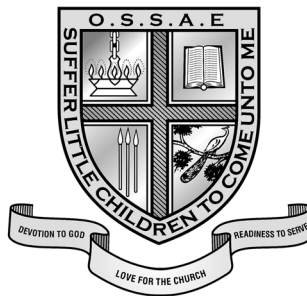


ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



Nazareth Division **Class III** (English)

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FOREWORD

Orthodox Sunday School Association of the East could successfully publish Sunday School text books, modifying those in use comprehensively, according to needs of the hour. The effort behind this deserves appreciation from all angles. This publication was the result of concerted hard work from a fellowship of clergy and laity well experienced in the area of education under the capable leadership and guidance of the then OSSAE President and educational wizard H. G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios and the then Director General of OSSAE and reputed Psychologist Fr. Dr. O. Thomas. Now, it has become necessary for a re-publication of those books. Let us recall thankfully those who worked behind this: we submit them in the hands of our Almighty God.

The Word of God, Church Liturgy, family prayers, life of Church Fathers and their exhortations, faith of our Church, Church History and social issues are integrated systematically and equitably developed from BALAPADOM to VEDA PRAVEEN DIPLOMA and different topics arranged in different textbooks most sensibly and in an orderly manner. There can be further modifications and corrections. All those going through these texts may note that they have the freedom and opportunity to make suggestions for improving this further.

Let us not forget one thing. Along with the topics covered in the curriculum, children come across another open text, which is the presence of their teacher, which they experience and assimilate. In young minds, which is more influential, presence of teacher or textbooks? Both are important. However, what integrates more in a child mind is the presence of teacher, as we perceive. Facial expressions happen to enlighten a person. It is a direct perception rather than sense of hearing. Mother, father, priests, teachers, elder brothers and other elders are all masters, but the one standing on top of all is mother as the saying goes, “GURUNAM MATHA SHREYASI”.

The very first open house of education is home followed by church and school. All these join to form a concept of GURUKULAM and an ongoing master – child relationship. It shall be in such a learning scenario, one has to perceive curricular and non-curricular topics with teachers and students.

With this note of Foreword, the revised print of Sunday School texts are presented before Church.

Devalokam
01-12- 2019

Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios
President, OSSAE

INTRODUCTION

‘The goal of OSSAE is to give the students the firm faith in Jesus Christ, our God, the Lord and the Saviour. This aim shall be given emphasis in every class. Every topic in Sunday School classes such as the Holy Bible, Holy tradition, Church history, Sacraments, biographies of the Saints shall be centred in the life and person of Jesus Christ, the incarnated God. Students shall be led by the faith that ‘Jesus Christ is my Lord’ in all their endeavours like planning the life and selecting the partner in future. Sunday School study should inspire them to have faith in the Triune God, partake in all salvific acts of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as a member of the Holy Church, and also to work for the glory of the Kingdom of God.

What we are to be is more important than what we are. Let our teaching be learner centered. Teacher shall inspire the student. He/she shall be a facilitator for them. Help the student to know God, experience God and to walk in His ways. Teachers and students shall grow together facilitating each other.

The parents have a great evangelical role in moulding their children in Godliness. The parents should teach their children without fail. St. John Chrysostom opined that ‘Home Church is the cradle of Catechism’. The parents are the most influential teachers of children.

Video classes of all chapters from Balapadam to Class XII are available on ossaebodhanam.org. Parents should take care to teach children using online resources along with regular classes in Sunday School. The ultimate aim is theosis, not just achieving high marks. One of the reasons for spiritual decline is delimitation. Let thoughts overflowing with goodness and ideal to the glory of Kingdom of God fill in our minds and flow to the coming generations.

Devalokam
16-09-2021

Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese
Director General

PREFACE

The OSSAE curriculum was thoroughly revised during 2012-13. The revision was done considering child psychology and giving emphasis to student centered teaching and learning. Intensive supervision of the then OSSAE President, H. G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios and the leadership of the then Director General Fr. Dr. O. Thomas were the real assets in the revision process.

Prof. Dr. Sam V. Daniel, Omalloor served as the Executive Editor of the Curriculum Committee. After Fr. Dr. O. Thomas, Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew became the Director General and he worked hard day and night to complete the revision. Many distinguished persons co-operated with him to complete the lessons. Let us express the gratitude to all of them. When Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurian took charge as the Director General, he initiated the correction of printing mistakes and other errors in the first edition.

The process is still going on. It is now ten years since the new curriculum had been formulated. Present Curriculum Committee, under the leadership of OSSAE President H. G. Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios and Director General Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese, is taking steps to include necessary revisions in the texts. The service of Fr. Job Sam Mathew, our Office Administrator in remodelling this book is to be mentioned with gratitude.

There are thirteen classes at present under five sections – Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Jerusalem and Tabore. This text is for class Three of Nazareth section. Here the students are of the age 7-8. So teachers and parents shall take utmost care in handling them. We together shall help them to walk along with Jesus Christ. Give first priority to mould them, not marks. Let the Holy Spirit guide us to attain our goal.

Devalokam

14-09-2021

Prof. Dr. Cherian Thomas

Publication Officer

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STRUCTURE OF THE LESSONS

(Prepared by Prof. Dr. Sam V. Daniel)

1. **Message:** The central idea that should be sensitised through each lesson is given here.
2. **Verse to be Memorized:** A biblical verse related to the central theme of the lesson is given for memorizing. The teacher should read out this verse from the Holy Bible at the end of the class and the students should say it aloud several times.
3. **Teaching Aids:** Information on pictures, books, etc. connected to the central theme are given to present lessons effectively.
4. **Introduction:** This section helps in making the presentation of the lesson attractive and enjoyable.
5. **The Lesson or Text:** This is the content of the lesson. We have tried our best to make it student-centred. The ideas should be presented by participating students. The teacher should take the Holy Bible to class and should read out the biblical passages. The descriptions made should have the quality of a narration. The students should be encouraged through interaction questions. When important ideas come let the students recite them in Chorus.
6. **Song or Hymns:** A song or hymn connected with the lesson is given here. The teacher should sing it aloud and the students should recite it in chorus.
7. **Let Us Pray:** A simple prayer connected with the theme of the lesson is given here. The teacher and the students can say this prayer in the class together. All should stand up and cross themselves before the prayer.
8. **Resolution or Resolution:** An idea that can touch the students' mind like a decision and that can be implemented in their lives is given in this section. Make the students say aloud this concept.
9. **Let Us Think:** These are evaluation questions given to examine how far the students have grasped the ideas in the text.
10. **Activities:** Most of the tasks given in the section are for enacting, drawing, physical action or narration.
11. **Further Reading:** Various biblical passages connected with the lesson are given for reading in the evening and in the morning of all days of a week.

Unit 1

Bible Events

Lesson 1

Offerings that Please our Lord

(Genesis 4: 1-15)

Message: We should make our offerings to God with purity and goodwill.

Verse to be Memorized: “The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalms. 51:17).

Learning Aids: Pictures of farmlands, animals and shepherds.

Introduction

Many people find happiness in helping others. We can have this happiness only if such help has certain good qualities. We should help others with goodwill. We should not give anything to others half heartedly or grudgingly. St. Paul says, “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Today we are going to learn the experience of Abel and Cain, who made their offering to God.

The Lesson

Haven’t you heard about our first parents? What do you know about the children of Adam and Eve? The elder son Cain was a farmer. The younger son Abel was a shepherd. Both were hardworking. They believed that everything happens due to God’s grace. We show our thankfulness to God by offering Him a part of what we get. This practice has existed from ancient times. Both the brothers decided to sacrifice the fruits of their labour to God.

Cain offered his farm products. Abel sacrificed the best of his first-born sheep. God was pleased with Abel and his sacrifice. While, God was not pleased with Cain and his sacrifice. So, Cain became angry. God commanded him to contain his anger



Abel offering the sacrifice in a kneeling posture. Cain standing angry.

and advised him to lead a sinless, pure life of good deeds. Cain became furious. He didn't like the suggestions to get God's blessings.

Offer only the best things to God. Our offerings should be given whole heartedly and with happiness. God blesses those who give with pleasure.

Hymn

(Habelin kunjadam Nohinude...)

God, who didst receive the lamb- Blameless Abel brought
 Who the gift of Noah took, - Abram's sacrifice;
 See our fast and hear our pray'r,
 Answer by Thy grace our pleas.

.....

.....

Resolution

We will please God by making our offerings happily.

Let Us Think

1. Who were the first two children of Adam? What were their occupations?
.....
.....
2. Are our offerings as good as Abel's?
.....
3. How well do our families participate in the festival of First fruits' in our church (Harvest Festival).
.....
4. Why do we hold charity collection/offertory in our Sunday School? Do we make our contributions happily?
.....
.....
5. God wasn't pleased with Cain's offering. Why?

Activities

1. Write the script of God's conversation with Cain. Present it as a small drama in the class. Your teacher will help you.
2. Crossword Puzzle

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | | | ○ | ○ | | | | | | |
| | | | 2 | ○ | ○ | | | | | |
| 3 | | | ○ | ○ | | | | | | |

Right

1. "It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be among you must be your servant." (St. Matthew 20:26) (5 letters)
2. The town where Jesus was born (9 letters)
3. The child who lived with Eli the Priest who later became a prophet of Israel (6 letters)

3. Word Study

The word 'brother' refers to all siblings who share the womb of their mother. The word is also used in the sense of a colleague.

4. What should we do if we are angry with our brother/friend? Given below are some suggestions.

1. Be patient and remain silent
2. Let the anger melt away.
3. Pray for getting mental strength.
4. Establish friendship once again/ Approach again with a smile.
5.

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Sunday | * | Hebrews 11:1-6 |
| Monday | Psalms 127:1-5 | Acts 5:1-6 |
| Tuesday | Acts 4:32-37 | Acts 5:7-11 |
| Wednesday | St. James 2:15-18 | St. Luke 16:19-23 |
| Thursday | St. Luke 16:24-31 | St. Matthew 6:1-4 |
| Friday | Proverbs 10:22-32 | Leviticus 2:14-16 |
| Saturday | Leviticus 23:22-25 | * |

Lesson 2

Abraham's Broadmindedness

(Genesis 12, 13, 14)

Message: What is gained selfishly without caring for others will not last.

Verse to be Memorized: "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity." (Psalms. 133:1)

Learning Aids: Picture of tents. Map of places travelled by Abraham.

Introduction

Parents often divide their wealth and assets among their children. Some children are satisfied with what they get. Some others try to grab a lion's share for themselves. Those who desire for and acquire what they don't really deserve would regret it in later life. Today let's learn a story that gives us this message.

The Lesson

God told Abraham to leave his own country and people, and go to another land. God promised to guide him. Abraham obeyed and got out with Lot, his nephew. They were very rich in livestock. The fight between their herdsmen made it difficult for them to live together. So Abraham thought that it would be better for their families to live independently. Abraham loved Lot as his own son. He said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Genesis 13:8-9)

Lot took a long look at the land. He selected the fertile plains of river Jordan lying to the east. Lot chose the fertile lands in a selfish manner. He did not bother about Abraham's needs. They parted ways. Abraham stayed in the land of Canaan. Lot lost all his wealth which he had selfishly chosen for himself neglecting Abraham's needs. He had to flee from the land without even looking back once. But Abraham, who selected the remaining land, and his descendants were blessed.

Hymn

(Rajyathin Vathil Cheriyaathumam Margam...)

How narrow the door - and straight the path, which
Leads to the Kingdom
He who wants to follow it
Needs restraint and discipline
He who relaxes his guard
Is drawn to the path of sin
By his will - he will lose his soul.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Lord, give us a pure heart which does not think about evil, lustful
thoughts and extravagance. Amen*

.....

Resolution

***We will develop selflessness and love for our brothers.
We will give importance to the Will of God in everything.***

Let Us Think

1. Who was Abraham's nephew?

.....

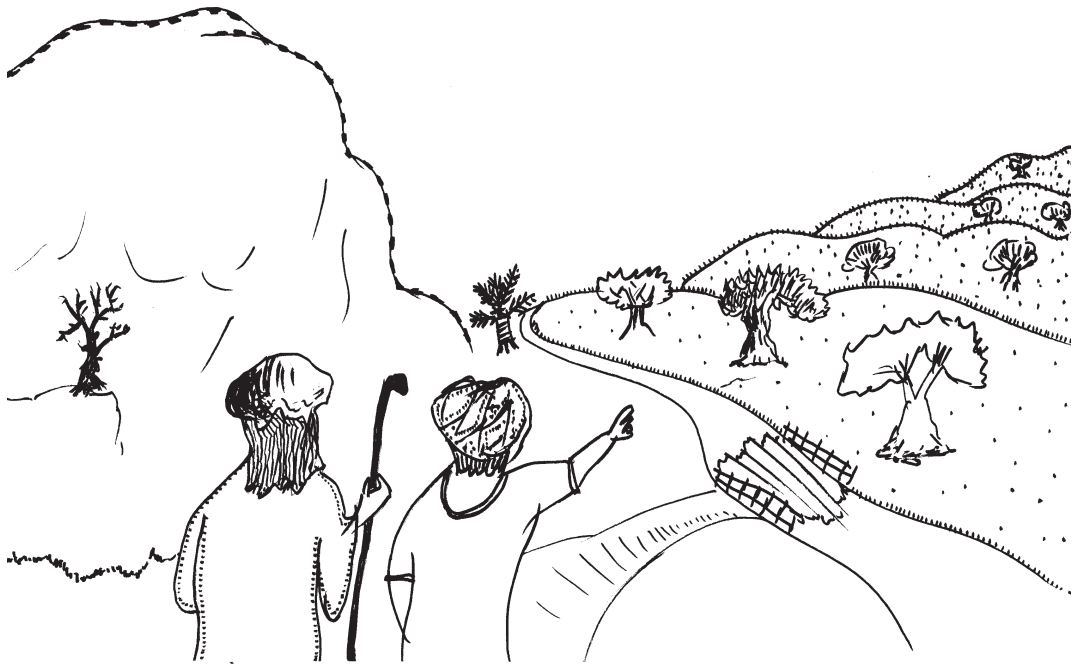
2. Why did Abraham and Lot part company?

.....

Activities

1. Find out God's promises (blessings) to Abraham from Genesis chapter 12 and write them briefly in your book.
2. Collect stories of self sacrifice and present them in the class.
3. Word study

Abraham is called "Father of the faithful". Do you know the different forms of the name 'Abraham'? Abraham - Avira, Avaran, Avarachan, Aby, Abel, Abhi, Abraham.



Abraham and Lot

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Sunday | * | Psalms 103:1-3 |
| Monday | Genesis 12:1-4 | Psalms 103:4-6 |
| Tuesday | Genesis 13:4-7 | Psalms 103:7-11 |
| Wednesday | Genesis 13:8-9 | Psalms 103:11-13 |
| Thursday | Genesis 13:10-11 | Psalms 103:14-17 |
| Friday | Genesis 13:14-16 | Psalms 103:18-20 |
| Saturday | Genesis 13:17-18 | * |

Lesson 3

Fire in the Bush

(Exodus 3: 1-22)

Message: We can do wonderful things if we submit ourselves to God.

Verse to be Memorized: “With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.” (Psalm 60:12)

Learning Aids: Picture of a desert; Map of Egypt.

Introduction

Have you seen individuals and organizations helping the needy? In ancient days the people of Israel suffered a lot of persecution from the Egyptians. Moses was chosen by God to save the people of Israel. Moses had a humble birth. Today we shall learn how God chose Moses and how Moses delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

The Lesson

Have you heard the story of how the people of Israel lived as slaves in Egypt? King Pharaoh made them slaves and burdened them with lots of hardships. One day a Hebrew named Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep in the valley of Horeb mountains. While taking rest for sometime in the valley, he saw a strange sight! A bush was on flames. He ran towards it. The bush was burning, but it didn't burn off. What a surprise! As he came closer he heard God calling him “Moses, Moses.” Moses stood still in surprise. The caller seemed to know him very well. Moses had been a prince for forty years and has been living as a shepherd for another forty years. On hearing his name being called out, Moses bowed his head saying “Here I am.” God commanded him to remove his shoes, as he was standing on a Holy ground. Moses understood that it was a call for him to accept a new path in life which was quite different from his past life.

Do you know why Yahweh chose Moses? He was appointed to deliver the people of Israel suffering in Egypt under Pharaoh's yoke. He should lead them through the desert to the Horeb mountain to worship Yahweh there. Moses had a stammering. He thought that the task given to him was too much for him. But God gave him courage and sent him along with his brother Aaron. From then on, Moses was guided by Yahweh's strength. He delivered his people and led them through the desert up to the land of Canaan. This incident reveals that we can achieve great things with God's strength.

There is nothing impossible to God. See how Moses the stammering shepherd, was made the great leader of his people for all times. Those who accept God's assignment shall receive lots of help from God. They can do great things. We should give up our old habits and become renewed.

Hymn

(Mulmarameriyatherithee ...)

As the fire enflamed the bush - yet did not it burn
So did God come down and dwell - in the Virgin's womb;
He incarnate was of her
Losing not the Virgin's seal

.....

Let Us Pray

*Jesus Christ, our Lord, empower us to rejoice with those
who obeyed Your will. Amen*

.....

Resolution

We will do our duties always relying on God's grace.

Let Us Think

1. In which country did the people of Israel become slaves?

.....

2. Who did God chose to deliver them?

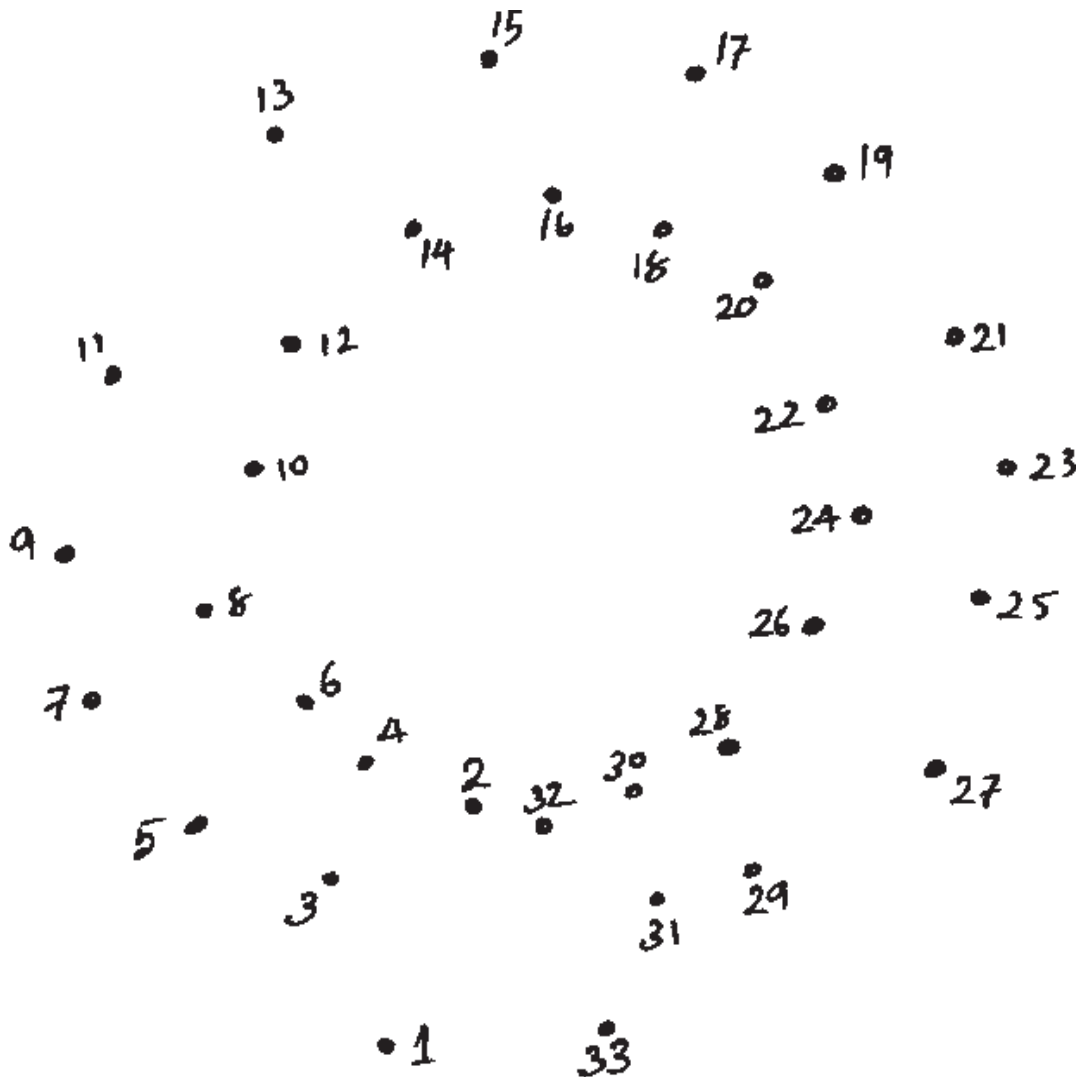
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3. What was Moses doing when he saw the burning bush?

.....

Activities

1. Memorize a biblical verse connected with sandals (St. John 1:27)
.....
2. Read from the Holy Bible, the passage dealing with Moses' meeting Yahweh.
3. Join the dots and find out the bush on flames of fire.





Moses and the bush on fire

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Sunday | * | Exodus 1:8-14 |
| Monday | Psalms 37:29-34 | Exodus 2:1-10 |
| Tuesday | Deuteronomy 5:12-15 | Exodus 4:1-5 |
| Wednesday | St. John 1:29-34 | Exodus 4:6-17 |
| Thursday | St. John 1:35-42 | St. Matthew 4:18-22 |
| Friday | Psalms 130 | Isaiah 6:1-8 |
| Saturday | Psalms 103:11-18 | * |

Lesson 4

The Strength of Prayer and Fasting

(Esther 3, 4)

Message: Prayer accompanied by fasting has great strength.

Verse to be Memorized: “This kind can come out only through prayer and fasting.”
(St. Mark 9: 29)

Learning Aids: Pictures of palaces, king, queen and Jewish religious vestments.

Introduction

People often face difficulties and crises in life. In times of danger, people with a pure heart rely on God. They would do things with prayer and fasting. So God will help them in difficulties and deliver them. There are many such incidents in history. Today's lesson deals with the incident of how a Jewish woman overcame a major crisis with prayer and fasting.

The Lesson

Have you learnt about the sufferings of Jews as Pharaoh's slaves? The people of Israel had a similar experience in Babylon too. The country was then ruled by King Ahasuerus. A Jew named Mordecai and his family were among the slaves of Babylon. He had a beautiful and lovely cousin, Esther. She had lost her parents and was looked after by Mordecai. Esther grew up as a young girl with good character. King Ahasuerus liked her very much and made her his queen. Thus Esther came to live in the palace of the king.

The king had a minister named Haman. All the servants of the king had to kneel down and respect him. But Jews had the religious commandment not to and worship anyone other than Yahweh. Hence Mordecai refused to kneel down before Haman. Haman was enraged. He decided to kill Mordecai and to destroy his tribe. He got the King's decree to destroy all the Jews.

Mordecai became aware of the great danger the Jews were in. He approached Queen Esther and prayed to save her tribe from doom. He reminded Esther. “If you

keep quiet now, the hope and salvation of Jews will come from other quarters... It is for that you have come to the royal throne.”

Esther directed all Jews to fast with her for three days and pray to God. They prayed together to God to save them from harm. Yahweh heard their prayers. Esther got permission to meet the king in person. The queen pleased the king and convinced him about the danger on Jews due to Haman’s evil plans. Haman became the object of king’s anger and was condemned to be hanged. He was hanged on the same gallows which he had secretly kept to hang Mordecai. The Jews were happy. Thus Queen Esther could save her own tribe from danger through prayer and fasting.

Hymn

(Song in the prayer before retiring to sleep during Lent)

Both Moses and Elijah
Fasted forty days and nights
As our Lord also fasted
And conquered the evil one.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Good Shepherd, Who is a model for us, grant us the grace to gain
strength from prayer and fasting. Amen*

.....

Resolution

We will overcome adversities through prayer and fasting

Let Us Think

1. Who was the king of Babylon?

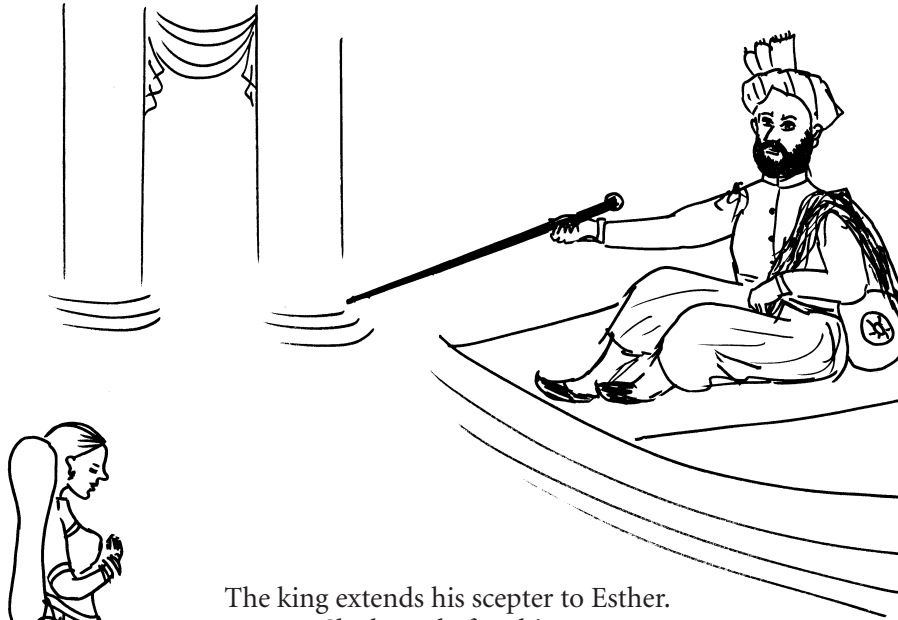
.....

2. Name the cousin of Mordecai.

.....

3. How did Esther become the queen of the land?

.....



The king extends his scepter to Esther.
She bows before him.

Activities

Match the following words by joining the bullets beside them with a line.

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|-----------------|
| Mordecai | • | • | minister |
| Esther | • | • | king of Babylon |
| Ahasuerus | • | • | a Jew |
| Haman | • | • | Queen |

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| Sunday | * | Esther 5:1-5 |
| Monday | Esther 5:6-11 | Esther 5:12-14 |
| Tuesday | Esther 6:1-7 | Esther 6:8-14 |
| Wednesday | Esther 7:1-4 | Esther 7:5-10 |
| Thursday | Esther 8:1-6 | Esther 8:13-15 |
| Friday | Psalms 89:17-27 | Proverbs 10:7-14 |
| Saturday | Psalms 138:1-8 | * |

Lesson 5

Samson: The Strength of Vow

(Judges chapters 13, 14, 15)

Message: We should maintain divine strength we received through Baptism by obeying God's commandments.

Verse to be Memorized: "Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways." (Psalms 128:1)

Learning Aids: Pictures of Church Fathers, monks and St. John the Baptist.

Introduction

Dear children, haven't you observed the vestments of metropolitans and monks of our church? The great ascetic fathers of our church also have similar vestments. Do you know that all great ascetics follow a disciplined way of life? It makes them different from others. Have you heard of people who have acquired extraordinary gifts from God due to their special vows in life? St. Gregorios of Parumala was such a great soul. How great would be the punishment if people who have taken their ascetic vows break their vows and life style! Today we are going to learn about the life of Samson and his fate.

The Lesson

Israelites were frequently attacked by Philistines. Samson was chosen by God from his mother's womb to save His people of Israel from the Philistines. God's angel had told Samson's parents never to cut their son's hair. For, he should be a 'Nazirite.' The Nazirite is a person set apart by God, who is chosen by the Lord from the mother's womb. (eg. St. John the Baptist, Prophet Samuel, Samson). They should never drink wine or beer, never cut their hair and should live a dedicated life. There will be big danger if these vows are broken.

Samson grew up to become a strong man. In his youth, he tore a young lion which tried to attack him into two! On another occasion he killed thirty Philistines single handedly. Samson attacked the Philistines with a donkey's jawbone and killed a thousand with it. Philistines feared this extraordinarily mighty man. He became the pride of the Israelites.

Once the Philistines closed the city gates to capture Samson who was lying asleep in it. Samson went to the city gates and lifted them with the two gateposts and carried them to the top of a mountain. As he was a Nazirite, God's strength rescued him from the Philistines every time.

Later the young Samson violated many of his vows. He married a Philistine girl but the relationship did not last long. Later he fell in love with another Philistine woman, named Delilah and started living with her. Philistines secretly asked Delilah to find out the secret of Samson's strength. At first Delilah could not achieve any success. Samson loved Delilah dearly. So she feigned love and pestered him again and again to get at the secret of his strength. At last he told her the secret of his long grown hair.

When Samson fell asleep. Delilah cut off his hair. The Nazirite's strength diminished. Samson, forgetting his vows, brought harm to himself. He couldn't resist the temptation. Philistines caught Samson, blinded him and put him in chains. Later they made him grind grains for them.

Samson regretted his faults. He wailed and prayed to God. Slowly his hair started growing. Though blind, Yahweh's strength flowed through him once again. There was a festival at the temple of the Philistines. They brought the blind Samson to the temple for fun and bound him on a pillar. Samson shook the huge pillars on which he was bound and pulled them down. The pillars gave in and thousands of Philistines died, and Samson too met with his end. Thus he completed his mission to save the Israelites from Philistines. This lesson teaches us that if those who receive the gifts of God violate them they will come to harm.

Hymn

(Song in the prayer before retiring to sleep during Lent)

By the prayers of Your Mother
Let not Satan near my bed
By Your sacrifice for me
Forbid him from harming me.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Merciful God, forgive our sins mercifully and prevent
Satan from ruling us. Amen*

.....

Resolution

*We will preserve God's gifts to us.
We will keep our promises to the Lord*

Let Us Think

1. Who is Samson?
.....
2. What are the special characteristics of Samson?
.....
3. Who is a "Nazirite"? What are the vows to be observed by a Nazirite? What kind of life style should he follow?
.....
.....
4. Narrate the incidents that reveal Samson's strength.
.....
.....

Activities

1. Collect pictures of ascetics and paste them in the Book of collections.
2. Make a note of your daily routine.
3. Find 5 Biblical verses which mention 'strength.'

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Sunday | * | Judges 14:5-10 |
| Monday | Judges 14:11-14 | Psalm 119:9-16 |
| Tuesday | Proverbs 6:6-11 | St. Luke 2:22-27 |
| Wednesday | St. Luke 2:28-33 | St. Luke 2:34-40 |
| Thursday | Ephesus 6:10-19 | Psalm 15:1-5 |
| Friday | Genesis 32:22-26 | Genesis 32:27-32 |
| Saturday | Job 42:10-17 | * |

Lesson 6

St. John the Baptist - The Burning Lamp

(St. John 5:35, St. Luke 7:28, St. Luke 1; 3:7-14, 3: 21-22,
St. Matthew 3:1-17, 14:1-12)

Message: Our life and actions should attract others to Jesus Christ.

Verse to be Memorized: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (St. John 3:30)

Learning Aids: The picture of a desert.

Introduction

We have seen how the public worship of the Holy Eucharist begins. The priest encircles the altar and he is led by a deacon carrying a lighted candle. Do you know who the priest and the deacon stand for? The priest represents Christ, and the deacon, St. John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. The deacon carries the lighted candle because Jesus Christ had described John the Baptist as ‘burning and shining lamp’ (St. John 5:35).

The Lesson

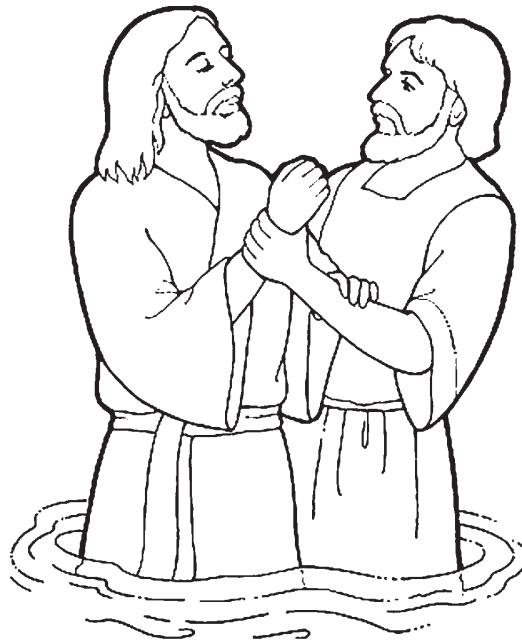
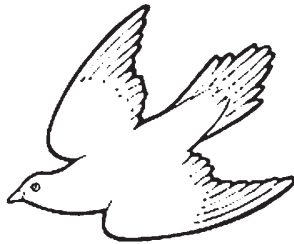
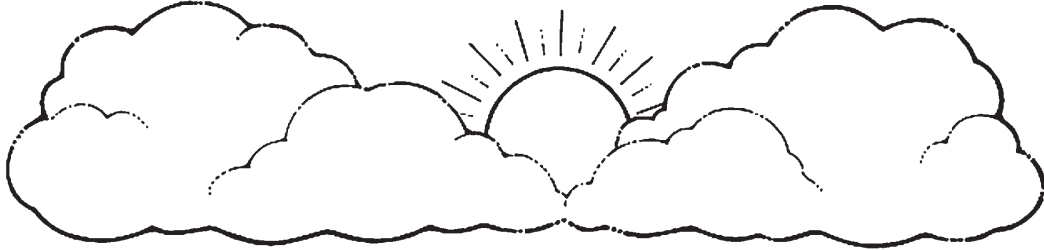
Priest Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless (St. Luke 1:). They were old, but they had no children. Once Priest Zachariah was burning incense in the temple of the Lord. Then Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, appeared to him on the right side of the altar of incense. Zachariah was afraid. The angel said, “Do not be afraid Zachariah, for your prayer is heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. You shall call him John.”

The angel’s words came true. Elizabeth, conceived and gave birth to a son in her old age. He was named John. He lived alone in the desert keeping his vows. There he got God’s commandment. Accordingly he called people to repent for their sins and get a baptism of repentance. Those who repented were baptized in the Jordan river. It was during this time that John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist taught the people that Jesus Christ was mightier than him and was truly the Son of the Lord. John the Baptist lashed out against injustice with a severe tongue. Jesus Christ bears witness to John the Baptist through there words.” Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.” “He was the burning and shining lamp.”

John the Baptist was quite fearless. He had told King Herod, the then ruler of the land, that it was not lawful for him to marry his brother's wife, Herodias. Because of this Herod caught hold of John, imprisoned him, and beheaded him.

Let John the Baptist's example of attracting several people to Jesus Christ through his words be a model for us.



Jesus Christ gets baptized by John the Baptist

Hymn

(Aadhyaacharithvam Kaikkondaharon ...)

When the priesthood passed on down,
Moses got it, Aaron too;
Moses passed it to Scariah,
Passed Scariah it on to John
 John did pass it to our Lord,
 Christ ordained Apostles twelve;
 They sent forth by Him
 Passed it on throughout the world.

.....

Let Us Pray

Lord, help us that we shall bear witness to you before others. Amen

.....

Resolution

We shall try constantly to show Christ to others.

Let Us Think

1. Who were the parents of John the Baptist?
.....
2. What were the good qualities of Zachariah and Elizabeth described in St. Luke 1:6?
.....
.....
3. What did Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, announce to priest Zachariah?
.....
4. Where did John baptize people?
.....
5. Name the angel of the Lord who announced John the Baptist's birth.
.....
6. What did John the Baptist baptize people for?
.....

7. Who said, “ I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”
-

Activities

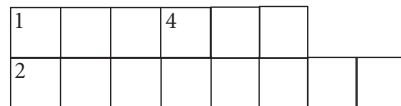
1. Arrange in the correct sequence of events.

1. The birth of Jesus Christ.
2. The song of Priest Zachariah.
3. The birth of John.
4. The baptism of Jesus Christ.
5. The murder of John the Baptist.
6. John the Baptist's call for repentance.

2. Crossword Puzzle

Right

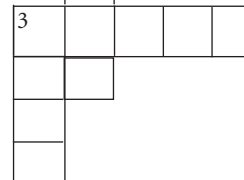
1. The river where John baptized. (6 letters)
2. Another name of Shadrach (8 letters)
(Daniel 1:7)



3. He too was baptized by John the Baptist (5 letters)

Down

3. The forerunner of Jesus Christ (4 letters)
4. The boy, who was thrown into the den of lions
(6 letters)



3. Listen and Comprehend

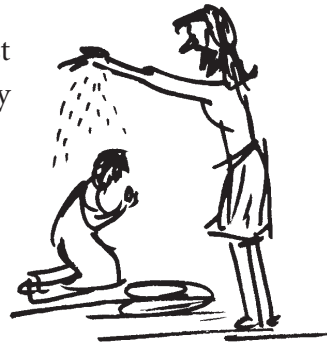
* Bath

Bathing means washing ourselves with water.
We should take a shower daily. (This is one of the laws of personal hygiene)



✱ **Baptism of Repentance**

This was the baptism given by St. John the Baptist (St. Luke 3:3, Acts 19:4). It is a call to turn away from sins.



✱ **Baptism in Holy Spirit**

Here the baptism is in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (St. Matthew 28:19)

The manifestation of the Holy Trinity happened on the river Jordan. It marks the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. The Father was heard the Son who touched; the Holy Spirit was seen in the form of a dove.



Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Sunday | ✱ | St. Luke 1:5-16 |
| Monday | Psalms 89:1-10 | St. Luke 1:67-80 |
| Tuesday | Proverbs 15:1-10 | St. Matthew 3:13-17 |
| Wednesday | Psalms 119:1-8 | St. John 13:3-11 |
| Thursday | 1 Samuel 23:14-18 | Acts 16:25-31 |
| Friday | St. Luke 8:19-21 | 2 Corinthians 3:1-7 |
| Saturday | Nehemiah 2:1-6 | ✱ |

Lesson 7

Child Jesus at the Temple

(St. Luke 2:41-52)

Message: We should go regularly to the church.

Verse to be Memorized: “Blessed are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.” (Psalms. 84:4)

Learning Aids: Picture of the temple of Jerusalem. The picture of parents and children going to church.

Introduction

Who do you go to the church with? Little children often go along with their parents. They return from the church after the service and Sunday School. We should participate in the worship regularly. Jesus Christ was also in the habit visiting the temple of Jerusalem. Today we are going to learn an incident that happened when young Jesus went for the Festival of Passover, at age twelve.

The Lesson

When the whole of a family go to a crowded place, don't you think they should stay together? Certainly, You might have heard incidents of children getting lost in huge shopping malls and festival crowds. We should be very careful in the crowd. The parents of child Jesus too faced such a difficulty.

Young Jesus and His parents were living in Nazareth. They would go to the far away temple of Jerusalem every year for the Passover festival. The word 'Pesaha' is the Hebrew word for 'passover' (Pascha). 'Pesaho' is the word in Syriac. Relatives and neighbours would join together in the trip. They would travel as a large group.

When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. After the festival, the parents of Jesus started their journey back home with their relatives and neighbours. Joseph and Mary thought that Jesus too was travelling with the group. However even after a day's journey they could not see Jesus. So Joseph and Mary were

much worried. They searched for Jesus among their relatives. As they could not find him, they went back to the Temple of Jerusalem. They were surprised at what they saw there.

Young Jesus was sitting in the midst of teachers, learning scriptures and asking questions. His speech and conduct surprised everyone. His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” Then Jesus said to them “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Thus Jesus revealed that God the Father in Heaven was his real father. Then He returned with his parents to Nazareth and was subject to them.

What do we give importance to when we participate in festivals today? We should not be carried away by the spectacle. Instead we should participate in worship systematically. We should follow Jesus Christ’s example and should use the House of the Lord for worship, meditation and study.



Jesus at the temple of Jerusalem for the festival

Hymn

(Prarthippan nee nilkumbol..., Sheema namaskaram, Monday Soothara)

May your mouth be a censer,
Your lips like smoke of incense,
And your tongue a minister,
Which pleases the trinity.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Jesus Christ, enable us to participate in worship faithfully and learn
your teachings regularly. Amen*

.....

Resolution

***We will attend services in the church regularly.
We will attend Sunday School classes without fail.***

Let Us Think

1. What was the festival to which Jesus Christ went along with his family, when he was 12 years old?
.....
2. What did Joseph and Mary think about Jesus Christ while they were travelling back home?
.....
3. Where did they find the lost boy? What was he doing?
.....
.....
4. What was Jesus Christ's reply to his parents' questions?
.....
5. What did young Jesus go to the temple for?
.....
6. Why do we go to the church?
.....

Activities

Findout

The names of some festivals are hidden in these columns. Find them. (You may either encircle them or mark them).

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | O | E | B | E | S | S | U | R | S | V | |
| S | U | R | P | A | S | S | O | V | E | R | |
| C | H | R | I | S | T | M | A | S | V | V | |
| O | P | E | N | T | E | C | O | S | T | V | |
| R | A | S | C | E | N | S | I | O | N | R | |
| R | E | S | U | R | R | E | C | T | I | O | N |

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday | * | Exodus. 12:1-12 |
| Monday | St. Matthew 12:1-8 | St. Matthew 6:9-15 |
| Tuesday | St. Luke 19:1-10 | St. Matthew 26:17-26 |
| Wednesday | Acts 1:6-11 | St. John 28:35-40 |
| Thursday | Psalms 119:97-104 | Ephesians 6:11-18 |
| Friday | Psalms 119:105-112 | St. James 1:5-8 |
| Saturday | 1 King 8:27-30 | * |

Lesson 8

The Real Neighbour

(St. Luke 10:25-37)

Message: It is a Christian virtue to help those in trouble.

Verse to be Memorized: “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”
(St. John 15:14)

Learning Aids: Picture stories of this parable on which places like Jerusalem, Jericho, Samaria etc. are marked.

Introduction

All of us have friends and neighbours, haven't we? Do you love your neighbours? Do you interact with them? Can you say the name of one of your neighbours? Imagine that it starts raining when you are going to school. You have an umbrella with you. What would you do if you see another child walking through the rain without an umbrella? Won't you accommodate him under your umbrella? A real neighbour is one who helps others in their times of need.

In our daily life we come across several sick and suffering people. They need our help. We have the responsibility to help them. But there are some people who would turn away from them. Some others would do all possible help.

Once a Jewish lawyer asked Jesus “who is my neighbour?” Jesus answered him with a parable. Let us learn that parable today.

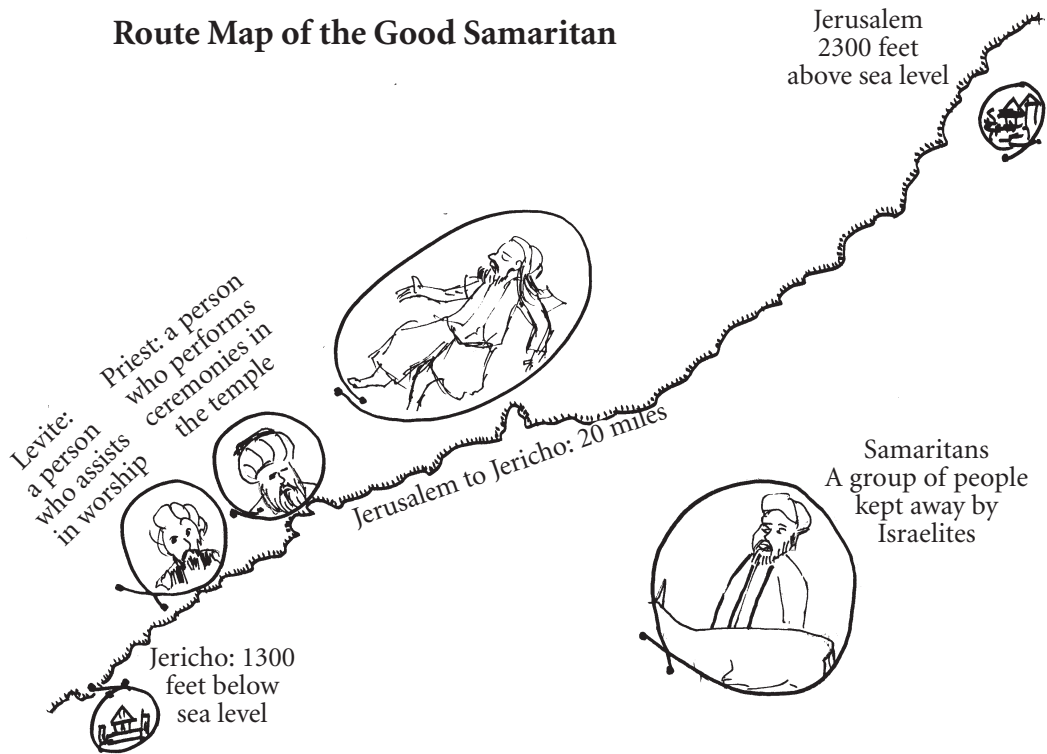
The Lesson

Once a Jew was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. At a deserted spot thieves fell over him and wounded him. They robbed him of his clothes and money and departed, leaving him half-dead. The poor traveller lay there helpless by the wayside.

Then the Samaritan set the wounded man on his donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the inn keeper and said “Take care of him and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.” Then he went on his way. After narrating this parable Jesus Christ asked the lawyer. “Which of these three was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?”

A certain priest and a Levite came down that road. However they neither cared for him nor came to help him. After sometime a foreigner, a Samaritan, came that way. He felt sympathy towards the wounded man. He jumped down from his donkey and went to the man. He comforted the injured man and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Route Map of the Good Samaritan



Hymn

(Mannavane Mashiha - Sathatham thavakaruna ...
Sleebe Namaskaram, Morning Worship)

Christ the King at Your - door of compassion
I knock every hour -
And from Your rich treasure - house
I ask for mercy and grace
In You Lord, I take refuge
Shame me not, I have confessed You
You're my hope - and strong protection.

.....

Let Us Pray

O Lord enable us to identify our real neighbours and to live as a good neighbour.

.....

Resolution

We would do all possible help to others and would live as good neighbours.

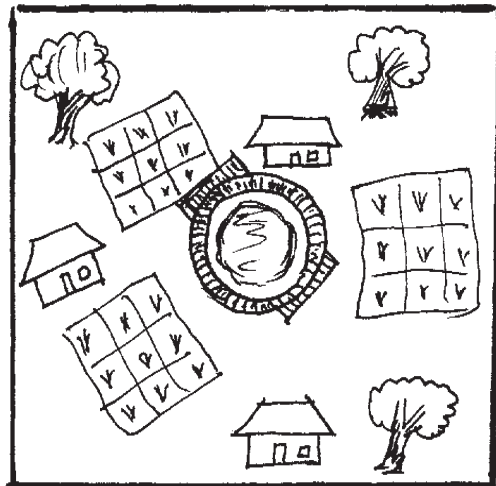
Let Us Think

1. How might have the wayfarer travelled?
.....
2. What did the robbers attack him for?
.....
3. Name the two persons who passed by neglecting the half dead traveller.
.....
4. Who nursed the traveller?
.....
5. What were used as balm for the wounds in olden days?
.....

Activities

1. **Create good neighbours with three lines.**

We can see houses, trees, and fields and a common well in the picture. Divide equally with three lines. The well is common. The lines can intersect.



2. Conduct the observance of a Neighbourhood Day called 'Good Samaritan Day.' Visit homes in the neighbourhood and exchange compliments.
3. Prepare a neighbourhood chart containing names, housenames, jobs etc. of the families living around you.

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Sunday | * | St. Luke 10:25-28 |
| Monday | Ephesians 5:1-4 | Galatians 5:13-15 |
| Tuesday | Psalms 145:16-21 | St. John 13:31-35 |
| Wednesday | 2 Kings 6:1-7 | 1 Corinthians 16:13, 14 |
| Thursday | Psalms 143:1-7 | 1 Kings 10:1-13 |
| Friday | Psalms 143:8-12 | 1 Kings 3:16-28 |
| Saturday | 1 John 3:13-18 | * |

Lesson 9

Nature Obeys its Creator

(St. Luke 8:22-25)

Message: Jesus is truly the Son of God and is the Master of all creation.

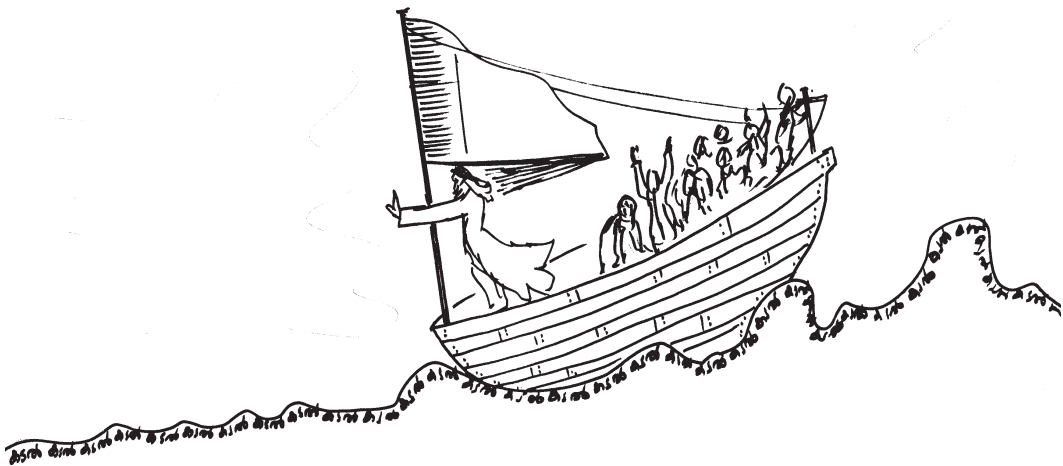
Verse to be Memorized: “For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.” (Hebrews 3:4)

Learning Aids: The picture of fishermen sailing on a country boat. The scenes of sea.

Introduction

You might have heard about the killer waves called ‘Tsunami.’ Thousands of people died in the Tsunami disaster of 2004. The event is still alive in our memory. We are often helpless before such natural disasters. But God, the creator of everything is also the master of such disasters. God alone is capable of controlling the forces of nature. One such incident happened when Jesus was sailing with his disciples. Let us see what Jesus did then.

The Lesson



The boat in the stormy sea

Here is a small play for you.

Scene 1

(Sea of Galilee. The disciples push a boat into water)

John: Look friends, here comes Jesus. Let him come in the boat with us.

James: That's nice. When Jesus sits in the boat and tells stories I find it very energizing to pull the oar. I won't feel tired.

(Jesus reclines at the head of the boat. The disciples oar the boat)

Jesus: Hey, the breeze is quite cool. I feel tired. Let me take rest for a while. I will wake up when we reach the other shore.

(Jesus falls asleep. The disciples oar the boat).

Scene 2

(Thy sky darkens. The sea becomes rough and stormy).

Peter: Oh! the weather has changed so suddenly. It seems there would be terrible storm. We may not be able to control the boat.

James: Yes, Yes, it is a terrible storm. Oh! our boat is being bossed. Look John! Our boat is being filling with water. We will drown. Oh Lord I am very much afraid.

All of them (together): Master... Jesus... the boat is sinking. We are perishing! Save us Jesus, Oh the boat is drowning.

(Jesus wakes up hearing the cries).

Jesus: Oh! wind and waves... Cease! Be calm.

John: What surprise! The wind and the sea obeys our teacher.

Jesus: Dear friends, It is a pity that you don't have a bit of faith. Why should you fear so much when I am with you in the boat!

The disciples look at each other, amazed.

James: "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water and they obey Him!

Peter: He is the real Messiah. Son of God. Let us bow to him.

(All fall on their knees and worship Jesus).

Hymn

*(Dhyudhiyudhayam cheyyum karthave...,
Sleeba Namaskaram, Morning)*

At the time - when the light appears
And takes away the darkness
Heaven and - earth worship You, Lord
These two were made at one time:
One a firmament above
The other held the waters
And the air stretched between them,
A bridal chamber arose
Praise to You, Lord, for Your works.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Lord, help us to go forward relying on You in times of difficulties and
crisis. Amen*

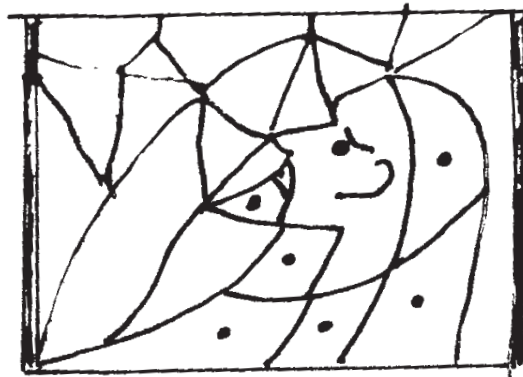
.....

Resolution

We will rely on God in all kinds of experiences in our life.

Activities

1. Find out the sleeping Christ. Colour the dotted columns.
2. Complete the story

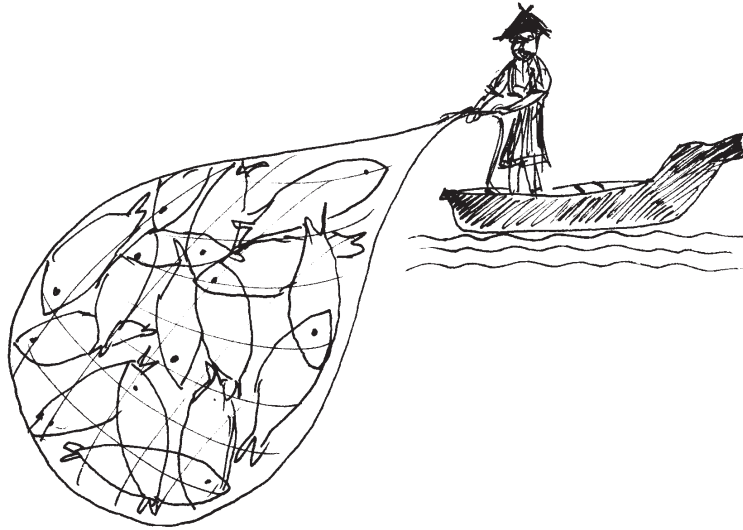


Jesus Christ—The shore of Galilee - Zebedee and sons—fishing—follow me—gave up everything—became disciples of Jesus.

3. Find out and underline the odd one out.

1. Waves, Sea, coconut palm, boat, fish.
2. Tsunami, storm, earthquake, forest, flood.
3. Peter, Mary Magdalene, John, Andrew, Thomas.

4. Count the fish in the fisherman's net.



Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday | * | St. Luke 8:43-48 |
| Monday | St. Luke 9:1-9 | St. Luke 9:37-43 |
| Tuesday | St. Luke 5:1-11 | St. Luke 5:27-32 |
| Wednesday | St. Matthew 4:23-25 | St. Matthew 10:16-23 |
| Thursday | Exodus 14:15-25 | Acts 28:1-6 |
| Friday | Exodus 14:26-31 | St. Matthew 14:22-33 |
| Saturday | Psalms 65 | * |

Lesson 10

The Call and Election of Apostles

(St. Matthew 10:1-4, St. Luke 6:12-16)

Message: It is essential to pray for God's blessings before we take important decisions in life.

Verse to be Memorized: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (St. Mark 8:34)

Learning Aids: 1. Picture of Last Supper. 2. Picture of St. Thomas.

Introduction

Is there anyone without friends? Who do you make friends with? Some of our friends are very dear to us. How do real friends behave?

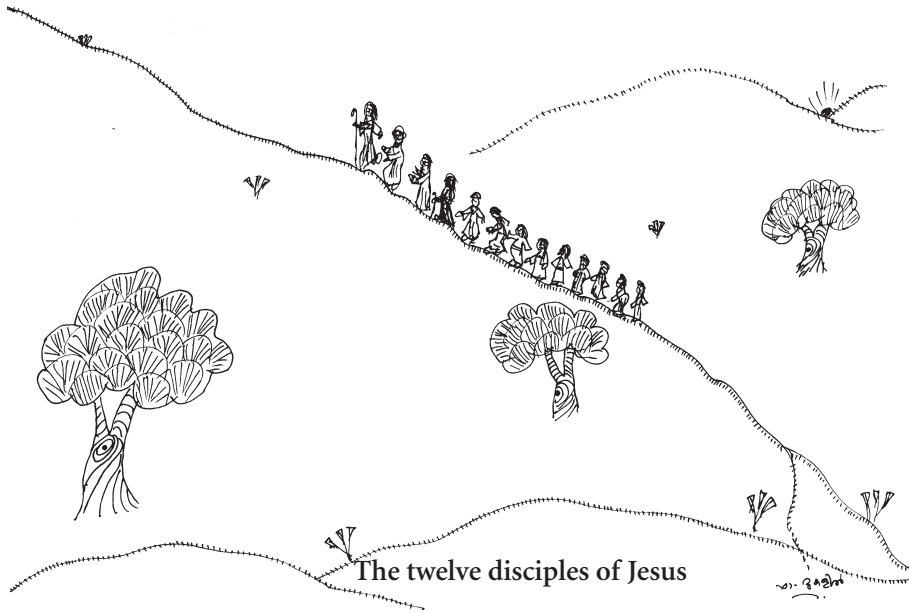
Jesus Christ chose twelve people as his chief disciples. He had gone to a mountain and had prayed to His Father an entire night before he made his choice in the morning. It can be seen that he chose his disciples from different walks of life. Let us learn more about it today.

The Lesson

Jesus Christ chose twelve of his disciples and called them apostles. They were Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus, Simon and Judas Iscariot.

Among them, Peter and Andrew were brothers and were fishermen. Similarly James and John were also brothers. They were from Bethsaida in Galilee. Since they were quite rash in the early days, Jesus Christ called them 'Bovanerghess', which means 'sons of thunder'. Matthew was a tax collector in Capernaum. Thomas, who came to India and founded Christianity here was also called Didymos. (It means twin). Simon was a revolutionary before he became a disciple. Judas or Thaddaeus was the scholar in the group.

The fishermen were strong and patient people. Majority of the twelve disciples were fishermen. Christ chose his disciples from various sections on walks of the society and transformed them. All of them except Judas Iscariot proclaimed Christ's gospel across the world. May there prayers be a refuge for us.



Hymn

*(Prarthipin Sleehanmare Karthavodai...,
Sleeba Namaskaram, Evening)*

Pray for us Apostles to Him Who chose you
That schisms and disputes cease in the - Holy Church
See! Heretics surround her on ev'ry side
To conceal the faith which you proclaimed - unto her
 May Your truth - be a crucible
 Which refines - her words like pure gold
May priests in victr'y praise Him who magnified her.

Let Us Pray

*O Christ, Just as You selected and strengthened the disciples,
strengthen us to identify Your call and live accordingly. Amen*

Resolution

We will listen to Christ's Call and will obey Him.

Let Us Think

1. What did Jesus tell them when he called his disciples?

.....

2. Name the sons of Zebedee

.....

3. What is meaning of the name that Jesus gave them?

.....

4. Name the apostle of India

.....

5. The disciple who betrayed Christ.

.....

Activities

1. **Have you noticed the importance of number 12?**

1. The number of Old Testament Patriarchs.

2. The number of bells in the censor.

Can you add more to the list?

.....

.....

2. **Match the following**

A

1. Didymos

2. Jesus

3. James and John

4. Peter

5. Judas Iscariot

6. The Apostle of India

B

1. Thomas

2. Andrew

3. Traitor

4. Twin

5. Nazareth

6. Sons of thunder

3. Write the Malayalam forms of the names of Jesus Christ's disciples

| | | |
|--------|---|----------|
| Peter | - | Pathrose |
| Andrew | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |
| | - | |

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday | * | St. Matthew 10:5-15 |
| Monday | Psalm 119:65-72 | St. Matthew 10:16-23 |
| Tuesday | St. John 20:24-29 | St. Matthew 10:24-33 |
| Wednesday | St. Matthew 10:40-42 | St. Luke 6 :20-26 |
| Thursday | St. Luke 9:28-36 | St. John 13:21-30 |
| Friday | St. Mark 14:43-50 | Psalm 23 |
| Saturday | St. Luke 9:51-56 | * |

Unit 2

Prayer

Lesson 11

Let's Pray Remembering God's Love

Message: Let us learn, the prayer “O Jesus Christ, our Lord” said in our Vespers and Nocturn (Evening and midnight) prayers and recite it faithfully.

Verse to be Memorized: “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.” (1 John 3:16)

Introduction

Don't we say our prayers every morning and evening at home? Do you follow the prayer books published by our Church? We should recite our prayers from 'Book of Family Worship' or 'Pampakuda Prayer book' or 'Book of Common Prayer'. Today we are going to learn a prayer included in the evening prayer as well as in midnight prayer.

The Lesson

The prayer begins by calling Jesus Christ as 'Moran' or 'Our Lord.' Hence we can begin this prayer also as “Our Lord Jesus Christ...” Let us learn the meaning of each sentence of the prayer.

“O Jesus Christ, our Lord, do not close the door of your mercy upon our faces.”

Imagine that someone comes to a house asking for help. What might the members of the house do? Here we pray that God should not shut the door of mercy to us who stand before Him for help.

We often commit sins. That is why we think that God might shut the door against us. Therefore, we confess our sins to God and beg for mercy. This is the next part of the prayer.

We confess we are sinners; have mercy upon us, O Lord.

Then we state about God's love. God the Son was born as a human being on this earth and was crucified because of His Love for us and because He wanted to redeem us from sins.

O Lord, Your love for us made You come down to us from Your place. That by Your death, our death be abolished: Have mercy upon us. Amen.

In our liturgy whenever we recite the Angelic Hymn beginning 'Just as the exalted Angels and the Archangels of heaven...' . It should be followed by this prayer 'O Jesus Christ, our Lord...'

This prayer is recited in our Vespers (Evening prayer), Nocturn (Night prayer) and in our Matins (Morning prayer).

We have learnt a prayer which tells us about the love of Jesus Christ which led him to give up His own life for giving us life, and which pleads for His mercy. This short prayer can be recited regularly by all.

Hymn

*(En Nadha nin krupa ninne...
Kyamtha Namaskaram Evening)*

My Lord Your mercy brought You,
In the midst of these sinners,
Have mercy upon the Church,
That clings to the wings of Your Cross.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us who are sinners. Let
Your mercy be our refuge and fortress always.*

.....

Resolution

***We would remember God's Love and beg for
His mercy everyday in our prayers.***

Activities

1. Learn this prayer by heart.
2. Find out how many times the word 'mercy' is used in this prayer.
3. Write two phrases we use in the sense of "Lord have mercy on us."
4. Comprehend the meaning of this prayer and recite it regularly along with your friends.
5. **Fill in the blanks**
 1. The meaning of word 'Moran' is.....
 2. O Lord, Thyfor us made
6. **Tick (✓) the correct answer(s)**
 1. What do we request Jesus Christ through this prayer?

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Heal our illness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have mercy upon us | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Give us our daily bread | <input type="checkbox"/> |
 2. When do we recite the prayer "O Jesus Christ, Our Lord."?

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Evening | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Night | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Morning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In other suitable occasions | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| Sunday | * | Psalm 121:1-4 |
| Monday | Psalm 63:1-3 | Psalm 121:5-8 |
| Tuesday | Psalm 63:4-6 | Psalm 91:1-4 |
| Wednesday | Psalm 63:7-8 | Psalm 91:5-8 |
| Thursday | Psalm 84:1-4 | Psalm 91:9-10 |
| Friday | Psalm 84:5-8 | Psalm 91:11-13 |
| Saturday | Psalm 84:9-10 | * |

Lesson 12

Let's Pray to God, the Merciful

Message: Let us recite the prayer 'O merciful God...' in our Compline (or Soothara Prayer) with devotion.

Verse to be Memorized: "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." (St. Luke 11:9)

Introduction

We are supposed to pray seven times a day - one of them is Compline (Late Evening Prayer). Compline means "guard." When we sleep at night we require the protection by God. Compline is the prayer for that. The prayer 'O merciful God...' is the introductory prayer of the Compline. Let us learn this prayer today.

The Lesson

This prayer begins thus. 'O merciful God...' The word merciful reflects our understanding of the goodness of God. He is Love. He forgives us and saves us. He gives what we ask for if it is good for us. Let us recite this part of the prayer together.

*"O merciful God, the voice of our prayer knocks at Your door;
prevent not from Your devotees the petitions of their needs."*

The Holy Bible teaches us that God is merciful. "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." (Psalm 145:8). "You are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing." (Jonah 4:2). We come across many people who plead "Lord have mercy" in the Holy Bible. (St. Luke 18:13, St. Matt. 20:47). 'Pleading' means asking in a spirit of humility.

Saying that "the voice of our prayer knocks at the door of God" would imply that God is listening to our prayer. How do beggars come to our homes asking for alms? They often cry out 'Mother, please help; give something...' We hear this call, open the door and give alms. Similarly God should hear our petition, open the door of His mercy and help us. God will not prevent the petition of needs of His devotees if they plead with Him. He would definitely grant them their prayers.

Now let us recite the next part:

“We call upon You, O God, to assist us in our infirmities. O good One, hearken to the voice of our supplication, and grant our petitions in Your Mercy.”

We say here that we are helpless and need His assistance. We cannot live without His help. Hence we call upon God How do we call Him? ‘O Good one...’

Though we say that Lord should listen to the voice of our request and grand our petitions, we do not raise any particular petition in this prayer. Hence this is an introductory prayer. It is a general prayer said before presenting our needs before God through the subsequent prayers. This prayer is followed by Mar Ephrem’s Bovootho or Hymn before retiring to bed, beginning. “Lord, Thy mercy on us cast...” In that prayer we ask for protection in sleep at night and blessings when we wake up in the morning.

This is a prayer to the merciful God to hear the voice of our petitions and grant us our needs.

Hymn

Lord, Thy mercy on us cast,
Use our service, ev’ry piece
Grant us from Thy treasure vast
Mercy, blessing and release.

By the Cross of Thy disgrace
Grant me, Lord, a restful sleep,
Evil dreams do Thou efface,
Wicked thoughts far from me keep.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O merciful God, hearken to the voice of our prayer and answer us.
Protect us all from dangers and temptations. Amen*

.....

Resolution

We will submit ourselves to God and ask for mercy.

Activities

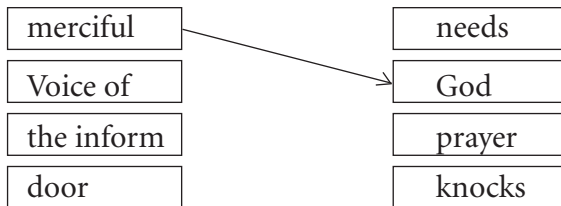
1. Learn the prayer 'O merciful God...' by heart.
2. Say this prayer together.
3. A song which includes the lines of this prayer is familiar to you. Find out this song. Compare the lines of this song with those of this prayer.
(Hint: This song is sung when the Curtains in the Holy of Holies are drawn during the Holy Eucharist))

4. Fill in the blanks

1. O merciful God, the voice of ourknocks at Thy.....
2. Prevent not from Thy devotees the

5. Match the connected words by drawing a line

(Eg. merciful God)



Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Sunday | * | Psalms 121:1-4 |
| Monday | Psalms 63:1-3 | Psalms 121:5-8 |
| Tuesday | Psalms 63:4-6 | Psalms 91:1-4 |
| Wednesday | Psalms 63:7-8 | Psalms 91:5-8 |
| Thursday | Psalms 84:1-4 | Psalms 91:9-10 |
| Friday | Psalms 84:5-8 | Psalms 91:11-13 |
| Saturday | Psalms 84:9-12 | * |

Lesson 13

Let Us Pray to the Holy Trinity

Message: Let us learn the prayer, ‘O Holy Father...’ (*Parissudha Pithave, Ninte Parissudha Namathal...*) It is a prayer to the Holy Trinity.

Verse to be Memorized: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you.” (1 Corinthians 3:16)

Introduction

Can you recite the first line of the ‘Kauma’ prayer? This is the praise of the Holy Trinity. Similarly the prayer ‘O Holy Father...’ is a prayer to the Holy Trinity. All of us recite this prayer every day. When do we say this prayer? This is a beautiful prayer often used in public worship. This prayer is addressed to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, namely, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the three persons of the Triune God. The prayer to the three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit is known as Prayer to the Holy Trinity. We are learning this prayer today.

The Lesson

The first part of this prayer is a request to God, the Father.

“O holy Father, guard us by Thy sacred Name.”

Repeating the name of God itself is a blessing for us. When we face problems don’t we say “Oh! my God”? That call gives us a lot of relief. Here too we call upon God the Father and pray for our protection.

The next sentence is a prayer to God, the Son.

*“O Son of God, our Saviour, protect us with
Thy victorious Cross.”*

Here we confess that Christ, the Son of God, through his Crucifixion saved us from punishment of our sins. We say ‘Victorious Cross’ because the Crucified Christ got resurrected. Christ’s Cross covers and protects us from all evils. That is why we wear or bear a cross. When we recite this sentence we should remember the Cross and make the sign of the Cross. We make the sign of the Cross whenever we see a Cross because then we remember God the Son who died on the Cross and gave us life.

The third sentence is a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

*“O Holy Spirit, make us worthy temples of Thy holy
habitation.”*

Holy Spirit is God who guide us in life. We have been anointed with the Holy Spirit through the holy sacrament of Baptism. Here we pray that we shall be homes suitable for the Holy Spirit to live in. St. Paul tells us this truth in 1 Corinthians 3:16. "The Spirit of God dwells in you." Thus this prayer means that we should become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and lead a holy life.

The next sentence is a general petition.

"O Lord our God for ever shelter us under Thy divine wings, at all times, for ever."

This is a very beautiful prayer. If we are sheltered under God's wings, what else need we fear in life? We need to be on our guard against sinning. There is nothing to worry. If one says one's prayers with deep rooted belief in God, we are saved from the fear of perdition.

This prayer is a proclamation of the belief in the Holy Trinity. This prayer is given at the end of the Book of Family Worship titled 'Book of Common Prayer.' Try to find it out.

Hymn

(Bovootho of Mar Ephrem)

Praise Him Who is one essence
Praise Him Who is three persons
Father, Son, Holy Spirit
Who is the One and True God.

.....

Let Us Pray

Praise to you, God the Father!
Praise to you, God the Son!
Praise to you, God the Holy Spirit!

.....

Resolution

We would praise the Holy Trinity always.

Activities

1. When you attend the Holy Eucharist, keenly listen how the priest ends each prayer.
2. Learn the 'Praise of the Holy Trinity' given at the beginning of 'Kauma' prayer by heart.

3. Make the sign of the Cross whenever you hear the names of the Holy Trinity said during prayers.
4. When the priest says the Syriac verse, “Shubaho Labo...” which means ‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit’, we should make the sign of the Cross.
5. **Answer the following question**
Who are the three persons in the Holy Trinity?
6. **Fill in the blanks**
 - a) O Holy Father, guard us by Thy sacred.....
 - b) O Son of God, our saviour, protect us with Thy victorious.....
 - c) O Holy Spirit, make us worthyof Thy holy.....

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sunday | * | Psalm 25:1-3 |
| Monday | Psalm 63:1-2 | Psalm 25:4-7 |
| Tuesday | Psalm 63:3-4 | Psalm 25:8-10 |
| Wednesday | Psalm 63:5-6 | Psalm 25:11-14 |
| Thursday | Psalm 63:7-8 | Psalm 25:15-16 |
| Friday | Psalm 63:9-11 | Psalm 25:17-19 |
| Saturday | Psalm 123:1-4 | * |

Unit 3

Hymns in Worship

Lesson 14

Let us Seek the Intercession of Virgin Mary, Mother of God

Message: Learn to sing a hymn requesting Holy Virgin Mary for her intercession and another hymn requesting Jesus Christ to bless us because of the intercession of Mother Mary.

Verse to be Memorized: “His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”
(St. John 2:5)

Introduction

You might remember the song ‘Stop not thy Intercession’ (Nirtheedaruthe Parissudhe...) you learned in Class 1. The hymn ‘Thou whose praise the church doth sing’ (Bhakthar pukazhcha bhajaname...) is another song for the intercession of Mother Mary. The hymn ‘By Thy Cross, O Jesus Lord’ (Moran Eso Kurissum nin...) is a prayer for saving us due to the intercession of Mother Mary.

The Lesson

In the Holy Eucharist, Kukilions begin after the ritual of raising Chalice and Paten commemorating the Ascension of Jesus Christ. The first hymn seeks shelter in the intercession of Mother Mary. Today let us learn two hymns included in it.

Let us sing,

‘Thou whose praise the Church doth sing
Intercession for us bring,
Unto Him, Thine only Son,
That He May not mercy shun.

Don’t we sing this hymn during the Holy Eucharist? Let us understand what it means. The song asks the Virgin Mary, who is eligible for glorification by the devotees, to request Her Only Begotten Son for our sake. This is an intercessory prayer. The

request is to pray for us to the Son of God, Jesus Christ. We request the Holy Mother to pray to Jesus Christ to have mercy on us.

Now let us sing the Hymn

By Thy Cross, O Jesus Lord
By Thy Mother's praying word,
Take from us and from our path
Punishment and rods of wrath.

This hymn also is familiar to you. This is the concluding song of the cycle of intercessory songs to Holy Virgin Mary. Here we pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that through the Cross on which He was Crucified and the intercessory prayer of His mother, let all punishments due to us be removed. We request also to remove all the sorrows that might be caused by the Lord's anger when we do evil things.

This is a supplication to Lord Jesus Christ made as a conclusion to the intercessory prayers to Holy Virgin Mary. We are convinced that we deserve the punishments of the Lord because of our wrong doings and sins. Hence we pray that 'Let us be spared of those punishments because of His Crucifixion and Intercession of Mother Mary.'

If we seek refuge in the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, she will in turn submit our requests before the Lord. God will accept them and will shower blessings upon us.

Hymn

Practice the hymns we learned today and other intercessory hymns

.....

Let Us Pray

Let one student recite the prayer. Let others join in chorus to give the words of response.

Student: O Mother Mary, the icon of Purity...

Others: Pray for us.

Student: O Mother Mary, whose praise the devotees sing...

Others: Pray for us.

Student: O Mother Mary, the Mother of God...

Others: Pray for us.

.....

Resolution

We will sing the intercessory hymns used in the Holy Eucharist with devotion.

Activities

1. Look into the Book of liturgy and sing the hymns we learned today along with other intercessory hymns. This recital can be done as a class activity or in groups..
2. Compare the songs 'Pray for us, O Holy Saints (*Parissudhanmare ningal...*)' which you learned in class II and 'By Thy Cross, O Jesus Lord.' Find out the difference between the last two lines of both the songs.
3. Sing these hymns with devotion when they are sung in the church.
4. Fill up the blanks
 - a) *Thou whose.....the church doth sing.*
.....for us bring
Unto Him, Thine only Sin,
That He may not.....shun.
 - b) *By Thy....., O Jesus Lord*
By Thy Mother's.....
Take from us and from our path
.....and

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|----------------|------------------|
| Sunday | * | St. Luke 1:26-33 |
| Monday | Psalm 40:1-3 | St. Luke 1:39-45 |
| Tuesday | Psalm 40:4-5 | St. Luke 2:15-20 |
| Wednesday | Psalm 40:13-14 | Psalm 71:1-3 |
| Thursday | Psalm 40:15-17 | Psalm 71:4-9 |
| Friday | Psalm 71:10-12 | Psalm 71:13-15 |
| Saturday | Psalm 71:16-19 | * |

Lesson 15

Let us Sing and Worship

Message: Learn to sing the concluding songs of the Holy Eucharist with devotion.

Verse to be Memorized: “For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. (St. Matthew 5:18)

Introduction

Let us sing and learn the concluding songs of the Holy Eucharist, ‘May this offered Eucharist...’ (*Kazhyathil Karthave nin...*) and ‘By thy - Mother’s plea...’ (*Mathavu yachikkum...*).

The Lesson

Today we learn two hymns sung just before the final benediction in the Holy Eucharist. These songs are called ‘Hoothomo.’ The word ‘Hoothomo’ means concluding prayer. Liturgical worship in the Orthodox church ends with the ‘Hoothomo’ prayer. This can be in prose or verse. In the Holy Eucharist the practice often is that the priest will sing a hymn and the laity will join with another song.

The songs sung in this section will vary according to the significance of the day and all of them are given in the Qurbanakramam. However the songs given here are sung on ordinary days.

Let us sing the first song together (*Kazhyathil Karthave nin...*)

May this offered Eucharist
By the Priest, appease You, Lord,
May it gladden angels and high
Our departed ones absolve.

This is a concluding prayer of the Holy Qurbana. We have presented the great sacrifice of Holy Qurbana before God and through this song we are requesting the Lord to be appeased at our sacrifice. We are also praying that, through this sacrifice, our departed shall get God’s grace and that the angels in heaven shall rejoice. This is a hymn composed by a saint called Mar Aprem.

Let us sing another hymn, (*Mathavu yachikkum...*)

By thy - Mother's plea,
And of - all Thy Saints
Lord, ab-solve our sins
And with us, our dead

This is another hymn used as the concluding prayer. It is prayer in which we seek refuge in the intercession of Mother Mary and the Saints. This hymn means that "O Lord, give us and our departed Your Grace by virtue of the prayers made by Your Holy Mother and the Saints." This hymn was written by the church Father Mar Balai.

Note that we include our departed along with us in the prayer contained in both these hymns. When we participate in the Holy Worship with fear and devotion, we earn heavenly blessings. When Mother Mary and the saints pray for us, we and our dead, earn the blessings of the Lord.

Hymn

Practice the hymns we learned today and other intercessory hymns

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Lord, help us to participate with devotion in the Holy Eucharist
offered to you. Amen*

.....

Resolution

***We will participate in the Holy Eucharist with devotion
and will recite the hymns and prayers devoutly***

Activities

1. When we participate in the Holy Eucharist, listen to these hymns with devotion and comprehension.
2. Find out some of the hymns of intercession given in the Book of liturgy and sing them.
3. Listen to the hymn of intercession sung by the priest during the Holy liturgy and try to comprehend its meaning.

4. Match the following

Holy Eucharist

gladdened

Departed

Appease

Angels

absolved

5. Fill up the blanks

By Thyplea

And of all the.....

Lord,our sins

And with us, our dead.

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Sunday | * | Psalm 112:1-4 |
| Monday | Psalm 42:1-4 | Psalm 112:5-10 |
| Tuesday | Psalm 42:5-6 | Psalm 113:1-4 |
| Wednesday | Psalm 42:7-11 | Psalm 113:5-9 |
| Thursday | Psalm 116:1-3 | Psalm 116:4-8 |
| Friday | Psalm 116:9-12 | Psalm 116:13-15 |
| Saturday | Psalm 116:16-17 | * |

Unit 4

My Church

Lesson 16

The Holy Altar ('Thronos')

Message: The holy altar is the throne of God. The Invisible Lord condescends to be with us on this throne. We should give an important place to Worship in the Church in our spiritual life.

Verse to be Memorized: "Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young-even your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." (Psalm 84:3)

Learning Aids: The picture of Holy of Holies.

Introduction

The Holy of Holies is the most important and the most sacred place in a church. The Holy of Holies or the Sanctuary is the place where the altar is erected. It is also known as 'Kdush Khudsin' (most sacred place) or 'Bethkudisho' (very sacred place). The Holy altar is at the centre of the Holy of Holies or Sanctuary. All services in the church are centred on the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies and the altar are like the Most Holy place in the Temple of Jerusalem. Today let us learn more about the altar.

The Lesson

When we go to the church for worship, the sight of a beautifully decorated altar pleases us very much. Each object in the Holy of Holies helps us to be divinely inspired. Its beauty cannot be described in words. Can we describe God's beauty? Never. However we can experience it. Similarly the beauty of the altar can only be experienced. The meaning and beauty of the altar can hardly be described.

The concept of altar comes from the Greek word 'Thronos'. Some Greek words are used as such in Syriac. The word 'Thronos' is used in Syriac too. The Syriac word

‘Thronos’ means the throne. ‘Thronos’ is the throne of the Triune God. It is also called the ‘altar’.

In the English and Latin, the word ‘altar’ is used for Thronos. In the Orthodox tradition, the Holy Eucharist is offered on the altar. Besides, incense is burned before the altar. The Holy altar is the worldly location where the invisible God reveals his presence to the community of worshippers. The Holy Eucharist is celebrated only on the Holy altar. It is called altar because the Holy Sacrifice is made on it.

The Holy Eucharist cannot be celebrated without the ‘Tabalaitha’ or altar stone. ‘Tabalaitha’ is a consecrated wooden tablet or plank on which Chalice and Paten are placed. The holy altar is also described as sacrificial table or place of sacrifice. The ‘Thronos’ is called altar because our Christ’s Holy Sacrifice is sacramentally reenacted on it.

The Holy altar represents the throne of God, Golgotha, Christ’s Cross and is the sign of Christ himself. In the Orthodox tradition the Holy altar is also seen as Christ’s tomb.

In olden days the Holy altar was made of wood. It looked like a table four feet high, six feet long and three feet broad. Today it is built in stone. There are usually three steps in the holy altar to place the candle sticks. (Show the picture of ‘Tabalaitha’ or altar stone placed on the altar. The picture should also contain the altar covering).

What all can be placed on the altar as per the Orthodox tradition? A cross, candles, altar stone, Chalice and Paten and the liturgical Book can be placed on the altar.



‘Tabalaitha’ (Tablet) or altar stone



**'Chithola' or decorated cover
on the front of the altar**



**Kabilana or hood of Chalice and Paten
and 'virikkoottu' or altar cover**



The Holy Altar

Why do we construct three altars in our churches? Only one Holy Eucharist can be offered on one altar a day. The three altars are constructed to offer more than one Holy Eucharist a day or to submit the elaborate Holy Eucharist said by three priests. This practice exists only in the Malankara Church.

The Holy altar is decorated mainly using two types of coverings. They are 'Chithola' or decorated draping at the front of the altar and 'Virikkoottu' or the top altar cover. 'Chithola' covers the altar at the front. This cover is knit using three pieces of cloth. 'Virikkoottu' or the top altar cover is spread at the middle of the altar. White, green and red coloured pieces of cloth are stitched on both these coverings. The red colour represents the universe, green colour earth and the white colour the Holy Church. This suggests that the Holy Eucharist is an offering made jointly by all animate and inanimate things of this universe.

We read in the Liturgy Book of Holy Eucharist that the priest mounts on the 'darga' or step. What is that? The step at the foot of the altar is known as 'darga' or step. The priest mounts on this step when the second part of the Holy Eucharist begins. (Darga is a Syriac word meaning 'step.')

Hymn

(Viswasathale Vangipoyore...)

Make mem'ry of the - faithful departed
Let us not forget those who have left us
Let us write their names - at the Lord's altar
That at all times the Lord will give them rest
Halleluiah w'Halleluiah
May they worship You, their Resurrection

.....

Let Us Pray

O Lord who is seated in the most high heavens, and is pleased in the praises of the holy angels..., open our inner eyes to behold your magnificence and glory. Amen.

Let Us Think

1. What is the meaning of the word 'altar'?

.....

2. Why does the Orthodox Church give an important position to the altar?

.....
.....

3. What are the different meanings of the “Holy altar”?

.....
.....

4. Describe the significance of altar droppings.

.....
.....

5. What are the colours used in the droppings? What do they stand for?

.....
.....
.....

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Sunday | * | Numbers 9:15-23 |
| Monday | Exodus 33:7-11 | Isaiah 55:1-3 |
| Tuesday | Exodus 40:17-20 | Isaiah 55:4-8 |
| Wednesday | Exodus 40:21-25 | Isaiah 55:9-11 |
| Thursday | Exodus 40:26-29 | Isaiah 55:12-13 |
| Friday | Exodus 40:30-33 | 2 Chronicles 7:1-5 |
| Saturday | Exodus 40:34-38 | * |

Lesson 17

Articles Used in the Church

Message: The sacrifice of the Son of God, who became human being for the Salvation of humankind gave a new meaning to the Cross. The Orthodox Church looks upon the Cross with great respect. The cross is a symbol of Jesus Christ. Burning candle is also a symbol of Jesus Christ who is eternal light to the world. The burning candle reminds us of God who is the source of light and can lead our thoughts towards light.

Verse to be Memorized: “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Introduction

Who do we remember when we make the sign of the cross? We remember Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. What a blessing it is to make the sign of the cross! The Cross is an important object used in our worship. Candle is one of them. We use several other objects also in our worship. As Orthodox believers we should understand the significance of the objects used at worship in the Church. This is essential to understand the importance and meaning of worship and it helps us to participate in it actively. Today let us learn in detail about the Cross and the candle.

The Lesson

1. The Cross

The cross is the sign of the Resurrected Christ. The Orthodox church uses many symbols in worship. These symbols are not idols. They are used to enable the human mind to comprehend the salvific acts of God fulfilled through Jesus Christ. The Son of God gave salvation to humankind through his crucifixion and resurrection. Hence a cross is essential in every worship. Malankara Orthodox church uses the cross without the image of crucified Christ on it. This is because Christ who died on the Cross got resurrected.

With the conversion of Emperor Constantine, the persecution of Christianity came to an end and Christianity became the official religion in the Roman Empire. In A.D. 345 Queen Helen recovered Christ's cross from Jerusalem. Then onwards the importance of the cross increased. As Christians got freedom of worship, churches were established. Church services developed and the tradition of using the cross in worship become common.

Since the salvation of humankind came through the Cross of the Son of God, we bow before it. Through the cross we remember the mysteries of Christ's Incarnation and Salvific acts. The fulfilment of these mysteries happened through Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. When we meditate on the cross, we do not think of that 'object' made of gold, silver, wood or stone. Instead we meditate on Christ who was crucified on it. It is a mistake to think that meditating on and bowing before the cross is idol worship. Instead it should be looked upon as a symbol. God's commandment was that we should not make and worship idols of other gods (Exodus 20:4,5) The symbols used for teaching and reminding biblical incidents and to make the faithful participate in worship actively do not in anyway become idols.

The Cross is the sign of peace, victory and salvation. The cross is the weapon against Satan. In order to remember that we should take refuge in Christ's cross for our protection and Salvation, we should bear the cross on our shoulders, and we should make the sign of the Cross on us (St. Matthew 16:24, Galatians 6:14, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Hebrews 13:13).

The Old Testament types

1. The tree of life in the Paradise (Genesis 2:9; Revelation 22:2)
2. Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:9-21; 7:23)
3. The wood for sacrifice carried by Isaac (Genesis 22:6)
4. The ladder seen by Jacob (Genesis 28:12,13)
5. The raised hands of Moses (Exodus 17:8-16)
6. The staff of Jacob (Genesis 32:11)
7. The bronze snake raised by Moses in the desert (Numbers 21:4-9)

2. Candle

All of us have seen the candlestick and candles in the church. You might have seen big candles lighted in the Holy altar of the Church. What is the meaning and significance of a lighted candle?

During the Old Testament period, oil lamps were used in the Temple of Jerusalem. Such oil lamps are used in Malankara Church even today. However in course of time candles became popular as they were convenient enough to be placed on the altar. There are no records of using candles on the altar before eleventh century A.D. All ancient religions considered light as a symbol of God. Jesus Christ said that he was “the light of the world” (St. John 8:12). He reminds that those who follow him will not walk in darkness. When Jesus Christ was born, “the people who sat in darkness saw a great light.” (St. Matthew 4:16).

Light expels darkness and illuminates everything. Since Christ has described himself as Light, the Church which is the house of light should be lighted up. Lamps were part of worship since ancient times. (Exodus 40:4). In the Holy Eucharist there should be at least two candles on either side of the Cross on the altar. It tells of the movement from the darkness of sin to light. It gives the message that “The Lord is my light and my salvation.” (Psalm 27:1). We see light through Jesus Christ who is light. This is the theme of the song we sing just before the beginning of the public worship of the Holy Eucharist (By Thy Light we see the light). It is at this time that the deacon lights the candles on the altar first the one on the left and then the one on the right. Normally there are twelve candles on the altar of our churches. They are said to represent the apostles.

Hymn

(Sleeba vennu vellunnu...)

The Cross conquered and conquers
The Cross has conquered Satan
May the Cross be a stronghold
To all who confess the Cross.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Lord, who saved us by Your Cross, help us to praise and glorify
Your Cross. Protect us from all Satanic snares with Your Cross.
Jesus, O True light help us to live for You for ever and become light
for others. Amen.*

.....

Resolution

***We will hold God's Name, proclaim it, and joyfully suffer
for God's Name.***

Let Us Think

1. What are the two incidents that happened in the fourth century which gave prominence to the Cross?

.....
.....

2. Why do some people think that bowing before the Cross is idol worship?

.....
.....

3. Give a brief explanation for why we make the sign of the Cross.

.....
.....

4. What is the theological meaning of light?

.....

5. What message does the candle give us?

.....

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Sunday | * | Galatians 6:14-16 |
| Monday | Genesis 6:9-21 | St. John 8:12-14 |
| Tuesday | Genesis 22:6 | St. Matthew 5:13-16 |
| Wednesday | Genesis 28:1-13 | St. Matthew 4:12-10 |
| Thursday | Exodus 12:8-16 | 1 Corinthians 1:7-19 |
| Friday | Genesis 32:11 | St. Mark 8:34-36 |
| Saturday | Numbers 21:4-9 | * |

Unit 5

Great Men of God

Lesson 18

St. Behanam and his Sister Sarah

Message: “Blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” (Tertullian)

Verse to be Memorized: “The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:17)

Introduction

We have learned about Christ’s Martyrs last year, right? Do you remember the infant Martyrs and St. Kuriakose? After the birth of Jesus, King Herod ordered the massacre of all infants below two years of age. The victims of that infanticide are called ‘Infant Martyrs’. Today we are learning about a brother and a sister who died for Christ in the first century A.D.

The Lesson

Behanam and Sarah were the children of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria in Persia. While living in the palace, Sarah developed a terrible disease. It was leprosy, for which no medical treatment was available in those days. They were very sad about it. Then Behanam had a vision in which it was said that there was a great ascetic living in the nearly mountain and he could cure Sarah. Behanam and his friends reached a monastery on the mountains. It was the abode of Mar Mathai. Behanam told him everything.

Mar Mathai told him that if Sarah confessed her faith in Jesus Christ, she would be cured. Even though Mar Mathai came to the palace he was afraid of the king and met Sarah in secret. The queen also took sides with her children in this matter.

Mar Mathai prayed with tears in his eyes. What a surprise! Sarah was cured. Both the children became believers in Jesus Christ. Mar Mathai baptized them both. Some of Behanam’s friends too believed in Jesus Christ. Somehow the king came to know about it. Instead of feeling glad about his daughter’s recovery, he was terribly angry about their conversion to Christianity.

The king summoned them to the palace. He asked them to give up their faith in Christ and return to their former faith. However the children were not prepared to do so. The king ordered that they and all those who became believers in Christ along with them should be put to death. The soldiers killed them all. Thus Behanam and Sarah became martyrs for Christ.

After this cruel deed, King Sennacherib and his country fell into trouble. The king became mentally ill. There were riots in the country. At the request of the queen, Mar Mathai reached the palace once again. He placed his hands on the king's head and prayed. The king regained his normal state of mind. He was very sad about killing his own children. The king repented and prayed. Mar Mathai told him that his sins will be absolved because of his repentance. The king and the queen believed in the loving Christ who pardons all sins. They got baptized became Christians. Their martyrdom caused the conversion of the King, queen and their subjects.

Hymn

(Bhagyam Nibiyarkum...)

Bliss to the Prophets,
And the Apostles
And to the martyrs
At resurrection.

(Orupolingum Mar Bahanam Sahadha...)

O St. Behanam, as in heav'n,
Keep we here thy memory;
Hear us as we honour thee,
Thy entreaties be our aid.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Lord, make us worthy to keep and proclaim the true faith like Mar
Bahanam, Morth Sarah and Mar Mathai. Amen*

.....

Resolution

***'Prayers made in faith heal the sick. God will revive them
from illness and will pardon them if they have sinned.'
We seek refuge in the intercession of our martyrs
St. Behanam and Sarah.***

Let Us Think

1. Who was Sarah's brother?
.....
2. Name the King of Assyria in Persia?
.....
3. Who was the saintly monk who cured Sarah?
.....
4. What disease afflicted the king who killed his own children?
.....
5. How did the king regain his mental health?
.....
6. How was the King, Queen and their subjects converted to Christianity?
.....
.....
7. Why did the King kill his children?
.....
8. How was Sarah cured of her disease?
.....

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
| Sunday | * | Hebrews 11:1-4 |
| Monday | Hebrews 11:5-7 | Hebrews 11:8-12 |
| Tuesday | Hebrews 11:13-16 | Hebrews 11:17-19 |
| Wednesday | Hebrews 11:20-26 | Hebrews 11:27-29 |
| Thursday | Hebrews 11:30-36 | Hebrews 11:37-40 |
| Friday | Hebrews 10:32-35 | Hebrews 11:36-39 |
| Saturday | St. John 15:22-17 | * |

Lesson 19
Mother Marth Shmooni
(St. Shamuna and her seven children)
(Martyrdom of the Maccabees)

Message: Believers who have shed their blood for Christian faith have caused the growth of the church. Mother Marth Shmooni (St. Shamuna) and her seven children became martyrs in this manner.

Verse to be Memorized: “The righteous walk in integrity—happy are the children who follow them.” (Proverbs 20:7)

Introduction

Can you name some of the Christian martyrs? The martyr Kuriakose and his mother were killed by Emperor Diocletian. St. Kuriakose was only three years old at the time of his death. They were killed because they didn't worship the deities of the king but confessed Jesus Christ instead. Those who confessed and followed Christ had always suffered persecution and death at the hands of ruthless rulers.

The Lesson

Give the names of saints whom you know. (St. Thomas, St. George, St. Gregorios of Parumala, St. Dionysius of Vattasseril etc.). We can categorise them into saints who lived before Christ and those who died for the sake of Christ. All of them, being great devotees of God, led a life of faith and offered their lives to God. Among them there is a saintly mother and her seven children.

The mother's name is Marth Shmooni (St. Shamuna). The word 'marth' in Syriac is a term of respect used to address saintly ladies whereas 'Mar' is used to address saintly fathers (Marthoma, Mar Baselius Marth Mariyam etc.) Mother Marth Shmooni (St. Shamuna) and her children lived about 200 years before Christ. Their history is given in the Book of Macabees II chapter 7. (Apart from the 66 Books that makeup the Holy Bible we use today, there are 'Apocryphal' books among which the Book of Macabees is one). This saintly mother and her children were killed. Their history is as follows.

In those days there was no democracy, the king was the absolute ruler. Most Kings insisted that their subjects too should believe in the deity they worshipped. Some of the Kings were cruel. They persecuted those who didn't believe in their deities. King Antiochus IV was one such King.

Have you heard about the Greek emperor, Alexander the Great who conquered North India? Antiochus IV was a successor of Alexander the Great. Antiochus IV attacked and conquered Palestine. He destroyed the Holy Temple of Jerusalem and placed idols of Greek gods and goddesses there. The Jews became quite sad and angry when their holy temple was desecrated. They rallied behind their priest Judas Macabees, defeated the Greeks and reclaimed the temple of Jerusalem. Several people had to lay down their lives in these battles.

Mother Marth Shmooni (St. Shamuna) and her seven children were captured and brought to the royal court while these battles were going on. The king asked this mother and her children to reject Yahweh and to eat the forbidden meat. But the mother was unwilling to do so. She said that she would worship Yahweh only who was the True God. The king became very angry and killed the children one after another before killing the mother. As they had deep faith in God, this mother and children were not afraid to die. They knew that if they left this world, they would be with God. Our church has recognized the great faith of that mother and children and has included them in the canon of Saints. We have certain churches dedicated to this saintly mother and her children.

Hymn

(Massihaye kanman...)

Those martyrs who longed
For seeing the Christ,
By their death took wings,
And fluttered to Heights.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Mother Marth Shmooni, who laid her life for God, pray for us
always.*

.....

Resolution

***Neither tribulation nor distress, persecution nor famine,
nakedness nor peril nor sword shall separate us
from the love of Christ.***

(Reference: Epistle to the Romans 8:35)

Let Us Think

1. The term used to address the Saintly women.
.....
2. How many children did mother Marth Shmooni have?
3. Name the ruler who killed this mother and her children.
.....
4. Give the Syriac word which means 'martyr.'
.....
5. Who was the Greek emperor, known as 'the Great', who attacked North India?
.....
6. Name the Jewish priest under whom the Jews organized themselves and defeated the Greeks?
.....
7. What did the king ask Marth Shmooni and her children?
.....
.....
8. What was the reply given by Mother Marth Shmooni to the King?
.....
.....

Activities

1. Identify and prepare a list of saints of the Old Testament times.
2. Find out the names of books included in the Apocrypha.

3. Match the following by drawing lines

Alexander

the Fourth

Antiochus

Priest

Judas Maccabees

the Great

4. List a few churches established in the name of Marth Shmoon in our Church

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
| Sunday | * | St. Luke 18:9-14 |
| Monday | St. John 11:1-4 | Psalm 78:1-5 |
| Tuesday | St. John 11:5-8 | Psalm 78:6-8 |
| Wednesday | St. John 11:9-11 | Psalm 78:9-14 |
| Thursday | St. John 11:12-15 | Psalm 78:15-22 |
| Friday | St. John 11:16-20 | Psalm 98:1-5 |
| Saturday | St. John 11:21-23 | * |

Unit 6

Good Habits

Lesson 20

Forgiveness - The Ideal Way to Respond

Message: Forgiveness is necessary to preserve the atmosphere of peace at home and in the society.

Verse to be Memorized: “Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:14)

Introduction

Many of the problems and conflicts in our society originate from wrong reactions and responses. Several conflicts could be solved if we are ready to forgive instead of taking revenge. Hence we need to cultivate good responses and habits. Today let us learn how we can learn forgiveness.

The Lesson

There is a proverb, “forgiving like the earth.” Even though man tramples over the earth and exploits her in many ways, earth forgives man and provides everything he needs. Earth is a good ‘model’ of forgiveness. Hence it is said that we should forgive like the earth. In Hindu religion earth is described as a deity of patience. They consider the earth as a ‘goddess.’ God forgives man’s disobedience. Hence we request God to forgive our sins. But when we ask God to forgive our sins we should think whether we have the right to make such a request. We have the right to ask for pardon of our sins only if we pardon those who wronged us. That is why, when Lord taught us to pray he asked us to pray “forgive us our debts and sins as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Christ has given us a great example? Lying on the cross, He prayed for those who crucified Him. “O Father pardon them as they don’t know what they have done.”

If we forgive others, God too will forgive us. We can ease many tensions when we forgive others. Those who do not forgive others will naturally face more discomfort or disappointment.

The first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, also prayed for those who stoned him. We read about it in Acts of apostles (Acts 7:60). Following these great examples, we can cultivate the habit of forgiving others. Anger, and not patience, is the weakness of many people. As a result they and those who live and work with them face several difficulties. Anger will lead us to several dangers.

“Anger is seed, we should know,
To the gaint tree of all sins.”

If the seed of anger grows, it will become the gaint tree of sins.

When we are unhappy about the behaviour of others, we may become angry and return the same form of behaviour. But if we can forgive them, we become good Christians; we become like Christ. Jesus said: “But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him. (St. Matthew 5:39). This principle influenced Mahatma Gandhi very much. Even when our neighbours or fellow students behave in a bad manner, we should not try to do them harm. Instead if we can do good to them we will definitely win over them. Jesus has taught us to overcome evil with goodness.

But there are some people who are not prepared to forgive even when those who did wrong are ready to apologize. Jesus Christ has taught us, “if your brother sins against you, rebuke him and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day and seven times in a day returns to you saying ‘I repent’, you shall forgive him.” (St. Luke 17:3-4).

Hence we should be patient and forgiving. It will lead our minds to peace. We will earn the love and respect of others through patience. That is the way in which we can bear Christ’s witness before others. If we keep hatred and vendatta against others, we will certainly lose our peace of mind. It will distort our outlook and will make us unable to see virtue. The peace and comfort we get from forgiving each other cannot be easily defined. It is something worth experiencing.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Lord, the Physician of all illness and sufferings and the Healer of all
wounds, heal the illness of our souls. Amen*

.....

Resolution

We will forgive those who do us wrong.

Activities

1. Imagine that one of your friends does something unpleasant to you. What will you do in return?
2. Find out the prayer made by Jesus Christ on the cross for those who persecuted him.
3. St. Stephen prayed for his enemies at the time of his death. Find out the relevant biblical verse.
4. Learn to forgive and encourage your friends to pardon and forgive others.

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday | * | St. Luke 21:14-19 |
| Monday | 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 | St. Matthew 18:33-35 |
| Tuesday | 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 | St. Mark 11:22-26 |
| Wednesday | Colossians 3:13-15 | Psalms 86:1-5 |
| Thursday | Ephesians 4:30-32 | Proverbs 19:8-11 |
| Friday | Ephesians 4:2-6 | Psalms 32:1-3 |
| Saturday | Colossians 3:12-15 | * |

Lesson 21

Charity: A Good and Gracious Way of Responding

Message: When we devote our thoughts, words, and deeds for doing good to others, our life will become acceptable to God.

Verse to be Memorized: “For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (St. Luke 22:27) We have a responsibility towards the society in which we live. Our society will be well knit only if each person fulfils his duty. Our duty is to help others. Through this lesson we shall learn how to live as a charitable person.

Introduction

When does life become useful and satisfying? Only when we have a goal and a plan of action in life. Without them, life becomes a burden to us and others. It will become uninteresting. This lesson tells us how our actions should be. It gives us strength to help others.

The Lesson

Good and righteous people use their wealth, abilities and position to lessen the sorrows and difficulties of others. They get happiness and satisfaction. Emerson, the philosopher, has said that comfort is a perfume. When we give it to others, a part of it falls on us too.

“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (St. Mark 10:45)

Christ was incarnate for the salvation of man. He gave food to the hungry, sight to the blind, cured the sick and made the lame, walk. Jesus taught us to “love our neighbours as ourselves.” He was reminding us of our duty to take care of our fellow beings always. We should never think of utilizing others for satisfying our selfish needs. Instead we should think what we can do for the good of others. If we think like that our conduct will be useful and pleasant to others. We have plenty of

opportunities to show our love and sympathy for others. We should neither shut our eyes towards them nor turn our backs on them. Instead of confining ourselves to religious observances and rituals we should extend the arms of brotherhood and love. God commands that He is pleased not in sacrifice but in mercy.

While travelling in buses and trains, some people offer their seats to mothers with little children and old people. Some others never care for such needy people. It is God's decree that human being should help, and cooperate with one another. The same principle is seen in nature too.

If we want to get help and happiness, we should give them to others. If we save small amounts of money in a bank, we can utilize it in times of needs. Similarly the little helps given to others, from time to time, will be repayed to us when we need them.

It is wrong to think that we can live without the help of others. We can't live a single day without the help of others.

A number of road accidents happen in our country daily. Those who reach the site of such an accident first should nurse the injured and take them to hospital. Unfortunately many people keep away as onlookers without doing any help. Sometimes the injured will have to be given blood at a hospital. That person can be saved from death only if there are people willing to donate blood. Anyone can become an accident victim any time. Hence we should be prepared to donate blood even to strangers, in an emergency.

Those who imitated Christ and dedicated their lives to help others shall always be an inspiration to us. The paths showed by H.G. Pathrose Mar Osthathios and H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios are also before us. They lived as the companion of the poor.

Let us enrich each day of our life with charity. Let us join others in their pleasure and pain and make our life blessed.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Lord, grant us a mind which is kind enough to the weak and sick
and helps them according to our ability. Amen*

.....

Resolution

***We shall listen to the call of the poor and destitute
We will not miss the chance to help others.***

Activities

1. List your common acts of charity.
2. Are there occasions when you didn't help others even though you could do so? Share such experiences with your friends in the class.
3. Write the timely help and assistance you got from your friends and others.

Further Reading

| Day | Morning | Evening |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Sunday | * | 2 Corinthians 8:1-6 |
| Monday | St. Matthew 25:31-34 | 2 Corinthians 8:7-9 |
| Tuesday | St. Matthew 25:35-40 | 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 |
| Wednesday | St. Matthew 25:42-46 | 2 Corinthians 8:16-9 |
| Thursday | Proverbs 19:16-17 | 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 |
| Friday | Deuteronomy 25:13-16 | 2 Corinthians 8:16-19 |
| Saturday | Deuteronomy 26:1-2 | * |

