her mother in law, Naomi, and through her trust in the new God to take care of them, even upon their return to their land. Our Lord Jesus Christ was born through this lineage despite Ruth being a Moabite because of her faithful to God and her mother in law.

PRAYER:

10. *Your hands have made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments. Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, Because I have hoped in Your word. I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, According to Your word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; For Your law is my delight. Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; But I will meditate on Your precepts. Let those who fear You turn to me, Those who know Your testimonies. Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes, That I may not be ashamed. **Glory be to You O lover of mankind***

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.

He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

+ He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...

+ Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens

+ This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens

+ Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Faithfulness

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	The Holy Spirit is the source of <i>the Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Liturgical:	We receive the Holy Spirit in the Chrismation and we nurture it in the Eucharist
Moral:	The Fruit of the Spirit help us to keep the Commandments

Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ
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CONNECTION POINT

The Tree Metaphor

The Holy Spirit gives us the Fruit of the Spirit and we receive this gift as seeds that are implanted in us by the Holy Baptism and Chrismation. We must nurture and grow the seeds continually by reading the bible, keeping God's Commandments, partaking of the Eucharist continually and continuing in charitable deeds. There are 9 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. If you lose one Fruit you slowly start to lose others. They are named **“fruit”** not FRUITS because they work together and must always be together.

INTRODUCTION

Review the fruit up to this point: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness

Faithfulness is about sticking by someone; it is not about our faith in God. Provide scenarios and examples for the kids to make sure they understand the definition. (For example, there were two sisters who loved each other very much and spent a lot of time together; one sister made a new friend in school and then started to completely ignore her sister and not spend time with her – is this faithfulness? Why or why not?)

Explain that it is difficult for us to be faithful on our own, and that it is a fruit of the Spirit. Ask them – how do we get the fruit? Make sure the kids understand it is by prayer and having a close relationship with God.

LESSON BODY:

Someone who is very faithful is our Lord Jesus Christ. How? He had many chances of running away and escaping His difficult life and the Cross and all the pain. He had many open loopholes to get out of this dilemma and escape for His life; yet He didn't. He was very faithful to us – He stuck with us. He was not going to leave us. We needed a savior and the way to save us was to go to the Cross. Even though it was very painful, very bitter, He stuck with us and wouldn't leave us even though He could have easily just gone to heaven. He is God! He can do anything! Did you ever think about Christ in this way? He loves us very, very much – much more than any of us could ever imagine, and He does anything for us, in order to have us with Him and keep us with Him forever, safe.

In the same way that our Lord was faithful to us, we can be faithful to Him. How? By remembering His words and listening to them, even when it is hard. By listening in Sunday School, even if I don't feel like it; by always coming to the church even if I have a chance to do something that sounds like a lot of fun; by praying every day at home, even if I am tired. This is how I am faithful to Him –

by keeping Him in my life. And the funny thing is that He is the only One who can help me stay faithful to Him – I cannot do it on my own.

Our Lord also strengthens us to be able to remain faithful to one another – our families, our church. There is a story about a very righteous woman named Ruth. This woman lived in a country called Moab. The people in Moab did not know God; they actually used to worship fake gods – statues. Now, when Ruth grew up, she met and loved a man from the children of Israel (God’s people) and they were married. Her mother-in-law was named Naomi and Ruth grew to love her very much and they became very close. (Naomi was a widow- her husband and died. Naomi also had another son who married a woman from Moab). Ruth learned from Naomi about God and started to love God in her heart. Naomi told her about all the wonderful things that God had done for the children of Israel – how He had freed them from slavery in Egypt, and parted the sea and they had walked in the middle of the sea but it was dry ground. And many other wonderful things; and in her heart, Ruth loved God. Now it happened that Ruth’s husband died – who is Naomi’s son – died and his brother died also.

[the servant may need to draw a family tree on the board for the kids to understand what happened in Naomi’s family and to keep everyone straight].

After her sons died, Naomi told Ruth and her other daughter-in-law that they should be free to go back home to their families and start their lives over again because they were still young. The other woman who had married Naomi’s other son cried and hugged Naomi goodbye and left. But God had given Ruth the fruit of faithfulness in her heart so she did something different. Well, let me ask you – what would someone who is faithful do in this situation? What do you think Ruth did? [Let the kids try to answer and you can use their answers to gauge their understanding of faithfulness].

Ruth stayed with her mother-in-law and refused to leave her; she said to Naomi, *“Wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried.”* Wow! This is a very strong statement! Ruth was not going to leave Naomi – even though they had no idea how they were going to have money or how they were going to live (back then, the fathers and husbands were the ones who made money for the family, and now since both of them were widows, they would be very poor). This is how much God is able to give us faithfulness if we just but ask Him. And because of this, Ruth joined herself to the family of God and actually became a great-great-great-great (etc...) grandmother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Is God faithful to us?

A: Yes, He will never leave us

Q: How can we be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ?

A: By remembering His words and listening to them, even when it is hard. By listening in Sunday School, even if I don't feel like it; by always coming to the church even if I have a chance to do something that sounds like a lot of fun; by praying every day at home, even if I am tired. This is how I am faithful to Him – by keeping Him in my life.

Q: How was Ruth faithful to her mother-in-law Naomi?

A: Even after her husband died, she did not leave her, she was faithful to her.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

HOME ACTIVITY AND MEMORIZATION

At home, children should continue to review the Introduction Lesson activity sheet. The servants should reiterate to the students that they should look at it every week on Saturday night to be reminded of the story and how it is related to that Fruit and see what it means to them and to review the previous week's fruit and story.

Memorization:

PSALM 27: *first 1/2*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. Though an army should encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war should rise against me, In this I will be confident. One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

28. GENTLENESS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Matthew 11:28-30

28Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

John 1:32-34

32And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one

Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 Peter 3:1-4

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, translated by Benedicta Ward, SLG – Page 137

They said of Abba Macarius the Egyptian that one day he went up from Scetis to the mountain of Nitria. As he approached the place he told his disciple to go on ahead. When the latter had gone on ahead, he met a priest of the pagans. The brother shouted after him saying, 'Oh, oh, devil, where are you off to?' The priest turned back and beat him and left him half dead. Then picking up his stick, he fled. When he had gone a little further, Abba Macarius met him running and said to him, 'Greetings! Greetings, you weary man!' Quite astonished, the other came up to him and said, 'What good do you see in me, that you greet me in this way?' The old man said to him, 'I have seen you wearing yourself out without knowing that you are wearing yourself out in vain.' The other said to him, 'I have been touched by your greeting and I realize that you are on God's side. But another wicked monk who met me insulted me and I have given him blows enough for him to die of them.' The old man realized that he was referring to his disciple. Then the priest fell at his feet and said, 'I will not let you go till you have made me a monk.' When they came to the place where the brother was, they put him onto their shoulders and carried him to the church in the mountain. When the people saw the priest with Macarius they were astonished and they made him a monk. Through him many pagans became Christians. So Abba Macarius said, 'One evil word makes even the good evil, while one good word makes even the evil good.'

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 2 CHAPTER I. That the Holy Ghost is in the Son not by participation, not from without, but Essentially and by Nature.

1: 32, 33 And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit."

...The Divine Scripture testifies that man was made in the Image and Likeness of God Who is over all. And indeed, he who compiled the first book for us (Moses, who *above all* men was known to God) says, *And God created man, in the Image of God created He him.* But that through the Spirit

he was sealed unto the Divine Image, himself again taught us, saying, *And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*. For the Spirit at once began both to put life into His formation and in a Divine manner to impress His own Image thereon. Thus the most excellent Artificer God, having formed the reasonable living creature upon the earth, gave him the saving commandment. And he was in Paradise, as it is written, still keeping the Gift, and eminent in the Divine Image of Him That made him, through the Holy Ghost That indwelt him. But when perverted by the wiles of the devil, he began to despise his Creator, and by trampling on the law assigned him, to grieve his Benefactor, He recalled the grace given to him, and he that was made unto life then first heard *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. And now the Likeness to God was through the inroad of sin defaced, and no longer was the Impress bright, but fainter and darkened because of the transgression. But when the race of man had reached to an innumerable multitude, and sin had dominion over them all, manifold despoiling each man's soul, his nature was stripped of the ancient grace; the Spirit departed altogether, and the reasonable creature fell into extreme folly, ignorant even of its Creator. But the Artificer of all, having endured a long season, at length pities the corrupted world, and being Good hastened to gather together to those above His runaway flock upon earth; and decreed to trans-element human nature anew to the pristine Image through the Spirit. For no otherwise was it possible that the Divine Impress should again shine forth in him, as it did aforetime.

What then He contrives to this end, how He implanted in us the inviolate grace, or how the Spirit again took root in man, in what manner nature was re-formed to its old condition, it is meet to say. The first man, being earthy, and of the earth, and having, placed in his own power, the choice between good and evil, being master of the inclination to each, was caught of bitter guile, and having inclined to disobedience, falls to the earth, the mother from whence he sprang, and over-mastered now at length by corruption and death, transmits the penalty to his whole race. The evil growing and multiplying in us, and our understanding ever descending to the worse, sin reigned, and thus at length the nature of man was shown bared of the Holy Ghost Which indwelt him. *For the Holy Spirit of wisdom will flee deceit*, as it is written, *nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin*. Since then the first Adam preserved not the grace given him of God, God the Father was minded to send us from Heaven the second Adam. For He sends in our likeness His own Son Who is by Nature without variableness or change, and wholly unknowing of sin, that *as by the disobedience* of the first, we became subject to Divine wrath, so through the obedience of the Second, we might both escape the curse, and its evils might come to naught. But when the Word of God became Man, He received the Spirit from the Father as one of us, (not receiving ought for Himself individually, for He was the Giver of the Spirit); but that He Who knew no sin, might, by receiving It as Man, preserve It to our nature, and might again in-root in us the grace which had left us. For this reason, I deem, it was that the holy Baptist profitably added, *I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven, and It abode upon Him*. For It had fled from us by reason of sin, but He Who knew no sin, became as one of us, that the Spirit might be accustomed to abide in us, having no occasion of departure or withdrawal in Him.

Therefore through Himself He receives the Spirit for us, and renews to our nature, the ancient good. For thus is He also said *for our sakes to become poor*. For being rich, as God and lacking no

good thing, He became Man lacking all things, to whom it is somewhere said and that very well, *What hast thou that thou didst not receive?* As then, being by Nature Life, He died in the Flesh for our sakes, that He might overcome death for us, and raise up our whole nature together with Himself (for all we were in Him, in that He was made Man): so does He also receive the Spirit for our sakes, that He may sanctify our whole nature. For He came not to profit Himself, but to be to all us the Door and Beginning and Way of the Heavenly Goods. For if He had not pleased to receive, as Man, or to suffer too, as one of us, how could anyone have shown that He *humbled Himself?* or how would *the Form of a servant* have been fittingly kept, if nothing befitting a servant were written of Him? Let not then the all-wise account of the dispensation be pulled to pieces, whereof the divine Paul himself rightly cries in admiration: *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* For wisdom indeed and God-befitting, is the great mystery of the Incarnation seen to be.

REFLECTION:

The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove – a dove being one of the gentlest creatures – and alighted upon the head of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christ and the Holy Spirit are One (with the Father); the characteristics of the One are found in the Other, and vice versa. Christ asks us to learn from Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart. As we continue to look at our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are drawn closer to Him, the Holy Spirit continues to impress within us His image, and we become more and more like Him; we acquire meekness.

PRAYER:

Just as You were with Your disciples, O Savior, and gave them peace, graciously come also and be with us, and grant us Your peace, and save us, and deliver our souls. *Agpeya, 3rd hour litany*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

- + Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.
- He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.
- + He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...
- + Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens
- + This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens

+ Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen
alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Meekness (gentleness), humble, Abba Macarius, pagan

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit (and the Virgin Mary)
Liturgical:	Baptism
Moral:	Humility
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father has sent to us His own Holy Spirit to dwell within us. This is how much God loves us and has made us His own – that His own Spirit now dwells within, very deep inside, and will never leave us. During our lives, the Holy Spirit gives us 9 very beautiful gifts called *fruit of the Spirit*. So far we have learned love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness. Today, we will study meekness (gentleness).

INTRODUCTION

[If possible, prepare a short movie or clip that shows a dove or a deer living his life and portrays how gentle of an animal he is]

Meekness means gentleness and humbleness. What does it mean to be gentle? What are some animals that are by nature gentle? [dove, baby deer, kitten]. What is the opposite of gentle? Can you give an example? [Let the kids answer all these questions]. What does it mean to be humble? [It means not showing off, not trying to be the best, not trying to prove that we are better than everyone; being humble means being content with who we are the way God has made us and being happy that way, not needing to compete or prove that we are better than others].

LESSON BODY:

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS GENTLE

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, *“Learn from Me, for I am gentle.”* Our God is a gentle God. He is as gentle as a baby deer and a dove, and even much more, because He was the One who *made* the deer and gave her her gentleness. So He Himself must be more gentle! This means that when we come to Him, He will be gentle with us, like a mother deer takes care of her baby deer. He would never do anything to hurt us, or to scare us.

[This would be the time to watch the movie of a dove or a deer].

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GENTLE AND HELPS US TO BE GENTLE

When St. John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit coming down from Heaven and resting on our Lord’s head, the Holy Spirit (God) appeared as a dove. What does this mean? That the Holy Spirit is gentle like a dove and It came and rested on the head of our Lord Jesus Christ, because *He* is so gentle. And can you imagine? – we have this same Holy Spirit within us, which is so gentle like a dove. (Remember, everyone who is baptized has the Holy Spirit).

So what does that mean for me, and for you? That the Holy Spirit inside us can make us gentle and humble, so we can be like just like our Lord Jesus Christ.

What would it mean for us to be gentle? How does someone who is gentle treat other people? [Let the children share their answers].

What does “humble” mean? [Make sure the children remember from the introduction].

ABBA MACARIUS WAS GENTLE

There is a story about a monk who brought someone to the church through the gift of gentleness that the Holy Spirit had given him:

Abba Macarius one day went up to a mountain near him. As he got closer to the place, he told his disciple to go on ahead. When his disciple had gone on ahead, he met a priest of the **pagans**. The disciple was mean to him and shouted after him saying, ‘Oh, oh, devil, where are you off to?’ (he called him a devil!) The priest turned back and beat him and left him half dead. Then he fled. When he had gone a little further, Abba Macarius met him running and said to him, ‘Greetings! Greetings, you weary man!’ Quite surprised by how kind and gentle Abba Macarius was with him, the priest came up to him and said, ‘What good do you see in me, that you greet me in this way?’ Abba Macarius said to him, ‘I have seen you wearing yourself out and working very hard; you are a hard worker!’ The pagan priest said to him, ‘I have been touched by your greeting and I realize that you are on God’s side. But there is another monk who met me and insulted me and I have given him blows enough that he might die!’ Abba Macarius realized that he was referring to his

disciple. Then the pagan priest fell at his feet and said, 'I will not let you go till you have made me a monk.' When they came to the place where the brother was, they put him onto their shoulders and carried him to the church in the mountain. When the people saw the priest with Macarius they were astonished and they made him a monk. And through him many pagans became Christians.

What do we see in this story? The disciple of Abba Macarius had been mean to the pagan priest and called him a bad name because he did not believe in God; Abba Macarius on the other hand, was kind and gentle with him, and he was humble. Not only did this cause the pagan priest to become a monk himself, but it also saved the life of Abba Macarius' disciple!

Note: Don't tell the children "you have to be good." Rather, emphasize that we need to attach ourselves to God and then we will be filled. It is when we are filled with the Spirit of God that we will be able to fulfill what God wants from us. Link the fruit to prayer and the Holy Spirit. If I, as a servant, don't keep giving this message all the time, over and over again, then I am not doing my job.

If one of the kids asks, "what if you are not baptized but you are a nice person?" Tell them the test would come when there is an experience outside of their daily, usual life. Give an example of interacting with someone who is regarded as an enemy. It is very difficult for someone who is a "nice person" to love their enemy. For someone who is a child of God and who is filled with the Holy Spirit, this would come naturally.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** the children can color pictures of doves or deer and cut them out. Or, the servants can also help the children write prayers to the Holy Spirit, asking for gentleness and humility.
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. When St. John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit coming on our Lord's head, what did the Holy Spirit look like?

A. *A dove*

Q. How is the Holy Spirit like a dove?

A. *The Holy Spirit is gentle and kind like a dove, and we have this Holy Spirit within us*

Q: Since we have this gentle Holy Spirit inside us, what does this mean?

A: That the Holy Spirit can make us gentle, like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was so gentle and humble

Q: How did St. Macarius treat the pagan priest?

A: With Kindness and gentleness

Q: Is our God a gentle God?

A: Yes

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

HOME ACTIVITY AND MEMORIZATION

Mothers to discuss meekness (gentleness and humbleness) with the children. It would be wonderful if they could show the children short movie clips of deer or doves, and explain how our God, the Creator of these gentle and meek animals, is much more gentle than they, since He is their maker and their gentleness *comes from* Him. Mothers should help the children understand how the world values and encourages pride, arrogance, roughness and being better than others, but the children of God, who belong to Him, will always be protected by Him, for He watches over the humble and the meek.

Memorization:

*Psalm 15: "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. **Alleluia.**"*

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

29. SELF-CONTROL

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

James 3:1-12

"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ²For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. ³Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. ⁴Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh."

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

"²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶Therefore I run

thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

Proverbs 25:28

"²⁸Whoever *has* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city broken down, without walls."

2 Peter 1:5-9

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, translated by Benedicta Ward, SLG – Page 87

One day when he (Abba John the Dwarf) was sitting in front of the church, the brethren were consulting him about their thoughts. One of the old men who saw it became a prey to jealousy and said to him, 'John, your vessel is full of poison.' Abba John said to him, 'That is very true, abba; and you have said that when you only see the outside, but if you were able to see the inside, too, what would you say then?'

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 10 CHAPTER II. That the Son is Consubstantial with God the Father, and not of an alien or foreign nature, as some of the perverse assert.

16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come unto you.

Come, then, let us add yet another reflection, profitable and true, to our previous investigations. All His work on earth had indeed been accomplished, as we just now affirmed. It was however surely necessary that we should become partakers and sharers of the Divine Nature of the Word; or rather that, giving up the life that originally belonged to us, we should be transformed into another, and the very elements of our being be changed into newness of life well-pleasing to God. But it was impossible to attain this in any other way except by fellowship in, and partaking of, the Holy Spirit. The most fitting and appropriate time, then, for the mission and descent of the Holy Spirit to us was that which in due season came----I mean, the occasion of our Savior Christ's departure hence. For while yet present in the body with those who believed on Him, He showed Himself, I think, the Bestower of every blessing. But when time and necessity demanded His restoration to His Father in heaven, it was essential that He should associate Himself by the Spirit with His worshippers, and should dwell in our hearts by faith, in order that, having His presence within us, we might cry with boldness, *Abba, Father*, and might readily advance in all virtue, and

might also be found strong and invincible against the wiles of the devil, and the assaults of men, as possessing the omnipotent Spirit.

For it might easily be shown, both from the Old and New Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit changes the disposition of those in Whom He is, and in Whom He dwells, and moulds them into newness of life. For the inspired Samuel, when he was discoursing with Saul, said: *And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man.* And the blessed Paul thus writes: *But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit. Now the Lord is the Spirit.* You see that the Spirit moulds as it were into another likeness those in whom He visibly abides. For He easily turns them from an inclination to dwell on the things of earth, to the contemplation only of that which is in heaven; and from an unmanly cowardice to a courageous disposition. And that we shall find the disciples thus affected and steeled by the Holy Spirit into indifference to the assaults of their persecutors, and laying fast hold of the love that is towards Christ, can no way be questioned. Therefore the saying of the Savior is true, when He says, "It is expedient for you that I depart into heaven." For that was the occasion of the descent of the Spirit.

REFLECTION:

It is the Holy Spirit dwelling within us that will grant us self-control. When Jeremiah 31:31 spoke of putting the commandments in the hearts, He was speaking of *the power to keep the commandments*, that only the Holy Spirit can give.

PRAYER:

Whenever we stand in Your holy sanctuary, we are considered standing in heaven. O Theotokos, you are the gate of heaven, open for us the gate of mercy.
(Agpeya, 3rd hour litany)

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

- + Let us praise the Lord, for with glory, He was glorified.
- He ascended into the heavens, and sent us the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.
- + He made the two into one, that is, the heaven and the earth. He ascended into the heavens ...
- + Come all you nations, to worship Jesus Christ. He ascended into the heavens
- + This is God our Savior, and the Lord of all flesh. He ascended into the heavens

+ Three in one and one in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen alleluia.

VOCABULARY:

Self-control, St. Moses, Abba John the Short

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life
Liturgical:	Communion
Moral:	Respecting ourselves and others around us
Spiritual:	We produce out fruit by abiding in Christ

CONNECTION POINT

We have learned that God the Father called us His children. Because we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father has sent to us His own Holy Spirit to dwell within us. This is how much God loves us and has made us His own – that His own Spirit now dwells within, very deep inside, and will never leave us. During our lives, the Holy Spirit gives us 9 very beautiful gifts called *fruit of the Spirit*. So far we have learned love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness. Today, we will study the last one – self-control.

INTRODUCTION

Review the fruit up to this point.

Review stories the children have heard in the previous lessons by asking them to reiterate ones they heard.

Remind the children that it is by always being connected with Christ that we acquire the fruit of the Spirit: attending liturgy and taking communion is very important.

LESSON BODY:

Today we are going to talk about the last fruit: Self-Control.

[With each of the stories, point out to the children what it was that the Holy Spirit granted them self-control in. Also point out the other areas in life where we are in need of self-control].

ST. MOSES PORTRAYS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER

There was a man who lived in Egypt who was not a Christian and did not know God. In fact, he was a robber and a gang leader and he was famous for spreading violence (people knew him and were scared of him). He was out of control. In his eating, for example, he would eat a lamb *every day*; first he would steal it. One time, it is said about him, that he had to cross the river in order to get to the farm with the lambs, so he swam across the river holding his knife in his hand, stole a lamb, put it over his shoulders and swam back to the other side to have his dinner. He was out of control.

He became a Christian at one point in his life, and today he is known as Saint Moses the Black or Saint Moses the Strong. He not only became a Christian, but he became a monk and dedicated his life to Christ, living in the desert. Now, the question is: How did he get self-control? Monks certainly do not eat an entire lamb every day – a lot of them only eat meat on the feasts of the church! So how did he gain self-control?

He started by praying a lot. Then he got in touch with his spiritual father and his spiritual father gave him a program for how to cut back his eating. He learned how to fast very gradually. Both the gift of prayer and his own work gave him self-control.

(He also became gentle and humble and loving, and gained all the fruit through the grace of the Holy Spirit working in him and his life of prayer).

ABBA JOHN THE SHORT PORTRAYS SELF-CONTROL THROUGH PRAYER

In this story we just heard, we see someone who was out of control in his eating, but there are many other things that people can get out of control about. For example, anger can easily get out of control. Has anybody seen anything (on TV for example) where someone's anger got out of control? [Let the kids share what they saw and point out how damaging anger is. Then tell them the following story]

There was a very holy monk named Abba John the Short and one day he was sitting in front of the church. The other monks were coming to ask him about spiritual advice. One older monk was watching all the monks going to him and he became very jealous, and said to him, "John, you are full of poison." But now look at what Abba John responded with, in humility and gentleness, "That is very true, abba; and you have said that when you only see the outside of me; imagine if you were able to see the inside of me, too!"

He did not try to defend himself, he did not get angry at all. He was someone who prayed a lot and was filled with peace within himself, and was not even moved towards anger.

Note: Don't tell the children "you have to be good." Rather, emphasize that we need to attach ourselves to God and then we will be filled. It is when we are filled with the Spirit of God that we will be able to fulfill what God wants from us. Link the fruit to prayer and the Holy Spirit. If I, as a servant, don't keep giving this message all the time, over and over again, then I am not doing my job.

If one of the kids asks, "what if you are not baptized but you are a nice person?" Tell them the test would come when there is an experience outside of their daily, usual life. Give an example of interacting with someone who is regarded as an enemy. It is very difficult for someone who is a "nice person" to love their enemy. For someone who is a child of God and who is filled with the Holy Spirit, this would come naturally.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What did St. Moses do before he was a Christian that shows us that he didn't have self control?

A: *He would eat a whole lamb for dinner everyday*

Q: How did St. Moses begin to have self control?

A: *He prayed and fasted*

Q: How did St. John the Short show self control?

A: *When he was insulted he did not defend himself or get angry*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss the blessings of self-control with the children, and all the areas it is needed in our daily lives. They should also (gently) help the children understand the dangers of being out of control.

Memorization:

Review Unit Memorizations

Unit III: The Spirit of Sonship

Purpose: The fruit are the qualities of God communicated by the Holy Spirit to the children of God. We experience the fruit of the Spirit as the result of the life of God that abides in us. We received these gifts through baptism. They are called fruit of the Spirit because they are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Holy the Spirit who gives us the ability to feel and think like our Father. The Spirit transmits to us the heart and mind of Christ and the power to fulfill the commandments. We are filled with the Spirit of God whenever we come closer to Christ and through Christ to the Father. The fruit is cultivated by keeping the commandment, good deeds, prayer and partaking of the Eucharist.

30. UNIT REVIEW

Review the main points of each lesson, continuing to stress that it is the Holy Spirit that allows us to grow and acquire the fruit; the Holy Spirit waters us and helps us grow just like water causes flowers to grow. Make sure the students understand the different ways to continue to acquire the Holy Spirit. If you have been using the suggestion of assigning a flower to each saint, use the flowers to help the students remember the stories and the fruit.

LESSON 22: INTRODUCTION

Q. Name three of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

A. *love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*

Q. What part of the tree is Christ?

A. *the trunk*

Q. What part of the tree are we?

A. *the branches*

Q. Can the branches live without the trunk of the tree?

A. *No*

Q. What happens to these fruits within us when we are not connected to Christ?

A. *They start to die*

Q. What do we need to grow a BIG tree?

A. *Seeds, water, sun and good soil*

Q. How do we get the gift of the Holy Spirit seeds in us?

A. *Baptism when we become children of God*

Q. How many Fruit of the Spirit parts are there?

A. *Nine*

Q. What happens when we lose one part of the Fruit of the Spirit?

A. *We slowly start to lose all of them because they are all connected and related.*

Q. Why are they called Fruit of the Spirit, not Fruits?

A. *They work together → you can't have some only, you have to have them all working together ALWAYS.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Memorization: *5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." John 15:5-8*

LESSON 23: LOVE

Q. What happened to the man who was traveling to Jericho?

A. *He was robbed and beaten nearly to death.*

Q. How did the priest and Levite react when they saw the wounded man lying on the road?

A. *They passed on the other side and did not help.*

Q. Who finally offered help?

A. *The enemy, a Samaritan*

Q. What did the Samaritan do for the wounded man?

A. *Cleaned him up and took him to an inn, then gave money for his care.*

Q. Who showed love and kindness in this story, a relative or an enemy?

A. *An enemy*

Q. What did the Samaritan expect in return for his kindness?

A. Nothing

Q. Is it enough to love those who love us? Why?

A. No, Jesus commands us to show love to everyone.

Q. What do we need to be filled with in order to love people with God's love?

A. The Holy Spirit

Q. How can we show love to someone this week?

Memorization:

Love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34

"⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

LESSON 24: PEACE AND JOY

Q: What did St. Macarius do when he saw thieves robbing his cell?

A: He helped them to steal his own things!

Q: Name the two fruits which St. Macarius had which led him to behave this way.

A: Peace and joy

Q: What is tasbeha?

A: it is a service of singing hymns and praises to our God and gives people great joy to sing it.

Memorization:

The Gospel of the Third hour:

"²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸You have heard Me say to you, "I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, "I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. ²⁹"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me

commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in Me, and I in you." John 14:26-15:4

LESSON 25: PATIENCE

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: St. Monica cried and prayed for her son St. Augustine for 18 years, what does this show about her?

A: She was patient on the Lord

Q: How can we be like St. Monica?

A: Pray for others, be patient and wait for the Lord to answer our prayers in His perfect timing

Q: King Saul was trying to hurt David but David was still kind to him, what does this show about David?

A: David was filled with goodness

Q: What can we learn from David?

A: To be kind to everyone- even those who are trying to hurt us or are mean to us

Memorization:

PSALM 27: 2nd 1/2

*Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me. Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence. I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD! **Alleluia.***

LESSON 26: KINDNESS AND GOODNESS

Discussion questions:

Q. Who passed the Stranger up the mountain?

A. All the other monks

Q. Why were the other monks in a hurry?

A. St. Bishop told them that Christ would appear on the top of the mountain.

Q. Who did St. Bishop carry?

A. *Jesus*

Q. How did St Bishoy know it was Jesus he was carrying?

A. *He was getting heavier.*

B. St Bishoy's body has not decayed why?

A. *Since he carried Jesus*

Q. Why were the other monks so upset?

A. *St Bishoy told them they had all passed Christ hurrying up the mountain!*

St Bishoy washes the Stranger's feet:

Q. Why did St Bishoy ask the Stranger into his cell?

A. *He was tired from walking so long.*

Q. What did he do to wash the Stranger's feet?

A. *Setup a basin and filled it with water.*

Q. Who's feet did St Bishoy wash?

A. *Jesus*

Q. What did the Stranger say to St Bishoy?

A. *You are an honorable man.*

Q. What did St Bishoy do when he realized that He was washing Christ's feet?

A. *He knelt down and worshipped Him*

Memorization:

PSALM 23 (22)*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. Alleluia.*

LESSON 27: FAITHFULNESS

Q: Is God faithful to us?

A: Yes, He will never leave us

Q: How can we be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ?

A: By remembering His words and listening to them, even when it is hard. By listening in Sunday School, even if I don't feel like it; by always coming to the church even if I have a chance to do something that sounds like a lot of fun; by praying every day at home, even if I am tired. This is how I am faithful to Him – by keeping Him in my life.

Q: How was Ruth faithful to her mother-in-law Naomi?

A: Even after her husband died, she did not leave her, she was faithful to her.

Memorization:

PSALM 27: *first 1/2*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. Though an army should encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war should rise against me, In this I will be confident. One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

LESSON 28: GENTLENESS

Q. When St. John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit coming on our Lord's head, what did the Holy Spirit look like?

A. *A dove*

Q. How is the Holy Spirit like a dove?

A. *The Holy Spirit is gentle and kind like a dove, and we have this Holy Spirit within us*

Q: Since we have this gentle Holy Spirit inside us, what does this mean?

A: *That the Holy Spirit can make us gentle, like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was so gentle and humble*

Q: How did St. Macarius treat the pagan priest?

A: *With Kindness and gentleness*

Q: Is our God a gentle God?

A: *Yes*

Memorization:

*Psalm 15: "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. **Alleluia.**"*

LESSON 29: SELF-CONTROL

Q: What did St. Moses do before he was a Christian that shows us that he didn't have self control?

A: *He would eat a whole lamb for dinner everyday*

Q: How did St. Moses begin to have self control?

A: *He prayed and fasted*

Q: How did St. John the Short show self control?

A: *When he was insulted he did not defend himself or get angry*

We Are Children of God

UNIT IV: ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF FAITH (9 LESSONS)

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple follow me, all the way to offer your only son. Not only that but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”* (John 1:12); *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith* (1 John 5:4-5).”

31. The Role of the Earthly Father - Abraham is Called
32. Abraham and Lot
33. Abraham and the Promises
34. Abraham and the visitors
35. Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah
36. Isaac is Born, Ishmael and Hagar
37. Isaac is Sacrificed – the Covenant
38. Unit Review

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4-5).

31. THE ROLE OF THE EARTHLY FATHER - ABRAHAM IS CALLED

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 12

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. ¹² Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, "This is his wife"; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." ¹⁴ So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. ¹⁵ The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷ But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great

plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, "She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." ²⁰So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

Genesis 13

Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. ²Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD. ⁵Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. ⁷And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. ⁸So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." ¹⁰And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. ¹¹Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. ¹²Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. ¹³But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. ¹⁴And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; ¹⁵for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. ¹⁷Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." ¹⁸Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

Hebrews 11:8,9

"By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St John Chrysostom commentary on the letter to the Hebrews 11:8,9 Homily 23:

[2.] Verse 8, 9 *"By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he*

sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." ["By faith"]: for (tell me) whom did he see to emulate? He had for father a Gentile, and an idolater; he had heard no prophets; he knew not whither he was going. For as they of the Hebrews who believed, looked to these [patriarchs] as having enjoyed blessings innumerable, he shows that none of them obtained anything as yet; all are unrewarded; no one as yet received his reward. "He "escaped from his country and his home, and "went out not knowing whither he went." And what marvel, if he himself [were so], when his seed also dwelt in this same way? For seeing the promise disproved (since He had said, "To thee will I give this land, and to thy seed" — Genesis 12:7; 13:15), he saw his son dwelling there; and again his grandson saw himself dwelling in a land not his own; yet was he nowise troubled. For the affairs of Abraham happened as we might have expected, since the promise was to be accomplished afterwards in his family (although it is said even to himself, "To thee, and to thy seed," not, "to thee through thy seed," but "to thee and to thy seed"): still neither he, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, enjoyed the promise. For one of them served for hire, and the other was driven out: and he himself even was failing through fear: and while he took some things indeed in war, others, unless he had had the aid of God, would have been destroyed. On this account [the Apostle] says, "with the heirs of the same promise"; not himself alone, he means; but the heirs also.

REFLECTION:

Faith is both a Divine gift as well as a human virtue. We believe what God have revealed and promised. It had to be God who start our faith, but also who perfect it and complete it in us. No one can say Jesus Christ is Lord except by the Spirit. We believe in the Revelation and the Promises of God.

PRAYER:

12. *"Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, For all are Your servants. Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life. I am Yours, save me; For I have sought Your precepts. The wicked wait for me to destroy me, But I will consider Your testimonies. I have seen the consummation of all perfection, But Your commandment is exceedingly broad."* Psalm 119:12

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

Patriarch: *father of fathers*

Descendents: *Children and grand children*

Faith: *trusting God in one's heart*

Famine: *lack of food in whole area*

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We are children of God
Liturgical:	Baptism
Moral:	Following God's commandments
Spiritual:	Vowing to God

INTRODUCTION

Note: Do a little background check on the kids to see if anything is hurtful by using the term "father". For instance, check if there are any children who do not have a father due to death or divorce. All of us here share one Father. Who am I talking about? [God – our Father in Heaven]. So since we all share one Father, what does that make us? [brothers and sisters – family.]

What do you think – does God have a family? [God's family is the church]. In the same way that God made fathers in our families at home, he made fathers for the church, His family. Today we are going to look at an early father of the church: the very first **patriarch**. When this patriarch was born - he didn't know that he was going to become the first patriarch of course - his name was Abram but later on in his life, God changed his name to Abraham.

LESSON BODY:

At the same time, each one of us also has a father on earth, and those fathers are all different. But, they are all meant to do the same things to help our Father in Heaven take care of us.

What does a father on earth do? How do our dads help our Father in Heaven? [They can speak of their fathers and why they need a father].

Our dads do 5 things to help us grow:

1. He protects us. How do our fathers protect us? [Make sure to mention how our fathers protect us from evil]

2. He feeds us. Our fathers work so they can make money so we can have food and clothes and a nice place to live, etc...
3. Our fathers teach us. What do they teach us? [Points to make sure to mention: Right from wrong, they guide us, they teach us which way we should go]
4. Dad disciplines us. This is the hardest for us to accept and be thankful for, but it is very important. When does our father discipline us? Why does he do that?
5. Our fathers take care of us in sickness. The church provides us with **Abouna** who helps us when we are sick. What does "Abouna" mean? [our father].

People have had fathers from the very beginning. God created first the father (Adam), and then out of him came the family.

When our Lord Jesus Christ came to us as a baby, His Heavenly Father called St. Joseph to be Jesus' earthly father.

Just like our Father in Heaven prepared a father on earth for Christ, He prepared a father on earth for each one of us (at home with our family and also in the church) to take care of us for a time.

We are going to study the stories of earthly fathers whom God gave to His people to take care of them. The first of those is Abraham, but we will call him Abram for now because we are going to start at the beginning of his story.

Abram lived with his family – his father and mother and brothers and his wife. Now let's look at things from God's point of view. Here is a man that God has created and prepared a wonderful future for. But He needs to get Abram's attention – He needs him to listen to Him. There is a little problem – Abram is living with his family and he already listens to *them*; when his father needs something, he does it for him right away; when his brothers want to talk to him, he is ready to listen. His time and his attention are all taken up by his family! So what would God need to ask Abram to do? [Let the kids have a few guesses and then give them the answer]. God asks Abram to leave his family, and not just his family, but his country also! God says, *"Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Gen 12:1-3).

Do you think this would be easy for Abram to do? No! But guess what? He did it. He was starting to learn to **trust** God. God asked him to do something that seemed very difficult, and he did it because he loved God very much and was learning to trust Him. Trusting God means being ok knowing that God is going to take very good care of you, no matter what.

What was God's promise that He made to Abram? [Read the verse again to the kids]. *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.* That is why God asked him to do this difficult thing – He wanted to give him something even better, much better, than what he thought he had.

God did this with Abram several times – He would give Abram promises and at the same time give him instructions to follow. If Abram was able to succeed – if he would follow God's instructions and continue to believe in His promises - then he would be able to father God's people. God was shaping Abraham and helping him increase his **faith** (trusting God in one's heart). Let's keep going with Abram's life and see some of these things:

Now when Abram left as the Lord had told him, he took with him his wife named Sarah and his nephew named Lot and they traveled to a new area called Canaan. When they arrived there, the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your **descendants** I will give this land." Another promise! God tells Abram that his descendants will live in that land, even though there were already people living there. Abram believed God, even though it seemed like it would be very difficult to happen. Abram had very much **faith**. He believed the things that God spoke to him and he obeyed Him and followed Him. Abram built an altar in that place for God.

After this time, there was a **famine** in Canaan where Abram, Sarah, and Lot were so they traveled to Egypt to find food. When he arrived in Egypt, Abram made a mistake: he tells a lie. Instead of telling people that Sarah was his wife, he said that she was his sister because he was scared that the people there would like Sarah and want to hurt him to take her away from him. Abram was not perfect, he made mistakes; in the same way, our fathers are not perfect, they make mistakes. But we are still called to respect and honor them. This is very important to know.

We see something else interesting from this part of the story – were things easy for Abram? Do you think it would be easy to always be traveling from one place to the other, with no permanent home? So far, he had left his house and camped out in many different places! And on top of that, there was a famine! So even though following God's directions for him was not easy, Abram continued to rise up and follow God's plan for him. This shows his faith in God, that God would protect him and do the things He promised, *even though they were not happening in the very moment that God said it.* And God protected Abram, even when Abram was not doing too well. For example, God helped Abram when he was scared about his wife Sarah in Egypt and God send many plagues on the Pharaoh and on his household because he had taken Sarah from Abram.

Now the famine got better, so Abram, Sarah, and Lot left Egypt and went back to Canaan. Abram was very rich; our Lord had blessed him with many possessions and cattle and sheep and silver and gold (people who were rich a long time ago did not just have a lot of money, but also a lot of animals). Lot also had many possessions. What do you think the problem would be here? Both of them have many flocks and herds and they are trying to live next to each other on the same grass?

The land was not big enough for them! Lot's sheep would be trying to eat Abram's sheep's grass and the goats would be too crowded, etc... So Abram told Lot he could pick anywhere he wanted to live, and Abram would live in a different area so that there wouldn't be problems between them on account of the herds and flocks and servants that they both had. So Lot separated from Abram and went and lived in a place that *looked* very beautiful and nice on the outside – he went to live near two cities named Sodom and Gomorrah. The cities looked very big and impressive and the grass looked very green and nice and there were beautiful trees and flowers. But the problem was that even though it looked like a very beautiful place to live on the *outside*, the people who lived *inside* were very wicked and did very many bad things and did not follow God. Lot made a bad choice, but his first mistake was not choosing to live in that area. What do you think his first mistake was? Leaving Abram, leaving the church, and going off by himself. He needed Abram to help guide him, and he should have asked Abram his opinion about where to move to instead of simply going where he thought was good.

Sometimes, when we grow up, we try to make big important decisions by ourselves without asking the advice and guidance of the church. This is a mistake and it is not good. We should not be like Lot in this point.

Do you know what ended up happening to those two cities that Lot went to live in after a short time? They were destroyed by fire from Heaven because of the evil that was in it. Lot had to be rescued from out of the city by angels! It was a very scary time.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Idea: Possible activity: (Prepare ahead of time) ask the kids to bring in pictures of their fathers to this class. Provide pictures of St. Joseph and of the Abounas. The kids can put the picture of their father, the picture of St. Joseph, and the pictures of the abounas together somehow (a collage, or in a frame) and decorate it in order to connect themselves with Christ and with the church.

- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

Review:

1. God called Abram out of his country and out of his family and Abram listened to God. Throughout his life, he grew in faith and learned more and more to trust God. He made mistakes, but he continued to rise up and listen to God's plan. Because of this, God makes Abram a father to His own family.
2. Abram is not perfect and he made mistakes; our fathers are not perfect and they make mistakes but we are still called to respect and honor them.
3. When Lot separated from Abram, something very scary happened to him. When we leave the church, we leave the protection that God wants to give us.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: We have 2 fathers, who are they?

A: Our earthly father and our Heavenly Father

Q: Name 2 of the roles of a father that help us grow.

A: Protect, teach, feed, discipline, take care of us in sickness

Q: Who was our Lord's earthly father?

A: St. Joseph

Q: Who was the first patriarch?

A: Abraham

Q: What does trusting God mean?

A: Trusting God means being ok knowing that God is going to take very good care of you, no matter what.

Q: Throughout his life, Abraham grew in faith. What is faith?

A: Trusting God in one's heart

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4-5).

32. ABRAHAM AND LOT

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 14

And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, ²that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). ⁴Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. ⁷Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar. ⁸And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar--four kings against five. ¹⁰Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. ¹¹Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹²They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. ¹³Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. ¹⁴Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. ¹⁷And the king of Sodom went out to meet

him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.

¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. ²¹Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." ²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, "I have made Abram rich"-- ²⁴except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Genesis 15

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." ²But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" ⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." ⁵Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. ⁷Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." ⁸And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" ⁹So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. ¹²Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." ¹⁷And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. ¹⁸On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates-- ¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

Hebrews 11:8-10

8By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 5: CHAPTER V. That not inferior in Might and Wisdom to God the Father is the Son, yea rather His very Wisdom and Might.

8:33 *"We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"*

They laugh at the promise of our Savior, rather they even take it ill, as though they were insulted. For that which has no share at all of *bondage*, how will it need (he says) of One Who calls us unto freedom, and Who gives us a something over and above what is in us already. But they know not, though wont to have a conceit of being wise, that their forefather *Abraham* was of no notable father after the world, nor yet of highest repute among those who are admired in this life, but was ennobled by faith only in God: *Abraham believed God*, it says, *and faith was imputed to him for righteousness and he was called the Friend of God*. You see then very clearly the cause of his illustriousness. For since he was called the friend of God who rules over all, he has become on this account great and famed, and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, and *the righteousness which is of faith* has become to him the cause of freedom towards God, Therefore when he by believing was justified, that is, when he shook off the low birth that is from sin, then did he appear illustrious and of noble birth and free. Foolishly then do the Jews spurning the grace which freed the very founder of their race advance only to him who was freed thereby, but considering neither whence is or whither looks what is illustrious in him, they dishonor the Giver of what is most excellent in him, and forsaking the Fount of all nobility they think greatly of him who is participate thereof; but they will be caught vainly boasting of being never in bondage to any man and what they say about this will be no less proved to be false. For they were in bondage to the Egyptians for 430 years and through the grace that is from above were hardly delivered from the house of bondage and from *the iron furnace*, as it is written, to wit the tyranny of the Egyptians. And they were in bondage both to the Babylonians and Assyrians, when they removing the whole country of Judaea and Jerusalem itself transferred all Israel to their own land. In no respect then was the speech of the Jews sane: for besides being ignorant of their truer bondage, that in sin, they utterly deny the other ignoble one and have an understanding accustomed to think highly about a mere nothing.

REFLECTION:

--Our Resurrection through the Christological Sacrifice

Read Hebrews 9:11 – 10:18; 1 Corinthians 15; Mark 16:14-20.

we as Christian believers are encouraged by the words of St. Paul to the Hebrew saints: 19Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, 22let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.

PRAYER:

"15 Look down from heaven, And see from Your habitation, holy and glorious. Where are Your zeal and Your strength, The yearning of Your heart and Your mercies toward me? Are they restrained? 16 Doubtless You are our Father, Though Abraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father; Our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name. 17 O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways, And hardened our heart from Your fear? Return for Your servants' sake, The tribes of Your inheritance. 18 Your holy people have possessed it but a little while; Our adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary. 19 We have become like those of old, over whom You never ruled, Those who were never called by Your name." Isaiah 63:15-19

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

Lot: *Abraham nephew*

Shield: *a defensive armor*

heir: *a person who inherit*

descendent: *children and grand children for all generations*

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We are children of God
Liturgical:	Baptism
Moral:	Following God's commandments
Spiritual:	Vowing to God

INTRODUCTION

Review last week's lesson and the 3 main points:

1. God called Abram out of his country and out of his family and Abram listened to God. Throughout his life, he grew in faith and learned more and more to trust God. He made mistakes, but he continued to rise up and listen to God's plan. Because of this, God makes Abram a father to His own family.
2. Abram is not perfect and he made mistakes; our fathers are not perfect and they make mistakes but we are still called to respect and honor them.
3. When Lot separated from Abram, something very scary happened to him. When we leave the church, we leave the protection that God wants to give us.

LESSON BODY:

Who here has been scared before? Did anybody have something scary happen to them? [If the kids have a story to share, ask questions about how they felt and prompt them to get all their feelings they experienced out in order to link this with how Lot felt when he was captured. They would then be able to appreciate the relief he felt at being rescued by Abram – by the church].

Someone in the Bible also had something very scary happen to them. His name was Lot. Who remembers who Lot is? [Abram's nephew]. Last week we heard how he left Abram and went to live in a place that looked very beautiful on the outside – very nice looking buildings, beautiful grass and trees and flowers, but inside there were very wicked people living. Well, it happened that one day the kings who lived in that area went to war against each other, and the kings of the city where Lot was living were losing. Those kings became very afraid; their soldiers were being attacked and people were coming after them, so they fled, they ran away and tried to hide. When they ran away, that left everyone in their cities open to being captured! No one was there to keep away the enemies. So all the enemies rushed in and took everything in the city – all the goods and all the people (they wanted to make them into slaves). They also took Lot! He was grabbed up by people he did not know – they also took everything he had in his house! – and taken prisoner. Now he felt very scared – the way that some of you felt scared but also much more. He didn't know what would happen to him or his family.

But there was hope. Someone from the city had managed to escape from being captured, and he was watching all this happen from far away. He saw the enemies take Lot. So he ran as fast as he could and went and told Abram, our first patriarch of the church. And what did Abram do? He gathered together all his servants and went and rescued Lot and brought him back safely. He saved his life.

This is what a father does, and this is what our fathers in the church do. They are sent by God to help us when we are in a bad situation, no matter what the situation is. It probably won't be a situation where you are carried away from your house, but any kind of bad situation when you feel scared, or when you have done something wrong and things are not good anymore.

God was very pleased with Abram that he had done this and saved Lot because this is something that God Himself does – remember, He is the Father that all fathers should follow. Abram was learning to become a very good father.

After these things had happened, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your **shield**, your exceedingly great reward." And then the Lord did something great: He gave Abram 3 beautiful promises. Listen very carefully to the words of the Lord and let us see who can spot the 3 promises:

First Abram is going to tell God that he does not have a son, "But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the **heir** of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [Abram is upset that he does not have a son]. Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" [Now we will start the promises] And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your **descendants** be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

[Repeat this over and over again so they can find the 3 promises].

Who has found the 3 promises?

1. A son and through that son a very big family (as many as the stars in heaven)
2. The land they would live together on (The Promised Land)
3. A Name: kings will come out of Him

[Ask the kids to memorize this for next week]

Now one thing you should know: God is not like other people. Sometime when people say things or make promises to us, it doesn't happen. For example, the weather man, or your big brother, or even your teachers sometimes. But with God, whenever He says something, it happens; there is not even a little tiny chance that it will not happen. So what would God like Abram to do after He gives him promises? Simply to *believe* God. And Abram did in fact believe God, and God was very pleased with Abram for doing so (Gen 15:6).

Our job is also the same as Abram's: whenever God says something to us, we are to trust that God would do it. And we will be rewarded for believing God.

Conclusion:

1. Abram, as a father of the church, rescued Lot
2. God gave Abram 3 promises
3. Whatever God says always happens
4. Abram believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What are the 3 promises that God gave to Abraham?

A: A son, a very big family, land that they would all live together on

Q: When Lot was in trouble and far from God what happened? Who came for him?

A: Abraham, the first patriarch, came to help him and get him

Q: Who is there to help us today when we are in trouble or far from God?

A: Abouna!

Q: What is different about the promises God makes and the promises people make?

A: whenever He says something, it happens; there is not even a little tiny chance that it will not happen

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4-5).

33. ABRAHAM AND THE PROMISES

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 16

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ²So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. ³Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. ⁴So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me." ⁶So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. ⁷Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." ⁹The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." ¹⁰Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." ¹¹And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. ¹²He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." ¹³Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" ¹⁴Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Genesis 17

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. ²And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." ³Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: ⁴"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." ⁹And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹²He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. ¹³He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." ¹⁵Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." ¹⁷Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" ¹⁹Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. ²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." ²²Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. ²³So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. ²⁴Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; ²⁷and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St John Chrysostom Commentary on the letter to the Hebrews 11: Homily 23

[6.] But if the things which He promised as additional, are so admirable, so beyond expectation, so magnificent, what will those be, to which these are an addition, to which these are somewhat over and above? What then can be more blessed than they who attain them? What more wretched than those who miss them? For if a man when driven out from his native country, is pitied by all; and when he has lost an inheritance is considered by all as an object of compassion, with what tears ought he to be bewailed, who fails of Heaven, and of the good things there stored up? Or rather, he is not even to be wept for: for one is wept for, when he suffers something of which he is not himself the cause; but when of his own choice he has entangled himself in evil, he is not worthy of tears, but of wailings; or rather then of mourning; since even our Lord JESUS Christ mourned and wept for Jerusalem, impious as it was. Truly we are worthy of weeping innumerable, of wailings innumerable. If the whole world should receive a voice, both stones, and wood, and trees, and wild beasts, and birds, and fishes, and in a word, the whole world, if receiving a voice it should bewail us who have failed of those good things, it would not bewail and lament enough. For what language, what intellect, can represent that blessedness and virtue, that pleasure, that glory, that happiness, that splendor? “What eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and what hath not entered into the heart of man” (1 Corinthians 2:9), (he did not say, that they simply surpass [what we imagine]; but none hath ever conceived) “the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” For of what kind are those good things likely to be, of which God is the Preparer and Establisher? For if immediately after He had made us, when we had not yet done anything, He freely bestowed so great [favors], Paradise, familiar intercourse with Himself, promised us immortality, a life happy and freed from cares; what will He not bestow on those who have labored and struggled so greatly, and endured on His behalf? For us He spared not His Only Begotten, for us when we were enemies He gave up His own SON to death; of what will He not count us worthy, having become His friends? what will He not impart to us, having reconciled us to Himself?

[7.] He both is abundantly and infinitely rich; and He desires and earnestly endeavors to obtain our friendship; we do not thus earnestly endeavor. What am I saying, ‘do not earnestly endeavor’? We do not wish to obtain the good things as He wishes it. And what He has done shows that He wishes it more [than we]. For while, for our own sake, we with difficulty think lightly of a little gold: He, for our sake, gave even the Son who was His own. Let us make use of the love of God as we ought; let us reap the fruits of His friendship. For “ye are My friends” (he says) “if ye do what I say to you.” (John 15:14) How wonderful! His enemies, who were at an infinite distance from Him, whom in all respects He excels by an incomparable superiority, these He has made His friends and calls them friends. What then should not one choose to suffer for the sake of this friendship? For the friendship of men we often incur danger, but for that of God, we do not even give up money. Our [condition] does indeed call for mourning, for mourning and tears and wailings, and loud lamentation and beating of the breast. We have fallen from our hope, we are humbled from our high estate, we have shown ourselves unworthy of the honor of God even after His benefits we are become unfeeling, and ungrateful. The devil has stripped us of all our good things. We who were counted worthy to be sons; we His brethren and fellow-heirs are come to differ nothing from His enemies that insult Him.

Henceforward, what consolation shall there be for us? He called us to Heaven, and we have thrust ourselves down to hell. “Swearing and lying and stealing and adultery, are poured out upon the

earth.” (Hosea 4:2) Some “mingle blood upon blood”; and others do deeds worse than blood-shedding. Many of those that are wronged, many of those that are defrauded prefer ten thousand deaths to the suffering such things: and except they had feared God, would even have killed themselves, being so murderously disposed against themselves. Are not these things then worse than blood-shedding?

REFLECTION:

The Word of God contains Revelations, Commandments and Promises, and all of them are essential to our salvation. We believe them and build our lives upon them. Revelations and promises to keep and believe and Commandments are to keep and obey.

PRAYER:

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! 2Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! 3They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways. 4You have commanded us To keep Your precepts diligently. 5Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes! 6Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments. 7I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. 8I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly!" Psalm 119:a

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

Faith: *trusting God's promises*

Patient: *waiting without complaining*

Covenant: *Family relationship*

Circumcised: *the sign of the old covenant*

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We trust in God's promises
Liturgical:	Church Mysteries
Moral:	Keeping God's commandments
Spiritual:	Waiting on God

INTRODUCTION

Review the 3 promises God made to Abram by asking the students to recite them.

God made three promises to Abraham

1. **The first promise: that Abram would have a son and** through that son, many descendants .
2. **The second is the Land.**
3. **The third is a great Name,** which means some of his children would be kings

LESSON BODY:

Let's put ourselves in Abram's shoes; each one of you will pretend that you are Abram and that God has just promised you that you will have a son. [Pause and let the students take this in]. What are your thoughts? Do you think this is going to happen right away? Are you going to get your son right at the moment that God says it? No of course not! You are only in second grade! So what does that mean you would need to do? (Remember, we said that whatever God says always happens). [Let the students try to answer, then tell them the answer is *wait*]. You would have to wait for a very long time before it happened. And so did Abram. He was not in second grade when God told him he would have a son, but he still had to wait a very, very, very long time. He did not have a son as soon as God said it. Abram was very **patient**. He knew God had told him he would have a son and he believed God, even though it was taking a very long time to happen (Abram was 100 years old when his son was finally born!) This is point #1 – remember this; it is very important: we need to wait for God's promises to happen and to give Him time.

Abram's wife, however, was not patient and she did not yet trust God's word. Her name was Sarai and when she saw that she was not having any children, she panicked. Instead of waiting for God, she took matters into her own hands and gave Abram some wrong advice: she told him that he should take her servant, Hagar, as his wife and then maybe he would have children from her. Sarai thought that this would solve her problem and make her happy, because since her servant belonged to her, it would be almost like the baby was hers. And Abram listened to his wife. And Hagar had a son. But there came a problem and this did not make Sarai happy as she had thought it would. When Hagar saw that she was able to have a son and Sarai was not, she started to treat her in a mean way and she started to think that she was better than her. This made Sarai miserable. And she learned a difficult lesson: when we do not trust God and wait, we have to carry difficult **consequences** that we will not like. This is point #2.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My **covenant** between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly" (meaning, give him many children). Now because Abram

was faithful, God made the promises He had given him into a covenant – a promise that cannot be broken. A covenant is actually much more than a promise, it is **family bond** - blood relation.

God also said to Abram, “behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be **a father of many nations**. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.” God changed Abram’s name to Abraham. *Abram* means “honored father,” while *Abraham* means “father of many nations.” So his name became what God had promised to give him. And God also told him that from his **descendants** would come kings and that his descendants would be given the Promised Land. And God also changed Sarai’s name to Sarah because she would be a mother of nations and also have kings come from her.

Now this was God’s side of the covenant. Abraham’s side was to do the following: God told Abraham that he and every male child that is his and all the males that would be born from his children and his children’s children and going on and on and on would need to be **circumcised**, meaning they would need to have a little piece of their skin cut off. God said that this would be the sign of the covenant that is between Him and Abraham. And Abraham listened right away and that very day he circumcised himself and all the males in his house. He was very serious in his relationship with God. We need to learn how to be this way in our relationship with God because He has made a covenant with us also – He gave us the most precious thing He has: His Son. So just like Abraham was very serious in his relationship with God, we too need to be serious in our relationship with Him.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

Review the main points

1. When God makes a promise, we show faith by trusting that God would do what He promised. We look for God's promises in the Bible and hold on to them in faith.
2. We need to be patient and wait for Him like Abram. We do not complain when promises are not fulfilled quickly.
3. When we do not trust God and wait, we will have to carry difficult consequences like Sarai did when her servant started to hate her

4. God made a Covenant with Abraham: God and Abraham were one family. God had a part to do in it and Abraham had a part to do in it. Abraham took his part very seriously; we should also take our relationship with God very seriously.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Sarah was not patient on God and because of this she suffered consequences, what did we learn from this?

A: when we do not trust God and wait, we have to carry difficult **consequences** that we will not like

Q: How would you describe how Abraham took his relationship with God?

A: Very seriously

Q: What is the covenant that God made with us?

A: He gave us His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ

Q: How should we take our relationship with God?

A: Very seriously, just as Abraham did

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrew 11:6

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4-5).

34. ABRAHAM AND THE VISITORS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 18

*Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ²So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. ⁴Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." ⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." ⁷And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. ⁸So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. ⁹Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." ¹⁰And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. ¹²Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" ¹³And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, "Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?" ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."
¹⁵But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"
¹⁶Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. ¹⁷And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, ¹⁸since*

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." 20And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know." 22Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. 23And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" 26So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." 27Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: 28Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." 29And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." 30Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." 31And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." 32Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." 33So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St John Chrysostom Commentary on the letter to the Hebrews 11: 11

[5.] (Verse 11) "By faith also Sarah herself," he says. Here he began [speaking] in a way to put them to shame, in case, that is, they should show themselves more faint-hearted than a woman. But possibly some one might say, How "by faith," when she laughed? Nay, while her laughter indeed was from unbelief, her fear [was] from Faith, for to say, "I laughed not" (Genesis 18:15), arose from Faith. From this then it appears that when unbelief had been cleared out, Faith came in its place. "By faith also Sarah received strength to conceive seed even when she was past age." What is, "to conceive seed"? She who was become dead, who was barren, received power for the retaining of seed, for conception. For her imperfection was two-fold; first from her time of life for she was really old; secondly from nature, for she was barren. (Verse 12) "Wherefore even from one they" all "sprang, as the stars of the sky, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore." "Wherefore" (he says) "even from one they" all "sprang." Here he not only says that she bare [a child], but that she also became mother of so many as not even fruitful wombs [are mothers of]. "As the stars," He says. How then is it that He often numbers them, although He said, "As the stars

of the heaven shall not be numbered, so neither shall your seed"? (Genesis 15:5) He either means the excess, or else [speaks of] those who are continually being born. For is it possible, tell me, to number their forefathers of one family as, such an one son of such an one, and such an one son of such an one? But here such are the promises of God, so skillfully arranged are His undertakings.

REFLECTION:

God's promises can be difficult to believe for people who do not know His power. A child of God Trust all that God promises to do. Sometimes we become a laughing stock to those who does not believe. Abraham and Sarah entertained the visitors not knowing who they were. They lived in Canaan among the worst type of people, yet their knowledge of their neighbors did not keep them from showing generosity and hospitality.

PRAYER:

"105Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. 106I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep Your righteous judgments. 107I am afflicted very much; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word. 108Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, And teach me Your judgments. 109My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Your law. 110The wicked have laid a snare for me, Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts. 111Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, For they are the rejoicing of my heart. 112I have inclined my heart" Psalm 119:n

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

Generous: *gives abundantly*

Intercedes: *Asks favors on behalf of other*

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We trust in God's promises
Liturgical:	Church Mysteries
Moral:	Keeping God's commandments
Spiritual:	Waiting on God

INTRODUCTION

When last we left Abraham, he had entered into a covenant relationship with the Lord and was still waiting on the Lord to fulfill His promises. [Review the definition of *covenant*, what Abraham's role in the covenant was, and what the three promises were by asking the children what they remember from last week].

LESSON BODY:

Today we are going to find out how something very beautiful, very special happened one day in Abraham's life. Listen very carefully because I am going to ask you about what kind of a person you think Abraham is after hearing about this incident that happened in his life and what he did. He was sitting at the door of his tent at about noon, when the sun is very hot, when he lifted up his eyes and looked and saw that there were three men standing by him. As soon as he saw them, he jumped up and ran from his tent door to meet them and he bowed himself to the ground before them and asked them to please stay so he could wash their feet and so they could rest. He also offered to bring them food so they could be refreshed. And the men agreed. So Abraham ran to Sarah his wife and asked her to very quickly make some bread and he ran to his herd and found a young calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man of his house who hurried to prepare it. And he took butter and milk and the calf and set it before the men and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

Think about all of these things that Abraham did – how he ran out to meet the men as soon as he saw them, how he bowed down before them and offered to wash their feet, how he ran to prepare them food and then stood by them while they ate. What does this show about Abraham? What kind of a person was he? Does everyone in the world treat strangers in this way? He washed their feet, he prepared the best food for them, and then he waited on them like a servant while they ate. He didn't even sit down to eat with them, and they were in his house, eating his food! [Answer: he is kind to strangers and very **generous**]. This is something that is very beautiful in God's eyes and He wants His people to be like this – not afraid to give away what they have, very kind and gentle with people, and serving everyone around them. Abraham was like this with everyone who would come by him. He was also very willing and eager to be generous.

But this time, in this story that we just heard, the visitors turned out to be very special visitors, and not just some regular people: one of those men was the Lord; the other two were angels. Now what do you think would have happened if Abraham had not been generous with strangers and was not used to acting this way whenever some people came by him? Would he have been able to enjoy the wonderful visit from God and have the honor of serving Him? No, he would have completely missed being able to talk with the Lord and His angels. His generosity was what allowed him this rare pleasure. So who knows? Maybe if we are kind and generous like this, we will also meet angels, or even the Lord. (Remember St. Bishoy, whose picture is in our church. He

used to wash the feet of everyone who came to his cell and one day it turned out to be the Lord whose feet he was washing.)

The Lord then told Abraham that his son was going to be born soon, the promise was about to be fulfilled: "Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, "Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!" Abraham was 99 years old at this point, and his wife was very old also. They were way past the normal time when parents have children, but nothing is too difficult for the Lord." (Gen 18:9-15)

The Lord had come down to Abraham His friend to tell him that Sarah would have a son soon. Look at the amount of care the Lord shows to those who love Him! Not only did the Lord share this with Abraham, but He also shared something else with him: the Lord revealed to Abraham secrets, things that He was about to do. Things that would happen in the future, that of course no one else knew; listen: as the Lord and the angels finished eating, the Lord started to tell Abraham about two cities called Sodom and Gomorrah. These were the two cities where Lot, Abraham's nephew was living. The people in these two cities were also, if you remember, doing very evil and wrong things and the Lord told Abraham that He was going to go down now and see if what they were doing was really as bad as what He had heard. And Abraham was led to understand that the Lord meant to destroy those cities. God shared with Abraham His own plans, and listen to what Abraham did after: he started to discuss with the Lord and talk with Him. Abraham **intercedes** for Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of his nephew Lot and asks the Lord if He would spare the cities for the sake of 50 righteous people who were found living in them: "Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and

I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place." (Gen 18:22-33)

[Make sure the students understand this dialogue]

Abraham was speaking with the Lord and discussing the Lord's plans with Him. God was treating Abraham like a friend because Abraham had proved himself worthy of this honor.

Conclusion:

1. Abraham's **generosity** with strangers is a characteristic that God wants His people to have.
2. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord to do
3. God reveals secrets to Abraham
4. Abraham intercedes for Sodom for the sake of Lot.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What did we learn from how Abraham treated the 3 men that came to visit him?

A: not afraid to give away what they have, very kind and gentle with people, and serving everyone around them

Q: Who were the 3 men that came to visit Abraham?

A: 1 was our Lord and 2 were angels

Q: Is anything too hard for God?

A: No, He can do anything and everything

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Hebrews 13:2

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4-5).

35. LOT IN SODOM AND GOMORRAH

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 19

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. ²And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." ³But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. ⁵And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." ⁶So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, ⁷and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! ⁸See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof." ⁹And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. ¹⁰But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door. ¹²Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city--take them out of this place! ¹³For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." ¹⁴So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his

sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. ¹⁵When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." ¹⁶And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." ¹⁸Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! ¹⁹Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. ²⁰See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." ²¹And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. ²²Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. ²³The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. ²⁴Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. ²⁷And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. ²⁹And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

³⁰Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. ³¹Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. ³²Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." ³³So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. ³⁴It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." ³⁵Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. ³⁶Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben- Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria Commentary on St Luke's Gospel Homily CXVII

AGAIN is the Pharisee fighting against God, nor feels that he is kicking against the pricks: for while assuming the appearance of being anxious to learn, he makes a mock at divine mysteries so holy, that "the angels desire to look into them," according to the word of the blessed Peter. For this reason "blindness in part has happened unto Israel," and darkness has blinded their eyes. For that they were dark and blind, so as even often to make the mystery of Christ an occasion of ridicule, any one may learn from what has now been read to us. For they drew near asking Him, and saying, "When will the kingdom of God come?" Moderate your pride, O foolish Pharisee: desist from a mockery that exposes you to heavy and inevitable guilt. "For he, it says, that does not believe the Son, is condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the Son of God." For the divine Moses showed before by type and shadow that the Word is the world's way and door of salvation, in that though He is God, He appeared in human form, and endured the death of the flesh for the sake of the whole earth. And the declarations also of the holy prophets agree with what was said by Moses. For they foretold that He would come in due time in form like unto us. And this also came to pass: for He was manifested to those upon earth, having assumed the form of a slave; but even so He retained His natural lordship, and power, and glory such as befits God, as is proved by the splendor of the works He wrought. But you did not believe in Him: you did not accept justification by His means, in that you were obdurate and proud. And after this you ask, "When the kingdom of God shall come?"

As I said therefore, he mocks at a mystery thus truly holy and worthy of admiration. For because the Savior of all in His public discourses spoke from time to time of the kingdom of God, therefore these miserable men, in contempt of Him,----or perhaps even having it in their mind that being entrapped by their malice, He will have to endure the death upon the cross,----ask in mockery, "When the kingdom of God will come;" as much as to say, that before this kingdom which You talk about, the cross and death will seize You. What therefore does Christ reply? Again He displays His long-suffering and incomparable love unto man: for "being reviled, He does not revile back: suffering, He does not threaten." He does not therefore harshly chide them, nor yet because of their wickedness does He deign to give them an answer to their question, but says that only which is for the benefit of all men, that "the kingdom of God comes not by watching: for behold! the kingdom of God is within you." For ask not, He says, about the times in which the season of the kingdom of heaven shall again arise and come: but rather be in earnest, that you may be found worthy of it, for "it is within you," that is, it depends upon your own wills, and is in your own power, whether or not you receive it. For every man who has attained to justification by means of faith in Christ, and is adorned by all virtue, is counted worthy of the kingdom of heaven s.

Having therefore made this plain to all men, He now transfers His words to the holy disciples, to whom as His true companions He says, "The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it." Is the Lord then in so speaking working cowardice in His disciples? Does He enervate them beforehand, and make them without heart for the endurance of those persecutions and temptations which they would have to bear? This is not His meaning, but the contrary: for He would have them prepared for all that can grieve men, and ready to endure patiently, that so being approved, they may enter the kingdom of God. He forewarns them therefore that before His advent from heaven, at the consummation of the world,

tribulation and persecution will precede Him, so that they will wish to see one of the days of the Son of man; that is, one such as those when they were still going about with Christ, and conversing with Him. And yet the Jews even then were guilty of no little violence against Him. They stoned Him with stones: they persecuted Him not once only, but oftentimes: they led Him to the brow of the hill, that they might throw Him down from the precipice: they vexed Him with reproaches and calumnies, and there was no form of wickedness which the Jews did not practice against Him. How then did He say that the disciples would desire to see one of His days? It was because, by comparison with the greater evils, the less are, so to speak, desirable.

But that He will descend from heaven in the latter times of the world, not obscurely nor secretly, but with godlike glory, and as "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto," He declared, saying, that His coming shall be as the lightning. He was born indeed in the flesh of a woman, to fulfill the dispensation for our sakes, and for this reason He emptied Himself, and made Himself poor, and no longer showed Himself in the glory of the Godhead: for the season itself, and the necessity of the dispensation, summoned Him to this humiliation. But after the resurrection from the dead, having ascended to heaven, and sat down with God the Father, He shall descend again, not with His glory withdrawn, nor in the meanness of human nature, but in the majesty of the Father, with the companies of the angels guarding Him, and standing; before Him as God and Lord of all. He shall come therefore as the lightning, and not secretly.

Nor must we believe any one saying, "Lo! Christ is here, or lo! He is there. But first He must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation," He cuts away another expectation from the heart of the disciples: for they supposed, that when He had gone round about Judaea, and afterwards been in Jerusalem, that He would immediately manifest the kingdom of God. They even drew near to Him and said, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Yes, even the mother of Zebedee's sons, expecting that this would be the case, drew near and said, "Lord, say that my two sons shall sit, the one on Your right hand, and the other on Your left, in Your kingdom." That they might know therefore that He was about first to undergo His saving passion, and to abolish death by the death of His flesh, and put away the sin of the world, and bring to nought the ruler of this world, and so to ascend unto the Father, and in due time to appear to "judge the world in righteousness," He says, that "He must first suffer many things."

And to show that He will appear unexpectedly, and with no man knowing it, and the end of the world come, He says, that the end shall be "as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. For they were eating, He says, and drinking: and were taking wives, and being made the wives of men: they were selling and buying, and building; but the coming of the waters destroyed the one, while the others were the prey and food of brimstone and fire." What therefore is signified by this? That He requires us to be always watchful, and ready to make our defense before the tribunal of God. For as Paul says, "We are all about to be revealed before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive a retribution for the things that are by the body, according to that he has done, whether good or bad." "Then shall He set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left: and He shall say unto the sheep, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundations of the world." But upon the goats He will utter a terrible sentence; for He will send them to the flame that shall never be appeased.

If therefore, O Pharisee, you desire to be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, become one of the sheep. Offer unto Christ the fruit of faith in Him, and the praise of holy conduct, even that which is by the Gospel. But if you continue to be a goat, that is, one unfruitful, and destitute both of faith and good works, why do you enquire when the kingdom of God will come? For it does not concern you. Fear rather because of the torment which is decreed against the unbelieving, and the unappeasable flame appointed for those who sin against Christ: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen.

REFLECTION:

Lot accepts the angels and shows hospitality to the 2 angels and in return they save him and his family. The theme of escaping utterly from evil without turning back -even a little- becomes the main lesson in the story of Lot.

PRAYER:

"Now O Lord, let Your servants, my fathers, my brothers and my weakness, be absolved by my mouth, through Your Holy Spirit, O You, the good Lover-of-mankind. O God, bearer of the sin of the world, begin by accepting the repentance of Your servants as a light of the understanding and forgiveness of sins. For You are a compassionate and merciful God. You are long-suffering, plentiful in mercy, and righteous. And if we have sinned against You in word or deed, remit and forgive us as a good Lover-of-mankind. O God absolve us and absolve all Your people from every sin and every curse, from every denial, every false oath, and from every encounter with the heretics and pagans. ***O our Lord, grant us reason, power and understanding to flee entirely from any evil deed of the enemy,*** and grant us to do what is pleasing to You at all times.

Write our names with the whole host of Your saints in the kingdom of the heavens. Through Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom glory, honor, power and worship are due to You, together with Him and with the Holy Spirit, the life-giving and consubstantial, now and at all times and forever. Amen." *Absolution to the Father St. Basil Liturgy*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

Sodom and Gomorrah

Fire and Brimstone

Free Will

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We trust in God's promises
Liturgical:	Church Mysteries
Moral:	Keeping God's commandments
Spiritual:	Waiting on God

INTRODUCTION

Last week we saw how God would talk to Abraham as one speaks to a friend. Does anyone remember what Abraham was discussing with God? [If God would spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of 10 righteous people – that was the last number they had agreed about].

LESSON BODY:

Now the two angels who had come with the Lord and eaten with Abraham came to Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting in the gate. (Remember – Lot is Abraham's nephew, who had moved away from Abraham and gone to live by himself with his family in a place called Sodom, which looked very beautiful but had very wicked people living in it). When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked bread, and they ate. Now, why do you think Lot insisted strongly that the angels stay at his house instead of staying outside for the night? [Because he was also generous, because he knew how evil the people were and that they may try to hurt the angels].

Now listen carefully to what the angels are going to tell Lot and try to understand what is going to happen: Then the angels said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? **Son-in-law**, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city--take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." What does this mean? What is happening here? The angels are telling Lot to get his family out! God sent the angels to get Lot and his family out because He was going to destroy the city. If you remember His discussion with Abraham also, this means that He could not find in it 10 righteous people. In fact, who were the only righteous, the only good people in the city? Who were the angels sent to rescue? Lot and his family! They were the only ones, and God cared for them so much that He wanted to save them out of the city and save their lives. Let us also try to remember how Lot got himself into this dangerous situation; whom did he leave? [Abraham – the father of the church]. Now he is in a very scary situation and it takes angels to come and save him and his family! And let us remember who is the one who was talking with God and interceding for the righteous people in those cities? It was Abraham – when he had been discussing with God about saving the righteous in the cities, who do you think he was talking about? Lot and his family of course! That is the job of a father of the church – to pray to God for his children and to ask God to save them and to help them always.

Ok, who remembers what the angels had said to Lot? [to get his family members and get out]. So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. They did not take him seriously! They were too much caught up in the bad things that the people of the city were doing, that they could not take the name of the Lord or his actions seriously. This is something very scary.

When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, **lest** you be **consumed** in the punishment of the city." And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he (the angel) said, "Escape for your life! *Do not look behind you* nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." The angels also told Lot to hurry because they couldn't do anything until Lot was safe – look at the how much God cares for His people. Remember, the angels told Lot *do not look behind you*. Why do you think it was important for Lot and his family to not look behind them? What were they leaving behind? [Sin, bad things]. So why would it be important for them to not look back to those bad things? [Let the students share their answers and then explain that:] when we are stopping bad things in our lives, we need to not turn back to them but leave them completely behind us.

Maybe we said a bad word or told a lie, or did anything wrong. We decide that we are not ever going to do that again and leave the bad actions or words or feelings behind us.

Let us get back to Lot. He escaped from Sodom and Gomorrah and arrived in a city nearby (named Zoar and the sun rose on Zoar as Lot entered it). As soon as he arrived there, then the LORD rained **brimstone and fire** on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

But something happened. Lot's wife looked back. She did what the angels told them not to do. And because she did this, she became a **pillar** of salt.

[bring in a picture of a pillar of salt to show the kids].

This shows us a few very important things. 1. Even though the angels were holding their hands, Lot and his family still had their **free will** – they could choose for themselves what to do. Every single human has free will. God never forces us to do anything; He only wants to help us because He cares for us and loves us more than we can imagine. Lot's wife still had the free will to turn around and look back, even though the angels told her not to. We need to be careful with our free will and always pray to God and ask Him to help us make the right decisions always and ask Him to help us put our lives in His hands. 2. Turning around to look back was not something that Lot's wife had learned from Abraham, their father. He had a chance to look back when Lot was separating from him and going to live in Sodom but he did not. He accepted what God wanted for him. We need to learn to accept what God wants for us and we need to also pray to God to ask Him to help us learn the good things from our fathers in the church.

Conclusion:

1. God cares for and saves His people
2. Fathers of the church intercede for their children before God and ask God to help them and save them and God honors their requests
3. We need to not look back when we are leaving bad things behind us. Remember Lot's wife.
4. We need to be careful with our free will and always pray to God to ask Him to help us make the right decisions and to learn to accept His will for our lives.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Bring in a picture of a pillar of salt to show the children**
- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***

- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What did the angels come to tell Lot?

A: That the Lord is going to destroy the city and that he and his family must leave

Q: Why did the angels rush Lot and his family out?

A: Because they couldn't do anything to the city until Lot and his family left

Q: What does this show about God?

A: How much He cares for us! He wouldn't let anything happen to the city until Lot and his family were safely out of the city.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4-5).

36. ISAAC IS BORN; ISHMAEL AND HAGAR

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 21:1-21

And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. ²For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. ³And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him-- Isaac. ⁴Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." ⁷She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age." ⁸So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. ¹⁰Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." ¹¹And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. ¹²But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. ¹³Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." ¹⁴So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. ¹⁵And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. ¹⁶Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept. ¹⁷And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. ¹⁸Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes, and

she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. ²⁰So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. ²¹He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

CHURCH FATHERS:

Verse 22. *“For it is written, (Genesis 15:16.) that Abraham had two sons, one by the hand-maid and the other by the freewoman.”*

He returns again to Abraham, not in the way of repetition, but, inasmuch as the Patriarch’s fame was great among the Jews, to show that the types had their origin from thence, and that present events were pictured aforetime in him. Having previously shown that the Galatians were sons of Abraham, now, in that the Patriarch’s sons were not of equal dignity, one being by a bondwoman, the other by a free-woman, he shows that they were not only his sons, but sons in the same sense as he that was freeborn and noble. Such is the power of Faith.

Verse 23. *“Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the freewoman is born through promise.”*

What is the meaning of “after the flesh?” Having said that Faith united us to Abraham, and it having seemed incredible to his hearers, that those who were not begotten by Abraham should be called his sons, he proves that this paradox had actually happened long ago; for that Isaac, born not according to the order of nature, nor the law of marriage, nor the power of the flesh, was yet truly his own son. He was the issue of bodies that were dead, and of a womb that was dead; his conception was not by the flesh, nor his birth by the seed, for the womb was dead both through age and barrenness, but the Word of God fashioned Him. Not so in the case of the bondman; He came by virtue of the laws of nature, and after the manner of marriage. Nevertheless, he that was not according to the flesh was more honorable than he that was born after the flesh. Therefore let it not disturb you that ye are not born after the flesh; for from the very reason that ye are not so born, are ye most of all Abraham’s kindred. The being born after the flesh renders one not more honorable, but less so, for a birth not after the flesh is more marvelous and more spiritual. And this is plain from the case of those who were born of old time; Ishmael, for instance, who was born according to the flesh, was not only a bondman, but was cast out of his father’s house; but Isaac, who was born according to the promise, being a true son and free, was Lord of all.

Verse 24. *“Which things contain an allegory.”*

Contrary to usage, he calls a type an allegory; his meaning is as follows; this history not only declares that which appears on the face of it, but announces somewhat farther, whence it is called an allegory. And what hath it announced? no less than all the things now present.

Verse 24. *“For these women” he says, “are two covenants; one from mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar.”*

“These:” who? the mothers of those children, Sarah and Hagar; and what are they? Two covenants, two laws. As the names of the women were given in the history, he abides by this designation of the two races, showing how much follows from the very names. How from the names?

Verse 25. *“Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia:”*

The bond-woman was called Hagar, and “Hagar” is the word for Mount Sinai in the language of that country.” So that it is necessary that all who are born of the Old Covenant should be bondmen, for that mountain where the Old Covenant was delivered hath a name in common with the bondwoman. And it includes Jerusalem, for this is the meaning of,

Verse 25. *“And answer to Jerusalem that now is.”*

That is, it borders on, and is contiguous to it.

Verse 25. *“For she is in bondage with her children.”*

What follows from hence? Not only that she was in bondage and brought forth bondmen, but that this Covenant is so too, whereof the bondwoman was a type. For Jerusalem is adjacent to the mountain of the same name with the bondwoman, and in this mountain the Covenant was delivered. Now where is the type of Sarah?

Verse 26. *“But Jerusalem that is above is free.”*

Those therefore, who are born of her are not bondmen. Thus the type of the Jerusalem below was Hagar, as is plain from the mountain being so called; but of that which is above is the Church. Nevertheless he is not content with these types, but adds the testimony of Isaiah to what he has spoken. Having said that Jerusalem which is above “is our Mother,” and having given that name to the Church, he cites the suffrage of the Prophet in his favor,

Verse 27. *“Rejoice, thou barren that bear not, break forth and cry, thou that travails not, for more are the children of the desolate than of her which hath the husband.” (Isaiah 54:1.)*

Who is this who before was “barren,” and “desolate?” Clearly it is the Church of the Gentiles, that was before deprived of the knowledge of God? Who, “she which hath the husband?” plainly the Synagogue. Yet the barren woman surpassed her in the number of her children, for the other embraces one nation, but the children of the Church have filled the country of the Greeks and of the Barbarians, the earth and sea, the whole habitable world. Observe how Sarah by acts, and the Prophet by words, have described the events about to befall us. Observe too, that he whom Isaiah called barren, Paul hath proved to have many children, which also happened typically in the case of Sarah. For she too, although barren, became the mother of a numerous progeny. This however does not suffice Paul, but he carefully follows out the mode whereby the barren woman became a mother, that in this particular likewise the type might harmonize with the truth. Wherefore he adds

Verse 28. *“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.”*

It is not merely that the Church was barren like Sarah, or became a mother of many children like her, but she bore them in the way Sarah did. As it was not nature but the promise of God which rendered Sarah a mother, [for the word of God which said, “At the time appointed I will return unto thee, and Sarah shall have a son,” (Genesis 18:14.) this entered into the womb and formed the babe;] so also in our regeneration it is not nature, but the Words of God spoken by the Priest, (the faithful know them,) which in the Bath of water as in a sort of womb, form and regenerate him who is baptized. Wherefore if we are sons of the barren woman, then are we free. But what kind of freedom, it might be objected, is this, when the Jews seize and scourge the believers, and those who have this pretense of liberty are persecuted? for these things then occurred, in the persecution of the faithful. Neither let this disturb you, he replies, this also is anticipated in the type, for Isaac, who was free, was persecuted by Ishmael the bondman. Wherefore he adds,

Verse 29, 30. *“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Howbeit what said the Scripture? (Genesis 21:10.) Cast out the handmaid and her son: for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman.”*

What! does all this consolation consist in showing that freemen are persecuted by bond-men? By no means, he says, I do not stop here, listen to what follows, and then, if you be not pusillanimous under persecution, you will be sufficiently comforted. And what is it that follows? “Cast out the son of the handmaid, for he shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman.” Behold the reward of tyranny for a season, and of recklessness out of season! the son is cast out of his father’s house, and becomes, together with his mother, an exile and a wanderer. And consider too the wisdom of the remark; for he says not that he was cast forth merely because he persecuted, but that he should not be heir. For this punishment was not exacted from him on account of his temporary persecution, (for that would have been of little moment, and nothing to the point,) but he was not suffered to participate in the inheritance provided for the son. And this proves that, putting the persecution aside, this very thing had been typified from the beginning, and did not originate in the persecution, but in the purpose of God. Nor does he say, “the son of Abraham shall not be heir,” but, “the son of the handmaid,” distinguishing him by his inferior descent. Now Sarah was barren, and so is the Gentile Church; observe how the type is preserved in every particular, as the former, through all the by-gone years, conceived not, and in extreme old age became a mother, so the latter, when the fullness of time is come, brings forth. And this the prophets have proclaimed, saying, “Rejoice, thou barren that bears not; break forth and cry, thou that travails not; for more are the children of the desolate than of her which hath the husband.” And hereby they intend the Church; for she knew not God, but as soon as she knew Him, she surpassed the fruitful synagogue.

Verse 31. *“Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid but of the freewoman.”*

He turns and discusses this on all sides, desiring to prove that what had taken place was no novelty, but had been before typified many ages ago. How then can it be otherwise than absurd for those who had been set apart so long and who had obtained freedom, willingly to subject themselves to the yoke of bondage? Next he states another inducement to them to abide in his doctrine.

REFLECTION:

There are two types of people in this world: the free and the slaves. Each group has their motives, and their struggles. For example the slaves are jealous and envious of the free. The free can suffer persecution and also feel superiority over slaves. Although no human slavery exist in our modern world today, but the traits of one or the other of these two groups still exist in each one. By watching our actions and thoughts we can determine which group we belong to.

PRAYER:

"⁸¹My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word. ⁸²My eyes fail from searching Your word, Saying, "When will You comfort me?" ⁸³For I have become like a wineskin in smoke, Yet I do not forget Your statutes. ⁸⁴How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me? ⁸⁵The proud have dug pits for me, Which is not according to Your law. ⁸⁶All Your commandments are faithful; They persecute me wrongfully; Help me! ⁸⁷They almost made an end of me on earth, But I did not forsake Your precepts. ⁸⁸Revive me according to Your loving-kindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth." Psalm 119:k

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

Isaac

Ishmael

Hagar

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We trust in God's promises
Liturgical:	Church Mysteries
Moral:	Keeping God's commandments
Spiritual:	Waiting on God

INTRODUCTION

So we have been talking about Abraham for several weeks now, and still God did not fulfill His first promise to him that he and Sarah would have a son. Who remembers how old we said Abraham would be when he would finally have this son? 100 years old. Do any of your friends have parents who are 100 years old? Of course not! This is something that is unheard of, because when peoples' bodies get old, it is not possible to have a baby. But God can do anything, even give a baby to a very old man and woman.

LESSON BODY:

So today, finally, we are going to see how God fulfilled His first promise to Abraham and what happened with this son:

“And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah... bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him-- Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he eight days old, as God had commanded him” (Gen 21:1-4)

God fulfilled the first promise He made to Abraham. This is one very important point to learn from Abraham’s life and if it is the only thing you remember from Abraham’s story, then it will be enough: God always does what He says He will do. He can never lie or say something just for the sake of saying it. His word always happens, even if it takes a very long time.

God has promised us, His church, that we will be with Him in Heaven, and we believe His words even though, around us, we see nothing that is even close to Heaven. We believe Him that this will come to pass in a certain time. Our Lord Jesus Christ also told us many other things that are written in the Bible, and we believe in His words just as Abraham believed in God’s words thousands of years ago.

Now if you remember, Abraham had another son with Sarah’s servant Hagar. That son’s name was Ishmael. And again if you remember, Hagar had made fun of Sarah when she saw that she was able to have a baby and Sarah was not. So now when Isaac was born, Ishmael was playing with him but when Sarah saw this, she did not like it. She went to Abraham and asked him to send Hagar and Ishmael away so that the son of the servant would not be **heir** with her son. Abraham was very sad that Sarah had asked him to do this because this was his son also. “But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your servant. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the servant, because he is your seed." So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness. But it happened that she ran out of water and she was afraid that her and her son would both die! What would they do? They were all alone, with no one to help them? Hagar placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at some distance; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." (She thought he was going to die and she couldn’t watch it happen). So she sat opposite him, and wept. She was feeling very sad and very scared and alone.

But do you know who heard? God. God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an **archer**. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a

wife for him from the land of Egypt. (Gen 21:12-21) So the Bible here gives us a short history of what happened to Ishmael as he grew up and when he was all grown up and got married.

God comforted Hagar and helped her and Ishmael. He took care of them when they had no one else in the world to help them. This is our God. So if you are ever in a situation where you feel like no one can see your pain or know that you are sad, know for sure that God sees. Talk to Him. He will help you and comfort you and is always with us. He will never leave us alone, ever.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is one important thing we mentioned to learn from Abrahams story?

A: God always does what He says He will do. He can never lie or say something just for the sake of saying it. His word always happens, even if it takes a very long time.

Q: When Hagar was crying because she was all alone and had nothing and no one who heard her and helped her?

A: God

Q: What does this show about our God?

A: So if you are ever in a situation where you feel like no one can see your pain or know that you are sad, know for sure that God sees. Talk to Him. He will help you and comfort you and is always with us. He will never leave us alone, ever.

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name"* (John 1:12); *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith"* (1 John 5:4-5).

37. ISAAC IS SACRIFICED

SERVANT PREPARATION:

Verse & References:

Genesis 22:1-19

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ²Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." ⁶So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. ⁷But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. ⁹Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. ¹⁰And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." ¹²And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." ¹³Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." ¹⁵Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because

you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- 17blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Hebrews 11:17-19

17By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 5:

CHAPTER V. That not inferior in Might and Wisdom to God the Father is the Son, yea rather His very Wisdom and Might.

8: 39, 40 *Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.*

Soothing, so to say, by every way and word the boldness of the Jews, Christ speaks to them veiledly, not applying open conviction but mingled with gentle speech, and in lowly wise and manifoldly charming their wrath. For since He sees that they are most exceeding silly and understand nothing of what is said, He makes His Discourse free at length from any veil and bared of all covering. For it needed (He says) it needed, if you believed that being classed among *Abraham's children* was the highest honor, that you should be zealous to imitate his manners: it needed that you should track the lovely virtue of your ancestor, it needed that you should be zealous of and love his obedience. For he heard God say, *Get out of your country and from your kindred and come into the land that I will show you.* And nought delaying in the fulfillment of what was bidden him, he hastens forthwith from his country, and relying on the mercy of Him who bade him, arrives in a foreign land. And being at the very goal so to speak of life and passing his hundredth year, he heard, You shall have a seed, and nothing doubting, he gave fervent faith to Him that spoke, heeding not the weakness of his flesh, but looking at the strength of Him that spoke to him. He heard that he was to offer to God his beloved for a sacrifice and forthwith he strove against the longings of nature, and made his love for the youth second to the Divine Command.

In you [the Jews] I find all contrary to these, for *you are seeking*, He says, *to kill Me because I have told you things from God, this did not Abraham*. For he insulted not by his unbelief Him who spoke to him, he sought not to do anything that grieved Him. How then are you any more *Abraham's children* being as far distant from his piety as the difference of your actions shows?

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Book 10

CHAPTER II. That the Son is Consubstantial with God the Father, and not of an alien or foreign nature, as some of the perverse assert.

15: 14, 15 *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you*

Come then, let us again illustrate this by the inspired Scripture, dwelling somewhat at length upon it to advantage. It has then been written in a book of Moses that *Abraham believed in God*, but his faith was accounted unto him *for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God*. And what was the manner of his faith, or how then was he called the friend of God? He heard the words, *Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, unto a land that I will show thee*. Moreover, when he was enjoined to sacrifice his only son as a type of Christ he learnt the purpose hidden in God. And for this reason the Savior spoke concerning him to the impious Jews, saying: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad*. Therefore the inspired Abraham, owing to obedience and sacrifice, was called the friend of God and put on himself the boast of righteousness.

And not only this, but he was deemed worthy of Divine converse, and knew the counsel of God, which came to pass in the last times. For in the fullness of time Christ died for us---the true, sacred, and holy sacrifice which takes away the sin of the world.

But see again a like fulfillment in the case of those who mount up by faith to the friendship of our Savior Christ. They also heard the words *Get thee out of thy country*. And that they did it eagerly we may learn from what they say: *For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come, whose builder and maker is God*. For they are strangers and sojourners upon earth, being citizens of heaven and leaving the land of their birth to speak allegorically of their heavenward aspirations, desiring eagerly the resting-place above. For this the Savior set before them when He said, *I go and will prepare a place for you; and when I come, I will receive you with Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*. They were told to go forth from their kindred; and how shall we show this? We will refer to Christ's own words: *He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me*. And that the things of God were preferred to their earthly and fleshly relationship, and their love towards Christ set forth as far stronger, is certainly unquestioned among those who reverence Him. And the blessed Abraham was ordered to bring to God his own son for an odor of a sweet-smelling savor, while others, girding themselves with the righteousness that is by faith, were commanded to offer not others but themselves. For he says:

*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Since it has been written concerning them: They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof, they knew the mystery that is in Christ. For they know the powers of the age to come, and what will be in the last days; for they will receive the rewards of their labors, and take as requital the recompense of their piety towards Christ. Therefore we shall become just and the friends of God, as did Abraham. And the Gospel dispensation is far more ancient than that of the Law. I mean by the Gospel dispensation that which is by faith and friendship towards God, then molded first in Abraham, as in the beginning of his race according to the flesh, that is of Israel, but now coming as from a type to truth, and being well fulfilled in the holy disciples themselves, as in the beginning of a spiritual race preserved as a people for God's own possession, which also is called a holy nation and a royal priesthood. Therefore it has been said to the mother of the Jews, I mean the synagogue, by the voice of the Psalmist: *Instead of fathers thy sons have been born.**

For the inspired disciples are truly sons of the synagogue of the Jews, for they were nourished up in the Mosaic usages. They became fathers, holding the position of Abraham, and were the beginning of the spiritual race, and for this reason were ordained as rulers, offering up as a sacrifice the Gospel of Christ in all the world, as did Abraham Isaac as a type of Christ. We thus speak, not depriving the blessed Abraham of the glory which is his due and befits him, but showing in him, as in a figure, what has been appointed in the last days by Christ. The reward of friendship with God which was then seen in Abraham first is intimately conjoined with the freedom which comes by faith, and now also it is seen in the holy disciples as the first fruits of a new generation. Let then the inspired Paul point out to us the necessity of thus speaking, vehemently contending with the Jews, that the righteousness that is of faith is far older than that of the Law. For when he made mention of the circumcision according to the flesh, he affirmed that this was given to the first fruits of the race, that is Abraham, for no other reason save his becoming *the sign and seal of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision*. But if uncircumcision with which also is faith was before the Law, but circumcision which has not the glory of faith after the Law, and Abraham believed in uncircumcision, how will not the justice through faith of those who are justified and freed through love towards God, as was Abraham, be more ancient than the dispensation by the Law? For thus also he will be *father of many nations* by promise, not according to the flesh. And these things have we now pertinently said on account of our Lord's word: *No longer do I call you servants: ye are My friends; for all things that I heard from My Father, I have made known unto you.*

REFLECTION:

Faith in the Resurrection Hebrews 10:35 – 12:2

The Testing of Our Faith in the Resurrection of the Dead through the Sacrifice of our Necessities

--Abraham's sacrifice of his only son Isaac:

The theme of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is the sacrifice of what he held most dear and necessary, with conviction in the future fulfillment of God's promise through the resurrection of Isaac from the dead. In Hebrews 11:17-19, St. Paul emphasizes that the strength and greatness of Abraham's faith was manifested in his offering of his only Isaac, *"of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense."* There is no limit to the sacrifice, even if we believe that the fulfillment of the promise requires the very things we are sacrificing.

Through the sacrifice of these essential elements, God fulfills His promises. Abraham knew that it was through Isaac, his only son, that God was to make him the father of many nations, and yet Abraham did not clench from offering the very tool by which he *knew* that God was to fulfill His promises. The secret of Abraham's faith was his conviction that God *"was able to raise [Isaac] up, even from the dead."* (Heb 11:19) Abraham offered the basis of his promised nations, with the faith and trust that Isaac would be raised from the dead for the future fulfillment of God's promises.

-- Our Sacrifice through Baptism

Abraham's covenant with God foreshadows our covenant with the Father, and the test by which Abraham's faith was examined is applied to us in baptism. When we are baptized, our trust in the Father's raising up of Christ from the dead, and our reliance on the Father raising *us* also in the future and giving us eternal life, is tested in the believing catechumen, or the parents of the newborn child.

--Our Sacrifice through the Eucharistic Offerings:

Just as with Abraham, God requires that we too offer to Him what is essential for our mortal lives, so that through the sacrifice we may receive the fulfillment of the promise of the resurrection and eternal life. The testing of Abraham confronts each of us in the liturgy; our faith in the sanctification of our earthly offerings (bread and wine) into the Divine Body and Blood by the descent of the Holy Spirit from the Father is tested, and so is our faith that it is *through* the invisible and mysterious sanctification of the bread and wine that we are resurrected from the dead and enter into the Father's heavenly kingdom.

In the liturgy, we likewise offer up the very basis of our human bodies and our mortal lives, the first fruits of God's creation on the 3rd day – bread and fruit. In these offerings, we offer the basis of our mortal life, with conviction in God's raising our mortal bodies up from the dead and granting us eternal life with Christ, who was likewise offered and raised up on the 3rd day, and became *"the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."* (1Cor. 15:20). Likewise, we follow Christ through the resurrection of the dead, *"But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him."* 1Cor.15:23)

PRAYER:

"¹⁶⁹Let my cry come before You, O LORD; Give me understanding according to Your word. ¹⁷⁰Let my supplication come before You; Deliver me according to Your word. ¹⁷¹My lips shall utter praise, For You teach me Your statutes. ¹⁷²My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness. ¹⁷³Let Your hand become my help, For I have chosen Your precepts. ¹⁷⁴I long for Your salvation, O LORD, And Your law is my delight. ¹⁷⁵Let my soul live, and it shall praise You; And let Your judgments help me. ¹⁷⁶I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments." Psalm 119: U

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, those who are to Your right.

And when You come again, in Your second fearful appearance, may we never fearfully hear, You say I do not know you.

+ But rather may we be made worthy, to hear the voice full of joy, of Your tender mercies, proclaiming and saying:

"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."

+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous will come, bearing their virtues.

The Son of God shall come in His glory, and His Father's glory, to give unto everyone, according to his deeds which he has done.

+ O Christ the Word of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace, that is full of joy.

As You have given, to Your saintly apostles, likewise also say to us, "My peace I give to You."

+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, both now and forever."

O the angel of this night, flying up with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.

+ The sick heal them, those who have slept O Lord repose them, and all of our brothers in distress, help us my Lord and all of them.

May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise continually be, always upon our mouths.

+ For blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.

VOCABULARY:

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We trust in God's promises
Liturgical:	Church Mysteries
Moral:	Keeping God's commandments
Spiritual:	Waiting on God

INTRODUCTION

How do you think Abraham and Sarah would feel about their son, Isaac – the one they had waited for, for such a long time? [They would love him very much and take very good care of him].

This is true that they loved their son very much, and today we are going to see how much Abraham loved God and that he was able to prove it by doing *something*...

LESSON BODY:

"Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" So we already see that God is going to test Abraham in this part – let us see what He is going to test him in.

And Abraham answered and said, "Here I am." Then God said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'" (Gen 22:1-2). What is God testing now in Abraham? Who remembers what God's second promise to Abraham was? [That he would be a father of

many nations and have as many children as there are stars in the sky]. So now Abraham has one son because the other son is gone and God asks him to sacrifice this son to Him. How would Abraham become a father of many children if his one son is dead? Where would all the other children come from? Think about this – how will your parents become grandparents? What would have to happen? You would have to grow up and get married and have children. Then your parents would become grandparents and the line of your family would continue. It was the same with Abraham. God promised him that the line of his family would continue, but now God is asking him to sacrifice his only son. How will that line continue? AND to add to the difficulty, we said that God can never lie; the second promise will have to come true no matter what. This may seem to you to be an impossible situation, but listen to what Abraham thought in his mind: even if God wants me to offer Isaac up and sacrifice him (meaning he will die), since God promised me that he will be the one through whom the second promise will be fulfilled, it must mean that God will raise him up from the dead. Abraham believed God completely and totally and trusted Him in everything. So he listened to what God asked him to do:

“So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." (He did not tell them exactly what he was going to do). So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand (he did not have a lighter in those days so he had to carry fire like a torch), and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." (Isaac was used to seeing his father offer sacrifices of animals to God, but this time his father did not bring anything with him to sacrifice, so he was starting to wonder, 'where is the sacrifice?') So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and picked up the son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven! and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." (God stopped him!) Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Gen 22:3-19)

Abraham passed the test and because of that, God blessed him abundantly and rewarded him very much. Abraham is called the Father of Faith – he is someone who always believed God and trusted him, and we can see from his life what happens to someone when they trust God completely – God blesses them and takes care of them and guides them.

God promised Abraham to bless his family to be the family of God. Some people may think what Abraham did is crazy, but Abraham offered his son in the same way that we offer little babies in baptism to God, to become the children of God. Abraham knew that Isaac is a child of God and that he was only taking care of him for God. He knew that ultimately, Isaac belonged to God and that God loved him much more than he himself did, because He was his Creator.

CONCLUSION:

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** have the children chose one scene from this lesson to draw
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

CONCLUSION

- God’s word always comes to pass. (This means that everything He says in the Bible will happen, if it has not already happened).
- Abraham offered his son in the same way that we offer little babies in baptism to God, to become the children of God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Who did God ask Abraham to sacrifice?

A: His only son, Isaac

Q: Why did Abraham do this?

A: Because he trusted God and God had promised him a very big family and he knew that God would never lie

Q: What did Abraham sacrifice instead of his only son Isaac?

A: A ram

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrew 11:6

Unit IV: Abraham, the Father of Faith

Purpose: Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple, "Follow Me," all the way to "Offer your only son." Not only that, but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us. *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name"* (John 1:12); *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith"* (1 John 5:4-5).

38. THE CHURCH AS THE FAMILY OF GOD – A REVIEW

Review vocabulary: promise and covenant. Ask the students to share what they learned about how God's promises and covenant shaped Abraham's life and the life of the people of God. Go around the room and have each student share one thing. Remind them to make sure to answer the question of how God's promises and covenant shaped Abraham's life and the life of the people of God.

LESSON 31

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: We have 2 fathers, who are they?

A: Our earthly father and our Heavenly Father

Q: Name 2 of the roles of a father that help us grow.

A: Protect, teach, feed, discipline, take care of us in sickness

Q: Who was our Lord's earthly father?

A: St. Joseph

Q: Who was the first patriarch?

A: Abraham

Q: What does trusting God mean?

A: Trusting God means being ok knowing that God is going to take very good care of you, no matter what.

Q: Throughout his life, Abraham grew in faith. What is faith?

A: Trusting God in one's heart

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

LESSON 32

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What are the 3 promises that God gave to Abraham?

A: A son, a very big family, land that they would all live together on

Q: When Lot was in trouble and far from God what happened? Who came for him?

A: Abraham, the first patriarch, came to help him and get him

Q: Who is there to help us today when we are in trouble or far from God?

A: Abouna!

Q: What is different about the promises God makes and the promises people make?

A: whenever He says something, it happens; there is not even a little tiny chance that it will not happen

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

LESSON 33

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Sarah was not patient on God and because of this she suffered consequences, what did we learn from this?

A: when we do not trust God and wait, we have to carry difficult **consequences** that we will not like

Q: How would you describe how Abraham took his relationship with God?

A: Very seriously

Q: What is the covenant that God made with us?

A: He gave us His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ

Q: How should we take our relationship with God?

A: Very seriously, just as Abraham did

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrew 11:6

LESSON 34

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What did we learn from how Abraham treated the 3 men that came to visit him?

A: not afraid to give away what they have, very kind and gentle with people, and serving everyone around them

Q: Who were the 3 men that came to visit Abraham?

A: 1 was our Lord and 2 were angels

Q: Is anything too hard for God?

A: No, He can do anything and everything

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Hebrews 13:2

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

LESSON 35

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: What is one important thing we mentioned to learn from Abrahams story?

A: God always does what He says He will do. He can never lie or say something just for the sake of saying it. His word always happens, even if it takes a very long time.

Q: When Hagar was crying because she was all alone and had nothing and no one who heard her and helped her?

A: God

Q: What does this show about our God?

A: So if you are ever in a situation where you feel like no one can see your pain or know that you are sad, know for sure that God sees. Talk to Him. He will help you and comfort you and is always with us. He will never leave us alone, ever.

LESSON 36

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Who did God ask Abraham to sacrifice?

A: His only son, Isaac

Q: Why did Abraham do this?

A: Because he trusted God and God had promised him a very big family and he knew that God would never lie

Q: What did Abraham sacrifice instead of his only son Isaac?

A: A ram

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrew 11:6

We Are Children of God

UNIT V: SEASONAL UNIT (14 LESSONS)

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

- 39. The Feast of Nyouroz
- 40. The Feast of the Holy Cross
- 41. The Month of Kiahk
- 42. The Holy Nativity
- 43. The Flight to Egypt
- 44. The Holy Theophany
- 45. The Holy Resurrection
- 46. Holy Fifty
- 46b. Holy Fifty: optional lesson
- 47. The Holy Ascension and Holy Pentecost
- 48. Our Lord Visits the Temple at Age Twelve
- 49. The Fast and Feast of the Apostles
- 50. The Feast of the Theotokos
- 51. The Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 39: THE FEAST OF NYROUZ

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

(Readings for Feast of Nyrouz)

Pauline 2 Cor 5:11 – 6:13

¹¹Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

¹²For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. ¹⁶Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

³We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. ⁴But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, ⁸by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always

rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. ¹¹O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. ¹²You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. ¹³Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

Catholic Epistle: 1 John 2:7-17

⁷Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. ⁸Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

⁹He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. ¹²I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. ¹⁴I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Acts 17:16-34

¹⁶Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. ¹⁷Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? ²⁰For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." ²¹For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

²²Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the

face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring." ²⁹Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. ³⁰Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

³²And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." ³³So Paul departed from among them. ³⁴However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Psalm 65:11, 81:1

You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance. Sing aloud to God our strength; Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.

Luke 4:14-30

¹⁴Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." ²⁰Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." ²²So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" ²³He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, "Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" ²⁴Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. ²⁵But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; ²⁶but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. ³⁰Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria: The twelfth sermon of the commentary upon the Gospel of Luke SERMON XII

4:18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; therefore He has anointed Me: He has sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.

He plainly shows by these words that He took upon Him the humiliation and submission to the emptying (of His glory), and both the very name of Christ and the reality for our sakes: for the Spirit, He says, which by nature is in Me by the sameness of Our substance and deity, also descended upon Me from without. And so also in the Jordan It came upon Me in the form of a dove, not because It was not in Me, but for the reason for which He anointed Me. And what was the reason for which He chose to be anointed? It was our being destitute of the Spirit by that denunciation of old, "My Spirit shall not abide in these men, because they are flesh."

These words the incarnate Word of God speaks: for being very God of very God the Father, and having become for our sakes man without undergoing change, with us He is anointed with the oil of gladness, the Spirit having descended upon Him at the Jordan in the form of a dove. For in old time both kings and priests were anointed symbolically, gaining thereby a certain measure of sanctification: but He Who for our sakes became incarnate, was anointed with the spiritual oil of sanctification, and the actual descent of the Spirit, receiving It not for Himself, but for us. For inasmuch as the Spirit had taken its flight, and not made His abode in us because of our being flesh, the earth was full of grief, being deprived of the participation of God.

And He proclaimed also deliverance to captives, which also He accomplished by having bound the strong one, Satan, who in tyrant fashion lorded it over our race, and having torn away from Him us his goods.

As the words "He anointed Me" befit the manhood: for it is not the divine nature which is anointed, but that which is akin to us: so also the words "He sent Me" are to be referred to that which is human.

Those also whose heart was of old obscured by the darkness of the devil, He has illuminated by rising as some Sun of Righteousness, and making them the children no longer of night and darkness, but of light and day, according to Paul's word, And those who were blind,-----for the Apostate had blinded their hearts,----have recovered their sight, and acknowledged the truth; and, as Isaiah says, "Their darkness has become light:" that is, the ignorant have become wise: those that once were in error, have known the paths of righteousness. And the Father also says somewhere unto the Son Himself, "I have given You for a covenant of kindred, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoners from their bonds, and from the guard-house those that sit in darkness." For the Only-begotten came into this world and gave a new covenant to His kindred, the Israelites, of whom He was sprung according to the flesh, even

the covenant long before announced by the voice of the prophets. But the divine and heavenly light shone also upon the Gentiles: and He went and preached to the spirits in Hades, and showed Himself to those who were shut up in the guard-house, and freed all from their bonds and violence. And how do not these things plainly prove that Christ is both God, and of God by nature?

And what means the sending away the broken in freedom? It is the letting those go free whom Satan had broken by the rod of spiritual violence. And what means the preaching the acceptable year of the Lord? It signifies the joyful tidings of His own advent, that the time of the Lord, even the Son, had arrived. For that was the acceptable year in which Christ was crucified in our behalf, because we then were made acceptable unto God the Father, as the fruit borne by Him. Wherefore He said, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men unto Myself." And verily He returned to life the third day, having trampled upon the power of death: after which He said to His disciples, "All power has been given Me." That too is in every respect an acceptable year in which, being received into His family, we were admitted unto Him, having washed away sin by holy baptism, and been made partakers of His divine nature by the communion of the Holy Ghost. That too is an acceptable year, in which He manifested His glory by ineffable miracles: for with joy have we accepted the season of His salvation, which also the very wise Paul referred to, saying, "Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation:" the day, when the poor who erewhile were sick by the absence of every blessing, having no hope and being without God in the world, such as were the gentiles, were made rich by faith in Him, gaining the divine and heavenly treasure of the Gospel message of salvation; by which they have been made partakers of the kingdom of heaven, co-partners with the saints, and heirs of blessings such as neither the mind can conceive nor language tell. "For eye, it says, has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him." Though it may also be true, that the text here speaks of the abundant supply of graces bestowed by Christ upon the poor in spirit,

But by the bruised in heart, He means, those who have a weak and yielding mind, unable to resist the attacks of their passions, and so carried along by them, as to seem to be captives: to these He promises both healing and forgiveness.

And to those who are blind, He gives the recovering of sight. For those who serve the creature instead of the Creator, "and say to the wood, you are my father, and to the stone, you have begotten me," without recognizing Him Who is by nature and in truth God, how can they be ought else than blind, seeing they have a heart devoid of the light that is divine and spiritual? And on these the Father bestows the light of the true knowledge of God: for they are called through faith, and acknowledge Him, or rather are acknowledged of Him, and whereas they were children of night and darkness, they have been made children of light. For the day has shone upon them, and the sun of righteousness has arisen, and the bright morning star has dawned.

There is no objection, however, to any one's referring all these declarations to the Israelites. For they were poor, and crushed in heart, and, so to speak, prisoners, and in darkness. "For there was not upon earth that was doing good, not even one. But all had turned aside, together they had

become unprofitable." But Christ came, preaching to the Israelites before all others, the glories of His advent. And like to their maladies were those of the Gentiles; but they have been redeemed by Him, having been enriched with His wisdom, and endowed with understanding, and no longer is their mind weak and broken, but healthy and strong, and ready to receive and practice every good and saving work. For in their error they had need of wisdom and understanding, who in their great folly worshipped the creature instead of the Creator, and inscribed stocks and stones with the name of Gods. But those who long ago lived in gloom and darkness, because they knew not Christ, now acknowledge Him as their God.

These words having been read to the assembled people, He drew upon Himself the eyes of all, wondering perhaps how He knew letters Who had not learnt. For it was the wont of the Israelites to say, that the prophecies concerning Christ were fulfilled, either in the persons of some of their more glorious kings, or, at all events, in the holy prophets. For not correctly understanding what was written of Him, they missed the true direction, and travelled on another path. But that they might not again thus misinterpret the present prophecy, He carefully guards against error by saying, "This day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears," expressly setting Himself before them in these words, as the person spoken of in the prophecy. For it was He Who preached the kingdom of heaven to the heathen, who were poor, having nothing, neither God, nor law, nor prophets; or rather, He preached it unto all who were destitute of spiritual riches: the captives He set free, having overthrown the apostate tyrant Satan, and Himself shed the divine and spiritual light on those whose heart was darkened; for which reason He said, "I am come a light into this world:" it was He Who unbound the chains of sin from those whose heart was crushed thereby: Who clearly showed that there is a life to come, and denounced the just judgment. Finally, it was He Who preached the acceptable year of the Lord, even that in which the Savior's proclamation was made: for by the acceptable year I think is meant His first coming; and by the day of restitution the day of judgment.

REFLECTION:

The celebration of this feast brings three things to mind: honoring the martyrs who gave their lives for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the beginning of a new Coptic year, and the second coming of our Lord. The connection between these three things is: the Opened Gates of Paradise.

Truly the Sun of Righteousness, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the ever shining Sun. There is no place for sunset in Paradise; there is no night, no days, no weeks, no months, no seasons, and no years. But we attain a unique day without night, an everlasting day. In it we receive the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness that reflects on our souls and our risen bodies.

Through the celebration of the Feast of Nyrouz, we start a new Coptic year. At the same time we declare our eagerness to share with the martyrs, a new Day which they attain in Paradise. They have the experience of brightness, through which the brightness of the glory of Christ shines on them; they have no need of a sun nor a moon. There is no room for various seasons, nor of night

and day. They are not in need of food. In the Feast of El-Nyrouz we are longing for the eternal life.
Father Tadros Malaty

PRAYER:

Come let us glorify the King of the ages, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God. O my Lord loosen us from the bonds of the demons, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God.
+ For Your strength is a great weapon for our weakness, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God. Worthy and right from generation to generation, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God.

Cleanse me O Lord, with Your hyssop, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God. Shape within our souls the beauty of Your nature, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God.

+ All the hymns of praise befit the Lord, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God. Unsheathe the sword of Your strength, arise and help us, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God.

Jesus Christ the King of glory, and the King of the ages, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God. Lord have mercy, O Lord forgive us, for glory is due to our God, glory be to our God. Amen.

Nyrouz Watos Psali

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia, Bless the crown of the year with Your goodness O Lord.

This is He who is worthy of glory, with His Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever.

- Gospel Response, Feast of Nyrouz

VOCABULARY:

Nyrouz, procession (a parade around the church to honor and remember a saint)

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead
Liturgical:	Processions
Moral:	Serving our Church
Spiritual:	Saints in Paradise are our intercessors.

CONNECTION POINT

The beginning of the Coptic year starts at almost the same time that the school year starts. We celebrate the beginning of the Coptic year, or Nyrouz, in the church. We actually celebrate three things in this feast: the beginning of the new Coptic year, the saints who are in Paradise, and we remember that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will come again to take us to Heaven. In church for the celebration, we pray Vespers and have a procession. In the procession, the saints of the church are honored and remembered.

INTRODUCTION

Note: Second graders are too young to hear details of how martyrs gave their lives and were tortured for Christ. All care should be taken not to frighten the children and not to expose them to graphic details. Stories of the lives of the martyrs should be prepared in advance, with the servant knowing exactly how the story will be told, with respect to the age of the children. For example (if telling the story of St. George to a child who is coloring an “icon” of him): St. George was a brave Christian who lived a very long time ago. He was also a soldier in the army. When St. George was 20 years old, his father died. He, wanting to follow our Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart, gave all his money to the poor and freed the slaves that had been serving in his house. He faced many hardships from people who didn’t like that he was a Christian. But throughout everything, our Lord Jesus Christ comforted him and took care of him.

Our Lord also made many miracles happen through him: once a poor woman brought her son, who was blind, deaf and couldn’t speak. St. George prayed to the Lord Christ then made the sign of the cross over him, and he was healed right away.

Until the end of his life, people were against him because he was Christian but he was not scared of them *at all*; he followed our Lord with all of his heart and gave his whole life to Him until he passed away from this life and went to Paradise.

LESSON BODY:

Prepare for the Nyrouz procession.
Knowing the names of Martyrs whose icons they color.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: Prepare for the Nyrouz procession by coloring icons of martyrs.

Alternative plans:

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"You crown the year with Your goodness" Psalm 65:11

Or

"the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" 1 John 2:8

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss with the children the lives of martyrs *without mentioning that they were tortured and/or killed because of their faith*. This will require care and thought before the actual telling of the story. The purpose of this is simply for the children to become familiar with the names and part of the stories of the saints that the church holds dear. Details of how the martyrs were treated and explaining what happened to them would frighten children at this age and not help them as they are much too young to understand. [For example: St. George was a brave Christian who lived a very long time ago. He was also a soldier in the army. When St. George was 20 years old, his father died. He, wanting to follow our Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart, gave all his money to the poor and freed the slaves that had been serving in his house. He faced many hardships from people who didn't like that he was a Christian. But throughout everything, our

Lord Jesus Christ comforted him and took care of him. Our Lord also made many miracles happen through him: once a poor woman brought her son, who was blind, deaf and couldn't speak. St George prayed to the Lord Christ then made the sign of the cross over him, and he was healed right away. Until the end of his life, people were against him because he was Christian but he was not scared of them *at all*; he followed our Lord with all of his heart and gave his whole life to Him until he passed away from this life and went to Paradise]. Suggestions of saints are given below.

1. St. George
2. St. Demiana and the 40 virgins
3. St. Irene the Great Martyr
4. St. Philopater
5. St. Mark the Evangelist
- 6. Anba Wanis**

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 40: THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

(Readings for the first day of the feast of the Holy Cross, 17th of Tout)

1 Cor 1:17-31

17For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

18For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 20Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- 31that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

1 Peter 2:11-25

11Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as

supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- ¹⁶as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. ¹⁸Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. ²¹For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²²"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; ²³who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all-- ³⁷that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴²And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tout

1. The Feast of the Consecration of the Church of the Honorable Cross.

1. On this day the church celebrates the consecration of the church of the Honorable Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Cross was uncovered by the lover of God, Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, from under the pile of Golgotha, after she ordered its removal.

As for the reason of how this great pile of dirt came into being: the Jewish leaders, when they saw all the signs and wonders which were manifested from the sepulcher of the Savior, such as raising the dead and healing the sick, became angry, and they sent forth throughout Judea and Jerusalem ordering all the people to cast the sweepings of their houses and the dirt over the sepulchre of

Jesus of Nazareth. They continued to do so for more than 200 years, until it became a very great heap. When St. Helena came to Jerusalem, and asked the Jews about the whereabouts of the Cross, they did not inform her. Finally, some of them told her about an old Jew called Judas who knew the place. She called him, and he denied it at first, but when she urged him, he told her about that pile. She ordered its removal and the Holy Cross was found. She built a church for it, consecrated it and celebrated for the Honorable Cross on the seventeenth day of the month of Tute. Christians make pilgrimages to that place every year as they do on the feast of the Resurrection.

A certain Samaritan called Isaac, as he was travelling with his family among the people going to Jerusalem, reproved the people for taking such trouble in going to Jerusalem to worship a piece of wood. Among the people was a priest whose name was Okhidus. While travelling along the road, they became thirsty. They found no water and they came to a well where the water was foul and bitter. The people became dismayed. Isaac the Samaritan started mocking them, saying, "If I witness a power by the name of the Cross, I will become a believer of Christ." The priest Okhidus was moved with divine zeal and prayed over that foul water and made the sign of the Cross on it, and it became sweet. All the people and their animals drank, but when Isaac drank, the water was bitter and wormy. He regretted and cried and came to the saint, Father Okhidus, bowed down at his feet and believed in the Lord Christ. Then he drank from the water, and he found it sweet. The water of that well possessed the power of becoming sweet for the believers and bitter for the others. A cross of light appeared in the well and a church was built there. When Isaac the Samaritan arrived in Jerusalem, he went to its bishop who baptized him and his family.

Because the feast of the appearance of the Honorable Cross, which is on the tenth of Baramhat, always comes during fasting, it was substituted by the fathers for the Seventeenth of Tute which is the day of consecration of its church.

Glory and worship be to Jesus Christ our Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 65:1-2

Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion; And to You the vow shall be performed. 2O You who hear prayer, To You all flesh will come.

John 10:22-38

22Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. 24Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. 26But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27My sheep hear My voice, and I Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30I and My Father are one."

31Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

33The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." 34Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, "I said, "You are gods"? 35If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the

Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? ³⁷If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

CHURCH FATHERS:

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM: EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS HOMILY 4 (On Corinthians 1)

[3.] Now observe: when I say, "He was crucified;" the Greek says, "And how can this be reasonable? Himself He helped not when undergoing crucifixion and sore trial at the moment of the Cross: how then after these things did He rise again and help others? For if He had been able, before death was the proper time." (For this the Jews actually said.) (St. Matthew 27:41, 42.) "But He who helped not Himself, how helped he others? There is no reason in it," says he. True, O man, for indeed it is above reason; and unspeakable is the power of the Cross. For that being actually in the midst of horrors He should have shown Himself above all horrors; and being in the enemy's hold should have overcome; this cometh of Infinite Power. For as in the case of the Three Children, their not entering the furnace would not have been so astonishing, as that having entered in they trampled upon the fire; — and in the case of Jonah, it was a greater thing by far, after he had been swallowed by the fish, to suffer no harm from the monster, than if he had not been swallowed at all; — so also in regard of Christ; His not dying would not have been so inconceivable, as that having died He should loose the bands of death. Say not then, "why did He not help Himself on the Cross?" for he was hastening on to close conflict with death himself. (See Hooker, E. P. v. 48. 9.) He descended not from the Cross, not because He could not, but because He would not. For Him Whom the tyranny of death restrained not, how could the nails of the Cross restrain?

[4.] But these things, though known to us, are not so as yet to the unbelievers. Wherefore he said that "the word of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent will I reject." Nothing from himself which might give offense, does he advance up to this point; but first he comes to the testimony of the Scripture, and then furnished with boldness from thence, adopts more

vehement words, and says, Verse 20, 21. "*Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Where is the wise? Where the Scribe? Where the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*"

Having said, "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," He subjoins demonstration from facts, saying, "Where is the wise? where the Scribe?" at the same time glancing at both Gentiles and Jews. For what sort of philosopher, which among those who have studied logic, which of those knowing in Jewish matters, hath saved us and made known the truth? Not one. It was the fisherman's work, the whole of it.

Having then drawn the conclusion which he had in view, and brought down their pride, and said "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" he states also the reason why these things

were done. "For seeing that in the wisdom of God," says he, "the world through its wisdom knew not God," the Cross appeared. Now what means, "in the wisdom of God?" The wisdom apparent in those works whereby it was His will to make Himself known. For to this end did he frame them, and frame them such as they are, that by a sort of proportion, from the things which are seen admiration of the Maker might be learned. Is the heaven great as it is, not only was made by Him, but made with ease; and that boundless earth, too, was brought into being even as if it had been nothing. Wherefore of the former He says, (Psalm 102:25) "The works of Thy fingers are the heavens," and concerning the earth, (Isaiah 40:23. LXX.) "Who has made the earth as it were nothing." Since then by this wisdom the world was unwilling to discover God, He employed what seemed to be foolishness, i.e. the Gospel, to persuade men; not by reasoning, but by faith. It remains that where God's wisdom is, there is no longer need of man's. For before, to infer that He who made the world such and so great, must in all reason be a God possessed of a certain uncontrollable, unspeakable power; and by these means to apprehend Him; — this was the part of human wisdom. But now we need no more reasonings, but faith alone. For to believe on Him that was crucified and buried, and to be fully persuaded that this Person Himself both rose again and sat down on high; this needs not wisdom, nor reasonings, but faith. For the Apostles themselves came in not by wisdom, but by faith, and surpassed the heathen wise men in wisdom and loftiness, and that so much the more, as to raise disputings is less than to receive by faith the things of God. For this transcends all human understanding.

But how did He" destroy wisdom?" Being made known to us by Paul and others like him, He showed it to be unprofitable. For towards receiving the evangelical proclamation, neither is the wise profited at all by wisdom, nor the unlearned injured at all by ignorance... For the shepherd and the rustic will more quickly receive this, once for all both repressing all doubting thoughts and delivering himself to the Lord. In this way then He destroyed wisdom. For since she first cast herself down, she is ever after useful for nothing. Thus when she ought to have displayed her proper powers, and by the works to have seen the Lord, she would not. Wherefore though she were now willing to introduce herself, she is not able. For the matter is not of that kind; this way of knowing God being far greater than the other. You see then, faith and simplicity are needed, and this we should seek every where, and prefer it before the wisdom which is from without. For "God," says he, "has made wisdom foolish."

But what is, "He has made foolish?" He has shown it foolish in regard of receiving the faith. For since they prided themselves on it, He lost no time in exposing it. For what sort of wisdom is it, when it cannot discover the chief of things that are good? He caused her therefore to appear foolish, after she had first convicted herself. For if when discoveries might have been made by reasoning, she proved nothing, now when things proceed on a larger scale, how will she be able to accomplish ought? now when there is need of faith alone, and not of acuteness? You see then, God has shown her to be foolish.

It was His good pleasure, too, by the foolishness of the Gospel to save; foolishness, I say, not real, but appearing to be such. For that which is more wonderful yet is His having prevailed by bringing in, not another such wisdom more excellent than the first, but what seemed to be foolishness. He cast out Plato for example, not by means of another philosopher of more skill, but by an unlearned fisherman. For thus the defeat became greater, and the victory more splendid.

[5.] Verse 22-24. Next, to show the power of the Cross, he says, “For Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.”

Vast is the import of the things here spoken! For he means to say how by contraries God has overcome, and how the Gospel is not of man. What he says is something of this sort. When, says he, we say unto the Jews, Believe; they answer, Raise the dead, Heal the demoniacs, Show unto us signs. But instead thereof what say we? That He was crucified, and died, who is preached. And this is enough, not only to fail in drawing over the unwilling, but even to drive away those even who are willing. Nevertheless, it drives not away, but attracts and holds fast and overcomes.

Again; the Greeks demand of us a rhetorical style, and the acuteness of sophistry. But weakness, this in the case of the Greeks is foolishness. Wherefore, when we not only fail in producing what they demand, but also produce the very opposites of their demand; (for the Cross has not merry no appearance of being a sign sought out by reasoning, but even the very annihilation of a sign; — is not merely deemed no proof of power, but a conviction of weakness; — not merry no display of wisdom, but a suggestion of foolishness;) — when therefore they who seek for signs and wisdom not only receive not the things which they ask, but even hear the contrary to what they desire, and then by means of contraries are persuaded; — how is not the power of Him that is preached unspeakable?

As if to some one tempest-tossed and longing for a haven, you were to show not a haven but another wilder portion of the sea, and so could make him follow with thankfulness? Or as if a physician could attract to himself the man that was wounded and in need of remedies, by promising to cure him not with drugs, but with burning of him again! For this is a result of great power indeed. So also the Apostles prevailed, not simply without a sign, but even by a thing which seemed contrary to all the known signs. Which thing also Christ did in the case of the blind man. For when He would heal him, He took away the blindness by a thing that increased it: i.e. He put on clay. (John 9:6.) As then by means of clay He healed the blind man, so also by means of the Cross He brought the world to Himself. That certainly was adding an offense, not taking an offense away. So did He also in creation, working out things by their contraries. With sand, for instance, He walled in the sea, having made the weak a bridle to the strong. He placed the earth upon water, having taken order that the heavy and the dense should be borne on the soft and fluid. By means of the prophets again with a small piece of wood He raised up iron from the bottom. (2 Kings 6:5-7.) In like manner also with the Cross He has drawn the world to Himself. For as the water bears up the earth, so also the Cross bears up the world. You see now, it is proof of great power and wisdom, to convince by means of the things which tell directly against us. Thus the Cross seems to be matter of offense; and yet far from offending, it even attracts.

[6.] Verse 25. All these things, therefore, Paul bearing in mind, and being struck with astonishment, said that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;” in relation to the Cross, speaking of a folly and weakness, not real but apparent. For he is answering with respect unto the other party’s opinion. For that which philosophers were not able by means of reasoning to accomplish, this, what seemed to be foolishness did excellently well. Which then is the wiser, he that persuades the many, or he that

persuades few, or rather no one? He who persuades concerning the greatest points, or about matters which are nothing? What great labors did Plato endure, and his followers, discoursing to us about a line, and an angle, and a point, and about numbers even and odd, and equal unto one another and unequal, and such-like spider-webs; (for indeed those webs are not more useless to man's life than were these subjects;) and without doing good to any one great or small by their means, so he made an end of his life. How greatly did he labor, endeavoring to show that the soul was immortal! and even as he came he went away, having spoken nothing with certainty, nor persuaded any hearer. But the Cross wrought persuasion by means of unlearned men; yea it persuaded even the whole world: and not about common things, but in discourse of God, and the godliness which is according to truth, and the evangelical way of life, and the judgment of the things to come. And of all men it made philosophers: the very rustics, the utterly unlearned. Behold how "the foolishness of God is wiser than men," and "the weakness stronger?" How "stronger?" Because it overran the whole world, and took all by main force, and while men were endeavoring by ten thousands to extinguish the name of the Crucified, the contrary came to pass: that flourished and increased more and more, but they perished and wasted away; and the living at war with the dead, had no power. So that when the Greek calls me foolish, he shows himself above measure foolish: since I who am esteemed by him a fool, evidently appear wiser than the wise. When he calls me weak, then he shows himself to be weaker. For the noble things which publicans and fishermen were able to effect by the grace of God, these, philosophers, and rhetoricians, and tyrants, and in short the whole world, running ten thousand ways here and there, could not even form a notion of. For what did not the Cross introduce? The doctrine concerning the Immortality of the Soul; that concerning the Resurrection of the Body; that concerning the contempt of things present; that concerning the desire of things future. Yea, angels it hath made of men, and all, every where, practice self-denial, and show forth all kinds of fortitude.

ST. AMBROSE, ON THE DEATH OF THEODOSIUS

Although Constantine was in his last hours when he was freed by the grace of baptism from all sins, yet, since he was the first of the emperors to believe and left after him a heritage of faith to princes, he has found a place of great merit. Of his times the following prophecy has been fulfilled: 'In that day that which is upon the bridle of the horse shall be holy to the Lord Almighty' (Zach 14:20). This was revealed by the great Helena of holy memory, who was inspired by the Spirit of God.

(41) Blessed was Constantine with such a mother! At her son's command she sought the aid of divine favor in order that he might take part safely even in battles and not fear danger. Noble woman, who found much more to confer upon an emperor than she might receive from an emperor! The mother, solicitous for her son to whom the sovereignty of the Roman world had fallen, hastened to Jerusalem and explored the scene of the Lord's Passion.

(42) It is claimed that she originally was hostess of an inn, and thus became acquainted with the elder Constantine, who afterwards obtained the imperial office. Good hostess, who so diligently

searched for the manger of the Lord! Good hostess, who did not ignore that host who cared for the wounds of the man wounded by robbers! Good hostess, who preferred to be considered dung, to gain Christ! For that reason Christ raised her from dung to a kingdom, for it is written that 'He raised up the needy from the earth, and lifted up the poor out of the dunghill' (Psalm 112:7).

(43) Helena, then, came and began to visit the holy places. The Spirit inspired her to search for the wood of the Cross, She drew near to Golgotha and said: 'Behold the place of combat: where is thy victory? I seek the banner of salvation and I do not find it. Shall I,' she said, 'be among kings, and the cross of the Lord lie in the dust? Shall I be covered by golden ornaments, and the triumph of Christ by ruins? Is this still hidden, and is the palm of eternal life hidden? How can I believe that I have been redeemed if the redemption itself is not seen?

(44) I see what you did, O Devil, that the sword by which you were destroyed might be obstructed. But Isaac cleared out the wells stopped up by foreigners, and did not permit the water to lie concealed (Gen 26:18). So let the ruins be removed that life may appear; let the sword by which the head of the real Goliath was cut off be drawn forth; let the earth be opened that salvation may shine out. Why did you labor to hide the wood, O Devil, except to be vanquished a second time? You were vanquished by Mary, who gave the Conqueror birth. Without any impairment of her virginity, she brought Him forth to conquer you by His crucifixion and to subjugate you by His death. Today, also, you shall be vanquished when a woman discovers your snares. That holy woman bore the Lord; I shall search for His cross. She gave proof that He was born ; I shall give proof that He rose from the dead. She caused God to be seen among men; I shall raise from ruins the divine banner which shall be a remedy for our sins.'

(45) And so she opened the ground and cleared away the dust. She found three fork-shaped gibbets thrown together, covered by debris and hidden by the Enemy. But the triumph of Christ could not be wiped out. She hesitated in her uncertainty. She hesitated, as a woman, but the Holy Spirit inspired her to investigate carefully, because two robbers had been crucified with the Lord. Therefore, she sought the middlebeam, but it could have happened that the debris had mixed the crosses one with another and that chance had interchanged them. She went back to the text of the Gospel and found that on the middle gibbet a title had been displayed, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews' (John 19:22). Hence, a sequence of sound reasoning was established and the Cross of salvation was revealed by its title. This is what Pilate answered to the Jews who petitioned him: 'What I have written, I have written' (John 19:22), that is: I have not written these things to please you, but that future ages may know them. I have not written for you, but for posterity,' saying, as it were: 'Let Helena have something to read whereby she may recognize the cross of the Lord.'

(46) She discovered, then, the title. She adored the King, not the wood, indeed, because this is an error of the Gentiles and a vanity of the wicked. But she adored Him who hung on the tree, whose name was inscribed in the title; Him, I say, who, as a scarabaeus (St. Ambrose often employs the scarab as a symbol of Christ), cried out to His Father to forgive the sins of his persecutors (Luke 23:39). The woman eagerly hastened to touch the remedy of immortality, but she feared to trample under foot the mystery of salvation. Joyful at heart, yet with anxious step, she knew not

what she should do. She proceeded, however, to the resting place of Truth. The wood shone and grace flashed forth. And, as before, Christ had visited a woman in Mary, so the Spirit visited a woman in Helena. He taught her what as a woman she did not know, and led her upon a way which no mortal could know.

(47) She sought the nails with which the Lord was crucified, and found them. From one nail she ordered a bridle to be made, from the other she wove a diadem. She turned the one to an ornamental, the other to a devotional, use. Mary was visited to liberate Eve; Helena was visited that emperors might be redeemed. So she sent to her son Constantine a diadem adorned with jewels which were interwoven with the iron of the Cross and enclosed the more precious jewel of divine redemption. She sent the bridle, also. Constantine used both, and transmitted his faith to later kings. And so the beginning of the faith of the emperors is the holy relic which is upon the bridle. From that came the faith whereby persecution ended and devotion to God took its place.

(48) Wisely did Helena act who placed the cross on the head of sovereigns, that the Cross of Christ might be adored among kings. That was not presumption but piety, since honor was given to our holy redemption. Good, therefore, is the nail of the Roman Empire. It rules the whole world and adorns the brow of princes, that they may be preachers who were accustomed to be persecutors. Rightly is the nail on the head, so that where the intelligence is, there may be protection, also. On the head, a crown; in the hands, reins. A crown made from the Cross, that faith might shine forth; reins likewise from the Cross, that authority might govern, and that there might be just rule, not unjust legislation. May the princes also consider that this has been granted to them by Christ's generosity, that in imitation of the Lord it may be said of the Roman emperor: Thou hast set on his head a crown of precious stones.¹

(The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation http://www.orthodox.cn/patristics/frchurchnewtrans_en.htm)

REFLECTION:

The Coptic Orthodox Church celebrates two feasts dedicated to the Cross. The first is on the 17th of Tout (this feast lasts for three days) and the second on the 10th of Baramhat (this feast lasts for one day).

This lesson is meant to take place at the feast of the 17th of Tout. On the 17th of Tout, a three day feast of the church begins. It is the day of the consecration of the Church of the Cross built by Queen Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine who was the first emperor to become Christian; on this day the Coptic Church also commemorates the discovery of the Holy Cross, the Cross on which Christ was crucified, by Queen Helena. The actual appearance of the Cross was on the 10th of Baramhat but because this date is always during fasting, the early church fathers substituted the 17th of Tout, for the Feast of the Cross, which is the date of the church consecrated in honor of the appearance of the Holy Cross.

How great is the humility of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to Him be all glory, that he allowed the Cross on which He was crucified to be buried beneath rubble for nearly 300 years. This fact also adds more proof to the point of St. John Chrysostom regarding the seeming weakness of the Cross.

PRAYER:

Thus truly the Logos of God suffered in the flesh, was slain, bowed on the Cross, and His soul parted from His body,
Even though His divinity never parted, either from His soul or from His body.
He was pierced with the spear in His side, out of which flowed blood and water for the forgiveness of the whole world; His body was smeared in them, and His soul came and was reunited with His body.
In place of sins which engulf the world, the Son died on the Cross and turned us from the way on the left towards the right.
He made peace through the blood of His Cross, uniting and reconciling the heavenly with the earthly, the people with the peoples, and the soul with the body.
And on the third day He rose from the tomb.
One is Immanuel, who is indivisible after the union, and undivided into two natures. Thus we believe, thus we confess, and thus we affirm that this Body belongs to this Blood, and this Blood belongs to this Body.
You are Christ our God, who was pierced in His side on Golgotha at Jerusalem for our sake.
You are the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Forgive our trespasses, and remit our sins, and make us stand at Your right-hand side. Amen. *Syrian Fraction for the Feasts of the Cross*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Choose one section:

VOCABULARY:

Shere nak o-pis-tavros, Jerusalem, Constantine, Helena

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	He was crucified for us
Liturgical:	Church feasts
Moral:	Serving our church
Spiritual:	The sign of the Cross

CONNECTION POINT

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself to die on the Cross so that He could save us from our sins. After He died, His body was taken down from the Cross and laid in a tomb. But what happened to the Cross? Our church celebrates the finding of the Cross of our Lord in the Feast of the Cross.

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, children should prepare for the Feast of the Cross procession.

LESSON BODY:

As they are preparing their crosses, the story of the finding of the Cross by Queen Helena can be told:

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified for us on the Cross. This means that He actually died on the Cross. After He died, His mother and His disciples and His friends, took down His body from the Holy Cross and laid Him in a tomb. And then, we all know, that He rose from the dead early on Sunday morning.

But here is the question – what happened to the Cross after our Lord was taken down from it? Does anybody know?

It is actually very sad what happened: the people who lived in the area around it (Jerusalem), when they saw that there were so many miracles and wonderful things happening from the Cross of our Lord – things like dead people coming back alive and sick people being healed! – they became very angry because they did not want people to believe in Jesus Christ. So, listen to what they did: they sent messages throughout all Jerusalem and all the rest of the country *ordering* that

all people dump their garbage from their houses, and any dirt that they sweep in their houses *on top of* the area where the Cross was. They continued to do this for more than 200 years, until there was a very huge pile there. And the Cross of our Lord was underneath this pile.

Now there was an emperor (which is like a king, but greater) named Constantine. Emperor Constantine is very important to the church because he was the first emperor to become Christian. His mother's name was Helena. Queen Helena is very important in our story of the Cross.

Queen Helena wanted to know, from all her heart, where the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was. She said to herself, "Is it right that I live among kings and in great palaces, and the Cross of the Lord lies in the dust? Shall I be covered by golden ornaments, and the triumph of Christ be in ruins? How can the Cross be hidden, the Cross which is the healing and the medicine for our eternal life?" So she traveled very far from her home to Jerusalem to search for the Cross.

When she arrived there, she asked everyone where the Cross was, where our Lord was crucified. But no one could tell her. Finally, she found an old man who knew the place. He told her about the great pile of garbage and dust. With the help of others, she cleared away this great pile.

But what do you think she found at the very bottom? Not one cross, but *three* crosses. Remember, there were two thieves who were crucified with our Lord. How could she know which one was the cross of our Lord? She searched for the title that had been placed on the Cross of Christ: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." There was also one more thing that she did: she saw someone who had passed away, and they were having the funeral for him. She asked the people to bring the coffin with the person in it. They placed the coffin on one cross, nothing happened. On the second cross, nothing. But when they placed it on the third cross, the person who had been dead came back alive! She knew she had found the right Cross, the Cross that our Lord and Savior was crucified on to save us. She was filled with joy! And she had a church built there.

This is the story of how the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was found. It was not just Queen Helena that was filled with joy about finding the cross, but all Christians. This is something that our church celebrates every year at this time.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: the children can decorate wooden crosses that they will carry in the procession.
Suggestion: each Sunday school class has its own color ribbon tied to the cross, or has its own theme/way of decorating.

Alternative plans:

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What happened to the Cross of our Lord after He was crucified on it?

A. *It was covered by garbage and buried underneath a great pile.*

Q. Why did this happen?

A. *The people who lived around the area, when they saw all the miracles that were happening, got very angry because they did not want people to believe in Jesus Christ. So they ordered everyone to dump their trash there.*

Q. Who was the first Christian emperor?

A. *Emperor Constantine.*

Q. Why do we remember his mother?

A. *Queen Helena was the one who found the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. She traveled far from her home to Jerusalem and searched for it until she found it.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ Gal 6:14

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss with the children the power of the Cross. They should explain to them that the sign of the Cross brings us victory: over fear, over sins, over anything that can hurt us. They can also mention to the children that it is through the Cross that our Lord Jesus Christ brought us back to God. This is why the Cross is very important to Christians.

1. The Tree of Life in Genesis and Revelation *Genesis 2:1-9, Genesis 3:21-24, Revelation 22:1-5*
2. Jacob crosses his hands when blessing Joseph's sons *Genesis 48*
3. The blood on the doorpost and the lintel of the houses of the Israelites during the last plague. The doorpost and lintel form two perpendicular lines as the sign of the cross. Thus by putting the blood on them the Israelites were actually making the sign of the cross on their houses and they were saved through the cross from the plague *Exodus 12*
4. Bitter water made sweet *Exodus 15:22-27*

5. Moses had his hands outstretched as a sign of the Cross and by this sign the Israelites were able to conquer Amalek, who came to fight against them. *Exodus 17:8-16*
6. The wise men offered myrrh to the Child Jesus *Matthew 2*

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 41: THE MONTH OF KIAHK

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 1:1-56

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

⁵There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

⁸So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

¹⁹And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. ²⁰But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

21And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

23So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

24Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25"Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

29But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37For with God nothing will be impossible."

38Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

39Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

46And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." 56And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

CHURCH FATHERS:

S. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, commentary on the Gospel of St Luke

Miscellaneous fragments on Luke c. 1

1:2. Who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word.

In saying that the Apostles were eyewitnesses of the substantial and living Word, the Evangelist agrees with John, who says, that "the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled in us, and His glory was seen, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." For the Word became capable of being seen by reason of the flesh, which is visible and tangible and solid: whereas in Himself He is invisible. And John again in his Epistle says, "That which was from the beginning, That which we have heard, That which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled around the Word of Life, and the Life became manifest." Do you not Hear that he speaks of the Life as capable of being handled? This he does that you may understand that the Son became man, and was visible in respect of the flesh, but invisible as regards His divinity.

1:51. He have shown strength with His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.

The arm enigmatically signifies the Word that was born of her: and by the proud, Mary means the wicked demons who with their prince fell through pride: and the Greek sages, who refused to receive the folly, as it seemed, of what was preached: and the Jews who would not believe, and were scattered for their unworthy imaginations about the Word of God. And by the mighty she means the Scribes and Pharisees, who sought the chief seats. It is nearer the sense, however, to refer it to the wicked demons: for these, when openly claiming mastery over the world, the Lord by His coming scattered, and transferred those whom they had made captive unto His own dominion. For those things all came to pass according to her prophecy, that

1:52. He hath put down riders from their thrones, and exalted the humble.

Great used to be the haughtiness of these demons whom He scattered, and of the devil, and of the Greek sages, as I said, and of the Pharisees and Scribes. But He put them down, and exalted those who had humbled themselves under their mighty hand, "having given them authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy:" and made the plots against us of these haughty-minded beings of none effect. The Jews, moreover, once gloried in their empire, but were stripped of it for their unbelief; whereas the Gentiles, who were obscure and of no note, were for their faith's sake exalted.

1:53 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.

By the hungry, she means the human race: for, excepting the Jews only, they were pining with famine. The Jews, however, were enriched by the giving of the law, and by the teaching of the holy prophets. For "to them belonged the giving of the law, the adoption of sons, the worship, the

promises." But they became wanton with high feeding, and too elate at their dignity; and having refused to draw near humbly to the Incarnate One, they were sent empty away, carrying nothing with them, neither faith nor knowledge, nor the hope of blessings. For verily they became both outcasts from the earthly Jerusalem, and aliens from the glorious life that is to be revealed, because they received not the Prince of Life, but even crucified the Lord of Glory, and abandoned the fountain of living water, and set at nought the bread that came down from heaven. And for this reason there came upon them a famine severer than any other, and a thirst more bitter than every thirst: for it was not a famine of the material bread, nor a thirst of water, "but a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord." But the heathen, who were hungering and athirst, and with their soul wasted away with misery, were filled with spiritual blessings, because they received the Lord. For the privileges of the Jews passed over unto them.

1:54. He hath taken hold of Israel His child to remember mercy.

He hath taken hold of Israel,---not of the Israel according to the flesh, and who prides himself on the bare name, but of him who is so after the Spirit, and according to the true meaning of the appellation;---even such as look unto God, and believe in Him, and obtain through the Son the adoption of sons, according to the Word that was spoken, and the promise made to the prophets and patriarchs of old. It has, however, a true application also to the carnal Israel; for many thousands and ten thousands of them believed. "But He has remembered His mercy as He promised to Abraham:" and has accomplished what He spoke unto him, that "in thy seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed." For this promise was now in the act of fulfillment by the impending birth of our common Savior Christ, Who is that seed of Abraham, in Whom the Gentiles are blessed. "For He took on Him the seed of Abraham," according to the Apostle's words: and so fulfilled the promise made unto the fathers.

From S. Cyril's Commentary upon the Gospel of St. Luke, Sermon the First.

2:5 With Mary, his betrothed wife, being great with child.

The sacred Evangelist says that Mary was betrothed to Joseph, to show that the conception had taken place upon her betrothal solely, and that the birth of the Emanuel was miraculous, and not in accordance with the laws of nature. For the holy Virgin did not bear from the emission of man's seed. And what was the reason of this? Christ, Who is the first-fruits of all, the second Adam according to the Scriptures, was born of the Spirit, that he might transmit the grace (of the spiritual birth) to us also: for we too were intended, no longer to bear the name of sons of men, but of God rather, having obtained the new birth of the Spirit in Christ first, that he might be "foremost among all," as the most wise Paul declares.

REFLECTION:

The faith of our mother Saint Mary, the Theotokos, is very deep. How great is the mystery of her life, that she would speak words so filled with faith before our Lord Jesus Christ was even incarnate and began His work.

She gave her life to her Lord, and was found with child before her marriage, thus causing her to become the subject of judgment, ridicule, and hatred: *Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God"* (John 8:41).

Our Lady and Queen lived the life of the Kingdom and truly despised every worldly honor and praise for the sake of her Lord.

PRAYER:

Since we have no favor, nor excuse, nor justification because of our many sins, we, through you, implore to Him who was born of you, O Theotokos, the Virgin, for abundant and acceptable is your intercession with our Savior. O pure mother, do not exclude sinners from your intercession with Him whom you bore, for He is merciful and able to save us, because He suffered for us to deliver us. Let your compassion speedily reach us, for we are exceedingly humbled. Help us, O God, our Savior, for the glory of Your name. O Lord, deliver us and forgive us our sins for the sake of Your holy name. *Agpeya, 6th hour litany*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

The adornment of the Virgin Mary, / daughter of King David, / at the right hand of Jesus Christ, / the beloved Son of God.

+ As King David has said / in a hymn of the Psalms, / "The Queen did stand / at the right hand of the throne."

You are exalted more than the cherubim, / O mother of the Mighty God, / and more honored than the seraphim / in heaven and on earth.

+ We magnify you day by day, / saying with Gabriel, / "Hail, O full of grace, / the Lord is with you."

+ We ask you to remember us, / O faithful patroness, / before our Lord Jesus Christ, / that He may forgive us our sins. *Kiahk Doxology for the Virgin*

VOCABULARY:

Faith, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Gabriel, barren

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary
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Liturgical:	Incense / Kiahk praise
Moral:	Serving those who are in need
Spiritual:	Trusting in God's promises

CONNECTION POINT

Our Lord was born to the Virgin Mary and we celebrate His birth on Holy Nativity. But before He was born, God the Father prepared the people and helped them get ready to receive His Son. How would He do this?

INTRODUCTION

Does anybody know who is the greatest saint in our Church? [Let the children give their guesses and then tell them that it is St. Mary]. Today we will find out a little bit about how great she is; we will look at her faith. Remember, faith is saying “yes” to God, agreeing with Him about His plan for you and accepting His will. St. Mary was someone who did this – she accepted from the angel that she would become the mother of Jesus Christ. And the whole world is thankful to her because of her faith.

We will also talk about some relatives of hers and see how they were involved in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ also.

LESSON BODY:

ZACHARIAS AND GABRIEL

In the days before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born, there was a priest named Zacharias. Zacharias had a wife named Elizabeth. Now Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God; they kept all the commandments of the Lord and obeyed Him with all their hearts. They loved God very much. But there was one thing that made them unhappy: they did not have any children and they were already very old. They had been praying and praying for God to give them children, but – nothing. Elizabeth was barren (meaning, she was unable to have a baby). And now they were old and felt that their chances to have children had passed and that it was not possible anymore.

One day as Zacharias was serving as priest in the temple, it happened that he was chosen to go inside the altar and offer incense (there were a lot of priests during his time and a priest hardly ever got to go inside the altar and offer incense. We will see what God had prepared for him and why He chose Zacharias to go inside on that day). Do you know how Abouna walks around with the censor (shoria) and offers incense as he is praying? This is a tradition that priests have been doing for hundreds and thousands of years – during Zacharias’ time and even before.

So Zacharias went inside to offer incense and all the people were praying outside. All of a sudden, as Zacharias was praying, an angel of the Lord appeared to him! and stood on the right side of the altar. When Zacharias saw him, he was afraid.

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The angel was telling Zacharias that his promised son John would bring great joy to him and his wife and to many others; he also told him that he would be very great and strong and would go *before* the Lord, to make the people ready to receive Him. What does that mean? First it means that the Lord was coming, and coming soon, and secondly it means that John would be the one to get the people ready for the Lord to come. What a great honor! Zacharias and Elizabeth had been waiting for a son for their whole lives, and God waited until this time so that they could have not just a regular child, but the one that would be a very great person in the eyes of God and who would do the very important and difficult job of getting the people to leave their wrong ways of living and their sins and turn to the Lord when He came.

But Zacharias could not fully believe what the angel said to him because he was an old man and his wife was also very old. He asked the angel, "How shall I know this?" In other words, he asked for a sign or some kind of proof from the angel.

And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be... not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

Now the people who were praying outside waited for Zacharias and wondered why he took so long in the temple! "What happened to him?" They asked one another. "Why hasn't he come out yet?"

But when he came out, he could not speak! He was making hand motions to them but nothing was coming out of his mouth. And the people realized that he must have seen a vision in the temple.

As soon as the days of his service were completed, Zacharias left the temple and went to his own house. And his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and she glorified God. And she did not tell anyone that she was pregnant and she hid herself in her house.

Zacharias' response to the message the angel brought him from God was not one of faith – he did not believe what God was telling him personally. He lacked faith. The angel, wanting to help him understand that God was able to accomplish what He had just told him, and showing the power of God, told him he would be unable to speak and right away, it happened just as he said it would! Zacharias was immediately unable to speak. His ability to believe God increased after this experience and when his son was born 9 months later, he showed his faith and named his son John just as the angel had told him, and immediately after that he became able to speak. And the first words he spoke were to glorify God and to thank Him.

ST. MARY AND GABRIEL

There is one more very important person we need to talk about today: St. Mary. St. Mary also had a visit from the angel Gabriel. But the way she responded to the message he gave her from God was different from the way Zacharias responded. See if you can find out the difference. (Remember, Zacharias did not believe right away that God could do what He said and he said to the angel, "How can I know this will happen? I am old and my wife is also very old").

Now six months after the angel Gabriel went to Zacharias, he was sent by God to a young woman, she was actually not even 20 years old, named Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary believed the angel but she wondered how she could have a son since she was not married, and she asked the angel that.

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." Wow! Nothing like that had ever happened before or ever been heard of before! So the angel, wanting to help St. Mary believe continued and told her, "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Did anyone notice the difference between St. Mary's response and St. Zacharias' response? Mary *believed* what the angel said to her – she had faith that what God was telling her would happen and she said "yes" to God.

After this, because the angel had told St. Mary that Elizabeth her relative was pregnant with a son, Mary hurried and went to the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. Now, remember what St. Elizabeth did after she became pregnant? She hid herself in her house and did not tell anyone. Now when she saw St. Mary coming to her, she realized two things: 1. That St. Mary knew she was

pregnant, and she could only have known from the angel since she had not told anyone, and 2. Since the angel had gone to St. Mary and told her about Elizabeth, the angel must have also given St. Mary herself a message about something that was going to happen to her also.

And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

St. Elizabeth realized that St. Mary was going to give birth to the Son of God, even though St. Mary never told her!

And St. Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her house.

FAITH

We can see from these stories of faith how God prepared for the coming of His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Church honors St. Mary very highly because of her faith – she said “yes” to God and gave herself completely to His will, not knowing what would happen. And because she did this, the *whole world* was able to come to Jesus and receive salvation through her Son.

The faith that Christians have in God can change the world!

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: Prepare pictures of the Old Testament priesthood and the Temple to show the children as they hear the story of Zacharias.

Alternative plans: Prepare an imaginative story or poem about what it may be like to be an angel. Include details about what it would be like for beings who never die, but have seen everything in the history of the world since their creation. Include details about how the angels serve God without wavering or hesitation (not like us).

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Why were Zacharias and Elizabeth sad?

A. *They had wanted to have a child but they were very old and had never had any children*

Q. Where was Zacharias when the angel Gabriel appeared to him?

A. *He was a priest and it was his turn to pray and offer incense inside the altar of the Temple*

Q. What did angel Gabriel tell Zacharias?

A. *That he would have a son (Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord...)*

Q. When did Zacharias become able to speak again?

A. *When his son was born and he wrote that his name would be John.*

Q. What did St. Mary say to the angel when he told her that she would give birth to the Son of God?

A. *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."*

Q. What was different about St. Mary's response?

A. *She believed the angel and had faith in the message that God was sending her.*

Q. What is "faith"?

A. *Faith is saying "yes" to God, agreeing with Him about His plan for you and accepting His will.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." *Luke 1:38*

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss St. Mary with the children. Stories and pictures of her apparitions, in Zeiton or elsewhere, would be wonderful for the children to hear.

1. The birth of Christ *Luke 2:1-20*
2. Presentation of our Lord in the Temple *Luke 2:21-38*
3. The childhood of our Lord *Luke 2:39-52*
4. St. Mary's intercession at the wedding in Cana of Galilee *John 2:1-12*
5. Jacob's Ladder *Genesis 28:10-22*
6. The Burning Bush *Exodus 3*

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 42: HOLY NATIVITY

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-12

18Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

24Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

3When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6" But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel."

7Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

9When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

1 Peter 2:4,5

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ^s you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on Matthew - HOMILY 7, MATTHEW 2:4, 5

“And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judaea.”

3. *“Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.”*

Attempting to slay that which was born, — an act of extreme idiocy not of madness only; since what had been said and done was enough to have withholden him from any such attempt. For those occurrences were not after the manner of man. A star, I mean, calling the wise men from on high; and barbarians making so long a pilgrimage, to worship Him that lay in swaddling clothes and a manger; and prophets too from of old, proclaiming beforehand all this; — these and all the rest were more than human events: but nevertheless, none of these things restrained him. For such a thing is wickedness. It falls foul of itself, and is ever attempting impossibilities. And mark his utter folly. If on the one hand he believed the prophecy, and accounted it to be unchangeable, it was quite clear that he was attempting impossibilities; if again he disbelieved, and did not expect that those sayings would come to pass, he need not have been in fear and alarm, nor have formed any plot on that behalf. So that in either way his craft was superfluous.

And this too came of the utmost folly, to think that the wise men would make more account of him than of the Child that was born, for the sake of which they had come so long a journey. For if, before they saw, they were so inflamed with longing for Him; after they had seen with their eyes, and been confirmed by the prophecy, how hoped he to persuade them to betray the young Child to him?

Nevertheless, many as were the reasons to withhold him, he made the attempt; and having *“secretly called the wise men, he inquired of them.”* Because he thought that Jews would be concerned in favor of the Child, and he never could expect that they would fall away unto such madness as to be willing to give up to His enemies their Protector and Savior, and Him who was come for the deliverance of their nation. On account of this he both calls them secretly, and seeks the time not of the Child, but of the star: thereby marking out the object of his chase so as to include far more than it. For the star, I think, must have appeared a long time before. It was a long time which the wise men had to spend on their journey. In order, therefore, that they might present themselves just after His birth (it being meet for Him to be worshipped in His very swaddling clothes, that the marvelous and strange nature of the thing might appear), the star, a

long time before, makes itself visible. Whereas if at the moment of His birth in Palestine, and not before, it had been seen by them in the East, they, consuming a long time in their journey, would not have seen Him in swaddling clothes on their arrival. As to his slaying the children *“from two years old and under,”* let us not marvel; for his wrath and dread, for the sake of a fuller security, added very much to the time, so that not one might escape.

Having therefore called them, he says, *“Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also.”* Do you see his extreme folly? Why, if you say these things in sincerity, why do you inquire secretly? But if intending to plot against Him, how is it you do not perceive, that from the fact of their being asked secretly the wise men will be able to perceive your craft? But as I have already said, a soul taken captive by any wickedness becomes more utterly senseless than anything. And he said not, *“go and learn concerning the King,”* but *“concerning the young Child;”* for he could not even endure to call Him by the name of His dominion.

4. But the wise men perceive nothing of this, by reason of their exceeding reverence (for they never could have expected that he could have gone on to so great wickedness, and would have attempted to form plots against a dispensation so marvelous): and they depart suspecting none of these things, but from what was in themselves auguring all that would be in the rest of mankind.

“And, lo! the star, which they saw in the east, went before them.” For therefore only was it hidden, that having lost their guide, they might come to be obliged to make inquiry of the Jews, and so the matter might be made evident to all. Since after they have made inquiries, and have had His enemies for informants, it appears to them again. And mark how excellent was the order; how in the first place after the star the people of the Jews receives them, and the king, and these bring in the prophecy to explain what had appeared: how next, after the prophet, an angel again took them up and taught them all things; but for a time they journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem by the guidance of the star, the star again journeying with them from that place also; that hence too you might learn, that this was not one of the ordinary stars, for there is not so much as one star that has this nature. And it not merely moved, but *“went before them,”* drawing and guiding them on in mid-day.

“But what need of this star anymore,” one may ask, *“when the place was ascertained?”* In order that the Child also might be seen. For there was not anything to make Him manifest, since the house was not conspicuous, neither was His mother glorious, or distinguished. There was need then of the star, to set them by the place. Wherefore it reappears on their coming out of Jerusalem, and stays not, before it has reached the manger. And marvel was linked on to marvel; for both were strange things, as well the magi worshipping, as the star going before them; and enough to attract even such as were made all of stone. For if the wise men had said, they had heard prophets say these things, or that angels had discoursed with them in private, they might have been disbelieved; but now, when the vision of the star appeared on high, even they that were exceeding shameless had their mouths stopped.

Moreover, the star, when it stood over the young Child, stayed its course again: which thing itself also was of a greater power than belongs to a star, now to hide itself, now to appear, and having appeared to stand still. Hence they too received an increase of faith. For this cause they rejoiced also, that they had found what they were seeking, that they had proved messengers of truth, that

not without fruit had they come so great a journey; so great a longing (so to speak) had they for Christ. For first it came and stood over His very head, showing that what is born is Divine; next standing there, it leads them to worship Him; being not simply barbarians, but the wiser sort amongst them.

Do you see, with how great fitness the star appeared? Why; because even after the prophecy, and after the interpretation of the chief priests and scribes, they still had their minds turned towards it.

5. Shame upon Marcion, shame upon Paul of Samosata, for refusing to see what those wise men saw, — the forefathers of the Church; for I am not ashamed so to call them. Let Marcion be ashamed, beholding God worshipped in the flesh. Let Paul be ashamed, beholding Him worshipped as not being merely a man. As to His being in the flesh, that first is signified by the swaddling clothes and the manger; as to their not worshipping Him as a mere man, they declare it, by offering Him, at that unripe age, such gifts as were meet to be offered to God. And together with them let the Jews also be ashamed, seeing themselves anticipated by barbarians and magi, whilst they submit not so much as to come after them. For indeed what happened then was a type of the things to come, and from the very beginning it was shown that the Gentiles would anticipate their nation.

“But how was it,” one may ask, *“that not at the beginning, but afterwards, He said, ‘Go ye, and make disciples of all nations’?”* Because the occurrence was a type, as I said, of the future, and a sort of declaration of it beforehand. For the natural order was that Jews should come unto Him first; but forasmuch as they of their own choice gave up their proper benefit, the order of things was inverted. Since not even in this instance should the wise men have come before the Jews, nor should persons from so great a distance have anticipated those who were settled about the very city, nor should those who had heard nothing have presented them that were nurtured in so many prophecies. But because they were exceedingly ignorant of their own blessings, those from Persia anticipate those at Jerusalem. And this indeed is what Paul also says: *“It was necessary that the word of the Lord should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you have judged yourselves unworthy, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”* For even though before they did not obey, at any rate when they heard it from the wise men, they ought to have made all haste; but they would not. Therefore, while those are slumbering, these run before.

6. Let us then also follow the magi, let us separate ourselves from our barbarian customs, and make our distance therefrom great, that we may see Christ, since they too, had they not been far from their own country, would have missed seeing Him. Let us depart from the things of earth. For so the wise men, while they were in Persia, saw but the star, but after they had departed from Persia, they beheld the Sun of Righteousness. Or rather, they would not have seen so much as the star, unless they had readily risen up from thence. Let us then also rise up; though all men be troubled, let us run to the house of the young Child; though kings, though nations, though tyrants interrupt this our path, let not our desire pass away. For so shall we thoroughly repel all the dangers that beset us. Since these too, except they had seen the young Child, would not have escaped their danger from the king. Before seeing the young Child, fears and dangers and troubles pressed upon them from every side; but after the adoration, it is calm and security; and no longer

a star but an angel receives them, having become priests from the act of adoration; for we see that they offered gifts also.

Do you therefore likewise leave the Jewish people, the troubled city, the blood-thirsty tyrant, the pomp of the world, and hasten to Bethlehem, where is the house of the spiritual Bread. For though you be a shepherd, and come hither, you writ behold the young Child in an inn: though you be a king, and approach not here, your purple robe will profit you nothing; though you be one of the wise men, this will be no hindrance to you; only let your coming be to honor and adore, not to spurn the Son of God; only do this with trembling and joy: for it is possible for both of these to concur in one.

But take heed that you be not like Herod, and say, *“that I may come and worship Him,”* and when you are come, be minded to slay Him. For him do they resemble, who partake of the mysteries unworthily: it being said, that such a one *“shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.”* Yes; for they have in themselves the tyrant who is grieved at Christ’s kingdom, him that is more wicked than Herod of old, even Mammon. For he would fain have the dominion, and sends them that are his own to worship in appearance, but slaying while they worship. Let us fear then, lest at any time, while we have the appearance of suppliants and worshippers, we should in deed show forth the contrary. And let us cast everything out of our hands when we are to worship; though it be gold that we have, let us offer it unto him and not bury it. For if those barbarians then offered it for honor, what will become of you, not giving even to Him that has need? If those men journeyed so far to see Him newly born, what sort of excuse will you have, not going out of your way one alley’s length, that you may visit Him sick or in bonds? And yet when they are sick or in bonds, even our enemies have our pity; thine is denied even to your Benefactor and Lord. And they offered gold, you hardly give bread. They saw the star and were glad, you, seeing Christ Himself a stranger and naked, are not moved.

For which of you, for Christ’s sake, has made so long a pilgrimage, you that have received countless benefits, as these barbarians, or rather, these wiser than the wisest philosophers? And why say I, so long a journey? Nay, many of our women are so delicate, that they go not over so much as one crossing of the streets to behold Him on the spiritual manger, unless they can have mules to draw them. And others being able to walk, yet prefer to their attendance here, some a crowd of worldly business, some the theaters. Whereas the barbarians accomplished so great a journey for His sake, before seeing Him; you do not emulate them, even after you have seen Him, but forsake Him after seeing Him, and run to see the stage player. (For I touch again on the same subjects, as I did also of late.) And seeing Christ lying in the manger, you leave Him, that you may see women on the stage.

7. What thunderbolts do not these things deserve? For tell me, if any one were to lead you into a palace, and show you the king on his throne, would you indeed choose to see the theater instead of those things? And yet even in the palace there is nothing to gain; but here a spiritual well of fire gushes up out of this table. And you leave this, and run down to the theater, to see women swimming, and nature put to open dishonor, leaving Christ sitting by the well? Yes: for now, as of old, He sits down by the well, not discoursing to a Samaritan woman, but to a whole city. Or perchance now too with a Samaritan woman only. For neither now is any one with Him; but some with their bodies only, and some not even with these. But nevertheless, He retires not, but

remains, and asks of us to drink, not water, but holiness, for *“His holy things He gives unto the holy.”* For it is not water that He gives us from this fountain, but living blood; and it is indeed a symbol of death, but it is become the cause of life.

But you, leaving the fountain of blood, the awful cup, go your way unto the fountain of the devil, to see a harlot swim, and to suffer shipwreck of the soul...

HOMILY 8 MATTHEW 2:2

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother.”

How then says Luke, that He was lying in the manger? Because at the birth indeed she presently laid Him there (for, as was not unlikely, in that large assemblage for the taxing, they could find no house; which Luke also signifies, by saying, *“Because there was no room, she laid Him”* there); but afterwards she took Him up, and held Him on her knees. For no sooner was she arrived at Bethlehem than she brought her pangs to an end, that you may thence also learn the whole dispensation, and that these things were not done at random, or by chance, but that they all were in course of accomplishment, according to some Divine foreknowledge, and prophetic order.

But what was it that induced them to worship? For neither was the Virgin conspicuous, nor the house distinguished, nor was any other of the things which they saw apt to amaze or attract them. Yet they not only worship, but also *“open their treasures,”* and *“offer gifts;”* and gifts, not as to a man, but as to God. For the frankincense and the myrrh were a symbol of this. What then was their inducement? That which wrought upon them to set out from home and to come so long a journey; and this was both the star, and the illumination wrought of God in their mind, guiding them by little and little to the more perfect knowledge. For, surely, had it not been so, all that was in sight being ordinary, they would not have shown so great honor. Therefore none of the outward circumstances was great in that instance, but it was a manger, and a shed, and a mother in poor estate; to set before your eyes, naked *and bare*, those wise men’s love of wisdom, and to prove to you, that not as mere man they approached Him, but as a God, and Benefactor. Wherefore neither were they offended by ought of what they saw outwardly, but even worshipped, and brought gifts; gifts not only free from Judaical grossness, in that they sacrificed not sheep and calves, but also coming nigh to the self-devotion of the Church, for it was knowledge and obedience and love that they offered unto Him.

“And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return unto Herod, they departed into their own country another way.” See from this also their faith, how they were not offended, but are docile, and considerate; neither are they troubled, nor reason with themselves, saying, *“And yet, if this Child be great, and has any might, what need of flight, and of a clandestine retreat? and why can it be, that when we have come openly and with boldness, and have stood against so great a people, and against a king’s madness, the angel sends us out of the city as runaways and fugitives?”* But none of these things did they either say or think. For this most especially belongs to faith, not to seek an account of what is enjoined, but merely to obey the commandments laid upon us.

REFLECTION:

This lesson is meant to focus on one aspect of the birth of our Lord: the Magi coming to see Christ the King and offering Him gifts. The idea of “offering” is central to the theme of this year, as the children are being exposed to the idea that they are children of their Father in Heaven and therefore are encouraged to enter into this relationship with Him. The basis of any relationship is giving (offering) and receiving. The children should understand from this lesson that when someone recognizes Christ as Lord, it is natural to want to offer Him things, be it items for the church, time, prayers, and ultimately ourselves and our lives. This is why they are exposed to the excellent example of the wise men.

“The wise men recognized and understood the meaning of the star. Their wisdom can be characterized as , "the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times" (I Chronicles 12:32). The quest of these wise travelers began with a revelation from God and continued by God's providence. In wisdom they doffed their worldly concerns and allowed the Heavenly Father to lead them. As Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses before them, they sensed God's leading and understood.

By faith, the wise men followed the pointing star. By faith, the wise men set out on a journey to pay homage to a newborn King. These educated men whose counsel was probably highly sought after, lived their life by faith. In the Gospel of St Matthew we are told, "...we have seen His star and are come." (Matthew 2: 2)

Obediently, the wise men followed the star. God sent them a sign of the Messiah Himself, signifying the light He will shed upon the world. In ancient times a star signified a god, a deified king. The wise men trusted in the Lord and followed the star into an uncertain direction. The wise men obeyed the will of God. We are given a specific example of the obedience of the wise men in Matthew 2:12, *Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.*" (Article by Bishop Youssef, Southern Diocese of the United States)

May God grant us to be like the wise men, who because of their great faith, traveled a great distance and persevered in the face of many challenges to see Christ the King, and to present their offerings to Him.

PRAYER:

Come all that we may worship our Lord Jesus Christ, He who was born of the Virgin, while her virginity is sealed.

The Magi came, they worshiped You in Bethlehem, You who were born of the Virgin, our Lord Jesus Christ. The ranks of the heavens gathered together, praising You in Bethlehem, You who were born of the Virgin, proclaiming and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, and goodwill toward men.” To You is due all glory, with Your good Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen. *Doxology of the Feast of the Glorious Nativity*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Today the Virgin has born the Supreme Essence. The earth offers a manger to the One who cannot be approached. The angels together with the shepherds glorify Him. The wise men guided by the star journeyed to Him, for God, who exists before all ages, became a child for our sake.

Response to the reading of the Acts, Feast of Nativity Liturgy

VOCABULARY:

Herod, prophet, Magi, Frankincense, Myrrh

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
Liturgical:	Offering bread and wine
Moral:	Giving
Spiritual:	Offering to God

CONNECTION POINT

Our Lord Jesus Christ was born in a manger to St. Mary and St. Joseph. After His birth, wise men came from a far away country to see the new born King.

INTRODUCTION

Review these points with the children to make sure they are familiar with them:

1. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born and St. Mary is His mother
2. He was born in a manger because there was no room for the Holy Family to stay in the inn.
3. He was born in Bethlehem.

LESSON BODY:

Tell the children that you will tell them the story of the wise men coming to visit the Infant Jesus and that after the story the class will reenact the story as a play.

THE WISE MEN OFFERED GIFTS TO OUR LORD

Briefly tell the story of the wise men to the children:

After our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, wise men came from the East. They asked the Jews where they could find the newborn King: *"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."* The wise men had traveled for many days, maybe even months, to find this King. And people did not have cars or bikes back then, they traveled maybe on animals like horses and on foot. They had been following a star that was leading them. This star may have been an angel, who was sent to guide them especially to find our Lord. These wise men had great faith.

Now the king who was ruling over the area at this time was named King Herod. He was a very cruel man. When he heard that these wise men had come all the way from the East to look for a newborn King, he was troubled. He didn't want any other king to take over his rule! So he gathered together all the chief priests and knowledgeable people and asked them where the Christ was to be born. The chief priests and the knowledgeable people knew the Bible and they told him that the King was to be born in Bethlehem because a prophet who lived long ago had written that.

So King Herod secretly called the wise men to himself and found out from them what time the star had appeared to them (he thought that he could figure out when this king was born by finding out when the star had appeared). And then he sent them to Bethlehem and said, *"Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."* But he was tricking them! He didn't want to worship the King; what he wanted was to find out where the King was so that he could get rid of Him.

The wise men left the king Herod and saw the star that they had followed from the beginning of their journey again. (You see, they were not from the area and did not know where Bethlehem was, and even if they could find Bethlehem, they wouldn't know where to look for the King). The star continued guiding them until it came and stood over where the young Child Jesus was. When they saw the star, they were very happy! They had finally found Him! When they came into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother and they fell down and worshiped Him.

And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then, after they were warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed and went back to their own country a different way, so they would not have to pass by where Herod was.

Now the question is – why did they present to the Child Jesus those gifts? They are gifts for God: Gold because He is the King of all kings, frankincense because He is the great high priest (and priests are the ones who offer incense to God), and myrrh because He would suffer and taste bitterness in His life and die on the Cross.

Option: Act out the story

WE OFFER

After the short play, discuss with the students the following:

Just like the wise men traveled from very far away to come and worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and presented to Him very valuable and precious gifts, we a church, through Abouna, offer to Him bread and wine every time we pray the liturgy. What else can we present to our Lord as valuable and precious gifts? He deserves the very best that we have. And we are His children. What would God our Father want from us His precious and very dear children? [Possible answers: ourselves, prayer, praises to Him, offerings to the Church such as oil, candles, etc..., our good behavior and our eagerness to follow Him and obey Him, serving in the church, helping the poor]. Do you know what some children even do on Christmas? Some children tell their parents that they do not want gifts on Christmas or that they want only one gift; instead, they tell their parents to buy gifts for the poor or make a donation to the Church.

Let us remember that Holy Nativity is not just about us getting presents, but it is about the Child Jesus. And just as on His birthday, the wise men traveled from very far to come and worship Him and present Him gifts, we also all travel from our homes and come to church late at night to worship Him, offer Him the very precious gifts of ourselves and the bread and wine, and take communion.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: This lesson can be acted out with three students as the wise men, one as King Herod, one as St. Mary, and one as the angel who appears to the wise men in a dream telling them not to return to Herod. Beforehand, one student could be assigned the task of coloring in a baby to be the Infant Jesus and one student to cut out the star to be ready for the lesson (explain to that student that the star may have been an angel). For this play, the students should be given real gold, real frankincense and real myrrh (if possible) to present to the Infant Jesus. Simple costumes should be provided.

Alternative plans:

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. How did the wise men know where to find the King?

A. *They followed a star, which was guiding them. The star could have been an angel*

Q. What happened with King Herod and the wise men?

A. *When King Herod heard that the wise men were looking for another King, he got very worried. After he found out where the King was meant to be born, he tried to trick the wise men and told them to come back to him after they had found Him and tell him where He was, so that he could go and worship this King also.*

Q. How did the wise men feel when they finally found Christ the King?

A. *They were so happy! They had finally found Him, the One they had traveled so far and so long to find.*

Q. Where was our Lord born?

A. *Bethlehem*

Q. What gifts did they offer to Him?

A. *Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They offered gold to our Lord because He is the King of kings, they offered frankincense to our Lord because He is the great high priest (priests are the ones who offer incense to God), and they offered myrrh to our Lord because He would suffer and die on the Cross*

Q. How did the wise men know not to go back to King Herod and tell him where to find Jesus, the newborn King?

A. *God warned them in a dream.*

Q. What can we present to our Lord as valuable and precious gifts?

A. *Examples: ourselves, prayer, praises to Him, offerings to the Church such as oil, candles, etc..., our good behavior and our eagerness to follow Him and obey Him, serving in the church, helping the poor*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:11)

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss the different people who have offered, and offer, things to God with the children. It would be very helpful for the children to learn that God accepts from us whatever we have, as long as it is the *best* that we have, and therefore worthy of Him. For example, the priest chooses the *best* orban to be the one for communion, because this is an offering to God. Another example is that the church encourages us to pray in the morning because that is the time of day when we are at our *best*. Personal stories about friends and/or family members who made or who make offerings to God would be wonderful for the children to hear as well. It is very important for the children to understand that offerings can be both *material* (things to give God by giving to the church or to the poor) and *spiritual* (prayers and praises).

Mothers should also point out to the children how after an offering is made to God, the person or people feel *great joy* in their hearts. A possible activity to do as a family would be to think an offering of both kinds to offer our Lord Jesus Christ on the feast of Nativity (the spiritual offering could be attending the Nativity liturgy and praying, even if they feel tired).

1. As soon as Noah came out from the ark, he made an offering to God. This was immediately followed by a blessing, granting joy *Genesis 8:13-22*
2. Hannah offered her only son to the Lord and was very glad to be able to give God the very best thing she had *1 Samuel 1*
3. King Solomon, who was very rich, made a great offering to God after he had finished building His temple. The last verses of the chapter show how much joy he and all the people had after this *1 Kings 8:62-66*
4. The poor widow offered to God all she had *Luke 21:1-4*
5. The members of the early church offered everything they had to God *Acts 2:40-47, Acts 4:32-37*
6. When St. Peter was put in prison, the church offered to God constant prayer on his behalf, leading to him being miraculously freed *Acts 12:4-17*

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 43: THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 2:1-23

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:" But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he awoke, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: " A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he awoke, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But

when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Acts 7:20-34

20At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. 21But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. 22And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

23"Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

26And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, "Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?" 27But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" 29Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

30"And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. 31When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, 32saying, "I am the God of your fathers-- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses trembled and dared not look. 33"Then the LORD said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. 34I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel

"But what was it that induced them (the wise men) to worship? For neither was the Virgin conspicuous, nor the house distinguished, nor was any other of the things which they saw apt to amaze or attract them. Yet they not only worship, but also *"open their treasures,"* and *"offer gifts;"* and gifts, not as to a man, but as to God. For the frankincense and the myrrh were a symbol of this. What then was their inducement? That which wrought upon them to set out from home and to come so long a journey; and this was both the star, and the illumination wrought of God in their mind, guiding them by little and little to the more perfect knowledge. For, surely, had it not been so, all that was in sight being ordinary, they would not have shown so great honor. Therefore none of the outward circumstances was great in that instance, but it was a manger, and a shed,

and a mother in poor estate; to set before thine eyes, naked *and bare*, those wise men's love of wisdom, and to prove to thee, that not as mere man they approached Him, but as a God, and Benefactor. Wherefore neither were they offended by ought of what they saw outwardly, but even worshipped, and brought gifts; gifts not only free from Judicial grossness, in that they sacrificed not sheep and calves, but also coming nigh to the self-devotion of the Church, for it was knowledge and obedience and love that they offered unto Him."

"But wherefore, it may be said, is the young Child sent into Egypt? In the first place, the evangelist himself hath mentioned the cause, saying," That it might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." And at the same time beginnings of fair hopes were thenceforth proclaimed before to the world. That is, since Babylon and Egypt, most in the whole earth, were burnt up with the flame of ungodliness, He, signifying from the first that He means to correct and amend both, and inducing men hereby to expect His bounties in regard of the whole world likewise, sent to the one the wise men, the other He Himself visited with His mother"

And behold a wonder again. Palestine plots, and Egypt receives and preserves Him that is the object of the plots. For, as it appears, not only in the instance of the sons of the patriarch did types take place, but also in our Lord's own case. In many instances, we are sure, His doings at that time were prophetic declarations of what was to happen afterwards; as, for example, in the matter of the ass and the colt.

REFLECTION:

Our Lord coming to Egypt is very special, knowing that He did not visit any other country outside Israel in His whole life on earth. Egypt is a special place in the salvation history. Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Jacob, all went to Egypt in the times of famine. Moses was brought up in Egypt. After the Exodus, God commanded His people not to go back to Egypt lest they fall back to Idol worship. Our Lord coming to Egypt changes forever the image of Egypt. It is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: *"In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria--a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."* Isaiah 19:19-25

PRAYER:

O God, the Father of light, the Lord of life, the grantor of knowledge, the creator of grace, the beneficent of our souls, the treasure of wisdom, the teacher of purity, the founder of the ages, and the receiver of pure prayers; Who give those who rely on Him –with all their hearts- the things which the angels desire to see. Who uplifted us from the depth to the light; Who gave us life from death; Who granted us freedom from slavery; Who caused the darkness in us to shine, through the coming in the flesh of Your Only-Begotten Son.

Now, our Master enlighten the eyes of our hearts, and purify us to be perfect in soul, body and spirit, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. *The prayer of Fraction during Advent*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

A star shines in the east, the magi followed it, until it brought them to Bethlehem, they worshipped the king of ages.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Jesus Christ the Son of God, entered the Land of Egypt

This is He to Whom the glory is due: with His Good Father: and the Holy Spirit: now and forever.

Gospel response of the feast of entering Egypt

VOCABULARY:

Jerusalem, wise men, Frankincense, Myrrh

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ is our King
Liturgical:	Incense
Moral:	Running from evil
Spiritual:	Offering

CONNECTION POINT

God the Father had promised the coming of the savior, His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord was born in Bethlehem of Judea. What had happened to the Holy family?

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Where was our Lord born?

A. *In a manger in Bethlehem*

Q. What were the shepherds doing?

A. *watching over their sheep*

Q. What was the sign the Angel gave to the shepherds?

A. *a baby in a manger*

Q. what is a manger?

A. *the place in which the animals eat.*

Q. The angel told the shepherds that the birth of our Lord will be for great Joy (happiness). Why?

A. *Because our Lord is the Savior God promised Adam and Eve to save His people.*

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"

Luke 2:10-11.

LESSON BODY:

1. The wise men in Jerusalem

When our Lord was born in Bethlehem, **wise men** (great men) from a far country in the east came to **Jerusalem** (the city where the king lives and rules). They started to ask the people where the new born king of the Jews is. The wise men said that they saw His star in the east and came to Jerusalem to see Him.

2. King Herod

The king (his name was Herod) heard of the wise men and their search for our Lord. King Herod was very anxious, for he was afraid that the new born King could take his place. King Herod gathered the chief priests and the people who knew the Bible well and asked them about where the Bible says that the Christ would be born. They answered: "in Bethlehem". King Herod called the wise men and told them and asked them "when did you first see the star?" they said "two years ago". King Herod told them to go search for the new born king in Bethlehem and when they find Him to let king Herod know so that he also can go there to worship our Lord Jesus. Of course king Herod was lying because he wanted to know where our Lord is to go and kill Him.

3. The Gifts

When the wise men left the palace they saw the star again. When they saw the star they were very happy. They went to Bethlehem where the star led them. They found the Holy Family and worshiped (bowed down) to our Lord. They gave Him three gifts: Gold, **frankincense** and **myrrh**. The gifts had meanings: the Gold meant that our Lord is the King of Kings. The **Frankincense** (is what abouna use for incense) meant that our Lord is a High Priest. The **myrrh** (used to put around dead bodies) meant that our Lord would suffer and die for us. When they left an angel appeared to them in a dream and warned them not to go back to Herod, so they left from another way to their country.

4. The flight

When they left, an angel of God appeared to St. Joseph in a dream at night and said to him: "*Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.*" St. Joseph arose immediately and took our Lord and St. Mary and left Judea to go to Egypt in the same night.

5. The killing of the children

When King Herod heard that the wise men had tricked him and left without telling him where our Lord was, he was very, very angry. He ordered his soldiers to kill all the boys in Bethlehem who were 2 years or younger.

6. The return of the Holy Family

The holy family remained in Egypt (and we are very excited that our land was blessed greatly by the coming of our Lord, St. Mary and St. Joseph to it) until one night the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Joseph in a dream and told him to go back to Israel because king Herod died. St. Joseph had another dream from God. He was told not to go back to Bethlehem because Herod's son took his father's place. So he went and lived in Nazareth. He took our Lord and St. Mary and they lived there where our Lord grew up and was obedient to both St. Mary and St. Joseph. He came when called, did exactly what they asked, helped both of them in their work

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: Bring the wise men statues and the star, and have a servant act as king Herod in his palace; add the wise men to the manger set. At the end of the lesson remove the manger to say that they left to Egypt. Send home a coloring page of the flight and a map of Egypt.

Alternative plans: Add the wise men to their mangers as a coloring page.

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What did the wise men feel when they saw the star?

A. *Very Happy*

Q. What gifts did they give our Lord? And what do they mean?

A. *Gold: because our Lord is the king of Kings*

Frankincense: because our Lord is a high priest

Myrrh : because our Lord is going to suffer and die for us

Q. Where did the Holy Family hide from king Herod? Why is that so special?

A. *Egypt. Our Lord chose our Land out of all places.*

Q. How did our Lord treat His parents?

A. *He was obedient to them and respected them.*

Q. what does obedience mean?

A. *Obedience mean:*

1. **Come** immediately when you are called (even leave whatever you are doing)

2. **Do** as you are told

3. **Do** your best in school (homework on time and attention during classes to get good results that would please your parents)

4. **Help** in work around the house

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"Out of Egypt I called My Son." Luke 2:15

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss with the children the verse "Blessed is Egypt My people" (Isaiah 19:25). They should also explain the many times Egypt is mentioned in the Bible and the events that occurred there.

1. Abraham went to Egypt *Genesis 12:10-20*
2. Joseph went to Egypt *Genesis 37*
3. Joseph is appointed a governor over Egypt and married an Egyptian wife *Genesis 41*
4. Jacob and his family went to Egypt *Genesis 46*
5. Moses is born in the land of Egypt and fled to Midian *Exodus 2*
6. Moses returned to Egypt *Exodus 3, 4*

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 44: HOLY THEOPHANY

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 3:13-17

13Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" 15But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. 16When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

John 1:18-34

18No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. 19Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23He said: "I am "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD,"" as the prophet Isaiah said."

24Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. 25And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. 27It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

28These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' 31I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

32And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me,

"Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." ³⁴And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

John 3:3-8

³Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

⁵Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again.'" ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Romans 6:4

⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

1 Peter 3:18-22

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

1 John 5:5-21

⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

⁹If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His

Son. 12He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

14Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. 16If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. 17All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

18We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 19We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. 20And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

21Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

CHURCH FATHERS:

John 1:30-31: *This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me." I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.* **John's Baptism Makes Christ Known to Israel**

Betrothal Through Baptism. Ephrem the Syrian:

Eliezar had given Rebekah as a bride at the well of water (Gen 21:1-67). Jacob did the same for Rachel at the well of water (Gen 29:1-20), and so did Moses for Zipporah at the well of water (Ex 2:16-21). All of these therefore were types of our Lord, who betrothed his church through John's baptism (Eph 5:22-23). Just as Eliezar introduced Rebekah to Isaac, his master, when he came to meet her in the field, so too John introduced our Redeemer from the Jordan: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron)

Why Jesus was Baptized. Chrysostom:

Jesus then did not need baptism, nor did that washing have any other object than to prepare for all others a way to faith in Christ. For [the Baptist] did not say, "that I might cleanse those who are baptized" or "that I might deliver them from their sins" but "that He should be made known to Israel." And why, tell me, could he not have preached without baptism and still brought the multitudes to Him? But this would not have made it any easier. For they would not have all run together like they did, if the preaching had been without baptism. They would not by the comparison have learned His superiority. The multitude came together not to hear his words, but for what? They came to be "baptized, confessing their sins." But when they came, they were taught the matters pertaining to Christ and the difference of His baptism. Yet even this baptism of John was of greater dignity than the Jewish one, and therefore all ran to it; yet even so it was imperfect. (Homilies on the Gospel of John)

John 1:32 *And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.* **The Spirit Descending from Heaven like a Dove**

Why Didn't the Appearance of the Spirit Curb Their Unbelief? Chrysostom:

The Father sent forth His voice proclaiming the Son, the Holy Spirit came upon Him as well, focusing the voice upon the head of Christ... in order that no one present might think that what was said of Christ was said of John... But someone might ask: How is it that the Jews did not believe, if they saw the Spirit? Such sights, however, require the mental vision rather than the bodily. If those who saw Christ working miracles were so drunk with malice that they denied what their own eyes had seen, how could the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove overcome their unbelief? Some say, however, that the sight was not visible to all, but only to John and those more disposed toward devotion. But even if the descent of the Spirit, as a dove, was visible to the outward eye, it does not follow that because all saw it, all understood it. (Homilies on the Gospel of John)

Christ Did Not Lack the Holy Spirit. Chrysostom:

To prevent any, however, from thinking that Christ really lacked the Holy Spirit in the way that we do, [the Baptist] corrects this notion also by informing us that the descent of the Holy Spirit took place only for the purpose of making Christ known. (Homilies on the Gospel of John)

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* **Unless one is born again**

Only Those Born Again Can Understand Who Jesus Is. Chrysostom:

In other words: unless you are born again and receive the right instruction, you are wandering somewhere out there far away from the Kingdom of Heaven. But He does not speak as plainly as this, preferring to make what he says easier to hear by generalizing, "Unless *one* is born again." In this way, He does not specifically address His remarks at Nicodemus... Now, if He had spoken to the Jews this way they would have ridiculed Him and then left. But Nicodemus shows he wants to learn... And so what Christ says to him is something like this: If you are not born again, if you do not share in the Spirit that comes through the washing of regeneration, everything you think about Me will be from a human point of view, not a spiritual one... Now, some take the expression "again" to mean "from heaven"; others think it means "from the beginning." Either way, it is impossible, Christ says, for someone who is not born in this way to see the kingdom of God. By these words our Lord discloses His nature, showing that He is more than what He appears to the outward eye. (Homilies on the Gospel of John)

The One Who Is Illuminated Is Washed. Justin Martyr:

At our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice by our parents coming together. We were brought up with bad habits and wicked training. However, so that we may not remain

the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over the one who chooses to be born again and has repented his sins the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe. The one who leads to the font the person that is to be washed calls him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God. And if any one dares to say this name, he raves with a hopeless madness. Also this washing is called illumination because those who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. The one who is illuminated is thus washed in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus. (First Apology)

Portrait and Image in Baptism. Athanasius:

Once the likeness painted on a panel has been effaced by stains from outside itself, the one whose likeness it is needs to come once more to enable the portrait to be renewed on the same wood. And, for the sake of his picture, even the mere wood on which it is painted is not thrown away, but the outline is renewed upon it. In the same way, the most holy Son of the Father, being the image of the Father, came to our world to renew humankind once made in His likeness. He came to find such lost individuals by the remission of their sins. He says as much Himself in the Gospels: "I came to find and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). This is why He also said to the Jews, "Except one be born again," not meaning, as they thought, birth from a woman, but speaking of the soul born and created anew in the likeness of God's image. (On the Incarnation)

John 3:4 *Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"* **How is it possible to be born a second time?**

A Twofold Cleansing. Gregory of Nazianzus:

We are a compound of both body and soul. The one part is visible, the other invisible. In the same way, our cleansing also is twofold, that is by water and the Spirit. The one is conceived visibly in the body, the other concurs with it invisibly and apart from the body... The one that comes to the aid of our first birth makes us new instead of old and like God instead of what we now are. It recasts us without fire and creates us anew without breaking us up. For... the virtue of baptism is to be understood as a covenant with God for a second life and a purer conversation. (On Holy Baptism, Oration)

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* **The Birth of Water and Spirit**

Born of Water and Spirit. Chrysostom:

If anyone asks how is someone born of water, I ask in return, how is someone [like Adam] born from the earth? How was the clay separated into different parts? How were all different kinds of things, like bones, sinews, arteries, veins, and so on made from one kind of material (which itself was only earth?)... For, as in the beginning, earth was the subject matter but the whole fabric of

the human body was the work of Him who molded it, so now too, though the element of water is the subject matter, the whole work is done by the Spirit of grace... Then, humanity was formed last, when the creation had been accomplished. Now, on the contrary, the new person is formed before the new creation. He is born first, and then the world is fashioned anew... Then, He gave him a garden as his place to live. Now, He has opened heaven to us... The first creation then, that is, that of Adam, was from earth; the next, that of the woman, from his rib; the next, that of Abel, from seed, yet we cannot comprehend any of these... How then shall we be able to account for the unseen generation by baptism, which is far greater than these, or how can we require arguments for that strange and marvelous birth?... The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit do everything. Let us then believe the declaration of God. That is more trustworthy than actual seeing. Sight often is in error; it is impossible that God's Word should fail. Let us then believe it. (Homilies on the Gospel of John)

Why is Water Included in Baptism? Chrysostom:

That the need of water [in baptism] is absolute and indispensable, you may learn in this way. On one occasion, when the Spirit had flown down before the water was applied, the apostle did not stand idle at this point, but, as though the water were necessary and not superfluous, observe what he says, "Can anyone forbid water so that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). Why then is water needed?... In baptism, the pledges of our covenant with God are fulfilled: burial and death, resurrection and life. And these all take place at once. For by the immersion of our heads in the water, the old person disappears and is buried as it were in a tomb below and wholly sunk forever. Then as we raise them again, the new person rises in his place. As easy as it is for us to dip and to lift our heads again, that is how easy it is for God to bury the old person and to show forth the new. And this is done three times so that you may learn that the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit fulfills all this. (Homilies on the Gospel of John)

- Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament IVa, John 1-10

St. Ambrose, the Book Concerning the Mysteries

In the Great Flood... all people died, except for Noah and his family... So, the outer man perished, while the inner one is renewed. This does not only happen in the water of Baptism, but also by repentance, when the lusts of the flesh perish, and the Spirit grows... You see, water, wood (the Lord tells Moses to make the ark out of "gopher wood" and pitch), and a dove! Do not get confused! In the water, the body is emerged to get all its sins cleansed, and all its evil buried. On the wood, the Lord has been nailed as He suffered for our sake. And in the appearance of a dove, the Holy Spirit descended, as we read in the New Testament. He who grants peace to your soul and mind and the raven is a symbol of sin that goes not to return, as righteousness is kept in you inside and outside.

REFLECTION:

The Sacrament of Baptism has the first rank among the Seven Holy Sacraments, as it is the door by which the believer enters the church and has the right to partake in the rest of the Sacraments. This lesson is meant to focus on the fact that Holy Baptism is our second birth, the way to the Kingdom. The challenge is for the servant to present the new life in Christ in such a way that a second grader would be able to understand and appreciate it. An example is provided below in the “Lesson Body,” but there are of course many other examples that illustrate our new life than simply the ones provided.

What does the new life in Christ mean? It is that interior life, the Kingdom of Heaven within, that is known to and by the spirit of each practicing believer, and that will be manifested to us fully in the New Creation. Now it is hidden within the individual, in the next life it will *be* the life. Now it is not understood by the world, in the next life there will be nothing that can stand against it. Now, there is a battle fought against every child of God, for the sole purpose of stealing this new life from him/her; in the next life, the children of God will be victorious. They will face no more battles.

PRAYER:

As You have bestowed upon us the grace of sonship through the washing of rebirth and renewing of the Holy Spirit, so make us worthy now also, that, without hypocrisy, with a pure heart, a conscience full of boldness, and unerring lips, we may entreat You, O Abba Father, So that having abandoned the vanity of the excessive words of the heathen and the haughtiness of the Jews, we may be able to offer unto You the supplication of prayer according to the decree of Your only begotten Son, which is full of salvation. *Fraction to the Father for Theophany*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Alleluia, Alleluia: Alleluia, Alleluia: Jesus Christ, the Son of God: was baptized in the Jordan.

This is He to whom is due glory: with His Good Father: and the Holy Spirit: now and forever

- Second doxology of the feast of Theophany

VOCABULARY:

Baptism, pledge

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	We are children of God
Liturgical:	Baptism
Moral:	Following God's commandments
Spiritual:	Vowing to God

CONNECTION POINT

The Holy Family stayed in Egypt for a short while and then returned back to Israel. Our Lord grew up in Israel, helping St. Joseph with his carpentry work and being obedient to His earthly parents in all things. When it was time for Him to begin His work of saving the people, the very first thing He did was get baptized.

INTRODUCTION

Show the children an icon of the baptism of our Lord and ask them to point out everything they notice about it.

LESSON BODY:

OUR BAPTISM

Who here was baptized? [Let the children raise their hands]

Ok so all of us were baptized. Do you know when you were baptized? [Have a few of the children share their thoughts]. Yes, most of us were baptized when we were babies, and some people get baptized when they are older, too. Does anybody know what happened to you when you were baptized? [Abouna or a bishop dunked you completely into the water and prayed many prayers and anointed you with Holy Oil].

Here is another question – does anybody know *why* we are baptized? [If anyone has his/her hand up, call on him/her].

There are 3 reasons:

1. We are baptized because of our Lord Jesus Christ – since He was baptized, we want to do what He did.
2. When we are baptized *we are able to become like Him*.
3. There is also one more reason we are baptized, and it may be the most special one of all: when we are baptized, we are adopted by God into His family and we become God's children. This is very special.

Think about it this way: when you were born, you happened to find yourself in a family, right? With a mother, a father and maybe even brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. When you born as a little tiny baby into a family – this counts as the first time you were born. And that day was very special and it is called your birthday and you celebrate it every year. But guess what? Christians get to have a *second* birth; that birth occurs on the day they are baptized. On that day, they become a part of God's family – with St. Mary, all the saints in Heaven, and with the other people in the church. We become new people on that day, ready to live a life with God as real members of His church.

Did you know that before you were baptized you could not take communion? We can only take communion after we are baptized, after we become part of God's family. And there are many other things that only people who are baptized, who are God's family, can do: we get to celebrate all the holidays (holy days) in the church and receive good things from God; when we do something wrong, for example, we know to come to Him, our Father, and He will forgive us.

Holy baptism is our second birth. And this day is so important to some Christians, that they remember it and celebrate it every year (like their birthday).

OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, WAS BAPTIZED

When our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was baptized in the river by St. John the Baptist, something happened. Does anyone know what it was? [Give the children time to respond]. God the Father spoke from Heaven and said, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" And the Holy Spirit came down from Heaven, in the shape of a dove, and rested on the head of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Show the icon again).

God wanted to show us something on this very special day: that we are His children when we are baptized. Because what was said to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by God the Father (This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased), the very same thing is said to each one of us when we are baptized.

What does it mean to be "well pleased" with someone? Let's say your teacher was well pleased with you – what would that look like? [Let the kids give some ideas]. What about if your parents were very happy with you, to have you as their son/daughter – what does that look like? [Tell them to think of all the things their parents do for them]. Now think about this – not your teacher, not your parents, but *God Himself* is well pleased with you simply because you are His child. Imagine all the wonderful things He can do and does do for you because you are His – He gives you the sun to make you warm every day, He sends you rain so that your food can grow, He hears you when you speak to Him and He gives you everything you need to be happy and content. He gives you joy and peace and safety whenever we ask Him. He gives us every good thing.

This is what it means to be born into God’s family – to have Him as Father and as the One who loves us more than anyone else in the whole world and who protects us and cares for us always and every single minute of the day.

THE BAPTISMAL PLEDGE

When you were baptized, you were only a baby and cannot remember what happened on that very special day. What we are going to do today is act out part of what happened on that day. There is a special pledge that the person being baptized makes on the day of his/her baptism. If you are a baby and get baptized, then your mother makes that pledge for you because babies cannot talk. Since you are old enough today, each one of you is going to recite that pledge yourselves. What the pledge is about is renouncing Satan (saying you want nothing at all to do with him and will not go anywhere near him) and coming completely to Christ and asking Him to fill all your heart. [Make sure the students know what renounce means before starting]. Are you ready? This is very serious. I need everybody to stand up and face towards the West. We are going to start by renouncing Satan (Your mothers would have been holding you in their left arms). Raise your right hand and repeat after me: *“I renounce you Satan and all your wicked deeds,”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and all your evil followers, all your power,”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and all your hated worshipping, all your evil traps”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and your army and your dominion and the rest of your trickery.”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“I renounce you, I renounce you, I renounce you.”* [Pause and let the students repeat].

Now turn and face towards the East. Now you are going to re-enact turning towards our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Raise your right hand and repeat after me: *“I confess to you O Christ my God and to all Your redeeming laws”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and enlivening service and Your life giving works.”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“I believe in one God the Father the Almighty,”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and the Life-Giving Holy Spirit,”* [Pause and let the students repeat] *“and the resurrection of the body, and the One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church, Amen.”* [Pause and let the students repeat]

Now let’s have a seat. Since we are God’s own special family, we obey Him and to do those things which are pleasing to Him: coming to church whenever we can to take communion, praying every day, reading our Bibles, and being good by following the 10 commandments (you will be learning about those this year).

Option: ask the students to find out the date of their baptism. Ask them to bring in the dates to Sunday School and make a calendar to hang up in the room. The dates can be celebrated however the servants of the class see fit: perhaps every month, those children who were baptized that month could receive a small gift of a cross. The children can be asked to find out the date *before* this lesson so that the calendar is ready for this lesson, or *during* this lesson and the calendar prepared for the next week.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: Children re-enact the baptism pledge.

Alternative plans: Create a baptism calendar for the class.

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. Why are we baptized?

A. *There are 3 reasons:*

1. *We are baptized because of our Lord Jesus Christ – since He was baptized, we want to do what He did.*
2. *When we are baptized we are able to become like Him.*
3. *There is also one more reason we are baptized, and it may be the most special one of all: when we are baptized, we are adopted by God into His family and we become God’s children.*

Q. What does it mean that Christians get to have two births (two times that they are born)?

A. *Everyone is born as a baby, into a family. The day of that birth is called a birthday. Christians get to have a second birth and that occurs on the day they are baptized and become part of God’s family. This means we get to have God as our Father and we get to have communion!*

Q. What happened when our Lord was baptized?

A. *God the Father spoke from Heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the Holy Spirit came down from Heaven, in the shape of a dove, and rested on the head of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Q. What does God want to show us by this?

A. *That we are His children when we are baptized. Because what was said to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by God the Father (This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased), the very same thing is said to each one of us when we are baptized*

Q. What did your mom do on the day you were baptized?

A. *She took a pledge, speaking for me since I was a baby.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READING

Mothers to discuss baptism with the children. It would be very exciting for the children to hear stories about the many people who were baptized, and to know that they are connected to all these people.

1. The first Christians in Jerusalem were baptized – 3,000 at once! *Acts 2:40-47*
2. People in Samaria who had previously followed sorcery and magic, and even the magician himself, were baptized when they saw how wonderful the life of a Christian was *Acts 8:4-13*
3. A very important man that worked in the palace in the country of Ethiopia asked Philip if he could be baptized *Acts 8:26-40*
4. Saul, who had previously *hated* the church, believed and was baptized! *Acts 9:1-22*
5. The jailor who had kept the apostles locked up, ended up being baptized by them *Acts 16:25-34*
6. Even the people of the Old Testament experienced a type of baptism *Exodus 14*

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 45: THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY RESURRECTION

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

John 20:1-18

Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

³Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

¹¹But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." ¹⁴Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."

¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. Cyril, Commentary on John, Book 12

INTRODUCTION

xx. 1-9 Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

3Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

This excellent and pious woman would never have endured to remain at home and leave the sepulcher, had not her fear of the law for the Sabbath, and the penalty which impended upon those who transgressed it, curbed the vehemence of her zeal, and had she not, allowing ancient custom to prevail, thought she ought to withdraw her thoughts from the object of her most earnest longings. But, when the Sabbath was already past, and the dawn of the next day was appearing, she hurried back to the spot, and then, when she saw the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, well-grounded suspicions seized her mind, and, calling to mind the ceaseless hatred of the Jews, she thought that Jesus had been carried away, accusing them of this crime in addition to their other misdeeds. While she was thus engaged, and revolving in her mind the probabilities of the case, the woman returned to the men who loved the Lord, anxious to obtain the co-operation of the most intimate of His disciples in her quest. And so deep-rooted and impregnable was her faith that she was not induced to esteem Christ less highly because of His death upon the cross, but even when He was dead called Him Lord, as she had been wont to do, thereby showing a truly God-loving spirit. When these men (I mean Peter, and John the writer of this book, for he gives himself the name of the other disciple) heard these tidings from the woman's mouth, they ran with all the speed they could, and came to the sepulcher in haste, and saw the marvel with their own eyes, being in themselves competent to testify to the event, for they were two in number, as the Law enjoined. As yet they did not meet Christ risen from the dead, but infer His Resurrection from the bundle of linen clothes, and henceforth believed that He had burst asunder the bonds of death, as Holy Writ had long ago proclaimed that He would do. When, therefore, they looked at the issues of events in the light of the prophecies which turned out true, their faith was henceforth rooted on a firm basis.

Observe that the blessed Evangelist, John, when he tells us the time of the Resurrection, says: *On the first day of the week early, while it was yet dark, cometh Mary Magdalene unto the tomb;*

while Matthew, also, wishing to indicate the time to us, says that the Resurrection took place when the night was far spent. No one, I suppose, will imagine that the inspired writers are at variance, or that they fix the time of the Resurrection differently. For any one that chooses to investigate the meaning of the indications they give of the time, will find that their accounts tally. For early dawn and late night fix the same point of time, that is, the very dead of night, so to say. There is, therefore, no discrepancy between them; for the one, taking as his starting-point the end of night, and the other the beginning, both reach the middle watch, and meet at the same point, that is, as I just now said, the dead of night.

10, 11 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping

The wise disciples, after having gathered sufficiently satisfactory evidence of the Resurrection of our Savior, being in travail, as it were, with their confirmed and unshaken faith, and by comparison of events as they had actually occurred with the prophetic utterances of Holy Scripture, went back home, and hastened, as is likely, to see their fellow-workers, to recount to them the miracle, and afterwards to consider the course to be pursued. And we shall not err if we think that they had another object in so acting. For while the passion of the Jews was at its height, and the rulers were thirsting eagerly for the blood of every man who marveled at the teaching of the Savior, and admitted His Divine and ineffable power and glory, but most of all for the blood of the holy disciples themselves, they had good reason for shrinking from encountering them, and left the sepulcher before it was quite light, as they could not have done so without risk, if seen in the daytime, the sun's rays revealing them to all beholders. We are far from saying that unmanly cowardice was the motive of their cautious flight. Rather should we suppose that the knowledge of what was expedient for them was instilled in the minds of the Saints by Christ, Who did not permit these who were destined to be lights and teachers of the world to run untimely risks. For it was necessary that the truth of His saying should be seen, which He spoke concerning them to the Father in heaven. *Holy Father, keep them, He says, in Your Name which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are One. While I was with them, I kept them in Your Name which You have given Me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition.* The disciples therefore retired, thinking they ought to await the time when they should speak openly. And this they did in obedience to the Savior's words. *For He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, as it is written, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of Him: for John indeed baptized with water, but they shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; an event which we find actually came to pass in the days of the Holy Pentecost, when there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.* For then were they invested with a spirit of the greatest courage and endurance, and, high exalted above the frailty of their fellow men, boldly encountered the madness of the Jews, and thought their plotting against them worthy of no account. The wise disciples, then, concealed themselves from the motive of expediency, as I said just now, while Mary, in her love of Christ free from all fear and not much suspecting the wrath of the Jews, sat on the watch persistently, and, affected after the manner of women, wept abundantly, and continually wiped away the tears that kept

falling from her eyes, mourning not only because the Lord was dead, but also because she thought He had been taken away from the sepulcher.

11, 12, 13 *and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"*

Observe that the tears let fall for Christ do not lose their reward, nor is it long before love for Him bears fruit; rather will His grace and rich requital follow closely in the wake of pain. For, behold, as Mary was sitting there, her cheeks bedewed with mourning for her beloved Lord Whom she had lost, the Savior vouchsafed unto her the knowledge of the mystery concerning Him, by the mouth of holy angels. For she saw angels in bright apparel, the garments wherewith they were clad signifying to her the perfect beauty of angelic purity, who interrupted her lamentations, and said unto her, *Woman, why are you weeping?* It was not, indeed, that they desired to learn the reason why her tears were falling, for they would have known it even had the woman not told it them, and the very circumstances themselves were sufficient to indicate it. Rather do they bid her cease from weeping, as there was no occasion for tears, and as she had made what was a subject for rejoicing a cause of grief. Why, indeed, say they, when death has been subdued, and corruption lost its power, and our Savior Christ has therefore risen again, and made a new pathway for the dead back to incorruption and to life, why dost thou, O woman, mistake the time, and why art thou so distraught by bitter pangs of woe, when the issue of events rather calls you to rejoice? For, in truth, you should be glad, and of good cheer. *Why, then, do you weep,* and thus in some sort detract from the honor due unto a festival?

The angels appeared *sitting at the head and at the feet where the Body of Jesus had lain*; thereby, as it were, signifying to the woman, who thought that the Lord had been taken away, that no one could have done despite unto the holy Body while angels kept watch and holy powers encompassed the Temple of God, for they knew their Lord. One may raise the question, not unreasonably, how it was that the blessed angels said nothing to the holy disciples, and did not even appear unto them, but were both seen by the woman and also spoke unto her. We reply, then, that it was the object of the Savior Christ to instill into the minds of those who loved Him the perfect knowledge of the mystery concerning Him; but that this perfect knowledge was in different ways given unto them, and adapted to the requirements of those who stood in need of it. The course of events itself, as compared with the expectations raised in Holy Writ, sufficed to give the holy disciples adequate knowledge, and begat in them a confidence that did not admit of doubt. For they went home trusting in the Holy Scriptures, and it would have been superfluous for those, whose faith was thus firmly grounded, to be taught by the mouth of the holy angels; but it was very necessary to the woman, who knew not the Holy and Divine Scripture, and by no other means could apprehend the deep mystery of the Resurrection.

13, 14 *She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.*

The woman, or rather all womankind, is slow of understanding. For she does not understand the hidden meaning of what met her gaze, but rather announces it as the cause of her grief. But as she ceased not to call Christ Lord, and thereby signified her love towards Him, she is justly permitted to enjoy the sight of the object of her desire. For she beholds Jesus, though she did not think Him to be at her side; and why? Either her ignorance was caused by our Savior Christ still concealing Himself by His Divine power, and not allowing Himself very easily to be recognized by the eye of the beholder; or, as it was still early in the morning, she could not readily distinguish what was before her eyes, as night somehow prevented her from so doing, and scarcely revealed the Figure of Him Who was drawing nigh. Therefore, also, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the Song of Songs, makes mention of His walk on this night, and the moisture of the morning dew, in the words: *For My Head is filled with dew, and My Locks with the drops of the night.*

15 *Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."*

As it was still dark, and the night had not yet wholly passed away, she sees Jesus, Who stood near her, but dimly, and knows not Who He is, being unable to distinguish the Form of His Body or His Features, but hears Him say, *Woman, why are you weeping?* The Savior's words are indeed words of courtesy, still such as to arouse in her the suspicion that they were most like the words of one of the gardeners. It follows, too, that the Lord, when He thus spoke, was not in point of fact asking her the reason for her weeping, nor desirous to learn of whom she was in search; but was rather anxious to stop her lamentations, just as, indeed, were the two blessed angels, for it was in their company that He spoke. *Why, then, do you weep, O woman?* He says; *Whom are you seeking?* That is to say, wipe away your tears, as you have the object of your search. I, He says, am He Who is the occasion of your mourning, as having been dead, and as having suffered a dreadful fate, and as having also been taken away out of the tomb. But, as I am alive and am here, give up your lamentations, and contrariwise be of good cheer. He asked the question, then, wishing to end her sorrow. For it was meet that the Lord should be our restorer in this way also. For by Adam's transgression, as in the firstfruits of the race, the sentence went forth to the whole world: *Dust you are, and to dust you shall return;* and to the woman in special: *In sorrow you shall bring forth children.* To be rich in sorrow, then, as by way of a penalty, was the fate of woman. It was, therefore, necessary that by the mouth of Him That had passed sentence of condemnation, the burden of that ancient curse should be removed, our Savior Christ now wiping away the tears from the eyes of the woman, or rather of all womankind, as in Mary the firstfruits. For she, first of women, being offended at the death of the Savior, and grieving thereat, was thought worthy to hear the voice that cut short her weeping; the power of the word, in fact, extending also to the whole race of women, if indeed they be pained by the outrages against Christ, and honor faith in Him, and almost fall to quoting that saying in the Psalms: *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate You? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against You? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

While, however, our Lord Jesus Christ says this to put a stop to her weeping, she, supposing the speaker to be one of the gardeners, undertook very readily to transfer the remains to another place, if only it were shown her where he had laid Him. For, not yet apprehending the great mystery of the Resurrection, she was disturbed by suspicions of this kind. For the feminine mind is slow-witted and ill-prepared to readily comprehend even what is not very difficult, far less miracles which baffle description.

16 *Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).*

He invites the recognition of the woman, whose mind had already been enlightened, and, allowing her to gaze upon Him without let or hindrance (for indeed she loved Him ardently), He almost rebukes her for having been so slow to perceive that He was Christ, for there is some such implied meaning in His calling her by name. She understood at once, and at the sight of Him casts aside the suspicions she felt at first, and offers Him the usual tribute of respect, calling Him *Rabboni*, that is to say, *Master*; and, with her mind full of a heavenly joy, ran eagerly to touch the holy Body, and to gain blessing therefrom.

17 *Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father*

The meaning of this saying is not easily understood by the vulgar, for a mystery underlies it; but we must probe it for our advantage. For the Lord will vouchsafe unto us the knowledge of His own Words. For He repulses the woman as she was running up to Him, and though she longed to embrace His Feet, He suffered her not; and, in explanation of His reason for so doing, said: *For I have not yet ascended to My Father*. We must inquire into the meaning of this saying. For what if He were not yet ascended to His Father? How could this reason suffice to render it improper for those that loved Him to touch His holy Body? Would it not be blameworthy for any one to imagine that the Lord shrank from the pollution of the touch, and thus spoke that He might be pure when He ascended to the Father in heaven? Would not such a man stand convicted of great folly and madness? For the Nature of God can never be polluted. For just as the light of the sun's ray, when it strikes upon a dunghill or any other earthly impurities, suffers no stain----for it remains as it is, that is, undefiled, and partakes in no degree of the ill odor of the objects that it encounters----even so the all-holy Nature of God can never admit of the blemish of defilement. What, then, is the reason why Mary was prevented from touching Him, when she drew near and yearned so to do? What can the Lord mean when He says: *For I have not yet ascended to My Father*? We must investigate this according to the best of our ability. We say, therefore, that the reasons for our Savior's sojourn amongst us were manifold and diverse, but this one the principal of all, which is indicated in His own words: *For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*.

Therefore, before the saving Cross and the Resurrection from the dead, while as yet His providential scheme had not received its appropriate fulfillment, He mingled both with the just and the unjust, and ate with publicans and sinners, and allowed any that so willed to come to Him and touch His holy Body, that He might sanctify all men and call them to a knowledge of the truth, and might bring back to health those who were diseased and enfeebled by the constant practice

of sin. Therefore also, in another place, He said unto them: *They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick.* Therefore, before His Resurrection from the dead, He had intercourse indiscriminately with the righteous and with sinners, and never frightened away any that came unto Him. Moreover, when He was once reclining at the house of a Pharisee, a woman came in unto Him weeping, *who was a sinner in the city*, as is written, and let down her wanton locks, scarcely released from the service of her past sins, and wiped His Feet therewith; and we see that He did not stop her. Again, when He was on His way to bring back to life the daughter of the leader of the Synagogue, once more a woman came near unto Him, who had *an issue of blood*, and *touched the border of His garment*; and we find that He was in nowise offended, but rather vouchsafed unto her the comforting assurance: *Daughter, your faith has made you whole; go in peace.* But at that time, by His Providence, men who were still unclean, and who were polluted both in mind and body, were suffered without let or hindrance to touch the holy Flesh Itself of our Savior Christ, and to gain every blessing thereby; but when, after having completed the scheme of our redemption, He had both suffered the Cross itself, and death thereon, and had risen again to life, and shown that His Nature was superior to death, henceforward, instead of granting them a ready permission, He hinders those who come to Him from touching the very Flesh of His holy Body; thereby giving us a type of the holy Churches, and the mystery concerning Himself, just as also the Law given by the all-wise Moses itself did, when it represented the slaughter of the lamb as a figure of Christ; for *no uncircumcised person*, said the Law, *shall eat thereof*, meaning by uncircumcised impure---and humanity may justly be deemed impure in its own nature. For what is the nature of man, as compared with God's inherent purity? We may not, therefore, while we remain uncircumcised, that is, impure, touch the holy Body, but only when we have been made pure by the true circumcision of the Spirit. For *circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit*, as Paul says. And we cannot be spiritually circumcised if the Holy Spirit hath not taken up His abode in us by faith and Holy Baptism. Surely, therefore, it was meet that Mary should for a while be restrained from touching His sacred Body, as she had not yet received the Spirit. For even though Christ was risen from the dead, still the Spirit had not yet been given to humanity by the Father through Him. For when He ascended to God the Father, He sent the Spirit down to us; wherefore also He said: *It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.* As, therefore, the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent down unto us, for He had not yet ascended to the Father, He repulses Mary as not yet having received the Spirit, saying: *Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father*; that is to say, I have not yet sent down unto you the Holy Spirit. Hence the type is applicable to the Churches. Therefore, also, we drive away from the Holy Table those who are indeed convinced of the Godhead of Christ, and have already made profession of faith, that is, those who are already catechumens, when they have not as yet been enriched with the Holy Spirit. For He does not dwell in those who have not received Baptism. But when they have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, then indeed there is nothing to hinder them from touching Our Savior Christ. Therefore, also, to those who wish to partake of the blessed Eucharist, the ministers of Divine mysteries say, "Holy things to the holy," teaching that participation in holy things is the due reward of those who are sanctified in the Spirit.

CHAPTER I. That the Son is by Nature God, even though we find Him calling the Father His God.

xx. 17. *But go unto My brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.*

For reasons which we have given, Christ suffers not Mary to touch Him, though, in her love of God, she greatly yearned for this boon; but still rewards her for her watchful care, and doubly requites her for her passionate faith and love for Him, showing that those who are diligent in His service meet with a recompense. And, what was even yet more glorious, she achieved the deliverance of woman from the frailties of old; for in her first----I mean in Mary----all womankind, so to speak, are crowned with a double honor. For though at first she thus lamented, and made Christ an occasion for weeping, she turned her mourning into joy when she was told to forbear from tears by Him, Who, by His own sentence of old, had made woman easy to be overcome by the attacks of sorrow. For God had said to the woman: *In sorrow shall you bring forth children*; but just as He once made her subject unto sorrow in Paradise, when she hearkened to the voice of the serpent, and ministered to the devil's wiles, so now again in a garden He bids her refrain from weeping. Releasing her from that curse which bound her unto sorrow, He bids her be the first messenger of tidings of great joy, and proclaim to the disciples His journey heavenward; that as the first woman, the mother of all mankind, was condemned for listening to the devil's voice, and through her the whole race of women, so also this woman, in that she had hearkened to our Savior's words, and announced tidings fraught with life eternal, might deliver the entire race of women from the charge of old. The Lord, therefore, grants unto Mary that, besides being delivered from tears, and from a heart ever prone to sorrow, her feet also should be *beautiful*. For, as the Prophet exclaims: *How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!* while the feet of that woman of old time were not *beautiful*, for no good tidings did she bring when she enticed our forefather to transgress the Divine command. That Mary is worthy our admiration we may infer, from the fact that she was deemed worthy of mention in prophecy. For what said the Prophet concerning her, and the women with her, who announced unto the holy disciples the Resurrection of the Savior? *Ye women, who come from the sight, come hither; for it is a people that hath not understanding.* For this Divine prophecy bids these women, true lovers of Christ, come, as it were, with quickened steps, that they may tell what they themselves have seen, and condemns the insensibility of the Jews in that they laughed to scorn the words of our Savior Christ Himself concerning the Resurrection.

And though there were also other women there (for this the other Evangelists are pleased to record), and the wise John made mention only of Mary, we shall yet find no discrepancy in the accounts of these holy men. For it is probable that John made mention only of Mary Magdalene, because her love for Christ was more impassioned, and she outran the others, so that she first saw the tomb, and was in the garden, and visited every place that was nigh unto the sepulcher, to search for the Body; for she thought, in fact, that the Lord had been taken away. For results are always ascribed to those who take the lead in counsel and action, though there may be others who co-operate in both.

Therefore, to her honor and glory and perpetual renown, the Savior vouchsafed unto Mary the duty of proclaiming to the brethren the tidings contained in His words: *I ascend unto My Father*

and your Father, and My God and your God; and do thou for thy part accept this great and profound mystery, not suffering your heart to vault over the measure of the truth of the Divine doctrines. Observe how the Only-begotten Word of God came among us, that we also might be even as He is, so far as is possible for our nature to attain thereto, and so far as relates unto our new creation by grace. For He humbled Himself that He might exalt that which was by nature lowly to His own high station; and wore the form of a servant, though He was by Nature Lord and Son of God, that He might uplift that which was by nature enslaved to the dignity of Sonship, in conformity with His own Likeness, and in His Image. How, and in what sense, then, He, becoming one of us as Man, in order that we also might be like Him, that is, Gods and Sons, receives our attributes into Himself, and gives back unto us His own, you may well be anxious to inquire. I will explain, then, as far as I am able: In the first place, then, though we are servants by rank and nature (for creatures are subject to their Creator), He calls us His brethren, and designates God the common Father of Himself and us; and, making humanity His own, by taking our likeness upon Him, He calls our God His God, though He is His Son by Nature; that, as we mount up to His exceeding great dignity of station by likeness to Him (for it is not because we are by nature sons of God that we are so called, for He cries in our hearts by His own Spirit, *Abba, Father*), so also He, since He took our form----for He became Man, according to the Scriptures----might have God for His God, though He was truly God by Nature, and proceeded from Him. Be not, therefore, offended, though you hear Him calling God His God, but rather contemplate His words in a teachable spirit, and attentively consider their true meaning. For He says that God is both His Father and our God; and both sayings are true. For, in very truth, the God of the universe is Christ's Father, but not ours by nature; but rather our God as our Creator and Sovereign Lord. But the Son, as it were, blending Himself with us, vouchsafes to our nature the dignity that is in a special and peculiar sense His own, calling Him That begat Him the common Father of us all; while, on the other hand, He receives into Himself, by taking upon Him our likeness, that which belonged to our nature. For He calls His Father His God, being unwilling, through His inherent love and mercy toward mankind, to dishonor our likeness that He had taken upon Himself. If, then, you choose in ignorance to cavil at this saying, and it seem intolerable to you that the Lord should say that God the Father was His God, you will then, in your perversity, be bringing a charge against the scheme for your own redemption; and when you ought to be offering up thanksgiving you will be dishonoring your Benefactor, and be foolishly objecting to the manner in which He manifested His love towards you. For if He humbled Himself, *despising shame*, and became a Man for your sake, on your head is the charge of humiliation, and to Him Who chose to undergo this for your sake, exceeding great is the honor due. And I am amazed that you have ears merely for the eclipse of glory (for He humbled Himself for our sake), and consider not its restoration, and, regarding only the degradation, reflect not upon the exaltation. For how was He humiliated, if you do not regard Him as perfect, as being God? And in what sense was He degraded, if you do not take into account the lofty attributes of His ineffable Nature? Therefore, when He was perfect and all-sufficient as God, He humbled Himself for your sake, transforming Himself to your likeness; and though He was high exalted as the Son of God, and of the very Essence of the Father, He degraded Himself, being mulcted of the attributes of Divine glory, so far as His Nature admitted. As therefore, now, He is at the same time God and Man, being high exalted because of His parentage (for He is God of God and truly Begotten of His Father), and also made lowly for our sake (for He became Man for us); be

of a tranquil mind when you hear Him saying: *I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.* For it was very meet and right that, as being by Nature God and Son of God, He should call Him That begat Him His Father; and that, as being Man, even as we are men. He should call God His God.

18 *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.*

That race which is specially subject to weakness----I mean the race of women----is restored by the loving-kindness of our Savior, Who, in a manner, rolled up in one the source and origin of our infirmities, and ameliorated them for the future. For Mary announced that she had seen the Lord, Who had escaped from the bonds of death, and had heard His Voice, and brought to the disciples the words of life, and the Firstfruits of the Divine Gospel.

LESSON PREPARATION

SONG:

“Very Early Sunday Morning”

VOCABULARY:

Mary Magdalene, St. Peter, St. John, crucifixion, resurrected, ascend

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ has risen
Liturgical:	We pray "Our Father" after the fraction
Moral:	Obedience
Spiritual:	Prayer in the name of Christ

LESSON BODY:

VERY EARLY SUNDAY MORNING

After our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, all the people who followed Him were very sad and scared. They didn't know what was going to happen next. Would they ever see their Lord again? Would the people who crucified their Lord come and hurt them? They didn't really know what to do; they didn't know if they were in danger.

The 11 disciples spent the time together, hiding; they were trying to do what our Lord had told them and to wait. They also wanted to stay out of trouble. The women, on the other hand, did not feel like they were in danger, and as soon as they could, they ran to the tomb of Christ to anoint His holy body with special spices and to be with Him. (You will remember, after our Lord was taken down from the Cross, they laid Him in a tomb which was like a small cave. It was near the place where He had been crucified). Mary Magdalene was one of those women and she arrived at the tomb first. She wanted to see her Lord, wanted to see where they had laid Him in the tomb, and she wanted to pray. She did not want to be separated from Him even for another minute. It was Sunday, very early in the morning, while everyone else was still sleeping. It was not even light yet, but still dark. Have you ever been awake that early, before the sun? If you ever do wake up that early, and it is still dark which means that sun did not wake up yet, then you will know what time it was when St. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. When she was on her way to the tomb, she was wondering about who would be able to roll away the huge stone that was sealing the door of the tomb. "I will never be able to move it by myself," she was saying to herself. Can you imagine how she was feeling? She had just seen her Lord crucified, and die, and she was sad; all she wanted to do was to see Him again.

But when she arrived to the tomb, do you know what she saw? She saw that the stone, the big stone she had been very worried about, had been taken away from the tomb. What did it mean! Did they come and take Him away and put Him somewhere she could not find Him? She didn't know what to do. She ran and found St. Peter and St. John (two of the disciples) and told them, "*They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.*" St. Peter and St. John ran to the tomb. When they arrived there, they looked inside. *And what they saw told them that their Lord had resurrected*, had risen from the dead. They saw the linen cloths that our Lord had been wrapped in, and they saw the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. St. John, who had seen his Lord fold handkerchiefs before, realized that this was the special way the Lord folded handkerchiefs and that it could only have been Himself that did it. Our Lord had left St. John a special sign – what could it mean? That He was no longer dead – He was risen from the dead! He was alive!

St. Peter and St. John then went to their own homes; they wanted to think about what they had just seen and to pray. St. Mary Magdalene, however, stayed at the tomb. She stood outside, crying, and as she was crying, she stooped down to look inside the tomb (the entrance into the tomb was low and a grownup would have to bend over to look inside or to go inside). And she saw two angels wearing white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of

Jesus had lain. [Draw a picture to illustrate this point]. Then the angels said to her, “Woman, why are you crying?” and she said to them, “*Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.*” Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Maybe she didn’t know because it was still dark and she could not recognize Him or maybe she did not know because He had changed and did not look the same as He had when she knew Him. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you seeking?” St. Mary Magdalene, thinking that He was the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Can you imagine this?! She is asking that Man where Jesus is and crying because she cannot find Him, and the One speaking to her is Jesus! Jesus then said to her, “Mary!” And she recognized Him! She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which means, “teacher”). And she ran to Him. Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’” And St. Mary went to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord and told them what He had told her to say.

ADOPTION

This second to last sentence is the most important part of the whole story. Our Lord Jesus Christ told St. Mary Magdalene that God was His Father *and* their Father. Our Lord was telling her that now, after His crucifixion and resurrection, God is now their Father – and the Father of everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. What our Lord Jesus Christ did was make God our Father – He gave Himself up for us on the Cross, and when He resurrected, we were accepted to God the Father as His children.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the most Honored of all because of what He did. God the Father honors Him and put Him above everyone and everything else in the entire creation – the universe and the heavens; and we honor Him above all else in our lives because He gave us our life back and gave us the way to go back to God, our Father. And because He gave to us to be able to call God “Father.” No one else can do this, except for the one who belongs to Jesus Christ.

ST. MARY MAGDALENE: THE FIRST TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS

St. Mary Magdalene is very special in the Church: she was the first one to see our Lord in His resurrection, in His glorious body. And she preached to the disciples – the disciples, who then went and preached to the whole world. Our Lord granted her this honor because of her love for Him. Our Lord Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to those who love Him and who are searching for Him.

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 46: THE HOLY FIFTY DAYS – LESSON I: ST. THOMAS BELIEVES

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

John 20:19-31

¹⁹Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²²And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. Cyril, Commentary on John, Book 12

24, 25 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I

shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe.

The greatest marvels are always attended by incredulity, and any action which seems to exceed the measure of probability is ill-received by those who hear of it. But the sight of the eyes succeeds in banishing these doubts, and, as it were, compels a man by force to assent to the evidence before him. This was the state of mind of the wise Thomas, who did not readily accept the true testimony of the other disciples to our Savior's Resurrection, although, according to the Mosaic Law, in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established. I think, however, that it was not so much that the disciple discredited what was told him, but rather that he was distracted with the utmost grief, because he had not been thought worthy to see our Savior with his own eyes. For he, perhaps, thought that he would never receive that blessing. He knew that the Lord was by Nature Life, and that He was able to escape death itself, and to destroy the power of corruption; for surely He "Who released others from its trammels could deliver His own Flesh. In his exceeding great joy he affected incredulity, and though he well-nigh leapt in his ecstasy of delight, he longed to see Him before his very sight, and to be perfectly satisfied that He had risen again to life according to His promise. For our Savior said: *Children, a little while and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me, and your heart shall rejoice.* I think that the disciple's want of faith was extremely opportune and well-timed, in order that, through the satisfaction of his mind, we also who come after him might be unshaken in our faith that the very Body that hung upon the Cross and suffered death was quickened by the Father through the Son. Therefore, also, Paul says: *Because if you shall say with thy mouth, Jesus is Lord, and shall believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.* For since it was not the nature of flesh itself which brought back life, but the deed was rather accomplished by the working of the ineffable Nature of God, in which naturally abides a quickening power, the Father through the Son manifested His power upon the Temple of Christ's Body; not as though the Word was powerless to raise His own Body, but because the Father doeth whatsoever He doeth through the Son, for He is His Power, and whatsoever the Son brings to effect proceeds also of a surety from the Father. We, therefore, are taught, through the slight want of faith shown by the blessed Thomas, that the mystery of the Resurrection is effected upon our earthly bodies, and in Christ as the Firstfruits of the race; and that He was no phantom or ghost, fashioned in human shape, and simulating the features of humanity, nor yet, as others have foolishly surmised, a spiritual body that is compounded of a subtle and ethereal substance different from the flesh. For some attach this meaning to the expression "spiritual body." For since all our expectation and the significance of our irrefutable faith, after the confession of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, centers in the mystery concerning the flesh, the blessed Evangelist has very pertinently put this saying of Thomas side by side with the summary of what preceded. For observe that Thomas does not desire simply to see the Lord, but looks for the marks of the nails, that is, the wounds upon His Body. For he affirmed that then, indeed, he would believe and agree with the rest that Christ had indeed risen again, and risen again in the flesh. For that which is dead may rightly be said to return to life, and the Resurrection surely was concerned with that which was subject unto death.

26, 27 *And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see My Hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My Side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

Christ appeared once more unto His disciples miraculously by His Divine power. For He did not, like unto us, bid them open the doors for Him to enter in, but disdainingly, as it were, the natural sequence of events, passed within the doors, and unexpectedly appeared in the middle of the room, presenting the same kind of miracle before the sight of the blessed Thomas as He had performed on the former occasion. For he that was most deficient in faith had need of healing medicine. He made use of the greeting so often on His Lips, and solemnly gave them the blessed assurance of peace, as a pattern unto us, as we have said before. One may well be amazed at the minuteness of detail shown in this passage. For such was the extreme accuracy that the compiler of this book took pains to observe, that he is not content with simply saying that Christ manifested Himself to the holy disciples, but explains that it was after eight days, and that they were gathered together. For what else can their being all brought together in one house mean? We say this to point out the diligent care that the Apostle so admirably displays, and because Christ hereby has made clear unto us the occasion of our assembling, and gathering ourselves together on His account. For He visits, and in some sort dwells with, those assembled together for His sake, especially on the eighth day, that is, the Lord's day. Let us reckon it up, if you so please: On the one occasion He appeared unto the other disciples; on the other, He manifested Himself to them, when Thomas was also present. It is written in the preceding passage: *When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut, He stood in the midst.* Note, that it was on the first day of the week, that is, the Lord's day, when the disciples were gathered together, that He was seen of them, and that likewise also He appeared unto them on the eighth day following. And we must not, because he says eight days after, suppose that he means the ninth day, but that when he says this he includes the eighth day itself, on which He appeared, in the number given.

With good reason, then, are we accustomed to have sacred meetings in churches on the eighth day. And, to adopt the language of allegory, as the idea necessarily demands, we indeed close the doors, but yet Christ visits us and appears unto us all, both invisibly and also visibly; invisibly as God, but also visibly in the Body. He suffers us to touch His holy Flesh, and gives us thereof. For through the grace of God we are admitted to partake of the blessed Eucharist, receiving Christ into our hands, to the intent that we may firmly believe that He did in truth raise up the Temple of His Body. For that the partaking of the blessed Eucharist is a confession of the Resurrection of Christ is clearly proved by His own Words, which He spake when He Himself performed the type of the mystery; for He brake bread, as it is written, and gave it to them, saying: *This is My Body, which is given for you unto remission of sins: this do in remembrance of Me.* Participation, then, in the Divine mysteries, in addition to filling us with Divine blessedness, is a true confession and memorial of Christ's dying and rising again for us and for our sake. Let us, therefore, after touching Christ's Body, shrink back from unbelief in Him as utter ruin, and rather be found well grounded in the full assurance of faith.

Let the attentive reader call to mind that our Lord repulsed Mary Magdalene from touching Him, saying plainly: *Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father*. Yet He allows Thomas to touch His Side, and to feel with his fingers *the print of the nails*. We have already explained why our Lord did this, but none the less will we call back to mind the reason, briefly recapitulating what we said. For not yet had the time arrived for Mary to touch Him, because she had not yet been sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit; for while Christ was yet in our midst, and had not yet ascended to the Father in heaven, it was impossible to see the descent of the Comforter fully accomplished among men. It was meet, however, for Thomas to touch Him, as he, as well as the rest, had been enriched with the Spirit. For, as we said before, he was not on account of his absence without his share in the Spirit. For the munificence of the Giver reached unto him also, when the boon was granted to the entire company of the holy disciples.

I think we ought also to investigate the following question. Thomas felt our Savior's Side, and found the wounds made by the soldier's spear, and saw the *print of the nails*. Then how was it, someone may inquire, that the marks of corruption were apparent in an incorruptible Body? For the abiding trace of the holes bored through the Hands and Side, and the marks of wounds and punctures made by steel, affords proof of physical corruption, though the true and incontrovertible fact that Christ's Body was transformed into incorruption points to a necessary discarding of all the results of corruption, together with corruption itself. For will any man who is lame, at the Resurrection have a maimed foot or limb? And if any man have lost the sight of his eyes in this life, will he be raised again blind? How then, someone may say, can we have shaken off the yoke of corruption, if its results still remain and rule over our members? It is essential, I think, to inquire into this question; and this we say, with reference to the difficulties raised by the passage. We are as far as possible anxious to assent to the contention that at the time of the resurrection there will be no remnant of adventitious corruption left in us, but, as the wise Paul said concerning this body of ours, that which *is sown in weakness is raised in power*, and that which *is sown in dishonor is raised in glory*. And what can we expect the resurrection of this body in power and glory to be, if it does not imply that it will cast off all the weakness and dishonor of corruption and disease, and return to its original purity? For the human body was not made for death and corruption. But, inasmuch as Thomas required this proof for his perfect satisfaction, our Lord Jesus Christ, of necessity, therefore, in order to leave no excuse for our want of faith, appears even as he sought to see Him; for even when He ascended into heaven itself, and made known the meaning of the mystery concerning Himself to the rulers, principalities, and powers above, and to those who commanded the legions of angels, He appeared also unto them in this same guise that they might believe that in very truth the Word That was of the Father, and in the Father, became Man for our sake, and that they might know that such was His care for His creatures that He died for our salvation. And, in order to make the meaning of my explanation clearer to my hearers, I will add the very words spoken by the mouth of Isaiah on this subject. He saith: *Who is This That cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra?* They who raise this shout, I mean the cry: *Who is This That cometh from Edom?* that is, from the earth, are angels and rational powers, for they are marvelling at the Lord ascending into heaven. And, seeing Him almost, as it were, dyed in His own Blood, they say unto Him, not yet apprehending the mystery: *Why is Thy apparel red, and why are Thy garments like him that treads in the wine-vats?* For they compare the colour of the

blood to new wine, lately trodden in the press. And what said Christ unto them? First, in order that He may be known to be the living God, He said: *I speak righteousness*; using the word *speak*, instead of "teach." And most assuredly. He that teaches righteousness must be a Lawgiver, and if a Lawgiver, surely also God. Then say the angels unto Him, as Christ shows them the marks of the nails: *What are these wounds in Thy Hands?* and the Lord answered: *Those with which I was wounded in the house of My beloved.* For Israel was the house that the Lord loved, and Israel smote Him with nails and spear. For the outrages of the soldiers may justly be ascribed unto the Jews, for they brought the Lord to His death. Therefore, when He wished to satisfy the holy angels that He was, in fact, a Man, and that He had undergone the Cross for us, and that He was risen again to life from the dead, Christ was not content with mere words, but showed unto them the marks of His suffering. What is there to astonish us in the fact, that when He desired to rid the blessed Thomas of his unbelief He showed the print of the nails, appearing unto him, contrary to expectation, for the advantage of all men, and to the intent that we might believe without question that the mystery of the Resurrection was actually accomplished, no other body being raised but that which suffered death?

28 Thomas answered Him, and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.

He that had shortly before been slack in the duty of faith was now eager to profess it. and in a short time his fault was wholly cured. For after an interval of only eight days the hindrances to his faith were removed by Christ, Who showed unto him the print of the nails and His wounded Side. But, perhaps, someone will ask the question: "Tell me why did the minds of the holy disciples carry out so rigid an inquiry, and so careful a scrutiny? For would not the sight of the Lord's Body, the features of His Face, and the measure of His Stature, have sufficed to prove that He had indeed risen from the dead, and to secure His recognition?" What do we reply? The inspired disciples were not free from doubt, although they had seen the Lord. For. they thought that He was not in very truth the same as He Who of old had lived and dwelt among them, and had hung upon the Cross, but rather that He was a Spirit, cunningly fashioned like unto our Saviour's Image, and simulating the features of the form which they knew. For they fell into this delusion not without some apparent excuse, as He miraculously entered when the doors were closed; in spite of the fact that a body of coarse earthy mould requires a hole through which it can pass, and necessitates the aperture of the door to correspond in width with the size of the body. For this cause our Lord Jesus Christ, greatly to our profit, laid bare His Side to Thomas, and exposed the wounds on His Person, through his agency giving adequate proof to all. For though of Thomas alone is recorded the saying: *Except I shall put my hands and see the prints of the nails, and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe*, yet was the charge of lack of faith common to them all; and we shall find that the minds of the other disciples were not free from perplexity, though they said unto the holy Thomas: *We have seen the Lord.* And that what we say does not err from the truth we may easily perceive by what the Divine Luke tells us: As they spoke these things, He stood in the midst of them, that is, of course, Christ, *and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My Hands and My Feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having. And when He had said this, He showed them His Hands and His Feet. And while they still disbelieved for*

joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. You see how the thought of unbelief is found lurking, not in the blessed Thomas alone, but that the minds of the other disciples were afflicted with a kindred disease. For, lo and behold! seeing that their faith wavered even after the sight of the wounds upon the Cross, He thought it right to convince them by another act, in nowise suited to a spirit, but specially appropriate to earthly bodies and the nature of flesh. For He ate the fish that was brought unto Him, or the portion of one. For when no mark at all of corruption any longer remained after the Resurrection of His holy Flesh, because He lived again to incorruption, and when it was incredible that His Body stood in need of food as heretofore, He yet showed unto them the print of the nails, and did not refuse to partake of food, in order that He might establish the great mystery of the Resurrection, and cause faith in it to spring up in the souls of us all. He does acts wholly alien to the nature of spirits. For how, and in what way, could the prints of nails, and the traces of wounds, and participation in bodily food, be found to exist in a naked spirit unconnected with flesh, to which all these things are suitable by the law of its being and the conditions under which it exists? In order, then, that none might think that Christ rose again a mere spirit, or an impalpable body, shadowy and ethereal, to which some give the name of spiritual, but that the selfsame body that was *sown in corruption*, as Paul said, might be believed to have risen again, He openly did acts suitable to a palpable human form. What we said at first, however, namely, that the blessed disciple did not so much lack faith owing to infirmity of judgment, but rather was affected in this way by excess of joy, will not be wide of the mark. For we have heard the saying of the blessed Luke concerning all the others: *And while they disbelieved for joy and wondered.* It was wonder, therefore, that made the disciples slow to be convinced. But as henceforward there was no excuse for unbelief, as they saw with their own eyes, the blessed Thomas accordingly unflinchingly confessed his faith in Him, saying: *My Lord and my God.* For we must all confess that it follows of a surety that He That is Lord by Nature and Ruler over all is also God, just as also universal dominion and the glory of sovereignty is clearly seen to appertain to the living God.

Observe, too, that when he says *My Lord and my God*, he uses the article to show that there was One Lord and One God. For he does not say without the qualification of the article, *My Lord and my God*, to prevent anyone from imagining that he called Him Lord or God as he might have done one of ourselves or of the holy angels. For *there are gods many and lords many*, in this sense, in *heaven and on earth*, as the wise Paul has taught us; but rather he recognizes Him as, in a special sense, the One Lord and God, as begotten of the Father, Who is by Nature Lord and God, when he says, *My Lord and my God*; and, what is a still greater indication of the truth, the Savior heard His disciple saying this, and saw that he rested in the firm conviction that He was, in fact, the Lord and God, and thought it not right to rebuke him. Christ, then, approved his faith, and with justice. And you may easily see that what I say is true. For to him that was possessed of this faith He says, at the end of the Gospel, as unto the rest: *Go ye and make disciples of all the nations.* And if He bids him who was thus minded teach all nations, and appointed him to instruct the world in His mysteries, He wishes us to have a like faith. For He is, in fact, Lord and God by Nature, even when Incarnate Man. For observe that the disciple, when he had touched His Hands, and Feet, and Side, made unto Him this confession of faith, not severing Emmanuel into a duality of Sons, but

recognizing Him as one and the same in the Flesh, for Jesus Christ is One Lord, according to the Scripture.

29 Jesus said unto him, Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

This saying of the Savior is very pertinent and we may derive the greatest profit therefrom. For hereby He showed His great care for our souls; for He is good, and *wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth*, according to the Scripture. What is here said may not unlikely excite surprise. It was, indeed, necessary for Him to be long-suffering, as was His wont, with Thomas, who uttered that saying, and also with the other disciples with him, who thought that He was a spirit or apparition; and also to exhibit, as He very readily did for universal satisfaction, the print of the nails and His pierced Side; and also, contrary to use and need, to partake of food, that no plea for their unbelief might be left to those who sought to gain the benefits of His death. But it was also essential to have regard to the security of our faith. It was necessary also to have another end in view, namely, that those who should come at the last times should not easily be drawn into unbelief. For it was likely that some should err from the straight path, and from ignorance, practicing a spurious kind of caution, refuse to accept the resurrection of the dead, and put themselves forward, and say unto us, like that unbelieving disciple: *Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe.* What sufficient means of satisfying them would there have been, Christ being no longer on earth but having ascended into heaven? And would they not have been, at times, thought to be justified in thus speaking, when they appeared to be imitating therein the disciple of the Savior, and, considering it a noble thing not to believe off-hand, but rather to require more for their complete assurance, claimed for themselves the sight that was shown to the holy disciples? Christ, therefore, restrains men from such an inclination, and keeps them from falling. For being truly God, He knew well the malicious designs of the devil and his practice to deceive. And, therefore, He declares that blessed are they who believe without seeing, for they are surely worthy of admiration. And why? Because unquestioning belief is due to what lies before our eyes, for there is nothing at all to raise doubt in us. But if a man accept what he has not seen, and believe that to be true which the words of his instructor in mysteries have brought to his ears, then he honors with praiseworthy faith Him that is preached. Blessed, therefore, shall be the lot of every man that believeth through the voice of the holy Apostles, *which were eye-witnesses of Christ's actions, and ministers of the Word*, as Luke says. To them must we hearken if we are enamored of life eternal, and cherish in our hearts the desire to abide in the mansions above.

LESSON PREPARATION:

VOCABULARY:

St. Thomas, resurrection

CONNECTION POINT

After His resurrection, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appeared first to St. Mary Magdalene very early Sunday morning. He gave her a message to deliver to the disciples. Later on that same day, He appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together. St. Thomas was the only one of the disciples not with them at that blessed time.

LESSON BODY:

OUR LORD APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES

After our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, how did the disciples feel? [They were afraid; they thought they may be next]. Now because they were scared, they all kept together and stayed in St. Mark's house and closed the doors on themselves. They were kind of trying to hide, not wanting anyone to know they were there. It was Sunday (our Lord had been crucified the Friday before). It was the same day that our Lord had appeared to St. Mary Magdalene (very early Sunday morning) and given her a message to give to the disciples: *"say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"* St. Mary had done exactly what He told her to do and gone to tell the disciples. By evening of that day, our Lord had appeared to a few others of the disciples as well during the day, and as they were all gathered together, those who had seen Him were telling the others and they were all talking about it. "Could it be?" They were saying. "Could He really be alive?" They didn't really believe it. Some of them were still feeling sad that He was gone; most of them were scared.

Now you remember that we said the doors were closed, right? All of a sudden, Jesus appeared – out of nowhere! – and stood in the middle of them, and said to them, *"Peace be with you."* The disciples were terrified! Where did He come from? How did He get in? The doors were shut! Was He a ghost, or some kind of spirit? People could not go through walls!

But He said to them, *"Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"* He meant, why don't you believe that I am real? Why are you afraid and think that I am a ghost? I am not a ghost. And He said to them, *"Look at My hands and My feet, see that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."* When He said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. The disciples were so full of joy that they could not even believe! It seemed to them too good to be true! So He asked them, *"Have you any food here?"* He wanted to show them that it really was Him, that He was real, and that He would eat. So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.

And He said to them again, *"Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."* And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, *"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*

Wow. Not only did the disciples receive the greatest desire of their hearts – to see their Lord Christ – but He breathed on them and gave them the Holy Spirit also.

ST. THOMAS WAS NOT THERE

Now, here is the thing – on that Sunday, one of the disciples was missing. He was not there with them. And that means, he didn't get to see the Lord. That disciple's name was Thomas.

The other disciples of course told him what had happened and how they had seen the Lord. And Thomas said to them, *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* (Remember, our Lord had gotten nailed to the Cross so St. Thomas wanted to see the place where the nails had gone into Him. He had also gotten a spear in His side, and St. Thomas wanted to see this also. He wanted to know that it was indeed His same, beloved Lord). Some people say that he was devastated that he had missed out on seeing the Lord when He came to the disciples and that he wanted to see Him for himself. Other people say that he didn't believe that the Lord had risen from the dead and needed to see Him in order to believe. But you know what? It really doesn't matter. What matters is what happened next, because thanks to Thomas, we got to hear something really beautiful and we got to know for sure that it was the same Lord who had died who rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples. We got to know for sure that this wonderful thing called "resurrection" happened and will happen again.

OUR LORD APPEARS A SECOND TIME TO THE DISCIPLES; ST. THOMAS BELIEVES

Even though our Lord was not seen as being with the disciples when Thomas said that to them, do you think He heard what Thomas said anyway? [Of course]. Our Lord hears everything, even what we pray inside our hearts to Him, the things that no one else hears. Listen to what happened next: The disciples were gathered together again the next Sunday (a week later), and Thomas was with them this time. And again the doors were shut. Our Lord Jesus came again and stood in the middle of them again and said, *"Peace to you!"* Again, He went right through the walls and did not need to walk in through the door like you or I would need to if we wanted to go inside a room.

Then He said to Thomas, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."* And Thomas saw what he had wanted to see and he did what he had wanted to do and then he answered and said to the Lord, *"My Lord and my God!"* It was Him!

Then He said to Thomas, *"Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* What does that mean? He told Thomas that those people who believe in Him but did not see Him with their eyes like Thomas did are blessed. Who are those people? Us! We have not seen our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we believe in Him and we believe that He was raised from the dead. Our Lord said we were blessed; He said it all those years ago, when you were not even close to being born yet. But He knew that you would be born and that you would believe in Him, and He called you blessed.

SUNDAY

Did anyone notice what day it was that the disciples were gathered together and our Lord appeared to them? Sunday. Does anybody notice anything about that? What day of the week do we all gather together and our Lord comes to us? [Sunday]. How does He come to us? In the Communion.

We are doing the same exact thing the disciples of our Lord did; they started it. And our Lord showed us that by coming all together on Sunday, He will appear among us just as He did with the disciples many years ago.

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 46 (OPTION B): THE HOLY FIFTY DAYS – LESSON II: THE TWO DISCIPLES OF EMMAUS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 24:13-35

13Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 18Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" 19And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." 25Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

28Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 29But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

30Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" 33So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

³⁴saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Mark 16:12-13

¹²After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. Cyril Commentary on Luke, Book 14

24:13. *Behold two of them went that same day to a village.*

As two of the disciples walk to a village called Emmaus, they conversed with one another concerning Christ, regarding Him as no longer living, but mourning Him as dead. And as they conversed, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them, without being recognized by them, "for their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He says to them, "What is it, I pray, of which you converse with one another as you walk thus mournfully? And one of them whose name was Cleopas answered and said, Are You only a stranger in Jerusalem," &c. And then they tell Him of the rumors of the resurrection brought by the women, and of that by Peter, but believe them not. For by saying, "And women also astonished us, who found not the body," they show that they had not been induced to believe the news, nor regard it as true tidings, but as a cause of trouble and astonishment: and Peter's testimony, who had seen only the linen bandages at the sepulcher, they did not consider as a trustworthy proof of the resurrection, because he did not say that he had seen Him, but inferred that He had risen from His being no longer there. And you must know that those two belonged to the number of the seventy, and that Cleopas' companion was Simon,----not Peter, nor he of Cana,----but another of the seventy.

24:27. *Having begun from Moses and from all the prophets.*

In this discourse the Lord shows that the law was necessary to make ready the way, and the ministry of the prophets to prepare men for faith in this marvelous act, that so when the resurrection really took place, those who were troubled at its greatness might remember what was said of old, and be induced to believe. He brings forward therefore Moses and the prophets, interpreting their hidden meaning, and making plain to the worthy what to the unworthy was obscure, so settling in them that ancient and hereditary faith taught them by the sacred books which they possessed. For nothing which comes from God is without its use, but all and several of them have their appointed place and service. In their due place servants were sent before to make ready for the presence of the Master, by bringing in beforehand prophecy as the necessary preparative for faith, that, like some royal treasure, what had been foretold might in due season be brought forward from the concealment of its former obscurity, being unveiled and made plain by the clearness of the interpretation. Having thus then stirred up their minds by the writings of the law and the prophets, He afterwards more plainly sets Himself before them, when, having consented to their request to go with them to the village, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and divided it among them. "For their eyes, it says, "were held that they might not know Him," until namely the word had entered stirring up their heart to faith, and then, rendering what they had before heard and believed visible, He offered them

the sight seasonably after the hearing. He does not, however, continue with them, for "He vanished, it says, out of their sight." For our Lord's relation to men after His resurrection does not continue the same as before, for they too have need of renovation, and a second life in Christ, that the renewed may associate with the renewed, and the incorruptible approach the incorruptible. For which reason, as John tells us, He did not permit Mary to touch Him, until He should go away and return again.

LESSON PREPARATION:

VOCABULARY:

Cleopas, Simon, Jerusalem, Emmaus

CONNECTION POINT

On Sunday when our Lord resurrected, He appeared to different groups of disciples. Two of those disciples were actually leaving Jerusalem and the rest of those who followed to Lord behind when they got an unexpected surprise...

LESSON BODY:

THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THEIR WAY TO EMMAUS

We have been talking about how the disciples felt after our Lord was crucified and before they knew that He was risen from the dead. How did they feel? [Scared]. They also felt like they lost their teacher, their leader, and probably most of them didn't know what they should do next. They had been listening to our Lord for 3 and a half years and He had been directing them. But now He was gone; who would they listen to? Who would they follow?

Two of the disciples – they were not of the 12 but they also followed the Lord – were named Cleopas and Simon. On the very same day that our Lord resurrected – Sunday, the same day He appeared to St. Mary Magdalene – Cleopas and Simon decided to leave Jerusalem (that was where everything had been happening: where our Lord had been crucified, where He had been buried, where the rest of the disciples were). They traveled to a village called Emmaus which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And of course they were walking because that was how people traveled in those days. Walking for seven miles would take about 2 – 3 hours, depending on how fast you walk. As they were walking, they talked together of all the things which had happened –

how our Lord had been crucified but now some of the women were saying they saw Him alive that very morning. They were very sad that He had been crucified and they didn't believe what the women had said. And now, here comes the wonderful part of this story, and the mysterious part: as they talked and discussed things over with each other, Jesus Himself – the One whom they were talking about! – drew near to them and walked with them. But they did not know it was Him. Does this sound familiar? Do you remember how someone else was talking with our Lord and she did not know that it was Him? St. Mary Magdalene. This tells us that our Lord certainly had changed when He resurrected so much so that even the people who knew Him best did not recognize Him. I don't know about you, but I wonder a lot about how He looks like now, after He has resurrected.

OUR LORD JOINS THEM ON THE ROAD, BUT THEY DO NOT KNOW HIM

So let us go back to the story. As Cleopas and Simon were talking with each other, Jesus Himself came near and walked with them, but they did not know Him. And He said to them, *"What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"* Then Cleopas answered and said to Him, *"Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"* Everyone from Jerusalem knew what had happened so Cleopas was shocked that this Person who seemed to be a stranger did not know. So our Lord asked them, *"What things?"* And they said to Him, *"The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."* Very interesting.

Then our Lord started to explain to them everything that had been written about Him in the Bible and how the Christ ought to have suffered these things and then enter into His glory. They had some incorrect ideas about what Jesus Christ had come to do; they thought that He was going to set up a Kingdom on Earth and make their nation a great nation on the earth. But they were wrong, and He wanted to help them understand what was true His purpose on Earth – to save us from our sins. And meanwhile, the whole time they still do not know that it is Him!

OUR LORD IS REVEALED TO THEM IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD

As they neared the end of their journey and approached the village where they were going (Emmaus), He indicated to them that He would have gone further on. But they told Him, *"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."* And He went in to stay with them.

Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened! And they knew Him! He was the only one who did that and taught them to do that! He was giving them the communion, the same communion

that we eat every Sunday. And right when they recognized Him, He vanished from their sight! Gone in an instant. One moment He was there, the next moment He was gone.

They were so joyful! They had seen their Lord! He was alive! And they said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road and while He explained the Bible to us?” It was almost like their hearts had recognized their beloved Lord before their minds did; they felt it was Him, but didn’t know it yet.

And do you know what those two disciples did right at that moment? They got up that and went back to Jerusalem (walked back another 2 – 3 hours) and found the eleven disciples and others gathered with them talking about how the Lord had truly risen and had appeared to Peter! (another disciple). So then Cleopas and Simon told them everything that had happened on their road to Emmaus and how they had known Him, recognized Him, when He broke the bread (gave them communion).

OUR LORD GIVES HIMSELF TO US

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is always with us, even today. And He gave Himself to us in the communion. Those who take communion “see” our Lord, but in that special way with their hearts; their hearts will burn like the hearts of Cleopas and Simon. And they will know Him in a very special way; He will be very close to them and they will feel Him always taking care of them and loving them.

The Communion is how we are able to be with our Lord here on earth, even though no one else can see Him. He may be invisible to the whole world, but He becomes visible to those who take communion, just like He became visible to Cleopas and Simon when they were taking communion.

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 47: THE HOLY ASCENSION AND HOLY PENTECOST

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Mark 16:19-20

19So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Luke 24:50-53

50And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

John 14:1-4

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4And where I go you know, and the way you know."

John 16:5-7

5"But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, "Where are You going?" 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

Acts 1:4-11

4And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons

which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

⁹Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Acts 2:1-13

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." ¹²So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" ¹³Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

CHURCH FATHERS:

(Regarding Pentecost)

HOMILY 5

ACTS 2:14

"Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words."

[“Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem,”] whom the writer above described as strangers. Here he directs his discourse to those others, the mockers, and while he seems to reason with those, he sets these right.

For indeed it was divinely ordered that “some mocked,” that he might have a starting-point for his defense, and by means of that defense, might teach. [“And all ye that dwell in Jerusalem.”] It seems they accounted it a high encomium to dwell in Jerusalem too. “Be this,” says he, “known unto you, and hearken unto my words.” In the first instance he made them more disposed to attend to him. “For not as ye suppose,” says he, “are these drunken.” Do you observe the mildness of his defense? (v. 15.) Although having the greater part of the people on his side, he reasons with

those others gently; first he removes the evil surmise, and then he establishes his apology. On this account, therefore, he does not say, "as ye mock," or, "as ye deride," but, "as ye suppose;" wishing to make it appear that they had not said this in earnest, and for the present taxing them with ignorance rather than with malice. "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day." And why this? Is it not possible at the third hour to be drunken? But he did not insist upon this to the letter; for there was nothing of the kind about them; the others said it only in mockery. Hence we learn that on unessential points one must not spend many words. And besides, the sequel is enough to bear him out on this point: so now the discourse is for all in common. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, said the Lord God. (v. 16. 17. Joel 2:28.) Nowhere as yet the name of Christ, nor His promises but the promise is that of the Father. Observe the wisdom: observe the considerate forbearance. He did not pass on to speak at once of the things relating to Christ; that He had promised this after His Crucifixion; truly that would have been to upset all. And yet, you will say, here was sufficient to prove His divinity. True, it was, if believed (and the very point was that it should be believed); but if not believed, it would have caused them to be stoned.

"And I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." He offers even to them excellent hopes, if they would have them. And so far, he does not leave it to be regarded as the exclusive advantage of himself and his company; which would have made them be looked upon with an evil eye; thus cutting off all envious feeling. "And your sons shall prophesy." And yet, he says, not yours this achievement, this distinction; the gift has passed over to your children. Himself and his company he calls their sons, and

those [whom he is addressing] he calls his and their fathers. "And your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy." So far he shows that he and his have found favor, in that they had received [the Spirit]; not so they whom he is addressing; for that they had crucified [the Lord]. So Christ also, willing to mitigate their wrath, said, "By whom do your sons cast out devils?" (Matthew 12:27.) He did not say, My disciples; for indeed it seemed a flattering mode of expression. And so Peter also did not say, 'They are not drunk, but speak by the Spirit:' but he takes refuge with the prophet, and under shelter of him, so speaks. As for the accusation [of drunkenness], he cleared himself of that by his own assertion; but for the grace, he fetches the prophet as witness. "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." ["And your sons," etc.] To some the grace was imparted through dreams, to others it was openly poured forth. For indeed by dreams the prophets saw, and received revelations. Then he goes on with the prophecy, which has in it also something terrible. "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs" ["in the earth beneath"]. (v. 19.) In these words he speaks both of the judgment to come, and of the taking of Jerusalem. "Blood and fire, and vapor of smoke." Observe how he describes the capture. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." (v. 20.) This results from the internal affection of the sufferers. It is said, indeed, that many such phenomena actually did occur in the sky, as Josephus attests.

At the same time the Apostle strikes fear into them, by reminding them of the darkness which had lately occurred, and leading them to expect things to come. "Before that great and notable day of the Lord come." For be not confident, he means to say, because at present you sin with impunity. For these things are the prelude of a certain great and dreadful day. Do you see how he made

their souls to quake and melt within them, and turned their laughter into pleading for acquittal? For if these things are the prelude of that day, it follows that the extreme of danger is impending. But what next? He again lets them take breath, adding, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." (Romans 10:13.) This is said concerning Christ, as Paul affirms, but Peter does not venture as yet to reveal this.

Well, let us look over again what has been said. It is well managed, that as against men laughing and mocking, he starts up and begins with, "Be this known unto you all and hearken unto my words." But he begins by saying, "Ye men of Judea." By the expression, I take him to mean those that lived in Judea. — And, if you please, let us compare those expressions in the Gospel, that you may learn what a sudden change has taken place in Peter. "A damsel," it is written, "came out unto him, saying, You also was with Jesus of Nazareth." And, says he, "I know not the Man." And being again questioned, "he began to curse and to swear." (Matthew 26:69-72.) But see here his boldness, and his great freedom of speech. — He did not praise those who had said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God;" but by his severity towards those others, he made these more earnest, and at the same time his address is clear from all appearance of adulation. And it is well to remark, on all occasions, however the Apostles may condescend to the level of their hearers, their language is clear from all appearance both of adulation and of insolence: which is a difficult point to manage.

Now that these things should have occurred at "the third hour," was not without cause. For the brightness of this fire is shown at the very time when people are not engaged in their works, nor at dinner; when it is bright day, when all are in the market-place. Do you observe also the freedom which fills his speech? "And hearken to my words." And he added nothing, but, "This," says he, "is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days." He shows, in fact, that the consummation is nigh at hand, and the words, "In the last days," have a kind of emphasis. ["I will pour out," etc.] And then, that he may not seem to limit the privilege to the sons only, he subjoins, "And your old men shall dream dreams." Mark the sequence. First sons; just as David said, "Instead of thy fathers, were begotten thy sons." (Psalm 45:17.) And again Malachi; "They shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

And on my handmaidens, and on my servants." (Malachi 4:6.) This also is a token of excellence, for we have become His servants, by being freed from sin. And great is the gift, since the grace passes over to the other sex also, not as of old, it was limited to just one or two individuals, as Deborah and Huldah. He did not say that it was the Holy Ghost, neither did he expound the words of the prophet; but he merely brings in the prophecy to fight its own battle. As yet also he has said nothing about Judas; and yet it was known to all what a doom and punishment he had undergone; for nothing was more forcible than to argue with them from prophecy: this was more forcible even than facts. For when Christ performed miracles, they often contradicted Him. But when Christ brought forward the prophet, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand," they were silent, and "no man," we read, "was able to answer Him a word." (Psalm 90:1.) And on all occasions He Himself also appealed to the Scriptures; for instance, "If he called them gods to whom the word of God came." (John 10:35.) And in many places one may find this. On this account here also Peter says, "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh;" that is, upon the Gentiles also. But he does not yet reveal this, nor give interpretations; indeed, it was better not to do so (as also this obscure saying, "I will show wonders in heaven above," put them the more in fear

because it was obscure.) And it would have been more an offense, had it been interpreted from the very first. Then besides, even as plain, he passes over it, wishing to make them regard it as such. But after all, he does interpret to them anon, when he discourses to them upon the resurrection, and after he has paved the way by his discourse. (*infra* 5:39.) For since the good things were not sufficient to allure them, [it is added, “And I will show wonders, etc.”]. Yet this has never been fulfilled. For none escaped then [in that former judgment], but now the faithful did escape, in Vespasian’s time. And this it is that the Lord speaks of, “Except those days had been shortened, not all flesh should be saved.” — [“Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.”] (Matthew 24:22.) The worst to come first; namely, the inhabitants to be taken, and then the city to be razed and burnt. Then he dwelt upon the metaphor, bringing before the eyes of the hearers the overthrow and the taking. “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.” What means, the moon turned into blood? It denotes the excess of the slaughter. The language is fraught with helpless dismay. (*supra* p. 32.) “And it shall come to pass, everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Everyone,” he says: though he be priest (but he does not yet reveal the meaning), though bond, though free. For there is no male nor female in Christ Jesus, no bond, no free. (Galatians 3:28.) Well may it be so, for all these are but shadow. For if in king’s palaces there is no high-born nor low-born, but each appears according to his deeds; and in art, each is shown by his works; much more in that school of wisdom. “Everyone who shall invoke.” Invoke: not anyhow, for it is written, “Not everyone that said unto Me, Lord, Lord:” but with inward earnest affection, with a life more than commonly good, with the confidence which is meet. Thus far, however, he makes the discourse light, by introducing that which relates to faith, and that terrible which relates to the punishment. For in the invocation is the salvation. What, I pray you, is this you say? Do you talk of salvation for them after the Cross? Bear with me a little. Great is the mercy of God. And this very fact does, no less than the resurrection, prove him to be God, yea, no less than His miracles — the fact that He calls these to Him. For surpassing goodness is, above all things, peculiarly God’s own. Therefore also He says, “None is good save one, that is, God.” (Luke 18:19.) Only let us not take this goodness for an occasion of negligence. For He also punishes as God. In fact, the very punishments here spoken of, He brought them to pass, even He who said, “Everyone who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” I speak of the fate of Jerusalem; that intolerable punishment: of which I will tell you some few of the particulars, useful to us in our contest, both with the Marcionites and many other heretics. For, since they distinguish between Christ a good God, and that evil God [of the Old Testament], let us see who it was that effected these things. The evil God, taking vengeance for Christ? or not so? How then alien to Him?

But was it the good God? Nay, but it is demonstrated that both the Father and the Son did these things. The Father in many places; for instance, when He says in the parable of the vineyard, [“He will miserably destroy those wicked husbandmen” (Matthew 21:41); again in the parable of the marriage feast, the King is said] to send His armies (ib. 22:7): and the Son, when He says, “But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me.” (Luke 19:27.)

And they sent, saying, We will not have Thee to reign over us. Would you like then to hear the things which actually came to pass? Moreover, Christ Himself also speaks of the future tribulations, than which never anything more dreadful came to pass; never anything more

ruthless, my beloved, than the deeds then done! And He Himself declared it. For what could you wish to see more grievous than these? — probed them with their daggers!

But shall I relate to you the shocking case of the woman, that tragic tale? (Joseph. B. J. 6:3. 4. Did not the actual events cast all misery into the shade? But shall I tell you of famines and pestilences? One might speak of horrors without number: nature was unknown; law unknown; they outdid wild beasts in ferocity. True, these miseries came by the fate of wars; but because God, because Christ so willed it to be. These facts will apply both against the Marcionites and against those who do not believe that there is a hell: for they are sufficient to silence their impudence. Are not these calamities more severe than the Babylonian? Are not these sufferings more grievous than the famines of that time? Yes, for [“never was the like from the beginning of the world”] “no, nor ever shall be such.” (Matthew 24:21.) And this was Christ’s own declaration. In what sense then, think ye, is it said that Christ remitted them their sin? Perhaps it seems a commonplace question: but do ye solve it. — It is not possible to show anywhere, even in fiction, anything like what the reality was here. And had it been a Christian that wrote this history, the matter might be regarded with suspicion: but if he was a Jew, and a Jewish zealot, and after the Gospel, how can the meaning of the facts be otherwise than palpable to all men? For you will see the man, how, everywhere, he always extols the concerns of the Jews. — There is therefore a hell, O man! and God is good. — Aye, did you shudder at hearing these horrors? But these, which take place here, are nothing in comparison with what shall be in that world. Once more I am compelled to seem harsh, disagreeable, stern. But what can I do? I am set to this: just as a severe schoolmaster is set to be hated by his scholars: so are we. For would it not be strange indeed, that, while those who have a certain post assigned them by kings do that which is appointed them, however disagreeable the task may be, we, for fear of your censure, should leave our appointed task undone? Another has a different work. Of you, many have it for their work, to show mercy, to act humanely, to be pleasant and agreeable to the persons to whom you are benefactors. But to those to whom we do good, we seem stern and severe, troublesome and disagreeable. For we do good, not by the pleasure we give, but by the pain we inflict. So it is also with the physician: though he indeed is not excessively disagreeable, for the benefit afforded by his art is had immediately; ours hereafter. So again the magistrate is odious to the disorderly and seditious; so the legislator is vexatious to them for whom he makes laws. But not so he that invites to enjoyment, not so he that prepares public festivities and entertainments, and puts all the people in garlands: no, these are men that win acceptance, feasting, as they do, whole cities with all sorts of spectacles; contributing largely, bearing all the cost. And therefore those whom they have treated, requite them for these enjoyments with words of welcome and benediction, with hanging of tapestries, and a blaze of lamps, and with wreaths, and boughs, and brilliant garments. Whereas, at the sight of the physician, the sick become sad and downcast: at sight of the magistrate, the rioters become subdued: no running riot then, no gamboling, except when he also goes over into their ranks. Let us see, then, which render the best service to their cities; those who provide these festivities, and banquetings, and expensive entertainments, and manifold rejoicings; or those who restrain all those doings, bearing before them stocks, scourges, executioners, dreaded soldiers, and a voice fraught with much terror: and issuing orders, and making men hang down their heads, and with the rod dispersing the idlers in the market-place. Let us see, I say; these are the disagreeable, those the beloved: let us see where the gain rests. What comes then of your pleasure-givers? A

kind of frigid enjoyment, lasting till the evening, and tomorrow vanished; mirth ungoverned, words unseemly and dissolute. And what of these? Awe, sobriety, subdued thoughts; reasonableness of mind, an end of idleness; a curb on the passions within; a wall of defense, next to God, against assailants from without. It is by means of these we have each our property but by those ruinous festivities we dissipate it. Robbers indeed have not invaded it, but vainglory together with pleasure acts the part of robber. Each sees the robber carrying off everything before his eyes, and is delighted at it! A new fashion of robbery, this, to induce people to be glad when one is plundering them! On the other part, there is nothing of the kind: but God, as the common Father, has secured us as by a wall against all [depredators], both seen and unseen. For, "Take heed," said He, "that ye do not your alms before men." (Matthew 6:1.) The soul learns from the one, [excess; from the other] to flee injustice. For injustice consists not merely in grasping at more wealth than belongs to us, but in giving to the belly more than its needful sustenance, in carrying mirth beyond its proper bounds, and causing it to run into frantic excesses. From the one, it learns sobriety; from the other, unchastity. For it is unchastity, not merely to have carnal intercourse with women, but even to look upon a woman with unchaste eyes. From the one, it learns modesty; from the other, conceited self-importance. For, "All things," says the Apostle, "are lawful for me, but not all things expedient." (1 Corinthians 6:12.) From the one, decent behavior; from the other unseemliness. For, as to the doings in the theatres, I pass these. But to let you see that it is not even a pleasure either, but a grief, show me, but a single day after the festival, both those who spent their money in giving it, and those who were feasted with spectacles: and you shall see them all looking dejected enough, but most of all him, your famous man that has spent his money for it. And this is but fair: for, the day before, he delighted the common man, and the common man indeed was in high good humor and enjoyment, and rejoiced indeed in the splendid garment, but then not having the use of it, and seeing himself stripped of it, he was grieved and annoyed; and wanted to be the great man, seeing even his own enjoyment to be small compared with his. Therefore, the day after, they change places, and now he, the great man, gets the larger share in the dejection. Now if in worldly matters, amusements are attended with such dissatisfaction, while disagreeable things are so beneficial, much more does this hold in things spiritual. Why is it that no one quarrels with the laws, but on the contrary all account that matter a common benefit? For indeed not strangers from some other quarter, nor enemies of those for whom the laws are made, came and made these orders, but the citizens themselves, their patrons, their benefactors: and this very thing, the making of laws, is a token of beneficence and goodwill. And yet the laws are full of punishment and restraint, and there is no such thing as law without penalty and coercion. Then is it not unreasonable, that while the expositors of those laws are called deliverers, benefactors, and patrons, we are considered troublesome and vexatious if we speak of the laws of God? When we discourse about hell, then we bring forward those laws: just as in the affairs of the world, people urge the laws of murder, highway robbery, and the like, so do we the penal laws: laws, which not man enacted, but the Only-Begotten Son of God Himself. Let him that hath no mercy, He says, be punished (Matthew 18:23); for such is the import of the parable. Let him that remembers injuries, pay the last penalty. Let him that is angry without cause, be cast into the fire. Let him that reviles, receive his due in hell. If you think these laws which you hear strange, be not amazed. For if Christ was not intended to make new laws, why did He come?

Those other laws are manifest to us; we know that the murderer and adulterer ought to be punished. If then we were meant only to be told the same things over again, where was the need of a heavenly Teacher?

Therefore He does not say, Let the adulterer be punished, but, whoso looks on with unchaste eyes. And where, and when, the man will receive punishment, He there tells us. And not in fine public monuments, nor yet somewhere out of sight, did He deposit His laws; not pillars of brass did He raise up, and engrave letters thereon, but twelve souls raised He up for us, the souls of the Apostles, and in their minds has He by the Spirit inscribed this writing. This cite we to you. If this was authorized to Jews, that none might take refuge in the plea of ignorance, much more is it to us. But should any say, "I do not hear, therefore have no guilt," on this very score he is most liable to punishment. For, were there no teacher, it would be possible to take refuge in this plea; but if there be, it is no longer possible. Thus see how, speaking of Jews, the Lord deprives them of all excuse; "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin:" (John 15:22): and Paul again, "But I say, have they not heard? Nay, but into all the earth went forth their sound." (Romans 10:18.) For then there is excuse, when there is none to tell the man; but when the watchman sits there, having this as the business of his life, there is excuse no longer. Nay, rather, it was the will of Christ, not that we should look only upon these written pillars, but that we should ourselves be such. But since we have made ourselves unworthy of the writing, at least let us look to those. For just as the pillars threaten others, but are not themselves obnoxious to punishment, nor yet the laws, even so the blessed Apostles. And observe; not in one place only stands this pillar, but its writing is carried round about in all the world. Whether you go among the Indians, you shall hear this: whether into Spain, or to the very ends of the earth, there is none without the hearing, except it be of his own neglect. Then be not offended, but give heed to the things spoken, that ye may be able to lay hold upon the works of virtue, and attain unto the eternal blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom to the Father and Holy Ghost together be glory, power, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

VOCABULARY:

Ascension, Pentecost

LESSON BODY:

WHERE IS OUR LORD TODAY? THE HOLY ASCENSION

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was crucified and then rose from the dead on the third day. He appeared to His disciples and also to many others; in total, He spent 40 days with them after He resurrected. And they saw Him in His glorified and wonderful new body that all of us who follow Him will have one day. So let me ask you a question – does anybody know where our Lord is right

now? We know that He died, and then He rose from the dead and then spent some time with His disciples. But where is He right now? What happened after those 40 days He spent with His disciples?

Our Lord had a plan; let us see what it is: On the last day that He was going to spend with His disciples on earth, He led them out of the city and blessed them. Now as He was blessing them, while they were watching, He was parted from them and taken up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. He was received up to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. This is what is called the *Ascension*. *Ascension* means “going up” or “rising up.”

He is in Heaven now with God the Father, in a glorious place where He is honored by all the creatures around Him. The angels and the powers and all the hosts of Heaven praise Him all the time. And even though He is in a place now where He is King over all and most honored and revered, do you know what He is doing? He is preparing a place for us, so that it is ready for us when we come to join Him in Heaven one day God willing. There are mansions in Heaven that our Lord is preparing for us. See how much our Lord loves us?

THE HOLY PENTECOST

There is another reason that our Lord had to go up to Heaven: When He was received in Heaven by God the Father, our Lord sent the Holy Spirit down to all those who followed Him – the Christians. This happened in a very special and mysterious way: 10 days after our Lord ascended into Heaven, the disciples were gathered together praying and praising God in St. Mark’s house (this was their custom; the disciples always stayed together). [Hand out candles to the children at this point]. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. [Have the students hold the candles above their heads very carefully; a servant goes around and lights each candle]. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages! And they went out in the streets and started talking about God and all the wonderful things He had done and people heard them speaking in different languages. There were many foreigners there who had come from other countries, and they heard the disciples speaking in their own language from home and everyone was amazed!

Now here is a question – do you think the disciples were walking around like this, with fire on top of their heads? No! So what happened to the fire? It went inside them. [Have the students bring the candles down in front of them and tell them to imagine that fire going inside of them]. This is what happened with the disciples, and that is what each believer who is baptized has inside of him/her: the Fire that is the Holy Spirit. But it is a different kind of fire than this – it is not the kind that can be put out by water. [Pause and let the children take this in].

[Have the students blow out their candles and then collect them].

The Church remembers and celebrates the day that the disciples, and therefore all Christians, received the Holy Spirit; it is called Pentecost. We celebrate it every year and it is coming up on _____ [make sure the children know when Pentecost will be].

BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

After Pentecost, followers of our Lord Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit when they were baptized. They did not see fire resting on their heads; rather the Holy Spirit went directly inside them and filled them. This is what we received when we were baptized and the Holy Spirit is renewed within us every time we pray, read the Bible, and especially take communion.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: Have the students draw a picture of the Ascension. To explain Pentecost, hand out candles to each student. Read the section from Acts explaining what happened, and then tell them to hold the candles above their hands very carefully. Light the candles. Then have the students bring the candles down in front of them and tell them to imagine that fire going inside of them. Tell them that is what happened at the Pentecost, and that is what each believer who is baptized has inside of him/her: the Fire that is the Holy Spirit. But it is a different kind of fire that cannot be put out by water.

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 48: THE VISIT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO THE TEMPLE AT AGE TWELVE (OPTIONAL IF NOT TAUGHT WITH THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT)

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 2: 41-52

“His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.”

CHURCH FATHERS:

“Just as St Mary was called a mother to John in love and not because she conceived him, likewise is St. Joseph called a father to Christ, not because he begot Him, but rather because of His care in upbringing Christ.” St Cyril of Jerusalem

“Due to matrimonial integrity, both of them are worthy to be called “Jesus parents”, for they were as such according to the mind and goal, and not according to the body. If one of them was the father in

goal, who is the mother, is His mother from the physical point of view. Both were thus called His parents according to His modesty and not according to His divinity." *St Augustine*

"His words to St. Mary confirm His divinity, for He says. "I must be about My Father's business." At this point Christ is referring to His true Father, and He uncovers His divinity." *St. Cyril the great*

REFLECTION:

At 12 years old, our Lord showed Himself as the true "*Son of the Law*". He is in the Temple where He belongs as a Son in His Father's house. We see Him comfortable and actively engaged about "*His Father's business*". Our Lord always had the greatest love and reverence to the Temple as "*The house of God, the house of prayer*".

1) The "*Bar Mitzvah*" is the ritual celebration of a male Jew on his 12th birthday. The church would gather with his parents to give him the Torah. From that day it becomes his right to read and interpret scriptures alone or in the synagogue. It is similar to the job of the "Ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓ" "*Anagnostis*" in our Coptic church.

2) "*Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.*"
Deuteronomy 16:16-17

PRAYER:

2. How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.

With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth.

I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.

I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.

I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.

Glory be to You O lover of mankind. *Midnight prayer-psalm 119-2*

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Thousands of thousands, and myriads of myriads, praise and glorify, my Lord Jesus.

All the righteous people, who have pleased God, meditated upon, all the laws.

The Monday E psali Adam

VOCABULARY:

Passover, Temple, Nazareth

INTRODUCTION

1. *Review questions:*

Q. What did the wise men feel when they saw the star?

A. *Very Happy*

Q. What gifts did they give our Lord? And what do they mean?

Gold: because our Lord is the king of Kings

Frankincense: because our Lord is a high priest

Myrrh : because our Lord is going to suffer and die for us

Q. Where did the Holy Family hide from king Herod? Why is that so special?

A. *Egypt. Our Lord chose our Land out of all places.*

Q. How did our Lord treat His parents?

A. *He was obedient to them and respected them.*

Q. what does obedience mean?

A. *Obedience mean:*

1. **Come** immediately when you are called (even leave whatever you are doing)

2. **Do** as you are told

3. **Do** your best in school (homework on time and attention during classes to get good results that would please your parents)

4. **help** in work around the house

REVIEW VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"Out of Egypt I called My Son." Luke 2:15

CONNECTION POINT:

God the Father sent His son to the world. Our lord was in St. Mary the Theotokos for nine months. He was born in Bethlehem. King Herod wanted to kill Him. The holy family fled to Egypt. After king Herod died, they went back and lived in Nazareth. Our Lord grew up. The story we are about to learn today happened when He was twelve years old.

LESSON BODY:

THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

When our Lord was a child His parents used to take Him and go together to **Jerusalem** (*the City where the king has his palace and where the Temple is*), for a big feast of the Jews, called the feast of Passover (we will learn about it sometime later). In the feast, they go to the **Temple** (the old Testament Church). In the Temple, men stay on one side and women on the other side. Every boy, man and old man is expected to be there in that feast with their families (2). There was a very big crowd. People usually come to Jerusalem from their faraway hometowns in big groups. Say for example, all the males of your town or neighborhood go together. It becomes a fun journey and they sing church songs and tell each other stories about God's work in their lives and about Saints. It was a very happy journey. The men would travel together and the women would be together, each group having their own talks and songs. The young children would usually be with their mothers, aunts and grandmothers, sometimes with their fathers, older brothers, uncles and grandfathers. When a boy reaches 12 years old, he usually stays with his father and the rest of the men. The men always watch the women group for protection and help if they need it.

OUR LORD IS MISSING

When the feast was finished, everybody packed their luggage and prepared to leave. The men together and the women together. Our Lord Jesus was not with them. St. Joseph thought that because our Lord Just turned 12, that He may still be more comfortable with His mother. St. Mary thought that because He turned 12, that He would feel more comfortable with the men.

The journey takes many days may be even a week to go back to **Nazareth**, their hometown. They usually stop every evening to put up the tents and sleep for the night. St. Mary felt that it was a long time since she saw our Lord, and she missed Him. St. Joseph also felt like wanting to check on both our Lord and on St. Mary. When both of them met on the first night of the journey, both of them were very troubled. St. Mary had tears in her eyes. Both of them started to ask everyone in their group if they had seen our Lord. But everyone said they had not seen Him since they left Jerusalem that morning. It was a very difficult night for both of them, and they could not sleep. Very early morning, they left their groups to go back to **Jerusalem**. They were hurrying to go back. When they reached the city, it was night, and they looked for Him in the place where they used to spend the nights, but He was not there. Both His parents were very anxious, although tired they continued to look for Him. They wanted to look for Him the whole night, but most people were in their houses asleep by then (people then had neither electric light nor TVs). They needed to wait till the morning. Again, both of them were unable to sleep. Early morning on the third day, both of them went knocking on relatives and friends doors, but everyone said that they do not know where He was. Later in the morning, just before noon, someone said that they saw Him in the **Temple** with the teachers. Both; St. Mary and St. Joseph were very exhausted and tired, but they ran to the Temple looking for Him. The Temple was a big building with many halls and yards.

OUR LORD IS FOUND

At last they found Him. They were very surprised for He was in the middle of a big circle of older men asking them questions and listening to them. St. Joseph excused himself to the center of the crowd and asked our Lord to come with him. When our Lady saw Him, she cried and gave Him a long hug. Then she asked Him, *"Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have looked for You anxiously (worried)."* And He said to them, *"Why did you look for Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* They did not understand what He said to them, but St. Mary kept thinking about what He said and remembered it. The teachers told them how they have never seen anyone like Him in His understanding of the word of God, in His questions and answers. St. Mary and St. Joseph did not get angry with our Lord; because they knew that He would never disobey them, nor intentionally give them hard time. It was for God (His heavenly

Father) that He stayed behind. He would not do that for any other reason. And He knew how much they were worried about Him and how hard they were looking for Him.

OUR LORD SUBMITTED TO HIS PARENTS

They left the Temple and Jerusalem to go back to Nazareth. In Nazareth, our Lord did always submit to His parents:

- He would come when he is called, even if he is in the middle of doing something different. If He was enjoying a game or a toy or even watching something exciting, still He would **stop, Listen** and **leave** everything and answer His parents immediately.
- He would do exactly what they say. He was happy to do whatever they told Him to do even if he did not enjoy it.
- He was always looking to help St. Mary in the house work: cleaning His room, and made sure to not leave a mess after eating or playing. Even if he was thinking of something more enjoyable to do.
- He helped St. Joseph in his carpenter shop. He did it happily and tried to watch and learn from Him

OUR LORD GREW UP IN STATURE, WISDOM AND GRACE, BEFORE GOD AND MEN

Our Lord grew up and increased in His body and mind and also in His Spirit. He loved the people of His town, and they loved Him too because of His perfect manners and Love that He showed them. God His Father was very pleased with Him also, for He always obeyed Him, and never, did anything that was not pleasing to God

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: hang a poster of Galilee or Nazareth on one wall in the class, and hang a poster of the Temple in Jerusalem on the opposite wall. The class length would be the journey to Jerusalem from Nazareth. In the Middle put a poster of a Bedouin tents. Get an icon of our Lord talking with the elders in the Temple and cover it, till the end. Describe the story in the different “places”

Alternative plans: drawing and coloring, story booklet, acting.

A. Conclusion

1. *Review Questions:*

Q. Where was our Lord when St. Mary and St. Joseph were looking for Him?

A. *in the Temple*

Q. what was He doing in the Temple?

A. *He was with the teachers asking them and listening to them*

Q. What did the teachers say about our Lord?

A. *The teachers was amazed by His understanding*

Q. How did our Lord treat God and His parents?

A. *He was obedient to God His heavenly Father and to His earthly parent*

Q. how do we obey our parents? Spell obedience.

A. ***come when you are called, do as you are told, help around the house and do your best at school***

2. *Verse to Remember:*

"Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49

HOME ACTIVITY - DAILY READINGS

Mothers to discuss with children the life of our Lord and His Commitment to honor God and His Parents.

1. Samuel grew up in the Temple – 1 Samuel 1: 19-28, 2:11
 2. King Joash grew up in the Temple – 2 Chronicles 22: 10-12
 3. King Josiah was a young Godly king – 2 Chronicles 34
 4. Young Jeremiah is strengthened by the Lord – Jeremiah 1
 5. The Three youth are strengthened by the Lord – Daniel 1
 6. A boy offer to our Lord five loaves and two fishes – John 6:1-14
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Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 49: THE HOLY FAST AND FEAST OF THE APOSTLES

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Acts 2:1-47

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

⁷Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." ¹²So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"¹³Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

¹⁴But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷" And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. ²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. ²¹ And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

²²"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- ²³Him,

being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵For David says concerning Him: "I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. ²⁷ For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' ²⁹"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³²This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. ³⁴"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

"The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

³⁶"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."⁴⁰And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." ⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

⁴³Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

⁴⁴Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

CHURCH FATHERS:

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, Homily 7

“And they continued steadfastly and with one accord in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” (v. 42.) Here are two virtues, perseverance and concord. “In the Apostles’ doctrine,” he says: for they again taught them; “and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.” All in common, all with perseverance. “And fear came upon every soul” (v. 43): of those that believed. For they did

not despise the Apostles, like common men, nor did they fix their regard on that which was visible merely. Verily, their thoughts were kindled into a glow. And as Peter had before spoken much, and declared the promises, and the things to come, well might they be beside themselves with fear. The wonders also bore witness to the words: "Many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles." As was the case with Christ; first there were signs, then teaching, then wonders; so was it now. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." (v. 44.) Consider what an advance was here immediately! For the fellowship was not only in prayers, nor in doctrine alone, but also in social relations. "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." See what fear was wrought in them!

"And they parted them," he says, showing the wise management: "As every man had need." Not recklessly, like some philosophers among the Greeks, of whom some gave up their land, others cast into the sea great quantities of money; but this was no contempt of riches, but only folly and madness. For universally the devil has made it his endeavor to disparage the creatures of God, as if it were impossible to make good use of riches. "And continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (v. 46), they enjoyed the benefit of teaching. Consider how these Jews did nothing else great or small, than assiduously attend at the temple.

For, as having become more earnest, they had increased devotion also to the place. For the Apostles did not for the present pluck them away from this object, for fear of injuring them. "And breaking bread from house to house, did take their portion of food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." (v. 47.) It seems to me that in mentioning "bread," he here signifies fasting and hard life; for they "took their portion of food," not of dainty fare. "With gladness," he says.

Seest thou that not the dainty fare, but the food made the enjoyment. For they that fare daintily are under punishment and pain; but not so these. Do you see that the words of Peter contain this also, namely, the regulation of life? ["And singleness of heart."] For no gladness can exist where there is no simplicity. How had they "favor with all the people?" On account of their alms deeds. For do not look to the fact, that the chief priests for envy and spite rose up against them, but rather consider that "they had favor with the people." — "And the Lord added to the Church daily [together] such as should be saved. — And all that believed were together." Once more, the unanimity, the charity, which is the cause of all good things!

["Now when they heard this," etc. "Then Peter said unto them," etc.] (Recapitulation, 5:37.) What had been said was not enough. For those sayings indeed were sufficient to bring them to faith; but these are to show what things the believer behooves to do. And he said not, In the Cross, but, "In the name of Jesus Christ let every one of you be baptized." (v. 38.) And he does not put them continually in mind of the Cross, that he may not seem to reproach them, but he says simply, "Repent: and why? That we may be punished? No: "And let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." And yet quite other is the law; of this world's tribunals: but in the case of the Gospel proclamation; when the delinquent has confessed, then is he saved! Observe how Peter does not instantly hurry over this, but he specifies also the conditions, and adds, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" an assertion accredited by the fact, that the Apostles themselves had received that gift. ["For the promise," etc.] (v. 39.) "The promise," i.e. the gift of the Holy Ghost. So far, he speaks of the easy part, and that which has with it a great gift;

and then he leads them to practice: for it will be to them a ground of earnestness, to have tasted already of those so great blessings ["and with many other words did he testify," etc.] (v. 40). Since, however, the hearer would desire to learn what was the sum and, substance of these further words, he tells us this: ["Saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation."] ["They then, that gladly received his words," etc.] (v. 41) they approved of what had been said, although fraught with terror, and after their assent given, proceed at once to baptism. "And they continued" it is written, "steadfastly in the doctrine" (or, "teaching") "of the Apostles" (v. 42): for it was not for one day, no nor for two or three days that they were under teaching as being persons who had gone over to a different course of life. ["And they continued with one accord in the Apostles' doctrine," etc.] The expression is not, "together," but, "with one accord;" ("and daily," he says [afterwards], "they were continuing with one accord in the temple,") i.e. with one soul. And here again in his conciseness, he does not relate the teaching given; for as young children, the Apostles nourished them with spiritual food. "And fear came upon every soul" (v. 43): clearly, of those, as well, who did not believe; namely, upon seeing so great a change all at once effected, and besides in consequence of the miracles. ["And all that believed were together, and had all things in common," etc.] (v. 44.) They are all become angels on a sudden; all of them continuing in prayer and hearing, they saw that spiritual things are *common*, and no one there has more than other, and they speedily came together, to the same thing in common, even to the imparting to all. "And all the believing" (v. 44), it says, were: and to see that this does not mean that they were together in place, observe what follows ["And had all things common"]. "All," it says: not one with the exception of another. This was an angelic commonwealth, not to call anything of theirs their own. Forthwith the root of evils was cut out. By what they did, they showed what they had heard: this was that which he said, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." — "And daily continuing with one accord in the temple." (v. 46.) Since they are become three thousand, they take them abroad now: and withal, the boldness imparted by the Spirit being great: and daily they went up as to a sacred place, as frequently we find Peter and John doing this: for at present they disturbed none of the Jewish observances. And this honor too passed over to the place; the eating in the house. In what house? In the Temple. Observe the increase of piety: They cast away their riches, and rejoiced, and had great gladness, for greater were the riches they, received without labor. None reproached, none envied, none grudged; no pride, no contempt was there. As children they did indeed account themselves to be under teaching: as new born babes, such was their disposition. Yet why use this faint image? If you remember how it was when God shook our city with an earthquake, how subdued all men were. (*Infra*, Hom. 41: 2.) Such was the case then with those converts. No knavery, no villainy then: such is the effect of fear, of affliction! No talk of "mine" and "thine" then. Hence gladness waited at their table; no one seemed to eat of his own, or of another's; — I grant this may seem a riddle. Neither did they consider their brethren's property foreign to themselves; it was the property of a Master; nor again deemed they aught their own, all was the brethren's. The poor man knew no shame, the rich no haughtiness. This is gladness. The latter deemed himself the obliged and fortunate party; the others felt themselves as honored herein, and closely were they bound together. For indeed, because when people make doles of money, there are apt to be insults, pride, grudging; therefore says the Apostle, "Not grudgingly, or of necessity." — (2 Corinthians 9:7.) ["With gladness and simplicity of heart," etc.] See of how many things he bears witness to

them! Genuine faith, upright conduct, perseverance in hearing, in prayers, in singleness, in cheerfulness. ["Praising God."] (v. 47.) Two things there were which might deject them; their abstemious living, and the loss of their property. Yet on both these accounts did they rejoice. ["And having favor with all the people."] For who but must love men of this character, as common fathers? They conceived no malice toward each other; they committed all to the grace of God. ["With all the people."]

Fear there was none; yea, though they had taken their position in the midst of dangers. By *singleness*, however, he denotes their entire virtue, far surpassing their contempt of riches, their abstinence, and their perseverance in prayer. For thus also they offered pure praise to God: this is to praise God. But observe also here how they immediately obtain their reward. "Having favor with all the people." They were engaging, and highly beloved. For who would not prize and admire their simplicity of character; who would not be linked to one in whom was nothing underhand? To whom too does salvation belong, but to these? To whom those great marvels? Was it not to shepherds that the Gospel was first preached? and to Joseph, being a man of simple mind, insomuch that he did not let a suspicion of adultery frighten him into doing wrong? Did not God elect rustics, those artless men? For it is written, "Blessed is every simple soul." (Proverbs 11:25.) And again, "He that walks simply, walks surely." (Proverbs 10:9.) "True," you will say, "but prudence also is needed." Why, what is simplicity, I pray you, but prudence? For when you suspect no evil, neither can you fabricate any: when you have no annoyances, neither can you remember injuries. Has anyone insulted you? You were not pained. Has anyone reviled you? You were nothing hurt. Has he envied you? Still you had no hurt. Simplicity is a high road to true philosophy. None so beautiful in soul as the simple. For as in regard of personal appearance, he that is sullen, and downcast, and reserved, even if he be good-looking, loses much of his beauty; while he that relaxes his countenance, and gently smiles, enhances his good looks; so in respect of the soul, he that is reserved, if he have ten thousand good points, disfigures them; but the frank and simple, just the reverse. A man of this last description may be safely made a friend, and when at variance easily reconciled. No need of guards and outposts, no need of chains and fetters with such an one; but great is his own freedom, and that of those who associate with him. But what, you will say, will such a man do if he fall among wicked people? God, Who has commanded us to be simpleminded, will stretch out His hand. What was more guileless than David? What more wicked than Saul? Yet who triumphed? Again, in Joseph's case; did not he in simplicity approach his master's wife, she him with wicked art? Yet what, I pray, was he the worse? Furthermore, what more simple than was Abel? what more malicious than Cain? And Joseph again, had he not dealt artlessly with his brethren? Was not this the cause of his eminence, that he spoke out unsuspectingly, while they received his words in malice? He declared once and again his dreams unreservedly; and then again he set off to them carrying provisions; he used no caution; he committed all to God: nay, the more they held him in the light of an enemy, the more did he treat them as brothers. God had power not to have suffered him to fall into their hands; but that the wonder might be made manifest, how, though they do their worst, he shall be higher than they: though the blow do come upon him, it comes from another, not from himself. On the contrary, the wicked man strikes himself first, and none other than himself. "For alone," it is said, "shall he bear his troubles." (Proverbs 9:12.) Ever in him the soul is full of dejection, his thoughts being ever entangled: whether he must hear aught or say aught, he does all with complaints, with accusation. Far, very far from such do

friendship and harmony make their abode: but fightings are there, and enmities, and all unpleasantness. They that are such suspect even themselves. To these not even sleep is sweet, nor anything else. And have they a wife also, lo, they are enemies and at war with all: what endless jealousies, what unceasing fear! Aye, the wicked, his name from, "to have trouble."

And, indeed, thus the Scripture is ever calling "wickedness" by the name of labor; as, for instance, "Under his tongue is toil and labor;" and again, "In the midst of them is toil and labor." (Psalm 10:7; 90:10; and 55:11.)

Now if anyone should wonder, whence those who had at first been of this last class, now are so different, let him learn that affliction was the cause, affliction, that school-mistress of heavenly wisdom, that mother of piety.

When riches were done away with, wickedness also disappeared. True, say you, for this is the very thing I am asking about; but whence comes all the wickedness there is now? How is it that it came into the minds of those three thousand and five thousand straightway, to choose virtue, and that they simultaneously became Christian philosophers, whereas now hardly one is to be found? how was it that they then were in such harmony? What was it, that made them resolute and active? What was it that so suddenly inflamed them? The reason is, that they drew near with much piety; that honors were not so sought after as they are now; that they transferred their thoughts to things future, and looked for nothing of things present. This is the sign of an ardent mind, to encounter perils; this was their idea of Christianity. We take a different view, we seek our comfort here. The result is, that we shall not even obtain this, when the time is come. "What are we to do?" asked those men. We, just the contrary — "What shall we do?" What behooved to be done, they did. We, quite the reverse. Those men condemned themselves, despaired of saving themselves. This is what made them such as they were. They knew what a gift they had received. But how can you become like them, when you do everything in an opposite spirit? They heard, and were forthwith baptized. They did not speak those cold words which we do now, nor did they contrive delays (p. 47, note 3); and yet they had heard all the requirements: but that word, "Save yourselves from this generation," made them to be not sluggish; rather they welcomed the exhortation; and that they did welcome it, they proved by their deeds, they showed what manner of men they were. They entered at once the lists, and took off the coat; whereas we do enter, but we intend to fight with our coat on. This is the cause that our antagonist has so little trouble, for we get entangled in our own movements, and are continually thrown down. We do precisely the same thing as he who, having to cope with a man frantic, breathing fire; and seeing him, a professed wrestler, covered with dust, tawny, stripped, clotted with dirt from the sand and sun, and running down with sweat and oil and dirt; himself, smelling of perfumes, should put on his silken garments, and his gold shoes, and his robe hanging down to his heels, and his golden trinkets on the head, and so descend into the arena, and grapple with him. Such a one will not only be impeded, but being taken up with the sole idea of not staining or rending his fine clothes, will tumble at the very first onset, and withal will suffer that which he chiefly dreaded, the damage of those his fond delights. The time for the contest is come, and say, are you putting on your silks? It is the time of exercise, the hour of the race, and are you adorning yourself as for a procession? Look not to outward things, but to the inward. For by the thoughts about these things the soul is hampered on all sides, as if by strong cords, so that she cannot let you raise a hand, or contend against the adversary; and makes you soft and effeminate. One may think himself, even when

released from all these ties, well off, to be enabled to conquer that impure power. And on this account Christ too did not allow the parting with riches alone to suffice, but what said He? "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow Me." (Mark 10:21.) Now if, even when we cast away our riches, we are not yet in a safe position, but stand still in need of some further art and close practice; much more, if we retain them, shall we fail to achieve great things, and, instead thereof, become a laughing-stock to the spectators, and to the evil one himself. For even though there were no devil, though there were none to wrestle with us, yet ten thousand roads on all sides lead the lover of money to hell. Where now are they who ask why the devil was made? Behold here the devil has no hand in the work, we do it all ourselves. Of a truth they of the hills might have a right to speak thus, who after they had given proof of their temperance, their contempt of wealth and disregard of all such things, have infinitely preferred to abandon father, and houses, and lands, and wife, and children. Yet, they are the last to speak so: but the men who at no time ought to say it, these do say it. Those are indeed wrestling with the devil; these he does not think worth entering into. You will say, But it is the devil who instills this same covetousness. Well, flee from it, do not harbor it, O man. Suppose now, you see one flinging out filth from some upper story, and at the same time a person seeing it thrown out, yet standing there and receiving it all on his head: you not only do not pity him, but you are angry, and tell him it serves him right; and, "Do not be a fool," everyone cries out to him, and lays the blame not so much on the other for shooting out the filth, as on him for letting it come on him. But now, you know that covetousness is of the devil; you know that it is the cause of ten thousand evils; you see him flinging out, like filth, his noisome imaginations; and do you not see that you are receiving on your bare head his nastiness, when it needed but to turn aside a little to escape it altogether? Just as our man by shifting his position would have escaped; so, do you refuse to admit such imaginations, ward off the lust. And how am I to do this? you will ask. Were you a Gentile, and had eyes for things present alone, the matter perhaps might be one of considerable difficulty, and yet even the Gentiles have achieved as much; but you — a man in expectation of heaven and heavenly bliss — and you to ask, "How am I to repel bad thoughts?" Were I saying the contrary, then you might doubt: did I say, covet riches, "How shall I covet riches," you might answer, "seeing such things as I do?" Tell me, if gold and precious stones were set before you, and I were to say, Desire lead, would there not be reason for hesitation? For you would say, How can I? But if I said, Do not desire it; this had been plainer to understand. I do not marvel at those who despise, but at those who despise not riches. This is the character of a soul exceeding full of stupidity, no better than flies and gnats, a soul crawling upon the earth, wallowing in filth, destitute of all high ideas. What is it you say? Are you destined to inherit eternal life; and do you say, how shall I despise the present life for the future? What, can the things be put in competition? You are to receive a royal vest; and say you, How shall I despise these rags? You are going to be led into the king's palace; and do you say, How shall I despise this present hovel? Of a truth, we ourselves are to blame in every point, we who do not choose to let ourselves be stirred up ever so little. For the willing have succeeded, and that with great zeal and facility. Would that you might be persuaded by our exhortation, and succeed too, and become imitators of those who have been successful, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, and power, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

VOCABULARY:

Apostles, fellowship

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ ascended to the Heavens and sent us the Holy Spirit
Liturgical:	We celebrate the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost
Moral:	Giving to the poor
Spiritual:	Praising God

CONNECTION POINT

After our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into the Heavens and the apostles received the Holy Spirit, they began to talk about our Lord Jesus Christ to others. This is how the church began.

LESSON BODY:

THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE JOIN THE DISCIPLES

When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they changed. And they changed dramatically. Before they had the Holy Spirit, they acted just like everyone else around them. There was nothing special about them. In fact, they were among the people whom everyone kind of looked down upon: they were very poor fishermen, or they had jobs that were regarded as dishonest. They were not among the honored people, like a priest or a governor or an important person like that.

But, something really changed in a huge way after they received the Holy Spirit. Do you remember the story of how they received the Holy Spirit? Remember how we used the candles? They were gathered together after our Lord ascended, and then what happened? [Let one of the children explain how they heard a rushing mighty wind that filled the whole house and divided tongues of fire sat upon each one of them, and how they went out and could speak in different languages that they had not known before].

Right after they went outside and were talking in different languages and the people who heard them speaking were amazed, but some made fun of them, St. Peter stood up and gave a very powerful sermon to thousands of people. And 3,000 people joined the disciples on that day and were baptized and became Christians – 3,000!

Look at how much St. Peter changed: he went from being scared and denying Christ our Lord before His crucifixion, to speaking boldly and without any fear to thousands of people, the same people whom he had denied Him in front of. And not only did he speak boldly to them, but the people *listened* to him and agreed with him and joined him in his faith. This is a remarkable change and miraculous – one that could only have happened due to the Holy Spirit.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Those who had believed that day continued on in fellowship and unity with the disciples, learning from the apostles and keeping everything they taught them about our Lord Jesus Christ and about how to live. Let's talk about what unity is. When a family is united, what does that look like? [Let the kids give their answers and help them get a thorough understanding]. How about when a Sunday school class is united, what does that look like? [Let the kids share what they think and correct if they need to be]. What about when a church is united? [Again, let them explain].

So those who had believed and the disciples – the first Christians – were perfectly united. Their hearts were knit together and they loved and cared for one another. And they were together in all things; they became very close to each other and they shared *everything*. They actually sold their possessions and everything they had, and divided them among all. All their possessions belonged to everyone; there was no such thing as “this is mine” and “that is yours.” Everything was everyone's, and there was no one who was left out or left without something he/she needed. There was no such thing as “poor” or “rich” among them, because they shared everything. So no one felt like he was better than another person because he had nicer clothes, or nicer games, or better food. And no one felt jealous of anyone else because they had better things. Those first Christians knew that everything belonged to God, and they shared all things among one another. And they were very glad and joyful.

No one thought badly about another or suspected that someone else had done something mean to them. They loved one another and were honest with one another and never assumed anything bad about another. For example, they wouldn't complain and say that “so and so said I was mean” or “so and so doesn't want to be my friend,” or “so and so thinks bad things about me,” or “so and so tricked me.” There was nothing like that among them. They would eat their meals together and they were not worried about having fancy food or the best kind of food. They ate simply and in peace.

Together, they would pray every day in the Temple (the church). Together, they would have communion and pray in each other's houses.

And they were always praising God, in their hearts and in psalms and hymns and prayers. They were so thankful to our Lord and loved Him and were very glad because of what He had done and how He had saved them. And the other people – those who had not joined them – loved them because they were always giving to the poor and helping those in need. They were not worried about anything because they trusted in God completely; and because they were not worried about anything, they were able to give to others.

This is how our church started with the apostles; this is what it was like.

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 50: THE FEAST OF THE THEOTOKOS SAINT MARY: THE LIFE OF ST. MARY

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 1:26-38

26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

29But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

37For with God nothing will be impossible."

38Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

SYNAXARIUM:

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Entrance of Saint Mary into the Temple at Jerusalem

On this day we commemorate the entrance of our holy Lady, the Virgin, Saint Mary, the Theotokos, into the Temple when she was three years old, for she was dedicated to God.

Her mother, Anna (Hannah), was childless. The women who were in the Temple stayed away from her. She was exceedingly sad and so was her husband Joachim who was a blessed old man. She prayed to God fervently and with a contrite heart saying, "If You give me a fruit, I will devote the child to Your Holy Temple." God answered her prayers and she brought forth this pure saint and called her Mary.

She reared her for three years, after which she took her to live with the virgins in the Temple.

Saint Mary dwelt in the sanctuary for 12 years. She received her food from the hands of the angels, until the time when our Lord Christ came into the world, and was incarnated through her, the elect of all women.

When she had completed 12 years in the sanctuary, the priests took counsel together concerning her, so that they might entrust her to someone who would protect her, for she was consecrated to God and they were not allowed to keep her in the temple after this age. They decided that she be engaged to a man who could take care of her and who would look after her.

They gathered 12 righteous men from the house of David of the Tribe of Judah so they might place her with one of them. They took their staffs inside the Sanctuary, and a dove flew up and stood on the staff belonging to Joseph the carpenter who was a righteous man. They knew that this was God's will.

Joseph took the holy Virgin St. Mary, and she dwelt with him until Gabriel, the Angel of the Lord, came to her and announced to her that the Son of God was to be incarnated from her, for the salvation of Adam and his posterity.

Her intercession be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1.The Dormition of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.

2.The Departure of St. Hilaria, Daughter of Emperor Zeno.

3.The Departure of St. Gregorius (Gregory of Nyssa), Brother of St. Basil the Great.

1. On this day, Our Lady, the all pure, Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God, departed. As she was always praying in the holy sepulcher, the Holy Spirit informed her that she was about to depart from this temporal world. When the time of her departure arrived, the virgins of the Mount of Olives came to her, with the apostles, who were still alive, and they surrounded her bed. The Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is the glory, with a host of thousands and thousands of angels came to her and comforted her and told her about the eternal joy that was prepared for her, and she rejoiced. The apostles and the virgins asked her to bless them. She stretched her hand and blessed them all, and she gave up her pure spirit in the hand of her Son and God, and He took her spirit to the heavenly mansions.

The apostles prepared the body in a fitting manner and carried it to Gethsemane. Some of the Jews blocked their way to prevent them from burying the body. One of the Jews seized the coffin with his hands, which were separated instantly from his body and they remained attached to the coffin. He regretted his evil deed and wept bitterly. Through the supplications of the saintly apostles, his hands were reattached to his body, and he believed in the Lord Christ. When they placed the body in the tomb, the Lord hid it from them.

St. Thomas the Apostle was not present at the time of St. Mary's departure. He wanted to go to Jerusalem and a cloud carried him there. On his way, he saw the pure body of St. Mary carried by the angels and ascended to heaven with it. One of the angels told him, "Make haste and kiss the pure body of St. Mary," and he did.

When St. Thomas arrived where the disciples were, they told him about St. Mary's departure and he said to them, "You know how I conducted myself at the resurrection of the Lord Christ, and I will not believe unless I see her body." They went with him to the tomb, and uncovered the place of the body but they did not find it, and everyone was perplexed and surprised. St. Thomas told them how he saw the holy body and the angels that were ascending with it. They heard the Holy Spirit saying to them, "The Lord did not will to leave her body on earth." The Lord had promised his pure apostles to let them see her in the flesh once again. They were waiting for this promise to be fulfilled, until the 16th day of the month of Misra, when the promise was fulfilled and they saw her.

The years of her life on earth were 60 years. She was 12 years old when she left the temple. She spent 34 years in Joseph's house, until the Ascension of the Lord, and 14 years with St. John the Evangelist, according to the commandment of the Lord which he told her at the cross, "Behold, this is your son," and to St. John, "Behold, this is your mother."

Her intercession and blessings be with us. Amen.

The Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

1. *The Departure of the Righteous Joachim, The Lord Christ Grandfather.*
2. *The Departure of St. Macrobius.*
3. *The Departure of Sts. Agapius, Theodora, and Metruf.*

1. On this day the righteous Joachim (Yonakhir - Zadok) departed. He was the father of St. Mary, the Theotokos, the mother of God incarnate. He was of the seed of David, and of the tribe of Judah, for he was the son of Jotham, the son of Lazarus, the son of Eldad who ascended up in genealogy to Solomon the king, the son of David whom God promised that his seed should reign over the children of Israel for ever. The wife of this righteous man, Hannah was barren, and both of them prayed and entreated God continually to give them a child. Having accepted their petition He gave them a good and sweet fruit, which satisfied all the men of the world, and removed from them the bitterness of servitude, and He made Joachim worthy to be called the father of the Lord Christ in regard of His marvelous and wondrous Incarnation. After God had pleased him with the birth of our Lady, his heart was rejoiced and he offered his offerings, and the shame had been removed from him, he departed in peace when the Virgin was three years old.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

The Blessed Month Of Bashans, The First Day

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, The Mother of God

On this day the church celebrates the birth of the pure Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God (Theotokos), through whom Salvation came to mankind. She was born in the city of Nazareth, where her parents lived. Her father was grieved in his heart for he could not offer an offering to God for he did not have any children. In the fullness of time according to the Divine Will, the angel of the Lord was sent to announce Joachim, her father, while he was on the mountain praying, and said to him: "The Lord will give you offspring through whom salvation comes to the world."

Immediately he went down the mountain believing what the angel told him, and he told his wife Anna of what he saw and heard. She rejoiced, gave thanks to the Lord, and vowed that the child who was to be born to her would become a servant in the house of the Lord all the days of her/his life. She conceived, and gave birth to this Saint and called her Mary who had become the Queen of all women of the world, and through her we have received the grace.

May her intercession be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Annunciation of St. Joachim with the Birth of the Virgin Mary.*

2. *The Departure of St. Timothy II (Timotheos), 26th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, God sent His honorable angel Gabriel to announce to St. Joachim of the birth of the Virgin, the mother of the incarnated God. This righteous man and his wife St. Anna (Hannah) were stricken in years and had no children for Anna was barren. The children of Israel used to insult him because he had not begotten a son. Because of this, these two saints were sad, and prayed continually, and entreated God by day and by night. They vowed that the child they would beget would be made a steward for the temple.

While St. Joachim was praying over the mountain, he fell into a deep sleep and Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, appeared to him and announced to him that his wife Anna would conceive and bear a child, that would delight his eyes and please his heart; and likewise all the world would rejoice and be glad. When he woke from his sleep, he came to his house, and told his wife about the vision, which she believed.

Anna conceived forthwith, and brought forth our Lady, the Virgin Mary, and St. Anna became more honorable than all the women of the world.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

Saint Mary's Feasts and Apparitions in Egypt:

1. The 21st of every Coptic month, the church celebrates the commemoration of Virgin Mary
2. Departure of the Virgin St. Mary: January 29 – Tuba 21
3. St. Mary's apparition in Zeitoun (Cairo): April 2, 1968 – Baramhat 24
4. Birthday of St. Mary: May 9 – Bashans 1
5. St. Mary's apparition in St. Demiana church (Cairo): May 25, 1986 – Bashans 17
6. Entry of the Holy Family into Egypt: June 1 – Bashans 24
7. Commemoration of the Virgin Mary and Dedication of her first church in Philippi: June 28 – Baona 21

8. Annunciation of the Birth of Virgin Mary: August 13 – Mesra 7
9. Assumption of St. Mary's body: August 22 – Mesra 16
10. Consecration of St. Mary's church of El Moharrak monastery: November 15 – Hatour 6
11. St. Mary's entry into Jerusalem sanctuary: December 13 – Kiahk 3
12. St. Mary's apparition in St. Mark's Church (Assiout, Egypt): August 2000

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Sheri Maria te Oro

VOCABULARY:

Theotokos: *Mother of God*

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	St Mary is the Theotokos
Liturgical:	Icons tell the story of St Mary
Moral:	St Mary is the role model of the church
Spiritual:	St Mary is our mother whom we look to for help

LESSON BODY:

ST. ANNA AND ST. JOACHIM

Long ago there lived a man and a woman named Anna and Joachim. They were married and they were very righteous people who loved God very much. But they were sad because they did not have any children and they had become old. These two saints would pray continually for a child and ask God day and night to grant them a child. They promised God that the child they would

have would be given to the Temple (the church) to serve Him. In those days, people who loved God would have their children dedicated in the Temple and they would live there, serving in the Temple and praying.

One day while St. Joachim was praying on top of a mountain, he fell into a deep sleep and the archangel Gabriel appeared to him. Gabriel announced to him that Anna his wife would bear a child that would delight his eyes and please his heart, and likewise all the world would be glad over his child as well. Gabriel told him, "The Lord will give you a child through whom salvation comes to the world." When he awoke from his sleep, he immediately went down from the mountain, believing what the angel told him, and he told his wife Anna of what he saw and heard. St. Anna was so happy! She gave thanks to God and promised that this child that was to be born to her would serve in the house of God all the days of his or her life.

St. Anna gave birth to a baby girl and named her Mary (after St. Anna's mother). We know her today as our Lady and the Mother of us all, the Virgin Saint Mary the Theotokos.

SERVING IN THE TEMPLE

Mary lived with her mother and her father until she was three years old. When she turned three, two things happened: her father passed away and went to Heaven, and since she was dedicated to God, she was now old enough to go serve Him in the Temple. She was brought to the Temple and she lived with the other women there. She spent her time praying and worshiping God, and serving. She did all kinds of work in the Temple and she was very joyful in being with her Lord.

She stayed in the Temple until she was 15 years old. When she turned 15, it was time for her to leave the Temple. The priests talked with each other about where St. Mary would go live next and who could take care of her. They wanted to entrust her to someone who would protect her, because she was consecrated to God and therefore belonged to Him. She was very special because of that. They needed God to show them where St. Mary should go live next.

ST. MARY GOES TO LIVE WITH ST. JOSEPH

The priests gathered together 12 righteous men. They took their walking sticks inside the Sanctuary of the Temple (a place that is like the altar in the church). They prayed to God to choose the right person for St. Mary to go live with and who would take care of her, kind of like a father. Then something interesting happened: a dove flew up and stood on the staff that belonged to a man named Joseph; he was a carpenter and a very righteous man. We know him today as St. Joseph, our Lord's earthly father. The priests knew that this was God's will and that God wanted Mary to stay with Joseph.

Joseph took the holy Virgin St. Mary and she dwelt in his house. She continued spending her time in prayer and worship, for she loved God truly with all her heart and soul and strength.

ARCHANGEL GABRIEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT

St. Mary had given up her life to God and depended on Him completely to direct her life. She knew her life was in His hands. She was a very kind and gentle person; she didn't scream or shout or get angry at people. She was very humble, and she saw herself as the servant of God and didn't expect any special treatment from Him or from anyone. She knew He would do what was best for her and she only wanted to serve and worship Him.

One day, as she was in prayer, the archangel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she would give birth to the Son of God, the Savior of the world. The angel told her that since she was not married, the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of God would bring forth this Holy Child in her. St. Mary accepted what the angel told her and believed God's word that was spoken to her.

ST. MARY'S LIFE FOLLOWING GABRIEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT

As we know, St. Mary then went to visit Elizabeth and stayed with her a few months and then went back to the house of St. Joseph.

When it was nearing the time for her to give birth to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, St. Mary and St. Joseph had to travel far from their home to Bethlehem. When they arrived there, there was no room for them in the inn and St. Mary gave birth to our Lord in the manger.

Shortly after, the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt and they stayed there for a while before returning back to their home country (Israel).

St. Mary and St. Joseph raised the Child Jesus and He was obedient to them in all things. He would help St. Joseph in his carpentry work and He helped St. Mary around the house.

At our Lord's crucifixion, St. Mary was with Him and she was very, very sad to see her beloved Son on the Cross and in so much pain. Our Lord spoke to St. Mary and St. John the disciple while He was on the Cross and told them that St. Mary would go live with St. John as his mother and that St. John would take care of her now.

ST. MARY'S BODY IS TAKEN TO HEAVEN

When the time came for St. Mary to leave her earthly life behind and go to Heaven, the Holy Spirit told her that she was about to depart. When it was time, many people gathered to her, including all the apostles. They surrounded her bed. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to her and told her about the eternal joy that was prepared for her. She was very joyful that she was finally going to be able to be with Him again.

The apostles and the others asked St. Mary to bless them, which she did, and then she gave up her spirit in the hand of her Son and God and He took her spirit to the heavenly mansions.

The apostles carried her body to her tomb.

Now St. Thomas had not been there at the time of St. Mary's departure. He wanted to go there, and a cloud carried him there. On his way, he saw the body of St. Mary carried up to heaven by

angels. One of the angels told him, "Hurry and kiss the pure body of St. Mary" and he did. (The angel meant for St. Thomas to take a blessing from it, like we do in the church when the relics of saints are being carried around the church).

When St. Thomas arrived and met the rest of the disciples, they told him about how St. Mary had passed away. St. Thomas played a little joke on them, since he was the only one who had seen her body being carried up! He told them, "Look, you know how I acted at the time of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now I will not believe this news either unless I see her body." So they all went together to the tomb and uncovered the place where they had laid her body, but they did not find it! They were all surprised and confused, except for St. Thomas! St. Thomas then told them about how he had seen her body being carried up to heaven by the angels. Then they heard the Holy Spirit saying to them, "The Lord did not will to leave her body on earth."

St. Mary was 60 years old when she departed to Heaven. May her prayers and intercessions be with us.

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Plan a: After telling the story, the children could draw different scenes from St. Mary's life, each child or group of children drawing one scene. The servant could suggest the following scenes to draw: St. Joachim praying on the mountain, St. Mary being dedicated in the Temple at 3 years old, St. Mary leaving the Temple with St. Joseph at 15 years old, the annunciation, St. Mary going to visit Elizabeth, the birth of Christ, the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt, the crucifixion of Christ, St. Mary going to live with St. John, the assumption of her body to Heaven. Then as a class, the pictures could be arranged in the correct order and hung on the wall.

Unit V: Seasonal and Activity Lessons

Purpose: This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

LESSON 51: THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 17:1-13

"Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ²and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" ⁶And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." ⁸When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." ¹⁰And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. ¹²But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." ¹³Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist."

CHURCH FATHERS:

St John Chrysostom Commentary on St Matthew Gospel Homily 56:

2. *"And after six days He took with Him Peter and James and John. Now another says, "after eight," not contradicting this writer, but most fully agreeing with him. For the one expressed both the very day on which He spoke, and that on which He led them up; but the other, the days between them only. But I pray you, the severe goodness of Matthew, not concealing those who were preferred to himself. This John also often doth, recording the peculiar praises of Peter with great sincerity. For the choir of these holy men was everywhere pure from envy and vainglory.*

Having taken therefore the leaders, *“He brought them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.”*

Why does He take with Him these only? Because these were superior to the rest. And Peter indeed showed his superiority by exceedingly loving Him; but John by being exceedingly loved of Him; and James again by his answer which he answered with his brother, saying, “We are able to drink the cup; nor yet by his answer only, but also by his works; both by the rest of them, and by fulfilling, what he said. For so earnest was he, and grievous to the Jews, that Herod himself supposed that he had bestowed herein a very great favor on the Jews, I mean in slaying him. But wherefore does He not lead them up straightway? To spare the other disciples any feeling of human weakness: for which cause He omits also the names of them that are to go up. And this, because the rest would have desired exceedingly to have followed, being to see a pattern of that glory; and would have been pained, as overlooked. For though it was somewhat in a corporeal way that He made the disclosure, yet nevertheless the thing had much in it to be desired. Why then does He at all foretell it? That they might be readier to seize the high meaning, by His foretelling it; and being filled with the more vehement desire in that round of days, might so be present with their mind quite awake and full of care.

3. But why does He also bring forward Moses and Elias? One might mention many reasons.

And first of all this: because the multitudes said He was, some Elias, some Jeremiah, some one of the old prophets, He brings the leaders of His choir, that they might see the difference even hereby between the servants and the Lord; and that Peter was rightly commended for confessing Him Son of God. But besides that, one may **mention another reason also:** that because men were continually accusing Him of transgressing the law, and accounting Him to be a blasphemer, as appropriating to Himself a glory which belonged not to Him, even the Father’s, and were saying, *“This Man is not of God, because He does not keep the Sabbath day;”* and again, *“We do not stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because that You, being a man, makes yourself God:”* that both the charges might be shown to spring from envy, and He be proved not liable to either; and that neither is His conduct a transgression of the law, nor His calling Himself equal to the Father an appropriation of glory not His own; He brings forward them who had shone out in each of these respects: Moses, because he gave the law, and the Jews might infer that he would not have overlooked its being trampled on, as they supposed, nor have shown respect to the transgressor of it, and the enemy of its founder: Elias too for his part was jealous for the glory of God, and were any man an adversary of God, and calling himself God, making himself equal to the Father, while he was not what he said, and had no right to do so; he was not the person to stand by, and hearken unto him. And one may **mention another reason also,** with those which have been spoken of. Of what kind then is it? To inform them that He hath power both of death and life, is ruler both above and beneath. For this cause He brings forward both him that had died, and him that never yet suffered this.

But the fifth motive, (for it is a fifth, besides those that have been mentioned), even the evangelist himself has revealed. Now what was this? To show the glory of the cross, and to console Peter and the others in their dread of the passion, and to raise up their minds. Since having come, they by no means held their peace, but *“spoke,”* it is said, *“of the glory which He was*

to accomplish at Jerusalem;” that is, of the passion, and the cross; for so they call it always. And not thus only did He cheer them, but also by the Excellency itself of the men, being such as He was especially requiring from themselves. I mean, that having said, *“If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross, and follow me;”* them that had died ten thousand times for God’s decrees, and the people entrusted to them, these persons He sets before them. Because each of these, having lost his life, found it. For each of them both spoke boldly unto tyrants, the one to the Egyptian, the other to Ahab; and in behalf of heartless and disobedient men; and by the very persons who were saved by them, they were brought into extreme danger; and each of them wishing to withdraw men from idolatry; and each being unlearned; for the one was of a *“slow tongue,”* and dull of speech, and the other for his part also somewhat of the rudest in his bearing; and of voluntary poverty both were very strict observers; for neither had Moses made any gain, nor had Elias aught more than his sheepskin; and this under the old law, and when they had not received so great a gift of miracles. For what if Moses clave a sea? yet Peter walked on the water, and was able to remove mountains, and used to work cures of all manner of bodily diseases, and to drive away savage demons, and by the shadow of his body to work those wonderful and great prodigies; and changed the whole world. And if Elias too raised a dead man, yet these raised ten thousand; and this before the spirit was as yet vouchsafed to them. He brings them forward accordingly for this cause also. For He would have them emulate their winning ways toward the people, and their presence of mind and inflexibility; and that they should be meek like Moses, and jealous for God like Elias, and full of tender care, as they were. For the one endured a famine of three years for the Jewish people; and the other said, *“If You will forgive them their sin, forgive; else blot me too out of the book, which You have written.”* Now of all this He was reminding them by the vision. For He brought those in glory too, not that these should stay where they were, but that they might even surpass their liminary lines. For example, when they said, *“Should we command fire to come down from heaven,”* and made mention of Elias as having done so, He said, *“You know not what manner of spirit you are of;”* training them to forbearance by the superiority in their gift.

And let none suppose us to condemn Elias as imperfect; we do not say this; for indeed he was exceedingly perfect, but in his own times, when the mind of men was in some degree childish, and they needed this kind of schooling. Since Moses too was in this respect perfect; nevertheless these have more required of them than he. For *“except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no ease enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”* For not into Egypt did they enter, but into the whole world, worse disposed than the Egyptians; neither were they to speak with Pharaoh, but to fight hand to hand with the devil, the very prince of wickedness. Yea, and their appointed struggle was, both to bind him, and to spoil all his goods; and this they did cleaving not the sea, but an abyss of ungodliness, through the rod of Jesse, — an abyss having waves far more grievous. See at any rate how many things there were to put the men in fear; death, poverty, dishonor, their innumerable sufferings; and at these things they trembled more than the Jews of old at that sea. But nevertheless against all these things He persuaded them boldly to venture, and to pass as along dry ground with all security. To train them therefore for all this, He brought forward those who shone forth under the old law.

4. What did the ardent Peter then say? *“It is good for us to be here.”* For because he had heard that Christ was to go to Jerusalem and to suffer, being in fear still and trembling for Him, even

after His reproof, he does not dare indeed approach and say the same thing again, *“Be it far from you;”* but from that fear obscurely intimates the same again in other words. That is, when he saw a mountain, and so great retirement and solitude, his thought was, *“He has great security here, even from the place; and not only from the place, but also from His going away no more unto Jerusalem.”* For he would have Him be there continually: wherefore also he speaks of *“tabernacles.”* For *“if this may be,”* said he, *“we shall not go up to Jerusalem; and if we go not up, He will not die, for there, He said the scribes would set upon Him.”* But thus indeed he does not dare to speak; but desiring however to order things so, he said undoubtingly, *“It is good for us to be here,”* where Moses also is present, and Elias; Elias who brought down fire on the mountain, and Moses who entered into the thick darkness, and talked with God; and no one will even know where we are.” Do you see the ardent lover of Christ? For look not now at this, that the manner of his exhortation was not well weighed, but see how ardent he was, how burning his affection to Christ. For in proof that not so much out of fear for himself he said these things, hear what he said, when Christ was declaring beforehand His future death, and the assault upon Him: *“I will lay down my life for Thy sake. Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You.”* And see how even in the very midst of the actual dangers he counseled amiss for himself. We know that when so great a multitude encompassed them, so far from flying, he even drew the sword, and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant. To such a degree did he disregard his own interest, and fear for his Master. Then because he had spoken as affirming a fact, he checks himself, and thinking, what if he should be again reprov’d, he said, *“If You will, let us make here three tabernacles, one for You and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”* What do you say, O Peter? did you not a little while since distinguish Him from the servants? Are you again numbering Him with the servants? Do you see how exceedingly imperfect they were before the crucifixion? For although the Father had revealed it to him, yet he did not always retain the revelation, but was troubled by his alarm; not this only, which I have mentioned, but another also, arising from that sight. In fact, the other evangelists, to declare this, and to indicate that the confusion of his mind, with which he spoke these things, arose from that alarm, said as follows; Mark, *“He did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid;”* but Luke after his saying, *“Let us make three tabernacles,”* added, *“not knowing what he said.”* Then to show that he was held with great fear, both he and the rest, he said, *“They were heavy with sleep, and when they were awake they saw His glory;”* meaning by deep sleep here, the deep stupor engendered in them by that vision. For as eyes are darkened by an excessive splendor, so at that time also did they feel. For it was not, I suppose, night, but day; and the exceeding greatness of the light weighed down the infirmity of their eyes.

5. What then? He Himself speaks nothing, nor Moses, nor Elias, but He that is greater than all, and more worthy of belief, the Father, utters a voice out of the cloud. Wherefore out of the cloud? Thus do God ever appear. *“For a cloud and darkness are round about Him;”* and, *“He sits on a light cloud;”* and again, *“Who makes clouds His chariot;”* and, *“A cloud received Him out of their sight;”* and, *“As the Son of Man coming in the clouds.”* In order then that they might believe that the voice proceeds from God, it comes from thence. And the cloud was bright. For *“while he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.”*

For as, when He threatens, He shows a dark cloud; — as on Mount Sinai; for “Moses,” it is said, “entered into the cloud, and into the thick darkness; and as a vapor, so went up the smoke;” and the prophet said, when speaking of His threatening, “Dark water in clouds of the air;” — so here, because it was His desire not to alarm, but to teach, it is a bright cloud.

And whereas Peter had said “Let us make three tabernacles,” He showed a tabernacle not made with hands. Wherefore in that case it was smoke, and vapor of a furnace; but in this, light unspeakable and a voice. Then, to signify that not merely concerning some one of the three was it spoken, but; concerning Christ only; when the voice was uttered, they were taken away. For by no means, had it been spoken merely concerning any one of them, would this man have remained alone, the two being severed from Him.

Why then did not the cloud likewise receive Christ alone, but all of them together? If it had received Christ alone, He would have been thought to have Himself uttered the voice. Wherefore also the evangelist, making sure this same point, said, that the voice was from the cloud, that is, from God.

And what said the voice? “This is my beloved Son.” Now if He is beloved, then fear not O Peter. For you ought indeed to know His power already, and to be fully assured touching His resurrection; but since; you do not know, at least from the voice of the Father take courage. For if God be mighty, as surely He is mighty, very evidently the Son is so likewise. Be not afraid then of those fearful things.

But if as yet you receive it not, consider at least that other fact, that He is both a Son, and is beloved. For “This,” it is said, “is My beloved Son.” Now if He is beloved, fear not. For no one gives up one whom he loves. Be not you therefore confounded; though you love Him beyond measure, you love Him not as much as He that begat Him. “In whom I am well pleased.” For not because He begot Him only, does He love Him, but because He is also equal to Him in all respects, and of one mind with Him. So that the charm of love is twofold, or rather even threefold, because He is the Son, because He is beloved, because in Him He is well pleased. But what means, “In whom I am well pleased?” As though He had said, “In whom I am refreshed, in whom I take delight;” because He is in all respects perfectly equal with Himself, and there is but one will in Him and in the Father, and though He continue a Son, He is in all respects one with the Father. “Hear ye Him.” So that although He choose to be crucified, you are not to oppose Him.

6. “And when they heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.” How was it that, when they heard these words, they were dismayed? And yet before this also a like voice was uttered at Jordan, and a multitude was present, and no one felt anything of the kind; and afterwards again, when also they said, “It thundered,.... yet neither at that time did they experience anything like this. How then did they fall down in the mount? Because there was solitude, and height. and great quietness, and a transfiguration full of awe, and a pure light, and a cloud stretched out; all which things put them in great alarm. And the amazement came thick on every side, and they fell down both in fear at once and in adoration.” But that the fear abiding so long might not drive out their recollection, presently He puts an end to their alarm, and is seen Himself alone, and commands them to tell no man this, until He is risen from the dead. For “as they came down from the mount, He charged them to tell the vision to no

be, whether governor, or consul, or what you will, all these dignities fleet away, and he that is convicted suffers the utmost penalty; much more will it be so there.

8. Therefore that this may not be so, let us lay aside our filthy garments, let us put on the armor of light, and the glory of God will wrap us around. For what is even grievous in the injunctions? or what is there not easy? Hear, for instance, the prophet speaking, and then you shall know the easiness thereof. *“Neither though you bow as a collar thy neck, and strew beneath you sackcloth and ashes, not even so shall you call a fast acceptable; but loose every bond of iniquity, unloose the twisted knots of oppressive bargains.”* See a prophet’s wisdom, how stating first whatever was irksome, and removing it, he exhorts them to obtain salvation by the duties that are easy; signifying, that God needs not toils, but obedience. Then implying that virtue is easy, but vice grievous and galling, he makes it out by the bare names; *“For,”* said he, *“vice is a bond,”* and *“a twisted knot,”* but virtue is a disengagement and release from all these. *“Tear in sunder every unjust compact;”* thus calling men’s bills about the interest due to them, and the sums they have lent. *“Set at liberty them that are bruised;”* them that are afflicted. For such a being is the debtor; when he sees his creditor, his mind is broken, and he fears him more than a wild beast. *“Bring in the poor that are cast out to thy house; if you see one naked, clothe him, and them that belong to thy seed thou shall not overlook.”*

Now in our late discourse which we made unto you when declaring the rewards, we showed the wealth arising from these acts; but now let us see if any of the injunctions be grievous, and transcending our nature. Nay, nothing of the kind shall we discover, but quite the contrary; that while these courses are very easy, those of vice are full of labor. For what is more vexatious than to be lending, and taking thought about usuries and bargains, and demanding sureties, and fearing and trembling about securities, about the principal, about the writings, about the interest, about the bondsmen? For such is the nature of worldly things; yea, nothing is so unsound and suspicious as that which is accounted security, and contrived for that purpose; but to show mercy is easy, and delivers from all anxiety. Let us not then traffic in other men’s calamities, nor make a trade of our benevolence. And I know indeed that many hear these words with displeasure; but what is the profit of silence? For though I should hold my peace, and give no trouble by my words, I could not by this silence deliver you from your punishment; rather it has altogether the opposite result; the penalty is enhanced, and not to you only, but to me also, doth such a silence procure punishment. What then signify our gracious words, when in our works they help us not, but rather do harm? What is the good of delighting men in word, while we vex them in deed, bringing pleasure to the ears, and punishment to the soul? Wherefore I must needs make you sorry here, that we may not suffer punishment there.

REFLECTION:

We are the children of God. The glory of the children of God is the glory of the only begotten of His Father. We saw a glimpse of that glory in the transfiguration of our Lord on the holy mountain. St Paul calls us to walk according to the calling that we are called.

PRAYER:

"As You have bestowed upon us the grace of sonship, through the washing of rebirth and the newness of the Holy Spirit, now, make us worthy, without hypocrisy, with a pure heart, a conscience full of truth, and unerring lips, that we entreat You, saying O' ABBA FATHER.

So that, as we have abandoned repetitive and vain words of the heathens and the hypocrisy of the Jews, we may be able to offer unto You the pleadings and the prayers, according to the Law of Your Only-Begotten Son, which is full of Salvation. So, with a humble Christian voice, and with purity of the soul, body and spirit, we dare without fear to cry unto You, Who are not created, without beginning and unbegotten, the Master of everyone, God, the Holy Father, Who art in heaven." Fraction of the Holy Theophany

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

Let us praise Christ our God, the Co-essential with the Father, who created through His divinity, the living and the dead.

+ Jesus Christ the only-begotten, ascended to the peak of Mount Tabor, and took His disciples with Him, Peter and James and John.

And He was transfigured before them, His face shone more than the sun, His clothes were like snow, and two prophets appeared to Him.

+ Elijah and Moses the strong ones, saw His clothes upon Mount Tabor, a cloud of light passed, over the disciples.

And there was the voice from heaven, of God the Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, He has done My will hear Him."

+ We praise and glorify Him, and exalt Him above all, as a good One and Lover of man, have mercy upon us according to Your great mercy. Alleluia Alleluia, Alleluia Alleluia, Jesus Christ the Son of God, was transfigured upon Mount Tabor.

+ This is He who is worthy of glory, with His good Father, and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever.

VOCABULARY:

Transfiguration: *Our Lord showing His glory*

Mount Tabor: *The holy mountain of Transfiguration*

OBJECTIVES

Faith:	Christ is the beloved of His Father
Liturgical:	We celebrate the feast of Transfiguration
Moral:	God called us His children
Spiritual:	Prayer transform us

INTRODUCTION

From the day Jesus was born on Earth, he became the perfect example of how the children of God should behave. When he was a child, he always obeyed his mother and father, and as he grew up, he continued to live by the laws of God. Today's lesson is about something else we learned about him from his life. During his Glorious Transfiguration, we learned that not only was he the best example of a child of God, but that he really *is* the true Son of God. It was then that the disciples really saw the true glory and majesty of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, when on the mountain Jesus shone with a light so bright that the disciples were unable to see past it. This light was so bright and sparkling because it was a taste of the power and majesty of the one true God. And it is this glory that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has given us the grace and opportunity to share in, as we are baptized to become children of God when we share in the Eucharist – when we eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

LESSON BODY:

Story

A few days before Jesus went into Jerusalem on a donkey, He called his three closest disciples – Peter, James, and John – to go up with him on a mountain to pray. And when they had gone up the mountain, Jesus began to pray but the disciples were very tired and very sleepy. Jesus,

however, was praying very passionately. And while he was looking up to heaven praying to God, his face and clothes suddenly became full of bright sparkling light. The gospel tells us that the light was so very bright and beautiful, and that two men appeared beside Jesus to speak to him – one was Moses the prophet and the other was Elijah the prophet. Now Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about how he was going to be crucified in Jerusalem, when the three sleepy disciples became fully awake and saw the two prophets beside Jesus and the brightness and glory of Jesus' face and clothes. So Peter told Jesus that they could build three tents, one for Jesus and one for Elijah, and one for Moses, where they can celebrate the Feast of the Tent up there on the mountain. Peter of course didn't really understand what was going on, but he thought that whatever it was, it was so amazing and wonderful that he didn't even want to leave the mountain. But as soon as Peter said he was going to set up the tents, a big bright glistening cloud came over the mountain and covered where they were all standing, and the disciples became very scared because it was nothing like they had ever seen before. And as the cloud covered them, a great and mighty voice was heard saying "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." And as soon as this voice stopped, only the disciples and Jesus were left on the mountain, and the disciples no longer saw anything or anyone else but Jesus. And Jesus told them that they were not allowed to tell people of what they saw until after he dies and rises from the dead. And the disciples obeyed.

Why did Jesus shine so brightly?

The dazzling bright light that the Gospel tells us surrounded Jesus and was in the cloud that covered the mountain was God's way of showing a taste of his glory to the three disciples. God wanted to show the disciples that Jesus Christ was truly the one and only Son of God. Jesus Christ is God. Jesus became so bright and marvelous to show the disciples that he is just like his father in Heaven. God the Father and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit wanted to show that they were together as one God, and that even if Jesus Christ was completely a man, he was still the one true Son of God. In glowing and shining as bright as the cloud that covered the mountain, Jesus showed that he was the Son of God the Father (who spoke in that mighty voice) and that just as God the Father is glorious and bright, Jesus the Son is also glorious and bright. And just as Jesus the Son is so full of love for us, God's children, God the Father is also full of love for us. And it is because of this that after Jesus had died and rose from the dead, St. Peter wrote a letter to the Church explaining that what he, James, and John saw on the mountain was God's true glory – Jesus is the Son and the Light of the Father in Heaven. He is not only human but he is also completely and exactly like the Father and the Holy Spirit – He is God.

Imagine if Jesus were to allow us to see His true glory in bright dazzling light. What do you think the light might do to us? The light would blind us! Remember the story of how Saul, before he converted and became St. Paul, rode to Damascus to kill the Christians when Jesus suddenly appeared in God's glory, so bright and full of light, and said to him "Saul Saul why do you persecute me." As soon as Saul saw Jesus surrounded by his godly light, he was blinded and had to go to a city to have a saint heal his eyes and baptize him into Christianity. That is what would happen if Jesus were to let us, sinners, see his blinding glorious light during the Divine Liturgy. But instead, God protects us by covering our eyes during the liturgy so that we do not become blind.

St. Peter was able to see Jesus' light when they were on the mountain because he loved Jesus so much and was so amazed by what he saw. Only those who do not believe were blinded when they were allowed to see Jesus' light, like Saul.

How can we enjoy God's light if we are all sinners?

Jesus Christ the Son of God did not come down to Earth just to show off his magnificent bright light to us. Instead, he loves us so much that he came down to Earth so that he can share that Godly light with us. He wanted to give us some of this light so that we can become children of God and have a part of God inside of us. He lets us share in his glorious nature by giving us his body and blood in the Eucharist. When we eat of Jesus' body and drink his blood, we become LIKE God himself. That is why everyone must first be baptized before they can eat of this Eucharist. Because without being born again through baptism, our sinful bodies and hearts will never be able to share this glory of God. But once we were baptized, the Holy Spirit cleaned us and made us brand new children, born in the Church, and born in God's family. And once you are part of God's family, you can have your share of the glory of God through eating the body and drinking the blood of the Son of God. That is why Jesus glowed so brightly on the mountain during his transfiguration. God wanted to show the disciples that Jesus was truly the Son of God who was exactly like God the Father and the Holy Spirit; all three are one God, and they want to share their bright and dazzling glory with us, to give us a chance to be their children – the Family of God.

THIRD SECTION: MINI-REFERENCE

1. Liturgical Cycle
2. Second Grade Prayer
3. Creative Activities

1. LITURGICAL CYCLE

- Every family has their own celebrations (for example: birthdays, anniversaries). The Church, as the family of God, comes to celebrate certain occasions. The church invites all of us to celebrate the important occasions that made our faith as one body. What are the feasts we celebrate in general?

FEASTS OF THE LORD: MAJOR AND MINOR

MAJOR FEASTS

1. Holy Nativity
2. Holy Theophany
3. Palm Sunday
4. Covenant Thursday
5. Holy Resurrection
6. Holy Pentecost
7. Holy Annunciation

MINOR FEASTS

1. Presentation of the Lord into the Temple
2. Circumcision
3. Entry into Egypt
4. Wedding of Cana of Galilee
5. Holy Transfiguration
6. Holy Ascension
7. Thomas Sunday

- In addition we celebrate the feasts of the saints on daily basis, except in the Holy fifty days, as we focus all our attention to the Resurrected Lord.

FASTING

FIRST DEGREE FAST: ABSOLUTE RESTRICTION TO MEAT & DAIRY & SEAFOOD; INCLUDES EVERY –

- Wednesday and Friday (except during the 50 days after Resurrection)
- the Great Lent,
- Baramoun days,
- Jonah's Fast

SECOND DEGREE FAST: ABSOLUTE RESTRICTION TO MEAT & DAIRY- SEAFOOD IS ALLOWED; INCLUDES:

- Advent,
- Fast of the Apostles,
- the Fast of St. Mary

MOVEABLE FEASTS AND FASTS

- o Moving Feasts and Fasts (do not come on a fixed date every year)
 1. Jonah's fast
 2. Beginning of Holy Lent
 3. Holy Week
 4. Holy Resurrection
 5. Holy Pentecost

- He ascended unto heaven and sent to us the Paraclete, The Spirit of Truth the comforter,
Amine Alleluia

3. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

DRAWING AND ART

- Album/CD covers
- Boxes (for art projects or collections)
- Flyers
- Greeting cards
- Mobiles
- Models from clay or dough
- Mosaics (construction paper, paper punch holes, Easter egg shells, seeds)
- Bulletin boards
- Christmas trees
- Collages (magazine pictures or odds and ends)
- Displays
- Banners
- Book jackets
- Booklets (bound with yarn or staples, accordion type)
- Bookmarks
- Doorknob hangers
- Dot pictures
- Finger paintings
- Fingerprint pictures from ink pads (details with felt-tipped pens)
- Movies
- Puppets
- Sculpture (wire, paper, aluminum, foil, clay)
- Sponge paintings
- Stained-glass windows
- Student-made storybooks
- Texts lettered on seashells, rocks
- Paper dolls
- Paper weight
- Photo albums with illustrations and captions
- Photo essays (magazine pictures or photos)
- Posters
- T-shirts
- Water pictures on the board
- Yarn-and-cloth pictures

WRITING

- TV shows
- Web pages
- Paraphrases of Bible passages
- Poems
- Prayers
- Questions and answers
- Quizzes
- Reports
- Riddles
- Commercials
- Conversations

