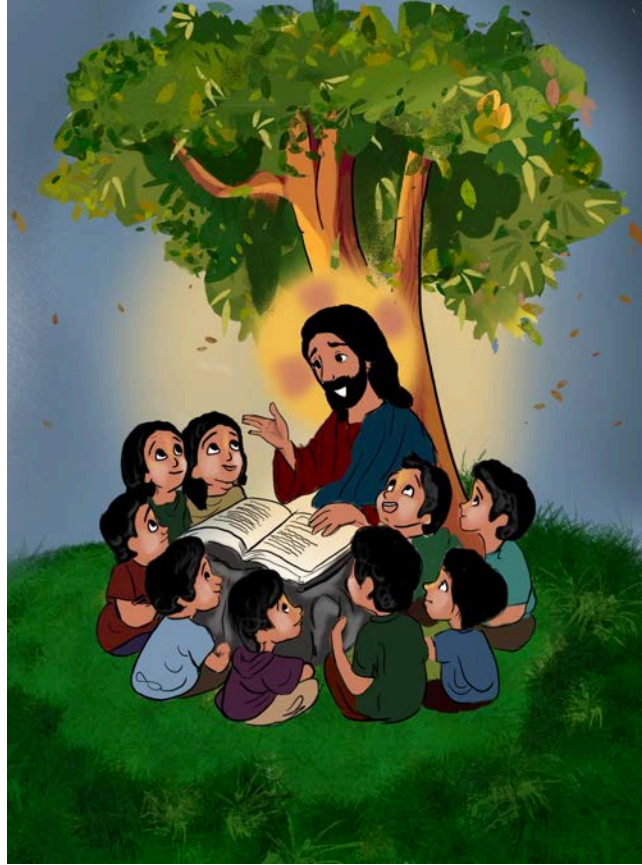




Sunday School of the American Dioceses
of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

1st Grade

Our Wonderful World



1st Grade

Our Wonderful World

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Supporting materials can be found at <https://talmido.org>

Lesson 1: Maker of Heaven and Earth

God made everything! He made all the things we can see and even the things we cannot see. And guess what? He made us special!

Vocabulary Words

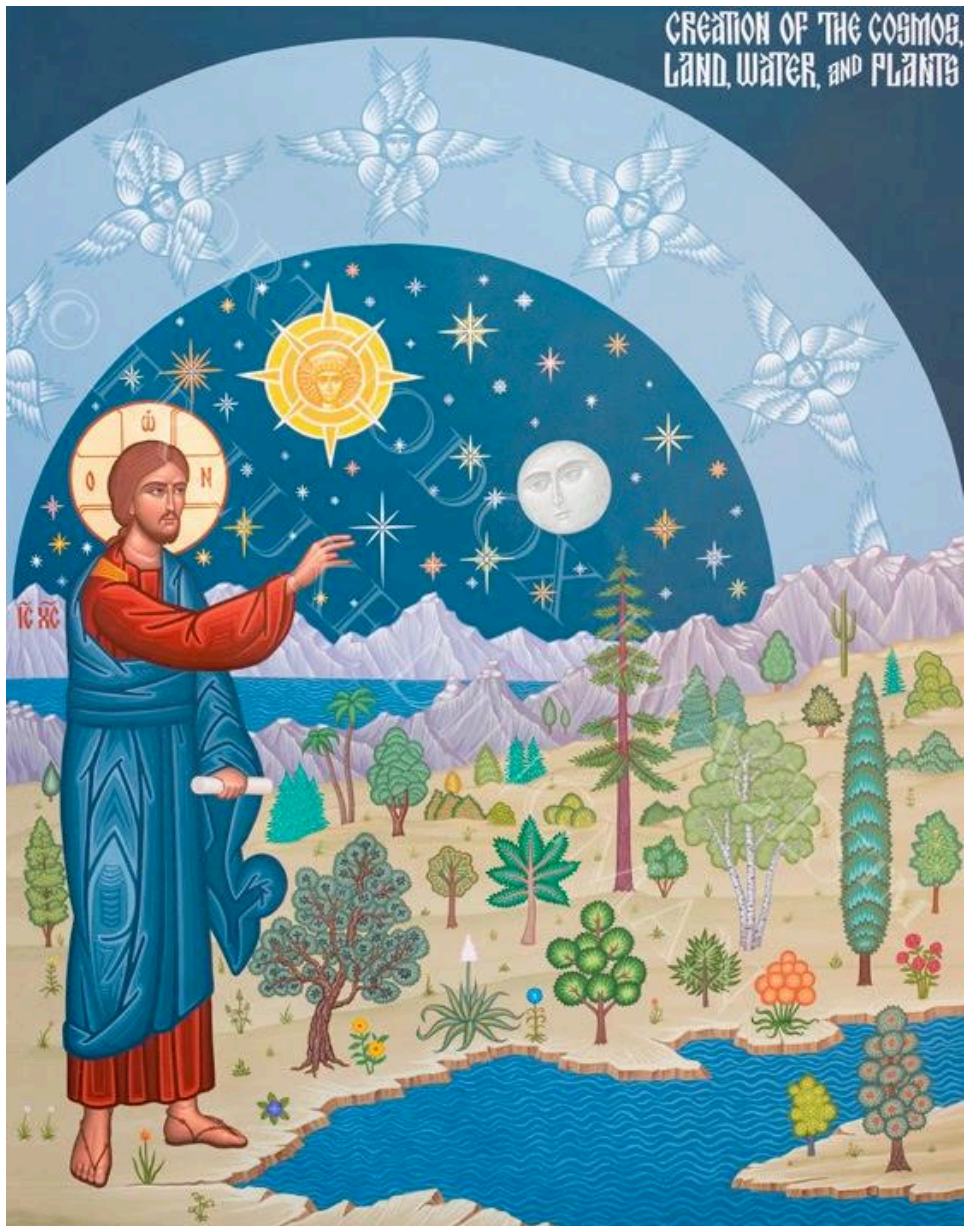
- **Create:** To make something.
- **Creatures:** Any living thing that can move around, grow, and need food and water to stay alive
- **Sanctify:** to make something special and holy
- **Eternal:** Lasting forever and ever

God made everything, even what we can not see. He **created** everything.

On the first day, God spoke and there was light. God made it bright during the day and dark at night. He saw it was good. This was the first day.

On the second day, God spoke and made space in the middle of the water and called it Heaven. God saw it was good.





On the third day, God spoke and put all the water in one place so that dry land could show. He called it the “earth” and the “seas.” God made plants, trees, and grass to grow on the earth. God looked and said it was good!

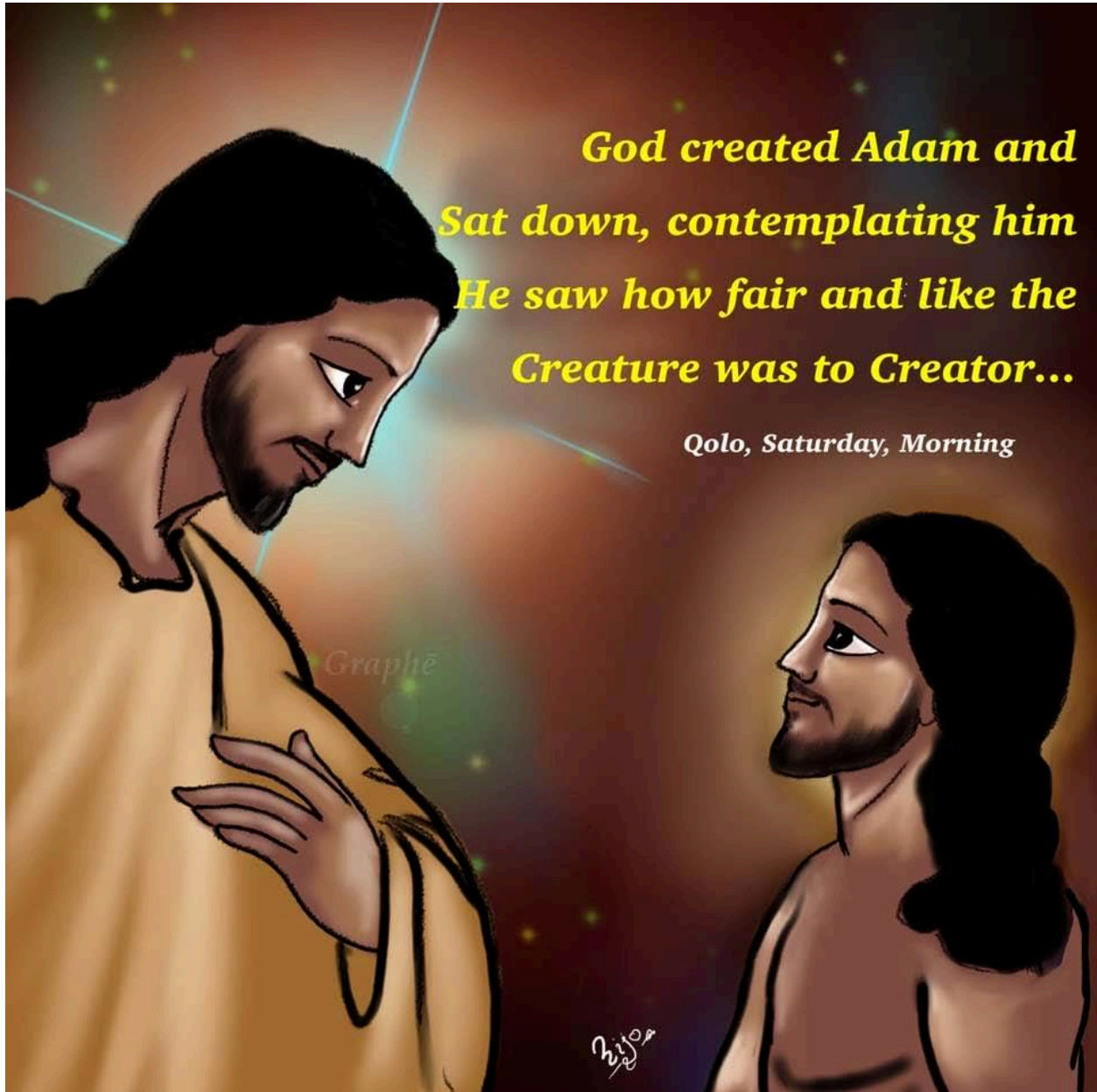
On the fourth day, God spoke and made the sun, moon, and stars to shine in the sky. They help us see when it is day and when it is night. God created everything from nothing, and saw it was all good!

On the fifth day, God spoke again and made fish and **creatures** swimming in the ocean and birds flying in the sky. The oceans were filled with colorful fish, and the skies were filled with birds soaring high. God looked at everything He made and saw that it was good and blessed them!



On the sixth day, God spoke and made different kinds of **creatures**. There were big animals like lions, tigers, and bears. There were also smaller animals like rabbits, sheep, and cows. God also made all kinds of animals from tiny ants to big zebras on the land. God looked and saw it was good and blessed them.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our **image**, according to Our **likeness**. God **created** man and woman and blessed them.



What is “image”?

Another word is picture. So we are like a picture of God! God made us very special.

What is “likeness”?

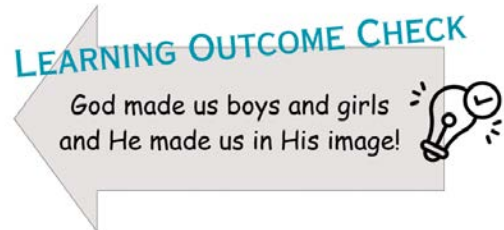
When we say we are made in God’s likeness, it means we can show love, kindness, and forgiveness, just like God does!!



After God finished, He looked at everything He made and saw it was good.

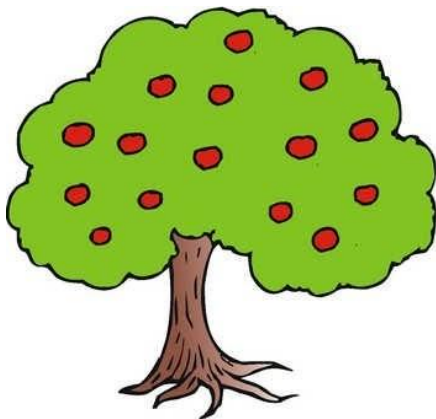
So, God rested on the seventh day. He blessed and **sanctified** the seventh day.

God made everything because God is Love. God loved us very much so He made us special. He made us in His Image and Likeness. He created us to take care of everything He made.



The Garden

God created the Garden of Eden. In this garden, Adam and Eve could eat fruit from all the trees except for one called the **Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil**.



God told Adam and Eve not to eat from this tree as something bad would happen. If they ate before God said they were ready, they would die.

God loved Adam and Eve so much and did not want them to be hurt. He knew they were not yet ready to eat from that tree and God hoped they would trust and listen to Him..

There was another special tree in the Garden called the **Tree of Life**. Adam and Eve did not eat this fruit yet.

Did you know we eat the fruit from both trees today? God gives this to us through the Church! We learn more about God and how to be like God.

And when we pray and prepare our hearts, we receive a wonderful gift of life from the Priest during Holy Qurbana - the Body and Blood of Jesus!

The Church is a paradise like the Garden of Eden and Holy Qurbana is the fruit of the Tree of Life. In this holy place we receive this holy gift when we pray and are ready to receive Jesus. God gives us this because He loves us just like He loved Adam and Eve. God gives us life!

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Just like the fruit from the Tree of Life was to make Adam and Eve strong. When we receive the body and blood of Christ through Holy Qurbana, we are made strong.



Reflection Questions

1. How did God make us special?
2. What are the names of the two special trees in the Garden of Eden?
3. Where can you find something that reminds you of the beautiful Garden of Eden, the special fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the powerful fruit from the Tree of Life?

Lesson 2: God's Will Be Done

*God loves us very much. We become like Him when we listen to Him.
What happens when we don't?*

Vocabulary Words

- **Sin:** When we do something that is wrong and makes God sad.
- **Humility:** When we remember that God loves us and gave us everything, and so we are not better than anyone else.
- **Repent:** When we feel sorry for something wrong and want to fix it.
- **Forgive:** Letting go of sad or angry feelings when someone hurts or upsets us.
- **Confession:** When we talk to a Priest about what we did wrong and ask God to forgive us.

The Devil was jealous of how much God loved Adam and Eve. So as a snake, the Devil tricked Eve into eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.

Eve knew God said not to eat but she listened to the Devil instead of God. Eve then gave the fruit to Adam. By eating the fruit, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and this was a **sin**.

God wants us to be honest and say sorry when we make mistakes, so we can become closer to Him again. But Adam and Eve tried to hide from God.



They did not say sorry and blamed each other and the serpent. They did not **repent**.

God knows everything and sees everything. When we make a mistake, God wants us to say sorry for what we did wrong. This is how we can grow closer to God.

Remember God always loves us!

Sometimes when someone makes us sad or hurts our feelings, we might feel angry at them. But God loves us very much. When Adam and Eve did not listen to God, God did not stop loving them.

Remember

To repent means to say you are sorry and come back to God.



When we make mistakes, God forgives us when we repent with **humility**. When we sin we say sorry to God and he **forgives**.

Adam and Eve did not obey God and did a great **sin**. God did not want them to eat the fruit yet because they would get very sick. They began to die.

God sent them out of the Garden of Eden. This was not because God was angry or to punish Adam and Eve. God still loved them so much! God did not want to see Adam and Eve be sick and dying. God wanted to save them!

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

When Adam and Eve sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, sin entered the world.



If God loved Adam and Eve, why did He not let them stay in Eden?

In the Garden was another special tree called the Tree of Life. If they ate that fruit, then they would never get better. God is a loving Father who knows what is best for His children. God made Adam and Eve leave the Garden so He could save them. God loved Adam and Eve so much!



What is Sin?

Sin is when we do something that God does not want us to do. Remember that God is always Good and Holy. Sin is doing something that Jesus would not do.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Sin is anything that takes us away from God. Sin caused death to enter this world.



Telling lies, being mean to your brother or sister, not listening to your parents, not praying ... are all examples of sin. We are supposed to always be like God, but sometimes we make mistakes.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

When we do something, we should always stop and think, "Would Jesus be happy with what I am going to do or say?" before we do or say it.



Sometimes, we may do something that is wrong without even realizing it! But don't worry, God always loves us and just wants us to say sorry and try to do better. God wants us to come back to Him if we have turned away. Turning away from God is called sin, and coming back to Him is called repentance.

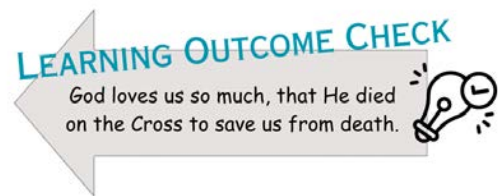
Adam and Eve made a bad choice and did not listen to God. They felt ashamed and tried to hide from God by covering themselves with leaves. But God still loved them and did not want them to live like that. So, God sent them out of the special place they lived in called Eden to help them realize their mistake and trust Him again. God wanted Adam and Eve's children, which includes all of us, to learn from their mistakes and to always trust and obey God.

God knows that we sometimes make mistakes, and that's okay because nobody is perfect. But it's important for us to always try our best to make good choices. We should try to be like God.

When we do something wrong, we need to say sorry to God and talk to our priest in **Confession**. Confession is a special time where we admit our mistakes, promise to do better, and receive God's forgiveness.

Adam and Eve made a mistake that brought death into the world. But God loves us so much that He made a plan to save us.

God came to Earth and died on the Cross. Jesus is God and on the Cross, He died and rose again. This is how we are saved!



Cain and Abel

After Adam and Eve left the beautiful Garden of Eden, they had two sons named Cain and Abel. Cain was older and he liked to grow plants in the fields. Abel was younger and he liked to take care of animals. Abel was a shepherd.

Both Cain and Abel learned to worship God and give Him presents to show their love. Even today, we should remember that God gives us everything

we have. Because we love God, we should give Him the best things we have to show Him how much we love and appreciate Him.

Cain brought some plants as a gift to God, but Abel brought the best and tastiest meat as a gift. God was happier with Abel's present because he gave it with all his love.



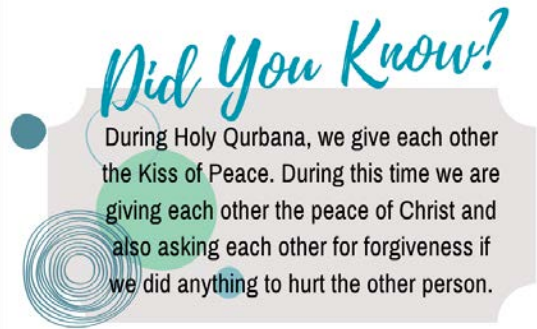
Did God love Abel more than Cain? No! Abel gave God the very best things he had, while Cain just gave God the leftover plants that he didn't need anymore.

Cain gave his gift to God but he did not do it with love. He made a bad choice and God was less happy with Cain. Abel made a good choice and gave his very best to God with love. This made God happy.

Cain felt angry and jealous of Abel. God loved Cain and tried to teach him how to do better. But Cain did not listen. Instead of listening to God, Cain let his jealousy grow and became so angry with his brother, that he killed him.

Cain made a bad choice and did a great sin. He killed Abel, his brother. God was so sad. Cain turned away from God.

God loves when we are humble. When we choose to listen to God and trust Him, we become like Him. If we believe in God and listen to Him, we grow to become good and holy.



Reflection Questions

1. Did God punish Adam and Eve when they ate the fruit?
2. What does it mean to sin? What does it mean to repent?
3. During Holy Qurbana, we give each other the Kiss of Peace. Why do we do this? What does it mean?

Lesson 3: The Holy Trinity

We believe in One True God. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Vocabulary Words

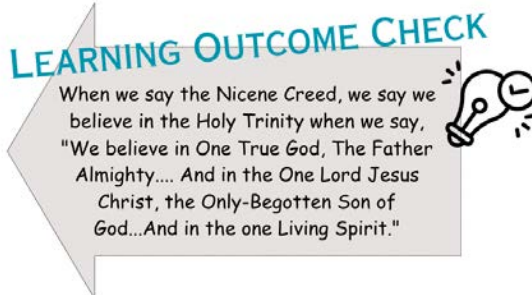
- **Doctrine:** A teaching or lesson that we learn from God through the Prophets, Saints, and Apostles. It is something that God wants us to know and understand
- **Holy Trinity:** A special and important teaching we have in our Church. It means God is One True God, but also three persons. The first person is God the Father, the second person is God the Son (Jesus), and the third person is God the Holy Spirit.
- **Faith:** Trust or confidence in something or someone. In Church, it is our trust or confidence in God who we may not see.
- **Mystery:** Something we can not explain

One True God

We believe in One True God, who is also three. God is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This is confusing, but we do not have to understand. This is because this something we believe because God said it was true.

These teachings of the Church are called **doctrine**. We trust it is true because we have **faith**. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a **mystery** because it



is something that only God understands. Just because we do not understand does not mean it is not true! The Church believes it is true because God said it was true.

When we say the Nicene Creed, we remind ourselves as a Church that we believe the Holy Trinity is One God and is also three Persons.

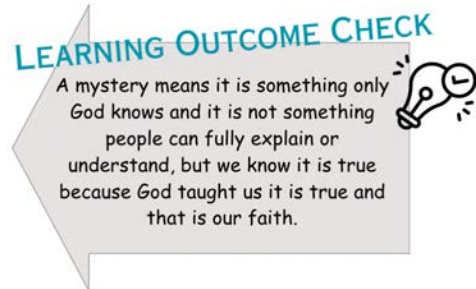
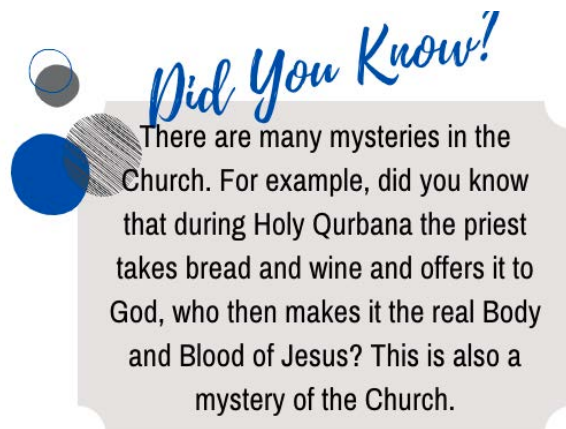
A mystery does not mean we should not think about it. It only means we can not explain. We must be strong in our faith and believe the mysteries of the Church like the Holy Trinity because God said it was true.

Holy Trinity

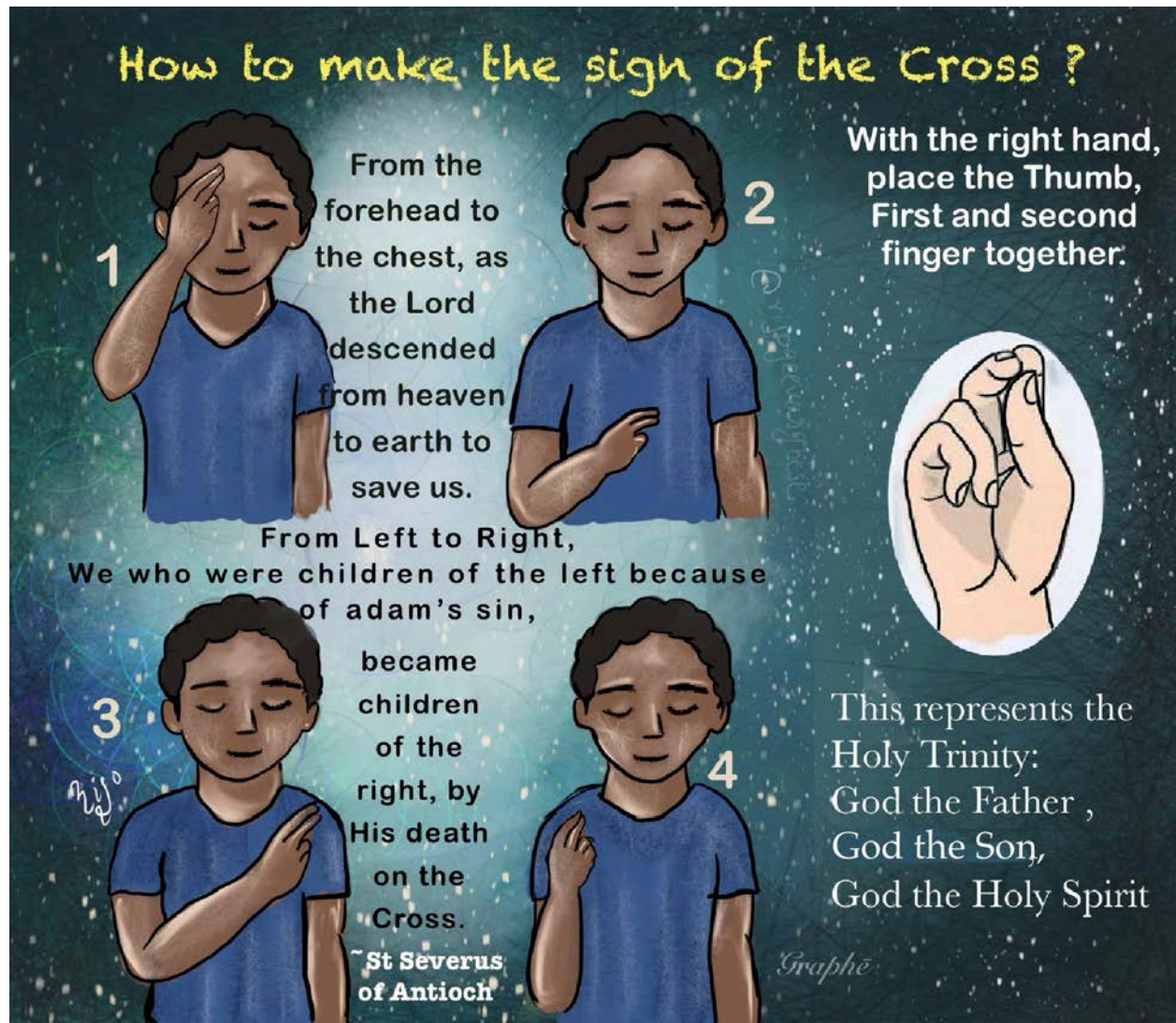
We pray to the Holy Trinity during Holy Qurbana. For example, the priest prays in Syriac "**Shub'ho l'abo l'bro val rooho qadisho**" which means "Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

In response to this we pray "**Men olam v'adamo l'olam olmeen**" meaning "from the beginning for ever and ever."

Every day, we make the **Sign of the Cross**. We do this by touching our forehead, chest, left shoulder, and right shoulder. While doing this, we say "In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

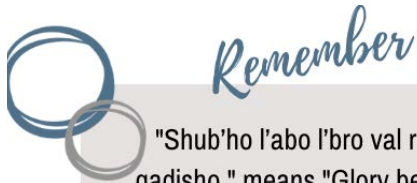


This helps us remember the Holy Trinity, which is very important to us. .
The Holy Trinity is God being the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It reminds us of how much God loves us!



The Holy Trinity is God, and the Holy Trinity was there from before the beginning of all time and forever.

In the first book of the Bible (Genesis) we learn how God made everything. Did you know that the Holy Trinity is is there? The Holy Trinity worked as One God to make everything we see and also what we can not see!

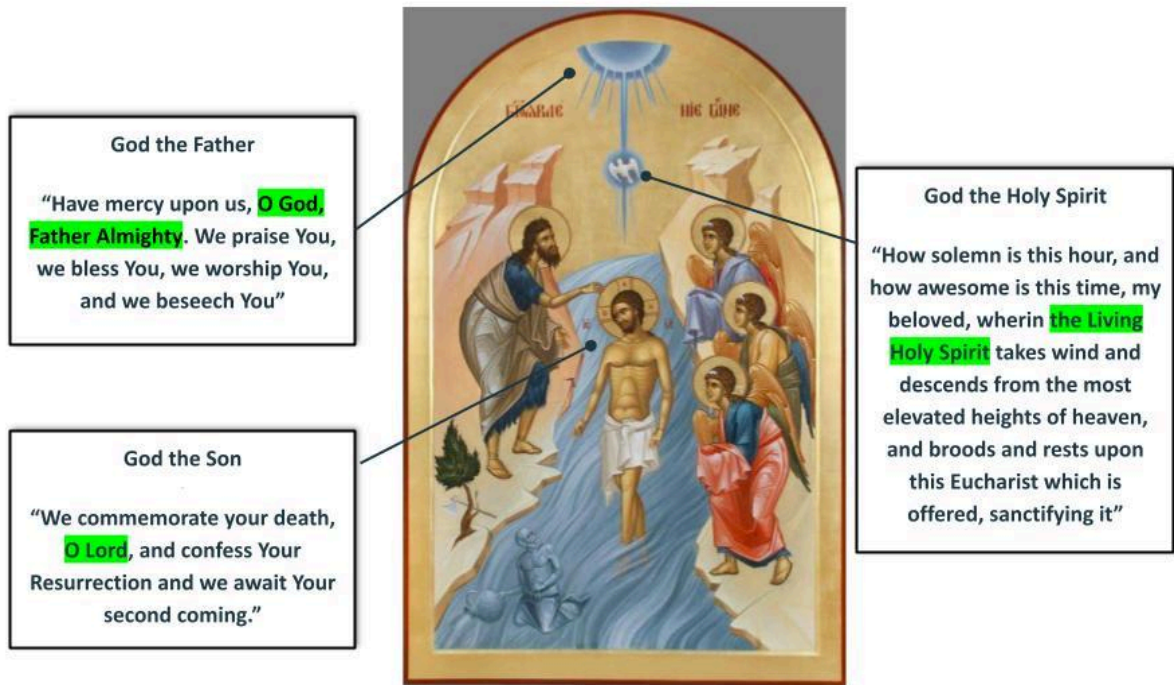


Remember

"Shub'ho l'abo l'bro val rooho qadisho," means "Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Trinity was also present at the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read about this in the Bible, but we also see it in the Holy Icon.

An Icon is a special art used in the Church to teach us about God. In the Bible and in the Icon, we see the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity revealed at the time of the baptism of Jesus.



Jesus, God the Son, was baptized at the river Jordan by John the Baptist. As Jesus came out of the water, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove. A voice then came from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the voice of the Father!

The Father is God

God is our Father. He made everything in the world. God did this because He loves us! God created us very special. We are like Him and we look like Him. He wants us to be kind and loving, just like Him.

The Son is God

The One Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is fully God because He comes from the Father, and He is fully man as He was born to St. Mary. Jesus is equal and the same as the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The “Trisagion” is a special prayer we say every day. We pray “Holy art Thou, O God!”, and at the end we say “Crucified for us, have mercy on us!” In this prayer, we say Jesus is God!

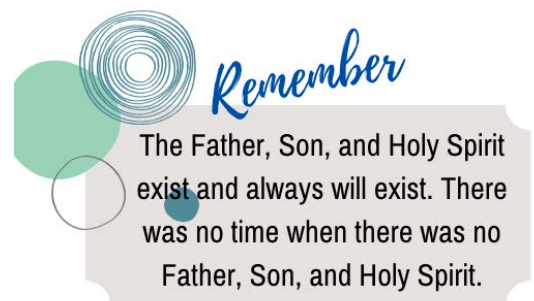


The Holy Spirit is God

The One Living Holy Spirit is God. He is fully God because He comes from the Father. He is equal to the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is our special helper and is equal to the Father and Jesus. During Pentecost, we learn a lot about the Holy Spirit and how He is our guide. He helps us become more like God.

We read about the Holy Spirit helping people in the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Spirit talks to important people, like Prophets, Apostles, and Saints, so they can teach us about God.



Reflection Questions

1. Can we explain the Mystery of the Holy Trinity?
2. Who do we remember when we make the Sign of the Cross?
3. The Nicene Creed reminds us of what?

Lesson 4: Our Father

What can the story of the Prodigal son teach us about love and saying sorry? This story teaches us that God loves us very much!

Vocabulary Words

- **Parable:** Stories that Jesus Christ used to help teach about God
- **Prodigal:** Being wasteful with money or resources. Someone who spends more money than they have and makes bad choices
- **Humility:** To remember that we are not better than others and that it is God who gives us everything and makes us special
- **Unconditional love:** Loving someone no matter what happens

Do your parents or teachers ever tell you stories to help you learn something really important? Jesus Christ did the same thing! He liked to tell stories called **parables**. When Jesus taught lessons as stories, it helped people understand them better.



One of the **parables** Jesus Christ taught was the story of the **Prodigal** son. This **parable** is about a man who had two sons. The younger son decided that he wanted to go live on his own and have fun. But the older brother wanted to stay home and help the family. The father felt sad that the younger son wanted to leave but he still let him go.

The son left his home and started living by himself. Soon, he spent all his money on silly things and ended up very poor. He had no more money and

could not buy food. He is the **prodigal** son because he spent more than he had on bad things. He felt sad and sorry for his actions. He was so hungry that he even wanted to eat the pigs' food! So, he decided to go back to his father and say sorry. He learned **humility**.



Was the father angry when his son came home? No! The father was so happy to see him that he ran towards his son and kissed him!

The father invited everyone to a big party for the prodigal son because he had finally come home! But, the older son was not happy. He did not understand why everyone was happy because his younger brother had left the family. He was also upset because he had stayed back in the house and helped the father.

The older brother was upset because his younger brother had wasted all his money but then was given a party! He asked the father why he let the younger son come back home. The father explained that he had been very scared because he thought his younger son was gone forever. He was so happy and relieved that his younger son had come back safe. The father said it is more important to celebrate the younger brother's return rather than to punish him for making a mistake. The father was happy that his younger son realized he had been wrong, selfish and irresponsible, and still chose to come home and say sorry. This shows that the father's love is always there no matter what happens. This is called **unconditional love** and means that the father loves his son no matter whatever may happen!

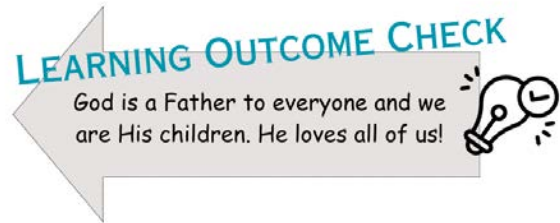
Who is the father in the parable?
The father is God! God loves us no matter what! We should always remember like the prodigal son and be humble and return to God when we make a mistake.



God will always love us. He is so happy when we come back to Him!

Jesus told this parable to teach us that God loves us no matter what wrong we may do. Just like the father in the story was so happy to see his young son return safely after he made the mistakes; our Father in Heaven is always happy when we repent and come back to God. It does not matter if our sin is big or small. If we are sorry and mean it, God will forgive us. He will always accept us and love us if we are honest and really mean what we say. We should also be like this with the people in our lives. God's love is always there for us, no matter what!

God is our loving Father who always takes care of us, helps us, and forgives us when we make mistakes. Jesus taught us a special prayer (**St. Matthew 6: 9-13**) that we say everyday called the **Lord's Prayer** or the **Our Father** prayer.



This prayer is important because it shows how much God loves us, just like a dad who loves his kids so much!

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts and sins, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amin.

Reflection Questions

1. In the Icon of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where does the son show humility?
2. Does God love us the way the father loved his son?
3. When we say the Lord's Prayer, who do we call our Father?

Lesson 5: We Stand Before God

Our Church is the House of God. We can show God we love Him by singing, praying, and listening.

Vocabulary Words

- **Holy:** Something or someone that is very special to God. It is a word we use to describe things that are set apart and sacred.
- **Communion:** A word used to describe being very close to God. In the Orthodox Church, we have a special gift called "Holy Communion" where we eat the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- **Reverence:** Showing and treating something or someone with deep respect

Every day we wake up and get ready. During the school year, we eat breakfast, get our backpack, and head to school. Sundays are different. On Sunday, we wake up and go to a special place called Church!

We go to Church to be with God and show Him we love Him. God has given us so many things, and going to Church is a way to say thank you. Even though God is everywhere, Church is a special place where we can feel closer to Him.

The Church is God's house. Just like our house is special, God's house is too. It's a **holy** place where we can go to be close to God.



Remember

The Church is a **holy** place. This is why we don't run, eat food or play games inside the Church.

Do you know about Moses? One day, Moses saw a bush that was on fire, but it did not burn up! It was very special because God was there. God spoke to Moses and told him to take off his shoes because the ground where he stood was very holy, which means it was a special place.



This is what we do when we go inside the Church! We need to take off our shoes before entering the Church because it is a very special and holy place.

When we go inside the Church we say a special prayer: *“In **reverence**, will I enter Thy house, and offer my vows to Thee”*

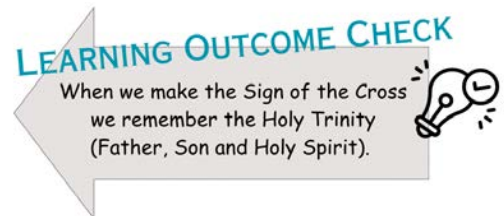
This prayer is from **Psalm 5:7** and helps us get ready. The prayer helps our heart, our soul, and our body get closer to God. We talk to God when we

pray, and during Holy Qurbana we come even closer to God. When we receive Holy Communion, we have God inside us!

The Holy Qurbana is special and we should pay attention and participate. Even if we do not know how to read, we can still say "Amin", "Barekmor", and "Kurielaison".

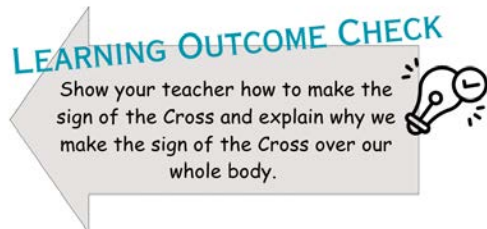
We can also sit and stand nicely when we are supposed to. This helps us listen to the priest and understand what is happening. We also make the Sign of the Cross.

When we make the Sign of the Cross, we use three fingers on our right hand to represent the **Holy Trinity**: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



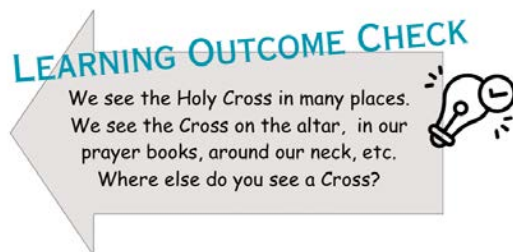
When we make the Sign of the Cross, we use three fingers on our right hand to represent the Holy Trinity. To make the Sign of the Cross, we use our hand to draw a Cross on our body.

First, we touch our forehead with three fingers, then we move down to our chest. After that, we touch our left shoulder and finally our right shoulder. We say, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" while making the Cross. It is a special way to talk to God and show that we believe in Him. We make the Sign of the Cross in **reverence** to God.



Showing reverence means treating something with deep respect. It's important for us to make the Sign of the Cross when we go inside the church, walk in front of the special table called an altar, and when the curtain opens during the church service.

Even when we are outside of Church, we should make the Sign of the Cross whenever we see a Cross. We may have the Cross at home, in our books and Bible, or even outside on some buildings. We should also make the Sign of the Cross when we pass by a church or if someone is sick or in need of our prayers. We also can carry a Cross on a necklace or prayer rope.



We see the Cross in the Church in many places. One important place, we see the Cross is on the Holy Altar. Whenever we see the Cross, we can make the Sign of the Cross as it connects us with God.

We also make the Sign of the Cross during Holy Qurbana. When the curtain opens and we see the Holy Altar, we should make the Sign of the Cross.

We make the Sign of the Cross when we hear the bells ring, and when the priest talks about the Holy Trinity. Every time we hear the word "Cross" in songs or prayers, we should make the Sign of the Cross.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

We make the sign of the Cross whenever we talk about the Holy Trinity. For example, when Achen says Shubho labo labro walrooho qadisho (Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and whenever we say Sleebea (Cross).

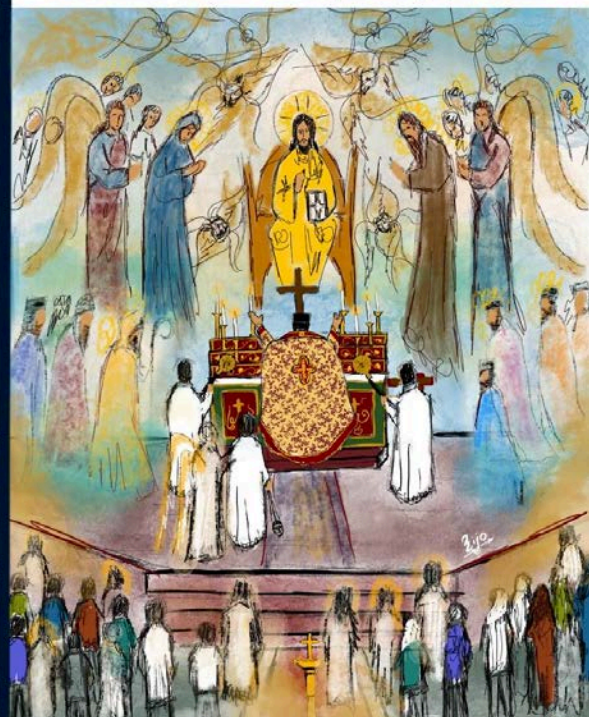


This may seem like a lot of times but we do this as Christians because the Cross is very special and important to us! Also, through this, our participation in the service becomes more personal.

What we see



What actually happens



It is very special when we are in Church during the Holy Qurbana. The priest celebrates at the Holy Altar with the whole Church - this also includes the angels, those who had died and gone to God, and the Saints! When we believe in God and listen to Him, we can see things that others might not see. Church is a special place where we are with God, especially during Holy Qurbana. This is why we make the Sign of the Cross so many times.

A very important moment during Holy Qurbana is when the priest gives us the Body and Blood of Jesus. If we are ready, we can receive this most special gift. We fold our hands together to receive and after the priest gives us the Holy Communion, we make the Sign of the Cross.



It's important to be respectful in the Church, even after the service is done. We should never yell, run, or play rough in the Church. Instead, we quietly leave the Church and put our shoes back on before going about the rest of our day.

We show our love for God by spending time in His Holy House. We join the Holy Qurbana and thank Him for everything He does for us!

Reflection Questions

1. Why is the Church a holy place?
2. How do you make the Sign of the Cross?
3. Do you make the Sign of the Cross only in Church?

Lesson 6: Christ is Born!

Jesus is God and was born of St. Mary to become a man.

Vocabulary Words

- **Nativity:** Nativity means birth and usually we mean the Nativity of Jesus Christ. Also known as 'Yeldho' or 'Christmas', the Nativity of Jesus is when He became a man.
- **Magi:** Kings from the East who followed the star to find baby Jesus

Let's think about our favorite birthday. What made it great? Did you have cake and presents? Were your friends and family with you? In this lesson, we will learn about the most wonderful birthday - the day when Jesus was born!



St. Joseph and St. Mary lived in Nazareth. But they had to go to Bethlehem because the ruler said they must. This was hard because Mary was going to have a baby, and Bethlehem was very far away. Just think about walking for a lot of days! But Mary and Joseph were brave and started their trip to Bethlehem. Mary rode on a donkey, while Joseph walked alongside her to get to Bethlehem.

The Birth of Christ

After a long trip, Mary and Joseph finally arrived in Bethlehem and were very tired. It was almost time for their baby Jesus to be born. Joseph looked for a room but they could not find any place to stay!

They went to many inns and tried but all of them were full. Joseph found a cave that was used as a stable and that is where Mary gave birth to Jesus. Jesus, who is our Lord and the Savior of the world, had His first bed made of straw.

We sing about this during the Christmas Service:

Reflect

Have you gone on a trip and stayed in a hotel? Even though Joseph looked for a place to stay he could not find one, so Mary and Joseph stayed at a small space meant for animals to take care of Jesus.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Jesus became a man with St. Mary as His mother.



*Mary told Joseph, "The pains of labor strike me
Let us depart for Bethlehem, O righteous man.
I have no bed – I have no dwelling,
For I am poor – as I walk this earth.
In the cave I give birth to the Ancient of Days;
And place the Savior of the world in a manger"
Halleluyah w'Halleluyah*

Visitors: The Shepherds and the Magi

When Jesus was born, an angel came to some shepherds who were close by. The light of the Lord shone all around them that night and they got scared! But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, I have good news that will bring a lot of joy to everyone!" The angel told the shepherds that they would find a little baby wrapped in special cloth in a place where animals eat. The shepherds were told that this baby is the Savior of the world! Suddenly, there were many angels in the sky singing and praising God. They said, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth for everyone!" The shepherds found Jesus and they were so happy. They celebrated and praised God!



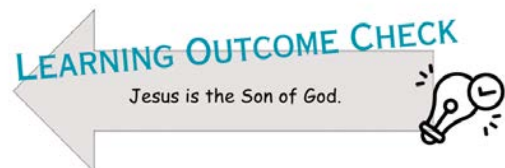
Before Jesus was born, there were three wise men called **Magi** who saw a very shiny star in the sky. They knew it meant that the special Savior of the world had been born. They decided to follow the star and it led them to the cave in Bethlehem where Jesus was lying. When the wise men saw Jesus, they got down on their knees. They gave Him three special presents: shiny gold, nice smelling frankincense, and a special perfume called myrrh.

Jesus is God!



The Holy Icon of Christmas teaches us something very important. The icon shows us that God loves us! Angels, shepherds, wise men and even animals all knew that the newborn baby was special.

They recognized that the new baby was God! God loved us so much that He became a man with St. Mary as His mother. We know this because Jesus is the Son of God and He is God.



Jesus wanted to be closer to us, so He came to live with us. It was the first time that God became someone we could see, touch, and hold. Everyone, including the angels, kings, and shepherds, were very happy because the Son of God was born. Even the animals were happy and peeked into the manger, where Jesus lay on a bed made of straw.

On Christmas, we give presents to our friends and family. But the most special gift, we can give is love. We can show our love to Jesus by loving people who need help. When we give presents to people who need help, it's like giving a present to Jesus just like the Magi!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Reflection Questions

1. Who is the Mother of God?
2. What other words do we use for the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ?
3. Was Jesus alive before He was born in Bethlehem?

Lesson 7: The Last Prophet

St. John the Baptist is a very special and holy person. He is called the “forerunner” because he was born before Jesus and spoke about Him.

Vocabulary Words

- **Prophet:** Someone who shares God’s message to other people
- **Forerunner:** A person who helps prepare others for something or for the coming of someone special
- **Sacrament:** A very special event in the Church where God changes something or someone to new and holy in a way we cannot explain. The reason why a Sacrament is called a “Mystery” of the Church
- **Baptism:** It is when our old way of life is washed away. Holy Baptism is one of the important Sacraments of the Church through which we become a full member of the Church

There was a priest named St. Zachariah and his wife St. Elizabeth. They were very old and wanted to have a baby but they could not. They prayed to God for a long time.



After many years, something amazing happened! The angel Gabriel came to them and said that they would have a special baby boy whom they needed to name John. God blessed them because they had been praying and believing in Him. Zachariah was very surprised to hear what the angel had said. He and his wife were very old, and he had never seen other old people having kids.

Could God really give them a baby? God decided Zachariah needed to understand that He can do amazing things. God made Zachariah unable to talk until after the baby was born.



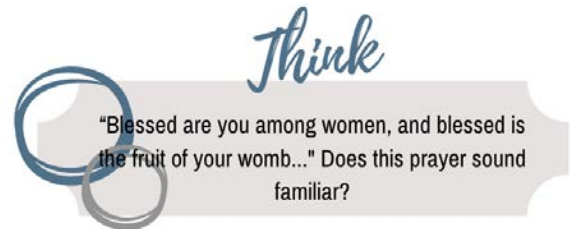
Think

In the icon above, which baby is Jesus, and which baby is St. John the Baptist?

St. Elizabeth and St. Mary were cousins. After the Angel Gabriel invited St. Mary, to be a mother, she immediately went to visit her cousin.

St. Mary didn't know that St. Elizabeth was going to have a baby too! But when St. Elizabeth saw St. Mary, she was really happy because she knew that St. Mary was going to be the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God!

She told St. Mary that the baby inside her, St. John the Baptist, also jumped with joy. She told St. Mary that she was blessed among all the women in the world. She was so happy that the Mother of God had come to see her!



She said to St. Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. How does this happen to me, the mother of my Lord comes to visit me?"

St. John the Forerunner

St. Elizabeth had a strong and healthy boy. They named him John just like the angel Gabriel had told them to. St. Zachariah was able to talk again and he was so happy. God always keeps His promises.

St. John prayed to God a lot. He was so close to God that the angels talked to him! He did not eat a lot and lived a very simple life. St. John was a special person chosen by God. God talked to John and gave him messages to share with others. John talked to everyone and told them that a very special person was coming soon. He was talking about Jesus!



St. John told people to repent which means to say sorry for their mistakes. He told them they needed to be ready because Jesus was coming. That's why John is called the **forerunner** because he was the person who came before Jesus.

St. John was the last **prophet** before Jesus came down to Earth. A prophet is a special messenger from God. God talks to the prophets and tells them important things to tell other people.

St. John helped prepare everyone to receive God's Son by baptizing them. **Baptism** is when someone is washed with special water and becomes a part of God's Kingdom.

St. John was a special person who was able to baptize Jesus Christ! Because of this, he is also called St. John the Baptist. He was a friend of Jesus and they worked together to teach people about God's Kingdom and how to say sorry for their mistakes.

Today, after someone is baptized in the Church, they can receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us be good people and be like Jesus and the saints. Once we are baptized, we become a part of God's family and start a new life with Him.

After baptism, we can take part in all the church services. Just like the people St. John baptized, we also receive forgiveness of sins at baptism.

Sin is when we do things that make us sick inside because we are not listening to God. It's like having a sickness. But the Church has special ways to help us feel better and get closer to God again.



We can pray to God and listen to what the Church teaches us. This makes God happy.

When we say sorry to God and ask for forgiveness, it's like a special medicine that heals all the sickness in our hearts and makes us feel better again.



Reflection Questions

1. Who is the forerunner of Jesus Christ?
2. When we are baptized, what happens to our sins?
3. After we are baptized and we sin, where should we go?

Lesson 8: By Your Light

God loves us and has a plan. We can see by following God's Light.

Vocabulary Words

- **Person:** A living being that includes you, your family, and your friends. Every person is special. We say that God is a person because God is alive and is special.
- **Messiah:** Someone who comes to help and save. In the Church, the Messiah is Jesus Christ.
- **Thubden:** A Syriac word meaning again - a special prayer read during Holy Qurbana .

Pretend you are in a very dark room at night. It might feel scary because you can not see anything in the room.

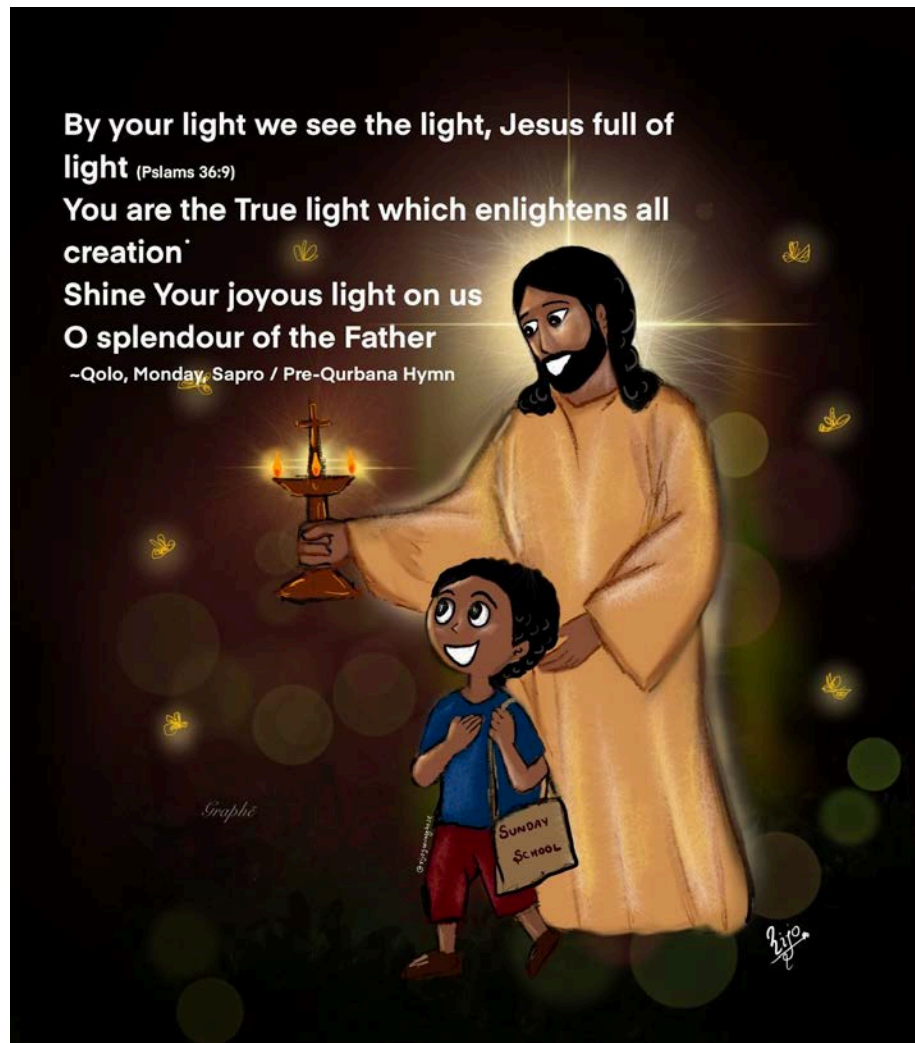
But what happens if someone turns on the light switch?



The room is now filled with bright light and you can see! Won't this make you feel safe and happy?

Jesus taught everyone that He is the Light of the world. Just like the darkness of a room went away when the light was turned on, so also sin and bad things of the world disappear when we are with Jesus.

Jesus helps us see how we can become children of God! He wants us to be like Him and to be the light for others in the world too.



St. John the Baptist knew that Jesus was the **Messiah**. A messiah is someone who saves. Remember what happened when Adam and Eve ate the fruit? All men and women began to die because of sin. The world became dark.

But God loved the world and all His children so much that Jesus was sent to save the world from sin and death. He is the Light that shows how everyone can come back to God and be in communion with Him.

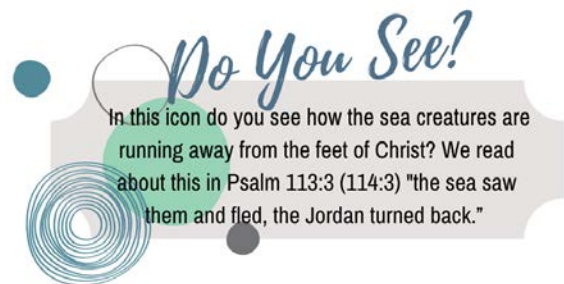
St. John the Baptist knew this and told everyone to be ready and repent. After they were sorry for their sins, he began to baptize them to make them clean.

One day, John was talking to a big group of people next to the Jordan River. Then, he saw Jesus walking towards him. Jesus asked John to baptize Him! John was surprised and said he did not think he was holy enough to baptize Jesus. Instead, John wanted Jesus to baptize him!



But Jesus said that He needed to show others how to be good Christians. Jesus is our example in everything. He shows us how we should be like God.

When Jesus was baptized, it made the water special and holy.



The Holy Trinity

St. John baptized Jesus in the river. And then something amazing happened! When Jesus came out of the water, the sky opened up and the Holy Trinity appeared.

God, the Father spoke from the sky in a very loud voice. God said Jesus is God's special Son and that God is very happy with Him. The Holy Spirit came down from the sky, like a special bird called a dove.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is One God but they are also three **Persons**. It's a little difficult to understand.

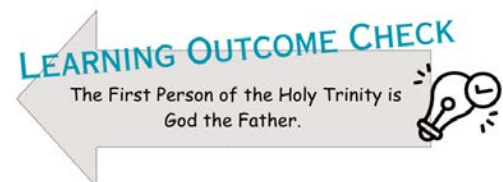


That is why the Church calls this a mystery. It's something special that we do not understand.

The first Person of the Holy Trinity is God the Father.



We believe God is the maker of everything. The Father created everything because He is Love.



God the Father is drawn in Holy Icons as a part of a circle with rays (sometimes with a hand) because He is the Creator.

The second Person of the Holy Trinity is Jesus Christ.



We believe that Jesus is God and also the Son of God. He loved us so much that He became a man!

St. Mary is His mother. Jesus was baptized by St. John the Baptist. Jesus also died on the Cross.

But most importantly, Jesus rose again on the third day to defeat death! He did all of this because He loves us.



The third Person of the Holy Trinity is the Holy Spirit.

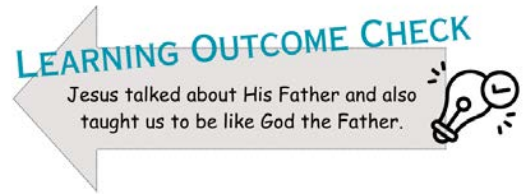


The Holy Spirit is God. He is special and does so many things for us! He is called the Helper and the Protector. The Holy Spirit completes everything.

The Holy Spirit is shown in Icons like a dove but in a special circle. This is because that is how He is described but He is not a bird! Nobody can really describe the Holy Spirit so they tried their best to explain.

Remember that Jesus taught us to be like God. How do we do that? By trying to be like Jesus!

Jesus is God. God knows that we are not perfect but it is important that we always try our best!



Just like God forgives us when we make mistakes and repent, we should forgive others and treat them with kindness.

Jesus is the Light

The Church teaches us important things about God. We know these things because God first spoke them to special people called prophets. Some of the prophets are Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and St. John the Baptist.

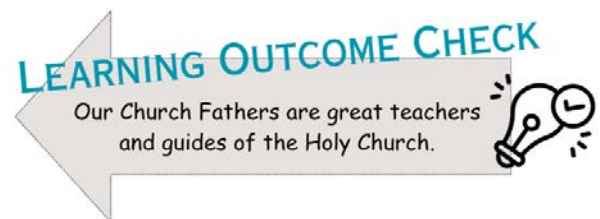
But then Jesus came and was a friend to the Apostles. He lived with them and ate with them. He spent a lot of time teaching them about Himself! We know a lot about God because of the Apostles.



There are also many Saints who followed the light that Jesus showed the Apostles. They kept the same teachings that were given to them. The Church makes sure to

never lose the True Light.

In the Fifth **Thubden** of the Holy Qurbana, we remember many great Saints who taught us about God. We call them our Church Fathers. But there are even more Saints including both men and women who shared to us what God taught. If we tried to remember all their names, we would be in Church for a very long time!



We are so lucky and blessed that the Saints and teachers never forgot what Jesus taught, so we can still learn and be part of it today!

Reflection Questions

1. Can you name the three persons of the Holy Trinity?
2. How does Jesus love us?
3. How do we know that Jesus called Himself the “Light of the World”?

Lesson 9: Our Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus loves us very much. He shows us that He is God by how He lived.

Vocabulary Words

- **Incarnation:** God becoming man when St. Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus.
- **Disciples:** People who followed Jesus and learned from Him

God Becomes Man



God loved us so much that He did something very special - He became a man! In the picture, we see angels, kings, and shepherds - everyone is so happy because God's Son is born.

Even the animals loved Jesus and peeked to see Him sleeping on straw. Remember that even though Jesus was born as a tiny baby that day, He has always been alive! His birth with St. Mary as His mother is the **Incarnation**.

He was there before everything was made, like the stars, trees, and animals. Jesus is God, and God created everything! Jesus was born in a stable with animals because He loves us so much and wanted to be close to us!

Jesus is Brought to the Temple



After baby Jesus was born, His parents, Mary and Joseph took Him to a special place called the temple.

There, they met an old man named Simeon and a prophetess named Anna.

Simeon had been waiting his whole life to see Jesus because he knew Jesus was very special. When Simeon saw baby Jesus, he was filled with joy and said that he had found God's salvation.

He prayed, "Lord, my eyes have seen Your salvation!"

Anna also knew that Jesus was the Savior when she saw Him.

Jesus Teaches in the Temple (St. Luke 2:39-52)



Jesus loved to teach!

From a young age, Jesus loved to learn and listened carefully to those who taught Him. He also shared stories to help others understand God better.

Jesus and His parents, St. Joseph and St. Mary, went to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate a holiday called Passover.

One time when He was twelve, He stayed behind in the temple when His parents started back home.

When they could not find Him they were worried and went back to Jerusalem. After three days of looking, they found Jesus sitting with the teachers in the temple, listening and asking them questions.

Jesus was talking about God and amazed everyone even though He was young. But He went back home with St. Mary and St. Joseph because He knew they loved him and were worried. Jesus was in God's House but was also a child and obeyed his parents.

Jesus Cares for the Children (St. Luke 18:15-17; 7:11-16)

Jesus loved all children and liked to be with them. One day, some parents brought their kids to Jesus so He could bless them. But the **disciples** did not want the children to bother Jesus. So Jesus told them to let the children come to Him, for God's Kingdom is for them as well! Jesus picked up the little children and placed His hands on their heads to bless them.



Another day, Jesus went to a town called Nain. When He reached, He saw that everyone was sad as a man had died. His mom was very sad as she was alone.

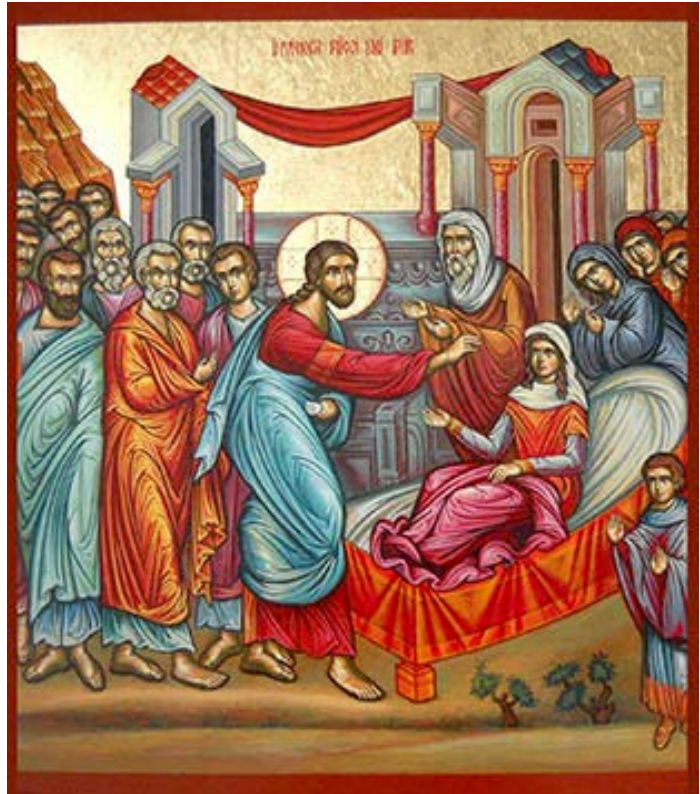
Jesus told her not to cry, and then went and told the young man to get up. And something amazing happened! He woke up and started talking again! Everyone was so surprised and happy. They praised God for what Jesus did. Jesus always cares about the parents and their children.

Jesus Gives Life (St. Luke 8:40-42, 49-56)

Once, Jesus was teaching and a man named Jairus came to see Him. Jairus was very worried because his daughter was very sick and he wanted Jesus to help her get better.

Jesus went with Jairus to his house along with His friends. On the way, Jairus received a message that his daughter had died, but Jesus told Jairus not to worry and to believe that everything would be okay.

When they arrived at Jairus' house, Jesus went inside with only a few disciples, and Jairus' daughter's parents. Everyone in the house was very sad and crying.



But Jesus said: "Do not cry; the girl is not really dead, only sleeping."

Some people laughed because they did not believe Jesus. Then, Jesus held the girl's hand and said, "Wake up, little girl!" And guess what? The girl suddenly woke up! Jesus asked for some food for her. Everyone was so amazed and happy. Jairus and his family thanked and praised God for what Jesus had done.

Jesus Calms the Storm (St. Mark 4:35-41)

Jesus and his disciples were in a boat on the sea. Jesus was tired and so He went to sleep at the back of the boat. Then, a really big storm came and made the waves bumpy. Water started coming into the boat, and everyone got scared. They woke Jesus up and said, "Help us, Jesus! We are going to sink!" Jesus woke up and talked to the storm. Immediately, the wind stopped and the waves became calm because Jesus is very powerful.

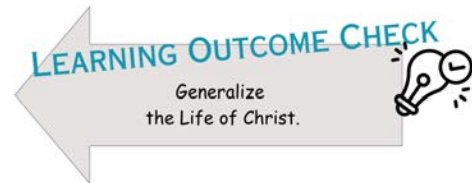


The disciples of Jesus were very brave when He was with them. But they got scared when a big storm came and hit their boat. Even though they saw Jesus do amazing things many times, they still did not have strong belief. Jesus was surprised that all of His friends were scared of the storm and did not trust Him more. He asked them, "Why are you scared? Don't you believe in Me?"

Summary

Jesus loves us. He is truly God, and became man so that He could teach us, care for us, and help us in our lives.

From the day He was born to His teachings in the temple, from His special blessings for children to the amazing miracles He performed, Jesus shows us how much He loves us. He wanted to save us from death and bring us closer to Him.



God is with us, and we can trust Him to take care of us. Let us follow the example of Jesus by loving others and learn more about God's teachings every day!

Reflection Questions

1. Can you name one event in Jesus life and explain how we know from that story that Jesus is God?
2. How can we be more like Jesus in our life?
3. Did Jesus ever sin?

Lesson 10: The Priesthood

Priests help us learn about God. They take care of us just like shepherds.

Vocabulary Words

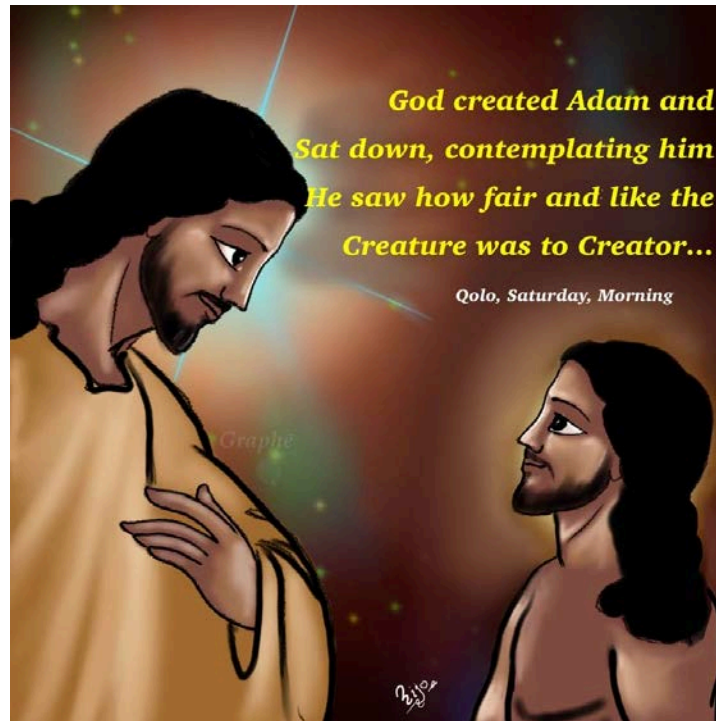
- **Contemplating:** Thinking about something
- **Exalted:** Something or someone who is very important or special
- **Role:** A job or something that a person needs to do
- **Pharaoh:** The powerful ruler of Egypt who thought he was god
- **Stewardship:** Taking care of something or someone

Adam: The First Priest

This song is from the Quqlion (special prayers) during Holy Qurbana:

*God created Adam and
Sat down, contemplating him
He saw how fair and like the
Creature was to Creator
The earthly one came and went
Through the trees of Paradise
The angels marveled
At how he was exalted*

We sing that Adam looks like God! “Adam” in this song means all boys and girls. So if God made Adam to look like God, that means we also look like God! God loves us very much and even the angels were surprised and happy.



After God finished creating everything, He asked Adam to take care of it for Him. This was a special job for Adam. This is why we say Adam is the first priest (Achen) of the world. Priests are helpers of God and they take care just like God would do. This is called **Stewardship**. Our priests take good care of God's people.

The song continues:

*Moses and Aaron received
The priesthood which was passed down
It went to Zachariah
Then it was given to John
John then gave it to our Lord
Who ordained the apostles
And the apostles
Spread it throughout creation!*

Moses and Aaron

*Moses and Aaron received
The priesthood which was passed down*

Moses was an important person in the Bible. When he was a baby, his mother put him in a basket and placed it in the river to keep him safe from danger. **Pharaoh's** daughter found him in the river and took him to live with her in the palace.

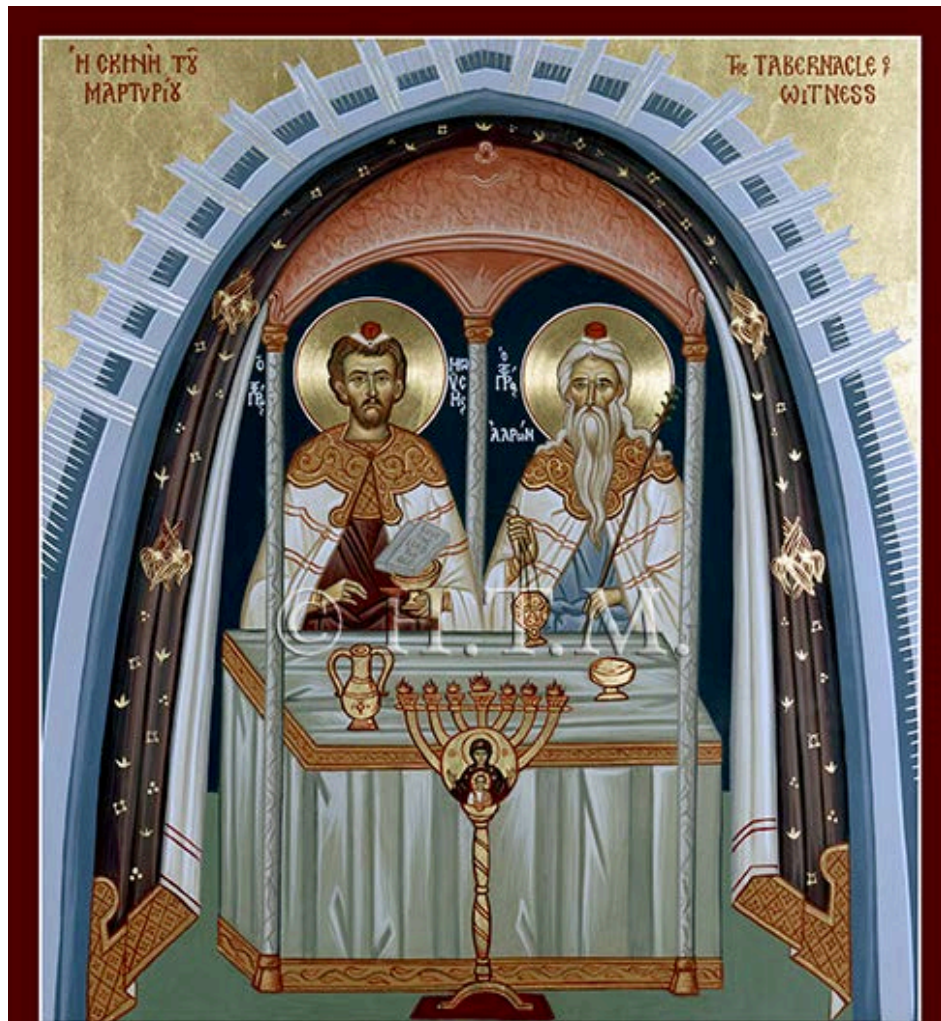


As Moses grew up, he decided to leave the palace and become a shepherd in the desert. God loved Moses and one day He spoke to him from a burning bush on Mount Horeb. God wanted Moses to help free the people of Israel and be their leader, but Moses felt scared. He was afraid he might make a mistake.

God understood how Moses felt, so He told Moses to bring his brother Aaron to help him. Moses was happy because he wouldn't have to do it alone. When Aaron came, Moses shared everything God had told him, and they both went to tell the Israelite people. The people were joyful to hear God's message!

A priest is a leader chosen by God to help Him. Moses was a priest because just like Adam, he was chosen by God.

Moses and Aaron became priests to the people of Israel. They helped lead the people of Israel to worship God. We see them dressed in a special way like our priests in the icons.



Our priests (Achens) also lead us in worshiping God. We now come to Church to be with God. Our priests pray and celebrate the Holy Qurbana. They pray to God for us and God forgives our sins.

Zachariah and St. John the Baptist

*It went to Zachariah
Then it was given to John*

The Israelites made a special place called the Temple of Jerusalem to pray to God and show they love Him. Many priests served God and helped the people. Worship how we show God that we love Him. We thank Him for all that He has done for us. Helping the people worship is an important work that priests do.

Did you know the priest needs our help? We also pray and worship God with our priests, and this is why we say “Amin” after every prayer that the priest starts! Everyone prays together. This makes God very happy!



Zachariah was a priest and his wife was Elizabeth. They loved God and God loved them. They were also old and had no children but they still prayed for a baby.

Today our priests serve God just like Zachariah and St. John the Baptist. Everyone (including babies) are invited to be part of the Holy Church and it is the priest who baptizes in a very special service with water and oil.



Jesus and the Apostles

*John then gave it to our Lord
Who ordained the Apostles
And the Apostles
Spread it throughout creation*

St. John the Baptist was at the River Jordan telling people to get ready for Jesus. He would baptize anyone who wanted to say sorry and repent. John would use the water of the River Jordan to help them be clean but would tell everyone that one day Jesus would do much more.

One day, Jesus Himself came to see St. John! Jesus asked St. John to baptize him in the river. John was surprised because he did not think he should baptize God and wanted Jesus to baptize him instead!

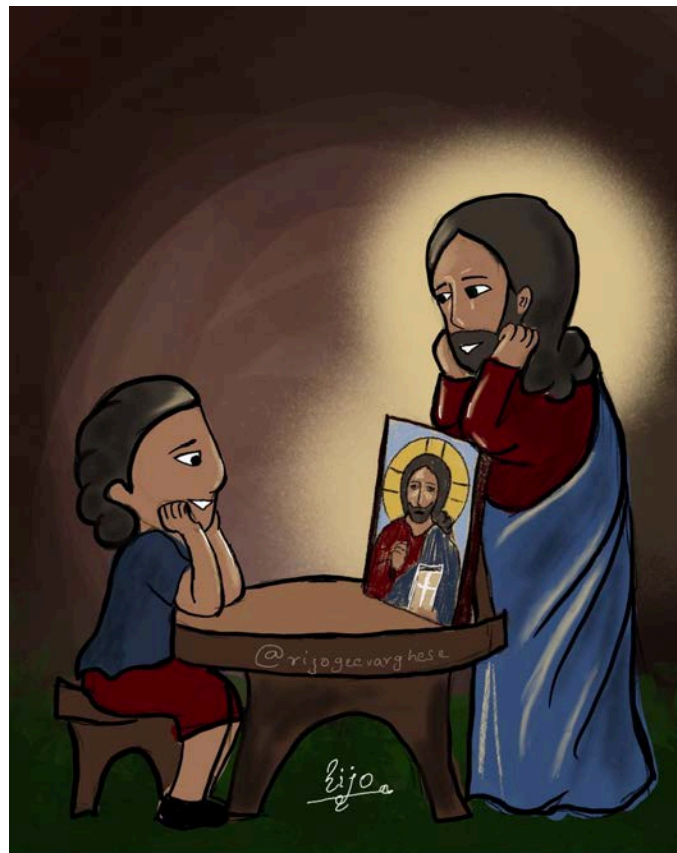


Jesus told John that this was important as He needed to show everyone how to be a good Christian. Jesus wanted to set an example for people. He also wanted to bless and make holy the river and all the water on Earth. Jesus blessed the water with the help of the Holy Spirit.

So, John put Jesus in the water of the River Jordan. And something really amazing happened! When Jesus came out of the water, God the Father spoke! The sky also opened up and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven like a dove. It was a very special moment! Jesus is the High Priest and the Lord of all, and He then gave the priesthood to His chosen Apostles. Our priests then received the teaching from the Apostles. This is why we are an Apostolic Church!

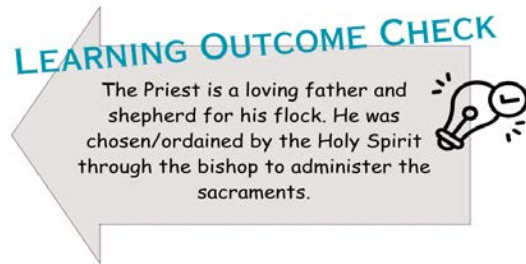
Our Priests Guide Us Towards Christ

God loves us and has special plans for us. He created us to be like Him so that we can love others like He loves us. Adam was the first priest and like Adam we are also priests because God has chosen us.



There are special people who are called priests (or Achens) because they help the people of God in worship. The priesthood started from Adam, and went to Moses, Aaron, Zachariah, St. John, and then to Jesus. Jesus chose the Apostles who chose bishops, and our bishops choose our priests.

Do you see how there is a connection between our priest all the way through Christ to Adam? Our priests pray for us, bless us, and heal us from sin.



Our priests are able to do many things with the grace of the Holy Spirit. They have a special job during Holy Qurbana and wear special robes. On the Holy Altar and with the help of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus!

We should love and help the people around us, just like how a priest takes care of and loves the people in the Church. Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors just like we love ourselves. It is important to treat others with kindness and care, just as we would want to be treated. We also take care of the world that God created. Remember, this will help us become more like Jesus. (**Matthew 22:39**)



Reflection Questions

1. How did God make us?
2. A shepherd cares for his flock. What are examples of how the priest cares for his people?
3. Can you find the song we reviewed here in your Holy Qurbana book?

Lesson 11: Our Savior

God loves us very much. He became a man to save us.

Vocabulary Words

- **Savior:** Someone who comes to help or rescue others when they are in trouble or danger
- **Paradise:** A holy place with God
- **Resurrection:** Jesus coming back to life after dying on the Cross
- **Sheol:** A place where people in the Old Testament went

The Church celebrates a very important day each year. This is when Jesus came back to life! This day is Easter, also called Resurrection Sunday or Qyamtha in Syriac. This day is very special because Jesus saved us!



In the Beginning ...

God made everything. He made what we can see and also the things we can not see. God did this because He is Love. And remember He made us just like Him!

Adam and Eve lived in a special place called Eden but then something bad happened. Satan tricked Adam and Eve. They did something they weren't supposed to do. This is called sin. This made God very sad and they could not be with Him like before. Because of sin, a very sad thing happened and Adam and Eve started to die. Death came into the world.

But God still loves us even when we do not listen to Him. He loved Adam and Eve even though they listened to Satan. God did not want them to die.



God loved us so much that He came to earth as a man! Jesus came to save us from death and all the bad things we did. As a man, He died. But because He is God, He could not die!

This is why we sing in each Holy Qurbana, "He trampled death by His death and destroyed our death."

Remember

We know that we can all get sick. We can have accidents. We know that sometimes people can die. When people die we can be sad. But we do not have to be afraid of dying because when we die we are with Our Creator, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

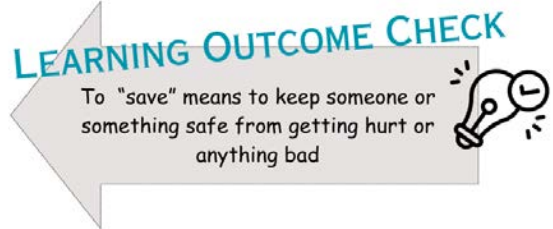


Do you remember the procession or special walk we do at Church on Great Friday?

The priest carries a Cross and we all sing while he walks around the Church. This helps us remember what Jesus did for us.

Jesus had to carry a heavy Cross to a place called Golgotha where he was killed. Jesus was crucified on the Cross. Jesus is our Savior because He died on the Cross.

To “save” means to keep someone or something safe from getting hurt or anything bad. Doctors and nurses save many sick people in hospitals, and firefighters and police save people who are in danger.



So, what did Jesus save us from? He saved us from death!

Jesus died on the Cross on Great Friday and rose again. This is why we know we when we die we go to God and will still be alive.

This is a great mystery and can never be fully understood. But we know it is true because God told us! This is why we call the day that Jesus died the **Great Friday** or **Holy Friday**.

Even though we feel sad when we think about how the soldiers took Jesus, hurt Him, and crucified Him on the Cross, we know that Jesus won!

Jesus died and rose again from the dead. He saved us from death and gave us a new life. Jesus is our Savior and the giver of new life.



The Icon of Resurrection



An icon is special as it teaches us so much about our Church and our Faith. An icon is holy because it teaches us more about God. In the icon of the Resurrection, we learn more about how much God loves us!

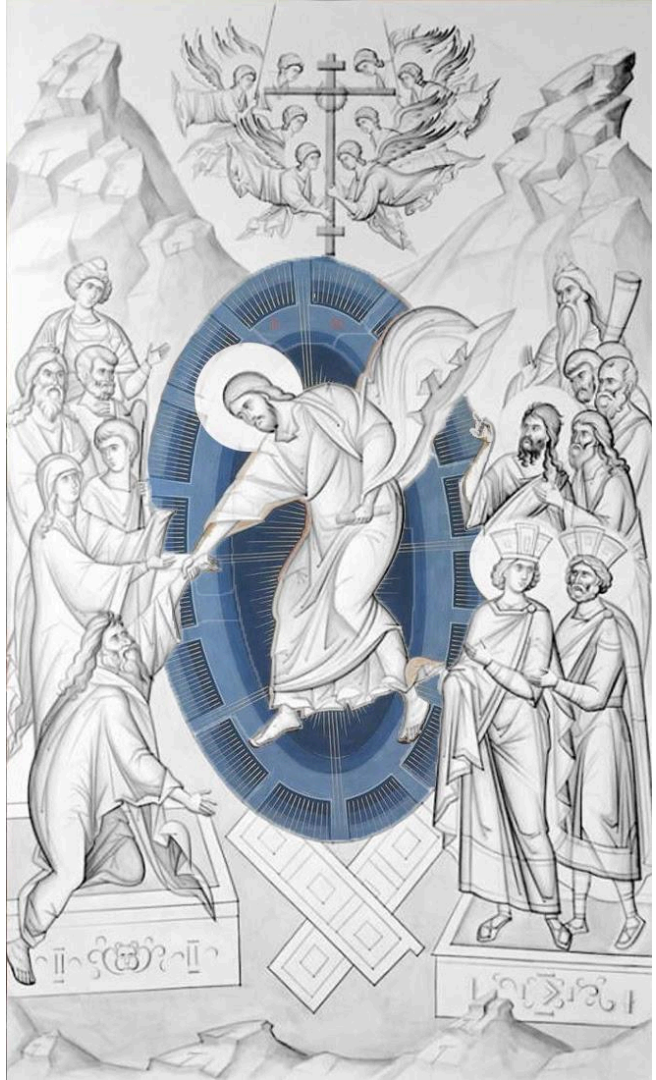
Mandorla

In many icons, there is a special shape called a *mandorla*. The Resurrection Icon has one!

A mandorla is a shape that looks like an almond or half circle. When we see a mandorla in an icon, it means something special is being shown!

In the Resurrection Icon, we see Jesus is alive! He defeated death. People who do not believe in Jesus will never really understand. This is a mystery that we cannot fully explain. But we know it is true because Jesus is God!

Do you see the mandorla in the Resurrection Icon?



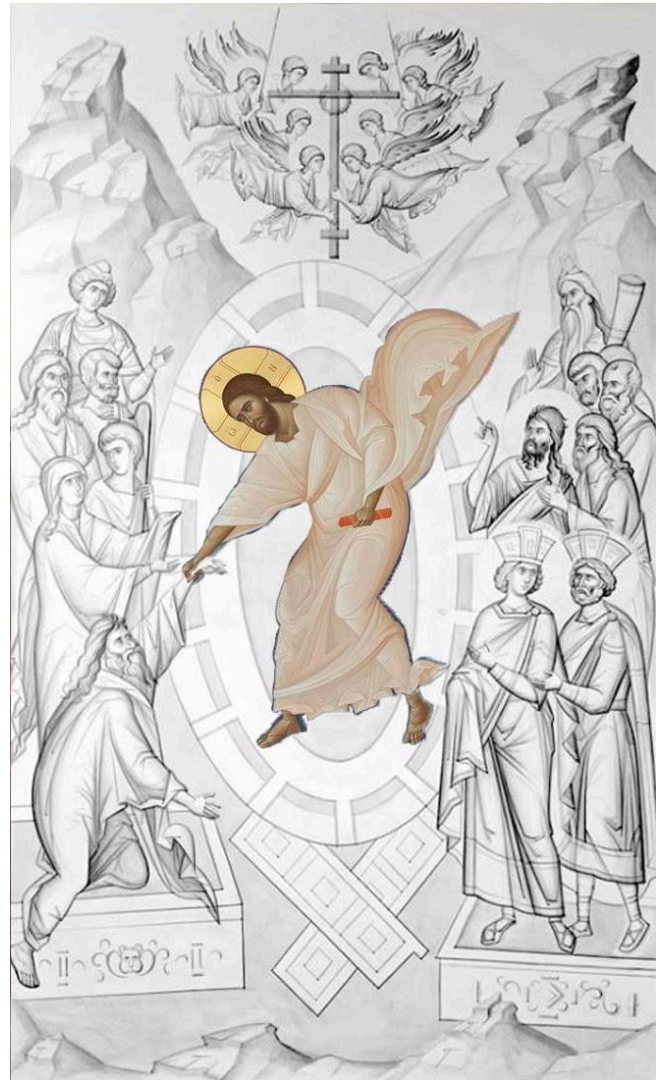
Christ in Glory

In the mandorla and in the center of this Icon is Jesus. He is in beautiful white and gold because Jesus is full of glory!

Do you see the Cross at the top? This is to remind us that Jesus had just died on the Cross. On Great Friday we are reminded of His death which was very sad. Jesus suffered a lot on the Cross.

But the Resurrection Icon reminds us that Jesus defeated death! Our God is too strong and has power over all things, in heaven and earth, including death.

Why did Jesus then die on the Cross? For only one reason - to save us from death!



Our Salvation

The icon reminds us that Jesus died on the Cross to save us. Do you see these two people in the icon?

One is an old man and one is an old woman. This is Adam and Eve!

Remember, we learned that Adam and Eve had to leave Paradise. Outside of Paradise, they grew old and died. Adam, Eve and all the people who lived before Jesus died, would go to a place called Sheol when they died. This was a place where there was no life. In the icon, we see many people in Sheol.

But that all changed when Jesus rose again! After dying on the Cross, Jesus brought life to everyone, including those who died before Him, starting with Adam and Eve!

Do you see how Jesus is holding Adam in the icon? He is pulling him up from the dead. This is how much God loves us! He would not allow His children to die and came to save them.



LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Through the Resurrection icon we understand that Christ saves Adam & Eve. This means he saves all of us as well.



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

On Easter, we greet each other with these words. But once we learn about the Resurrection and what it really means, we will shout this with even more joy!

On that Sunday of the Resurrection, we sing a special song after the priest reads the Gospel:

*O Holy Temple, Praise the Son of God who dwells upon the Holy Altar!
Praise Him who saved us and has raised us up by His body and
life-giving blood! Am-Halleluyah!
O Bridegroom, when You rose from the tomb, Your children rejoiced*

At Church, we sing and pray about how wonderful and loved we are by God and how He saved us from death. This is the song we sing after the Great Procession when the Body and Blood of Jesus are brought to us:

*All shall worship and bless You,
and each tongue confess Your name,
for You give life to the dead
and good hope to those entombed!*

When we call Jesus our Savior, we know that He saved us because He loves us. Because of the Resurrection, we know that nothing will happen to all who have died as they are now alive with God. And one day Jesus will come again and then we will be with God forever.

Reflection Questions

1. What did Christ save us from?
2. In the Resurrection Icon, who do Adam and Eve represent?
3. Can you remember any of the songs of the Holy Qurbana that teach us that Jesus brought life to the dead?

Lesson 12: The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God.

Vocabulary Words

- **Sacrament:** A special event in our life that God changes something in a way we cannot explain. Also called a Holy Mystery.
- **Pentecost:** Celebration of receiving the Holy Spirit
- **Disciple:** Someone who believes and follows Jesus
- **Apostle:** A special disciple who was chosen by Jesus

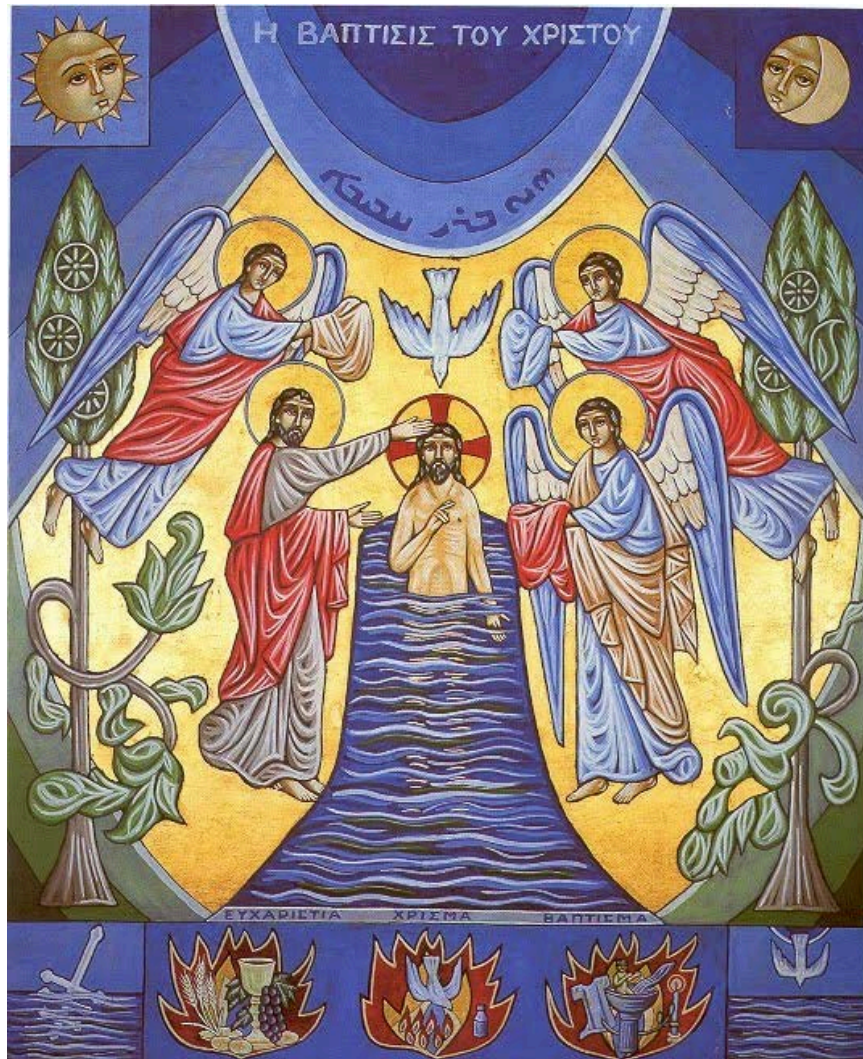
Do you know about **Pentecost**?

Pentecost is a special day for the Church. It is when the Holy Spirit came down on the **Apostles** and **disciples** and gave them new life. The Holy Spirit helped them become smart, strong, and brave.

Jesus said that after He went to Heaven, the Holy Spirit would come and help His friends do what God wanted them to do. The Holy Spirit even gave them the ability to speak different languages so that they could tell everyone that Jesus is alive and that God loves them.



Another important day is when we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus.



When we are baptized, we become members of the Church. The Church is God's people. When Jesus was baptized, He went into the water and made it special and holy. The Holy Spirit was there.

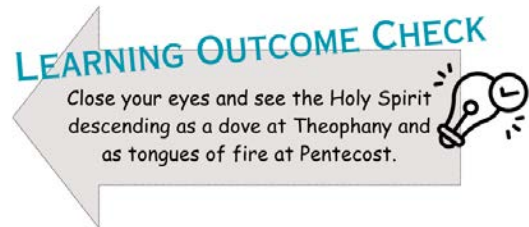
Do you see the Holy Spirit like a dove in both these icons? This does not mean that God the Holy Spirit is a bird!

Remember

Just like the Holy Spirit made the disciples and apostles wise, strong, smart, and brave, the Holy Spirit makes us wise, strong, smart and brave too!

The Bible says the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus *like* a dove, and we see this in the icons. The Holy Spirit is God just like Jesus and the Father is God. But only Jesus became man.

When we see the Icon or read about the Holy Spirit being like a dove, we know that is how the Holy Spirit looked to the person who saw it.



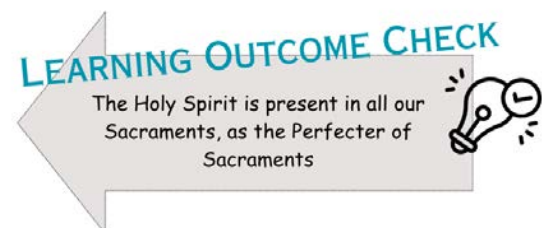
Just like how the Apostles and Disciples received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we also receive the Holy Spirit. On the day of our baptism, the priest uses holy oil and makes the Sign of the Cross. This cleans us so that we can receive the Holy Spirit inside us through the sacrament of Holy Chrismation. The Holy Spirit is God, so that means God is always inside you!

When you receive the Holy Spirit, it's like getting a special mark that lasts forever. That is why we have only one baptism. God loves us so much and will never leave us, even if we make mistakes or forget about Him. We do not have to get baptized again because the Holy Spirit stays with us always.

How does the Holy Spirit help us?

The Holy Spirit is in everyone who is baptized and Chrismated. The Holy Spirit helps us each day. He helps us love and help each other. The Holy Spirit helps us know God and talk about God to others.

The Holy Spirit makes everything complete and **perfect** ... including us! The Holy Spirit comes down to complete and **perfect sacraments**.



We love God, and therefore, we listen to Him. We try to be like God, and the Holy Spirit in us will make us **perfect**. We know that we are obeying the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is **perfecting** us when other people see us and act like Jesus.

We clean the Church because it is God's House. We also need to keep ourselves clean inside because we are God's house!



After Baptism and Chrismation, the Holy Spirit lives in us. We are special and we should try to be like God on the outside too. We should love our neighbors and treat them how we want to be treated.

Reflection Questions

1. Is the Holy Spirit different from God?
2. What does the Holy Spirit do when we are baptized?
3. Is the Holy Spirit present during Holy Qurbana?

Lesson 13: Beyond the Walls of the Church

*We worship God at Church and we must also remember
Him at home and everywhere!*

Vocabulary Words

- **Yield:** Means to let others go first before we do
- **Hymn:** A song that offers praise to God

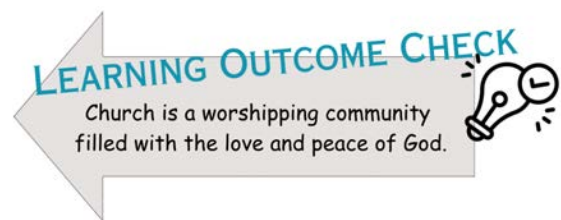
Sometimes we may think that we only need to be good when we are at Church. But that's not true! When we are baptized, God is with us always. They are with us wherever we go.

Our Home: The Mini Church

When our priest blesses a house, it becomes our home. In our home, the love of God grows because the house has been made holy. A house is built with wood, cement, and plastic. A home is built with the love and blessings from God.



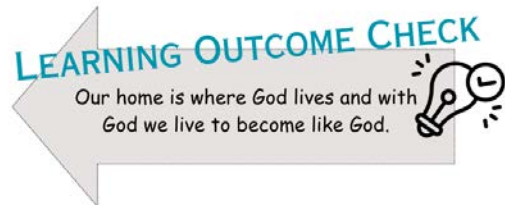
At Church, we *see* the priest or bishop at the altar, the people around us worshipping, and all of the icons. We *hear* the people around us pray aloud and sing **hymns**. We *touch* one another to give the Kiss of Peace, and we hold the Holy Qurbana Service Book to follow along during each service. We *smell* the incense coming from the censor. And of course, we



taste the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ Himself during the Holy Qurbana!

In the same way, our homes can be special and we can feel closer to Jesus. We can *see* a picture or an icon of Jesus or another saint. We can *hear* the words when we pray, and sing songs to Jesus. We can *hold* the Bible to read. When we do these things, we feel Jesus' love inside our hearts and in everything we do!

Just like how we go to church to worship God, we can also have a special place in our homes where we pray. This makes our home like a little church!



Every family might pray in different ways. Some families pray in the morning and evening. Some families pray in the living room, bedroom, or at the dining table.

It's okay if we do not have a special picture or object to pray in front of. The most important thing is to always make time to pray, even if we are busy.

Jesus Himself found time to pray, even when he was doing important things. Once He prayed in a special garden called Gethsemane (**St. Matthew 26: 36-44**).

Besides singing hymns and reading the Bible, what else should we do?



Where is your home altar?

We should learn to talk to God through prayer. P-R-A-Y can also stand for *Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield*.¹

You can start off your prayer by *praising* God, and using the time to think about all of the things you are thankful for.

- Examples: Thank God for the food on the table, for providing us with a home, for giving us good friends and family, and so on.

Then, take a moment to think about the things you might have done wrongly, and *repent*, which means to not only feel sorry for what you have done, but also try to do better next time.

- Example: I feel bad that I lied to my parents. I will say sorry and try to be honest next time!

Even though God is also your Father in Heaven and He knows the things you need before you even ask for them. But, it is still okay to *ask* God for things. Even King Solomon asked God to grant him wisdom so that he could be a good leader! (**3 Kingdoms 3:1-15**)

- Sometimes we do not get what we want when we want it but if God thinks we should have it, He will make it happen.

Lastly, ***yielding*** means to take a step back after praying and to let God do His work. This does not mean we just sit on the couch and be lazy.

- Instead, it means that we should still make the effort to do the things we are supposed to do (like studying, doing homework, or helping your

¹ The TRUTH Podcast. (2021, January 24). The Mechanics of Prayer: the P-R-A-Y method. PursueGOD.org. <https://www.pursuegod.org/the-mechanics-of-prayer-the-p-r-a-y-method/>.

parents at home, doing household chores), and that God is still there protecting you no matter what.

You might also think, “If I can pray and worship God at my own home, why do I still need to come to church? Isn’t my home a mini church already?”

Yes, your home is still a mini church! But when we go to church, we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This special gift gives us true healing from our sins!



Living Like Jesus Christ Outside of the Home



Since we are Christians and we are believers of Jesus Christ, it is important that we try to behave like Christ no matter where we are! This means we should be Christ-like at home, at school, when we are with our friends, and even when we think that nobody is watching us.

Jesus tells us to love God and love our neighbor (Mark 12:30-31 and Mark 12: 30-31), and there is no commandment greater than this.

We show others the love that Christ has shown us. Then, we are closer to living a life that is centered around Christ.

But how can we do that? If you see someone sitting alone, ask for permission to sit next to them and talk to them so that they do not feel lonely.

- When Jesus chose His 12 disciples, He picked the people who were not popular. He chose fishermen, carpenters, tax collectors, and sinners to be His disciples and His close friends. He chose the people that were usually lonely and whom other people ignored. **(St. Mark 1: 16-24, St. Mark 3: 13-19)**

If you see that someone is hungry, you can share a snack.

- Over 5,000 people came to Jesus, to receive healing of the sick, to learn, and hear from Him. They became very hungry. Instead of telling everyone to go home and eat, Jesus wanted to feed everyone right where they were. A little boy shared 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, and Jesus performed a miracle so that everyone had enough to eat and there was even extra food leftover! **(St. Matthew 14: 13-21)**

If you see that someone is sad, you can try to cheer them up!

- When Mary and Martha were sad that their brother, Lazarus, had died, Jesus visited them, and also cried! He used that moment to show God's wonderful ways by raising Lazarus from the dead! **(St. John 11: 1-44)**

There are so many ways we can behave like Christ!

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe the Church?
2. How can you pray at home?
3. How can your house be like Church?

Lesson 14: God Shows Us the Way

The Holy Spirit plays an important part in our lives.

Vocabulary Words

- **Kingdom of God:** Heaven
- **Fruit of the Spirit:** Actions you do to bring other people joy, happiness, peace
- **Parable:** A story used to teach a lesson, especially by Jesus Christ

God made us. We are His children. We believe in One God. He made us in His image and likeness

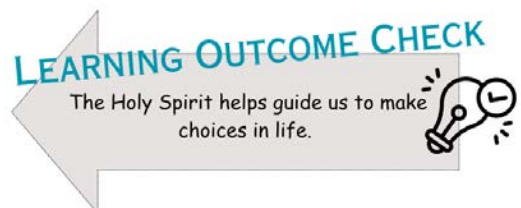
God is also Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is One and God is three Persons. This is called the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.



The Holy Spirit comes from the Father. During our Baptism, that Holy Spirit comes to live in us too. We become a part of God's family through baptism. It is a special celebration where we are cleansed with water and blessed by the Holy Spirit. A priest baptizes babies and adults by saying the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Helper

During the Feast of Pentecost, there are many prayers that describe the Holy Spirit and how much He is helping us



become holy like Christ. This is why the Holy Spirit is called the Helper.

The Holy Spirit helps us in many ways. He helps us understand God's Word and the teachings that God had given us through the Apostles. The Holy Spirit made the Apostles understand what Jesus had been teaching them, and gave them the gift of speaking many languages. The Holy Spirit helped the Church remember these teachings. As we learn, we become better Christians.

With God inside of us, we can understand and learn. However, we must work with the Holy Spirit. God will not force us to do anything! God is love, and because He loves us, He allows us to make our own choices.

How do we know we are doing God's will and working with the Holy Spirit inside of us? We act more like God. We love everyone like God loves us!

The Holy Spirit helps us to grow just like a special plant that grows fruit. We also grow fruit. This is called the "Fruit of the Holy Spirit." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) The Holy Spirit grows this wonderful fruit which others will see. It makes you a better and kinder person.

- **Love:** It's like giving big hugs and smiles to everyone around you. You care for others just like you care for your family and friends.
- **Joy:** It's like feeling super happy inside, like when you play with your favorite toys or eat your favorite ice cream!
- **Peace:** It's like being calm and not worrying, even if things get a little scary. The Holy Spirit helps you feel safe and peaceful.
- **Patience:** It's like waiting calmly without getting frustrated when things take time, like waiting for your turn on the playground.

- **Kindness:** It's like sharing your toys and helping someone who's sad. Being kind makes others happy.
- **Goodness:** It's like doing nice things for others, like picking up trash or helping your parents at home.
- **Faithfulness:** It's like being a good friend and keeping promises. You can trust the Holy Spirit to be with you always.
- **Gentleness:** It's like using soft and caring words when you talk to others. It's important to be gentle with your friends and family.
- **Self-control:** It's like being in charge of your actions and not doing wrong things , even when it's hard.

When you have all of this fruit growing in your heart, you become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us become like God.

Parable of the Mustard Seed

When Jesus was alive, He told stories to teach people about how to live as God's children on earth. These stories are called parables. One of these parables is the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

Once, a person asked Jesus, "What is the Kingdom of God?" Jesus said it is like a tiny mustard seed. Mustard seeds are really small. When a farmer plants this tiny seed in the ground, it grows into a big tree with branches. This tree is helpful for birds to rest on. When birds come together on the tree, they sing and make everyone happy.

Just like the mustard seed, we should let God's Word grow in us. If we do that, we can enter the Kingdom of God. By growing in God's Word, we can

bring joy, peace, and love to ourselves and others. These are good things that come from God. The Holy Spirit helps us grow this special fruit that will help us and others. We become like God to our friends and to our family.

Reflection Questions

1. Who are the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity?
2. What is another word for stories told by Jesus Christ?
3. How do you know if the Holy Spirit is guiding you? Give some examples.

Lesson 15: Women of Faith

St. Photini and St. Helena who loved Jesus. Their stories teach us that everyone is unique. It is important to celebrate our differences.

Vocabulary Words

- **Messiah:** Savior, or “the anointed one”; who is Jesus
- **Samaritan:** A person from Samaria, a region north of Jerusalem.

The Woman at the Well (St. John 4:1-42)

Jesus had been traveling and stopped at a well. A woman named Photini was there, and Jesus asked her if He could have some water to drink.

The woman was surprised because Jesus was Jewish and she was Samaritan. They were not supposed to talk or get along with each other.

Jesus told her that if she knew who He was, she would ask Him for special water that would make her never feel thirsty again and give her eternal life. Jesus was talking about the gift of life that only God could give.



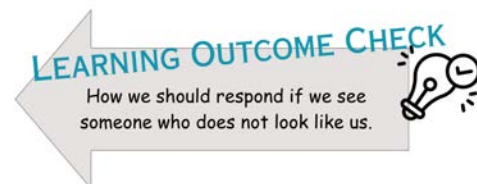
Jesus knew Photini's life even though they just met. This amazed her and she saw He is the **Messiah**, the special person sent by God.

Photini was so happy that she ran to tell everyone in her town about Jesus. They were surprised because men and women usually didn't talk to each other, and women were not treated equally. But Photini did not care about that. She wanted everyone to know about Jesus.

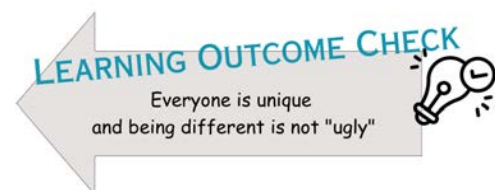
Some people from her town also wanted to meet Jesus because they were amazed by what Photini had told them. They became followers of Jesus that day.

St. Photini was a special woman who met Jesus at a well, and she was very brave because she told everyone in her town about Him, even though back then men and women didn't usually talk to each other. Jesus showed St. Photini that He loves everyone, no matter where they come from or how they look.

This teaches us that we should be kind and friendly to everyone, even if they don't look like us or come from different places. We should remember that everyone is special and loved by God, just like St. Photini.



St. Photini, a Samaritan woman, showed us that Jesus loves all people, no matter their background, gender, or status. When she met Jesus at the well, she shared her experience with others, highlighting that our differences are something to celebrate, rather than hide. This teaches us that being different is not "ugly" but is a part of what makes us special.



If we see someone who looks different, we should smile and say hello

because it can make them happy!

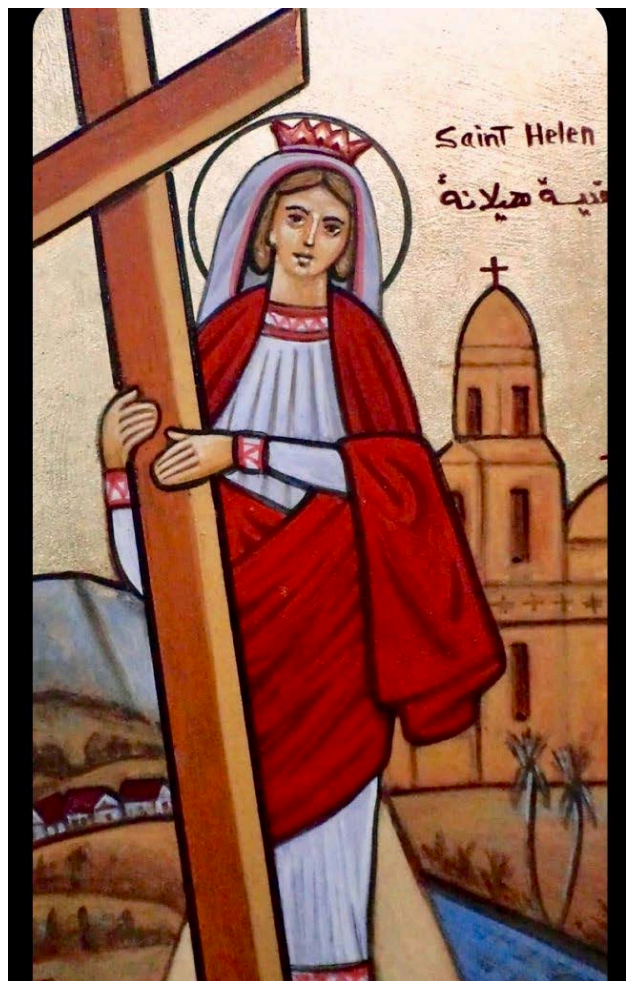
The story of St. Photini shows how Jesus loves all people. He cares for all men, women and children of this world. Where they come from, their religion, color or how different they are, do not matter to Him. Jesus just wants everyone to know about God and love God.

St. Helena the Empress

St. Helena was the mother of a king named Emperor Constantine. Before they knew about Jesus, they used to pray to statues.

One day, Emperor Constantine saw a Cross in the sky and heard Jesus speak to him. Jesus said that they would win battles if they had crosses on their shields and flags. So, Constantine started to believe in Jesus and became a Christian.

St. Helena was curious about Jesus too. She went to the Holy Land to find special places where Jesus had been. She wanted to find the Cross that Jesus was crucified on.



She asked a Jewish priest called a rabbi. He said that they could find the cross under an old temple. There, they dug and found three crosses. Now, they did not know which one was Jesus' Cross. So they did a test. They placed each cross on a little boy who had just passed away.

When they laid the third cross on him, the boy suddenly came back to life! That's how they knew it was Jesus' Cross.



St. Helena was very happy and knew she had found something amazing. She also found Jesus' tomb and built a church there.

She was a very important Saint who used her power to help other Christians. She built churches where people could pray and gave money to help sick and poor people.

St. Helena showed us that no matter how old we are, we can always learn about Jesus and do good things for others. She is an important saint in the Christian religion because she helped spread the faith and protect it.

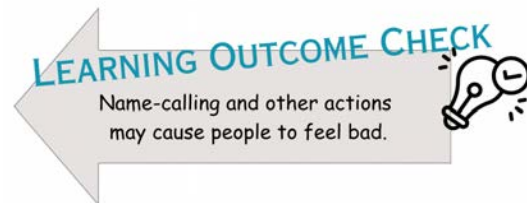
Summary

In our lessons about St. Photini and St. Helena, we see the powerful examples of two women of faith who taught us about kindness, bravery, and the importance of treating all people with love and respect. St. Photini, a Samaritan woman, spoke with Jesus despite the cultural barriers of her time and boldly shared the good news of His love with her entire town. She reminds us that everyone, regardless of their background, deserves compassion and understanding.

Similarly, St. Helena used her influence and strength to protect and

spread the Christian faith, showing us that our actions, whether big or small, can significantly impact the lives of others. She demonstrated that we can always choose to be kind and uplift others, regardless of our position or age.

When we consider the stories of these two saints, it's important to remember that name-calling and hurtful actions can make people feel bad and isolated. Just as St. Photini broke societal norms to share love and acceptance, we can also choose to reject negative behaviors and be a source of encouragement and kindness in our own lives. Instead of allowing our words or actions to cause hurt, let's strive to reflect the love of Jesus and treat everyone with dignity and respect, just as the examples set by St. Photini and St. Helena.



By being mindful of our words and actions, we can create a community that celebrates everyone's uniqueness and fosters a sense of belonging and love, ensuring no one feels left out or unloved.

Reflection Questions

1. What qualities do you like about St. Photini and St. Helena?
2. What made St. Photini different from the rest of Jesus's disciples?
3. How did St. Helena strengthen her belief in Christ?

Lesson 16: Called to Serve

*Everyone is called to work for the Kingdom of God.
Clergy have a special role in helping the people worship God.*

Vocabulary Words

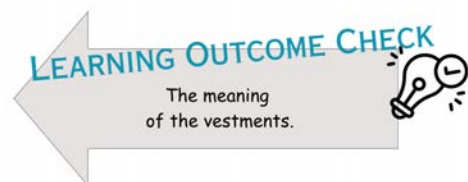
- **Vestments:** Clothing worn by different clergy members
- **Clergy:** Church leaders (such as deacons, priests, bishops)

In Ephesians 6:10-18, St. Paul the Apostle describes the "Armor of God". The **clergy** wear special **vestments** or clothing that reminds us of their special role.

What is armor? Armor is protective clothing. You might have heard that soldiers wear strong, protective armor to be ready for a battle. Without the armor, the soldiers are more likely to get hurt.

In the same way, we must also put on the full Armor of God. This means everyday we must remember to include Jesus Christ and the Gospel in our lives. This will protect us from sin and temptation, just like soldiers are protected from getting hurt!

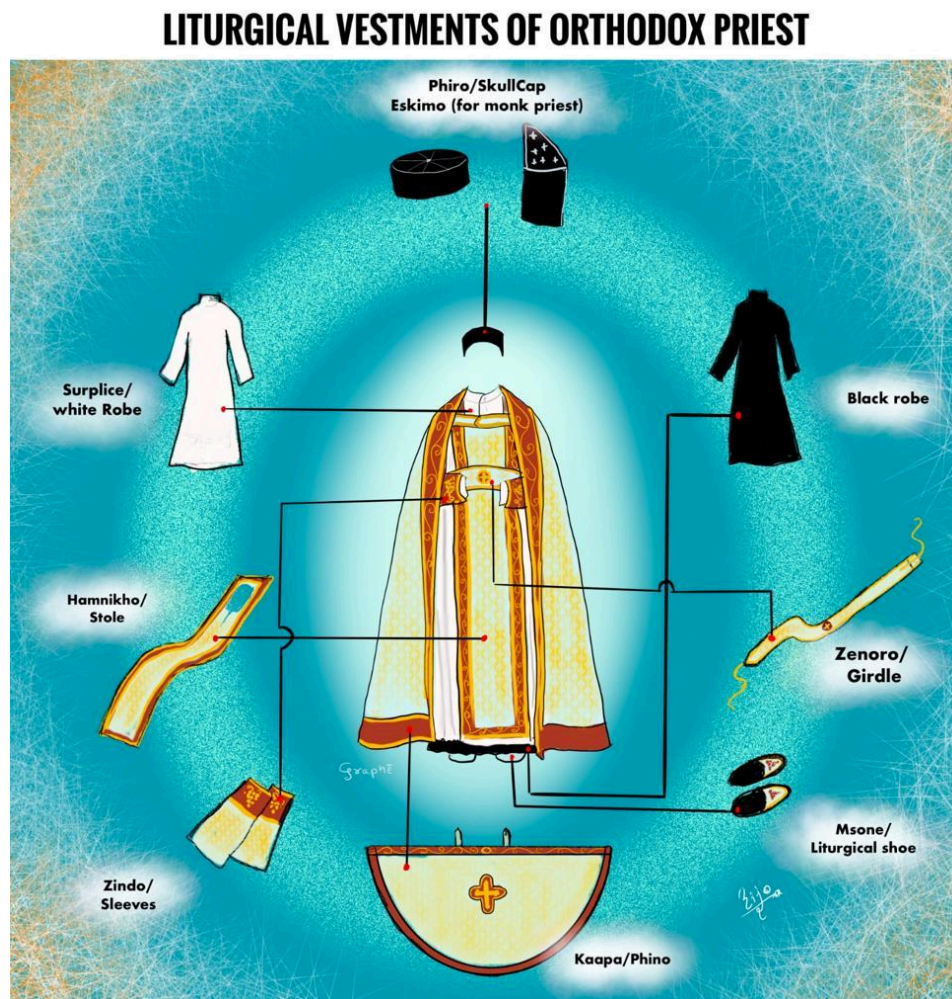
For clergy, each piece of clothing has important meaning to it. Deacons, priests, and bishops say special prayers before putting on each vestment. There are many different levels of **clergy** members, which mostly includes deacons, priests, and bishops. In this lesson we will look closely at the vestments of the priest.



The Priest

The priest is a loving father to the people in church. He guides, prays for, and helps them find things that are good for them. He also goes into the altar and offers our gifts to God. Then God gives it back to us, as the priest gives us Holy Qurbana or the blessed palm leaves on Palm Sunday

The priest wears a white robe over black robe, special shoes, a stole, a belt, hand sleeves, with a black cape and lastly a kapa or kappa on top of everything.



Vestments

- Stole: Similar to the stole of the deacon, but for the priest, there is a hole where they can put their head through, and then the stole flows down the front of the priest.
 - Symbolizes the breastplate of Aaron



- Girdle (belt): worn around the waist
 - Symbolizes the belt of truth



- Sleeves: worn on both arms, from wrist to elbow
 - Symbolizes that the hands are for good works



- Shoes: Shoes are work to go somewhere! In the same way, we take the good news, or the Gospel, of Jesus Christ to everyone around us.
 - Symbolizes the readiness of the Gospel of peace. We bring peace to them, just like Jesus brings peace to us.



- Cape (also called Kaapa): The large, designed outer vestment worn over all other pieces
 - Symbolizes the glory and salvation, like the robe of Aaron (Moses' brother)



The Faithful

Each one of us is a child of God. Some of us may choose to be a clergy member, and some of us may not. But we all received the Holy Spirit at our baptism, and have since accepted Jesus Christ into our hearts. We still have to live like Christ wherever we are.

We are all part of the priesthood and also practice **stewardship**. Stewardship means to take care of the whole creation.

A priest prays for people, a child can also pray for people. A priest comforts people who might be having a bad day, and so can a child. A priest can offer Qurbana, or the Body and Blood of Christ. In the same way, together we can

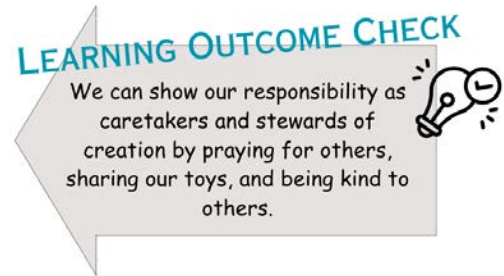
LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Stewardship means that we have a responsibility to take care of all of creation. This means to take care of the animals, bugs, the environment and also each other.



share the Body and Blood of Christ with the whole world, all people, and even the plants and animals.

As we have learned in previous lessons, we can share the love of Christ today. We can pray for our friends, and talk to them about our love for Christ. We can talk to our families, and pray for them too. We can do acts of kindness and charity for people.



If we receive money as a gift, we can set aside a small piece of it, and give it to someone in need or to the Church. We can donate cans of food, or make cards for people who are sick or having a tough day.

We can also do our best in Sunday School, making sure we ask questions in class, and share what we have learned with our family. You can also try to follow along with all the things you see and hear the next time we go to Holy Qurbana, and try to learn how to pray with your family.

Always remember to keep God first before anything you do and to always make time for God, every day. Someday, you might even become a Sunday School teacher yourself and share your love for Christ to future Sunday School children!

Reflection Questions

1. What are the roles of a deacon, a priest, and a bishop?
2. What can you do to be a good steward of Christ?
3. What are some things you can do to take care of creation?