



9th and 10th Grade High School Curriculum

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Objective: Jesus Christ Our Life

“And this is eternal life, knowing you Father, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” As Christians we are called to live in communion with God and to know Him. But how do we get to know the Father. Jesus said “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” Christ is the ultimate, the final revelation of God. And as Christians, when we see Christ, we know the Father. Having this relationship with Christ, and truly understanding His love for us, and abiding in this love, is what gives us life. This relationship directs us to the mysteries and to living a moral life in the Church. As such, the objective of this curriculum is to build on this relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit. How is this accomplished? The units vary from one that focus on “Who is Christ” which helps us to understand and appreciate the person of Christ- seeing his compassion, love, strength, and all that is beautiful in Him, to studying the Book of Isaiah to see how the prophecies speak about Christ, to a unit about the role of the Holy Spirit and how He makes Christ present to us through the mysteries, through prayer, and through contemplating on Christ’s life. We also study the book of Revelation to see that Christ will come again to collect His people and how the end is not for our condemnation but for our redemption.. All of the units in this curriculum should focus on the person of Christ and building a spiritual life through understanding His love and will for us. Really, the ultimate goal of these years is to have the students understand who Christ is and practically understand how to build a relationship with Him.

Unit 1

Nothing shall separate from the Love of God in Christ Jesus

Objective

The objective of this unit is to make it clear that the love of Christ is all encompassing. It is stronger than even death. This is first shown in the love of the martyrs-i.e. to what extent they loved the Lord, it is demonstrated in the everyday relationship between the Church and Christ, and it is ultimately shown in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The goal is to show the students the power of this love and how it really is the ultimate truth in our lives. This is a unit on **spirituality** but it also incorporates some **Bible study**.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Nyrouz- Those who love Christ
- Lesson 2: Relationship to Christ
- Lesson 3: Feast of the Cross

Lesson 1: Nyrouz- Those who Love Christ

Objective:

- To demonstrate to what extent a person loves Christ- to the point of even death.

Memory Verse:

- *"21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)*

References:

- The letter of St. Ignatius to the Romans

Lesson Plan:

The world is very fearful of death	
The martyrs were running toward death	
When we find Christ's love, it is more powerful than even death which is just a passage to Him	

Introduction:

- Speak about an event in which people are very frightened. Example- after hurricane Katrina, people were stuck in the stadium. They were chaotic, they were panicked, there was violence. Why? What was the underlying fear? They were all afraid of death.

Lesson Outline:

- Study of letter of St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Romans. In this letter he discusses his deep desire to die. To specifically, have wild beasts tear him apart.
- What would drive a person to do this?
- Contrast this to the way the world views death.
- Highlight his love and his relationship to Christ.
- What could drive a person to faithfully face what St. Ignatius faced? With all hope, love, and peace?

Conclusion:

- When we find Christ's love it is even stronger than death. People see death as bringing them to Christ.

Applications:

- How is our view of death? Is death a fearful event? Or do we realize that there is something even stronger than death?

Lesson 2: Relationship to Christ

Objective:

- Demonstrate the qualities of the relationship between Christ and the Church

Memory Verse:

- *“My beloved spoke, and said to me: ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away.’”
(Songs 2:10)*

References:

- Have You Seen the One I Love By: HH Pope Shenouda III

Lesson Plan:

Study Song of Solomon and the love between Christ and the Church
Christ views us with extreme love and sees us as beautiful
Christ is knocking at our hearts, we need to accept this love

Introduction:

- What is the way the world loves us? The world loves us because...
- Ask the students who they love and why? There are always conditions

Lesson Outline:

- Study of Chapter 6, Chapter 3 of Songs of Solomon- Examining the love we have for Christ and the love He has for us.
- What are the characteristics of this relationship? What are some of the ways that the relationship is described?
- Who are each of the characters (the Beloved (Christ), the Shulamite (Us)). How is the Beloved described? How is the Shulamite described? Examine how Christ views us- He thinks that we are beautiful and wonderful.
- There is a relationship that exists between Christ and the Church that is even stronger than a love affair.

- In one of the songs, she is lazy, and ignores his knocking. Speak to how we have to answer the door when He knocks. By the time she opens, He is gone. What could this signify? She goes out in the streets panicked looking for Him. Once she finds Him, she does not let go.
- Relationship with Christ can be more fulfilling than even the relationship between man and woman

Conclusion:

- The love of Christ is so strong and fulfilling,

Applications:

- How is Christ knocking on our hearts? How is he telling us we are “most fair?” How do we answer this call?

Lesson 3: Feast of the Cross

Objective:

- To show the extent of Christ's love for us. The strength of His love is demonstrated in the Cross.

Memory Verse:

- *32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)*

References:

- Romans 8

Lesson Plan:

We have been given such a great gift of love	
When we understand this love, it is completely overwhelming and fills our entire being	
Sitting at the Cross of Christ helps us to feel this love	

Introduction:

- The Church celebrates the feast of the Cross on the 17th of Touth, (27th or 28th of September), the Cross to the Emperor the day of the apparition of Constantine, and on the 10th of Barmhat (19th of March), the day when the Empress Helen found the wood of the Holy Cross.
- What is so important about the cross that we would take so much time to commemorate it?

Lesson Outline:

- Study of Romans 8:12-14 Since we have been given such great gift, the love of Christ and the Father. We must answer this call. He has given us life. We were dead in sin, and had no power to change, to live again, but he has become like us and fulfilled the requirement of the law (Romans 8)
- When we see this love that the Lord has for us, it is completely overwhelming. Read Romans 8:31-39. What shall separate me from the love of God. By St. Paul seeking the Lord with all his heart, it is almost as if he can see Christ, he can feel Christ on

the Cross and then through this he finally finds an answer a freedom from his passions. When we truly seek Him this is when we have the freedom.

- We need to experience this love ourselves in order to bring it to the kids. In the cross, Christ's love is made very real. Without the cross and resurrection we cannot find this.

Conclusion:

- If you ever do not feel the love of God, it is important to sit at the Cross (watch the Passion, read the accounts of His passion). Look to what extent He did what He did. And when we see how much He loves us, we know there is nothing in this world that would ever make Him reject us or keep us from Him. And all the suffering in this life are nothing compared to the life with Him

Applications:

- Is there something you are suffering from in your life? What is it that is causing you to suffer? Is it a sin? If it is a sin, you need to be free from it. We become free from it, by seeing the extent of Christ's love for us. And when we chose this love over all else, we become free.

Unit 2

The Book of Isaiah

Objective

This is an informative unit on Isaiah intended to be taught in a Bible study format reading the chapters with the students. It has to be very interactive. The goal is for them to see all the references to Christ and the Church. To recognize that these prophecies were written hundreds of years before Christ was incarnate and how clearly it described Him. Whenever there is a chance let the children open their Bibles and read from them. In the book they will see how Christ had promised to bring life to a people who had left him, and how he is their savior. This unit is categorized as **Bible study**.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Introduction & chapters 7, 9, and 11
 - Lesson 2: Isaiah 11, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.
 - Lesson 3: Isaiah 40 and 49
 - Lesson 4: Isaiah 53, The Messiah
 - Lesson 5: Chapter 55-61
 - Lesson 6: Chapter 66
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Lesson 1: Introduction & Chapters 7, 9, and 11

Objective:

- Provide an introduction to Isaiah and the writing style
- To discover the references to Christ

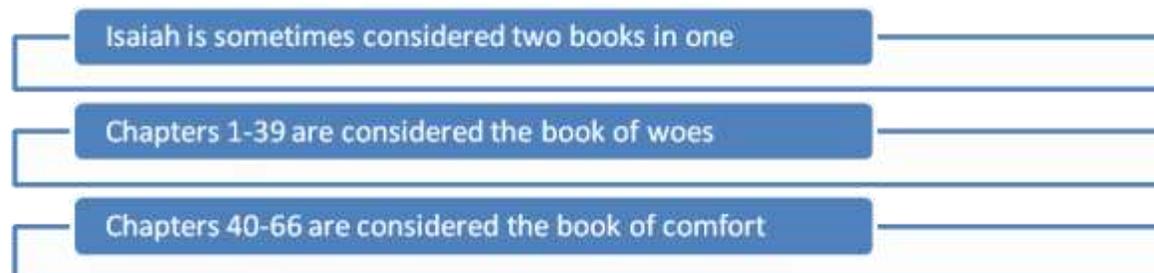
Memory Verse:

- *“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6*

References:

- The Book of Isaiah

Lesson Plan:



Introduction:

- Intro to the book. Isaiah is sometimes considered two books in one
 - Isaiah was the relative of a king. He was very well educated and wrote very high poetry with a vision that was very clear.
 - He could see the future as if looking out his window.

Lesson Outline:

- Book of woes (chapters 1-39)
 - Every chapter has woes, destructions, the land being made desolate, etc. It is all doom and gloom of how the people have sinned and turned away.
 - You can have the students read some of the verses that highlight this from early chapters and have them describe what these chapters are talking about. Is it

something happy or is he describing a very difficult situation? Isaiah 5 is an example of the Vineyard being torn down. Many woes in this chapter “woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” (5:20)

- Book of Comfort (Chapters 40-66)
 - Chapter 40 starts with “Comfort, yes comfort my people...the voice of one crying in the wilderness” proclaiming the consolation of the coming Messiah.
 - Introduction & Chapter 7, - birth of the virgin, Chapter 9 - the divine, everlasting, mighty God is the messiah,
 - From John Chrysostom (Homily 5:4) Why was Christ called Emanuel? The names given to children were not exactly the name of the person, but rather they were describing an event at the time. He also defends here the Virginity of St. Mary from the translation of the Septuagint. And how the 70 elders at once agreed that this was a virgin not a young maiden as is argued by some Jewish people.
- Chapter 9:6“ **For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.**”
 - How did Christ fulfill all that is said in this verse? Christ is all the things that are described in this verse. Christ on earth acted as a father to us. He was not the Father, but He was the one who took care of His disciples as a father does his children. He called his disciples “my little children.” He is called wonderful- what does it mean that Christ is wonderful? What is the role of a counselor? King of Peace- we have a song that specifies that this is who He is.

Conclusion:

- Begin reading the chapters in the book of Isaiah. To understand the prophecies of Christ.
- Takeaway:
 - To get the children interested in the book of Isaiah, and to understand the relevance of the Old Testament

Applications:

- Conduct a Bible study: read the chapters and explain the meaning.
- Highlight the “popular” verses that the students will recognize.
- In Isaiah 5:20 there is a lot of Woe. What woes would the Lord direct to us? When do we call good bad and bad good?

Lesson 2: Isaiah 11

Objective:

- To know that the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this

Memory Verse:

- *“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
²The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” (Isaiah 11:1-2)*

References:

- The Book of Isaiah

Lesson Plan:

Image rod- the kingdom of Jesse cut and then how did it continue.
The meaning of the words when it discusses the Spirit of the Lord
The Lord will gather his people

Introduction:

- This chapter presents us with the promises of a restored Kingdom. Though the family tree of Jesse, David's father, has been reduced to a stump, God will make it grow a new branch (see Isaiah 4:2; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8).
- The new king will be given God's spirit, just as God's spirit "came mightily" upon David (1 Samuel 16:13). Governing in the spirit of God will mean caring for the poor and the meek, as it does throughout the Bible (Psalm 72).

Lesson Outline:

- Have the kids discuss the difference between each of these names
 - Wisdom: Practical smartness

- Understanding: Not of physics, philosophy, understanding the will of God. If you know the will of God you can open very great mysteries.
- Counsel: Inspires with sound advise
- Might: Having authority and confidence, not learned, something you are very sure of. St. Paul says he could do all things through Christ that strengthens Him." ¹²I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ^[b] who strengthens me." This is the real might here that we is given in the Spirit. It is easy to be strong when you have everything you need- but real strength is at all times and in all situations.
- Knowledge:
- Fear of the Lord:

Conclusion:

- God will overcome the curse of sin and establish a world in which all creatures thrive.

Applications:

- Bible Study discussion

Lesson 3: Isaiah 40 and 49

Objective:

- To answer the question of why God instituted marriage and establish an early foundation of important marriage values including the concept of nakedness

Memory Verse:

- *“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Isaiah 40:1*

References:

- The Book of Isaiah

Lesson Plan:

- This is the end of the book of woes, the beginning of the New Testament, the beginning of the good news.
- This is the new time- the time of comfort, when Gods work is coming and there is a consolation
- John the baptist quotes this chapter

Introduction:

- Chapter 40 starts as “Comfort my people.” This is the end of the book of woes, the beginning of the New Testament, the beginning of the good news. It speaks of the “voice crying in the wilderness...” when John says he is this voice, it is him reminding them of the book of Isaiah saying that this is the end of the book of woes, that time in history has passed and how this is the new time- the time of comfort, when Gods work is coming and there is a consolation.

Lesson Outline:

- Whenever it speaks of the coastlands in the book of Isaiah it is speaking about how Christianity will go to the gentiles (verse 1).
- The above verses are the Father speaking to Christ- how was this fulfilled by Christ? When it speaks about “it is too small of a thing... I will also give you as a light to the gentiles” this is speaking about the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice and that through it all the world will come to Him. When it speaks about you are my servant in whom I am glorified, this is very similar to John 13.

- After Judas goes out, Christ says “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. son Glorifying Christ.” By Thursday night, Christ had become so glorious, so precious, so amazing, and so wonderful in the eyes of the Father. This was “the son of man glorified”
- When Christ was offered on the cross, at this moment, the Father is glorified, because the most perfect son was given up...God so loved the world, to the point that he gives up his beloved son. This glorifies the father, and then Christ is glorified by the resurrection (glorified in Him).

Conclusion:

- Isaiah the prophet is giving God’s message to those in captivity to comfort and reassure

Applications:

- How does this chapter mirror the New Testament?

Lesson 4: Isaiah 53- The Messiah

Objective:

- Christ's passion was foretold in Isaiah.

Memory Verse:

- *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities” Isaiah 53:5*

References:

- The Book of Isaiah

Lesson Plan:

Christ's passion	
Christ bearing our sins	
Revealing Christ's unconditional love	

Introduction:

- This chapter of Isaiah is a beautiful, poetic song, one of the four “Servant Songs” in which the prophet describes the climactic period of world history when the Messiah will arrive.
- It is a prophecy foretelling how the world will react when they witness Israel's salvation.
- Go through the chapter have them read it and say what each of the verses mean. Let them see how much it truly describes Christ's passion.

Lesson Outline:

- Contemplations on Him bearing our sins. “And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” This transfer of Him taking our sins happened in the last supper. He gave us what is His- his life giving flesh, and took our sins, and bore them to death.
- Sheep before his shearers is silent- Unlike a sheep that has wool taken; Christ's skin was sheared off. The stripes he received, he was silent. Talk about the magnitude of what He endured... it says He was silent.

Conclusion:

- This chapter reveals what Christ went through because of his love for us.
- “For the transgressions of my people He was stricken.”

Applications:

- Read through the Chapter, focusing on the meaning of the words and how deep and true each statement is. Think about the verse “as a sheep is silent before his shearers...” Christ was wounded to the point that his skin was taken off as wool from a sheep. And yet he did not even cry out. This is the extent of His love for us.

Lesson 5: Isaiah 55 and 63

Objective:

Memory Verse:

- *“Seek the LORD while He may be found” Isaiah 55:6*

References:

- The Book of Isaiah

Lesson Plan:

Read Chapter 55- Water that is freely given, satisfaction without laboring	
Read Chapter 63- what images are brought to mind with these descriptions	
Discuss "why do you spend money for what is not bread"	

Introduction:

- Remind them about the set up of the Book of Isaiah break them into groups and have them answer questions about each chapter.

Lesson Outline:

- Chapter 55- Water that is freely given, satisfaction without laboring
 - Theme of the water freely given- the Holy Spirit. Talks about how people labor so hard for something that does nothing.
 - Isaiah asks why would you labor for something that will not fill you. He asks why do they spend money for something that is not bread, while there is a free offering of what will actually, truly satisfy them.
 - Jeremiah says something similar he says *“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.”* (Jeremiah 2:13)
 - This is a continuous theme and even with the book of John—the samaritan woman who is looking for water, who is thirsty, but when she continues to drink from the waters that are in front of her (all the things she is seeking)

she will always thirst. The Spirit though, given freely satisfies. Makes it so we never thirst.

- Isaiah 55:1-7
 - These verses can be divided into 3 parts. Verses 1-3, 4-5, and 6-7. What is each section talking about?
 - For verses 1-3, what story in the New Testament that sounds similar to this? (Hint Christ talks to someone about water). What is the meaning of “spending money for what is not bread” and “your wages for what does not satisfy.” How do we do this?
 - What is important about verses 6-7? How may the Lord be not found? Read Luke 19:41-44. What is it that will happen to Jerusalem and the people who rejected Christ and why? What will happen if we reject Christ when we are able to have Him?
- Chapter 63: Isaiah 63:1-5 and 8-10
 - Who is it that is speaking in verses 3-6? A winepress is where people would crush grapes into wine. It is a large pool of grapes and the person goes to the pool and smashes the grapes with their feet. What would it look like if someone was fully dressed and in their smashing grapes?
 - When did these verses become fulfilled? How and when would the person have felt alone, and that they “looked but there was no one to help?”
 - What does verses 8-9 refer to? Why did “He” do what He did?
 - What is the warning in verse 10?

Conclusion:

- We need to recognize the love of the one who would tread the winepress. If we recognize this love we would abide in it.
- Have them discuss what it means to spend you money on what is not bread.

Applications:

Why do we choose things in life other than Christ that will not satisfy us?

Lesson 6: Isaiah 60, 61, and 66

Objective:

- To know that God the father, the Creator, extends the offer of fellowship to the humble who are responsive to His Word.

Memory Verse:

- *“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.” 60:1*

References:

- The Book of Isaiah

Lesson Plan:

The church is what heals and helps the body	
What's the place of rest according to God?	
God is seeking us and we are His ultimate good	

Introduction:

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Lesson Outline:

- Chapter 60- resurrection and the glory of the church
 - The chapter describes that there is a glory that is coming. It speaks “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar,” this has relevance to a wedding. Isaac lifted up his eyes and saw Rebekah and loved her.
 - With the Samaritans Christ told his disciples, “lift up your eyes and see the fields are already white for harvest” speaking of a people ready for the word... once again the white making reference to a wedding. The church is what will bring glory.
 - Orthodox means straight glory. The Orthodox church is very beautiful. “the wealth of the gentiles...” speaking of how the beauty, and marvel of the church all throughout the lands... even poor nations, in the church is the best of everything.

4" Lift up your eyes all around, and see:
 They all gather together, they come to you;
 Your sons shall come from afar,
 And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side.
 5 Then you shall see and become radiant,
 And your heart shall swell with joy;
 Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
 The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.
 6 The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*,
 The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
 All those from Sheba shall come;
 They shall bring gold and incense,
 And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.
 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you,
 The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
 They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar,
 And I will glorify the house of My glory.

- The whole chapter speaks about the glory given to the church by the resurrection of Christ. Chapter 61- Spirit of God
- Place of rest according to God: Ultimately the church, is the dwelling place. And more specifically, our bodies... so why do we need a church? Because the church is what heals and helps the body. "oh holy God who rests in His saints"
- The account of genesis is almost identical to the account of the flood. Both had the earth covered with water and the spirit of God (dove) hovering. The spirit of the Lord was hovering (like a dove—the dove also does not find a place of rest for her feet in the flood). So the dove goes back to the ark. God created us to find a place of rest. Once he had found the place of rest, he rested in us. He breathed His spirits in to human beings- and this is when there was rest. Adam sinned, Adam sent His spirit hovering again. Until Christ comes, and he rested in his son again, and then the Church. As well baptism needs water because this is how the Lord recreates things. In baptism, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" The Spirit rests in Christ. Christ gave the spirit to his disciples, and then this is once again when there is rest. The Spirit finds its rest on Resurrection. When Christ breathed on His disciples and told them to receive the Spirit. This is why Sunday is the new Sabbath. Cause this is when once again the Spirit of God finds its permanent rest in the Church (against the 7th day Adventists)
- We once again, break the Sabbath, break the place of rest for the Spirit when we sin.
- God is seeking us and we are His ultimate good. You can link this to a wandering heart that does not find peace until it finds Christ.
- Verses 7-14 about Jerusalem

- This chapter also has the description of the new church and the image of a woman in labor (In book of John “a woman in labor has many sorrows...”, and also in Revelations 12 “I saw a great sign in the heavens a woman in labor...she bore a male son who was taken up to the throne) What is the birth of this male son?
- In Acts- Paul quoting the book psalms, Psalm 2 “you are my son today I have begotten you” – Christ was begotten by the Father before all ages, this is not talking about the virginal birth, this is speaking about the resurrection of Christ. This is when Christ is seen accepted by the Father.
- Christ is the male Child who will reign with a rod of iron—once again this is resurrection. We are now in the womb, and we will be born in the freedom as the sons of God at the resurrection at the last day.
- Verses 18-end Universal church verse
 - Speaks about the church going to the ends of the world, and how the gentiles will be taken to serve as priests and Levites. There is an image of the sheet with the unclean animals (similar to St. Peters vision on the roof before Cornelius comes to him). When it says “I will take from them some for priest s and some for Levites.” This is awful to the Jews because not all of them can be priests in the first place, only Levites can be deacons, and priests from the sons of Aaron. But here it is saying it will take some (not all, showing this is not just a universal priesthood of believers) from the gentiles. Its says here that there will be priests and Levites in the new church—both indicating that there is a church hierarchy. Once again not just universal priesthood.
 - Glory of the church- in Ezekiel and Isaiah they both end with discussing the church. Because we believe in one holy universal apostolic church.

Conclusion:

- We can look forward to the future with fear and with hope. God the father, the Creator, extends the offer of fellowship to the humble who are responsive to His Word. Zion is told to rejoice, confident that all her troubles are but birth pangs, and soon she will give birth to a glorious future. God will bless His land with peace and comfort His children in the day He executes judgment on sin. God pledges that all mankind as well as the Jewish people will find Him at history’s end. The new heavens and the new earth He makes will endure. But the bodies of those who rebelled against the Lord will be scattered over old earth’s deadened lands.

Applications:

- Match and compare verses to verses that confirm the same prophesy in the New Testament. There is a lot of overlap with the book of Revelations. Speaking about how there is no longer a need for the sun and how there is no night.

Unit 3

Desert Fathers Teachings on the Passions

Objective

The passions are movements of the soul that are intended for good, but in the fallen man have gone awry. For example, anger is meant to be directed towards sinfulness, yet we direct it towards people. All Christians must face and must overcome the passions. For every passion there is a fruit of the spirit. The desert fathers in particular were doctors who spent their time diagnosing, struggling with, and overcoming the passions. This unit is designed to teach the youth regarding the desert fathers teaching to cure the passions. This is a unit on **spirituality/morals**.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Introduction to the passions
- Lesson 2: Anger/ Resentment
- Lesson 3: Self-pleasing/ indulgence/ dissipation
- Lesson 4: Desires and Addictions
- Lesson 5: Pride

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Passions

Objective:

- To help the kids to understand the role of the subconscious in driving our actions and the need to understand why we do what we do.

Memory Verse:

- “¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Matthew 15:19

References:

- Sayings of the Desert Fathers – Benedicta Ward
- Paradise of the Fathers vol 1 and 2
- The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to It. St. Theophan the Recluse

Lesson Plan:

What is the subconscious	
What are the passions and why do we have them	
Why do we need to understand why we do the things we do	

Introduction:

- What is an iceberg? How is an iceberg different from just frozen ice? So with an iceberg there is a small part you see above the surface but underneath it is a mountain of ice.
- So how does this compare to a person’s mind? The mind has something that we are all very aware of- our conscious. But it also has another part that is hidden but much bigger than the part we are aware of- our subconscious.

Lesson Outline:

- What is our subconscious? It is the activity of our brain which we are not aware of. It is fueled by everything we take in every single day- our surroundings, media, people, what we hear and what we see and the associations we have with them.

- It's actually funny from our childhood we start labeling things as good or bad.
- We eat an apple it is labeled as good and bad- we have an emotion its labeled as good or bad
- This is all part of the subconscious-
- Another example- Have you ever had a dream about something completely random and you realize the reason why you had this dream is from something you saw earlier that day- that you did not even pay attention to it, like a commercial? Our dreams actually show what is going on often in our subconscious.
- So why would we be talking about the subconscious in Sunday school?
- Do people always realize why they are doing the things they are doing?
- I think people often don't know at all why they are doing the things that they are doing. And what is interesting is often our actions are directed by our subconscious. Our actions are kind of like the actors of a play and the director behind the play is the subconscious.
- What kind of things do you think are driven by the subconscious
 - Pride
 - Lust
 - How we talk to people
 - Fear
 - Peace and Joy
 - Addictions
 - Jealousy and Competition
 - Anger and resentment
- These things are called the passions.
- So the next few weeks what we are going to try to do is to understand why we do the things that we do
- Do you think people always want to know why they are doing the things they are doing?
- What do you think would hinder people figuring out why they are doing what they are doing?
 - They are afraid to see the truth.

- If they see that the reason they are acting this way how would the person feel?
- Let me give you an example- a girl whenever she is in front of guys laughs really loud- makes kind of a scene- why? Somewhere on her path she had it put in her subconscious that this loud, screaming, girly attitude is very attractive.
- So what we need to figure out is why we are doing the things we are doing. Because we can often convince ourselves that things are good when they are harmful- or things are bad when they are really not.
- As we understand why we do the things we do, it helps us to understand others as well and deal with them in love.

Conclusion:

- So we said the subconscious is the director behind the actors who are our actions. What or who is the guide to get “behind the scenes?”
 - The word of God
 - The Holy Spirit
 - The spiritual guide
- So the next few weeks we will be going through some of these topics- looking at the subconscious reasons behind some actions- with direction from our guides.

Applications:

- What are the passions? How do the passions manifest in our everyday life.
- The passions are movements in our soul that have gone awry. How were each passion supposed to be used for good but are now gone awry?

Lesson 2: Anger

Objective:

- To inform our youth with the nature of anger and how to identify sources.
- To encourage them to use the teachings of the desert fathers on how to overcome anger.

Memory Verse:

- *“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” - James 1:19*

References:

- Sayings of the Desert Fathers – Benedicta Ward
- Paradise of the Fathers vol 1 and 2

Lesson Plan:

Define Nature of Anger and its entrance points	
Diagnosing our anger	
Consequences of anger and Overcoming Anger	

Introduction:

- *“Anger is by nature designed for waging war with demons and for struggling with every kind of sinful pleasure. Therefore angels..incline us to direct our anger against the demons . But the demons, enticing us towards world lusts, make us use our anger to fight with men, which is against nature, so that the mind, thus stupefied and darkened, should become a traitor to virtues.” - Abba Evagrius*

Lesson Outline:

- Created as one of the passions/emotions within us originally from God to be used as a tool to battle unrighteousness and wrong
- Examples: Christ’s anger is seen in only in the face of hypocrisy, disbelief, sacrilege.
– Ask kids examples of holy anger? Christ at temple, Pharisees insistence on keeping

Sabbath over healing of the lame. Pharisees unrighteousness. When anger is good- what is difference between getting angry at a person for their sin, or for reprimanding them, and judgment? LOVE- A mother gets angry at a child's actions because she loves him and wants the best for him. Anger is justified when it is in love.

- Satan uses this passion to extinguish our communion with God and to create strife with our brothers.
- Desert Fathers have found anger to be one of the most destructive of passions in the spiritual life and for brotherly love.
- Saints had learned how to use the passion of anger to preserve their righteousness.
- Uncontrolled passion of anger should be seen as spiritual warfare. There was a monk once who was in prayer. By him were some pots with water in them. Satan trying to destroy his prayer tipped over one of the pot. The monk corrected the pot and continued his prayer. Satan again tipped the pot. The monk again corrected it. Satan continued to do the same. Eventually the monk lost his temper, picked up the pot and smashed it against the wall. Then when he returned to prayer he realized his loss of peace due to his temper was actually a temptation from Satan.
- Anger produces violence inside us as well as sometimes outside. We may not notice the anger on the inside.
- Anger is a complete enemy to prayer.
- Entrance Points of anger in our life. – *“He who is not indifferent to fame and pleasure, as well as he who love riches that exists because of them and increases them, cannot cut off occasions for anger. And he who does not cut these off cannot attain perfect love.”* St. Maximos
 - Pride: When our arrogance is challenged this is when we become angry
 - Pleasure or Desire: Anger ensues often when something we have not wanted has happened
 - Desire for power, position or possession.
- What makes a high school student angry?
 - Parental tension
 - Insults of siblings, friends (Columbine kids, the school shooter had great anger)
 - Disdain for the personalities of peers.
 - Differences in culture, cliques, etc. Have the students brainstorm
- Diagnosing our anger.
 - Understanding we are angry is the first step.
 - Knowing real root of anger/bitterness (whether or not your anger is justified)
 - Sample story: The witch. A woman who was a dedicated servant. She was kicked out of the service for no good reason. She continuously had a nightmare where she was being chased by a ugly witch. This dream happened night after night. She decided to talk to her spiritual guide. In speaking to her spiritual guide she discussed with him the issue of service. She kept saying “I know it is not right to be angry.” The guide told her it is okay to feel upset. Eventually she had the dream again. This time, the woman turned and confronted the witch. The witch was not ugly. The witch asked her “why are you running from me? I am trying to help you.” The servant

realized the witch was actually anger personified. She had been angry about leaving the service but refused to allow herself to be angry even though she was justified in being angry.

- High Schoolers tend to have poor control over anger due to pride and desire.
- “If anyone is angry at his brother without a cause” - Matthew 5:22
- Consequences of Anger and controlling Passion
 - Destroys our communion with God – James 1:19
 - Prayer is impossible with anger
 - Communion is forbidden amongst contentions
 - anger results in hurtful words and actions
 - Murder is a result of anger
 - Broken relationships
- Anger can be fought against through prayer, humility, and realization of real source of anger. Desert fathers says the first step to controlling anger is to (1) control words of anger, (2) then thoughts of anger, (3) then anger in the heart. James 1:19.
- Freedom of anger should not be an allowance of evil and wrongdoing.
- Story: Tamav Ireny became angry with a construction worker once and yelled at him. She was so upset that she yelled she decided to refrain from taking communion. In a dream she saw a former abbess who asked why she isn't taking communion. Tamav explained. The abbess told her that she should not yell at people in anger. However, she should firmly correct people if they do something wrong. She told her to resume receiving communion.

Conclusion:

- Anger is something that God originally gives us to protect us against sin. We should be aware of its entrance points and the root causes. We should struggle to never give way to it and understand peace in the invitation to prayer while anger is the enemy of prayer

Applications:

- Brainstorm what things make us most angry. How can we negate the negative effects of this anger?

Lesson 3: Self-indulgence/pleasing dissipation

Objective:

- To teach the youth how to achieve self-control by sharing the wisdom of the fathers of the church.

Memory Verse:

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. ⁴In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. 1 Peter 4:3-4

References:

- 1 Corinthians 7:5
- The sayings of the fathers

Lesson Plan:

Control of the tongue	
Control of the mind	
Control of the actions	

Introduction:

- In the late nineteen-sixties, kids were invited into a “game room” at a Nursery School. The room was little more than a large closet, containing a desk and a chair. The kids were asked to sit down in the chair and pick a treat from a tray of marshmallows, cookies, and pretzel sticks. A researcher then made them an offer: they could either eat one marshmallow right away or, if they were willing to wait while he stepped out for a few minutes, they could have two marshmallows when he returned. He said that if they rang a bell on the desk while he was away he would come running back, and they could eat one marshmallow but would forfeit the second. Then he left the room.
- Footage of these experiments, which were conducted over several years, is poignant,

as the kids struggle to delay gratification for just a little bit longer. Some cover their eyes with their hands or turn around so that they can't see the tray. Others start kicking the desk, or tug on their pigtails, or stroke the marshmallow as if it were a tiny stuffed animal. One child, looked carefully around the room to make sure that nobody can see him. Then he picks up an Oreo, delicately twists it apart, and licked off the white cream filling before returning the cookie to the tray, a satisfied look on his face. They struggled to resist the treat and held out for an average of less than three minutes. "A few kids ate the marshmallow right away," The professor of psychology in charge of the experiment, remembers. "They didn't even bother ringing the bell. Other kids would stare directly at the marshmallow and then ring the bell thirty seconds later." About thirty per cent of the children, however, were successful in delaying gratification until the researcher returned, some fifteen minutes later. These kids wrestled with temptation but found a way to resist.

Lesson Outline:

- What are some of the things we are called to control, but are very difficult to put under subjection?

Control of the tongue

- The word is the human being's most prized possession.
 - "If you guard your tongue, my brother, God will give you the gift of compunction of heart so that you may see your soul, and thereby you will enter into spiritual joy. But if your tongue defeats you—believe me in what I say to you—you will never be able to escape darkness. If you do not have a pure heart, at least have a pure mouth, as the blessed John said. (St. Isaac the Syrian, Ascetical Homilies)
 - He who has become aware of his sins has controlled his tongue, but a talkative person has not yet come to know himself as he should. St. John Climacus

Control of the mind

- A man is truly dispassionate—and is known to be such—when he has cleaned his flesh of all corruption; when he has lifted his mind above everything created, and **has made it master of all the senses**; when he keeps his soul continually in the presence of the Lord and reaches out beyond the borderline of strength to Him. – The Ladder of Divine Ascent
- But we should know what imagination springs from. Imagination may appear to move freely, but it doesn't just exist in isolation. It is, rather, the outworking of a range of forces: ambition, disability, repressed passion, bitter jealousy, anger, fear—all of which are decisive factors that propel one's thinking out of the world of factual reality. Buy so doing, the ego can attain in fantasy what it could not fulfill in reality. – The Orthodox Prayer Life

Leads to control over actions

Conclusion:

- Control over the tongue and the mind lead to control over the actions.

Applications:

- As a spiritual exercise, discuss with your father of confession how to exercise self-control over a sin you're committing.

Lesson 4: Desires and Addictions

Objective:

- To discuss the topic of desires and addictions and share the wisdom of the fathers on how to fight it.

Memory Verse:

- *Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:3-5)*

References:

- Story from St. Paul the Simple (p. 205 *Saying of the Desert Fathers*)
- St. Theophan the Recluse (*The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to it* p. 225)

Lesson Plan:

The danger of the lover of desires	
<i>By making a strong commitment to give up the sin and by choosing God, we are released from the captivity</i>	
On captivity to sin and how to overcome it	

Introduction:

- In central Africa, monkey meat is very sought after. So what the hunters do is they get a coconut and they put a small hole in it. From that hole they carve out the inside of the coconut and then put a small piece of fruit- like mango in it. From the other side, the coconut is then tied to a tree. So what happens is a monkey will come and see the fruit inside the coconut, reach his hand in and grab the fruit. As the monkey tries to pull his hand out he finds he cannot get it out of the hole from the coconut and he is essentially tied now to the tree. He is trapped. The hole was designed in the coconut so that it is just big enough so that the monkey can get his hand in and out when it is empty but not while it is clenched around the fruit. Now the monkey would be completely free to run away if he let go of the fruit but he wants the fruit to badly. Even to the point that the hunters will approach him and still he will not let go of the fruit. The hunters will take out their weapon and kill the monkey and still

he will not let go. Even after the monkey is dead his hands need to be pried off the fruit.

- Main points from the story
 - *The monkey's love and desire for the fruit was stronger than his reason and his sense of fear and danger*
 - *The monkey became so overpowered by his desire for the fruit that he first made himself a slave (he became bound) for the sake of keeping this fruit*
 - *The monkey's desire even went past making a slave- it lead to his destruction*
 - *When we become over taken with our desire for something, we become slaves to the desire*
 - *How it starts: When we label things in our lives as so good to the point that we lose our judgment.*
 - *Once we label things as better than life we are handing our selves over to the path of addiction*
 - *This is the path of addiction (slavery to the sin) and destruction*

Lesson Outline:

- St. Paul observes people as they enter the church and as he enters he can see the state of their souls just as we can see each other's faces. And as he is watching he sees many men shining, their faces are radiant and their angels are rejoicing. And then he sees one- he is black and his whole body is dark. He is surrounded by demons on every side of him. They are dominating him, and actually leading him by his nose. And this man's angel is following at a distance with its head down mourning. St. Paul sees this and starts to cry. Everyone asks him why he is crying and he does not answer. As the church service completes, St. Paul again watches the people to see in what spiritual state they leave the Church and he sees the man who was previously in black being held captive by the devils shining white, his angel rejoicing and close to him, while the demons followed at a distance. At this St. Paul starts to rejoice and praise the love and mercy of God. Everyone in the church comes to hear why St. Paul is rejoicing. He tells about what he saw. And the man himself confesses that he was a fornicator that he lived up to this moment as a slave to this sin. He said while he was in the Church he heard the reading calling him to wash himself and make himself clean (Isaiah 1:16-19) and from that moment he made a commitment to give up his sin and to never turn to it again. And he said with the promise he made, he left the Church sure that he would never return to this sin again. And for this reason he came out as St. Paul saw him.
 - *When we are under the power of sin we are being led and bound by demons.*
 - *By making a strong commitment to give up the sin and by choosing God, we are released from the captivity*

- **On captivity to sin and how to overcome it:** “I wrote that there is within us a kind of chaotic, stormy region in which thoughts, desires and emotions are jumbled in confusion and scattered by the passions like dust. I situate the region between the soul and body, stipulating that the passions do not belong to our nature, but are alien to it. They do not remain inside the gap however; instead, they pass right into soul and body and place the spirit itself- the consciousness and the free will- under their power; and in this way rule the entire person. When they work in collusion with demons, the demons rule through them over the person, who nevertheless thinks that he himself is in control.
- It is the spirit that first of all escapes from these bonds. The grace of God pulls it free. The spirit, filled with the fear of God by the action of grace, breaks off any ties with the passions and repenting for what has passed, makes a firm commitment from this point forward to please God alone and to live for Him alone, walking in his commandments. The spirit standing fast in its resoluteness, then drives the passions from the soul and the body with the help of Divine grace, and everything inside becomes spiritualized. Within you, too, the spirit has broken the bonds that held it. You stand on the side of God consciously and through free will. You want to belong to God and please Him”
 - *A person who yields to their desires end up having their free will and consciousness under their power. They do not realize that they are slaves or addicts- they think they are still in control*
 - *Firm commitment to please God and to live for Him alone and to keep his commandments*
 - *There has to be the point in which the person chooses God over the addiction*
 - *Grace helps the spirit to stand firm and to drive the passions from the soul and the body*
 - *The person stands on the side of God and wants to belong to Him and please him*

Conclusion:

In closing engage the class on the following:

- What are the common desires that teens become enslaved by
 - Lust/sexual impurity
 - Body image
 - Drugs/Alcohol
- How the person becomes enslaved? What is in the subconscious?
- What is happening when the person is enslaved? Who is in control?
- What is the result if the person stays in slavery, in the addiction?
- Letting go of the addiction and how to let go

Applications:

- At the end, ask them to summarize the discussion in one sentence

Lesson 4: Pride

Objective:

- To discuss the topic of Pride and share the wisdom of the fathers on how to fight it.

Memory Verse:

- *Let not the foot of **pride** come against me, And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away. (Psalm 36:10-12)*

References:

- *The Saying of the Desert Fathers*

Lesson Plan:

The danger of the love of pride	
The wisdom of the fathers on pride	
How can we humble ourselves	

Introduction:

How faults cannot be cured unless their roots and causes have been discovered.

- I THOUGHT it well to insert these things in this little work of mine, that we might learn, not only by reason, but also by examples, about the force of temptations and the order of the sins which hurt an unfortunate soul, and so might be more careful in avoiding the snares and manifold deceits of the enemy. For these things are indiscriminately brought forward by the Egyptian fathers, that by telling them, as those who are still enduring them, they may disclose and lay bare the combats with all the vices, which they actually do suffer, and those which the younger ones are sure to suffer; so that, when they explain the illusions arising from all the passions, those who are but beginners and fervent in spirit may know the secret of their struggles, and seeing them as in a glass, may learn both the causes of the sins by which they are troubled, and the remedies for them, and instructed beforehand concerning the approach of future struggles, may be taught how they ought to guard against them, or to meet them and to fight with them. As clever physicians are

accustomed not only to heal already existing diseases, but also by a wise skill to seek to obviate future ones, and to prevent them by their prescriptions and healing draughts, so these true physicians of the soul, by means of spiritual conferences, like some celestial antidote, destroy beforehand those maladies of the soul which would arise, and do not allow them to gain a footing in the minds of the juniors, as they unfold to them the causes of the passions which threaten them, and the remedies which will heal them. –John Cassian

- "There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine they are guilty themselves."
- (Have kids guess what it is)

C.S. Lewis on the sin of pride in his work "Mere Christianity"

1st we will read a short story and we'll see if you can guess what this sin is?

Story of the Young Man and His Uncle

There was a young man who when he was a boy was criticized by his uncle as ignorant. His uncle constantly ridiculed him in his stories. He called him ridiculous. This man grew up to desire knowledge big time. And managed to go to college, post grad, and was recognized as being well educated. Later in life he encountered very "annoying" people. When he was with these people he would pick on them. He could not understand why he would pick on them.

- *Can you guess the character of the people he criticized?*
 - These people were ignorant and stupid in his definition- he was far above them.
- *Why would he feel like he has to pick on them?*
 - He is rejecting his own ignorant self from his youth?
 - By criticizing them he felt he was building himself up and separating himself from them and from himself as a child.
- *How would you fix this?*
 - Make it clear to him that ignorance is okay. "Before you remove the splinter from your brother's eye, take out the plank in your eye." The splinter is the ignorance of others while the plank is the ignorance in his child hood which blinded him to see the truth.
 - In his own self examination, he should see the source of his annoyance was because of his pride in his "new" educated self and he removed himself so much from the person he was as a child
 - When a quality of another person really bothers you and you are criticizing them a lot, that quality is most likely in you. (give examples)
- *What is the sin that we spoke about in the 1st passage?*
 - PRIDE

Lesson Outline:

- As Abba Macarius was returning to his cell from the marsh carrying palm-leaves, the devil met him with a sharp sickle and would have struck him but he could not. He cried out, "Great is the violence I suffer from you, Macarius, for when I want to hurt you, I cannot. But whatever you do, I do and more also. You fast now and then, but I am never refreshed by any food; you often keep vigil, but I never fall asleep. Only in one thing are you better than I am and I acknowledge that." Macarius said to him, "What is that?" and he replied, "It is because of your humility alone that I cannot overcome you."
- 1) Why couldn't Satan overcome Saint Macarius?
 - a. The devil's self love and inability to humble himself was the reason he couldn't overcome St Macarius.
 - b. *The old men used to say, "When we do not experience warfare, we ought so much the more to humiliate ourselves. For God seeing our weakness protects us; when we glorify ourselves, he withdraws his protection and we are lost."*
 - 2) Why did Satan fall?
 - a. Satan was named Lucifer because of his greatness and splendor.
 - i. **"I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High."** Isaiah 14:13
 - b. Satan forgot that all things good in him were from God and not from himself.
 - i. We must always remember the goodness in us and all we do well is given to us by God. Always must give thanks and glory to God for his gifts.
 - 3) What was the 1st sin committed by Man?
 - a. Adam and Eve and the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
 - i. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, **and you will be like God**, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, **and also desirable for gaining wisdom**, she took some and ate it.
 - ii. **Pride is the greatest of sins because it is the summit of self-love and is directly opposed to submission to God.**
 1. **"From pride all perdition took its beginning."** (Tob. 4:14).
There is a species of pride in every sin, whatever may be the individual nature of the sin itself. **Pride is the most dangerous of sins, because it blinds our understanding, and unless something finally makes us realize the truth, we are liable to go on, day after day, in a spiritual self-delusion, imagining our acts to be good and virtuous when certain habits actually may be vicious**
 - 4) So the opposite of pride is humility.
 - a. **An old man was asked, "What is humility?" and he said in reply, "Humility is a great work, and a work of God. The way of humility is to undertake**

bodily labor and believe yourself a sinner and make yourself subject to all." Then a brother said, "What does it mean, to be subject to all?" The old man answered, "To be subject to all is not to give your attention to the sins of others, but always to give your attention to your own sins and to pray without ceasing to God."

b. *An old man said, "Every time a thought of superiority or vanity moves you, examine your conscience to see if you have kept all the commandments, whether you love your enemies, whether you consider yourself to be an unprofitable servant and the greatest sinner of all. Even so, do not pretend to great ideas as though you were perfectly right, for that thought destroys everything."*

i. So let's examine ourselves and see what we find.

1. Have you ever wanted to be the "hub of the wheel" or have people notice you?
2. Have you ever found it hard to submit to others or to yield to their opinions?
3. Have you ever been overbearing, critical, given to arguing, inflated with a sense of superiority, inconsiderate of the rights of others?
4. Have we ever been full of self-pity and over sensitive? Felt resentment, harboring grudges, suspicion, and unexpressed hostility?
5. Have you ever been shocked by faults in others, but quite satisfied with our own self?
6. Have you ever wanted to have more control over the lives of others, to impose yourself on them, to "domineer" over them?
7. Have we ever felt anger, indignation, arrogance, the spirit of contradiction and haughtiness?
8. Have you ever wanted to refuse advice and assistance, to be insubordinate or disobedient to the Church or your parents?
9. Have you ever wanted to seek positions or offices of honor?
10. Have you ever imagined yourself to be perfect and your acts always virtuous or finding a thousand reasons to diminish the gravity or excuse your faults when we do acknowledge them?
11. Have you ever found yourself always talking, even of what we do not understand?
12. Have you ever spoken sarcastically and used cutting words or ridiculed others, scolding and misjudging them?
13. Have you ever been boastful and critical of others?
14. Have you ever thought you were special because of the family you came from or by how much money you have or your parent's career?
15. Have you ever been overly fearful of others' opinions?

16. Have you ever been proud in material things, money, life status, clothing, beauty, strength, good morals, and intelligence?
 17. Have you ever felt that you were too good for a conversation or for a group (not because you cannot participate but because you are so much above them).
 - ii. In every statement above some form of pride may exist. You must examine yourself, your thoughts and actions and dig to the root of why are you feeling, talking or acting this way.
 1. If you dig enough, you will probably find your actions, thoughts and words are because of pride. You are protecting yourself and your ego and trying to make yourself feel better, higher or more important in whatever you are doing.
 - iii. **The proud person is capable of any sin.**
- 5) More on pride...
- a. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. **It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest.** Once the element of competition has gone, Pride has gone. That is why I say Pride is essentially competitive in a way other vices are not ... Greed may drive men into competition if there is not enough to go around; but the proud man, even when he has got more than he can possibly want, will try to get still more just to assert his power. Nearly all those evils in the world which put people down to greed or selfishness are really far more the result of Pride." — C.S. Lewis, from Mere Christianity (underscore added)
- 6) Once there was this great captain of a British fleet, his name was Clyde Disley Thomas. He was a well decorated captain and he had several ships under his command. One winter day the entire fleet had all set sail from England to Iceland. On the captain's main boat there was a young boy who was a deckhand. The deckhand was one of the lowest positions on the ship. The boy was always very interested in navigating and sailing, so he was paying very close attention to where the fleet was headed. He pulled out his charts and compass and made several calculations. He double and triple checked his work and the direction the fleet was headed. After confirming the fleet was headed for disaster, a very dangerous area filled with rocks and icebergs, he decided he must approach the captain to try and save the fleet. So he mustered up all his courage and approaches the captain and says, "Captain, pardon me for saying, but I do believe we are headed for disaster. I've looked at the charts and have done all the calculations three times over. We are all going to die if we don't alter our course southwest straight away." The captain after hearing all this did the only thing a good captain could do...he had the deckhand hung. The very next day, the entire fleet sank several hundred miles off course of their final destination and many men died.

- a. This Captain ignores basic reason and falls into the trap of many of the questions we posed ourselves above:
 - i. His high rank in the English Navy was a source of his Pride.
 - ii. The very low rank of the deckhand caused him to feel shamed and insulted his pride.
 - iii. His failure to admit or recognize his own shortcomings or the fact that he could ever err.
 - iv. This pride caused him to commit murder.
 - v. He was completely unable to receive/accept any advice.
 - vi. ETC
 - b. STORY OF RESENTMENT: There was a Korean boy working in the camp of the Americans during the war. He would do everything. But the people in the camp always played tricks on the boy- put grease on the knob, glued his shoes, etc... After sometime the people of the captain came and apologized to the Korean and said we will no longer put grease on the knob, glued his shoes, etc... and the boy said really you are not going to do it again? Then I will stop spitting in your soup.
- 7) More examples of pride from the bible:
- a. Satan's fall.
 - b. Adam and Eve.
 - c. Cain and Abel
 - d. Nimrod and the tower of Babel
 - e. Pharisees and Christ
 - f. Pharisees and the tax collector
- 8) Can you guys think of any real world stories where pride got the better of you and you didn't know it at the time...you didn't realize it was pride that was afflicting you? What made you angry, what made you react this way? "Anger is the overt sign of a covered pride" from the desert fathers.
- a. Personal stories....insert here.
- 9) Pride goeth before destruction; and the spirit is lifted up before a fall." (Prov. 16:18). Therefore it is most necessary in the spiritual life to fight this vice in whatever guise it presents itself. If we permit it to enter our heart, the germs of all the vices enter with it, and we soon find ourselves a slave of Satan. We must beware of being ensnared by it, for the end of the proud, unrepentant sinner, as revealed by God, is the everlasting fire of Hell, in company with the demons.
- 10) James 4

Pride Promotes Strife

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet^[a] you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and^[b] adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes

himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

*“ God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.”*

Conclusion:

- Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. Even sometimes when we ask for things we are asking out of pride to fulfill our pleasures.

Applications:

- At the end, ask them to summarize the discussion in one sentence

Unit 4

The Book of Revelation

Objective

The point of this unit is to expose them to some of the mysteries in the book of Revelation. To have them understand that the book of Revelation should be understood in light of not current events, but in light of the BIBLE. Many of the references and symbols in Revelation are universal “prophetic language” As well, most importantly, the study should always come back to the themes of “Christ our Life.” In revelation we see how much Christ cares for His people and that He is doing this for His people, and to bring back those who did not put Him as their lives. This is a unit of **Bible study** but also **spirituality**, **morals**, and **dogma**.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Overview of book and Seals and Trumpets (Chapter 6-11)
- Lesson 2: Woman in Labor, The Child, The Dragon
- Lesson 3: Beast from the Sea, Beast from the Land, Babylon the Harlot
- Lesson 4: 1000 Year Reign, Satan Cast out, Heresies
- Lesson 5: General Resurrection, Judgment, Heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 20-22)
- Lesson 6: The messages to the 7 Churches.

Lesson 1: “Overview of book and Seals and Trumpets (Chapter 6-11)”

Objective:

- Give an overview of the entire book and Seals and Trumpets (Chapter 6-11) Explain wrote it. How is it interpreted with Orthodox understanding? Overview of the chapters Chapter 6 and 7

Memory Verse:

- *“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants- things which must shortly take place. And He sent it and signified it by his angel to his servant John.”
– Revelation 1:1*

References:

- [Ultimate Things](#)
- [A Second Look at the Second Coming](#)

Lesson Plan:

Overview of the Book	
Explain the Seals	
Explain the Trumpets	

Introduction:

- The end times can be compared to a woman in labor-a woman who is pregnant starts with back aches, maybe leg pains, small contraction before delivery- it does not let up until deliveries comes. This is how we know when the end is coming, when the birth pangs get closer and closer together. And that is what it will be for the end, when these signs in the earth and heavens get closer and closer, and when persecutions get worse and worse, this is when “delivery” is near.

Lesson Outline:

- These chapters describe what was written on the scroll that was given to the lamb. Each time a seal is opened a new image appears as below. The description of the seals is very similar to how our Lord describes the end of times and the destruction of Jerusalem. (i.e. wars, pestilence, earthquakes, persecutions, etc) as in Matthew 24
- Comparison to Matthew 24
 - 1st rider in white: Christ- Christ is the one who came and conquered the nations. Christ is called King by people in almost every nation. As well the Gospel is to be preached to all the nations.
 - 2nd rider in red is for the wars that come to the world
 - Wars- WWI and WWII more people died than in all of the wars in history. Germany lost 75% of males. Japan complete cities annihilated
 - 3rd rider is for black horse for scarcity and inflation. After wars there is always inflation. Germany after the first war could take barrels of money to buy a loaf of bread at the store and by the time they would get to the store it would not be enough money. The horseman says that a small amount of wheat will be equivalent to the wage of a worker for 1 day.
 - 4th rider is pale horse of disease. Plagues and disease, famines, wars.
- 5th seal martyrs under the altar cry to the Lord.
- 6th seal cosmic disturbance, earthquakes and sealing of the people of God
- Tsunami, Haiti, China devastating earthquakes
- Compared to a woman in labor- woman who is pregnant starts with back aches, maybe leg pains, small contractions, and delivery- it does not let up until it comes. This is how we know when the end is coming, when the birth pangs get closer and closer together. And that is what it will be for the end, when these signs in the earth and heavens get closer and closer, and when persecutions get worse and worse, this is when “delivery” is near.
- REMEMBER- there is protection God sealed us- as a protection. What is the seal that protects God’s people? CHRISMATION. 1 John 2:20. Ephesians 1:13 **In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,**
- Noah’s ark and Lot saved from Sodom.
- 144,000- 12X12 church perfect.
 - 12 represents the number of the church. The Church in its fullness. 1,000 is the time of perfection- 1 year with God is 1,000 years, and 1,000 years is as 1 year. The church is perfect at the end of times. Virginitly has to do with people entering the Promised Land. They had to be renumbered because they slept- defiled with the Moabites. The 144,000 is symbolic of the people who will make it to the promised land- means that it the church that is not defiled by any means. “adultery” in the OT always refers to the people being unfaithful to God.
- Chapters 8 -11 The Trumpets
 - Land- often symbolizes Church or Israel
 - Vegetation and Green things- are the proud people “they will be like the grass on the house top which withers before it grows up
 - Sea- represents the whole world (nations)

- Rivers- the faithful
- The Two witnesses
- Two olive trees and lamp stands
- Fire comes out of their mouth
- They have power to shut heaven (Elijah)
- They have power to turn water to blood (Moses) But Enoch was also did not die. “As it is appointed for man to die once and then comes the judgment” Hebrews 9:26
- Why do they come- these people lived in a time of extreme corruption
 - Enoch- prior to flood
 - Elijah- with Ahab when Elijah thought he was the only one who was still serving God
- Locust- sting as one of scorpion

Conclusion:

- The end is always drawing nearer. The prophecies of Christ from the gospels and the book of Revelation can be seen clearly. Christ gives us these revelations and prophecies not to try to determine the day of the end but encourage to be ready for his end at all times. We must gather strength from Him throughout our whole life or when the days of tribulation and judgment we will be unready. We should always have confidence in Him and His grace and protection.

Applications:

- Take a moment to meditate on what we would do if we knew this coming week was the great and awful end of world. What sins would we attempt to repent from and leave forever? What mysteries would you be sure to partake of to prepare you? Confession? Communion? The saints became saints partly because one their meditations was the end of their lives. It was perpetually before their eyes each day in preparation and love for God.

Lesson 2: “The Woman in Labor, the Child, the Dragon”

Objective:

- Teach about the symbolism of Revelation 12 regarding the Woman the Child and the Dragon. These figures represent the Christ’s advent and the temptations and persecution the church would face thereafter.

Memory Verse:

- *“Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.” – Rev 12:13*

References:

- Revelation – Tadros Malaty
- Ultimate Things.

Lesson Plan:

Identify Child, Woman, and the Dragon.	
Woman in Labor and Satan perscutes the Church	
Satan get cast out of heaven.	

Introduction:

- Hygiene has become a top priority for businesses, hospitals, and even people homes. They want to cleanse themselves from all manners of germs and bacteria. However what people do not realize is the amount of germs, bacteria, etc there is everywhere without being conscious of them. One statistic said that there is more fecal matter in the kitchen than there is in the bathroom. Similar to this is the spiritual warfare that is unceasingly being waged upon us and on our behalf by Satan and God’s army respectively. Read Revelation 12.

Lesson Outline:

- The woman is described as “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars” What does the woman represent? What are the twelve stars?
- If Christ is the first born he is the firstborn of both the Church (among the resurrected- the first fruit from the dead, as St. Paul says) and St. Mary according to the flesh. So the woman represents both St. Mary and the Church.
- The “Sun” is a symbol of the Father, just as no one has beheld the Father, no one can look at the Sun’s radiance. In the Bible the Sun often represents God the Father. The “Moon” that is under her feet is a symbol of Christ. Christ was crucified when the Passover came which is marked by a full moon. On the cross is when He became a perfect image of the Father—reflecting His light (Love) just as the moon reflects the light of the sun. Christ as the Moon reflects the perfect love of God the Father (the Sun). In Isaiah it says that there will be a time when the brightness of the moon matches that of the Sun. This happens in the cross when we see the ultimate love of the Trinity. And Christ becomes the perfect image of His Father by sacrificing himself for us. Also, notice how the moon is at the feet of the woman? Where was Christ found on Holy Thursday? He was found washing the feet of the disciples, so here the moon is found at the feet of the woman. 12 stars represent the 12 disciples.
- As well John 16:21 “A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you” Here the woman in labor is the Church- specifically the disciples. The Church is giving birth to the resurrected Christ as the first born among the resurrected. Christ is the head of the Church, and as with a baby, the head is delivered first, then the body. This will be the same. Christ has been born into the resurrected body. We too will follow. The book of revelation and our history here on earth is about the birth of us into this resurrected body.
- Acts 13:30- Paul quoting Psalms “you are my son today I have begotten you.” God is the Father of this begotten child through resurrection Christ becomes the first fruit of the resurrection of our humanity which is accepted to God the Father.
- Isaiah 26:17-19. “As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O Lord. 18 We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. 19 Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body[b] they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.”
 - In our labor we do not give birth to anything, but if God would want he could make the dead rise. He is bringing in the image of the child in labor. “The dead shall rise those in the tombs shall come up.” Birth giving is linked to resurrection.
- Why is it compared to labor-
- Labor was part of the discipline God put on humanity as well as death. So if the woman is in labor pains- it is connected to death.

- Life is coming out of the labor- just as life came out of Christ’s cross. The same way that a woman feels that there is a lot of “death”
- The Church will be delivered as a person is. First the head (Christ) and then the rest of the body (us). All of this happens through labor pains—which are the suffering, catastrophes, casting out from the world. Like labor pains and contractions it gets worse and worse until the baby is expelled out- kind of like the Church in the world. The world is going to get worse and worse all the disasters are going to get worse till the final resurrection.
- Compare verse 5 “She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and his throne.” With Acts 1: 9-11 “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who 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.”
 - When was Satan thrown out of heaven? And who are those who “did not love their lives to the death”?
 - When the woman gave birth- “immediately a war started in heaven. And Michael throws Satan and his angels (devils) to the earth... wow to the inhabitants of the earth because...”
 - Satan after the resurrection immediately persecutes church—is seen in the roman persecution of the Church.
 - Satan inhabited the heaven as the Canaanites were in the Promised Land. Through resurrection Satan was expelled from Heaven... just as the Canaanites were overcome and expelled from the promised land
- Explain the Woman’s persecution, the earth’s help to her and the significance of the enraged dragon making war with her offspring “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
 - The offspring is the church... they are exiled to the desert as the church moved to the monasteries. After the roman persecution the Church is kept in the monastery.
 - How do you see Satan killing us from the inside and outside?
 - It is more subtle now.

Conclusion:

- Satan is a fierce and relentless in his mission to destroy us. God and His army however is a much more powerful ally in our fight. As God delivered the Woman from the persecution of the Dragon, so will He deliver us from the persecution of the demonic influences of this age if we put our trust in Him.

Applications:

- Contemplate what are the trials, persecutions, and temptations that Satan puts forth in each of our lives. In what ways can we entrust our souls into God’s hands to

protect us.. Encourage the kids to beseech Jesus Christ's name "Lord Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me" in times of temptation. Also to ask for the intercessions of Archangel Michael who had cast Satan and his army from heaven in times of temptation.

Lesson 3: “Beast from the Sea, Beast from the Land, Babylon the Harlot”

Objective:

- Teach the meaning and symbolism of the two beasts mentioned in Revelation.
- Allow for the audience to identify “types” of the beasts and harlot.

Memory Verse:

- *“1 It's the last hour and the antichrist is coming and even now many antichrists have come....He is the antichrist who denies the Father and Son.” 1John 2:18*

References:

- REVELATIONS 13, 17,18 & 2 Thess 2

Lesson Plan:

Beast of the Sea	
Beast of the Land	
Great Harlot Babylon.	

Introduction:

- “One of the most intriguing figures in eschatology is that of the antichrist. People often have a preoccupation for the details of who or what he is or what things will be like when he present here on earth. These chapters outline his actions and influence on the world.”

Lesson Outline:

- ***The beast from the Sea.*** What is the description of this beast? What does the “sea” represent in the Bible? Sea is the whole world. The beast from the sea could be a kingdom- an Empire.
 - Roman empire could be a type of the beast from the Sea
 - 7 heads and 10 crowns-7 kingdoms that follow the same rule
 - 10 crowns and horns- which represent power crowns are the rulers

- One of the kingdoms was ruined- but then changes. Ex Russia was communist living like the beast (wounded) became non communist- if it would go back to communism this would be its fatal wound being healed.
- The rule is 3.5 years
- The system is set up to force them to do things contrary to God- Example things that are in our society that make us hate the Church. Starts with no prayer in church, no crosses, no Christ in Christmas. Then it becomes hate-people hating Christians.
- This system keeps repeating itself (The system is the beast from the sea)- Roman empire, Egypt with Israel, Communism, Nazis, Muslim Brotherhood
- ***The beast from the Earth***
 - Who does the beast of the earth represent? What is its job?
 - Land- in the old time this is Israel may now be the Church.
 - He has a description of looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. Anti-Christ, This beast is a person or Antichrists. There have been many and there will be more. 1 John 2:18 "It's the last hour and the antichrist is coming and even now many antichrists have come....He is the antichrist who denies the Father and Son." Examples: Nimrod, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Judas Iscariot, Nero
 - ANYONE WHO PREACHES THAT CHRIST IS NOT THE SON OF GOD 2 Thessalonians 2: "Now brethren concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...Let no one deceive you this day will not come until the falling away comes first and the man of sin the son of perdition is revealed. Who opposes himself and exalts himself above God...pleasure of unrighteousness"
- There is a gate (angel) that is keeping this from happening- and then the flood of evil will come to the earth.
- The falling away will happen because there is a concentration on the physical life- people have to struggle to keep their physical life. It will not come through persecution but through the pressures of our life being seduced by the cares of the world.
- The end may be more of the church being suffocated. The resources will be completely controlled. Nothing will be given for the church, money, food, drink. The people's ability to buy and sold without a mark from the beast. The church will be only those who truly want to be there. Returning back to the stage of being willing to die. The Church will be in hiding. The last few members will be struggling for their lives.
- How could this be brought about? How could democracy be driven backwards?
 - FEAR. This authority will happen after many disasters happen- people think congress cannot make decisions and they need quick decisions a person in control.
- Why does the beast perform great signs? Why did St. John mention the specific miracle of making fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men? He performs signs to uncover the hearts of people
- KIDS: Do not be happy that you are not interested in following God. DO not be comfortable that you are just not doing wrong... if you are not persistent in going after right automatically you are exposing yourself to the wrong. The wrong will

catch up. Everyone will be affected. Example: Cain- If you do well would you not be accepted. If you do not do well sin is waiting at the door. Genesis 4:6

- What is the mark of the beast? Is this a literal or a symbolic mark? Both- they live as for the beast and he who does not have the mark cannot sell or buy. Compare In Revelation 7:3 an angel from the east, having the seal of the living God cried “**Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.**” To verse 16 “**He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.**”
- What is the meaning of the number “666”? 7 is the number of covenant. 7th day is the day of the Lord. 6 is the number for the day of man when he was created. 6- 3 times which is the number of trinity- so it is a man who wants to make himself a man.
- John does not give us the specific titles or names he saw on the head of the beast rising from the sea. What do you think he meant by “blasphemous name”? What does it symbolize?
- What is the beast’s relation to the dragon? If the dragon is Satan, then what is the beast?
- “**All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**” If it is predetermined whose names will be written in the book of Life and whose names won’t, then what is man’s personal responsibility?
- **Babylon the Harlot** “**He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**” What does it mean to ‘lead into captivity’? How does this apply to our daily lives? Why are we responsible for others?
 - The more any culture makes itself against Christ (denying His existence, OK with blasphemy), the more it becomes Babylon.
 - Technology seems to go hand in hand with rebellion against God. Civilization (advancements) and rebellion go together in the Old Testament. Examples:
 - Cain – first mention of music, etc... are the children of Cain Genesis chapter 4. Cain, the murderer, founded the first city with the first trumpeter and harp, etc. (civilization) Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon – learned a technology of making bricks, the first time ever. It came in Gen. 10:9, that Nimrod is the founder of the city of Babylon. He was a tyrant, a disobedient man who led many to the disobedience of God. Egypt, Babylon in the time of Daniel
 - Rome- needed slavery to drive the machines of the kingdom. Fight, get slaves, make progress. Every kingdom needed slaves to drive their machines. Contemporary kingdoms do it in a different way: Communists do it through an ideology – everyone is equal and we divide shares; capitalism does it through making money, and people have to work to make a lot of money and buy things
 - This city was known for the worship of idols. Her disobedience appeared since its foundation, as it was called Babylon, “**because there, the Lord confused the language of all the earth**” (Gen. 11:9). That happened when men

wanted to build a tower, to protect themselves from God, whenever He aims to take revenge on them.

- For the Church of the Old Testament, Babylon was a source of terror. The Lord was using her to punish the Jews. She insulted, and subdued them at many stages in their history. Therefore the word “Babylon,” became an indication of the opposition to God, the love of the world, and cruelty to human beings.
- “Babylon,” appeared in the Book of Revelation, as an adulteress, and as a great city. A woman in the Holy Bible indicates a certain system, or a certain group. Jesus Christ has a real bride, which is the Church (Eph. 5:23-32). She is a holy woman, immaculate and blameless. The Antichrist has also a bride, which is “Babylon.” She is his people who works against the true faith, opposes God, and urges others on defilement.
- A city indicates the habitation, and as holy Jerusalem indicates the dwelling of God among human beings, therefore it is called Holy. We can say that every soul is also the Holy Jerusalem, because God dwells in her. The great Babylon indicates the dwelling of the “Antichrist” among human beings. It was thus called “great,” because the Antichrist is violent. He can be allowed to use any other city apart from this Babylon, it makes no difference. What we can say is that every soul opposing God is ‘Babylon,’ because it is the dwelling place of Satan.
- **THE MEANING OF THE HARLOT**
 - 7 heads (exalted and proud kingdoms- which carry that woman)= 7 mountains [verse 9]
 - 7 Kings 5, 1, 1 – they are one; the beast is the main body. He is the head of the union.
 - Out of the 7 kings come 10 horns(in the future) – will hate the harlot verse 16
 - 10 kings which don’t have a kingdom, each will rule for a short time (1 hr)
 - They will follow the beast and give it power. Will fight the Lord on the side of the beast and lose

Conclusion:

- The actions of Satan and his armies are already in motion. Satan’s influences are so deeply entrenched that we do not even recognize them day to day. Do not be shocked that his destructive motives have the ability to be put in action through government and societal infrastructure on a global scale. This spirit is constantly a temptation to all Christians because we are living in the world and in our weakness we are very worldly.

Applications:

- Have the kids identify parts of their lives that are run by the system or spirit that these beasts operate under. For example – social media, social norms, television. Have kids identify different influences in the world that have the spirit of the antichrist which denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and has come in the flesh.

Also notice that Babylon was a very rich consumerist society. Does that sound familiar? Brainstorm what we can do weed out these harmful influences and ideals from our hearts.

Lesson 4: “1000 Year Reign and Heresies”

Objective:

- Teach the meaning of 1000 year reign and heretical teachings vs Orthodox understanding
- Understanding what will take place in the 1000 year reign

Memory Verse:

- *“Matthew 24:23 “If anyone says ‘look here is the Christ or there’ do not believe. For false Christs will rise and show great wonders to deceive, if possible even the elect. See I have told you.”*

References:

- Revelation 20

Lesson Plan:

Teach what the meaning of 1000 year reign is.	
Churches view on 1000 year reign and heresies regarding it	
Reason for this reign and dangers of believing in literal 1000 yr reign	

Introduction:

- From the time awaiting for Christ’s arrival to after His death and resurrection to the current day, people have constantly tried to point to the coming of a Messiah or even Messiahs plural. Christ gave stern warnings that there will be times when people will say Christ has come here in this place, or there in that place. For example: Mohammed (another prophet), David Koresh (false Christ) John Smith (another prophet) The book of Revelation speaks of Christ having a 1000 year reign. It is important to interpret this reign as God had intended.

Lesson Outline:

- ***Interpretation for Christ': 1000 Year Reign***, Satan Cast out, Heresies
- Revelation 20:
- Satan who deceives the whole world is chained for 1000 years. This is accomplished in the victorious work of the cross of Christ. This event defeated Satan and made him impotent in the world.
- Satan no longer could “deceive all the nations” As we were all witnesses of the works of Christ and His apostles and His Church. Now his deception is used to convince us to live lives no different than those who have no saving knowledge of Christ and His Church.
- Rev 20 says Christ rules for “1000 years”. 1000 years represents a perfect time
- This reign is right now. Now in almost every nation, among every tongue people proclaim Christ as King. This is Christ’s reign- in the Church now,
- Christ told Pilate “My kingdom is not of this world...” we say in the Creed “And His kingdom should have no end...” The heresy of the millennial rule means his kingdom ends after 1000 yrs.
- Matthew 24:23 **“If anyone says ‘look here is the Christ or there’ do not believe. For false Christs will rise and show great wonders to deceive, if even possible the elect. See I have told you.”** We will not see Christ reigning on the earth. If you see someone who looks like Christ reigning on earth do not be deceived! Christ even said “do not believe... see I told you!”
- ***Heresies:*** Many Protestant churches interpret this verse about 1000 year reign as Christ coming to reign in Jerusalem for 1000 years
- Very few (<3) church Fathers thought that Christ would reign on the Earth. The vast majority believed that his reign was immaterial.
- Sporadically post reformation (Protestants) believed in the millennial rule.
- In the 1700s this is when the millennial rule heresy really began to “take off” in modern Protestantism.
- Danger of Millennial Rule: Imagine, someone ruling in Israel- they perform wonders EVEN to make “fire come down from heaven.” He “looks like a lamb” (Christ). He brings prosperity to all people who worship him... this is THE ANTICHRIST’s description, but it will confuse people if they are looking for Christ to rule for 1000 years.
- ***Reason for 1000 year reign:*** Related to the return of the evangelizing of the whole world. This period we are in of Christ’s reign is to allow for time to preach the gospel to all nations and peoples.
- Satan is controlled until the gospel is preached to the whole world. If the devil was allowed he would restrain every good move by the church. But by Christ’s blood Satan is bound and the world is preached the gospel.
- In the book of Matthew- it says until the time of the gentiles is complete. Jacob’s wives would fight over him- they would almost play games. Now the time of the “Jewish wife” is complete now is the time for the gentile wife- the time of the Church. We know that this time is complete when the gospel has been preached to the whole world.
- How do we know when the time is done?

- The apostasy- meaning the turning back of the believers- and there will be fierce attacks on the faith without very much help. Everything is going wrong- and there is nothing to help the situation. Persecutions. Similar to when a new pharaoh came into power in Egypt and then times were tough for the Israelites.
- Since King Constantine Christians had a favorable positions but slowly, slowly that will end

Conclusion:

- Christ once taught his disciples to do good work while they have light. (Have you ever tried to do yard work or grill food in the dark? It is impossible) Christ's reign is now, it our duty and purpose to serve and worship Him now. A time will come when worship of God will be harder, will not be easy, when it says Satan will be released from the bottomless pit to persecute the Church. Let us always take every opportunity to become one with Christ, to grow in prayer and the mysteries of the Church to obtain strength to withstand the evil days that are to come.

Applications:

- What good deeds should we do while we have the light of Christ's reign. Think of the good we should do now that we are in Christ's reign that one day may be hard to perform. (example: attend church freely, preach the gospel freely, perform physically difficult spiritual practices prostrations, fastings, vigils)

Lesson 5: “General Resurrection, Judgment, Heavenly Jerusalem”

Objective:

- The audience will be able to define the general resurrection
- Outline the final judgment and Christ’s teachings on judgment
- Illustrate a picture and the world to come. The Heavenly Jerusalem.

Memory Verse:

- *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” Rev 21:1*

References:

- Revelation 20-22
- 2 Thess 2:8

Lesson Plan:

General Resurrection explanation	
Judgment of the Living and the Dead	
New Jerusalem.	

Introduction:

- For 3 years the disciples grew very tight with Christ experiencing the mysteries of God. When Christ was crucified the disciples were emotionally and spiritually destroyed. However Christ and Church teaches that Ascension was not only beneficial for us but essential to us.

Lesson Outline:

- **General Resurrection**
- The sea gives up its dead, all are raised up and look at the face of Christ- even those who pierced Him (as in the first chapter). The last trumpet will sound see (7:15) The

trumpet sounds and the end comes. 1 Thess 4:17 talks also about His people being caught in the sky.

- The beast and the prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire. This will happen by the appearance of Christ who will destroy these
- 2 Thess 2:8 “**The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.**”
- **Judgment**
 - The book of life- the judgment and the dead will be raised. How will people be judged? Each person according to their works
 - Judgment will be done by the PERSON- CHRIST’S WORDS WITHIN THE PERSON IS THE JUDGMENT
 - “**The Father does not judge He has given all judgment to Son.**” “**The Son does not judge... the words I have spoken...**”
- When will the end come? When the hearts of the people who are in suffering cry out sincerely for the end to come. The Church cries earnestly asking for the end. The power lies in the prayer of the people to end this. The time will be so terrible that people will wish they were dead and that they do not want to have children even. We need to remember that we Christians have such strong power and that our prayer really moves the heart of God. So we need to be careful for what our heart wants. “**For the elects sake the days will be shortened**” (Matthew 24)
- “**He who is unjust let him be unjust still...**” and “**The cowardly unbelieving...**” compare to MARK 7:20-23. Who is unclean and unfit? As well Galatians 5:20-21 the works of the flesh. THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT KEEP US OUT OF THE KINGDOM! List and define all of these words-
- **Heavenly Jerusalem** The description is that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles. This is why we are apostolic- the church has 12 stones- not just Christ- not just St. Peter and Christ- but the Church is built on the foundation of the 12 apostles
 - The dimensions are 144 cubits- not 144,000 because 1000 was for time and the time is out. There is no more time everyone is there. Now is eternity
 - First heaven and earth pass away because they are the physical things we see. 1 Peter- the heavens will be rolled open as a scroll and the universe will burn with a great noise- deafening noise. Isaiah 34:4 “**all the host of heavens will be dissolved**” There will be no sea in the heavenly Jerusalem because the sea represents the non Christians.
 - God will dwell with His people. The revelation of these events will bring God’s glory. The sight of God’s coming will be so much amazement and so much glory that everyone will be in awe.
 - Promises “**God shall wipe away every tear. There will be no more pain or suffering**”
 - God takes away all the memory of pain and suffering we had on earth. First there is an acknowledgment of the suffering the people face. God keeps in His memory all the suffering we have. Psalm 56:8. It is also about the comforting that will happen- that will make us forget all that we have suffered all the anguish. God will do this in a way that we will rejoice. St. Paul says “the

suffering in this time cannot be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.” It will be to the point that the evil memory will be a source of joy. Like a little child falls and hurts himself receives the comfort from the mother. The comfort is so great that sometimes the child will pretend to be more hurt for comfort.

- 12 gates compared to John 10- whoever goes through these gates will come in and out and find green pastures,
- At the time it was Christ, then the apostles, now the bishops- if you want to go through the gate it is thru the church.
- Light of the Lamb. There is no night, no sun. The light comes from the Lamb
- Nothing shall enter that causes abomination or a lie. Whoever enters into heaven is pure. Those who are not pure- it is impossible for them to enter. That is why we have to get rid of these things now- so that we can enter. Cause if the heart is not true- this is all that is left. The heart and what we truly want will be revealed- this will be the only thing present. And the heart determines if we are fit for the kingdom.
- **Revelations 22:** Revelation of the Trinity. The lamb (Christ) The river (Holy Spirit)—John 7:37 **“If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink as it is written out of His heart will flow rivers of living water.”** Come from the throne (Father) and through the Lamb. Ezekiel 47 temple becomes the source of water that becomes river and eventually gets deeper and becomes a great sea. Also in Genesis. The river is the Holy Spirit. The one who quenches. Because Christ is new Temple he becomes the source for this river.
- Catholics- Filioque said that the Holy Spirit proceeds equally from both the Father and the Son. So how do we understand? John 14 says the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. We know and the Catholics agree that the Father is always the source. But after incarnation it is given through Christ as well. There are not two sources. The Father is the source but it goes through the Son. The Catholics agree that the Holy Spirit did not eternally proceed from the Son- just after incarnation it was given through the Son.
- On the side of the river is the tree of life which bears 12 fruit- leaves are for healing of the nations The tree is the image of the Eucharist.
- Psalm 1 “blessed is the man who has not walked in the council of the ungodly... he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water...” Since the beginning the tree is there. The tree takes from the river and yields fleshy fruits- which is the Eucharist. The life in the fruit comes from the Holy Spirit. But without the flesh it would not give life. The leaves are the other mysteries of the church- for the healing. Unction of the sick, confession and communion. The 12 fruit is for every month to show the continuous giving of fruit- there is no season- constant harvesting- no withering leaves- not rotting fruit.
- “There shall be no more curse” goes full circle with Genesis as Genesis was beginning more or less with the curse of the fallen man.
- “Do not seal” Is a command to have the words not be too difficult to understand.
- The root and offspring of David- the Bright and morning star. Christ is the offspring of David. The morning star is the Sun- Jesus is the one who lightens everything

Conclusion:

- Every deed, every thought, every intention we will be held accountable for Christ who the Father delivered all judgment to. The heavenly Jerusalem is when we become united to the Holy Trinity- The Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit and the cloud of witnesses. Only joy peace and love will exist, while all sorrow and pain will be blotted out from existence. The Heavenly Jerusalem should be our only goal in life.

Applications:

- Contemplate what sins will we be held accountable for on the day of our judgment. Exhort the kids to know that if we knowingly fail to repent of these sins they God will hold us accountable on that day
- What pains and suffering would we look to release in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Contemplate on the joy and love one could find in the bosom of God. What would you compare it to?

Lesson 6: “The messages to the 7 Churches”

Objective:

- The seven messages to the churches are seven different spiritual lessons that we can still apply to each of us today. The workshop is to personalize Christ’s message to each of us. Come up with a title of the church? What would Jesus suggest for me to work on? Which message can you relate to and benefit from the most? What’s common between all messages or any message from God?

Memory Verse:

- *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. (Revelation 1:10-12)*

References:

- Revelation 2-3

Lesson Plan:

Know what are the seven churches	
What's the message for each?	
How can we relate to it?	

Introduction:

- Chapter 2 and 3 The Message to the Churches- message to the community at the time as well as the characters of us in the church today. The letters are for all time. The struggles these Churches endured at that time are the same struggles the Churches struggle with today, and each Christian struggles with individually.

Lesson Outline:

- 7 Churches Ephesus- Loveless- “first desirable”, Smyrna- Persecuted- “Bitter affliction”, Pergamos- Compromising- “Earthly Height”, Thyatira- Corrupt- “Sacrifice

of Labor”, Sardis-Dead- “Prince of joy”, Philadelphia- Faithful-“Love of a brother”, Laodicea- Lukewarm-“Just people”

- Identify the main characteristics of each of the churches by answering the following questions after reading each of the messages; discuss the answers below and write them down to present to the group (Each has a certain pattern... “I know your works” and then what is missing, the advice, and then the reward)
- What are the strengths? What are the weaknesses of the church? What was the solution? What’s the prescription? Where would your church fit?
- **The Nicolaitans** are a group of people who followed wrong teachings and were a great threat to the church of God. Notice that they hated and rejected the doctrines, works, and doctrines of the “Nicolaitans.” The Ephesus church was historically a type or antitype of the first and second century churches of God – essentially, the first generation of the church and their early descendents. But Christ said, “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to [all] the churches” (v.7). Then, to the Pergamos church, “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus [i.e. therefore] you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. REPENT, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth”
- What’s the Doctrine of Balaam? (part of the handout)
- Notice that their teachings are comparable or the same as the doctrine of Balaam, the arch apostate deceiver and prophet who tried to use divine magic against Israel when they came out of Egypt. When God would not allow him to place a curse on Israel, he later taught the Midianites and their allies to “seduce” Israel from their faithfulness to God, by sending their daughters and wives to use their sexual charms on them, and to entice them to commit immorality and the
- partake of pagan festivities and idolatrous worship, combining paganism with the worship of God – something which God abominates and thoroughly detests!
- **The church of Ephesus (The Loveless Church)**
 - Was there a time when you were closer to God?
 - Do you believe that God knows all of your deeds and works?
 - Are you patient?
 - What would you do if you found yourself exposed to evil things (drugs alcohol) at school?
 - Do you do work for the sake of the name of God?
- **The church of Smyrna (the Persecuted Church)**
 - Have you been persecuted for your faith?
 - Did you have fear at the time? Fear of what?
 - Do you wish that God wouldn’t allow suffering and temptation to take place? Why?
 - Do you believe in eternal live?
 - Do you fear death?
- **The church of Pergamos (The compromising Church)**
 - Do you recognize evil around you at school, work, and street everyday?

- How do you react to evil?
- Do you have any close friends that accept pre-marital sex?
- Do you have any friends that had exposure to drugs?
- Do you have any friends that drink?
- **The Church of Thyatira (The Corrupt Church)**
 - Do you think that as time passes you grow spiritually or you walk away from God's way?
 - Are you guilty of generalizing the bible's message to us? Or do you believe that all of it applies to you?
 - If you think that all of it applies to you, have you been in a situation where you allowed something to enter your life that God didn't want you to?
 - Are you prepared to stand before Christ on the judgment day?
 - What do you need to do to be prepared?
- **The Church of Sardis (The Dead Church)**
 - We are all Christians by name, have you thought if your works define you as Christian?
 - What does it mean to be spiritually alive?
 - What does it mean to be spiritually dead?
 - Are you a live or dead?
 - What do you need to do next, to be or continue to be spiritually alive?
- **The Church of Philadelphia (The Faithful Church)**
 - Have you ever denied God's name? Denied any ties to the church? Denied that you are Christian? Why?
 - Have you experienced personal love by Christ? He saved you from something? Helped you in something? Protected you from something? What was this like?
 - Do you keep God's commandments? How?
 - Do you know the results of not keeping God's commandments?
 - Do you know the promise and the reward of keeping God's commandments?
- **The church of Laodiceans (The Lukewarm Church)**
 - Do you feel empty without Christ? Do you feel the need to talk to him often "prayers"?
 - Do you pray when you are about to make "a big decision"? Or do you think you don't need God?
 - When you pray, do you "hear God"? Do you look for signs and responses from Him? Do you search for answers to your questions in His words?
 - Do you have a spiritual father than can help and direct you to where you will find answers?
 - How often do you seek your spiritual father's advice? Is it enough?

Conclusion:

- As each Church had strengths and weaknesses so do each one of us have strengths and weaknesses. Christ and the Holy Spirit's role is to identify it and encourage us to grow and transform. Every sin we have does have a solution. With the victory over our sins there are promises for our heavenly rewards.

Applications:

- Lesson Idea: Do lesson as a workshop. Give each group one church, have them answer the questions about what was good, bad, and the advice to each Church. Ask them to identify modern versions of this, and what "church" or type of person they are in each Church. Idea is to end with a message that each church is called to repent or else "lampstand will be removed." We hear about the end times, judgment, but what is important is how are we doing? We can reach the end at any time.

Unit 5

Lent and Holy Week

Objective

The objective of this unit is to review and focus on the readings of Holy Week to prepare ourselves to fully benefit from the spirituality of the Holy Week. This unit is to also help the students be in unity with what the Church is doing. So by focusing on lent in Sunday school we are also bringing to light what the church is doing. This unit is focused on **spirituality** but also incorporates **morality**.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: The Prodigal Son
- Lesson 2: The Samaritan Woman
- Lesson 3: The Man Born Blind L
- Lesson 4: Anointing of Christ at Bethany: How much will I “pay” for the “pearl of great price” L
- Lesson 5: Good Friday: The great manifestation of God’s Love. L
- Lesson 6: Bright Saturday: Every perfect gift is bestowed upon us after a period of waiting L

Lesson 1: The Prodigal Son

Objective:

- Show God’s love and that we will always be accepted. Once we feel the “hunger” for Him, we should return back to our Father’s house (the Church) where His servants (the priests) will dress us, put a ring on our hands and fill us.

Memory Verse:

- *“Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. **32** It 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.”
Luke 15:32*

References:

- Luke 15

Lesson Plan:

Prodigal son returned because he was hungry—physically.	
We too will feel a hunger to return to God.	
God will always accept us back.	

Introduction:

- The prodigal son left his home and when he felt empty and lost he had a hunger to return back to God. We too may stray and will also feel a hunger to return. There’s no sin that will prevent us from returning to God if we ask for forgiveness.

Lesson Outline:

- Why did the prodigal son return? He returned because he was hungry. He wanted to eat the pods that the pig ate and realized that his father’s servants had food to spare.

- Every sin that we get enslaved to will leave us feeling naked, abused, and desperate. But this is part of what if we listen and come to our selves will make us realize that we have done wrong. This “hunger” is what will turn us back to the Lord, if we are listening to our souls.
- Once we feel that desire to return home, that’s when the devil kicks in. He’s going to start trying to convince you that you’re not welcome back home. He’s going to make you feel like you’re not good enough. He’s going to work as hard as possible to make you feel shame. But unlike a friend at school, God is always, always, always going to take you back. There are no two ways about this.

- A
 ll sin is defeated by Gods love; He is always waiting with open arms for us to return. The son knows that he will be accepted when he returns to the father’s house.

- T
 he Father’s love is so great- there are 3 actions of the Father without him talking. Even without the son opening his mouth. (Luke 15:20 Saw him, had compassion, ran, fell on his neck, and kissed him) We don’t always talk about these actions and how much the Father is looking to accept and love. “Behold I stand by the door and knock if any one hears my voice and opens I will come in ...” Some parents, their kids do something wrong and the parents turn their back on them right away. This is the opposite of what our Lord does for us. No person wants to be put in a position of being yelled at, and this is what our Lord does- he shows us love. After the 4 actions the son starts speaking “Father...” but this is all after the Father has already accepted him.

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 nce we begin the journey home, God the father will be waiting for us.

- H
 ow do we stray from God?

- H
 ow do we return?

Conclusion:

- O
 nce we begin the journey home, God the father will be waiting for us.

- H
 ow do we stray from God?

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Applications:

What are the sins that the kids may feel once they have committed them that they will never be accepted back to God?

Lesson 2: The Samaritan Woman

Objective:

- Communion is where we get our “thirst” quenched. When we take it prepared, and with the hope that it will quench us it will. But too often we take it unprepared and without this goal in mind

Memory Verse:

- *“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.” John 4: 10*

References:

- John 4

Lesson Plan:

The Samaritan women had a deep thirst- what is thirst

When we realize who Christ is we know we can get filled. Communion is how we get quenched

We cannot be with Christ and also be thirsting after things in this world.

Introduction:

- The Samaritan woman was thirsty and was filling her thirst with the companionship of men. She only could truly be filled when she turned to Christ.

Lesson Outline:

- Why do you think Christ talked to the woman about being thirsty?
 - What are characteristics of being thirsty?
 - It's a need or craving for something
- The woman had a longing a craving for something that was not being filled. What was her craving?
 - Love
 - Lust
 - Attention
 - Filling her loneliness
 - She had 5 husbands-
- We are the Samaritan woman.
 - We might think- come on Jackie I haven't had 5 husbands
 - But maybe you have a thirst for boyfriends. I see girls always jumping from one boy to the next
 - Maybe it is lust
 - Maybe you are constantly seeking the attention from guys
 - Maybe its your looks- maybe you shop constantly, or are always concerned about your hair, or are always concerned about your body shape- your weight
 - Maybe its status- having people view us well, being popular, trying to be a people pleaser
 - Maybe its your intelligence
 - Maybe its money and possessions
- **How do you know if you are falling into the trap of chasing things?** There are really only 2 options (thirsty or not thirsty)
 - If we are content
 - 1- we are being satisfied by Christ- and we know we are satisfied by Him because we have a close relationship with Him AND we are not craving all those things I listed
 - 2- we are satisfied. But if we don't have a relationship with Him- that means we are being quenched by all the things around us
 - We are thirsty
 - We are always thirst going around looking for the next thing to quench us.

- You may think any of this is not a big deal- lets read verses 20-24 what word is repeated several times?
 - Why would Christ repeat this word? (worship)
 - If we are being satisfied by other things- we cannot truly be worshiping Him. We will never have a true knowledge of who He is, we are not in a true relationship with him. WE cannot serve 2 masters.

- **What will be the end to all of these things-**
 - If you are being filled by these things you will never be happy. What did Christ say would happen to whomever drinks of the well he was sitting at?
 - They would have to keep coming back for more
 - Anything that is not from Christ will leave us longing for more. Nothing ever is good enough.
 - You are longing for the latest styles- guess what? Its out of style- you look “bad” and you need to go buy more.
 - You are with the hottest guy- guess what? there is a hotter guy who you are now interested in. OR he dumps you, you are lonely again and need to find someone else.
 - You feel overweight- you loose the weight- but guess what? You really are unhappy still with your skin, or your hair color, or your still unhappy with the shape or size of your legs, your chest, anything!
 - Whoever drinks of this water- being quenched by these things will always be thirsty again
 - The other thing is say you are content with these things. Say you are happy with getting “love” from guys. –What happens if you get dumped by this guy and cant find a new one? Or what if you are happy with the way your body looks—but then you have to go on a medicine that makes you gain a lot of weight, weight that you cannot lose? How would someone feel in these situations?
 - IF the source of your water, your quenching dries up you get seriously depressed.

- **If Christ is telling us we will always be thirsty why do we continue?**
 - 1- we don’t feel thirsty yet... IT WILL COME ONE DAY
 - 2- we don’t believe that Christ will really fill our thirst

- **Why don’t people seek Christ?**
 - We don’t really know who Christ is
 - I want someone to tell me what was the progression of who the woman thought Christ was.
 - She thought He was just a Jew

- She thought He is a prophet
 - She realized He was the Messiah
 - If we know Christ and His power and gift we would ask Him to fill our thirst
- How does Christ fill our thirst?
 - How and where do we in the Church get our thirst quenched?
 - WE get quenching from Christ when we take communion **prepared** and **looking** for quenching.

A girl had a boyfriend for a long time and was not taking communion. Finally she broke up with the guy and confessed and started taking communion again. But she was still never happy and was on this quest to find a new boyfriend. But its funny because she was taking communion but still was not quenched. She was not happy. Even though she was taking communion she was not looking to communion with the understanding of Whom she was partaking of and the power of it. She was still preoccupied in her heart looking for another man. She was not interested in REALLY getting filled by Christ. She was not knowing Who she worships.

Conclusion:

- (1) We need to ask are we thirsty?
 - a. No- do we have a relationship with Him
 - b. No- what is it that is filling me- how will this lead to my destruction?
 - c. Yes- what do I think will quench me. Why haven't I turned to Christ to fill me?
- (2) We need to take communion knowing the power and love of Christ
- (3) Where do we see water coming out of Christ?
 - a. WE see it on the cross
 - b. This lent I want us all to sit with the image of Christ on the cross in our hearts... knowing that he loves us to this end
 - c. I want us to think about this and realize here is a person who loves me so much- would do anything for me- and he is offering me true happiness. All I have to do is truly come to Him.

Applications:

- High schoolers thirsts after too many things that artificially fill their thirst like the Samaritan woman.
- Abouna actually compares coming to communion and not really looking for Christ to fill us with marital relations. He said imagine you are married and you are going to be intimate with your husband but you are not really interested in him. Instead, you are more interested in this guy you work with. Do you think that sleeping with your husband is going to make you feel content, and like you have a wonderful relationship with Him? OF course not! And that is what it is like with us. If we are taking communion and are not interested in Christ then we will not be the satisfaction, the quenching. And this is why we still thirst and don't feel content in our lives.

Lesson 3: The Man Born Blind

Objective:

- Recognize the truth that Christ is there to fill all our desires and loneliness.

Memory Verse:

- *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” John 9:5*

References:

- John 9

Lesson Plan:

The man born blind was in a very lonely isolated position.	
The world will try to make you feel like Christ is not really who He says He is.	
The man born blind received the quenching that the Samaritan woman and the prodigal son were seeking.	

Introduction:

- Give a description of the world the man born blind must have lived in. How do you think his family treated him? We can see from the story that they seemed to want to distance themselves from him. This probably created a lot of loneliness. What would it be like to be shut out of the world physically- not seeing anything? Of course this would once again bring a lot of loneliness. Imagine, he was sitting as a beggar. How do you think he was treated? Why didn't his family still care for him? This man was completely rejected.

Lesson Outline:

- We can see how alone this man was. But what was Christ's role? Christ took away from him one of the things that was so burdensome to him. Christ will come to our life and do miraculous things.
- What was the society's reaction? They all rejected the truth that this was Christ who did this for him. This is what will happen- the truth that Christ is in our life and able to completely care for us and fill our loneliness, remove what is causing us pain- this will be challenged by the world.
- How is the truth that Christ is there for us challenged? It is challenged by the convenience of this time, when one relies on other things instead of God. Challenged when we are seeking comfort. Loneliness makes us vulnerable and causes us doubt that Christ is there for us.
- The man born blind was in a very lonely isolated position. Even when he was cured he was then rejected by the community. But he stood up for the truth that Christ is the one who healed him and cared for him. After he was cast out the Lord went and found him. Christ will not leave us. It may feel like years before He comes to us. But, we need to recognize Him in our lives and to trust Him.
- As a result, the man born blind received the quenching that the Samaritan woman and the prodigal son were seeking.
- But Christ is going to give quenching that no man can fight. While every relationship (outside of Christian brotherhood or Marriage) is very selfish, self-focused and destructive. Christ proves His true love for us on the Cross.

Conclusion:

- How would you describe the emotions that come with sin in loneliness? How does it drive the person? How does it make them feel?

Applications:

- What are the things in this life that people turn to fill their loneliness?
- We rely on things of this world other than God to fill our loneliness.
- Want to leave you with a thought:
 - Think about how the truth is challenged in your lives?

Lesson 4: Anointing of Christ at Bethany

Objective:

- Recognize that a sacrifice in this world for others is considered a sacrificing for Christ.

Memory Verse:

- *“Assuredly, 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.” Matthew 16:13*

References:

- Matthew 26

Lesson Plan:

A sacrifice for others can be seen as a sacrifice for Christ	
We need to practice sacrifice on a regular basis	
To love someone is to sacrifice for them	

Introduction:

Story: There was once a young engaged couple walking together along a bridge. The couple stopped looked over the water and just enjoyed their time together. Out of nowhere, the man asks his fiancée, “Do you love me?” She answered, “of course, you know I love you.” But he said “but how do I know.” She answered “well I spend my time with you, I do things for you, you know I love you.” But he repeated “but how do I really know?” The girls stopped and thought for a minute.

“You see this necklace around my neck? How much do I love this necklace?”

“That necklace is priceless to you,” he answered. “It was your mother’s necklace, it was one of the first gifts, your father gave your mother. She always wore it until the day she passed away. You love that necklace.”

Without a word, the girl reached around her neck, pulled off the necklace and threw it into the stream below. “That is how much I love you,” she answered.

- Why would the girl do this?
- Was there value in her action?
- Was what she did foolish or wasteful?

Lesson Outline:

Read John 12:2-9

“6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, **7** a 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*. **8** But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? **9** For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the poor*.”

10 But 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. **11** For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. **12** For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. **13** Assuredly, 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.”

- Who is Mary?
 - The sister of Lazarus and Martha
- What is alabaster flask? Why was it significant that it was broken?
 - A bottle made of very costly stone. The way it was made is for 1 use only, once the neck was broken it had to be used all at once.
 - She broke it so that she would pour it freely, an expression of her wholeheartedness and love for Christ.
- What is spikenard? What was it used for?
 - For anointing the dead for burial
 - Ritual uses for anointing priests and kings
 - Considered a great gift for a king because of its value.
 - Worth the salary of a worker for a year (\$50K maybe)
- Break up into 3 groups:
 - Identify Mary's personality and view of Christ.
 - She did not care how others viewed her love for Christ.
 - Her focus was on Christ.
 - She understood that Christ is king.
 - She understood that Christ is Savior and that he must die in order for her to receive salvation.
 - “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2Tim 3:12)
 - Identify the disciples' attitude and focus.
 - They prioritized the poor over Christ, saying that it was a waste for it to be used this way.
 - Judas was motivated by greed.

- They were not ready to make the same proclamation of Christ as Mary did.
 - They murmured about Mary.
 - Identify Christ's reaction to what Mary did vs. what the disciples said.
 - Christ saw their motives; it was jealousy and greed – not their concern with the poor. He explained why her actions were good. He explained that one's relationship with Christ is most important, followed by service.
- Discussion
 - Service is necessary, but it's fruitless if we are not filled with the love of Christ and if our intention is not leading people to Christ.
 - Mary did according to her capacity and ability; she gave Christ all she had freely. She did not think her abilities were wasted.
 - We all have our special gifts, not everyone is the same. Do we give Christ our best and all that we have, freely?
 - First we must work on our relationship with Christ, then spread the love to others through Him.
 - Mary was rewarded for her sacrifice "Assuredly, 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" (Mark 14:9)
 - At the end of the day, no matter how much we give the Lord- He will never be in debt to us. He always gives back to us abundantly.
- How much am I willing to pay to obtain this great pearl- our Lord and His kingdom? (Matt 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.)
 - Why were the disciples so mad? Imagine, when we see somebody giving something up for Christ, and we call it wasteful it is because we do not really know how valuable Christ is
 - We are not able to make the same sacrifice. In our eyes, the thing we are not willing to give up is not as valuable as Christ.
- Christ is willing and trying to give us everything- are we willing to take it and actually be a part of Him?
- What are the precious things that we need to give to God that the rest of the world will mock?
- Sometimes as Christians, like the disciples we are so close to Christ and His work that sometimes we take it for granted. While people outside receive it with joy and value. We are close physically, but spiritually far.
- Even though we believe in Christ, do we find ourselves trusting in other things for our happiness and security? (Money, praise, power, success..)

Conclusion:

- Why is sacrificing important? There is no love without sacrifice.
-

W

Whenever we sacrifice something for others in the name of the Lord it is as if it is to the Lord. Whenever we give up this most precious thing, there will be people who mock us as the disciples were indignant.

Applications:

- What are the precious things that we need to give to God that the rest of the world will mock? Dating, sex, freedom, drugs, alcohol, etc.

Lesson 5: Bright Saturday

Objective:

- very perfect gift is bestowed upon us after a period of waiting E

Memory Verse:

- *“There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection” Hebrews 11:35*

References:

- Matthew 26

Lesson Plan:

- The Bible is full of stories of "waiting".
- Christ waited on earth and waited in the tomb.
- When we want to have the “better resurrection” or even the best of the way things can be in this life, we have to go through a period of waiting.

Introduction:

- If you're out somewhere, waiting for a friend to show up and after say 10-15 mins what would you do? If it were me, I'd pick up my cell phone and text her to immediately find out how far away she is. I
- What if you were at home and had a whole bunch of pictures on your computer that you wanted to share with that same friend? What would you do? Maybe email them over to her? Or if they're small enough text them over? W
- Let's say you are dying to buy a new pair of Uggs because yours are kinda grimy, you L

have the money for it, but you don't have time to go to the mall? Maybe hop online and just order them over the internet?

- I
f we were to go back to the mid 90's a lot of this just wasn't going on. If you wanted to buy something you go to the store. If you want to send someone pictures you order duplicates at like a CVS wait 3-5 days and then mail them to your friend or hand them to her when you see her in person.
- A
nd what about that friend who is running late? If you had a dime you could call her on a pay phone...
- W
e've grown accustomed to more or less being able to get whatever we want whenever we want. A world of instant gratification with anything. Well not really anything...just anything money can buy.

Lesson Outline:

- T
hrough Bright Saturday we see everything good is given after a period of waiting. What examples can we find in the Bible of people waiting? 14 years? 40 years? 40 days? 33 years? 3 days? There are examples of Moses, Joseph, Hannah, Elizabeth, our Lord, the disciples, the Church.
- C
hrist submitted himself to 3 days in the tomb to wait for the glorious resurrection
- T
his is a fulfillment on our own waiting
- H
ebrews 11:35 "There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection" When we want to have the "better resurrection" or even the best of the way things can be in this life, we have to go through a period of waiting. To find the best spouse- we need to wait through our young years, and be patient and then the Lord will provide for us the best spouse. There is a difference in glory. God will ordain it for you if you wait. We should not take things into our own hands.
- N
OTHING will compare to the glorious body received in Resurrection.
- J
esus did not take things into his own hands as we are often tempted to do. Jesus waited 30 years—lived a mundane life with people probably being rude or pushy to

him as He worked in his parents shop. And he was not at all aggressive back, but submitted Himself. "Who being in the form of man did not view equality with God as something to be grasped. But humbled himself and took the form of the servant and was obedient until death. Even death of the cross." Phillipians 2. AND "Even Christ pleased not himself." Romans 15.

Conclusion:

- Imagine if we took actions earlier than we should have when children? Started driving at 10 years old? Crossing the street without holding someone's hand? Married the boy we had a crush on at age 12?

Applications:

- What are things that the kids have to wait for in order to receive a perfect gift? Spouses, freedom, money, travel..etc

Unit 6

The Joyful Resurrection in my life

Objective

The purpose of this unit is to convey the importance of Resurrection. To understand that this is the cornerstone in our faith and to follow through the weeks of the Holy 50 days. So we will go through the gospels of the Holy 50 Days. This unit is a unit on **spirituality**.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: What is Resurrection and why is it important
- Lesson 2: The Shroud of Turin
- Lesson 3: The Bread of Life
- Lesson 4: I am the way, the truth, and the life
- Lesson 5: Ascension
- Lesson 6: Pentecost

Lesson 1: “What is Resurrection and why is it important”

Objective:

- Answer these questions: What is resurrection? What is the importance of resurrection in our life? How do you prove the history of the resurrection of Christ—historically and Biblically? How does it relate to us? How can I get the power to fight back and overcome sin and struggles? 1 Cor 15

Memory Verse:

- *“For I delivered to you first of all, that which I also received; that Christ died for our sins according the scriptures, 4 And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” – 1 Corinthian 15:3-4”*

References:

- 1Corinthian 15
- [Case for Christ](#)

Lesson Plan:

Define the resurrection	
How does resurrection relate to us	
Evidences of resurrection	

Introduction:

- In the 1960s there was a great space race. The US was heavily competing with Russia for exploration into space. While we were preparing to land on the moon it was said that one of the biggest concerns was the astronauts ability to take notes. Pens would not work in space because there is no gravity. So the US spent inordinate amounts of money to develop a space pen that would work without gravity even in space. While the Russians just used a pencil. Similar to how the US forgot about this fundamental utensil for writing, as Christians we often forget about the fundamentals of Christianity namely Resurrection.

Lesson Outline:

- What is the cornerstone, the most important aspect of our belief as Christians? The most important belief is that Christ was crucified for our sins AND he resurrected. What is resurrection? Resurrection is rising from the dead. *1 Corinthians 15:12.*

12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

- Now if this is the most important aspect of our religion. How do we know it is true?
- What is agreed upon in history
 - Christ is a TRUE historical figure he is reported by other historians
 - He was crucified under Pontius Pilate
 - He was buried
 - Guards were set in front of his tomb
 - On Sunday Morning, the stone was moved away from the tomb
 - His tomb was found empty
 - His disciples claimed He was alive
 - Christians were then persecuted and died the most tortures deaths on the faith that Christ was ALIVE
- Consider each of these
- The Disciples are willing to die
 - Eye witness testimony are considered to be true in the court of law
 - He was seen by the 11, by James (the brother of the Lord), and even 500 at once
 - What did the disciples gain from this testimony? They did not become rich. They did not get fame. They became hated, sent to prison, beaten, torn apart by wild beasts. (Be able to answer how is this different from other “suicide martyrs?” Suicide martyrs are taking others lives, acting out in violence. Killing, cause this fulfills their lust of getting “virgins in heaven.” As well, modern day Muslim martyrs are not dying for something they saw. But rather on a faith. Christian martyrs today are dying for a faith too. What makes the apostles different is they were not dying on a faith, but on something they actually saw, CHRIST alive).
 - Authenticity of their testimony. (Case for Christ and Faith on Trial)
 - Why would 3000 people convert at once- Christianity spread based on this news that Christ, who everyone saw crucified is alive.
 - The disciples were afraid and hiding Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. If they had not seen Christ alive they would not have had this boldness. They themselves WITNESSED with their own eyes that Christ was alive.
- Guards were set over this political prisoner.

- The testimony was that the guards fell asleep. These were the equivalent of Navy SEALs, they would not have fallen asleep. This is absurd.
- Women as witness
 - If it was a lie why would women be the ones who would proclaim it? Women had no role in society.
 - Christ chose the woman as witnesses. But if it was a lie, you would not choose the weakest to proclaim it.
- Description of his pierced side
 - Blood and water came out.
 - This description by St. John, was way before its time. It indicates an actual medical condition- heart failure.
- HISTORIANS testify to all this
 - **Cornelius Tacitus (55-120 AD),**
 - Wrote about the execution of Jesus and about the Christians being tortured under Nero. Burned them like candles, put them in coliseum to be eaten by animals. Nero burnt Rome and blamed Christians.
 - "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed."
- **Flavius Josephus (37-97 AD), court historian for Emperor Vespasian:**
 - "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."

- **Emperor Trajan, in reply to Pliny: (53-117 AD)**
 - "The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. It is not possible to lay down any general rule which can be applied as the fixed standard in all cases of this nature. No search should be made for these people; when they are denounced and found guilty they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that when the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not (that is, by adoring our gods) he shall be pardoned on the ground of repentance, even though he may have formerly incurred suspicion. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the spirit of the age."

Conclusion:

- Why do we care about the resurrection? We will all die on day. We will all suffer the pangs and sadness of death. But Christ has defeated death. He gives us the promise that if He is alive, we will be alive, all those we lost, will live again. We will be able to touch them, just as Thomas touched Christ.

Applications:

- Do I have doubts about the Resurrection? I need to explore where these doubts are coming from. Perhaps read Case for Christ or Faith on Trial.

Lesson 2: “Shroud of Turin”

Objective:

- The Shroud of Turin is one of the greatest relics of Christ’s resurrection. This lesson will give an introduction to the history of shroud, the details of the relic, and explanations of its biblically historical and miraculous attributes.

Memory Verse:

- *“..And he saw the linen cloths lying there. And the handkerchief that had been around his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first went in also; and he saw and he believed.” – John 20:6-8*

References:

- The Shroud Revealed - Dvd

Lesson Plan:

Historical/biblical introduction of the shroud	
Explain why we believe the shroud was Christ’s burial garment	
Miraculous qualities of the shroud and how it is significant to us.	

Introduction:

- In Christ’s grace, He has left us a miraculous image of Christ’s crucified body on the Shroud of Turin that is currently in Turin, Italy. This Shroud or grave clothes is the most studied, tested and researched archaeological artifact of all time. The shroud has perplexed scientists for centuries and has been the object of great debate.

Lesson Outline:

- The shroud bears an image front and back of a male who is about 6 feet tall. Its image was made by some radioactive light transposed on to the cloth.
- The person in the image bears many wounds with real human blood. The wounds include lacerations around the head, dislocated nose cartilage, a piercing on his right side, piercing at wrists and ankles, scourging marks on his chest, back, legs, and

arms All wounds consistent with the crown of thorns, piercing from nails and a spear, scourging, and other physical beatings.

- The shroud had pollens and horticulture remnants of plants and flowers only found in Jerusalem.
- Many scientists assumed that they could look at this artifact and quickly dismiss it as a hoax or false, however after years and lifetimes studying the image they are shocked to find how many mysteries the shroud revealed.
- The Shroud exhibited real human blood. The image only could be made by a radioactive activity that the Church explains happened the moment Christ rose from the dead covered with grave clothes. The image also was analyzed by computers and found that it was actually a 3 dimensional image not a 2 dimensional image like a photo or painting. Finally the shroud is actually like the negative side of a photograph, and when one transposes it to the negative then the amazing detail of the shroud could be seen. This was not discovered until 100s of years later. If this was a hoax, this would have not been known.
- The shroud has had conflicting Carbon dating however there has been damage done to the shroud in history that caused it to be repaired that most likely affected the carbon dating. Specifically, newer cotton fibers, dyed to look like linen, contaminated that dated specimens. It has been confirmed that the tested samples were contaminated.
- The shroud is significant to us as Christians because God has always given us signs and proofs of his resurrection. We should use the shroud to fortify our faith and glorify God rather than relying on it alone. Some scientists, agree that this is the burial cloth of the historic Jesus, but what science cannot answer is the question Christ asked His disciple “Who do you say that I am?” This is our faith.

Conclusion:

- The shroud is a great relic accepted by our church. It bears all the characteristics of a man who was crucified and tortured as Christ was. There are many miraculous attributes of the shroud that give evidence of the resurrection of our Lord.

Applications:

- Watch the Shroud Revealed Dvd. Try to find the correlation of the different facts of the Shroud to the timeline of Christ in the gospels.

Lesson 3: “The Bread of Life”

Objective:

- Explain the correlation between the Eucharist and Resurrection.
- Convince the audience that without Christ’s body and blood through communion they will have no life and no resurrection at the end of times.

Memory Verse:

- *“Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of 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.” John 6:23-24*

References:

- John 6
- For the Life of the World – Father Alexander Schmemmann

Lesson Plan:

Importance of the bread of life/Eucharist in my life	
Without communion I cannot partake in the Resurrection	
We cannot sustain without eating. This was God's first command to Adam.	

Introduction:

- There is a saying- “You are what you eat.” Is this statement true? Every time we eat something, we take the energy the “life” from this thing that was once living, and we take the protein, the fat, etc. from it and incorporate it into our bodies. Interestingly, scientists can take peoples bodies, and determine what their diet was. But since we are always eating things that are dead, we will die. Christ tells us that there is a Living Bread which if we eat of it, we will never die.

Lesson Outline:

- Read John 6, and do a Bible study answering these questions. Do as a workshop. Have them sit and groups and answer these questions. *³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not*

believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

⁴¹ The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” ⁴² And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

⁴³ Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”

⁵³ Then 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. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This 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.”

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

⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”

⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not

believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

⁶⁶ From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Questions

- One word /phrase is repeated throughout this excerpt. What is this one word? What connection does it have with this subject?

Answer: Raise up, resurrection, eternal life (have them count how many times it is repeated). Eating the Bread gives life.

- If you had to summarize these 36 verses into one sentence what would it be?

Answer: The body and blood of Christ is given for Resurrection. “Given to us for salvation, remission of sins, and eternal life for those who partake of Him.”

- Is Christ talking figuratively or literally when He says “*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,*”?
- How do you know?

Answer: Both. But it is literal for sure. He was willing to let His disciples leave Him. He said many things figuratively, but He said even here he would not “cast anyone out” who came to Him. Things he said figuratively did not become cornerstones in the church practice. Since the beginning of the Church, Christians took communion with the belief that this was literally His body and blood. (St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John speaks about this). He says even if an angel does not believe he would be condemned.

- What happens to people who thought what Christ was saying was “hard” to accept? Why does the gospel writer bring up the rest of the disciples and Judas? What does Judas have to do with this story?

Answer: They walk no more with Christ. When we reject this we are departing from Christ. Judas, did not believe, yet he stayed with Jesus. It is very dangerous for us to partake of communion if we do not believe.

- In some Christian sects they believe that communion is important, but they only take it once a month and they do not believe they are taking the body and blood of Christ. What would you say to them to support the belief in our Church?

Answer: Christ insisted on this point. Sometimes the protestants will argue it says in this chapter that eating of his flesh is believing in Him (as said in this chapter). The actual text in greek is not “He who believes in me” but rather “He who believes (trusts) me.” Meaning, he who trusts what I am saying. As well they say Christ says “my words are Spirit and life.” Meaning that once again Christ’s words in general are what give us life. But once again, the actual Greek is that THESE words he are speaking, if we believe is what gives us life. Also stress, this was what was done in the church from Christ’s resurrection until 1500s. Only at 1500 AD did people begin to reject this.

Conclusion:

- The Samaritan woman had 5 husbands, and was still thirsty, or longing for love. Christ says in this passage “**For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.**” How can communion take away our thirst? What does it mean if I am thirsty and I am taking communion?

Applications:

- Do I truly believe that the communion we partake of is the Body and Blood of Christ? If not why? When I take it am I ready or do I not examine myself first?
- If I need to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ to be resurrected, is there anything I am choosing over this? Am I partaking of communion.

Lesson 4: “I am the Way the Truth and the Life”

Objective:

- Explain how Christ leads us to the Father and Gives us life.

Memory Verse:

- *“I am the Way the Truth and the Life, no one can come to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6*

References:

- John 14

Lesson Plan:

Christ prepares disciples for departure. Explains He is the way.	
Christ explains His relationship with the Father.	
How we follow Christ's Way, Truth and Life	

Introduction:

- *During the Holy 50 days the church focuses on Christ being our source of salvation and life.*
 - “The bread of life”*
 - “Living water”*
 - “Light of the world”*
 - “Our source of peace”*
 - “The way, the truth and the life”*

Lesson Outline:

- **Christ’s Prepares his disciples.** After the last supper, Christ spoke with his disciples regarding his departure.
- His disciples did not understand what he meant. So Christ spoke to them about heaven: (Jn 14:1-4) **“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also**

in Me. In 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. And 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. And where I go you know, and the way you know."

- But his disciples didn't understand (Jn 14:5) Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"
- Jesus said to him, (Jn 14:6,7) "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."
- But they still don't fully understand what he's saying:
- **Christ's Relationship to the Father:** (Jn 14:8) Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."
- Jesus then spoke to them plainly: (Jn 14:9-11) Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.
- Not only that, but He then spoke to them regarding the 3rd person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit: (Jn 14:15-18,23-24) "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, 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. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."
- So first Christ says how to attain a relationship with the Father and eternal life.
- Then he explains His oneness with God the Father. Then he says that we don't have to do this alone, He will send us a Helper that is also one with Him and the Father.
- I am – In the Greek language, "I am" is a very intense way of referring to oneself. It would be comparable to saying, "I myself, and only I, am."
- The only way/path or route
- The only truth = Jesus as the incarnate Word of God is the source of all truth
- The Life: Jesus was just telling His disciples about His death to come, and now He is saying that He is the source of all life. In John 10:17-18, Jesus declared that He was going to lay down His life for His sheep, and then take it back again. He spoke of His authority over life and death as being granted to Him by the Father. In John 14:19, He gave the promise that "because I live, you also will live." The life he speaks of is deliverance from a life of bondage to sin and death, to a life of freedom in eternity.
- **Following the Way:** So how do we follow Him today?
- The same way the disciples did long ago. They heard the words of Jesus and believed them. They took His words and obeyed them. They confessed their sins. They believed that He died to take the punishment of their sins. They believed that He

rose from the dead to give them new life. They followed His example and command to tell others the truth.

- When we follow Him in “the way,” we can be assured of following Him all the way to Heaven.

Conclusion:

- There is no access to the Father without the Son. Christ’s mission on earth was to bring us the Father and prepare us to receive the Holy Spirit. Like a hiking trail that is treacherous, Christ our guide first trekked the trail, and made the trail feasible. His life and the Person of Christ and His commandments are our trail.

Applications:

- What examples did Christ leave that we need take up? Commitment to prayer (he was in prayer all night alone) Fasting 40 days? Purity? Forgiveness and love of other especially His enemies.

Lesson 5: “Ascension”

Objective:

- Explain how the Ascension relates to our final resurrection.

Memory Verse:

- *“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” John 16:28*

References:

- John 14-17
- Acts 1:1-11
- Luke 24:51-53

Lesson Plan:

Reasons Christ needed to Ascend	
Correlation of Ascension to Pentecost	
How the Holy Spirit brings Christ to us	

Introduction:

- For 3 years the disciples grew very close with Christ experiencing the mysteries of God. When Christ was crucified the disciples were emotionally and spiritually destroyed. However Christ and the Church teach that Ascension was not only beneficial for us but essential to us.

Lesson Outline:

- What is the Ascension? What happened on the day of Ascension?
- There is something very interesting that Christ says to His disciples before the first time He is separated from His disciples. When was Christ first separated from His disciples? During the cross.
 - He said to them I am going away. But *I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away.*

- Imagine the person who you love most in this world. Now, if this person says to you I am leaving you. But it is to your advantage that I leave you. What would you think? I would think- how is this possible? You are the most important person to me. If you leave me, I will be alone. I would think that it is them trying to just get away from me. “Its not you its me” sort of thing.
- But Christ says it is to their advantage that He leaves.
- Why does He say it is to their advantage? Lets read what He says John16:5 ⁵“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’” ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless 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.
- Why does He say it is to their advantage? He is going to send the Helper to them. And unless He leaves He will not send the Helper to them
- So why is this better? What is the difference between Christ and the Holy Spirit?
 - 2 Chapters earlier Christ says to His disciples ⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, 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.
 - So if He says He will send another Helper what does that mean? It means that there was a first helper. Who was the first helper?
- What was the role of Christ to the disciples? What did Christ do?
 - He taught them
 - He took care of them
 - He comforted them
 - He corrected them
- These roles that Christ fulfilled in the flesh are now done by Who? It is done by the Holy Spirit.
- So why would Christ want the Holy Spirit to dwell within you?
- What is the difference?
 - The Holy Spirit is speaking in our hearts permanently.
 - He has a role in our Hearts.
- Next lesson we will talk more details of about what the Holy Spirit’s role is in our life.
- But I want to focus on why the Holy Spirit was sent to us?
 - ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

- What do each of these things mean
 - What does it mean that He will convict the world of sin?
- What does it mean that he will convict the world of righteousness?
 - What does the rest of the verse say?
 - How many of you would say you love Christ? But how can we love someone who walked on this earth 2000 years ago. Whom we have never seen with our eyes, who we have never touched with our hands? How can we love Him? Who gives us this love of Christ? It is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit that dwells within us that gives us this love.
 - 1Peter 1:7: ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,* ⁸ whom having not seen^[a] you love. *Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,* ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.
- One of the biggest problem we all face is loneliness. And actually a lot of the sins we fall into are because of loneliness. The demons, they prey on us because of loneliness. But Christ promised something. He said when I send you the Spirit He will dwell with you forever.
- And you might think okay, so what? What does the Holy Spirit do for me in terms of my loneliness?
- What the Holy Spirit does for us, if we give Him the opportunity, is everything that Christ did on earth for us. He brings us love and not only that, but He makes Christ present to us.
- If you give the room to the Holy Spirit, He will put joy in your heart and remove loneliness because He makes Christ present and real to us.

Conclusion:

- I want to read some of Mark 1 and let the Holy Spirit reveal to you in your heart who Christ is. (Ask the students, from the reading what impression they get of Who Christ is).
- Example- powerful and compassionate. He casts out the demon of the man's son. He is humble (in how he is avoiding the crowds). He is compassionate to the leper. Imagine with the leper- no one has probably touched this man in years in fear of getting leprosy. The man says if you are willing you can make me clean. Christ does not just heal him with a word but reaches out and touches the leper. Christ did not

have to do this. But why does He? Because He is so loving and wants the rejected to feel loved.

- What are the emotions you feel as you read this? The emotions you feel, are the work of the Holy Spirit, convicting you of righteousness.

Applications:

- We need to sit with the Gospels, and think about who Christ is, as we do this the Holy Spirit works within us.

Lesson 6: “Pentecost”

Objective:

- Explain the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Memory Verse:

- ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

References:

- Acts 2, John 16

Lesson Plan:

St. Peter had much power in Pentecost. Where did this come from?

The Holy Spirit has many roles in our life

We should not grieve the Spirit, but heed the Spirit

Introduction:

- What happened on the day of Pentecost? Summarize Acts 2
 - Disciples are in the upper room
 - Praying
 - Great wind came with a great noise
 - Tongues on each of their head
 - Start talking in new tongues
 - People are the feast and hear them talking in different languages
 - Peter gets up gives a sermon- what was in this sermon?
 - People repent and get baptized
- How could Peter’s words have such power? People who previously yelled what 47 days prior are now doing what?
- How could Peter have such wisdom to speak such a way?

- What other things impress you about this story
- This is all the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Why do we need the Holy Spirit in our lives?

Lesson Outline:

- What is His job? Review last week on ascension: Christ said it was to your advantage that I go away. Why advantageous? He said I will send another comforter.
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit. We talked about one last week- to convict the world of righteousness. 1 Peter 1:7 says **Him whom you have not seen yet you love.** This love comes from the Holy Spirit.
- Lets read John 16:8 to see what Christ says the Holy Spirit will do for us.
- John 16:8 **⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.**
- What are the things the Holy Spirit will do?
 - Convict the world of sin
 - Convict the world of righteousness
 - Convict the world of Judgment
 - Guide you into all truth
 - Speaks what he hears
 - Tell us all things to come
 - Glorify Christ (How?) He will take what is Christ and give to us!
- What are each of these things.
 - Convict of sin- he says what the world is doing is wrong especially because they do not believe in Christ (for unbelievers)
 - Of righteousness (to the believers) this is what we talked about last week. Giving love for Christ
 - Of judgment (this is Satan). His fate and his followers are set.
 - Guide you in all truth- the Spirit tells us the truth, in our daily life, but the main Truth that the Father loves us, and sent His son for us.
 - He speaks what he hears- He conveys the emotions of the Father and the Son to us.
 - Tells us things to come- He “prophecies” to us.
 - Glorify Christ- taking what is Christ and gives to us. Just as Christ was Glorified in resurrection. So we shall be like Him. St. John says, beloved we do

not yet know what we will be like. But we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.

- So the Holy Spirit has this very important role and what is sad, is we often do not heed the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to heed the Holy Spirit?
- St. Paul warns us, he says ³⁰ **And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.** (Ephesians 4:30) and **“do not quench the Spirit”** (1 Thes 5:19)

Conclusion:

- How would one do these things (Discuss)
- Biggest thing we need to worry about is one of the major roles of the Spirit right now in each of our lives.
- What is the biggest role? He guides us into truth and he convicts us to what we are doing is wrong. But how would we grieve the Spirit? We often don't listen. He tells us Jackie, you really should not do this. This will not be good for you. And what do I do? I silence Him. I say I want my own.
 - What are the sort of things that teenagers hear the Spirit saying and they ignore?
- What is the danger in ignoring the Spirit? This is who seals us for the day of redemption. But what is the only sin that is not forgiven? Ignoring the Spirit. Saying that the work of the Holy Spirit is evil. And this is what happens. If we continue not to heed the Spirit this is the result.

Applications:

- We need to examine are we listening to the Holy Spirit in our lives? What is it the Holy Spirit is telling me today to change in my life? Am I willing to make the change?

Unit 7

Entering Into the Life of Christ

Objective

This unit is focusing on how Christ gives us life. Yes, we know that His cross is what gives us life. But, unlike the Protestant sects, we do not believe that we just receive this life from just believing. In the Orthodox Church we show our faith by action. In particular through the Mysteries. This unit starts by describing the problem of death. Death came to the world through the envy of Satan in the actions of Adam and Eve. But Christ came and gave life. Even to those who were already in Hades. The unit continues by describing how through the Eucharist is how we obtain life from death and how the Church seasons make Christ present to us so that we can live with Him. Finally the unit concludes by speaking about the judgment. This is where it is decided of whether we live with Him or face second death. This lesson speaks of the consequences of us not choosing to live with Christ and how it is manifest in judgment.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Introduction to Death
- Lesson 2: Trampling over death by His death
- Lesson 3: The Eucharist source and summit of ecclesiastical life—the height of our church life
- Lesson 4: Living through Liturgical Seasons
- Lesson 5: “He shall come again in His Glory to judge the living and the dead”

Lesson 1: Death

Objective:

- What is death?

Memory Verse:

- *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” John 5:24*

References:

- The Mystery of Death By: Nikolaos P. Vassiliadis
- For the Life of the World By: Alexander Schmemmann
- Genesis 3
- John 5: 24

Lesson Plan:

Death entered the world through sin. We were meant to be eternal.
Second death is eternal death.
The consequence of sin is death.

Introduction:

- Did you ever think about what aging is? Why does a person’s hair go grey? It is the cells that make the hair pigment dying. Why do people wrinkle? The cells in their skin that make proteins also begin to die.
- Did you ever think of what is the point of all modern medicine? It is all to try to escape the inevitable- death.

Lesson Outline:

- Man was created to be eternal and death entered into the world through sin.

- Throughout history man has tried to characterize death as something that was natural- part of the circle of life. When in reality man was created for eternity.
- What is First death? First death is the death of the body. When the body separates from the soul this is death.
- What is second death? Second death is eternal death. This is the death that will happen after judgment to those who are separate from Christ.
- What are the meaning of the different types of death: spiritually and physically.
- Misrepresentations of death—What do other religions say about what death is?
- Natural occurrence? If it wasn't God's intention, how did it happen?—Sin. The Lord said as soon as you eat from the tree you will surely die. Did they die right away? In what way?
- Even the creation after the fall was subject to death. St. Paul says creation is in birth pangs even now and waits to be delivered with the end of times.
- What is the consequence of sin? The consequence of my sin is death. "The wage of sin is death."
- The whole world is subject to death. It is the last enemy. Everyone all in the world is running from this. Modern medicine, Science, nutrition, everything is to try to escape from the one inevitable death.
- Death is a very fearful moment in life.

Conclusion:

- But what is the answer to death- See John 5:24. As a preview to next week's lesson.

Applications:

- Why do we fear death? Why do some very faithful orthodox Christians not fear death?

Lesson 2: Trampling over death by His death

Objective:

- Death is unnatural. Christ is the Life

Memory Verse:

- *“1 Peter 3:18¹⁸ For 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,¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison”*

References:

- The Mystery of Death By: Nikolaos P. Vassiliadis
- For the Life of the World By: Alexander Schmemmann
- John 12: 49-50
- 1 Corinthians 1
- John 11
- Acts 2:29-32
- 1 Peter 3:18
- Ephesians 4:9

Lesson Plan:

Christ gave life through the cross.	
He gave life to even those in hades.	
If Christ went to Hades, He will help me through anything	

Introduction:

- Most religions are used to cope with death. It is even believed that this is what Christianity does. But on the contrary, Christianity is meant to give life.

M

Lesson Outline:

- C
 hrist when He came was given a command by His Father “Eternal life.” (John 12: 49-50- 49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”). So when Christ came. His command from the Father was to give eternal life. This was His purpose.
- H
 ow does Christ give life? We said the world is under the rule of death due to sin so how does He give life. Through the cross. He became the propitiation for our sins.
- C
 hrist not only gives life to those who are alive on the Earth but even to the point where he descends into Hades and preaches to those who “were formerly disobedient. “
- 1 Corinthians 15 Raising Lazarus (John 11)
- W
 hat are the Biblical proofs that Christ went to Hades?
 - Descent into Hades
 - Acts 2:29-32 “Men and Bretheren...”
 - 1 Peter 3:18 ¹⁸ For 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, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison
 - Ephesians 4:9 “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?
 - S
 ign of Jonah 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish so shall Christ be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the Earth

Conclusion:

- The very thing that was used as a corrective measure for us, death, becomes the very tool of our salvation.

Applications:

- Christ went to hell to save those who were dead. What about me? I may have deep depression, sadness or loneliness. I may be going through a very difficult time. But Christ is there. If He was willing to go to Hades, He is willing to take me out of all of my sufferings if I trust Him.

Lesson 3: The Eucharist source and summit of ecclesiastical life—the height of our church life

Objective:

- We receive this life in the Eucharist, the remedy to death

Memory Verse:

- *“Do not labor for the food that perishes but the food that endures for everlasting life, which the son of man will give you” (John 6:27)*

References:

- For the Life of the World By: Alexander Schmemmann
- Genesis 3 (eating of the tree of good and evil)
- John 6 (eating to life)
- Revelations 21, 22—the vision of the tree of life

Lesson Plan:

In communion we are not just eating bread and wine, but partaking of Christ Himself	
We are constantly living understanding that all we have our air, food, drink, sleep, relationships, is a gift from Him	
How can we be prepared for Communion	

Introduction:

- What is Eucharist- it is not only the Holy Communion, but it is also the giving thanks in everything. Living life completely in line with God- this is Life.

Lesson Outline:

- Original sin was not about disobedience as much as man ceasing to be hungry for God alone and ceasing to see the world as sacramental material. Man began to consume things in the world without the Lord- loving a world with a perspective devoid of God- corrupting themselves.

- Christ did not intend for there to be a dichotomy between spiritual/religious life and secular life. This dichotomy only serves to make that which God created as good, to be relegated as “profane”. The world was given to man for communion with God.
- God sends his Son the true Light in order to save man. The answer to our hunger and search for truth.
- We ultimately partake of this life through a life of thanksgiving—a Eucharistic life.
- We take part in everything in this world understanding that we do not take anything apart from Him. We are constantly living understanding that all we have our air, food, drink, sleep, relationships, is a gift from Him

Conclusion:

- Partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ is the summit of this life of Thanksgiving (Eucharistic life). It is the culmination of all the gifts He gives us. In communion we are not just eating bread and wine, but partaking of Christ Himself. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed” (John 6:54-55)
- “Do not labor for the food that perishes but the food that endures for everlasting life, which the son of man will give you” (John 6:27)

Applications:

- What can we do to prepare for this summit?

Lesson 4: Living through Liturgical Seasons

Objective:

- We live with the Resurrected Christ through the Liturgical worship

Memory Verse:

- *“For where two or three **are gathered** together **in My name**, I am there **in the midst** of them.” Matthew 18:20*

References:

- For the Life of the World By: Alexander Schmemmann
- The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to It By: St. Theophan the Recluse
- Liturgy
- Pascha
- Agpeya

Lesson Plan:

The church's purpose and it to ultimately make the One present in whom is all of life.	
Liturgical worship is a deeper understanding of reality	
When we read the gospels we need to sit with them to contemplate the life of Christ.	

Introduction:

- How many of you have felt bored in Liturgy or praying the Agpeya or reading the Bible? How could this be? How could it be that some people will go to all extents to attend Liturgy regularly? What is the difference? What is the point of Liturgy?

Lesson Outline:

- T
hrough the Eucharist we enter into the 4th dimension, the dimension where we can see

life in its true reality. It's not an escape from the world but a deeper understanding of reality.

- T
he church's purpose and it to ultimately make the One present in whom is all of life.
- T
he Church needs to therefore ascend to heaven while on earth. This is done through the Liturgical life.
- M
odern churches try to reach out to the modern man and make the church understandable and appealing to him, while the church should have already left and transcended the world. Even Christ in His glorified state was unrecognizable to his disciples as He had left the world.
- All of this is accomplished through the Liturgical life of the Church. The church seasons, in which we enter into his incarnation, life, the pascha, crucifixion, resurrection, etc. The Holy week- in which we live with him his last week. His Resurrection- after seeing put in the tomb- we wait for Him and we see Him alive. The Agpeya, The way we read the gospels. And the Mysteries- in Baptism we die with Him and are raised with Him.
- In the Liturgy we have 2 or 3 gathered together... He is in the midst of us. This is most shown in the Liturgy. We remember (being brought to "back" to that time) the life of Christ. We are not just thinking about or reliving the life and death and resurrection of Christ, but actually entering into that time in history-remember God is in the present (not past, not future) so when we stand in the Liturgy and Abouna prays the institution prayer, we actually enter into the Upper Room, we sit at the Table, we partake of this One body that is sacrificed.
- When we read the gospels we need to sit with them to contemplate the life of Christ.
- For example- The way to properly pray the Agpeya is to actually enter into the life of Christ. We pray the 1st hour entering into His incarnation and resurrection- the 3rd entering into, being one with Him in his trial (into Pentecost), the 6th his crucifixion, the 9th his death, the 11th his taking down from the cross, and the 12th his burial. As we pray these hours, reading the psalms of the 3rd hour, for example, we are one with Him as he prays to His Father and is in agony during His passion.
- During holy week, Good Friday we are standing in these hours with Christ.

Conclusion:

- We must partake of the blessing of liturgical prayers and be active in it,

Applications:

- Lesson Approach
 - Read some of the Agpeya psalms from the 3rd and 6th hour and have them say how it is relevant to those hours in Christ's passion.
 - Explain how when we pray liturgy we bring up images in our mind of these events. When it says in the Liturgy "He is incarnate..." As Abouna prays, bring these scenes alive in your attention, imagination... picture what about is praying about Christ. As we pray the Agpeya as well.

- Explain how in the Church seasons we live him fasting for 40 days, we live in the Holy Pascha, we live Death- we actually feel as if He is crucified in front of us, laid in the Tomb, and then we are joyful because the Lord we saw buried is alive!

Lesson 5: “He shall come again in His Glory to judge the living and the dead”

Objective:

- To inform our youth about the second coming and judgment day.

Memory Verse:

- *“He shall come again in His Glory to judge the living and the dead”*

References:

- Ezekiel
- Ecclesiastes

Lesson Plan:

We know the correct choices to make, but have to choose to be prepared.	
Are we giving a daily account? We need to look at what it is in our life.	
Once death comes, there are no second chances.	

Introduction:

- Christ is the final just judge. We will each be judged fairly based on what we’ve been given.

Lesson Outline:

- 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins –not all entered. The foolish had good deeds, knew of the oil, where to obtain, how to buy...they were waiting but they weren’t prepared.
- We know the correct choices to make, but have to choose to be prepared. From prior lessons we know the source of life, but we have to take action.
- Start thinking through each decision and action that they make and how does this impact your eternal life.
- Are we giving a daily account? We need to look at what it is in our life.

- Do we realize the kingdom of heaven is within us? Christ said that the “kingdom of heaven is within you.” This is a way we need to examine ourselves. Do we feel this? If not there is somewhere we have gone.
- Christ is the final just judge
- Once death comes, there are no second chances. Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes

Conclusion:

- Christ will come again to take us with Him to the Father and judge the sinners.

Applications:

- What would you do if you saw Christ coming in the skies today? How would you feel? What would you have wished you changed?

Unit 8

Who is Christ?

Objective

We ask the kids to try to live a spiritual life, live a moral life, live a life dedicated to the Church and her mysteries. But one of the main things that is missing is just a basic understanding of WHO Christ is. We give them information and lessons about the Mysteries, about prayer and reading the Bible, fleeing from sin and unrighteousness, but why would they chose this without knowing even on the most basic level, who Christ is. Unfortunately, they have not been exposed to the gospels as much as is needed to get a picture or an understanding of Who He is. Too little have we exposed them to the person of Christ? As servants all of us are attracted to the person of Christ. We have experienced His love, His gentleness, His strength, His compassion, His protection, His authority etc. The hope would be to bring this to the kids. If they at least learn at the basic level what Christ is like, they may be more receptive to Him, and then begin living a spiritual life, living a moral life dedicated to the Church and her mysteries. The lessons should be gospel based and presented in such a way that they can see Christ and see how attractive He is. The following lessons could be as either “regular” lessons or as workshops in which the kids read the excerpts from the gospels, or servants read it with them, and they try to pick out what each excerpts says about Who Christ is. The servant could prepare questions to go along with the reading to help them identify Who Christ is and what he is like, His characteristics. If done as a workshop, the servant should still have a message that ties the lesson to the main point.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Introduction- Who is Christ: A Historical Prospective
 - Lesson 2: Christ the Pantocrator (Almighty)
 - Lesson 3: Christ is the Forgiver of sins
 - Lesson 4: Christ is the Protector and Provider
 - Lesson 5: Christ is the Life-giver and Savior
-

- Lesson 6: Christ is the Teacher; He desires to be with us.

Lesson 1: Introduction- Who is Christ: A Historical Prospective

Objective:

- We have a question, Who is Christ? We need to entice and give the tools to the kids to know the person of Christ that they are united with through their baptism.
- How would they connect with Christ? Spell it out: through the Gospel- this is what we are focusing on in this unit, learning how to find Christ in the Gospels.

Memory Verse:

- *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eye witnesses of His Majesty.”
2 Peter 1:16*

References:

- The Antiquity of the Jews By: Falvius Josephus
- Mere Christianity By: C.S. Lewis
- Rabo Lyolino

Lesson Plan:

Christ is a <u>true historical</u> Person that is alive today
The Gospels are <u>4 eye witnesses accounts</u> of Christ
Christ is the Son of God, Whom God the Father had sent as a response for all our needs

Introduction:

- Christ is a true historical Person that is alive today. The Roman soldiers sealed the tomb, and found it empty indicating that He resurrected.
- We have a question, Who is Christ? We need to entice and give the tools to the kids to know the person of Christ that they are united with through their baptism.
- How would they connect with Christ? Spell it out: through the Gospel- this is what we are focusing on in this unit, learning how to find Christ in the Gospels.

Lesson Outline:

- Historians (non-Christian) wrote and testified that there was a person named Jesus, who lived during the Roman Empire that did mighty signs, was proclaimed as the Son of God, was crucified, and then reported as alive. Josephus was one historian who wrote “(63) Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. (64) And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross [2], those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day [3], as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named for him, are not extinct at this day.”

- This letter was written about Christ by Rabo Lyolino chief Councilor in Jerusalem to Caser in Rome was found in the safe of Prince Sharaweeni of Italy:

Your Eminence,

It is my understanding that you have become increasingly less inclined to know what I usually tell you, and that you have become more anxious to know about this man who lives a virtuous life. They call Him the prophet of righteousness. His disciples say that He is the Son of God, Creator of heaven and earth and all that lies therein. Indeed, everyday we come to know about awesome and amazing things about this Jesus: He raises the dead and heals the sick with one word. He is upright in stature and so good-looking. His face strikes one with awe and wonder; those who look at Him are instantaneously fascinated by Him. They are awe-stricken and enthralled at once. The hair of His head reaches His ears and then falls on His shoulders. It has the color of dust, yet it glows and shines. Like Nazarenes, His forehead has a white spot. His forehead is smooth and yellowish, and His face is without wrinkles or special marks. His appearance inspires reverence, respect and veneration. His eyes are like the rays of the sun; no one can look at them steadily because of their brilliance. When He chastises someone, He instills fear; when He gives advice, He causes tears to flow. All is compelled to revere and respect Him on account of His awe-inspiring appearance. It is said that no one saw Him laughing; they only saw Him crying at times. During meetings, people feel content and fulfilled, but He hardly looks at them. When amongst them, He sits with the utmost of propriety. In His form and appearance He seems to be the most handsome person you can ever imagine. There is also a striking resemblance to His mother who can also be considered the most beautiful girl in this part of the land. So if your Eminence would like to see Him, let me know so I can swiftly attend to your command. He has mesmerized the whole city of Jerusalem with His vast knowledge and learning; yet, He has received no education. Sometimes He walks barefoot with

His head uncovered. Some laugh at Him when they see Him. Yet, in His presence or when talking with Him, He captivates and fascinates people. They say that they have never seen or heard of man like Him in this part of the land. In fact, some Jews say that they have never heard or seen such wisdom such as this which Jesus demonstrates. Others are scornful; they complain to me saying that His teachings contradict our glorious doctrine. They criticize me vehemently. Some say that He has never angered or infuriated anybody; rather, they claim that most of those who have come to know Him have been made to feel better and have been touched by His grace and blessings. In all cases, I am anxiously awaiting your request; whatever you command will be most swiftly attended to.

- SERVANTS: The hesitation with this is that the letter has a large emphasis on physical appearance. There is nowhere in the Gospel or tradition that discusses His physical appearance. But Have You Seen The One I Love- has a reference to how Christ looks. HH Shenouda III discusses the verse, "My Beloved is white and red."
- The Gospels are 4 eye witnesses accounts of Christ, Who He is and What He did. 2Peter 1:16 "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eye witnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father, Honor and Glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory "This is my Beloved Son In Whom I am well pleased" and we heard this voice which came from Heaven when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (The sun is the morning star. The Bible is a little light in a dark place) This verse points to the Gospels. We need to keep the Gospels close to us and read them over and over and keep it close to us until we get a very good picture of Who Christ is.
- Christ is the Son of God, Whom God the Father had sent as a response for all our needs, the temporal and the eternal, the emotional, physical, and spiritual, the simple and the complex
- Baptism of Christ confirms who He is: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased"; we need to read this in the perspective of, who is Christ? Transfiguration, the Father once again proclaims this is "My beloved Son"; Resurrection from the dead confirms that this is the Son of God. References: the Gospels, 2 Peter 1:16-18, Romans 1:4
- Romans 1:1-6: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him

we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;”

- St. Paul saw Him in His glory, so He was convinced of His son ship of God. The baptism is where He is declared, that He is the immortal, that death cannot hold Him.
- For preparation: We need to pray that our love for Christ and that our love for Him transmits to them. In all of the lessons we need to be witnesses, this lesson in particular needs to illustrate our own reverence, love and respect for Christ needs to come through and shown to the kids. “17Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2Corinthians 4:17-18
- When St. Paul says, “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me” it is an image that St. Paul is talking about. The spirit in the heart projects to me the image of Christ. Everything I do and say illustrates the image which I have in my heart. I sharpen this image and make it very clear is through the sacraments and through the Gospels. We must work on this image, day and night.

Conclusion:

- Takeaway:
 - To have the students understand that whether Christian or not it is known that Christ was a true historical figure.

Applications:

- Give an introduction to the historical view of Christ and how we understand him as the Son of God, our Good Savior.

Lesson 2: Christ the Pantocrator (Almighty)

Objective:

- The point of this lesson is to have the kids identify that Christ is the ALMIGHTY. He can do anything and He has the care and compassion for us. Below are some stories as ideas that show that Christ is the Almighty and the compassionate.

Memory Verse:

- *"Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour." Matthew 8:13*

References:

- John 6
- Mark 6
- Matthew 8

Lesson Plan:

Christ is almighty	
He never makes miracles for Himself or to show off, He always does a miracle for others	
How can you judge that Christ is not going to do anything for you if you are not going to give Him a try?	

Introduction:

- What is our goal as Christians? Sometimes we think it is to be a "good person" or to "go to church" But our goal is not these things. But to have a relationship with Christ.

Lesson Outline:

- Christ is almighty. Throughout the gospels we see this illustrated. However, Christ's power to perform miracles was always done to care and support his creation—us.

- John 6 and Mark 6: Feeding the 5,000 and walking on water and He asks Peter to walk on water with Him and He calms the sea
 - John 6:1-14 and Mark 6:30-44. He sees the multitude following Him for days with nothing to eat. And He felt compassion for them. He cared for the multitude because they were hungry. And He being the Almighty is able to provide for over 5,000 people.
 - John 6: 15- 20 Mark 6:45-52 He cared for the disciples he let them leave to rest. He sees them struggling at rowing, and comes to them to rescue them. He cared for the disciples when they were suffering
 - He never makes miracles for Himself or to show off, He always does a miracle for others
 - He cared for the people; He cared for His disciples; He cared for St. Peter when he was about to drown
- Centurion's Servant- Matthew 8:5-14. He cures him with just a word
- Christ casts out demons and heals diseases: Mark 1:21-34

Conclusion:

- Faith is all or none, but we start out by giving Christ a chance in something small and then when He works in our lives these small miracles, it encourages us to trust Him in bigger things. For example, Abraham (called the father of faith) gave a chance to God to bring him to the promised land safely. Then to give him a child in his old age; then to raise his child from the dead even if he offered him (Hebrews 11:17-19). Something small in our lives: in prayer I entrust Christ with a specific misunderstanding between my parents and myself; and then you go to trusting Christ in prayer with a problem with your friend or a need like having a good friend or passing a test; then you go to a very difficult life situation like a sick family member or big disappointment or failure of any sort.

Applications:

- Why don't we go to Him with our needs? He came walking on water to the disciples in the dead of the night – He is able to come even in the very depth, the worst part, the darkest hour, of our problem or issue or fear, and help. Examples of needs: problems with friends/parents, feeling scared, feeling lonely, feeling sad, challenged/overwhelmed by school duties “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” It is due to our lack of faith that we do not go to Him. Before we make a judgment about whether something works or not, we would need to try. How can you judge that Christ is not going to do anything for you if you are not going to give Him a try, give Him a good try, and be patient? Don't rely on somebody else's experiences, negative or positive, to make up your mind.

- SERVANTS: Try to have the kids arrive at their own conclusions rather than us presenting the kids with the conclusion.
- "Prayer offered to God in truth is imperishable. Now and then we may forget what we have prayed about but God preserves our prayer forever." (Archimandrite Sophrony)

Lesson 3: Christ is the forgiver of sins

Objective:

- The focus is on Christ, not the person who committed the sin. This lesson is to show that Christ did not come to condemn us but to save us. (John 3:17). Christ is loving and wants to free us from our sins.

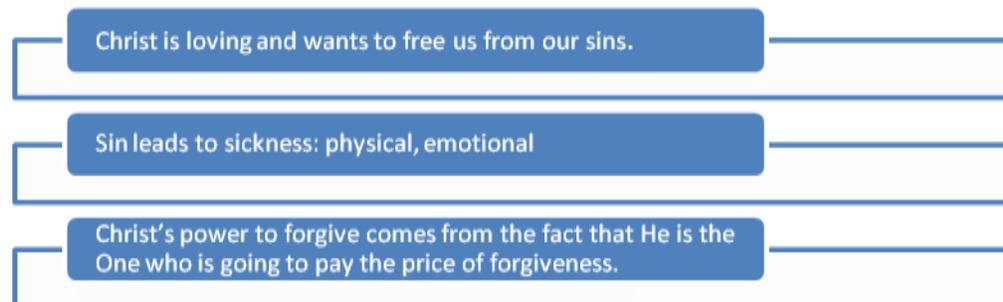
Memory Verse:

- *“Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.” Matthew 8:13*

References:

- John 8
- John 21

Lesson Plan:



Introduction:

- Once again the question is, as Christians, what is our goal? Our goal is to have a relationship with Christ. If we know Christ- everything else follows. We will love Him, we will follow His commandments, we will want to pray to Him. So our goal these next few weeks in class is to understand what Christ is like. Cause when we see what He is truly like it will warm our hearts.
- Before Christ came, how would someone who was caught in adultery be forgiven? They were not. There was no sacrifice for someone who committed adultery. Do you know what happened to people who committed adultery? They were stoned to death.

Lesson Outline:

- How shocking it was for people in His time to listen to Him forgive sins. They complained. But He proved that He did and the proof was in their physical healing. Sin leads to sickness: physical, emotional, depression, anxiety, lack of sleep, high blood pressure, strokes, bowel problems, strokes.
- Fear is a sin, lack of service to God is a sin (prayer).
- The woman caught in adultery, John 8:1-12
- Imagine this woman coming in complete shame, she was caught in the action, most probably naked. She was probably wrapped in a sheet, caught in her sin. She is standing before Christ waiting for His response to put her to shame, to pronounce her worthy of death. Christ is known to be a great teacher. She probably thinks He will be disgusted by her, thinking she is worth of death. But what do you see in this story? What does it say of Who He is? He says to her, "I do not condemn you" there are 2 ways one could see this- Either 1. He is not going to throw a stone but He going to keep a grudge in His heart or think she is disgusting and sinful OR 2. That He is genuinely forgiving her. Saying "I do not condemn you. I don't think you are shameful. I free you from this bondage of sin"
- Everyone was there to kill her but He is the one who stood up for her and protected her life.
- We should have the students stop and think about what is in Christ's Heart as He is saying these things. The genuineness of His heart. Let them think about Christ as the Shepherd. How would the Shepherd feel if a sheep of His was lost? No matter how stupid the sheep is, or how far the sheep strayed, the Good Shepherd will go after the sheep. The Shepherd loves the sheep, there is a bond, there is a sacrifice that the Good Shepherd must make to keep the sheep. "The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."
- Where is Christ's power to forgive coming from? It is coming from the fact that He is the One who is going to pay the price of forgiveness.
- When the priest gives absolution it is from Christ's blood that is offered on the altar. It does not come from the priests own pockets, it is coming from the altar- where Christ's Body and Blood is offered.
- Until we have Christ we are all naked as she was. Christ covers us. When we go to confession we are naked. The priest is used as a voice and body in the mystery of confession, you are not confessing to the priest but are confessing to Christ in the presence of the priest. The priest is an instrument, witness and steward to Christ.
- The restoration of St. Peter, John 21
- Christ when He forgives, He restores to us whatever honor and whatever role or place that we had in the church. St. Peter was an Apostle and a shepherd and our Lord in a very gentle way had appointed back to him shepherding Christ's own

sheep (“Feed my lambs, tend my sheep.”) Christ’s Own flock that He came to and that is the lost sheep of Israel.

- Healing of the paralytic (the one carried by the 4 friends).
- Christ forgives first and then He heals.
- Christ cares the most about us, He sees our sicknesses in and out. The sickness of the soul to Him is much more important than the sickness of the body. Because the sickness of the body is only a reflection or a result of the sickness of the soul. The sickness of the soul would make us sick and die forever. While the sickness of the body is fixed by our resurrection.
- Not everybody who is sick, the sickness comes from sin (story of the man born blind).
- Make up a story about a person who had developed a bad habit and she feels she couldn’t connect with God anymore- there is no prayer, no courage to even approach God in any means. She runs into miserable moods, difficult habits, or develop some kind of depression.
- Whenever Jesus Christ actually says something it is an action, when He says “Your sins are forgiven” something is actually happening. He is not saying “I have no hard feelings about you” but when He says “I forgive” there is a healing that is occurring. That is why the church calls the sacrament of confession a sacrament of healing. The mystery of confession is not a spiritual guidance; it is something the Holy Spirit is doing. If a priest adds spiritual guidance or advice that is something different. The most important words in the mystery of confession are those of the confessor.
- If you have depression (feeling down, useless, miserable, think there is nothing that is interesting or exciting, no motivation to do your usual day-to-day studying or talking etc, excluding yourself from social encounters) (highest suicide rate is amongst teenagers- they don’t know where to go and they don’t confess) or anxiety and you are suffering from something and you consider it a sickness and you think there is no healing for you, get on a schedule of confession regularly and you will be healed. The priests say that they have seen it so many times. Jesus uses the father of confession as the means to extend His forgiveness when He said to His disciples in John 21:21

Conclusion:

- If you have ever thought that you have committed the ultimate sin or done the ultimate unthinkable mistake and you think that no one will ever have compassion or pity and excuse you then you are the closest to Christ’s heart. The healthy do not need a physician but the sick. In my utmost desperate, sinful state I claim Christ’s most precious skill—the forgiveness of sins.

- Christ has come to forgive us. He is this Person who takes our sins willingly and in love for us.

Applications:

- No matter how shameful we are and no matter what we've done Christ restores us. Christ is dying and thirsting for us to return to Him. The same thirst we have for water is the thirst He has for us to return to us.
- Side note for Kids: When we lie to our parents we actually are on our way to destruction because the minute we tell a lie to our parent or hide things from them is in the same minute that we judge ourselves to be bad. Because which good son or good daughter would lie to their parents? Lying is viewed as weakness, it is against character. This is how they get on the track to continue doing what they are doing. They think it is something small but it is actually the thing that continues the destruction. They can ask Abouna to help them in a situation like this. Abouna can be present and be the Christ like person in this situation. We need to trust God. Christ is the Ultimate, Perfect Parent. Advise the kids to not lie to their parents. It is a commandment to honor our fathers and mothers.

Lesson 4: Christ is the Protector and Provider

Objective:

- This lesson is to show that Christ is a protector.

Memory Verse:

- *“But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?”⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!” Mark 4:40*

References:

- John 18
- Luke 22: 35
- Mark 4:34-41

Lesson Plan:

Christ is our protector	
The Old and New Testaments have examples of Christ protecting us.	
When we are with Christ, truly we are safe	

Introduction:

- Have you ever had a moment when you felt absolutely terrified? How did you feel? What was the situation?

Lesson Outline:

- What are some stories showing Christ as a protector? Christ being arrested and making sure His disciples were free in John 18:1-9.
- Christ in the garden prayed about none of His disciples being lost. He was worried about them. He prayed about St. Peter not being “sifted as wheat” by Satan. When He was being arrested He became a shield between the disciples and the temple guards that came to arrest them. Christ went forward when they came and asked them “Whom are you seeking” when they responded “Jesus of Nazareth” and He said “I am

He” they fell to the ground. They could not get to Him. It was only after He said I told you I am He, Let these [the disciples] go that they could then arrest Him. In this way Christ protected the disciples.

- Christ warns them about the destruction of Jerusalem.
- When you see Jerusalem is besieged get out because it will be destroyed
- 3 young men in the furnace- OT example. The pre-incarnate Christ appeared in the furnace and protected the 3 youth.
- When Jesus asks them if they lacked anything in Luke 22:35 prior to being arrested.
- This shows that He was personally responsible for them, as long as He was with them, they were protected by Him. Jesus must be physically with us, I have to have His physical presence.
- Christ sleeping on the boat during the storm (Mark 4:34-41)

Conclusion:

- While there are examples of Christ protecting us, we should remember that His sole purpose is to keep us from spiritual death—to protect us from eternal damnation.

Applications:

- When we are with Him, no harm can come to us (Must clarify what with Him means). The Eucharist is THE physical presence and the Gospel is where we sharpen the image of Christ in us. Therefore He says, “Watch and pray lest you enter into temptations,” And He said this immediately before the people come to arrest Him. In the Eucharist He also says, “he who eats My Body and drinks My Blood, abides in Me.”
- Things that would scare kids at this age- rape, end of the world, terrorists, loss of their Parents, worries about their future, economy. When we are with Him, we know that He protects us. And even though “bad” things happen we will be safe.

Lesson 5: Christ is the Life-giver and Savior

Objective:

- This lesson is to illustrate that Christ is the giver of life earthly and eternal.

Memory Verse:

- *“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. John 6: 53*

References:

- John 5 and 6

Lesson Plan:

Christ gives life and has power over death.	
Christ takes on our sinfulness and killed death through his resurrection.	
He sent the Holy Spirit to transform us so that we could become like Christ	

Introduction:

- Christ is the One who has the power over death. He gives life. Our death and sin was cured in Christ's cross and resurrection. Its like a kid who is sick and the parent says, “give me the sickness. I have a strong immune system. I will fight the infection, the disease (sin and death) and I my body will create the antibodies to fight the infection.” The parent's blood becomes the vaccine.

Lesson Outline:

- He takes our guilt upon Himself, He takes our sinfulness upon Himself. He took our sin on Him and He killed sin by His death. Then He took our death and killed death by His resurrection. “By death He trampled over death and He gave life to those in the tomb.” He gave us victory over sin, victory over death and the sacraments are where we receive this vaccine.

- Christ is the life giver: The last supper, John 5 (He is the resurrection) and John 6 (How He is going to do this, His Body and Blood), His passion (choose pieces from John 5 and John 6, they are too long)

Conclusion:

- He sent the Holy Spirit to transform us so that we could become like Christ and when we become like Christ we witness. He gave us sacraments of life.

Applications:

- when the person feels like they have no life, as if their life is meaningless they have nothing that is exciting or worth living for. When we have lost someone, we know that they will live again in Christ the life giver.

Lesson 6: Christ is the Teacher, He desires to be with us

Objective:

- This lesson is to illustrate that Christ is a teacher.
- Christ’s desire is for us to be with Him. Our response is to choose Him.

Memory Verse:

- *“I am the way, the truth, and the life” John 14:6*
- *“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.” Psalm 27:4*

References:

- Luke 10:38-42

Lesson Plan:

Christ gave us the right knowledge of the Father and Holy Spirit	
Christ taught us how to behave, how to prayer, and salvation	
Christ desires to be with us.	

Introduction:

- Christ came to teach us—of the Father, of the Holy Spirit, how to behave and of salvation.

Lesson Outline:

- He gave us the right knowledge about the Father because He is the perfect image of His Father. By being who He is, everyone came into encounters with Him has seen the Father- that’s what He said to Phillip “He who has seen Me, has seen the Father.” (John 14:9) This is not to mean that He is the Father but rather is a perfect representative.

- He taught us the new commandment - love one another as I have loved you. (John 13:34) He taught us the golden rule- do to others as you would like them to do unto you. He is the one who taught us to love our enemies. He taught us the beatitudes.
- The United States Rules of Engagement (rules of conduct) are based on St. Augustine's writings which are based on the Gospels.
- He gave us the knowledge of the Spirit
- He taught us the way of salvation (John 14) I am the way the truth and the life. He never wanted to leave us without the help and knowledge needed to know the way to the Father.
- He came to give us life and give us life more abundantly
- Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Christ is teaching us where the good place is to be.
- The rich young man: Christ is showing him the way to salvation
- Gospels of the Paraclete and His prayer to the Father (John 14-17) He keeps telling them how He will not leave them alone. He comforts them. And He prays to the Father say His desire is that they and US will be with Him where ever he goes. He says He is going to prepare a place for him

Conclusion:

- Our direction in life can and should come from the Bible and from Christ's teachings. Being Christian is not just your named religion, but it's how you live your life.

Applications:

- Who do I usually get my code of life from? The things I consider right to do and the things I consider wrong? Things I commend and the things I forbid? Things I respect and the things I despise? Give examples- a man and woman who are married and are Christian and have never done something outrageous came to an abouna one day because the man threw a garbage can on her and said very inappropriate and crude words to her. Abouna told him, I never expected this from you, what made you do something like this After 30 minutes of talking to abouna the man realized, he had been watching the show The Sopranos for the past 3 months and it impacted how he thought and behaved because he saw how the mafia was dealing with their families and their spouses. It made him think that the way in which the mafia was dealing with others was the appropriate way to deal with others.

Unit 9

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Objective

The purpose of this unit is to help the youth to recognize the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives in sanctifying, comforting, revealing, guiding, as well as gently rebuking them.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Introduction to the Role of the Holy Spirit
 - Lesson 2: Remembrance and the Holy Spirit
 - Lesson 3: Holy Spirit's Correcting Nature
 - Lesson 4: The Holy Spirit the Comforter and Encourager
 - Lesson 5: Application Lesson: Hearing and Heeding the Voice of the Spirit
-

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Role of the Holy Spirit

Objective:

- What is the role of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit makes Christ present to us in the Church and gives us a relationship with Christ.

Memory Verse:

- *¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. (John 14:16)*

References:

- A Day with Christ By: Father Bishoy Kamel

Lesson Plan:

Think of all Christ did for His disciples. Now the Holy Spirit is doing all this for the Church.

Christ had to leave us, but we now have Christ inside us.

We connect to Christ, and have Him present through the Spirit in prayer

Introduction:

- When Christ was with the disciples He did everything for them.
 - He guided them
 - He protected them
 - He taught them
 - He fed them
 - He comforted them
 - etc
- When Christ ascended to the heavens He sent them the Spirit to guide them as He had guided them and to help them—to make Christ present to them. To sanctify them and to help them and to transform them.
 - John 14:16 ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, 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.¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

- This is indicating that there was a comforter/helper before the Spirit descended. Christ Himself. So Christ ascends to heaven and sends them His Spirit to not just “dwell with them” but to “dwell in them.”
- 1 Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.
- Why did Christ have to leave? He said that it is to your advantage that I go away because if I do not the Holy Spirit will not come. But if I go I send the Holy Spirit to you.
 - Christ had to leave because while Christ was there they always depended on Him. Without Him departing they would never listen to the Holy Spirit within them. They would always be depending on the physical person of Christ.
- So after Christ sent them the Spirit, the Spirit did within them what Christ did for them while present with them.

Lesson Outline:

- The Church fathers had taught that within each person of the Trinity has the fullness of the other two members of the Trinity. When we receive the Holy Spirit in baptism, in prayer, confession, in our loving good deed, we become a dwelling place for the entire trinity.
- So when we have the Holy Spirit you have the fullness of God
- How does the Holy Spirit connect us to Christ? Last unit (Who is Christ) we spoke about how our goal as Christians is to have a relationship with Christ. But the question becomes- how do we have a relationship with someone we cannot hear, see, or touch? The Holy Spirit connects us to Christ.
- It is impossible to love someone you have never seen heard touched spoke with etc. However, if we look into our hearts all of us have a love for Christ within us. (1 Peter 1:8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory). It is the Holy Spirit that gives us this love for Christ.
- We have all the benefits of not having the physical relationship- through the Spirit. When we stand to pray even though we don't see Him (Christ) the Spirit within us creates the image of Christ- gives the aroma of Christ.
- These verses demonstrate how Christ is brought to us through the Spirit in prayer.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:7¹⁷ **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**¹⁸ **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

- 2 Corinthians 4:6-10 ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ⁸ *We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*
- 2 Corinthians 13:5 ⁵ *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you are disqualified.*
- Galatians 3:27 ²⁷ *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
- These verses show how the “treasure” Christ is in the “earthen vessels.” Christ is within us and His glory never fades.

Conclusion:

- Through the Spirit we have Christ always with us. We never have to feel alone because, we have this lover of our souls always with us. We do need to practice praying though to be filled with Him

Applications:

- We want the kids to feel Christ with them all day. To realize they have the presence with them always. IT is initiated in prayer but the Lord is there with you. When we pray our morning and night prayers we are not just reciting words but we are directing it to a person. To Christ. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit is inside of us. We look into our own hearts and this is where we will find Christ. As we struggle to connect with Christ we have the Spirit to help us make the connection. Unless we have this faith and hope that we can connect with Christ through the Spirit than the prayer is in vain. If we see prayer as if we are going to actually meet someone and not just reciting the psalms that prayer will be a true connection with Christ. And once we make this initial connection we need to hold onto it. We need to keep in our hearts that Christ is there constantly through the day. WE keep this connection by making small prayers every time we can. The one who upholds this link is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit brings Christ with us. Our part is to give Christ the time and then through the Spirit we will have the quenching of the soul.

Lesson 2: Remembrance and the Holy Spirit

Objective:

- The Holy Spirit utilizes the life of Christ to convict us and guide our actions, heart, and thoughts. Specifically, by reading the Gospels we get a picture of the life and characteristics of Christ. This picture serves as insight into our own hearts and shortcomings.

Memory Verse:

- *"²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." (1 Cor 11:26)*

References:

- For the Life of the World by Alexander Schmemmann

Lesson Plan:

We are transformed into the life of Christ by remembering His life

There is no descent of the Holy Spirit without remembering Christ

Through the Liturgy, Agpeya, and Gospels, we remember Christ and become transformed by the Spirit

Introduction:

- We are all called to be Christ like. But how? How can we be transformed to be like Christ.
- This transformation happens through the Holy Spirit.

Lesson Outline:

- To allow the Holy Spirit to work in you- you have to start with recollecting and remembering Christ.
- Remembering is not just recalling to mind. But rather it is being put back into something- reminiscing. It is re-entering into reliving. For example. What happens when someone remembers a situation that hurt him? He gets angry and very

emotional. It becomes very alive in their heart again. It is like they are back in that moment where they had a fight with the person.

- ADD personal story that may highlight this of a time you were angry, thought about it again and how it made you angry again,
- Sins are the same way. What if you have a remembrance of sin? It can cause you to get sucked back into it- it is very dangerous people get sucked back into sins by remembering it. "Remembrance of evil that entails death."
- There is also a remembrance that brings life- as we remember Christ we have life.
- As we commemorate Christ's actions and life there is a descent of the Holy Spirit.
- Consider the picture of liturgy. We read the institution narrative of the Last supper. "He took bread in His Holy and spotless hands and He blessed... He mixed in the chalice wine and water." As we recollect and live out Christ's actions the Holy Spirit actually descends and sanctifies and changes the bread and wine, and it also descends on us and changes and purifies us.
 - There is a strong link between the Epiclesis (the descent of the Spirit) and Anamnesis (the Institution prayer). There is no Epiclesis without the Anamnesis.
 - Again, after "Holy, holy, holy, oh Lord our God, who formed us..." we start remembering and reciting the life of Christ "Who of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin St Mary was incarnate..." we recall His life all the way to the Institution Prayer until we say "Amen, Amen, amen your death oh Lord we proclaim Your Holy resurrection and ascension into the heavens we confess..." The priest continues "As we commemorate His holy passion His resurrection from the dead and His second coming awesome and full of glory we offer You these oblations." As we remember we offer the bread and wine. After which point there is a request for the descent of the Spirit on the bread wine and us.
 - Similarly the church prayers are designed for both Anamnesis and epiclesis. The hours of Agpeya allow us to participate in the major events of Christ's life. 1st hour resurrection, 3rd hour Christ's trial, 6th crucifixion, 9th death etc. As we pray the Agpeya we are remembering the life of Christ and then the Holy Spirit works in us.
- What actions do we do to strengthen the Spirit?
 - For everything we do we should recall the work and acts of our Lord for the Holy Spirit to work in us.
 - When we read the Gospels we should be looking towards the life of Christ (remembering) to direct us in how we deal with similar situations. There are two ways we can read stories in the gospels- 1- trying to get information, factual. 2- entering into the story, recalling the details, putting yourself as a eyewitness, thinking of how you would feel in this situation. Actually encountering Christ.
 - For example, multiplying the 5 loaves and 2 fish if you read it factually you would deduce the fact that Christ can do anything. If you allow the story to become alive again by putting yourself in their shoes you would feel Christ's love and concern over their well being. He does not

just care about their spiritual well being but also their physical well being. He did not want to send them away hungry. Looking at the story this way the Spirit descends and connects to Christ. We'll start feel with this story that Christ is so loving, so compassionate, etc.

Conclusion:

- What actions do we do to strengthen the Spirit?
- For everything we do we should recall the work and acts of our Lord for the Holy Spirit to work in us.
- When we read the Gospels we should be looking towards the life of Christ (remembering/reminiscing) to direct us in how we deal with similar situations. There are two ways we can read stories in the gospels- 1- trying to get information, factual. 2- entering into the story, recalling the details, putting yourself as a eyewitness, thinking of how you would feel in this situation. Actually encountering Christ.
- For example, multiplying the 5 loaves and 2 fish if you read it factually you would deduce the fact that Christ can do anything. If you allow the story to become alive again by putting yourself in their shoes you would feel Christ's love and concern over their well being. He does not just care about their spiritual well being but also their physical well being. He did not want to send them away hungry. You could picture Christ multiplying the loaves, the love in his eyes. Looking at the story this way the Spirit descends and connects to Christ. We'll start feel with this story that Christ is so loving, so compassionate, etc.
- We can truly experience Christ, and we become transformed through remembrance of Him.

Applications:

- When we read the gospels we need to sit with them to contemplate the life of Christ
- In the Liturgy we have 2 or 3 together we remember the life of Christ and we receive the descent of the Spirit. In the Liturgy especially in the anamnesis follow the priest in the prayer. When it says in the Liturgy "He is incarnate..." As Abouna prays, bring these scenes alive in your attention, imagination... picture what about is praying about Christ. As we pray the agepeya as well.

Lesson 3: Holy Spirit's Correcting Nature

Objective:

- The Holy Spirit speaks to us to convict us of sin and to direct us towards righteousness. The goal of this lesson is to help the kids recognize His voice and to give the kids the tools to be able to understand when the Holy Spirit is speaking to them.

Memory Verse:

- *⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. JOHN 16:8*

References:

- JOHN 16:8

Lesson Plan:

- One of the main roles of the Spirit is to convict us of sin
- When the Holy Spirit fills us with the memory of Christ, the change in us has to come from the heart.
- We need to heed the voice of the Spirit.. And when our heart is cold we should focus on Christ's passion

Introduction:

- How do you make someone feel “sorry” or repentant for a sin they have committed or something they have done wrong?
 - When young kids do something wrong you often hear their mother saying “say you are sorry!” But this is not how it works.

Lesson Outline:

- One of the main roles of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin. What does that mean really? In the last lesson we spoke about remembering the life of Christ and how it gives us life- it brings the Spirit stronger in us. As a result when the Spirit is within us He speaks to us of how we are missing the mark- sinning.
 - For example- When St. Peter gives his sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:14-37) he asks the people to “heed his words” multiple times, he explains how Christ in the prophecies—that He is the savior and that they crucified the Christ. At this point the people through the Spirit in the sermon makes them feel “cut to

heart” and want to repent. The transformation that happened to St. Peter after Pentecost (who before denied Christ, and went fishing after He was crucified) when he is filled with the Spirit, is so transformed that he is able to speak the words that will convict the people. The Holy Spirit is speaking through Peter and convicting those who killed Christ.

- What happens when the Holy Spirit fills us
 - The first thing He does is to convict and to confront us of sin.
 - AS the Holy Spirit brings me the remembrance of Christ- the heart will have emotions that bring up repentance. As we are filled with the memory Christ two things happen the bread and wine is transformed and changed and purified. At this point there is also a purify us. The people at this point are also bowing and worshiping and there should be at this point an inward contrition of heart- a confession.
- Conscience exam. The heart is from where the sins come from. “Out of the heart proceeds all evil...” If there is any purification of sin in me, it needs to start in my heart. If the spirit is going to start on purifying me it will start there. And it will start by confrontation.
- What will confront sin within me? Another desire, another passion, another quenching- the love purity kindness the fruits of the spirit that are present in Christ. Whenever there is a remembrance of Christ it is the antidote to the sin in the heart.
- The Spirit within us also will bring to us a comparison to how Christ was compared to how we are... Christ’s humbleness compared to us seeking vain glory etc... but One has to overcome—the Spirit.
- 3 things that obstruct the Holy Spirit’s actions
 - Pride, violence, and distraction

Conclusion:

- What are the tools which the Holy Spirit uses to rebuke us? Where do we hear His voice
- How do we know the voice of the Spirit rebuking us compared to the voice of Satan in terms of convicting us? The Holy Spirit is not a tormenting voice.
- How do we heed the voice of the Spirit- what is the consequence of not heeding the voice of the Spirit? When we ignore this voice we grieve the Spirit and we bring depression in our hearts.

Approach: Choose stories to highlight how the Holy Spirit speaks in the heart thru Christ’s servants. Perhaps the story of Peter rebuking the Jews on Pentecost, Nathan rebuking David, Saul’s distressing spirit, Saul unable to “kick against the goads.” Have the kids read these stores and discuss the work of the Spirit.

- What was the nature of the rebuke?
- What is the result of ignoring the rebuke?

- What happens to those who heeded the rebuke? What happened in the stories of those who ignored the rebuke?

Applications:

- To prepare for confession one could read the accounts of the passion of Christ. Have them read some prayers that would put them in the right mind set— An example for a good prayer is The Prayer of Submission in the Liturgy after the “Our Father...” p. 398 in black liturgy book.” If this is prayed slowly with focus there will be better results. Other prayers that may help- maybe something from the Holy Week. Prophecies- Isaiah 53, Psalms 19

Lesson 4: The Holy Spirit the Comforter and Encourager

Objective:

- Holy Spirit has a role of comforting us and encouraging us in the spiritual way.

Memory Verse:

- *"²⁶ But 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." (John 14:26)*

References:

- St. Ignatius of Loyola "Spiritual Exercise"

Lesson Plan:

The role of the Spirit is also to be an encourager and a comforter to us.

There will be other voices that lie to us and try to distract us from the Truth.

By remembering how Christ loves us, we can shut out these other voices.

Introduction:

- It is said that in life when we face a lot of hardship, the most important thing we can have is not someone to fix all of our problems but one who stands by us and encourages us. One who is consistently there for us.
- This is what the Holy Spirit is to us. The one who comforts, consoles, and encourages us through life. The one who never leaves us and even dwells inside of us.
- Para-clete from the greek Parakletos literally means "Along the side of" or "helper" The Holy Spirit is the constant and consistent companionship of God inside our very bodies and souls

Lesson Outline:

- Discerning spirits: How can you discern if a thought is from the Spirit of God or from a demon? Sometimes we have thoughts on the onset that seem good- but bring us really down.

- Often we mistake the voice of the Holy Spirit for an oppressive spirit that resides in us. If we sin, or face a struggle, we are inclined to believe that we are worthless, or what we have done is unforgivable.
- Satan was called the adversary. The accuser of the brethren. Satan creates in us a spirit of accusation and oppression. For example Satan is seen making accusations before the throne of God concerning Job.
- The saints speak of how Satan convinces us to commit sin by stating that the sin is not so bad, but once we commit it he then convinces us how horrible and unforgivable that sin is.
- The Holy Spirit is the opposite. He guides us away from sin from the outset, but when we fall he leads us back by gentle reminders and encouragement.
- The Spirit is one that always instills hope, no matter how far we are from God.
 - The prodigal Son heard the voice of the spirit and painted a picture of hope in the Love of the Father.
 - Zacchaeus believed in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The thief next to the cross knew the truth of Christ through the encouragement of the spirit.
- The Spirit will always speak whatever words we need to hear to grow in Christ.
- After Peter betrayed Christ he felt convicted of sin and wept bitterly. However afterwards he felt the encouragement of the Spirit to return, and grow as one of the preeminent apostles.

Conclusion:

- We need to discern the spirits that try to bring us down. As we are praying the anamnesis and remembering Christ if there is something that distracts us- it is an evil spirit. Even if it seems beautiful.
- Any spirit that does not confess that Christ came in the flesh it is the spirit on the antichrist- so if anything is distracting us from Christ's presence this is the Spirit of the Anti-christ

Applications:

- We need to learn to shut out these "other voices."
- Voices that tell you that you are a failure, you will never get better, or you are not good enough. Voices that cause fear in us are not the voice of God. The voice of the Spirit is that of love and encouragement. Reflecting the love of God.
- By remembering Christ's love we can shut out these other voices.

Lesson 5: Hearing and Heeding the Voice of the Spirit

Objective:

- To teach the students how to hear and heed the voice of the Spirit.

Memory Verse:

- *This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:1-3)*

References:

- The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to It by: St. Theophan the Recluse

Lesson Plan:

Divide the students into groups and assign readings to them

Some reading show rebuking others are encouragement

Ask them to think about what it is SPECIFICALLY the Spirit is telling them

Introduction:

- How can we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
- The Holy Spirit does whisper in our ear through our conscious as well as through others.
- But we can also hear the voice of the Spirit as we read the Bible.

Lesson Outline:

- When we read the Bible we need to read it looking for God to speak to us. We need to read stories and say “what does the Lord want me to hear from the story right now?”
- Choose some passages from the Bible have the students read the stories and answer some questions that will direct them to whatever the Spirit may be telling them. Below is an example, but you should pick what you think will be good for your group.

- Example: Read each of these passages below. Find God’s personal message to you. Was there anything you really liked about the passage? Was there anything that really bothered you about the passage? Really figure out what it is about different situations in my life right now God is talking to me about. The Holy Spirit will speak to you if you try to listen. Write down your results in your journal.

REBUKING

- Mark 10:17
- 17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”
18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” 20 And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Questions

- What do I hold as “riches” in my life? What is my great “possession?”
- What keeps me from being “perfect”?
- What would be keeping me from following Christ?
- Do I ever look at just the “good” in me- the commandments I keep and miss the big problems in my life?
- What would Christ ask me to “sell?” How would I sell it?
- If I am not willing to sell it, why? What do I think will be the end of this?

COMFORTING

- Mark 4:35
- 35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”
39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Questions

- Is there something I am worried about?
- Do I have a situation in which I feel like I or someone I love is “perishing?”

- Do I feel like God is “asleep” while my “boat” is sinking and “does not care that I am perishing?”
- How does this story show me God’s power?
- What is God’s promise to me through this story?

Conclusion:

- Have students present (in vague terms) what the Spirit is telling them in each type of story

Applications:

- Each day, when we read the Gospels we need to do this. To sit with the story and contemplate on what the Spirit is telling us. We should write it down in a journal.

Unit 10

Back to Basics

Objective

This Unit is going to be returning back to the basics. Increasingly we are finding that the kids are a little bit behind in their knowledge and there is a need to try to build up the foundation. A lot of the units focused on higher level items yet it is still unclear whether the kids believe in the basics of the Christian faith and Orthodoxy. The goal behind this unit is to help the kids think independently and to draw their own conclusions. Too often we are just giving the kids information without giving them the opportunity to really ask questions. With this new lesson the hope is that we will foster discussion and create a non critical environment for them to not feel intimidated.

Need to be involved in the discussion, so that they come freely to the conclusions that need to be reached, the teacher should change their view of themselves from lecturers of some knowledge to facilitators of thinking and companions on the journey in knowing Christ: should not forget that the students are not ours'. They belong to God, and God speaks Truth to them, but they need guidance. In preparing for a meaningful session, one must think first of answering the relevance question: Why this subject matters to the students? Learning in School has a specific relevance i.e. scoring high on the report card. While in Sunday school, it has to relate to their life somehow. For example: Church history, can be taken from the point of the question, of why in their class, they have students that belong to different denomination, or if they had ever needed to talk about their Church with anyone? The next task is to find the challenging questions. In the topic of science and religion, a challenging question would be: were you ever asked if you still believe in the story of creation? The teachers should struggle with this first before presenting the question to their students. They need to come from a higher place than the students are. Your students are looking to be affirmed and empowered in their faith; they cannot do this on their own. Sometimes a teacher who is not very confident of what they teach would perceive a challenging question from his students as a rejection of himself. We need to change that perception. They look up to us teachers, to give them a world view, to answer back the difficult questions and the doubts the world throws at them. The idea that everyone can come to truth on their own is very unrealistic. Christ called his people sheep that need a shepherd. Very few people would have the motivation to search for the truth, and even then they could be misled into any kind of teaching.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Life's purpose
- Lesson 2: Who is Christ
- Lesson 3: Why did Jesus die?
- Lesson 4: How can I have Faith?
- Lesson 5: How and why do I pray?

Lesson 1: Life's purpose

Objective:

- To have the students realize life without Christ is incomplete, and more than often full of sadness and loneliness.

Memory Verse:

- *33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)*

References:

- Mathew 6:33

Lesson Plan:

Be a witness to Christ's love mercy and care.	
Bring up stories of those who lived without Christ. Modern and Biblical	
Discuss your experiences and the students and how they see Christ's role.	

Introduction:

- We are witnesses to Christ's love, goodness, mercy, strength etc. We need to tell stories that illustrate whatever the point is of the lesson. For example, what is going to be the most effective way to transmit to the kids that God is real and works in our lives? A story of something WE have experienced (first hand is best). Faith is transmitted from person to person through eye witness accounts and stories. Our life is to become a channel to people. If God has does something supernatural for us we should pass it on to the people who are connected to us. If we do not we become like a clogged channel. We need to transmit our faith. To give others the grace we have received.
- At some point each and every one of us will come to a point in which we will feel like "is this it?" or will think "I thought life would be different." This is because our hearts are restless until they are united with the Lord.

Lesson Outline:

- We all go thru life expecting more that everything will be perfect. We believe that if we have a good career, a good spouse, a good house, a good family, etc. everything will be fine and dandy. But most people in their lives, early or late, come to ask "is this really all there is to life."

- Is money bad? Is beauty bad? Is a relationship bad? No, these are gifts from God. But this is not our God. This is what we give to God and He gives back to us. WE are not called to give up things to God forever to become a hermit
- The only purpose in this life is to know Christ and His Father. He will make the right purpose of life.
- What points do we want to get to this topic? What do kids get excited about at this age?
 - Popularity
 - Relationships with the opposite sex
 - Success at school
 - Appearance/beauty
- What stories do you want to put with these (popularity, relationships, success, beauty)
- Examples:
 - During the high school graduation Abouna poled the audience of parents asking about how many of the parents when they graduated high school felt like they had high hopes for life and all these aspirations. Every single one raised their hands. Abouna then asked them to raise their hand if this is what they imagined their lives to be like. Not one of them put their hand up.
 - Tom Brady won 3 super bowls, is deemed to be one of the greatest quarterbacks in the history of the game. He is married to a super model. When asked about his success and how he felt about it, he responds “Gosh! There has got to be more to life than this.” (search on youtube Tom Brady on 60 minutes)... (story illustrates how in life there is always something more than the apparent success)
 - There was a point when someone did not go to church for a while. They thought they had all sorts of freedom they had. Eventually they felt like they were missing out and that there was not much. And they went back to church and felt much better.
 - Solomon had 1000 wives. Everything he could want in a woman he had in one of those wives. He had treaties with every nation. He had more gold than could be counted. He had the best palace. He was the wisest man. He had everything. Yet it was never fulfilling enough. Yet at the end of his life he opens the line in Ecclesiastes “Vanities of vanity all is vanity.” He concludes after repeating vanity of vanities “¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work

into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.”
(Ecclesiastes 12)

- Celebrities: Britney Spears and Lindsay Lohan- and their self-destruction
- Kim Kardashian- 72 days and divorced.
- St. Augustine- kept asking God when? When will I change my sinful attachments? A boy says take and read. St. Augustine takes the paper and read from St. Paul which says now is the time. St. Augustine at the end of it all says “You have created us for yourself are hearts will always be restless till we find our rest in you.”
- Someone who puts all their hope in a relationship. They pursue someone that rejects them. Tell it in the 3rd person. (people we depend on, boyfriend girlfriend etc).
- DISCUSSION:
 - Maybe start with your story again and ask a question that gets them to talk. Something like “If you were in my place what would you have done?” Or you invite them saying “has anyone had an experience like this?” OR “DO you disagree with this?” “Have you ever met someone that disproves this... etc.”
 - Challenge them- what will happen when the person gets old etc. Other examples, Forbes magazine- happiest profession is the monastics. Richest nations have highest suicide rates.
 - Share your experiences
 - Ex. When I was 17 I thought that I would____. Make sure its sincere and applicable to them.
- Instant gratification is the attitude of people that have lost the meaning of life. Example: Esau – He always lived to satisfy himself only. He married the Canaanite women against the advise of his family, on a whim. When he was hungry, he said “What is life to me if I die of hunger”. He had no purpose in life besides fleshly gratification
- There’s “life” and “Life, with Christ”. In “life”, there’s no favors, it’s miserable, it keeps you down and unhappy. But “Life, with Christ”, yes there is suffering, but He promises us that we will get to peace now even through tribulations, and eternal life to come.
 - Joseph: brothers tried to kill him, became a slave, imprisoned, tempted by master’s wife. Afterwards, he became rich and his brothers came to ask food for him. Although he might have been expected to be spiteful towards them because of all the evil they had

done to him, because he had peace with God, he embraced them. “You intended evil for me, but God meant it for good”.

- Ask them to share their experiences
 - Ex. what do you see yourself doing in_
 - Invite them to talk. Tell them you are interested in hearing what they have to say. “I don’t believe any one’s opinion is useless as we are all trying to learn ae benefit.” etc.
 - Have you ever met someone in your life that you just marvel when you see them?
 - How do you see yourself happiest in 10 years?
 - What do you want in life?
 - Have you ever felt like things were worthless- felt empty?
- Abouna’s story. When Abouna was about 17 years old he felt like he came to a point in his life where he was very disappointed with his friends. He felt alone and let down by all the people around him. He did not really know Christ. He had loved the Old Testament and knew it very well. But that night he decided to pray to God. He asked the Lord 1- are You there? 2- are You listening? 3- do You know me? and 4- will You help me? Abouna then went into a drawer and pulled out his bible and read for the first time the gospels. He started in Matthew and read the genealogy of Christ. As he read it he became really disappointed. The genealogy of Christ lists all these sinful people whom the Lord descended from. Tamar the harlot, David having Solomon the Bathsheba, etc. And he thought about the Lord “You are going to *help* me? It seems like You have a lot of problems based on this genealogy.” Abouna went back to his drawer and put the bible back. Next to the Bible was a book called Dialogue with the Savior. Abouna decided to read this. In the very first chapter of this book, the author describes how the first chapter in Matthew lists all the people whom Christ descended from. The author contemplates on how Christ, was not ashamed of His genealogy and it demonstrates that He is willing to come to us in our darkest times no matter how shameful or sinful we are. Abouna read this and was amazed. He was so moved and felt that the answer to all four of his questions to the Lord was “yes.” This changed Abouna’s life.

Conclusion:

- At the end of the discussion we want them to see that this, most of these goals all that we strive for and this will be our second priority. And that without Christ at the start nothing else will be fulfilling. – you could also see it as preparing them for the “fall” for what will happen.

Applications:

- Have the students think about what areas in their life have they felt that life wasn't what they thought it was. Ask them about why people would give up everything for Christ and what they think comes out of it.

Lesson 2: Who is Christ?

Objective:

- Christ is the answer to the question of relevance (if everything is futile, what is the way out?)

Memory Verse:

- *14 And 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. (John 1:14)*

References:

- Case for Christ, Case for Faith, Faith on Trial

Lesson Plan:

Addressing doubts on Faith	
Examine how Christ was fulfilling to those in the gospels	
How has Christ been fulfilling to you as a servant, and ask the kids	

Introduction:

- Even if they get everything we want: the person they love, the best and perfect job/career (Steve Jobs had the perfect career and then had to give it up), eventually they will have to give it up. How can we guide our students to see Christ as the only way out of this futility?
- The question is do we know who Christ is?

Lesson Outline:

- Ask them if they have doubts about faith. Do an anonymous survey.
- Ask them if they believe in His incarnation, His virginal birth, that He is God, His resurrection
- Be prepared to answer questions about the proofs and evidence for the Faith, the Resurrection, etc. (see References) and be able to answer questions about doubts they may have. Do not be afraid to say you are not sure and get back to them.
- How Christ fits into satisfying all criteria that I need for my life that will make me happy: These points should come from the kids, if they don't answer, servant can make suggestions
- Caring person that is very available who unconditionally accepts me and is willing to be patient with me
- Death is a big anxiety in life. We are always racing against time to get this or that done.

- Ask the question, how did you see Christ doing all these things (i.e. from the Gospel)?

Conclusion:

- How Christ is fulfilling. Personal stories from the servants about how they came back to find that Christ was the answer

Applications:

- Ask the students if they have experienced Christ in their life. Invite them to tell their stories.

Lesson 3: Why did Jesus have to die?

Objective:

- To understand that Christ's death is to give us life, it is not fulfilling the wrath of God. But it is out of the Father's love. We partake of this life through the Eucharist.

Memory Verse:

- *"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to His death." (Phil 3:10)*

References:

- Why did Jesus have to die? By Josh Macdowell

Lesson Plan:

What is evil?	
Christ's incarnation and death were to defeat evil and to put to end the last enemy- death.	
Through the Eucharist we partake of this Life	

Introduction:

- Sin and the problem of evil: ask the kids to, within themselves, how do they perceive evil? In their own lives, in the lives of the people around them, and in the world. What is the most evil thing you have ever heard about? Where is it coming from? How do they feel about what they call evil?

Lesson Outline:

- Death is the ultimate evil, the last enemy. Heb 3:14-15.
 - What is Jesus doing to evil and to death? First He takes on sin (sin is the sting of death, the poison that we feel) and goes to the cross (Isaiah 53:10-12 and Romans 6:6). Jesus took our sin and took it onto the cross and killed it on the cross. Jesus carried our death to overcome our sin. In His resurrection, He overcomes death and sin.
 - But so what? How will this help me? 1 Cor 15:50-58.

- If we had made the discovery that we need Jesus, that He is the ultimate answer to the hunger/emptiness that we feel, then how are we going to find Him? How are we going to take Him in?
- The sacraments bring Christ to me. Christ died for me to be able to take Him in. Talk about the transformation that happens. How Christ is saving me by giving me the power to overcome evil in my own self.
- Emphasize that He is giving me power, not forcing me.
- Why was the Last Supper done right before Christ died? The Eucharist was one with His death and resurrection. He didn't sleep between the Last Supper and the Cross. Therefore the Body and Blood that the disciples ate is the same Body and Blood that went through His death and Resurrection.
- ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. (Gal 1:4).

Conclusion:

- Why was all this done? Why did Christ have to die? He is Life. He died simply so that we would have life. He did it all in love, from the beginning to end. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." (Jn 3:16) Keep in mind that Christ did not die because the Father was angry- no because of the Father's love.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WosgwLekgn8> Watch this explanation of Why Christ had to die.

Applications:

- What is keeping me from partaking of this life? Am I choosing something over partaking of His death and resurrection through the Eucharist?

Lesson 4: How can we have faith?

Objective:

- To have the kids commit to starting on the path of faith with something small

Memory Verse:

- *"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)*

References:

- The Orthodox Way. By Bishop Kallistos Ware

Lesson Plan:

What is faith? What challenges our faith?	
What are examples of stories of Faith in the gospels?	
God will always answer us. We need to start trusting in Him.	

Introduction:

- What is faith? Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Lesson Outline:

- Faith is what we're sure of, and what we do with it. We don't have to be sure of everything, but have to act on what we do know.
- A child, when she sees a toy that she likes, has a hope of getting it, even though she has no money, because she has faith in her parents, that they want her to be happy, and have the money to get it for her.
- What are some of the things that challenge our trust in God?
 - Problems: death, sickness, poverty, all the evil we described in the previous lesson.
 - To believe in the incarnation of Christ truly is to love our lives on earth, with all the sickness, death, sufferings, etc., because He lived it and made it good.

- What do they already believe? For example, if they believe that Christ is true, have they asked Him to help?
- There are many stories of people in the Bible who had to trust and have faith in his goodness.
 - Woman in the crowd with a flow of blood
 - Canaanite woman whom Christ put down – “it is not good to take the children’s bread and give it to the little dogs”
 - Man with the son who is demon possessed- “Lord I believe, help my unbelief.”
 - The 4 friends of the paralytic had to go up the roof.
 - Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
 - How did these people show faith? They did something, they went against something.
 - Faith = work: they did something with their belief. Ask how do you show your faith?
- Stories from servant’s lives. What troubles have we had as servants? How did we get encouraged and our faith strengthened?
- Starting by recognizing that we are in places in our lives where no one else can reach us or help us, we are alone. What do we do in those situations when we are afraid? It may be anything – maybe there is a friend that is in trouble, maybe it is that you have a huge test tomorrow, maybe it is that you are feeling trapped in a situation. Ask for help. Be ready to receive help. He is the hope of the hopeless and the help of the helpless.
- The Lord is there though, and He will deliver us. He came walking on the sea at the Fourth watch of the night. He, even though asleep on the boat, calmed the seas and winds.
- Sometimes the Lord will delay his answer (Lazarus). But when we get the answer we “will see the Glory of God.” “Did I not tell you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God.” (John 11)

Conclusion:

- Faith is not all or nothing. Faith is a work in progress...a journey. We need to start to trust Him more and more.
- We need to try to ask without doubting. Praying as the father of the demon possessed son did “Lord I believe, help my unbelief”

Applications:

- Is there something you are struggling with, something you are worried of? Ask for help, knowing that you will receive help.

Lesson 5: Why and how do I pray

Objective:

- To explain to the students what is the point of prayer and how do we pray?

Memory Verse:

- *“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)*

References:

- The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology. By: Igumen Chariton
- Living Prayer By: Anthony Bloom

Lesson Plan:

Discussion on prayer	
Examples of people struggling in prayer	
Instruction for prayer	

Introduction:

- Start a discussion: What are their goals for prayer? What defines the best prayer? Are there right or wrong goals for prayer?

Lesson Outline:

- Wrong goals: asking for sinful things. Ex. Asking that my murder plan is perfect so that no one can discover it, asking for help to steal something or win the lottery.
- We should not come to prayer always looking for something in return. We will get something in return. But our prayers are an offering to the Lord as well. “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)
- What defines the best prayer? The perception of humans about prayer is that prayer has to always be heartfelt. It is our struggle to make prayer come from the deepest points in us. BUT by praying we learn how to pray.
- Stories about their struggles with prayer. Why do they start, why do they stop, etc...
 - Jacob wrestled with God. This is a metaphor also for prayer. He would not stop praying until he received from God.

- Christ in Gethsemane- He prayed until He was able to receive what He needed.
- Once we define the goal of our prayer, we can say how to pray. Why do we want to pray? In prayer, we realize the meaning of life that is in Christ, we realize our need for Him, realize that He is the answer to our hunger.
- The clever person in prayer would be able to get beyond the distractions and the façade of everything else and get to the still point in His life where He can meet God.

Conclusion:

- It is a matter of discipline and training that we continually reject the old resistance to pray, and come back to the new realization. And experience the hunger, the faith in God who can help me, His readiness to help me and His love. And to go beyond that to His plan for the future for me and for the people that I care about, and for His plan for humanity and specifically for the church and become more in-tune with God's vision of prayer rather than my own vision.

Applications:

- Sequence of events: start with one's own needs and feelings, bring them out in prayer so you connect on a deep level with God.
- Then Agpeya, and then praises and litanies (requests for others). Agpeya is important because, in the words of St. Athanasius, "the Psalms connect us to the heart of the Savior". Our own prayers are low, because our hearts are low. But King David was elevated and his heart was with God, so his prayers are deep. David's prayers were similar to Christ's prayers ("My God, My God" Psalm 22 and "sit on My right hand" Psalm 122). This lifts us up. Praying over our own concerns isn't fulfilling. Our fulfillment comes from connecting to God heart-to-heart, which is what we should struggle for.

Unit 11

Exodus

Objective

OVERVIEW OF EXODUS: The story of Exodus can be seen as an allegory or a parallel to our lives on Earth. We start all of us in bondage in a spiritual Egypt in sin. We are very connected to a society that really is not looking for our good but rather is keeping us in slavery and is using us to its advantage. But the Lord calls us out of bondage to a promised land. The exiting of Egypt means that we must remove all the leaven (our connection to our society) and eat of the Passover Lamb (Eucharist). We must cross the Red Sea (Baptism) we need to follow the guides Moses (who represents Christ) and the Pillar of Light (the Holy Spirit) and we journey through the desert where we must depend on the Lord for all our sustenance and maintain the faith that the Lord will deliver us. In this desert is where we also meet God on the Mountain (prayer) until we meet him finally in the Promised Land (heaven).

Objective is to teach through the events of Exodus, the need for a leader in the Church, faith, how it must be maintained and God will deliver and provide for his people, how we must approach God in reverence/fear. How we need to approach God in purity. We need to be sanctified to meet the Lord

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: God prepares a leader (Exodus 1-2)
- Lesson 2: God sends a Savior (Exodus 3-4; plagues Exodus 5-11)
- Lesson 3: The Passover (Exodus 12 and 13)
- Lesson 4: Red Sea and Baptism (Exodus 14))
- Lesson 5: The needs in the desert- Food and the Drink (Exodus 16, 17)
- Lesson 6: The Mountain (Exodus 19)

- Lesson 7: 10 Commandments (Exodus 20)

Lesson 1: “God prepares a leader (Exodus 1-2)”

Objective:

- To show how God’s providences present at all time

Memory Verse:

- *“By faith when Moses was born, was hidden for three months by His parents because they saw that he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.” – Hebrews: 11:23*

References:

- Exodus 1-2

Lesson Plan:

Moses' beauty serve as a sign to his parents and fosters Faith.	
God delivers Moses directly to the place to save his people as a Leader.	
Moses feels calls to leadership and deliverer of his people.	

Introduction:

- The Bible often refers to God’s people as sheep. The sheep alone always are wayward and in peril. The Israelites symbolic of the church is in bondage by evil. God in his faithfulness always sends a leader and deliver to His people whom He prepares through miraculous ways.

Lesson Outline:

- Out of all of the Israelites only one male was saved- Moses. In Exodus and in Hebrews 11 it talks about the beauty of Moses. So what? Who cares? All parents say there child is beautiful. Even if they look like aliens, parents think their child is beautiful. So why the stressing of his beauty? It is more than just the child’s looks. The parents looked at each other in a tough circumstance in which all males must be

put to death. And see his beauty and think it must be a miracle (apparently they were very ugly!). They have faith that God has given them something so beautiful- so this is a sign that they must defy the king and not deliver him to death. Moses' beauty was a sign to them that he was special. They decide to keep the child.

- One contemplation is when the child was put in the river the hand of the Lord delivered the child to a specific place in the river where pharaoh's daughter would save him, this was the same hand that formed the beautiful face of Moses. Secular people see this all by chance. Of course the child could be beautiful, even if the parents are ugly; of course it could happen that he would end in a certain place. But we know and have faith that it is the work of the Lord.
- So Moses grows up and notices that he is the only male in his group age. Then his "parents" tell him the story of how he is an Israelite. Moses grows up and realizes that he has a purpose. We see this very clearly when he goes and defends the Jewish man and slays the Egyptian. Moses flees, as a discipline for his actions- 40 years in the desert. It is not until 80 years he begins serving. But through all this time, the Lord had prepared Moses to be the deliverer of His people

Conclusion:

- The Church cannot survive without leaders. God's direction, will, and teachings come through His various teachers through the generations. Although the Israelites first reject Moses as their leader and questions him along the way, he eventually becomes known as the Archprophet- the distinguished prophet in biblical history pronounces God's judgments and saves His people.

Applications:

- Who are the leaders in your life both secular and spiritual. Parents, teachers, friends, priests, Sunday school servants. Consider where these various leaders are leading you to? Are they leading you to success- spiritual or worldly? Are they leading you to God or away from God. Encourage the audience to establish spiritual leaders that will lead their souls out of spiritual bondage to the promised land.

Lesson 2: “Savior (Exodus 3-4; plagues Exodus 5-11)”

Objective:

- Define how a savior is prepared and what the cost is to follow the savior to be saved.

Memory Verse:

- *“Then Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn” – Exodus 3:3*

References:

- Exodus 3-4. Exodus 5-11.

Lesson Plan:

A savior prepares by contemplation and prayer.	
Rejection of God's savior and its consequences.	
Sacrifice needed for salvation.	

Introduction:

- Even saviors need prayer. Do you know Christ would often escape from the people to pray alone? Do you know Christ would stay up throughout the night in prayer. Christ was in deep prayer the night before his greatest temptation came of His passion. Moses had the same beginnings when he started his life in prayerful contemplation of the burning bush.

Lesson Outline:

- When God sends Moses there is a huge difference of what he can do compared to when he tried to save his people before his calling. Before his calling, Moses murdered an Egyptian by his own might. But then Moses is called. It starts with Moses turning aside and looking at the wonder of the burning bush. Why was this so marvelous to Moses? The bush was not smoking or consuming, something never seen. What does this have to do with a contemplative life? A life of prayer? He sits

with it he spends time looking at it. We need to take time and just sit with the Lord. Whatever we put our time in that is our true love. Notice that God is always the one who starts the encounter. He is the one who called Moses.

- We know that Moses said no when the Lord said he would send him to pharaoh. But the Lord insisted. The Lord sends Moses, and Moses does wonders and signs. Some don't believe in Moses. Some don't like him. But the fact is he is the savior. They need to listen. If not they will be the ones who will lose. Some see him and say Moses is making their lives miserable. They doubt who he is and his role. But the problem is when people don't want to listen this is where they lose. This happens with us with Christ, our Father of Confession, and our own conscience. So Moses takes the Israelites out and the 9th and 10th plague comes. It is dark, the Passover lamb is killed still in the darkness. Christ is found saying the same thing in the Gospel of John "Walk while in the light... the light is with you a little while longer." In Egypt, there is darkness that can be felt, all first borne, regardless of age are killed. Think about it- in one house there could be a grandfather, father, and son killed.
- The Israelites leave the city at midnight, waited for by the pillar light. They leave their society and what is waiting for them is a pillar of light to lead them through the darkness. Metaphor- cut your biggest attachments, and you will find me (The Holy Spirit). This is what we take from the image. They have to leave everything they are attached to, houses, land, everything they knew. And the first thing they find in the desert is the Water of the Red Sea. We who were baptized as children are called to renew this.

Conclusion:

- Christ is our true savior. Throughout history and our lives there are types of Christ Saviors in our lives. Great suffering ensues if we do not heed the calling of our savior. If we want salvation we will be asked to sacrifice that which we hold dear. Often what we love most is what we need to be saved from ie sin.

Applications:

- What has our conscience and father of confession told us in the past that we refused. In retrospect were they right? What kind of advice are they giving us now that may be difficult to swallow.

Lesson 3: “The Passover (Exodus 12 and 13)”

Objective:

- Audience will be able to see the prophecies regarding the Passover lamb that points to Christ
- We will know the influence of society in our subconscious and the importance of leaving in behind during our “Passover”.

Memory Verse:

- *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will strike 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.” Exodus 12:12*

References:

- Could use the movie “Messiah: Prophecy Fulfilled” It is in the Library. Talks about how Christ was the ultimate fulfill of the Passover- you would need to skip around a little and clarify how God is not taking His wrath on Christ but rather Christ died to give us life. A spiritual life for a spiritual life.
- Exodus 12-13

Lesson Plan:

Passover Lamb: A type of Christ and its parallels.	
Refusing the leaven of Egypt (the influence of the world and mentality)	
Bitter Herbs, leaving the world in haste.	

Introduction:

- When God looked down on the looked down the Israelites and the Egyptian He could see many similar qualities. They are in the same culture they are in the same land, many of them have started to worship the same gods even. But when he heard their cry and freed them He instructed them to do something that entirely differentiated them from the Egyptians. He instructed them to sacrifice the Passover Lamb. The blood of the lamb purchased the Israelites and gave them life and saved. Same as Christ’s sacrifice freed us from bondage and gave us life.

Lesson Outline:

- Emphasize qualities of the Lamb that parallels with Christ. Male, without blemish, without any broken bones (Christ's bones not broken as thieves on cross), inspected by priest (as Christ inspected by Caiaphas), slaughtered, roasted with fire (as Christ in Resurrection engulfed in Holy Spirit), blood dipped with hyssop raised to lintel of doors (hyssop raised to Christ on the cross), nothing of lamb remained until morning (Christ not left on cross, communion always finished in its entirety), sacrificed on 14th day of the month which is full moon, as Christ was sacrificed 14th day of the month. Any who did not have blood of the lamb would not survive Passover, life of the lamb was given for the life God's people. Christ's passion has been so named the Holy Pascha (Holy Passover)
- Israelites ordered not take the leaven (yeast of the Egyptians) with them when they leave. The removing of the leaven during the feast of unleavened bread. The yeast is the subconscious things we have picked up from our community. Removing the yeast- is getting rid of what the society has imprinted in us, sins, behavior, train of thought etc. How do we do this? We have to start by saying how would someone in my age, in this society think? This is yeast in our lives. This reaction which is within us is from society. We need to be without this so that the Lord can imprint in us His yeast. Taking yeast out is taking out how the society sees things. We need to become the bland matzo bread (yeast removed) before we become Gods bread with His yeast (His Spirit). In the Passover tradition there is a searching through the house for the yeast. This is what is necessary is this deep search though ourselves to identify the world's yeast and remove it.
- Something else from Passover is the bitter herbs- we need to taste the bitterness- blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. We need to taste these herbs- but what makes the bitterness sweet is the Lamb- Christ. The life we walk as a Christian is full of suffering especially when leaving the sinful world. When faced with this suffering we often put it off, procrastinate which is dangerous. The Passover lamb needs to be in haste. This is a urging for moving forward when we partake of the communion- When we take communion we are ready to leave sins. Never to return to where we came from.

Conclusion:

- God's deepest will in our life is for us to be saved. God gives specific instruction for what the people must believe and do to be saved. Imagine the Israelites who didn't follow the instruction of God, to wake up in the morning and find their firstborn taken. God has so given us this Passover lamb through the sacrifice of His own Son. His Son is the only source of life and escape from death.

Applications:

- The Church has been given ways to partake in the true Passover Lamb. Our ability to do this is through the Mysteries of the Orthodox Church. What must we do to partake of the Mystery of the Eucharist in Church? What steps? Repentance,

confession, fasting, prayer, attention, understanding of the Mystery, prayer before communion.

Lesson 4: “Red Sea and Baptism (Exodus 14)”

Objective:

- Teach regarding the Crossing of the Red Sea- a type of our Baptism
- How is it that we are to repent

Memory Verse:

- *“Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he can by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” John 3:5*

References:

- Exodus 14
- John 3

Lesson Plan:

God leads us to the Red Sea Baptism	
God destroys the old Man of Sin (Egyptians)	
We must never seek to return to the places of sin (Egypt)	

Introduction:

- Christ told one of the known teachers of the Jews, Nicodemus, “unless you are born of water and spirit you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” When Nicodemus didn’t understand this Christ asks him, “How are you a teacher of Israel and do not understand this saying?” Commentators have said he is referring to both baptism and the red sea event in Jewish history (the most known story among the Jews). The crossing of the Red Sea was a picture of our baptism today.

Lesson Outline:

- Before the crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites come out, of the mountains surrounded on every side and then they come to the Sea. They panic they think that this is sure death. But then the Lord opens the sea. And the Israelites pass through. During this time, there is a separation between the Pillar of Light and the smoke that

was leading them. There is a separation of light and darkness. Leading the Israelites the fire guided them across the river and the pillar of smoke went behind them and blinded the Egyptians- put them in darkness. The Red Sea is a type of baptism. A cleansing from the freedom from slavery.

- And so there was a great confusion for the Egyptians and their wheels got dislodged. And they were drowned. Why would the Lord bring the Egyptians to chase them? The Egyptians chase them and are brought to the Red Sea so that they are destroyed and the Israelites will witness their destruction. Egypt is a symbol of the powers of darkness and Pharaoh is a type of Satan. In baptism Satan is vanquished. In baptism and repentance we stand (or the Mother) stands and renounces Satan his minions and all his evil works as the Israelites renounce the pagan works of the Egyptians
- This is done so that the Israelites will never fear the power of the Egyptians again. They will realize there is no going back to slavery and the Egyptians are never there to imprison them again. Why would the Lord send them a fire at night? So they would not stop walking. This is for us- even when we sleep there is no stopping the journey. There should be no hindrance to our progress. After repentance it vital that we never backslide and return to sin. Despite this great site the Israelites afterwards worship the golden calf and Egyptian God. They often lament leaving Egypt and desire to return there. We too often repent of our sins but afterward desire to return to this life. The picture of Exodus highlights how absurd it is that we would want to go back into bondage after being delivered in such a miraculous way. We see the fate of Egyptians (destruction) and we want to return to that life? Sin will lead to destruction.

Conclusion:

- God in His perfect plan, delivers His people from the bondage of evil and renews them as a new creation. He stated that He could hear the cry of his people and planned their deliverance. We are blessed with this deliverance of bondage to a new life with Christ in baptism as infants. When we find ourselves in servitude of Satan, we too should cry to God day and night stating, "Though I am your son God, I am being held as a slave to Satan in these impure works. Please deliver and save me from Satan as you saved the Israelites from Pharaoh." God will never abandon His children but only lead them to the Promised Land (Heaven)

Applications:

- How does one repent of their sins? Repent actually means "change of direction." When we repent we need first to see the "direction" we are walking and change it first. It is not enough to say "I am sorry" and confess. We must stop the lifestyle related to the sins we are committing and come up with a plan to cease our sins. Without a plan to stop our sins we would be like the Israelites who asked to be freed from Egypt but when Moses came to lead them out then would say I want to be freed but I still want to stay in Egypt. Ask your fathers of confession for plans to liberate us from our bad habits and lifestyle of sin.

Lesson 5: “The needs in the desert- Food and the Drink (Exodus 16, 17)”

Objective:

- To recognize the types of Christ seen in Manna, and the water from the rock struck by Moses.
- Christ the True Manna who gives us everlasting life, and the water from His side drank in communion.

Memory Verse:

- *“They all drank from the same spiritual drink. For they drank that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” (1 Cor 10:4)*

References:

- Exodus 16, 17
- John 6

Lesson Plan:

Test of the Manna, Bread of Life	
Influence of other nations	
Water from the Rock	

Introduction:

- There is an expression that people say, “You can not have your cake and eat it too.” The basic meaning is that people want two contradictory things. (If you have a cake it will be gone as soon as you eat it) Christ spoke of a similar paradox when He said, “Labor for the food which does not perish” All food that the Jews knew of perished (especially once you ate it) Christ is the answer to this paradox of the only Food that does not perish.

Lesson Outline:

- Manna. It says in Deuteronomy that God gave them the manna specifically to “test” them. What is the test? God gave them exactly enough for each day and instructed to them to collect no more than a portion for each day. If one gathered more than one portion it would rot and become inedible. God did this to see if they trust the Lord and will wait on Him. This same test of relying on God happens in Gospel of John

(chapter 6). When Phillip mentions that the thousands of people have no food, he even asks where in the wilderness can we get so much bread to feed so many people. Christ responds, "You give them something to eat" testing Phillip for He knew what he would do. God often allows lacks in our life where we must trust in His providence.

- Manna means – what is it? The unknown. Christ says in John 6 that He is the bread that came down from heaven. Christ was the unknown to them. They could not comprehend the mystery of His incarnation. How could His mother be Mary (someone they know) and He be the Son of God. Christ instructs the multitude not to "Labor for the food that perishes but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you. The manna or earthly bread that we eat will only result in our death. The True Manna from Heaven (Christ) will lead to everlasting life and resurrection from the dead.
- The people ate the manna in the wilderness and were satisfied until one point in which they began to loathe the bread. In Numbers 11 it says that "the mixed multitude" caused the Israelites to crave meat. Mixed multitude implies that there were some non-Israelites among them who began to stay with them. The people, they had picked up with them along the way, influenced them to start craving something else other than the bread which the Lord had provided to them. This happens to us with the people we hang out with. And the thing is that the people had the meat until they were disgusted with it. "Until it came out of their nostrils." This is also what happens when we seek things apart from the Lord it is something that disgusts us and we wish we did not have it.
- Water. When Christ meets the Samaritan woman he talks about the water which he has. It is clear that this water comes thru Christ- Christ pierced and struck in the side on the cross and water flows. "Whoever thirsts let him come to me and drink. As it is written out of His (Christ's) heart comes flowing water." When we see the crucified and risen Christ in our lives we are quenched. This is seen in the Liturgy- by the actions of the priests, the words of the prayer, and our meditations, and the summit- the core of the liturgy- when we pray "Amen amen amen your death oh Lord we proclaim your holy resurrection..." and then Abouna continues "Therefore as we commemorate his holy passion his resurrection..." The next thing that happens is the descent of the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit descends on the bread and wine, but also us. This leads to the quenching. There is no descent of the Spirit without reliving, truly remembering Christ's passion. When we truly do this there is a TRUE quenching. So the striking of the Rock in the story in Exodus is the passion of Christ. When we go thru the liturgy we expect to be quenched if we don't, the liturgy is useless to us. Why would Christ choose to be struck and to have water come out of Him? It is so we realize everything is delivered in the cross. The Holy Spirit is delivered through the cross. Christ is the rock. St. Paul says this "they all drank from the same spiritual drink. For they drank that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor 10:4)

Conclusion:

- The desert was an opportunity of great spiritual growth for the Israelites as they were forced to entirely depend on God for sustenance both physical and spiritual.

One can see that God never left them and always provided even though they were in a barren land. When we pursue God there will be times where we feel completely at His mercy. In these times we can find God in a special way when we are forced to completely depend on Him.

Applications:

- What areas of our life do we need to depend on God as our only true provider? School? Relationships? Health? Trouble in the home? We all have one thing in common, when finally our souls depart our body all with Christ say, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit" If we must trust God completely when facing death, would it not make perfect sense to entrust our lives to Him in our lives?

Lesson 6: “Lesson 6: The Mountain (Exodus 19)”

Objective:

- All encounters of God should be preceded by consecration of body and soul.
- Fear should not drive us away from the presence of God but should instill in us a holy reverence of God.

Memory Verse:

- *“Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, 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.” Exodus 19:16*

References:

- Exodus 19

Lesson Plan:

Consecration before encountering God.	
Fear of the Lord	
We should always be ready to be with Him	

Introduction:

- Imagine you are going to meet the president of the United States of America. How might your behavior change? Would you have a change in your body (increased heart rate, nervousness, rapid breathing.) How would you prepare socially. You would plan how you would address him, what you would say, what you wouldn't usually say. This illustration speaks to some different types of “fear” we have. Fear in the classical sense when we actually are afraid of something and another important “fear” in which we carry a certain reverence to a deserving figure.

Lesson Outline:

- Moses goes to prepare them. The Lord says “Go to the people let them consecrate themselves today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothes.” He wants to show Himself to the people the same way He did to Moses. The Lord says consecrate the people. Consecrate means to set apart to sanctify. Moses goes down, consecrates them, and tells them not to touch their wives. In the book of Hebrews, St. Paul comments on how the people could not keep this. They were so afraid when they heard the trumpet. They could not deal with the mountain shaking. They were afraid to talk to the Lord, because they could not even take the commandment of Moses serious (they could not just keep from their wives. Encounters with God always require consecration prior to this. As Christians we are to consecrate ourselves before approaching God through the mystery. It is by God’s grace we do not see God as He truly is at times. Each time we meet with God there is a Judgment of sorts. In Corinthians it speaks of those who partook of Communion unworthily and became sick or even died.
- The sound of the trumpet was getting louder and louder. There was thundering and the lighting and the mountain was smoking. The people were very afraid. The mountain was completely in smoke because the Lord descended on the mountain as a fire. Moses then spoke- and the voice of the Lord answered. This was extremely terrifying. The people knew they had not done what was commanded and did not want to approach the Lord. After Moses received the 10 Commandments (Exodus) Moses says in v. 20 do not fear God has come to test you and that His fear may be before you. In the Hebrew text the word fear which is used twice in this verse is actually two different words. 1st time “fear not” 2nd time “His Fear”. So he is saying do not be exceedingly fearful so that you stay away from ME... but be in fear to the point where we revere HIM, we treat Him with high respect, you don’t take Him too lightly. His fear should keep us from sin and keep us alert in prayer. But the first thing we need, the most important aspect is we need the fear. We need to always bring this fear back to our minds. We should stand in prayer saying “Remember Whom I am standing before.” The beginning of all wisdom is the fear of God. This is the first step. We cannot have anything else before Him. Whatever is our distraction is what our God is.

Conclusion:

- Every encounter with God is a fearful event. One when our judgment comes. It only makes sense that we always prepare ourselves for these encounters when we literally “meet our Maker” We are to fear God most of all in the sense we have an utmost reverence and respect for our King. This reverence should always inspire holiness and purity in all our actions.

Applications:

- What are the ways we exhibit fear of God in our encounters with Him during prayer and the mysteries? Fasting 9 hours before communion. Repentance and confession before communion. Standing during prayer! Standing up straight during prayer!

Removal of all media conduits during prayer, bible reading and prayer. Reverence to the clergy. Consecrating part of your day for prayer.

Lesson 7: “10 Commandments (Exodus 20)”

Objective:

- Explain the greatest commandment.
- Identify the gods in our lives that we put before the One True God.

Memory Verse:

- *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Exodus 20:2-3*

References:

- Exodus 20

Lesson Plan:

The first commandment definition given to the Israelites.	
Fearing men more than God	
Discovering foreign gods in our lives.	

Introduction:

- The Jews in the time of Christ often had a preoccupation with all the different commandments of the Old Testament. They had disputes of what the greatest commandment is of the 100's of commandments stated. When people would ask Jesus He would reply the very first Commandment of the 10 commandments, “You should have no other gods beside me.” That is interpreted that you should love the Lord your God with all your soul all your strength your mind and your body.

Lesson Outline:

- On the mountain the first commandment the Lord gives the Israelites was that they should have no other gods before HIM. In the time of the Israelites in the desert and in the Promised Land this is what the people struggled from the most. They sought

other gods, built idols and altars to worship them. By the time Christ came, the other god was money. Now it is still money for people, prestige, selfishness, etc.

- People care more about when men think than what God thinks- they begin to worship and fear other people's opinion more than God. Isaiah has a nice verse on this. What makes us lose the fear of God is the fear of people. Isaiah 8: 12-12 "for the Lord has spoken to me with a strong hand... Do not say a conspiracy concerning all the things the people call a conspiracy... for the Lord you shall fear and him you shall hallow...Let Him be your fear." Do not put people or anything else above him.
- The fear is connected to the 1st commandment- you shall have no other gods before me. And this is the question for all of us. What is exciting our lives- girlfriend/boyfriend, fads, electronics, sports, gossip, etc.? When trying to discover what "god" your truly worship one should look at two areas. What do we spend the most of our money on? What do we spend most of our free time on? It is said there is no such thing as an atheist, everyone has some god whether spiritual or material. Christ had said you cannot serve two masters, God and mammon (possession). The emphasis was that he did NOT say it is "bad" to serve to gods or that it is "hard" to serve two masters. He said that "you can NOT" in other words it is impossible.

Conclusion:

- The first commandment of loving God with all your heart, is not only a commandment but in fact it is our very purpose of life. If we have other Gods before the Almighty we actually miss our entire purpose of life. This is what "sin" is, it is literally translated to "miss the mark." When we don't love God more than anything than we miss the mark

Applications:

- Brainstorm what are the things that we serve before God. What "gods" are present in our life? Consider first the number 2 things we would confess if we were being very true. These sins or hindrances (Lusts, inappropriate relationships, alcohol, laziness.) often point to what the competing gods in our life are. What steps could we take to abolish these false gods in our lives to Love the One True God more than anything in our lives?

Unit 12

Recommitting to Christ

Objective

The purpose of this unit is to motivate the students to dedicate their hearts to Christ alone. Christ is worthy of our attention and His purpose in coming was to give us the Holy Spirit which is tied to our commitment to Christ. And it is the work of the Spirit that frees us from **all** servitude and bondage. The name of Christ does miracles. The opening of the heart is most important- and when we open our hearts we ask the Lord what He wants us to do as St. Paul said at his conversion. Don't miss talking about the heart and discovering where it really is within you.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Why do I want to commit to Christ?
 - Lesson 2: Hindrances to Christ "I renounce you Satan"
 - Lesson 3: "I accept you Christ..."
-

Lesson 1: Why do I want to commit to Christ?

Objective:

- To make the students realize that life with Christ brings absolute happiness and joy. Other people have everything, but without Christ there is no true joy.

Memory Verse:

- *“⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8)*

References:

- Philippians 3:8

Lesson Plan:

So many people have so much, yet depression is the biggest health issue in the world

The Saints had nothing yet were so happy. In prison, being beat, yet they are bold and so filled with grace.

We need to see and experience Christ.

Introduction:

- Show Tom Brady 60 minute clip “There’s gotta be more than this” www.youtube.com search Tom Brady 60 minutes interview. In this interview, Tom Brady, a man who has just one three Super Bowls, is rich, handsome, and married to the most famous super model is asked how he feels. He responds “God, there has to be more than this...”

Lesson Outline:

- Why would someone want to choose a life with Christ? Why do priests give up their jobs? Why do servants give up their time to teach Sunday school (they sometimes think we are paid). Why do monks leave their whole life behind?

- When someone experiences Christ, it completely transforms them and it becomes the most important thing in their life.
- Option 1: Read the statement of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost and what they did to Him (Acts 2:22-36). St. Peter with the Lame man (Acts 3)
 - Can you describe the emotions of St. Peter in this sermon? Excited. Full of love and proud of the Lord. Passion and life.
 - Why would St. Peter talk about Jesus to the Israelites? He wants to share these emotions, these passion, and life with them.
 - How is Peter feeling when he gives his message? What are the feelings going through the people when they hear him say these things? “rulers of the people...let it be known to all of you that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified whom God raised from the dead... this man now stands before you whole... for there is no name under heaven by which man should be saved...”
 - Compare this to St. Peter on Friday Eve. St. Peter was so afraid and denied Christ in front of a servant girl and then when he had the Holy Spirit he became so bold, brave, and proud to be a Christian and confessed his faith in Christ before kings and rulers.
- Option 2: Read the account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)
 - What was the emotion that went thru the hearts of the disciples when Jesus was talking to them?
 - What effect did that have on their direction
 - They were going to Emmaus but after they felt it they went back to the disciples in Jerusalem.

Conclusion:

- When a person experiences Christ, truly, there is a change that encompassed his entire being. Nothing compares to being filled with Chris’s love.

Applications:

- What are some examples of Saints in the church, and having extreme joy even when they have nothing? How does this compare to so many of today’s celebrities who have everything?

Lesson 2: Hindrances to Christ “I renounce you Satan”

Objective:

- To understand how sin hinders us from being in Christ

Memory Verse:

- *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:34)*

References:

- 1 Corinthians 6
- Mark 7

Lesson Plan:

Renouncing Satan is rejecting sin

We cannot truly love and serve God when we have sin in our life

To renounce sin, it really has to start in our heart. We need to exchange our love of the sin for the Love of God

Introduction:

- There is a promise to us if we choose Christ there is a new life waiting for us. We will be transformed to different people.
- What then do you think are the hindrances from making people choose this? If I told you Christ is offering you a new and wonderful life where you will be happier than you have ever been, you will never feel alone, you will always have joy even when things are hard. You won't care what people think of you... WHY wouldn't someone choose this?
 - You don't believe it
 - You think there is something better
 - You are attached to something that is contrary to having this

Lesson Outline:

- What does it mean to renounce Satan? No one sees the devil so we are renouncing the actions of the world
- When we reject Satan, we are rejecting all that he stands for:

- What is so wrong with sin? Why do we fight sin so much? Why does the Church and why did Christ insist so much that sin must be removed from our lives?
 - Christ said it plainly:
 - You cannot serve two masters for either you will love one and hate the other or else you will be loyal to one and despise the other.
 - So with sin who are the two masters? The sin and Christ.
 - I tell my husband I love him. But all day all I do is talk on the phone to my friends and I completely ignore him. Or lets say I tell him I want to be around him but whenever the opportunity comes I would rather go out shopping. Do my actions show that I love him? What are my actions showing that I love? Where your treasure is there your heart will be.
 - In this case my friends or my desire to go shopping is interfering coming between me and my husband. And that is what happens with sin it becomes between us and Christ and it prevents us from getting close to Him.
- (2) What happens when a person has sin dwelling in their lives?
 - A person when they are addicted to a sin or if a sin reigns in their life they are completely not free. Their thoughts, their heart their actions are all directed towards living for this sin.
 - Perhaps write a story (based on truth) about someone living in sin, and how it completely conflicts with them loving the Lord.

Conclusion:

- Renouncing of the devil or the acceptance of Christ. It is the beginning of all feelings. How are you saved from these things? The love of Christ. When you have the feeling of Christ nothing will seduce you away. If you have sin in your life- it means that the love of Christ has not taken the place in you.
- We need to reveal sins. What are these sins and where do they come from: Mark 7:17-21; Matthew 15:19; 1 Cor 6:9; Galatians 5:19; Romans 1:29-32; Revelation 21:8
- “out of the heart proceeds...” What is the heart? Where is the heart? It is the place in us that starts all the business of sin and righteousness. Renouncing of the devil or the acceptance of Christ. It is the beginning of all feelings. How are you saved from these things? The love of Christ. When you have the feeling of Christ nothing will seduce you away. If you have sin in your life- it means that the love of Christ has not taken the place in you.

Applications:

Let us consider what sin in our life we are choosing over Christ. Every time we confess we renounce these sins.

Lesson 3: “I accept you Christ...”

Objective:

- The point is to teach them to love Christ and His commandments

Memory Verse:

- *“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”(John 8:32)*

References:

- JOHN 8:32

Lesson Plan:

When we know Christ we are freed from the bondage of sin

To feel the absolute joy, we need to truly accept Christ, which means letting go of sin.

We need to examine what is keeping us from putting our trust in Christ.

Introduction:

- Why would we love someone who lived 2000+ years ago whom we have never seen?
- What would motivate this love?

Lesson Outline:

- When we love Christ it saves us from all the seduction of sin
- We might not trust that God is giving us something in that relationship. We are critical to the fact that there is something good in the love of Christ
- The Holy Spirit is given to us to know Him. And to recognize Him.
- We have to truly accept Christ. That means believing that He is going to give us something good. It is believing that He loves us more than anything else. It is letting go of the sins that are keeping us from him. We have to truly let go of sin- to say I want Christ, and to be loved by Him more than this sin I am suffering with.
- We are given the hardest judgment because we are given the Holy Spirit and then we reject what He is teaching us. There is no excuse for sin because we are given all the support and knowledge against Christ.

Conclusion:

- When we hang on to our relationship with Christ, our happiness, and self-esteem- all that we are is dependent and supported by Him.
- When we chose to truly accept Christ we become completely free. We abide in the truth that he loves us.

Applications:

- Ask the kids how they feel when they think of Christ? What are the feelings- Whether they see Him or not they have Him through the Spirit. If Christ is not in your heart you don't have Him.

Unit 13

Building up a Spiritual Routine

Objective

Each of us needs to develop a hunger and a thirst to connect with God. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst.” The kids may not realize that they are hungry or thirsty. But it is the servant’s job to make them realize that they are hungry. “We are created in You and our soul will not find satisfaction until we find you.”—St. Augustine. There is food and water that will fill us truly. The same way we have appetite for food and thirst for our physical body there are both spiritual drink and spiritual food. The body of Christ is the spiritual food. When we come to the Liturgy as a guided meditation we contemplate on the life of Christ and then it culminates in the communion. The drink in the bible is always the Spirit. So the way we quench the thirst is through prayer. The hope is to make the kids desire the spiritual life. To take up a routine that they will follow so that they can encounter Christ and have their thirst quenched.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Heaven and the transformation here
 - Lesson 2: The Private Encounter with Christ
 - Lesson 3: Prayer at Home
 - Lesson 4: Enemy to Spiritual Life
 - Lesson 5: The Spiritual life in the Church
-

Lesson 1: Heaven and the Transformation Starts Here

Objective:

- To give the kids an understanding that the heavenly life is something to look forward to and that our transformation towards being saintly people starts here with our spiritual life.

Memory Verse:

- *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2).*

References:

- 1 John 3:2

Lesson Plan:

Christ through His passion was transformed into the glorious body.
We also will be transformed

We have something very great awaiting us, but we need to let go of
our "self"

What is it that we are each holding on to so tightly?

Introduction:

- Heaven is a place worth going to: There was a little girl whose grandmother had passed away. The girl kept having nightmares about dead people. And she kept asking where Grandma is? And she was very disturbed. One day she went to read her baby Bible, and the mother pointed out that this was heaven. The girl saw the beautiful picture of heavenly Jerusalem and a great relief and joy fell over her.

Lesson Outline:

- When we think about Christ after Resurrection He had flesh and bones, but he entered into rooms with doors being shut. He left the tomb before the stone went away. And returned the other side of the wall as someone who could be touched again. He vanished from the sight of the disciples after the road to Emmaus. He defeated gravity and ascended into heaven. St. John says in his first epistle *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but*

we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2). So when we see him in the end after we have been resurrected we will have these same “super” human properties. All of us will be transformed in a twinkling of an eye. And this transformation is so amazing it says all of the creation is awaiting this transformation that will happen to us.

- With these super human properties, we will be going to a “super” new world. Imagine being in a world and all your senses are super enhanced. How would everything look, smell, feel, taste? Imagine being able to fly through the universe in a blink of an eye. Imagine having senses that are perfectly sharp and seeing as far as you could imagine. This new world would be more amazing than anything in this world. C.S. Lewis gives a picture of this in *The Voyage of Dawn Treader*. As the travelers get closer to Aslan’s country (Heaven) the light of the sun gets brighter and brighter and their eyes get more able to bear it. They see lilies growing on the ocean and they notice that they never grow tired or hungry. In the *Last Battle* as they enter the country no matter how far they look in the distance they can see everything clear. They can run as fast as the fastest animal. They taste fruit that is indescribable. They were in a super land with super powers.
- This is the new life. The transformation to be this way starts now with a spiritual life. St. Paul says that he labors for this worthy reward now that in his life that he may attain the resurrection of the dead. The transformation has to start here. (Philippians 3:11)
- We read in the book of Acts how St. Phillip the deacon was in one place at one moment and at the next “He was taken by the spirit” and found later in another place far away. We read in the synaxarium about saints who could fly and had these amazing abilities. These saints had begun the transformation here through their connection to Christ in their spiritual life.
- In the book of Numbers (Chapter 13) Moses sends 12 “spies” to see how the Promised land. The spies see this land and see that this land was very worthy. The promised land for us is Christ’s resurrected Body and the 12 disciples were like the 12 spies. Attaining this Resurrection will be worthy as St. Paul states. But just as the Israelites had to chose between being cowards and going back to Egypt and choosing the new land where they would have to struggle to get in. This is the same way we need to chose the spiritual life, and struggle leading towards to transformation of resurrection.

Conclusion:

- Everything that happened to Israelites in Egypt, all the drama, all the plague was so that the people of God could undertake an incredible journey—to see the red sea parted walking on a road that has never been revealed before. This is our God, He will take you to places you never been, to the fulfillment of who you really are.

Applications:

- We need to choose to let go of self-pleasing. When we have encounters with God this is what leads us to this transformation. In the “Great Divorce” a man has lust in his life which is symbolized by a lizard on his shoulder. A fiery angel is offering to kill this lizard. The man has to get over his cowardliness and let the angel kill this evil in his life. As the angel kills the lizard, the lizard is then transformed into a beautiful horse. The same way we have to give up cowardice let go of self-pleasing and encounter God.
- What is it that we need to each let go of?

Lesson 2: The Private Encounter with Christ

Objective:

- Our encounters with Christ happen in private times. And these encounters change us with Christ's 'aroma' rubbing off on us.

Memory Verse:

- *"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death," (Philippians 3:10)*

References:

- Philippians 3:10

Lesson Plan:

The disciples were completely transformed by meeting with Christ in the Holy 40 Days after resurrection. There was an encounter here.

Discuss a Saint story who was contemplative or living the life of prayer

For us to encounter Christ, we have to go into prayer looking at it as an offering

Introduction:

- Jesus visited the disciples alone after Resurrection. In Resurrection accounts, Jesus came to the disciples alone gave them instructions, providing an individual atmosphere. Making a new dimension in their life from which they will be established, fed, and rich. They are so enriched to the point that the world will give them nothing but they will get the world to Christ. So in the 40 days post resurrection they encountered him, and on 50th day they were together praying and the whole area was shaking and the Spirit came. This was the power of their encounters.

Lesson Outline:

- The resurrection created the spiritual life by taking them out and seeing Him privately (in the upper room, at the tomb, early in the morning at the sea) these are places where they are alone from the world. It is as if he is preparing them for after His ascension in which he will be seeing Him again only privately. It is almost that

He is telling them you will encounter me alone. Notice they are encountering a true person, not abstract ideals. But the person of Christ.

- Our prayers are to be like this encounters in which we meet the person of Christ. And we offer to Him. These encounters are what transform us (As in the first lesson). Moses was visited alone by the Lord on the mountain. He did not realize what his encounter with God did to Him. But when he came down from the mountain his face was shining so brightly. This is the same when we encounter Christ in prayer and meditating on the Bible we get transformed.
- Chose a Saint story. Many saints used to go alone to be with God to have a relationship with Christ. Not focusing on themselves but the relationship. Taking away the aroma of Christ. "We have the aroma of Christ." How do we get this smell?
- Maximus and Domidious. Used to stay quietly in the Church and then they would go home and wake up at night for prayer. As they would pray column of fires would come down from heaven over them. And it was always thought that was something very special about them.
- St. Mary always meditating on the ways of God. She is completely focused on Him. Looking for what He would do. Not focused on the latest fashions.

Conclusion:

- The life of prayer has much more LIFE to it than just looking at a book. He has given the Bible, prayer, the church, and examples of saints to create these intimate moments to encounter Christ. The spiritual life is much more valuable and richer. It may seem stagnant and boring. But once it is opened to it we will see the richness.
- The relationship has to be focused on a true relationship with Christ. Not self-centered and not selfish. We do not go with the focus on getting something out of it. But rather we are the ones serving offering the sacrifice. And as a result we end up being filled.

Applications:

- At the end, try to get them to make a commitment to pray at least twice a day and with a time of meditation. We can be accountable to each other to this. To help encourage us to do it.

Lesson 3: Prayer at Home

Objective:

- To encourage our sons and daughters to have a relationship with God that starts with praying at home.

Memory Verse:

- *6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mathew 6:6)*

References:

- Mathew 6:6

Lesson Plan:

Why praying?
When to pray?
How to Pray?

Introduction:

- St. Seraphim of Sarov felt as if God was calling to have a thousand nights in prayer. So he used to create places in which he would pray. For example before his prayers, he would say this rock is for the Sermon on the Mount and here he would meditate on the Sermon on the Mount. And then he would choose a cave and dedicate that area to another story in Christ's life and dedicate that area to that story. He did this because he this was his private time to spend with Christ.

Lesson Outline:

- The question becomes what we are doing and practicing at home? How are we spending time in prayer? Are we spending time in prayer? The same way a body builder or athlete needs to do all these exercises to strengthen his body. We need spiritual exercises to make us a strong person who moves forward and is transformed.

- Give them actions that will help direct them. When praying some people like to walk, some like to look out a window, some like to have an icon in a corner, some like candles, some people kneel, some start by talking about their feelings and then they pray. Tell them that the Holy Spirit will guide them. They may find different things will help them. They need to find the way they will find the intimate encounter. They will need to do what works for them. And keep it consistent.
- Bring in materials to give to them to help them be able to concentrate in prayer. Something that will help them to sanctify a place. Jacob with the rock he was sleeping on. He encounters God and then he pours oil on the rock and says this is a holy place.
- Tell them not to just look for fruits. They should not pray to “feel good.” Prayer needs to be Christ centered not self-centered. Looking for fruits can be problematic because there will not always be fruits felt. But our prayers are an offering to Christ. When we pray the Agpeya we say “We offer this prayer to Christ our King.” They are not just words that have no connection but it is a prayer we give to Him, and the whole time we pray the Agpeya, we are meditating on that hour of Christ’s life. At the 6th hour we concentrate on Christ on the Cross. 1st hour we concentrate on Resurrection, and as we concentrate and offer these prayers to Christ we become quenched by the spirit.
- There can be immediate results from prayer when we are looking for an impression of Christ on us. If we are looking for something to go with us for the day. This is a very objective result as it is an actual encounter. The words of the gospel are a paper weight that prevents the world from spreading the papers—St Isaac. This is a way to direct them to a more objective focus. Not just looking for the emotions. Through these encounters we become grounded in God. To feel that we are stable and not easily swayed. How can we have the mind of Christ? How do we become motivated by the Spirit of God rather than the spirits of the world (spirit of anger, jealousy, hatred, selfishness etc)

Conclusion:

- The purpose of this encounter at home is to once again meet Christ and be impressed by the person of Christ and to have the person of Christ make an impression on you. The same we rub off on others and others rub off on us, so it will be when we have an encounter with Christ

Applications:

- Prayer needs to have set times, and not fit in haphazardly.

Lesson 4: Enemy to the Spiritual Life

Objective:

- To identify the enemies to our Spiritual life and provide attacks and defenses against them.

Memory Verse:

- *12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)*

References:

- Ephesians 6:12

Lesson Plan:

- Have students discuss what would be considered to be enemies of the spiritual life
- Have each student write down what is keeping them from beginning or persevering through the spiritual life
- Give answers to how to overcome some of the enemies of the spiritual life

Introduction:

- There are many enemies to our spiritual life and to building a spiritual routine.

Lesson Outline:

- Distraction. We get distracted from the most important thing in our lives and lose what is important. So easily we sacrifice our time with God for the TV, facebook, texting, hanging out.
- Laziness/Procrastinating. We feel tired and don't want to offer prayers. We say we will do it later and never come to it.
- Wrong Image of God. We see God as not being loving or angry etc. This makes not want to connect to Him
- Thinking that there is no point. We think that offering prayers will do nothing to/for us. Or that God is indifferent to the prayers. The Lord rejects this idea: "I did not tell the children of Israel to worship me in vain " (Isaiah) "And it shall come to pass at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And punish the men Who are settled in complacency, Who say in their heart, ' The LORD will not do good, Nor will He do evil.'

- (Zephania 1:12).
- Sinfulness. People lead sinful lives because they are hungry but they do not know what for (e.g. Samaritan woman, prodigal son). Because they are in sin or desiring sin this destroys their desire to connect with God.
- Lip service to God. The person is praying without heart. If this is the case we need to pray for a heart of zeal. Do not stop though. Pray for zeal.
- Idea: Make a questionnaire to help the kids identify privately which one of these factors is preventing them from having real encounters with Christ.

Conclusion:

- We need to determine what it is that is keeping us from truly encountering Christ and making a relationship with Him.

Applications:

- When we fight one of these enemies of the spiritual life, others will come. But this is part of the struggle of being a Christian and we need to persevere.
- When we have trouble getting ourselves to pray, St. Theophan says we need to try to warm our hearts. How do we do this? We need to contemplate on how much God loves us. What are the sins we have committed that He has forgiven us for? What are the different events in our life in which He protected us? As we contemplate on His love, our love will come out and our heart will be prepared to pray. If we are distracted, we need to continuously remind ourselves that we are in the presence of the Lord.

Lesson 5: The Spiritual Life in the Church

Objective:

- We go to Church often and feel untransformed by confession and communion because there is no real connection that we make and we go through motions. We need to go these mysteries in truth and then there will be growth.

Memory Verse:

- *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. (John 6:55-57)*

References:

- “Examination of the Conscience” by St. Ignatious of Loyola.

Lesson Plan:

Why do we feel no change or transformation at Church?
We need to grow a disgust for sin. St. Paul lists what is sin
We need to examine ourselves. What secret love for sin do we have?

Introduction:

- How many of you have gone to confession and felt exactly the same as when you went in? How many of you have gone to Liturgy and have felt empty?

Lesson Outline:

- Why is there no growth in confession?
- True repentance when you are convicted of sin. Without excuses.
- Confession. “Examination of the Conscience” by St. Ignatious of Loyola. The most true, best confession is when there is a conviction of sin. When the confession is taken too customarily, then it will be lip service and it will lead to abandoning the practice because it is empty. Confessions are empty because we have already lost the connection with Christ. The confessions will become more real when there is a real connection with Christ. When we feel forgiven that is when we truly feel loved. With the sinful woman, Zachaeus, and the Samaritan woman, they all felt the love of God and this is what drove them to repent. This forgiveness makes them feel

incredibly loved. When we truly see ourselves as sinful this is when we will come closer to Him and repent.

- We see the sinful celebrities and all their sinful actions and this is what becomes normal and actually desirable to the kids. (St. Theophan [The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to it](#))
- We need to convict them of the wrongness and disgusting nature of them. We need to break down the excuses with sin.
- To draw conviction we can list the sins as St. Paul does in many of his letters and describe the despicable nature of these sins.

Conclusion:

- We need to make them realize no matter what the excuses are we need to explain to them that these sins are killers, and there will be no excuses to them. We can explain this to them by what is death. Death of the soul is when there are no fruits of the spirit. Happiness in sin is like drinking your own blood. There was a dog who went to a butcher shop. After the butcher shop is closed the only thing that is left out is the file. As the dog licks the file he at first he is tasting the blood of the animal. He keeps licking and begins to cut at his own tongue, and as he is licking he is enjoying the blood. He ends up licking the file until he dies. The same way sin is enjoyable, but we do not realize we are killing ourselves.

Applications:

- By examining ourselves in this manner, viewing the love of God to us we can prepare fully for confession. Once you feel these you go immediately to confession

Unit 14

World Views

Objective

The purpose of this unit to bring up the different attacks against Christianity, and the proper way we should respond to these attacks. More than other religions the main attack against our children is the world views. The idea is not to give them all the answers but rather so that they know that there are answers. We are not trying to have them fight people but rather so that when these attacks come they will not lose their faith.

Unit Outline

- Lesson 1: Atheism
- Lesson 2: Agnosticism
- Lesson 3: Spiritual but not religious
- Lesson 4: Secular Life

Lesson 1: Atheism

Objective:

- To inform our youth with Atheism and make sure they understand what it is before they are introduced to it in the world.

Memory Verse:

- *The fool has said in his heart,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt,
They have done abominable works,
There is none who does good. (Psalm 14:1)*

References:

- Romans 1
- Ravi Zacharias

Lesson Plan:

What they believe	
Thier argument	
Our response	

Introduction:

- Atheism is the disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God.
- The word itself means being without God. It is actually having FAITH that there is no God. This is different from having doubts, an atheist BELIEVES, and says they know there is no God.
- The number of people who call themselves atheists in America is on the rise. It is estimated to be about 5-9% of Americans. It seems like more in the Northeast. But the middle of the US actually is very Christian.
- Do you know what country has the highest percent? It is China. 50% of Chinese do not believe in a god.

Lesson Outline:

Things that may shake your belief in God today.

- Evolution
- Evil

CREATION

- But what is the answer to these things. People argue that because what they believe to be evidence of evolution and that means that God does not exist.
- What have the Church Fathers said about Creation?
 - I am going to teach you what we as Orthodox Christians believe as we say in the Creed
 - God is the creator of all things seen and unseen
 - God created from nothing.
 - God created out of love
- So what does the atheist believe? And this is not just evolution versus no evolution
- The atheist believes that the universe spontaneously came into existence.
- But what everyone agrees on is that there was point in time that the universe did not exist, and then came into existence. At this moment- there was a great explosion of LIGHT and Energy- Would Orthodox disagree with this? No.
- But where we disagree is how? Where did this come from?
- One of the laws we learn in Chemistry is that “No matter can be created or destroyed.” But the atheist view is that matter just materialized out of nowhere. It came out of nowhere.
- But as Christians, we believe that God, who by definition exists on His own, is simply the creator of all things.
- They argue about evolution and that our Bible says 6 days for creation.
 - What do we believe in terms of Creation? We do not believe that creation took necessarily 6 24 hour days. Why? What is one day and one night in the Bible. In Genesis, God called the darkness night and the light day. It wasn't until the 3rd day that sun and stars were created. SO in the Bible, darkness and light= night. Note (light is not just from the sun)
- Creation itself speaks of the glory of God. I want to ask you a question. What happens when you get a cut?
 - There are all these messages and programs that go off in your body telling cells to come to the area. Cells when they get there, they produce proteins, they act as physical workers and pull the cut shut.
 - They have this all programmed within themselves,
 - Atheists would argue this is all programmed in the cell's DNA so there is no God
 - Do you know how DNA works, it is like an extremely elaborate computer program.
 - Now how many of you know about making computer programs?
 - SO many programs, which keep in mind are written by engineers, have a series of numbers and letters that work on command. Lets say a video game,

there is this series of numbers and when one goes off, it causes something to happen, now, if you guys see an app on your phone, would you look at it and ever think that this app could happen spontaneously?

- Speaking of phones and cars, look how they have changed overtime. Are they completely different? No they are building off of each other. Now, no one would look at these cars and say that one over time, and with selective pressures that one car was transformed into another type. But rather what do we say? That there is a designer, a creator, who over time makes different types of cars.
- Evolution in humans
 - What animal is most similar to humans?
 - In what way?
 - DO you know what animal has a voice box most similar to humans? (Bird)
 - Do you know what animal is considered to have an intellect closest to humans? (Dolphin)
 - Do you know what animal understands human social behavior the best? (Dogs)
 - DO you know what animals skeleton is most similar to human's (Chimp)
 - So it is interesting, you would think that if we were directly evolved from chimps we would be most comparable to them in everything. But it is not true.
- The other reason is the **existence of evil**.
 - Why is there evil?
 - Does it mean God is too weak or not good?
 - Evil exists why? It is the absence of God. It is saying no to God.
 - But why did God create people to be able to do Evil?
 - God created people with Free will, he wanted them to love Him.
 - To chose Him
 - Who has an iPhone? When I ask Siri, do you love me? What is her response?
 - Can Siri love you?
 - If God made us, he made us to be free, otherwise we could not truly love him
 - People chose not to do what is right

Conclusion:

- It is important to understand why we may have doubts. And also remember the proofs in our own life that God exists. Do you have any miracles in your family. Encourage them to share. Is this just a coincidence?

Applications:

- Debate the youth in class on some of Atheism belief to best position them to defend the faith and protect themselves from any evil thoughts or doubts.

Lesson 2: Agnosticism

Objective:

- To inform our youth with Agnosticism and make sure they understand what it is before they are introduced to it in the world.

Memory Verse:

³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3)

References:

- Romans 1
- 1 John
- John 17

Lesson Plan:

What they believe	
Thier argument	
Our response	

Introduction:

- Agnosticism is a denial of ultimate knowledge of the existence of God; "agnosticism holds that you can neither prove nor disprove God's existence"

Lesson Outline:

- Where are the agnostics in the world? What percent of the population would say they are agnostic?
- What is agnosticism? Yes people say that they are agnostic because they do not know. But actually, in its definition, the claim is that it is not possible to know if there is a God: "agnosticism is the view that humanity lacks the requisite knowledge or reason to provide sufficient rational grounds to justify the belief about the existence or non-existence of deities"
 - 1- Faith is not based completely on knowing. There has to be a certain aspect of faith that you believe based on what you don't see. The evidence. St.

Thomas was told blessed are those who believe without seeing. So part of faith is believing without knowing.

- 2- Even so, there is evidence of God. God has REVEALED Himself. This is the whole point of religion in general, is the idea that God has made himself known.
- We believe in the Revelation of God was given first to Adam, then to Abraham, then to Moses, then prophets.
- The Final revelation, and the fullest revelation is Christ. There is no other revelation of God after Christ.
 - Christ makes it clear that He is God. "**Declared to be God though the Resurrection.**" (Romans 1:4).
 - Talk about some of the proofs of the resurrection
- The whole point of Christ's incarnation is so that people could know God. Jn 17:6 "**I have manifested Your Name.**" Manifest- he makes KNOWN the name of God. He performs many signs- not just miracles- but things that point to the fact that he is Christ. Multiplying loaves, casting out demons, having power over disease, having power over death, having power over nature (seas and winds), and finally Resurrection. And through this all He reveals what our God is like- LOVE. (1 John 1-3)
- Christ tells us that Eternal life is KNOWING the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent (Jn 17:3)
- The whole point is that you can't say that you cannot know if there is a God, He has given many "infallible proofs" He has revealed himself thru incarnation.
- And it is not just the Bible, which some may say is a biased source, But there are others who spoke of Jesus (Josephus).
- And finally, St. Paul says that even if people do not believe in Christ. That people are without an excuse. Why? CREATION
 - Romans 1:18-22. The whole point of this is that unrighteousness is without excuse for everyone. Why? Because God is made known- he has shown himself through his creation. "His invisible attributes..." St. Paul continues that they KNEW God! But they became futile in their thoughts and darkened their hearts. It is interesting to think, all early cultures believed in a God. They had a moral law. It is more recent that people say you cannot know if there is a God. Before, all believed in a God, they just had a wrong image of Him "trading the image of God..." (Also in Romans)

Conclusion:

- Why don't people believe
 - 1) Sin or sinful life contrary to God. Abouna used to say to people who had doubts, "why dont you confess first and then we will talk." After the person confesses they dont have doubts.
 - 2) lack of knowledge- this is very easy to fix-
 - 3) Emotional hurt or attachment. (people who lose family or feel slighted by the Church, they feel hurt so they have doubts).

- We should know that Agnosticism is a world view that we strongly disagree with as our creed starts with “we believe in one God, God the father...”.

Applications:

- Debate the youth in class on some of Agnosticism belief to best position them to defend the faith and protect themselves from any evil thoughts or doubts.

Lesson 3: Spiritual but not religious

Objective:

- To inform our youth with “Spiritual but not religious” and make sure they understand what it is before they are introduced to it in the world.

Memory Verse:

¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. (1 Cor 12:12)

References:

Types of tradition and importance in the church

*Notes from HH Pope Shenouda III “Comparative Theology”
Valid and invalid Tradition*

Lesson Plan:

What they believe	
Christ came to establish the Church	
We cannot know Christ outside the Church	

Introduction:

- Spiritual but not religious is a popular phrase used to self-identify a life stance of spirituality that rejects traditional organized religion as the sole or most valuable means of furthering spiritual growth. The term is used world-wide, but is most prominent in the United States where one study reports that as many as 33% of people identify as spiritual but not religious.

Lesson Outline:

- What are the secular view of religion:
 - source of comfort and advice
 - provide moral guidelines
 - caring community
 - help for those in need
 - defined by tradition and teachings

- What does the world see as negatives of religion:
 - cause of violence, wars, discrimination, bigotry, pain and suffering
 - justify political reasoning and supremacy
 - breeds separation: “me-centardness”
- Argument for spirituality:
 - meditation, contemplation and direct communication with universal consciousness
 - discovery of authentic self w/o trimmings or labels
 - rich source of values and deeper meaning to life
 - defined by own experience
 - finding own truth
- Function of the Church
 - Verses from the Bible: 1 Cor 12:12-26. The Church as the Body of Christ. Each member has its own function.
 - Importance of church unity: Eph 4:2-6 Note from Orthodox Study Bible: The basic characteristics of Christians are the virtues that contribute to unity; though we are many persons, we share one new nature. Though we are members of the most exalted body, the greatness is of God, not of ourselves. Even the cohesiveness of this body is God’s work in the Spirit. So there is no place for quarreling. To live in the heavenlies we are to walk in solidarity and humility on earth.
- **Why do we need the church?** Basically, Jesus Christ did not come to establish such a thing as "Christianity". Even the word is not in the Holy Scriptures. What Christ Jesus did do was to establish the Church, which Scripture calls both His Body and His Bride. the communion which man seeks with God is found by being part of the Church, something which St. Paul calls a "great mystery", whereby we become members of Christ: "of His flesh, and of His bones." (Ephesians 5:30) The Bible also tells us that such as were being saved were added to the Church (Acts 2:47). They were not merely making "decisions for Christ" -- again, not a Scriptural term -- but they were repenting, being baptized for the remission of their sins, and being added to the Church. (Acts 2:38 ff.) There, they were continuing steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, the Breaking of Bread (what is commonly called Holy Communion today), and prayer. Finally, from the day of Pentecost, the "birthday" of the Church, the Bible never speaks of Christians who were not a part of it. This sort of sums up why we speak so much of "The Church".
<http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/reading/questions.html>
- The heresy in Biblical times: Gnosticism: stressed salvation through a secret "knowledge" or "Gnosis."
 - The Concept of Knowledge (from “Ten Concepts” by HH Pope Shenouda III) God gave us a mind that can receive knowledge, but He also wanted us to know what is useful and of benefit to us, and also what may be of use and benefit to others.
 - Types of Knowledge:
 - Sensuous knowledge: through the senses
 - Knowledge through the mind by study/inference.

- Knowledge through God: Through divine manifestation or divine revelation. God wants us to know Him through His Spirit: "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding... the Spirit of knowledge" (Is.11:2). "Show me Your ways, O Lord, teach me Your paths" (Ps. 25:4).
- Knowledge leads to God's love and to God's dwelling in us: For example, the scientist which marvels at God's creation through his or her discoveries in science.
- Pursuit of knowledge gone awry: e.g. evolution and Darwinism:
 - Darwin himself admitted flaws in his theory: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, then my theory would absolutely break down."
- The Case for Faith p. 101-109 Knowing yourself is not a bad type of knowledge: You can gain great benefits from knowing yourself. When you know that you are dust and ash, you will be humbled. When you are aware of your sins, you will be regretful and contrite. When you know your nature and the wars within you, you will be able to overcome them. And when you know your talents, you will use them to glorify God.
- *Harmful Knowledge*
 - -Adam and Eve: lost their innocence and simplicity. -Eccl 1:18 "For in much wisdom is much grief." Knowledge has the power to influence your subconscious, thoughts or dreams and you lose control of its potentially harmful effects. (For example, the power of our senses).

Conclusion:

- First must think about our purpose as a creature of God: "Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." The ultimate purpose of man, therefore, is to become perfect in God, through love.
- How is our spirituality different? God-centered versus man-centered. Key element in Christian spirituality are the sacraments: Role and purpose of the holy sacraments in attaining spirituality:
- In the sacraments, we receive divine grace, and in the case of the holy Eucharist, Christ himself, who aids us in waging war successfully against the satanic powers.
- All the Orthodox rites and sacraments are meant to combat the powers of evil.
- The sacramental life of the Church is the chief means toward the attainment of spirituality and of ultimate salvation.
- Can we have spirituality outside the church? Can we have God outside the church? John 6: 53-58: "Then 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. 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 food indeed,[a] and My blood is drink indeed. He who 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 who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This

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.” No. Communion unites us with Christ and it is only through communion that we can be a part of His body, the Church.

Applications:

- Why do people look outside the church for spirituality?
- What is the function of the church?
- Is knowledge bad? When is it bad?
- What are the types of tradition? Why do we have tradition in the church?
- What is spirituality in the Orthodox Church?

Lesson 4: Secular Life

Objective:

- To inform our youth with Secular Life and make sure they understand what it is before they are introduced to it in the world.

Memory Verse:

³¹ “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (Matt 6:31)

References:

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Lesson Plan:

The definition	
What are the things we get attached to?	
How do we know if we are attached	

Introduction:

- Definition: The ideology that the earthy is all that matters
- Those who may or may not believe in god what drives them is the ambition whether is materialism, prestige, conforming to all of their desires

Lesson Outline:

- How does the world view this life? The world views it as “lets eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.”
- This sort of view is relinquishing this world to something that is not Holy. To something that is just temporary and to be used and abused.
- A person who is living this way is overly occupied with the materials and pride of life. What drives them? The desire to possess more. New phone, new TV, new player, new car, new house, new furniture, new clothing, new jewelry. Always worried about looks- hair, makeup, nails, clothing, shoes, purses, etc. Always wanting the most prestigious positions, to be viewed to be the best.

- What is the problem with the secular life? Christ told us, you cannot serve two masters. Not that it is difficult to serve two masters, but that it is actually not possible to serve two masters.
- What are the different things we each serve over God that makes us live that secular life. We need to determine what our “god” is.

Conclusion:

- Why is this important? We need to be aware and make sure that we are actually different from the rest of the world. What is the point of being a Christian if we are always taken by the same “waves” that the world is?
- At the end of times, some of the people of God will be stuck in the city of “Babylon.” How is Babylon described? It has all the nicest possessions in it. All the silk, ivory, precious metals, etc. Does this sound familiar? We know live in a place like this. But at the end as well, people will not be able to “buy or sell” without the mark of the beast. We need to be aware of how invested we are in this society and how much our heart longs for the things in this world.

Applications:

- How do we know if we are living a secular life? What was the story with the rich young man? Christ said to the man to go sell all he had. If we are living a secular life, we are not able to give up things for Christ.