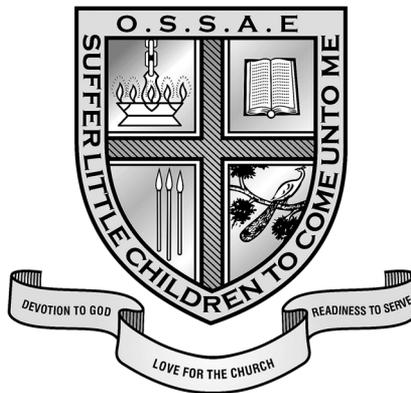


ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



Galilee Division Class VI (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. Teachers and parents shall take care to see that teaching Holy Bible, worship, history of Christianity and Malankara Sabha, and the life and witness of great personalities shall be grounded on this. Students shall be led by the faith that 'Jesus Christ is my Lord' in all their endeavours like planning the future and selecting the partner. 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 of Sunday School teachers. The ultimate aim is theosis, not just achieving high marks. One of the reason for spiritual decline is delimitation. Let thoughts overflowing with goodness and ideal to the glory of Kingdom of God fill our minds. Let this stream 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 Six of Galilee section, Here students are of the age 10-12. This means they are entering into their teenage. 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. **Our Decision 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

Chapter 1

Institution of the Holy Qurbana

(St. Luke 22:7-30)

Message: Our Lord, who came down to earth as a human, instituted the Holy Qurbana by giving His flesh and blood to disciples at the Upper Room of St. Mark (Sehion Mansion), prior to His crucifixion. As such, we must live Christ centred through our fellowship with the Holy Qurbana in our day to day life.

Verse to be Memorized: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

“Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (St. John 6:53).

Teaching Aids: A picture of the Last Supper, the Service Book of Holy Qurbana and a picture of the Holy Sanctuary.

Introduction

What is the purpose of incarnation of Son of God? His purpose was to liberate the sinners. God sent His begotten Son to us as a ‘sin offering’, for the emancipation of human beings who were fully immersed in sin, moving towards perdition and non – existence. And, Jesus Christ was born as son of virgin in the lineage of King David. He accepted Baptism from John the Baptist at age thirty. He preached to and healed the sick among the people for three and half years. And now, as his earthly sojourn was about to end, just before his death on the cross at Calvary, he gave his flesh and blood to us through the institution of Holy Qurbana. This was preceded by washing the feet of his disciples like a servant, teaching them and us lessons on humility. Today, we are going to learn the details of this important event.

The Lesson

Do you remember the occasion when you received Holy Qurbana for the first time? No, because you were small babies at that time. When you were about three months old, your parents had carried you to the church. By accepting the first sacrament of ‘Baptism’, we all became members of the Christian Church. Along with

this, we received Holy Qurbana also. Subsequently, we have been participating in the Service of Holy Qurbana every Sunday. Is it not interesting to learn how and when this very important sacrament was instituted?

It is the last part of our Lord's public ministry. The main festival of Israel, the feast of 'Passover' was round the corner. Right from the time of Moses, they have been observing this feast, also called the 'Feast of Unleavened Bread,' to remember the great liberation from Egyptian slavery. Our Lord sent two of his disciples to make preparations for the Feast, according to Jewish tradition. They reached Jerusalem and a well arranged mansion was ready for them. It is believed that this was the house of evangelist Mark, which is also called Sehion Mansion. The disciples arranged the Passover feast there following Jewish religious tradition.

In the evening, Jesus and his twelve disciples sat together to eat the Passover meal. While they were eating, Jesus gave them a warning – 'One among you will betray me'. On hearing this, they were so shocked and felt too sad that they could not say anything. Not knowing who this deceiver was, they were perplexed and looked among themselves. Jesus gave enough indication that it would be Judas Iscariot. We must remember that we are always answerable to God for each of our deeds.

After the Passover meal, Jesus took the bread, blessed, broke and gave them, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body". Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me". Jesus gave them bread as his own body and wine, as his blood, symbol of the new covenant. He also taught them that he was the new Passover lamb. This sacrament commenced at the Sehion Mansion and got completed with the crucifixion at Calvary. The Holy Qurbana we celebrate today is the very same that was instituted by Jesus at the Sehion Mansion and completed at the Calvary. Before, instituting the Holy Qurbana, our Lord washed the feet of his disciples. This noble act was an answer to a silent dispute among the disciples as to who was the greatest in the group!

'Perhaps, you have attended the feet washing service held on the Holy Thursday afternoon, where a Metropolitan of the Church washes the feet of twelve people: a very moving moment for those who participate in this service. Through his action of washing his disciples' feet, our Lord taught an unforgettable lesson that we are to serve others, and this alone makes us noble and Godly.

The Syriac word Qurbana or Qurbano means offering, sacrifice, offertory etc. Syriac had two dialects - East and West. They said Qurbana in the East, and Qurbano in the West. Even before our Lord instituted Holy Qurbana at the Sehion Mansion, he had taught his disciples its purpose and importance. (Refer St John chapters 5 and 6). Our Church, therefore, attaches a lot of importance to celebrating and receiving

Holy Qurbana. Holy Qurbana is considered as ‘Sacrament of Sacraments’, ‘medicine of immortality’, ‘Living Sacrifice’ etc. To experience the mystery of Holy Qurbana in its fullness, one must take part in it with complete faith and piety. St. Paul has stated, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:26). Holy Qurbana is blessing, peace, sacrifice and thanks giving; we must be careful to take part in it with proper preparation and devotion.

Hymn

(Rakshakanuracheythan ...)

Savior has thus spoken - My body and blood
Those who receive them - in them I reside.
By the faith so pure - he who receives Me
And keep My command - is he not My friend?
Body be your food - blood be your drink
Those who accept them - I will dwell in them.
Salvation of soul that - we may attain
Sacred blood body - O Saviour You give.
By the body Thine - seek we remedy
Certainly attain - our eternal life.
Having eaten Thine - sanctified elements
Do not sentence us - on Thy judgment day.

.....

Let Us Pray

Oh! Lord, the Word who has come down as human, we receive you through Holy Qurbana. Enable us to eat your body and drink your Holy blood with a pure conscience. May this serve to forgive our debts and sins and lead us to eternal life. Amen.

.....

Resolution

We shall participate in the Holy Qurbana and partake of it with full devotion and in humility.

.....

Let Us Think

1. On which Jewish festival, did our Lord institute Holy Qurbana?
2. Write down the words of institution of the Holy Qurbana.
3. What is the meaning of the term, "Qurbana?"
4. What are the adjectives our Church fathers have given to Holy Qurbana?

5. Is the Holy Qurbana we celebrate today a 'repetition' of what our Lord had instituted at the Sehion Mansion?
6. Is Holy Qurbana just a remembrance of an incident or an institution? If not, explain what it means.

Activities

1. In chapter 14 of the Book of Genesis, we see a high priest making an offering in the presence of Abraham with bread and wine. Try to find out his name.
2. Have you ever participated in a feet washing service? Discuss what all things caught your attention there.
3. What is the warning St. Paul gives to those who participate in Holy Qurbana carelessly? (1 Corinthians 11:26-31)
4. Make an attempt to identify the twelve disciples by looking at a picture of the 'Last Supper'.
5. Find out the different words used to describe Holy Qurbana.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 12:1-11
Monday	St. Matthew 26:17-29	Exodus 12:21-28
Tuesday	St. Mark 14:12-25	Exodus 13:1-10
Wednesday	St. John 13:1-20	Leviticus 16:3-10
Thursday	St. John 6:26-40	Ezekiel 45:18-25
Friday	St. John 6:47-51	1 Corinthians 11:23-30
Saturday	Romans 12:1-8	Hebrews 10:19-25
Sunday	St. Luke 24:13-35	*

Chapter 2

Prayer at Gethsemane

(St. Matthew 26: 36-56)

Message: Our Lord gathers strength through prayers, to face crucifixion, which is just a few hours away. This is a great example for those who pass through crisis situations. Total submission to the will of God is the essence of spirituality.

Verse to be Memorized: “Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (St. Mark 14:36)

Teaching Aids: A picture of our Lord praying at Gethsemane, liturgical Hymns.

Introduction

Some of us have experienced moments of terrible fear and anxiety in our life once in a while. Your experiences can be shared with the class such as a major surgery of a very close relative, a road accident involving someone who is quite close to you, unexpected demise of friends or relatives and similar incidents. Events like these create tremors in our life. How do we face them? Here, the way our Lord faced such a situation, shows us the path to follow. He was sure that he was going to be crucified the very next day. That being the will of God, our Lord prays and gains strength and courage from God, the Father. We will try to understand the extreme agony undergone by Lord Jesus Christ during the hours prior to his crucifixion.

The Lesson

In the life of Jesus, the Gethsemane experience is perhaps the most moving and agonizing. Gethsemane is a garden close to the Mount of Olives. The meaning of the word Gethsemane is ‘oil press’. Do you remember the name of that garden where the first man Adam disobeyed God? Because of his disobedience, the humans have been ‘tasting’ condemnation and death. Here, in another garden, Son of God subjects himself to obedience in its fullness so that we are blessed and that we are led towards eternal life. At the mount of Transfiguration, three disciples namely Peter, James and John were with Jesus to witness the glory of God; and now Jesus enters Gethsemane along with the very three disciples.

At Gethsemane, Jesus is seen to be sharing the feelings of his heart with these three disciples. He advised them to be awake and be vigilant. Jesus alone goes a little forward. He prayed to Father with a heavy heart. He fell on the ground and prayed, not once, but three times. St. Luke records drops of blood tickling through the sweat

glands. On coming back after the prayer, he found the three disciples sleeping. He admonished Peter who had assured that he would stand by his master in all his trying circumstances. Jesus warned them that those who fell asleep when they ought to be awake and praying are doomed to failure.

Our Lord prayed in deep sorrow and grief that the cup of tribulation should move away, but that was not to be. His prayerful submission to the will of God must be emulated by us. After he finished his prayer, Jesus talked like a hero who had won a battle, 'get up, we are going'. The power of prayer is immense. The secret behind the successful spiritual life of all our saintly fathers is nothing but their committed prayer habits. The more and more you pray, the more and more strength you earn. Let us memorize this saying in English: 'more prayer, more power; less prayer, less power; no prayer, no power'.

Our Lord got himself strengthened through prayer. But the disciples failed at the crucial testing time as they could not remain awake and pray. Peter denied his master thrice, but repented and was forgiven. But Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus for money, instead of repenting, chose to commit suicide, where his money or his own abilities failed to protect and console him. Judas is a warning signal to those who deviate from true faith for worldly gains.

Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing the hymn *ee raavil shishyar kurissippor...*
(Good Friday service, Night prayer, First vigil) connected with this lesson.

(Meaning: In this night the disciples, the crucifers and our Saviour kept vigil. Three vigils were kept: the people to kill our Lord, and the apostles to flee, and the Son of God on the Mount Olives)

.....

Let Us Pray

Oh! Lord Jesus, You were in great agony and grief on our behalf at Gethsemane; help us to emulate your prayer in our crisis. Show us Your mercy that we too submit fully to the will of God when we are to drink the cup of affliction. Amen

.....

Resolution

***With the help of God, we will not fail in difficult situations.
With Christ, we shall take crises into opportunities***

.....

Let Us Think

1. What is the meaning 'Gethsemane'?
2. Who were those disciples who accompanied Jesus to Mount Tabor as well as to Gethsemane?
3. The is willing, but the is weak.

Activities

1. Compare the experiences at the gardens of Eden and Gethsemane.
2. Have a discussion on this topic: While you pray, which is given importance: Will of God or our own interests?
3. Let your teacher share an experience of his having overcome a problem through prayer. You too come up with similar experiences you have come across in your life.
4. Jesus was praying at Gethsemane with a very heavy heart, but his disciples were in deep slumber. Is it proper to sleep during prayer time? Learn to exercise vigil while praying.
5. Let us meditate Jesus who was undergoing deadly pain for us.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. Mark 14:32-42
Monday	St. Luke 22:39-46	St. John 18:1-9
Tuesday	Psalms 1:1-11	St. Mark 10:35-45
Wednesday	St. John 12:27-36	Psalms 31:1-14
Thursday	Hebrews 5:1-10	Psalms 31:15-24
Friday	St. John 5:30-36	Psalms 43:1-5
Saturday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Isaiah 51:9-17
Sunday	Psalms 20:1-9	*

Chapter 3

The Trial of Our Lord

(St. Mark 14: 53-65)

Message: Don't we engage in activities which cause pain to Jesus? Jesus is pained when we do evil. Instead, we must engage in good and virtuous deeds so that the name of Jesus is glorified.

Verse to be Memorized: "Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted." (Isaiah 53:4)

Teaching Aids: Pictures of Jesus being tried.

Introduction

Have you ever seen a court in session where an accused is undergoing a trial? There is always an advocate who argues for the accused. Our judicial system has a dictum that even if a thousand criminals are let free, an innocent should never be punished. But the trial of Jesus was one where law and justice were given the go by. The Jewish leaders forced a trial on Jesus, the symbol of justice and innocence personified. Surely, this happens to be the darkest episode in judicial history. Our Lord was subjected to severe harassment physically and mentally and he went through all such torture patiently for saving us from the slavery of sin and eternal punishment; he was slapped on his face by sinful men and was subjected to the most unjust judgment as if he was a proven criminal. And all this was for our sake.

The Lesson

Jesus, who earned strength through his prayer at Gethsemane, was arrested by the Roman soldiers and the temple guards deputed by Jewish leadership. That traitor Judas showed them the way. Judas was quite familiar with the location because he had been there frequently with Jesus and other disciples. He kissed Jesus and thus the soldiers identified him. Jesus faced the situation calmly and with a gentle composure. Peter who could not pray with Jesus at Gethsemane took a sword and attacked a guard of the high priest cutting off his ear. This incident made Jesus teach a new lesson to Peter and others present there by healing the guard who was attacked and commented, "For all who draw the sword will die by the sword".

The unjust trial of our Lord was carried out in four stages. Jesus was dragged before Annas, Caiaphas, Jewish ruling council and Pilate for carrying out their farce which they called a trial.

From Gethsemane, Jesus as a captive was produced before previous year's high priest Annas. He, as the father in law of current year's high priest Caiaphas was an elderly leader of the community and was highly respected. Caiaphas would have thought that his job could have been made easy had the sharp minded Annas succeeded in identifying some serious and punishable charges against Jesus. Annas raised two allegations against Jesus namely, one – Jesus had been organizing his disciples against the Roman government and, two – he was misleading the people. Jesus replied to these allegations with absolute confidence and courage that he was teaching the people in public and that those who have listened to him during his teachings may come forward to testify against him. This response irked the soldiers and they slapped him on his face. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas as he could not find any charges against Jesus as alleged. It was during the trial before Caiaphas that Peter denied Jesus thrice.

While Jesus was being tried before Caiaphas, experts in the law, and leaders of people were all present. Many false witnesses came forward to testify, but no concrete evidences were forthcoming. To the question of Caiaphas, "Are you then the Son of God," Jesus replied, "You are right in saying I am". He continued to tell them about the glory and power, Son of God was going to have in future. At this, they all came to the conclusion that the statement of Jesus was a clear case of blasphemy deserving death penalty. They started spitting on his face, beating him with their fists and slapping on his face.

In the morning, Jesus was tried before Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. This was a 72 member supreme body of Jews apart from the high priest, which was enjoying full authority of Jewish Law. To their questions, Jesus affirmatively answered that he was Messiah and Son of God. The council decided to award death penalty to Jesus on charges of treason, claiming to be Son of God and for blasphemy. Then, he was sent to the Roman Governor Pilate as he alone had the power to impart a death penalty.

Pilate was Roman Governor for Judea from AD 26 to 36. His head quarters were at Caesarea. However, being the Passover festival season, to oversee law and order situation at Jerusalem, he was present at the palace here. St. John describes in detail the various stages of Jesus being tried at the different locations of this palace (St. John 18:28 – 19:26). Pilate utilized a chance to befriend Herod of Galilee by sending Jesus to him for his trial as recorded by St. Luke. Pilate was quite convinced that Jesus was innocent and that he needed to be set free. Even Herod did not find anything wrong with Jesus. However, Pilate knew that he himself was not in the good books of Jewish community and therefore, it was safe to entrust them to take the final decision and save his position. There was a tradition among Jews to liberate a prisoner every year during the Passover festival and Pilate gave them a choice as to who should be freed

this year; Jesus or Barabbas, the murderer? They shouted favoring Barabbas; but Pilate made one more attempt. The multitude gathered there threatened Pilate that they would lodge a complaint against him if he decided to set free Jesus who had moved against the emperor Caesar. With this, Pilate surrendered meekly as he was not ready for any step that might endanger his position of power. Thus, Pilate surrendered his better judgment and awarded death penalty to Jesus. 'It was the day of preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour' (St. John 19:14). At the same time when the Passover lamb was to be slaughtered, the Lamb of God too was handed over for sacrifice.

The King of Kings was now thoroughly exhausted with blood drained out and with the physical torture. Who had beaten up our Lord? Only Jews and Romans? The late His Grace Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios sings,

“En Hastham thane thalli,
Ennittum Snehichenne”
(I gave him up, but still be loved me)

Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing the hymn *Udaye Shobhana vasanathal...* (Good Friday service, Morning prayer, Mar Ephrem) connected with this lesson.

Meaning: In the morning, You covered the sky with beautiful and luminous garments. And in the morning the ungrateful people covered You with the garments of mocking. In the morning the Cherubim cries out before You: 'Blessed is Your honour from Your place'. In the morning, the harlot clamoured against You: 'Remove him, remove him from earth!'

Let Us Pray

Oh my Lord, it was for us You accepted the judgment in silence; for our trespasses, You, the Judge of judges subjected Your body to torture, and Your face for slapping and in all these, we all see Your divine love; Lord, make us love You always and live as per Your will. Amen.

Resolution

I will live as the obedient child of my Lord who was obedient till the death on cross, only to save me

Let Us Think

1. Jesus was tried by two high priests and two rulers. Name them.
2. betrayed Jesus;denied Jesus thrice, but repented.

3. What is the name the Head Quarters of Pilate at Jerusalem?
4. Find out the name of the guard whose ear was cut off by Peter (St. John 18:10)

Activities

1. Name of Pilate, who had awarded the death penalty of Jesus, is included in one our prayers. Which prayer? He knew the truth, yet he passed the judgment of death on the innocent. Discuss the possible reasons behind adding Pilate's name to the prayer.
2. During the time of Moses, we see such a person in the Old Testament, who took a wrong decision like Pilate because of pressures from public. Who was that? Explain that incident.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. Matthew 26:47-56
Monday	St. Matthew 26:57-75	St. Matthew 27:1-10
Tuesday	St. Matthew 27:11-26	St. Luke 22:47-71
Wednesday	St. Luke 23:1-12	St. Luke 23:13-25
Thursday	St. John 18:12-27	St. John 18:28-40
Friday	St. John 19:1-16	Isaiah 50:1-9
Saturday	Isaiah 53:1-101	Corinthians 1:18-31
Sunday	Psalms 35:1-11	*

Chapter 4

The Crucifixion of Our Lord

(St. John 19: 17-42)

Message: Let us meditate on the cross and submit ourselves in sacrifice and perseverance to understand the redemption our Lord Jesus Christ earned for us through the cross.

Verse to be Memorized: “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2: 6-8).

Teaching Aids: The Good Friday Service Book.

Introduction

The tribulations and sufferings of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross are so moving and heartbreaking; we shall meditate those events with great reverence and devotion. We participate in the day-long Holy service at our church on Good Friday and try to assimilate the sufferings and agony of our Lord and experience for ourselves the pain of the cross. The last moments of the Son of God on this earth were really grievous, but while undergoing such unbearable pain on the cross, Jesus prayed for those who tortured him. This certainly is the real and divine model for all times.

The Lesson

The Roman Governor Pilate handed over Jesus to the soldiers for crucifying. Death by crucifixion during the Roman regime was a cruel mode of punishment, practiced by Romans for punishing slaves and those who rebelled against the empire. The soldiers started beating up and ridiculing Jesus. He was made to wear a cheap red coloured cassock and a crown made of hard thorns pressed on his head. He was made to hold a stick as if that was a scepter (symbol of kingly power) and was made a subject of mockery. They started spitting on his face in addition to severely beating up. But our Lord accepted all this in absolute silence.

Jesus, who was quite tired after the lengthy trials at four different places as well as due to the cruel physical torture, was forced to carry the heavy cross on his shoulders, to Calvary. He was being beaten up continuously with leather belts on which lead balls were stuck, which made blood flow from all over the body. A virtually drained out Jesus slowly walked his way to Calvary carrying that heavy cross, his body drenched

in blood. And while he fell down on the way out of sheer exhaustion, a person, Simon of Cyrene came that way and the soldiers forced him to carry the cross. A big crowd was following Jesus to Calvary. The women folk among them were crying aloud, but Jesus tried to console them.

They reached 'the place of Skull' outside the city walls of Jerusalem, which is called Golgotha in Aramaic and Calvary in Latin. On this hill, Jesus was crucified at the third hour (9 a.m.). There was a practice of writing on the top of the cross the crime committed by the convict; it was written, 'Jesus, of Nazareth, king of Jews' in Hebrew, Latin and Greek languages. Two robbers were also crucified, one on his right and the other on his left. The Jewish priests and the teachers of law were still continuing to ridicule our Lord. Meanwhile, the one crucified on the left side of Jesus scoffed at him; the other one repented and came to inherit Paradise. See, how great and noble is our Lord listening to the prayers of sinners even as he himself was in deep agony on the cross and was about to die.

For the three hours, Jesus was suffering from unbearable pain on the cross. The seven statements of Jesus from the cross are the true enlightenment of love of God. These Sayings of our Lord on the cross were overflowing with hope and courage. Let us read those sayings.

1. **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing". (St. Luke 23: 34)**
2. **"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise". (St. Luke 23: 43)**
3. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, **"Woman, here is your son."** Then he said to the disciple, **"Here is your mother."** And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. (St. John 19: 26-27)
4. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, **"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"** that is, **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** (St. Matthew 27: 46)
5. When Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), **"I am thirsty". (St. John 19: 28)**
6. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, **"It is finished."** Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (St. John 19: 30)
7. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, **"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."** Having said this, he breathed his last. (St. Luke 23: 46)

During the time of crucifixion, many supernatural incidents took place such as earth quake, rocks splitting into pieces, tombs getting opened and the dead getting resurrected. Jesus accepted death on cross as the will of God. The guards present there including the Roman centurion testified openly that Jesus was truly the Son of God.

With the crucifixion of Jesus, the whole Universe was saved. Cross is the flag of victory over Satan, sin and death. The cross has the central place in all our worship services.

Pilate got confirmation through the centurion that Jesus was dead. Next day (Saturday) was Sabbath and therefore the funeral was to take place in the evening itself. Joseph from Arimathea met Pilate and obtained permission for bringing down the body of Jesus and burying it. Joseph, a disciple of Jesus in private, buried Jesus according to Jewish rites in a tomb that was made for his own use. (St. Matthew 27: 57-61). Nicodemus, another private disciple too was present along with Joseph. A big stone was placed at the mouth of the tomb to seal it. St. Mary, Mary of Magdalena and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, Salomy, wife of Cleophas were also present and witnessed all these.

For our worship on Good Friday, all the incidents which took place through the trials to the funeral are systematically and devotionally laid down. We are to participate in this service from morning till evening with piety and repentance.

Hymn

*(en natha nin kripa ninne...,
Kyamtha namaskaram, Evening worship)*

“Thy grace brought thee down, O Lord!
Unto Thy servants, sinners,
Thy Church now doth cling to the,
Wings of Thy Cross have mercy!”

.....

Let Us Pray

Oh Lord, You have, out of Your eternal love suffered unbearable pain and died for us on the cross. We meditate on Your sufferings. Let the love of cross show us the right way to live and die. Amen.

.....

Resolution

Jesus, we adore the Holy Cross; we meditate on Your suffering on our behalf. Your love is boundless and amazing. Forgive our sins and sanctify our souls and bodies. We thank for the great redemption You have achieved for us.

.....

Let Us Think

1. Name the person who helped Jesus to carry the cross.
2. What was the writing on the cross? In which languages was this written?

3. What was the promise Jesus gave to the robber crucified on his right side? (St. Luke 23: 43)
4. 'Golgotha', 'Calvary' – These words come from which languages? What are their meanings?
5. Which two private disciples of Jesus made arrangements of the funeral?

Activities

1. Find out the expansion of 'INRI'.
2. Memorize the seven Sayings of Jesus on the cross.
3. Sing the hymn of dialogues of the two robbers in the Good Friday service, first in your class and later in the Sunday School.
4. Examine whether the robber on the left side of Jesus' cross scoffed at Jesus and the one on the right side repented as per the Holy Bible.
5. During the Good Friday service, while bowing before the cross in reverence, there is a prayer "We adore the cross..." Complete this.
6. Study the changes on the Golgotha that is erected at the middle of the church during mid lent to Easter day and have a discussion in the class.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. Matthew 27:27-44
Monday	St. Matthew 27:45-66	St. Mark 15:16-32
Tuesday	St. Mark 15:33-47	St. Luke 23:26-43
Wednesday	St. Luke 23:44-56	Psalms 22:1-21
Thursday	Hebrews 13:8-17	Leviticus. 4:1-7
Friday	Numbers 19:1-10	Habakkuk 1:1-12
Saturday	Psalms 35:1-17	1 Corinthians 4:12-19
Sunday	Psalms 69:1-25	*

Chapter 5

Resurrection

(St. Luke 24: 1-12)

Message: Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis of Christian faith. We experience in our life, the hope of salvation conveyed to us by Resurrection of Jesus.

Verse to be Memorized: The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. (St. Luke 24: 5)

Teaching Aids: The Service Book of Holy Qurbana and the service book of Major Feasts.

Introduction

Let us look at the incidents that took place following the death of Jesus on cross and the funeral. By order from Pilate, the tomb was sealed and soldiers were entrusted to guard it. The disciples returned disappointed and in deep anguish. This was a situation like “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate,” says the Lord of hosts”. (Zechariah 13:7) The disciples were really perturbed whether it was the end of the road for them. But we do realize, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (St. John 1: 5). After his death, our Lord went into the world of the dead and preached the gospel to all the dead beginning from Adam. (St. Peter 3: 19, 4:6). The Orthodox churches believe this entry to Sheol and they observe Holy Saturday as a day to remember all the departed souls.

The Lesson

It was Sunday, the first day of the week. Early in the morning, Mary Magdalena and a few other women went to the tomb to apply perfume on the body of Jesus. It was customary for Jewish women to apply perfume on dead bodies after burial. They were moving towards the tomb with great enthusiasm and unparalleled devotion to their dear master, but they were also a bit anxious how they would enter the tomb because they had seen the heavy stone with which the tomb was sealed on Friday. They were wondering as to who would remove the stone for them.

They were in for a surprise. The heavy stone at the tomb was already moved away! Yet another and more fascinating surprise was in store – at the mouth of the tomb, there was an angel in a pure white robe! The angel explained to them why the tomb was empty. “He is not here; he has risen.” The angel asked them to convey the

glad news of Resurrection to the disciples. While they were moving out with fear and joy, Jesus appeared before them. He told them, "Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me". (St. Matthew 28: 10)

Immediately on hearing that Jesus had risen, Peter and John rushed to the tomb. The young John reached there first, and saw the empty tomb and the clothe which was used to wrap the dead body, lying there. It was sure that nobody had removed the body from the tomb. Peter was the first to enter the empty tomb and became a witness to the resurrection. Later, Peter declared, "... and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses" (Acts 3: 15). Books in the New Testament testify risen Jesus appearing to his disciples at many places several times. It was Mary Magdalena, to whom risen Jesus appeared first and who had the fortune to announce the good news to his disciples. How Jesus talked to Mary Magdalena is described in the hymn sung during the Easter procession in the Church.

(Oh Mariame njan thottakkaran thanne...)

Truly am I the gardener, Oh Mary,
I only planted Paradise, the Great One!
Oh, Mary am I life of all living things,
I am the Resurrection and new life,
I am who was killed; I was in the tomb,
Touch me not for I, have not gone to my Father,
With glory have I ascended from the tomb,
Good news this, carry to my disciples.

Risen Christ allowed his presence occasionally to disciples for forty days. On the fortieth day, he blessed them on the Mount of Olives and commanded them to spread the Good News throughout the world and then ascended to Heaven. Ten days later, on the feast of Pentecost, Holy Spirit was sent to the disciples. And our Lord lives even today with us.

Had the death of Christ on cross ended with crucifixion, it would have been a failure. But Christ overcame death and rose as he had said earlier and according to the scriptures. Jesus resurrected on Sunday and therefore the Church assembles on Sunday instead of Saturday (as Jew do), and this continues till now. The empty tomb and the growth and spread of the Church perhaps are the strongest evidences of the Resurrection. It was the power of Resurrection that strengthened the helpless disciples and equipped them for preaching the Good News. Resurrection is the focus of our faith. Again, it is Christ's Resurrection that is the basis of our own resurrection and eternal life. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who

raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.” (Romans 8: 11)

Hymn

(*Daivamuyirthu mahathwathode... ,
Kyamtha Namaskaram, Morning Worship*)

God in glory - arose from the death, and gave life to
Adam and all his - children
Angels on high adored their Lord
Earth was made bright
And trembling stood watchers then.

.....

Let Us Pray

*Oh Jesus, You rose from the dead and thus ensured our resurrection at
Your second coming. Give us the wisdom and humility to seek,
understand and be blessed by Your Resurrection from the dead. Amen.*

.....

Resolution

*Jesus died for my sake, and gave me freedom from sin and death.
I shall live for Him, serving Him and His Church.*

.....

Let Us Think

1. “If Christ has not been raised, then our has been in vain and your has been in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15: 14)
2. To whom did the Risen Christ appear first?
3. What would have been the reason why Peter and John rushed to the tomb?
4. On the fortieth day of Resurrection, there happened a very important event. What was that? What is its significance?

Activities

1. In the Orthodox tradition, we use the plain cross and not one with the image of a crucified Jesus. What must be the reason for this?
2. Go through the Service Book of Holy Qurbana and find out five hymns illustrating the great joy and importance of Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
3. The Declaration of Resurrection is a very important part of the service on the Easter Day worship. Read it out in the class.

4. Sing together the hymn “Vismayasahitham kabarupilarnnu ...” in the class, all joining together.
5. Jesus went down to the Sheol and preached good news to the dead. What do you understand from this? Could the dead listen to him and be benefitted by it?

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. John 20:1-18
Monday	St. John 20:19-31	St. John 21:1-14
Tuesday	St. Matthew 28:1-15	St. Mark 16:1-8
Wednesday	St. Mark 16:9-18	St. Luke 24:13-35
Thursday	St. Luke 24:44-53	1 Corinthians 15:3-19
Friday	Isaiah 60:1-15	Isaiah 61:1-11
Saturday	Acts 2:22-36	Romans 4:17-25
Sunday	Psalms 16:1-1	*

Chapter 6

Ten Commandments

(Exodus 20: 1-17)

Message: The Lord God gave commandments to His people, the Israelites, to help them live a righteous life as well as to enjoy the presence of God. It is for us to obey God's commandments always.

Verse to be Memorized: "Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine." (Exodus 19: 5)

Teaching Aids: The 'Ten Commandments' written as two big charts, pictures depicting the Commandments being handed over to Moses by God.

Introduction

We have a police force and a judicial system in our country. Have you ever thought of the reasons as to why they are there? This is for ensuring justice and law and order. Neither the judicial system nor the police force can act on their own. They have to co-ordinate their functioning within the Indian civil code and criminal procedure code. The Indian constitution oversees the effective implementation of these rules and regulations. In your secular schools, you would have learnt how these systems have developed over a period of time and got well established within the administrative framework. We shall try to understand how such systems came into existence in Israel.

The Lesson

Israel as a community can be said to have had its origin with Abraham, father of the faithful, being obedient to God's call. This is followed through the life history of Isaac, Jacob, and their descendents. We have already learnt how Joseph, the son of Jacob, got elevated to top administrative position in Egypt. He saved his brothers from the acute famine and made them settle down in Egypt. They were there for a few generations, but later rulers of Egypt, the Pharaohs, conceived plans to subjugate them.

As they were undergoing very cruel persecutions in Egypt, God chose Moses to liberate them from their slavery. Moses, forsaking all the palatial comforts, threw his lot with his people. His brother Aaron was there to help him. They appealed to the Pharaoh many times to set free the people, but the hard hearted Pharaoh did not yield. God sent down ten calamities to the land of Egypt. Ultimately, the Israelites moved out of Egypt, and proceeded to Canaan, the Promised Land. The content of

the book of Exodus is the history of this great journey. This Hebrew community took forty years to accomplish this. It was Moses who led the people. "... and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel" (Deuteronomy 34: 12). Moses led the people as leader, prophet and priest. It was through him that God gave the rules and regulations for the people of Israel. This is indeed a true indication of the love and care of God for his people, who had been liberated from slavery.

In the third month of their exodus from Egypt, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses atop the Mount Sinai. Tradition says that these commandments were given on the fiftieth day of the day of liberation or Passover i.e. on the day of the feast of Pentecost. To witness the Glory of God, Moses purified the people for two days. On the third day, amidst thunder, lightning and sound of trumpets Moses climbed up the Mount Sinai. The people waited at the foot of the mountain. Moses faced God in the darkness of the cloud. Moses fasted for forty days on the mountain. God gave him the Ten Commandments, which form the center point of all ethical practices. These commandments are recorded in Exodus 20:1-17 and also in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Following are those commands God gave to His own people as the code of morality.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.
4. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

In the history of humankind, especially of Israel, the Ten Commandments are important ethical codes. The first four among these indicate the relation of human beings towards God. Faith in 'one God' is insisted here and discarding of idolatry is affirmed. The remaining six commandments are for strengthening human's social relationships. When we respect and obey our parents, we are only keeping a commandment of God. In the New Testament, we read that Jesus Christ acknowledged the Ten Commandments and gave new interpretations for them.

Based on Deuteronomy 6: 5 and Leviticus 19: 18, Christ gives the summary of Ten Commandments: “He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (St. Matthew 22: 37-40). The Old Testament Law has its base in the Ten Commandments. In the New Testament, we get the Old Testament Laws and Rules fulfilled through Jesus Christ. In this context, St. John says, “The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (St. John 1:17)

While Moses was with God on Mount Sinai for forty days, the Israelites forgot their Lord God who liberated them from the slavery of Egypt. They chose to turn towards idolatry and forced Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. Moses as he came down from the mountain was terribly shocked to find his people worshipping a golden calf. He became very angry and threw away the stone plates on which the Ten Commandments were engraved by God Himself. As atonement for the sin of the people, Moses burnt the golden calf, powdered it, mixed the powder in water and made the people drink it. Then Moses interceded before God to save his people from God’s wrath. God acceded to the intercession of Moses. The Covenant was renewed and God blessed them and continued to guide them in their onward journey to Canaan.

.....
Let Us Pray

Oh Lord, kindly guide us and show us the way to live according to Your plans for us and following the commandments You have given us instead of getting attracted to the worldly comforts. Amen

.....

Resolution

***I will live as a child of God under all situations without getting diverted from the commandments of God.
I shall be beware of the temptations of the world. Amen***

.....

Let Us Think

1. What is the main content of the book of Exodus?
2. Among the Ten Commandments, which one is accompanied with a promise?
3. Fill up the blanks: “For the law was given through; Grace and truth came through.....”
4. Explain Ten Commandments.

Activities

1. Classify the Ten Commandments into two, like for e.g., the 'do's' and 'don'ts'
2. The history of Israelites' exodus is recorded in detail as a sermon in the book of Acts. Name the chapter and also the preacher.
3. Read the book of Exodus 19: 16-18 and based on these verses, find out what were the incidents on Mount Sinai.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 20:18-26
Monday	Deuteronomy 5:6-21	Exodus 19:1-13
Tuesday	Exodus 19:14-25	Exodus 21:1-19
Wednesday	Exodus 21:20-36	Exodus 23:1-17
Thursday	Exodus 23:18-33	Exodus 24:1-18
Friday	Exodus 31:18-32:14	Exodus 32:15-35
Saturday	St. Matthew 5:1-20	St. Matthew 5:21-48
Sunday	Romans 9:1-18	*

Chapter 7

Journey through the desert and the worship life of Israelites

(Exodus 40: 1-16)

Message: God was in their midst during the journey of Israelites through the desert. They believed that God travelled with them in a tent. The cluster of clouds during day time and pillar of fire in the night were the indicators of the presence of God. Even today, to those who worship Him, God is close by with His helping hand.

Verse to be Memorized: “For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall be holy, for I am holy”. (Leviticus 11: 45)

Teaching Aids: A map of the exodus (a sort of diagrammatic representation showing the route).

Introduction

The Israelites, having liberated from Egypt, reached the Promised Land of Canaan after a sojourn of forty years through the desert. Imagine a large group of people numbering a few lakhs travelling on foot through the desert year after year aiming to end up at the Promised Land. In this lesson, we learn about their experiences, their responses to different happenings, the inimitable leadership of Moses, the care of God which was unparalleled and the like. We would also learn about their religious life.

The Lesson

You might have carried out journeys to distant places from your home or from the school. Just think about the preparations you make for such a trip. Before you commence the journey, you plan out in detail many aspects such as the places you intend to visit, time schedule, arrangement of convenient vehicles, places of rest on the way, need of food, finance for meeting the expenses, necessary clothing and so on. The group would be relatively small, each one knowing each other, and all would be happy to carry out the trip with all the time for getting ready individually.

Now what we see at the exodus from Egypt to Canaan is totally different; lakhs of people are commencing a journey with fear, with no time to properly prepare, taking all their possessions including their animal wealth too and starting in a hurry. The multitude of people includes aged ones, the sick, children and pregnant women.

And the journey is through a desert and that too lasting a good forty years (though, originally, this was to get completed within just forty days or so). This was a fascinating exodus, where lots and lots of experiences of the care of God came up for us to learn.

The Israelites were liberated from Egyptian slavery by God through Moses. About six lakhs of men and their family members along with their assets including animal wealth started a great journey to the Promised Land on the 14th day of Abeeb month of Jewish calendar. They started their journey at night after observing the Passover. In all the Egyptian families, the first born were struck by Lord including those of animals and there were loud wailing everywhere. The houses of Israelites were spared wherever the blood of the lamb was applied on the top and sides of their doors. After 430 years of slavery, they commenced the journey with great enthusiasm and happiness of God's liberation under the leadership of Moses as well as the heads of tribes.

The route of their 'exodus' identified by Moses was noteworthy. The shorter coastal path through which they could have reached the promised Canaan within a year was not chosen because God had other plans. The idea was to avoid the area of Philistines who were strong warriors. These Israelites during those days never had any experience of waging battles. They proceeded to south through the desert adjoining Red Sea. Moses was well-experienced in these sort of terrains, as he was wandering through similar areas as a shepherd of his father in law Jethro's flock.

The people who left Egypt were experiencing continuous divine providence. They were protected from the extreme heat of the desert by the pillar of cloud and for light at night, the pillar of fire accompanied them throughout. We must believe that those who rely on God will be taken care through all calamities by the mysteries of God. Moses and the whole people were praising the Lord throughout their journey. Psalm 136 is one that illustrates God's care. They camped at Sukkoth and Edom, and then they were in for the big obstacle, the Red Sea right in front of them! And the Egyptian army following them was strikingly close! In this crisis, there was that wonderful interference from our Lord.

God made a dry path in the middle of Red Sea and the Israelites walked across safely, but the Egyptians almost caught up with them. And they too stepped into the dry path within the sea, but suddenly, the sea came back to its original state. The enemies got drowned and perished inside the Red Sea. Thus, the Israelites crossed Red Sea and walked along the border of Paran desert. But they faced another problem; there was no drinking water. At Mara, they had water, but the water was very bitter to taste. God answered Moses' prayer and the water turned sweet. Thereafter, at Eleem, they enjoyed pleasant atmosphere. They relaxed, people and animals, after sufficient rest, proceeded further.

Now, they had to confront fresh calamities as they entered the desert. They started murmuring against their Lord as they didn't have sufficient food for all. They thought over the meat they enjoyed in Egypt and felt, it was a blunder leaving all those 'comforts'. But, here too they had their Lord taking care of them. They were provided with Manna from the skies (Exodus Ch. 16). When they cried for meat, Moses too got perplexed and worried. Moses went to the extent of asking God whether He could provide meat sufficient to feed this multitude (Numbers 11: 21, 22). And now, God showered quails from the skies and satisfied them.

After a month, they reached Rephidim and faced shortage of water once again. The people, started murmuring against their Lord and that place was called 'Massa' as they tested God and also 'Mareeba' as they quarreled there. Moses cried before God and as directed, beat the rock at Horeb, which then produced sufficient water. This was followed by the attack from Amalekites and God saved them from this enemy. Moses constructed an altar there and called it "The Lord is my Banner" (Jehovah Nisei). Now, the family of Moses – wife Zipporah, sons Gershom and Eliezer – joined Jethro. Jethro witnessed, "Jehovah greater than all gods". The enviable task of leading the multitude of people was found quite manageable once Moses implemented the suggestions of Jethro.

Worship of Israelites: To ensure a systematic and disciplined worship, as directed by God, Moses made the Tabernacle, Ark of Testimony and the Tent of Meeting. Tabernacle is the small house where God came down and stayed. The Ark of Testimony is the chest where the stone tablets and the book of laws are kept. And the Tent of Meeting is where God and people meet together. As the representative of people, Moses used to enter this. The book of Exodus chapters 25 – 27 illustrates how this Holiest of Holies was to be made. Whenever Israelites settled down in the desert at night, the Tent used to be spread and when journey commenced, Levites used to carry it. The Tabernacle and the Tent of Meeting are considered the same, but described differently in different contexts.

Further, God gave the people a system for worship to live a holy life and defined the responsibilities of priests to give proper leadership to the people. Book of Leviticus, the third among the books of Moses contains these instructions. The book describes in detail different types of sacrifices and how they are to be offered. In worship, Levites are to play the key role and therefore their responsibilities are very important. The most common offerings are burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship offering, sin offering and guilt offering. The offering of Christ on the Cross at Calvary turns out to be a completion of all the Old Testament offerings.

We have learnt earlier that our Holy Qurbana is the observance and performance of that supreme offering of Christ on the Cross. The book of Leviticus chapter 23 narrates the order of observing various festivals of Israel. These are their main festivals.

(1) The festival of Passover is to remember how Israelites were saved from being struck off by Lord. This is also the feast of unleavened bread in relation to the exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. (2) Then there is the harvest festival or the festival of Pentecost falling at the beginning of harvest. (3) Then, they have the festival of Tabernacle which is the festival to remember the Lord's protection during their sojourn through the desert. (4) The festival of Trumpets is a feast to express thanks and gratitude to our lord. (5) They also observe the festival of Atonement of sins where the sins of people are atoned. In addition, two more festivals came up later namely the Purim (Book of Esther 9: 29-32) and the Feast of Dedication (St. John 10: 23). The Jews observe these festivals with devotion even today.

Observance of Sabbath: As commanded by Yahweh, the Israelites kept aside the seventh day of the week for God and used to observe that day exclusively for worship. There used to be specific commands as what to do and what not to do. On a Sabbath day, no worldly work was to be done, but the day has to be kept for prayers, contemplation of the Word of God and to attend synagogue worship. Which day we have kept aside is similar to the Sabbath of Jews? Yes, it is the Sunday. But how do we spend this day? On Sunday, we stay away from all sorts of worldly affairs and participate in church worship as well as Sunday school. We do not engage in playing on Sundays.

Our Lord as per His covenant promise protected His people in their journey through the desert. They were provided with those commandments so that they would lead a life of justice, truth and holiness; and they were given orders of worship too so that they could go on with a life of worship throughout. "Therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11: 45). This central theme of Old Testament is expected to be followed by us all always.

.....
Let Us Pray

Oh my Lord! The loving care You showed towards the Israelites leading them miraculously through the desert be with us too in our lives. Amen.

.....

Resolution

I shall obey Lord and enjoy his loving presence always.

.....

Let Us Think

1. 'There is no leader ever in Israel like Moses'. What are the main characteristics of the leadership style of Moses?
2. Narrate five incidents of divine providence and care during the exodus through the desert.

3. Explain briefly those five important festivals of Israel including their background.
4. Who were Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 31:2,6)
4. Try to screen the famous movie 'Ten Commandments' in the Sunday School using a projector or at least download the important scenes from internet and view from a lap top.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 33:1-11
Monday	Exodus 33:12-23	Exodus 36:1-10
Tuesday	Exodus 37:1-16	Exodus 40:16-38
Wednesday	Leviticus 1:1-17	Psalm 78:1-28
Thursday	Psalm 78:29-51	Psalm 78:52-72
Friday	Leviticus 23:1-14	Leviticus 23:33-44
Saturday	Psalm 106:1-24	Psalm 106:25-48
Sunday	Hebrews 10:1-18	*

Chapter 8

Joshua, the Successor to Moses

(Deuteronomy 34:1-12)

Message: God will raise those who are committed and dependant on God, to positions of leadership. God will find suitable persons capable enough to lead His people.

Verse to be Memorized: “I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”. (Joshua 1: 9)

Introduction

Who is the President of our country now? Yes, you know him. But can you tell who will succeed him? Looks difficult to give an answer? Change of power from one hand to another sometimes creates unpleasant situations too. But in religious history, God chooses suitable persons and trains them. Elisha succeeding Elijah and Solomon succeeding David are all examples. Even in our Church, we choose the successor of the Catholicose and call him ‘Catholicose designate.’

Moses, who was leading lakhs of Israelites, died at the land of Moab. The people mourned the death of their loving leader. They now needed a capable person who was committed to the will of God to go and occupy the Promised Land and establish the community there. But God had chosen Joshua for this role well in advance and the way the mantle was handed over to him is noteworthy. This further gives us a message that the leaders should aim at the glory of God and welfare of people only.

The Lesson

The Ten Commandments were give to Israelites at Mount Sinai and then, the first ever census of Israelites were taken as desired by God. They found the number of soldiers aged above twenty years as six lakhs. After thirty eight years, a similar census was taken once again and the number remained almost the same. The reason why the population did not increase during these thirty eight years is that many of the people perished in thousands as they rebelled against God and perished in the wrath of God. The fourth book of Moses (Pentateuch) describes these in chapters 1 and 26 and this is the reason why this book has come to be known as the ‘Book of Numbers.’

Many incidents took place before their entry into Canaan. The murmuring and quarrelling of people continued; however, God continued to protect His people. Moses was standing between God and the people. Moses survived many challenges relying exclusively on God. There are many incidents narrated in the Book of Numbers such as the sin of Miriam (chapter 12), the quarrel of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (chapter 16), death of Aaron (chapter 20), the venomous snakes and bronze snake (chapter 21), Balaam and the donkey (chapter 22), the disobedience at Baal of Peor and the punishment (chapter 25) and so on. In chapter 33, the places where they used to stay during those forty years of journey is listed out and numbered. The Book of Numbers ends up with the description of the borders of Canaan, the Promised Land and the cities of refuge.

Just before the end of their forty years' exodus, they reached the plain land of Moab. Among those who commenced the exodus from Egypt, nobody survived barring, Joshua and Caleb. Based on his memory, Moses talks to the new generation in detail. And this forms the content of the fifth book of Moses called the Book of Deuteronomy. This book is an abridgment of the sweetening words of God such as the recital of the sacred history, commandments from God, the rules and regulations to be observed at the Promised Land, the calling based on God's care to the people and last words of Moses. The last chapter of this book gives an account of the end of Moses.

Moses could not make his entry into the Promised Land. He climbed the Pisgah peak on Nebo Mountain and saw the whole area of Canaan to his satisfaction. And he died there. Can you explain why Moses could not enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 32:50-52)? The Bible says that God Himself has buried Moses somewhere opposite the valley of Baal Peor (Deuteronomy 34:1-6). The Israelites wept and mourned thirty days for Moses. Moses carries many an adjective with him like, 'the liberator of Israel', 'the leader', 'the law giver' and the 'moral advisor'. God repeatedly says about him, 'My servant Moses'.

Moses was so obedient and trustworthy. He suffered forty years with his people confronting different calamities. He took them in his stride with patience and led them to Canaan silently following the way of God. The very last verse of the Book of Deuteronomy records who Moses is; "For all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel." (Deuteronomy 34: 12)

Moses had, as commanded by God, ordained Joshua, son of Nun of the Ephraim clan as his successor (Deuteronomy 34:9). Joshua has been assigned the role of leading Israelites in their war against Amalekites earlier. We read in Exodus 33: 11 about this young man as one who was totally committed: "... but his young assistant Joshua, son

of Nun did not leave the tent”. Moses had assigned twelve men to spy on the land of Canaan of whom only Joshua and Caleb declared their faith in God without fearing adversities. After the death of Moses, Joshua took over the leadership of the whole Israel. Moses had the permission only to view the Promised Land from a distance, but Joshua had the call, as per God’s will, to occupy the Promised Land. God has been repeating to Joshua the very same advice He has been often giving to Moses: “Be strong and courageous”. Even in our own adversities, this verse will strengthen us: “Be strong and courageous”.

The Book of Joshua is one that links the five books of Moses to the subsequent history of Israel. The content focuses on taking control over Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and distributing the land to different clans and making them settle down at their specified assigned areas. Thus Joshua took over the mantle effectively from Moses. God strengthened him to lead the people. The people took a pledge that they would obey Joshua as they obeyed Moses.

The entry point to Canaan was a town called Jericho. Joshua sent two of his men to spy on this town, but the palace guards got the information and came down to arrest them. But a woman called Rahab saved them. We can see later when Jericho was defeated and taken over, Joshua took care to protect Rahab and her family.

The Israelites continued their journey and reached Shittim on the banks of Jordan. They were carrying with them the Ark of Testimony, the symbol of the presence of the Lord. Now, they were to cross Jordan. A miracle was in store for them similar to what they had at the crossing of Red sea by Moses. Joshua purified the people. The Levites walked in the front carrying the Ark of Testimony and the rest followed them. When the priests stepped into the river, flow of the water stopped. Water stood like an embankment, and the Levites stood firm in the middle of the river till the whole people crossed over. Joshua took twelve stones from the place where the Ark of Testimony stood and erected them on the shore. Once the priests crossed over to the shore, Jordan came back to original state. Thus, the people realized Joshua as a man of God just as Moses was. On reaching Gilgal, Joshua submitted everyone to God and observed the Passover. They ate from the produce of the land, and with this, the supply of Manna ceased. In short, the exodus was completed and the Israelites reached the Promised Land.

Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an English hymn
connected with this lesson

.....

Let Us Pray

Oh God, please raise noble leaders like Moses and Joshua for our Church and community. Bless our leaders to lead us relying on God and with dedication. Amen.

.....

Resolution

*Whatever responsibilities are coming to me,
I will carry out them according to God's will being
strong and courageous following the examples of
Moses and Joshua.*

.....

Let Us Think

1. What are the reasons for the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy getting these names?
2. Where did Moses die? Who buried Moses?
3. Deuteronomy is the last of the five books of Moses. Quote the last verse of this book.
4. Among those who started from Egypt, only two entered Canaan. Who are they?
5. Discuss three qualities you see in Joshua, the successor of Moses.

Activities

1. There are certain incidents namely, the sin of Miriam, the quarrelling of Korah and followers, the bronze snake and Balaam and the donkey where there are many dramatic moments. Read the relevant Biblical passages and prepare poetic stories or a skits and present them in the Sunday school general class.
2. Jesus has quoted certain verses from the Book of Deuteronomy as recorded in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. With the help of a concordance New Testament, find out these verses.
3. "Be strong and courageous". This advice is one that is repeated quite often. Try to identify ten references those are reflections of this advice from the Books of Deuteronomy and Joshua.
4. 'Joshua, son of Nun' is a usage that is repeated quite often. Can you find out some other characters of the Bible where a name is linked with that of a person's father?

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Deuteronomy 1: 1-22
Monday	Deuteronomy 1: 23-46	Deuteronomy 4: 1-25
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 4: 26-49	Deuteronomy 5: 1-21
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 6: 1-17	Deuteronomy 15: 1-15
Thursday	Deuteronomy 31: 1-19	Numbers 13: 21-33
Friday	Numbers 14: 1-12	Joshua 1: 1-18
Saturday	Psalms 136: 1-26	Acts 7: 20-34
Sunday	Acts 7: 35-45	*

Chapter 9

The Jericho Wall Falls

(Joshua 6: 12-20)

Message: Children of God can overcome any problem, howsoever big that may be. Our God will help implement good decisions taken after prayers.

Verse to be Memorized: “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.” (Psalm 16: 5-6)

Teaching Aids: Download ‘Joshua and Jericho – Images’ from the internet and present them in the class.

Introduction

You must have read about different kinds of ‘walls’ in history. The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Berlin wall which separated West Germany from East Germany is nonexistent now as the two blocks have joined together as one nation. The famous drama, ‘Mathilukal’ (which means walls) by Basheer was quite popular in Malayalam. In Bible, you have come across the enthusiasm shown by Nehemiah for constructing the walls of Jerusalem and how God made it possible for him. One of the most noteworthy incidents in the Old Testament is the destruction of Jericho walls. This was a shining achievement among all missions undertaken by Joshua.

The Lesson

The first step for Israelites to occupy the Promised Land was to overcome the city of Jericho. This was an old city protected by very strong walls. Joshua had a revelation before commencement of the battle (Joshua 5: 13-15). Yahweh’s commander of army stood before Joshua with a sword stretched out. Joshua sought for instructions from Yahweh and he was told to remove the shoes from his feet as the place where he stood was Holy. Joshua followed the commands of God in letter and spirit which made him victorious in all the battles. The term ‘Yahweh of the army’ used by Jews in their worship is based on such events in their history.

People of Jericho came to know that Joshua had crossed Jordan and that he was about to attack them. They were terribly afraid at these and closed all the doors of the city. All the instructions from Yahweh were totally obeyed by Joshua and all Israelites. The priests walked ahead with seven trumpets. People followed them. The priests blew the trumpets and the people gave loud shouts. They circled the city once

and returned. This was repeated for six days. On the seventh day, they circled the city seven times and the priests blew their trumpets followed by loud shouts from people. With this, the walls of Jericho, thought to be impenetrable, fell into pieces. People entered the city and took possession of it. They struck the residents with their heavy hands. But, the family of Rahab, which saved the spies from Israelites, was taken care of and protected.

Israelites believed the fall of Jericho as a great miracle performed by the Lord. This was the beginning of many victories to follow. Joshua's leadership was accepted totally. He turned out to be a great hero of Israel. When we work relying on God absolutely, victory is ours always. In the absence of God we are a big zero. And there is a saying, "With God, You are a Hero; Without God, You are a Zero".

With the overconfidence of their victory over Jericho, Israelites attacked the town 'Ai' without proper preparation and they were easily defeated. Many lost their lives. Joshua and the people, with great sorrow, cried before the Lord. God told them the reason why they failed in the battle against Ai. When they looted Jericho, they were instructed not to lay their hands on certain articles, but someone disobeyed this. The reason for their failure was revealed as their disobedience of Lord's orders. Joshua identified the culprit. It was Achan, son of Carmi of the Zerahites from the clan of Judah. He had hidden a beautiful robe, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels. Achan and his family were stoned to death in the valley of Achor. We must always remember that those sins committed by individuals would destroy the community also. Entertaining small sins too is a big sin. It is a big sin to love small sins.

When the sin was removed, God was delighted. They got God's guidance to capture Ai. The battle was won. They built an altar to Yahweh and did burnt offering and fellowship offering. The priests blessed the people. They heard the books of Laws being read and worshipped God. Subsequently, they entered into a covenant with Gibeonites, which was not to God's liking. They had to wage battle against Amorite Kings for Gibeonites. It was in this war over the valley of Aijalon, Joshua made Sun and Moon stand still for a day. The Sun did not set for one full day. "There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord heeded a human voice; for the Lord fought for Israel." (Joshua 10: 14). We must understand that God's anointed possess mysterious gifts.

This was followed by a series of battles. They set up their main camp at Gilgal to plan strategies. The Bible witnesses that God waged battles for Israelites. They defeated Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Hivites and Anakites and occupied their land. Chapter Twelve of the Book of Joshua gives a list of those 31 kings who were defeated by Israelites. However, tired with wars for seven years, peace descended on

the land. There are twenty four chapters in the book of Joshua. The first part of it summarizes how Canaan was taken over and occupied.

Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an English hymn connected with this lesson

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Let Us Pray

Oh Lord! who is trustworthy in promises, kindly make us good enough to receive your many holy gifts. We will obey Your commands steadfastly. Amen.

.....

Resolution

We will not fall behind the attractions of this world; instead, like Joshua, we will hold on to God's commands and march forward.

.....

Let Us Think

1. Give a dramatic narration of the strategy employed by Joshua that resulted in the destruction of Jericho wall.
2. When Israelites defeated the city of Jericho, they saved one family. Whose family was it? This person has found a place in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Locate that particular verse and its importance from St. Matthew chapter 1.
3. What was the reason for failure in the battle against Ai? How this problem was solved?
4. Read Joshua 10: 12-14 and discuss the great miracle at the valley of Aijalon.

Activities

1. When Israelites were overcoming Jericho, how many times, the number seven is repeated? This number is a symbol of fullness and as such assumes significance in Church as well as in Bible. Find out ten examples for this.
2. Joshua had made Sun and Moon stand still. Now, there is another prophet who has made the Sun dial of a time piece move backward, by his prayer. Who is this prophet? (Read 2 Kings chapter 20)
3. Find out the similarities and differences between Moses and Joshua and arrange them in a tabular form.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Joshua 3:1-8
Monday	Joshua 3:9-17	Joshua 4:1-15
Tuesday	Joshua 4:16-24	Joshua 5:9-15
Wednesday	Joshua 6:1-11	Joshua 6:12-27
Thursday	Joshua 10:1-43	2 Kings 20:1-11
Friday	Isaiah 38:1-9	Joshua 10:38-43
Saturday	Joshua 11:1-15	Joshua 11:16-23
Sunday	Joshua 12:1-24	*

Chapter 10

Dividing the Land of Canaan

(Joshua 14:1-5)

Message: God shall shower countless and immeasurable gifts upon those who believe in His promises.

Verse to be Memorized: “Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24: 15)

Teaching Aids: A map illustrating the land allotted to different clans / tribes.

Introduction

Parents usually divide their wealth among their children. But it is not unusual that disputes occur in this exercise even if the family is very small. Israelites have taken possession of the whole of Canaan by uprooting those thirty one kings, the hitherto rulers of the land. Twelve clans and thousands of families! A proper and justifiable settlement for this multitude is a tough task, but Joshua has to accomplish it. Let us learn how Joshua managed this job, fully relying on God.

The Lesson

The Book of Joshua chapters 13 to 21 describes the division of the land. During the time of Moses himself, the land lying to the east of Jordan was assigned to two and a half tribes namely Ruben, Gad and half of Manasseh as they had so requested. But this was on a condition that the people of these two and a half tribes must move with their brothers and take part in all future battles actively for the sake of the fraternity. It is found that they did so and acted in total obedience to Joshua.

The exercise of dividing the land was carried out by Joshua, the priest Eliezer and the tribal heads. They put lots at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to fix the rights of each tribe. The heirs of Joseph namely Manasseh and Ephraim were treated as tribal heads and were assigned shares equivalent to others. Even though this division was being done tribe wise, it is seen in chapter 14 that a small portion is given to one individual. This is to Caleb, the trustworthy servant of Moses. Remember that among those who started the exodus from Egypt, only two, namely Joshua and Caleb could reach the Promised Land. It was only Joshua and Caleb, while spying on the Canaan submitted them to God in faith and encouraged the people to be courageous. Caleb

stood with Joshua and fought all the battles and was given the Mountain of Hebron. Being confident and faithful in all assignments is very important. Once Mother Teresa said, "It is not being victorious, but being faithful is important".

Please look closely at the map where the tribes of Israel are identified. (This is an annexure to most Bible versions.) This map makes us understand as to how the division of land was done. The area where Bethlehem is located can be seen to be given to the tribe Judah. But the tribe of Levites is not to be seen anywhere in the map. Moses did not give any right to Levites. "But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the Lord God of Israel is their inheritance, as he said to them." (Joshua 13:33). Joshua followed the instruction of Moses. Though they were not given the rights, they were given 48 towns and the grasslands surrounding them. These towns were given among all the twelve tribes. The purpose was to ensure that the study of the books of Law and priestly service are available to all tribes. When Aaron made the golden calf at Sinai, it was only Levites opposed it and stood apart. Moses had advised that Levites were not to take part in battles and that they should be given tithes. Wherever the people of God stayed, it was expected that the service of Levites were available for priestly services.

Among the 48 towns given to Levites, six were earmarked as cities of refuge as commanded by God. Three each on the east and west of Jordan were thus set apart. In case one kills another accidentally, he can stay in a city of refuge till the case is examined and decided. If it is proved during the examination that the murder indeed was an accident, he can continue to stay there. Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan were those cities of refuge. Remember, our God is just and always shows mercy and takes care of us.

It took seven years to annex the land of Canaan. Almost the same period was needed to divide the land among different tribes and make them settle down. The land was assigned tribe wise and arrangements were made for their peaceful co existence. A system of worship too was formulated. In the present era, to fulfill a task of this magnitude could be achieved only by unprecedented hard work of great administrators and military force round the clock for a long time. Ultimately, Joshua, who spent his life fighting battles and shedding sweat for his people, standing close to God got aged and realized that his end was near. He summoned the whole Israel and reminded them of the blessings they had received from God during the past. And he warned them of the impending punishments in case they break their covenant with God.

Before his death, Joshua addressed the whole Israel at the valley of Shechem. He spoke to them at length recalling the history of the people of God right from the call of Abraham up to the annexure of Canaan. God has given us the land where we have not toiled, the towns we have not built, the wine yards and olive gardens we have not

planted. If we were to continue in the God’s plan of salvation, we must be obedient to God. Joshua asked the people, “would you serve the Lord faithfully, or would you go after other gods”? Here Joshua gave a clarion to call to them for a strong resolve. And he declared, “But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord”. The entire multitude of people rededicated themselves by joining Joshua in his declaration and renewed their covenant with God. The Shechem pledge is one of the blessed moments in the history of Israel. A totally and fully content Joshua died at the age of 110. They buried Joshua within the boarder of his inheritance on the north side of Mount Gaash. And the curtain falls down to a most crucial era of Israel.

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Let Us Pray

Our loving God, we have been able to study the history of Israelites who were liberated from the slave house of Egypt and assigned rights in the Promised Land after a lengthy journey through the deserts. Kindly lead us through the desert journey of this life and bless us inherit Heavenly Canaan. Amen.

.....

Resolution

I and my family will certainly live loving and obeying our Lord.

.....

Let Us Think

1. Which are those tribes who were given inheritance during the time of Moses? What were the conditions they were to comply with?
2. What are the particularities of the rights of Levi tribe? What are the reasons for such specialties?
3. When the land was being divided among tribes, one individual was given a special right. Who was he? Why he was given such a special right?
4. What are cities of refuge? How many such cities were there? What were they?
5. What was the Shechem pledge? What was its importance?

Activities

1. Manasseh and Ephraim, sons of Joseph were given equal rights as other tribes. Discuss what could be the reason for this. (Refer the history of Joseph in Egypt from Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33)
2. When the assets your families are to be divided in future, what would be your five priorities?

3. In our life this world, we strive hard for our rights and inheritance. Our Church reminds us about our rights in the most important Heavenly Canaan, in the funeral service. Find out this from the service book.
4. Arrange a service of a pledge in your class or Sunday School or even at the parish modeled on the Shechem pledge.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Joshua 13:15-33
Monday	Joshua 14:1-15	Joshua 18:1-10
Tuesday	Joshua 20:1-9	Deuteronomy 19:1-13
Wednesday	Joshua 21:1-12	Joshua 21:34-45
Thursday	Joshua 22:1-12	Joshua 22:13-20
Friday	Joshua 23:1-8	Joshua 23:9-16
Saturday	Joshua 24:1-10	Joshua 24:11-25
Sunday	Joshua 24:26-33	*

Unit 2

Prayer

The objective of chapters in this unit is to nurture the habit of worshiping with a proper understanding of meaning of prayers. The teachers are requested to ensure that the children pray in the morning and evening regularly.

Chapter 11

Psalm 51

Purpose of this Lesson: To understand the meaning and purpose of Psalm 51.

Verse to be Memorized: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51: 10)

Teaching Aids: The Holy Bible.

Introduction

We know that worship is central to Orthodox life. A lot of Psalms and other Bible portions are being used in Orthodox liturgy and prayers. Psalms consist of prayers, supplications and praises. These are written in an adulatory style. The Bible we use has 150 Psalms of which 73 are known in the name of King David, the sweet musician of Israel. We are now going to study the Psalm 51.

The Lesson

You would be quite familiar with the recitation of Psalm 51 beginning, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.” Not only that you have heard this, but you would have even recited it. Psalm 51 is known as ‘the Psalm of repentance’. This is sung by David in repentance when the Prophet Nathan pointed out the sin committed by him. (2 Samuel 11, 12)

This Psalm has been part of the liturgy of Christian Church for many centuries. In our Church, all services and prayers commence with the recitation of Psalm 51. Thus this Psalm opens into worship with a sense of repentance. Our Lord taught His disciples that repentance is a precondition when we submit ourselves before God. (Recall the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee of St. Luke 18: 9-14)

Now, we will try to understand the important thoughts contained in this Psalm.

1. **The Grace of God heals sin** (verse 51:1). Our body often gets plagued by different diseases. Similarly, as our fathers have taught us, sin is a disease that affects spirit, body and mind. Our sins are erased by grace and abundant mercy of God. It is God who can cleanse us from sin.
2. **All sins are against God** (verse 51:4). “Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.” Our actions which are against the will of God are called sin. Sin separates us from God. Whatever evil we do against our fellow beings or nature, is sin against God.
3. **We need a pure heart** (verse 51:10). “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (St. Matthew 5:8) The reference here is not about the heart, an organ. In Biblical language, heart is taken as the center of human personality and decision making. Also, ‘heart’ is used as a synonym of the word ‘mind’.
4. **We need the continuous guidance from the Spirit** (verse 51-10). We need help from Holy Spirit to live in goodness without being defiled by sin. “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). When we are filled by Holy Spirit, we feel joyous and happy. Our tired bones will get strengthened (51:8).
5. **God is the source of all wisdom** (verse 51:6). The Psalmist is praying, “You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart”. All wisdom and knowledge come from God. God is the mystery that is not revealed by all the knowledge of the universe. To know God is the greatest of all knowledge (Psalm 14:2, 53:2).
6. **God does not despise a broken and contrite heart** (verse 51:17). Let any sinner submit before God with a broken heart; God will never hate him. When we go to pray or go to offer our sacrifices, we should go with repentance.

Hymn

(Njan anchunnen papathil...)

Afraid am I for my sins;
Garden joyous - that is kept for saints
Let my sins be no hurdle
For me to enter therein
Lift me from hell and save me.
Let me dwell in - mansions at your will.

.....

Let Us Pray

O merciful Lord, we submit before You and repent for our sins and confess them before You; give us the Holy Spirit for ever to live with a pure heart; kindly do not take away Your grace from us. Amen.

.....

Resolution

When I recite Psalm 51 henceforth, I will concentrate on each word and meditate with a humble heart.

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Activities

1. Who among these Prophets made David realize his sin? (Samuel, Nathan, Isaiah)
2. Psalm 51 is a Psalm of (repentance, mourning)
3. Which word is used for Psalm in Syriac language?
4. Why do we recite Psalm 51 at the commencement of our service and prayers?
5. Write a paragraph on the message of Psalm 51.
6. Observe the similarity between Psalms 14 and 51.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Proverbs 10:1-12
Monday	St. Matthew 5:43-48	St. James 1:19-27
Tuesday	Ephesians 5:15-21	Psalm 103
Wednesday	Psalm 84	St. Matthew 23:1-12
Thursday	Jonah 2:1-10	Acts 2:37-47
Friday	St. Matthew 7:1-5	1 Timothy 6:11-16
Saturday	Isaiah 43:1-3	*

Chapter 12

Psalm 91

Purpose of this Lesson: We shall try to understand the meaning of Psalm 91 which we use daily in our Soothara (Nocturne) prayers every day.

Verse to be Memorized: “Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name” (Psalm 91: 14).

The message: The faithful, who is under the protection of God, is beyond persecution by anyone.

Introduction

Does your family pray together in the evening? Do you recite Psalm 91 in your evening prayers? We will try to understand more about Psalm 91 today. The word Soothara indicates prayer prior to sleeping. The meaning of the word Soothara is ‘vigil’ or ‘guard’. Through this prayer, we are soliciting the care and protection of God, before getting to sleep.

The Lesson

This Psalm is one which convinces a believer that he is always under the protection of God. In our prayer Soothara, the recitation of this Psalm is done with great devotion. This Psalm declares beyond any doubt that no forces in this universe can overpower children of God. If we recite Psalm 91 daily, our confidence in the providential protection shall keep us going.

Let us try to understand the core message contained in the Psalm.

1. We must always lead our life under the care and love of God. Verse 2 of this Psalm calls upon us to live with God as our refuge and fortress, relying on Him totally. The words Most High, Almighty, Omnipotent are all used from ancient times to indicate the greatness of God.
2. A faithful who relies on God has nothing to fear. If we place our faith in God, we are relieved of all sorts of fears and anxieties. We do not have to bother about the enemy’s snare, deadly pestilence and terror of night, the arrow that flies by day and the plague that destroys at midday, serpent, lion, cobra, python and other disasters or calamities. In other words, those human who depend on God need not be afraid of the forces of nature or temptations brought by Satan, the wild animals or deceitful motives of men because we are protected under His wings. Let us be confident that God always takes care of His people just like a bird protects its offspring by covering them under its feathers.

3. **One who depends on God is taken care of by the angels of God.** “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone” (91: 11,12).
4. **During the times of trouble, God keeps company with His children.** “When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them” (91:15).
5. **“God will satisfy His beloved with long life.”**(91: 16) A healthy and long life was considered as a gift of God. We must acknowledge that whatever be our life span, it is a great gift from God.

Now that you have learned the message of Psalm 91, try to do the following activities.

Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an English hymn connected with this lesson

Let Us Pray

O God of the Most High, you are our refuge and fortress. Remove all the fears from us. Shower your grace upon us that we may live fearlessly. Amen.

Resolution

From now onwards, I will pray reciting Psalm 91 carefully and with true faith, every day.

Activities

1. What is the main assurance that Psalm 91 provides to a believer?
2. Write down the message of Psalm 91 in five sentences.
3. Learn to sing the versified form of Psalm 91 from the service book of Holy Qurbana.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalm 91
Monday	1 Thessalonians 3:1-5	St. Mark 4:35--41
Tuesday	Proverbs 2:1--12	St. Matthew 5:1--12
Wednesday	St. Luke 12:1-7	Psalm 27
Thursday	Hebrews 11:1--6	St. John-. 15:1-7
Friday	Psalm 53	Proverbs 3:1-12
Saturday	St. Luke 11:5-13	*

Chapter 13

Psalm 121

Purpose of this Lesson: We are trying to understand the different dimensions of Psalm 121.

Verse to be Memorized: “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:2)

Introduction

This Psalm is used in our *Soothara* prayers along with Psalm 91. This prayer is one we do just before going to sleep. The lives of a children of God must be submitted before providence of God.

The Lesson

Psalm 121 is a pilgrimage hymn. The Bible describes it as a ‘Song of Ascent’. This was one of those Psalms the Jews used to sing while going up to the Jerusalem temple.

As members of the Holy Church, we are all pilgrims looking up to heaven as we continue the journey of life. This Psalm is one that helps us to affirm our faith during this journey.

The Psalm begins saying that “I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? And the answer is ready that “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” This is the expression of deep faith in the protection of God, the creator of all. “He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber” (121:3). “He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (121:4). “The Sun shall not strike you by day, nor the Moon by night” (121:6-7). “The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore” (121:8).

This Psalm helps us to think and meditate the manner in which our Lord takes care of us.

Let us try to understand the important thoughts contained in this Psalm.

I lift up my eyes to the hills (121:1). All religions give importance to mountains. This idea was prevalent among Jews too. In the history of Israel, God revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai. We see the Prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel offering a sacrifice and fire coming down from heaven. In the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus Christ was given on a hill. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ

was on another mountain and the Ascension of Jesus took place on the Mount of Olives. Thus lifting one's eyes to the hills is with the hope and expectation of the grace of God descending on us. Likewise, on raising our eyes with hope, we expect help from God who has created the heaven and earth. Such hope is the essence of this Psalm.

He will not let your foot slip (121:3). Our God is close to us and always give protection. He ensures that we do not land up in troubles or dangers. He is like a mother who moves with a child who is learning to walk.

He will neither slumber nor sleep (121:4). This is a verse which gives us courage to sleep soundly. Our God who watches us will neither slumber nor sleep. He takes care of us day and night. During our daily affairs and afflictions.

The Lord will watch over your coming and going. (121:8). This Psalm ends by saying "the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore". God is with us, in all our times and all our activities.

Hymn

'While my body silent lies
May Thy power its vigil keep
Let my breath like incense rise,
T'ward Thy greatness in my sleep'

.....

Let Us Pray

O Lord, do take care of us without our foot slipping and without any dangers. Help us to realize this so that we remain thankful to You always. Amen.

.....

Let Us Think

The courage and hope expressed by King David in this Psalm is great. Likewise, do we have hope and courage in God?

Activities

1. Learn Psalm 121 by heart.
2. Every day, before you get to sleep, recite this Psalm devotionally.
3. Find out other passages in the Psalms which reveals God's care for us.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Romans 12:1--15
Monday	Psalms 123	Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Tuesday	St. Luke 18:1--8	Colossians 3:1--10
Wednesday	Psalms 119:129-136	Romans 8:26-30
Thursday	St. Matthew 6:5--15	Proverbs 4:1-15
Friday	Philippians 4:4-7	St. Mark 10:46-52
Saturday	St. Luke 9:28-36	*

Unit 3

Liturgical Hymns

Chapter 14

The Vision of Isaiah

Purpose of this Lesson: To learn the hymn, “Seraphim of Fiery line.....” which is sung when the celebrant of Holy Qurbana performs the Fraction Ceremony of the Bread secretly.

Verse to be Memorized: “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!.” (Isaiah 6: 8)

Introduction

During the celebration of Holy Qurbana, there are certain occasions when the Holy Sanctuary is closed. After commencing the Holy Qurbana in public, on the very first such occasion, the hymn “Hearken Gracious Lord.....” is sung and we meditate on the death and resurrection of Christ. But, we sing certain other hymns too. One among them is “Seraphim of Fiery line.....” In this lesson, we shall learn this hymn and understand its context and meaning.

Lesson proper

The Book of Isaiah chapter 6 narrates a vision Prophet Isaiah had. Let us read chapter 6 verses 1-3 from the Book of Isaiah. (A student reads the portion)

It is this incident that we sing as a hymn. There are nine hosts of angels in heaven. Each host has separate assignments.

Isaiah, in his vision, sees the legion of Seraphs. They are assigned to praise God continuously in heaven. They are always with God who shines with glory. These are explained here.

“Seraphim of Fiery line
Saw Isaiah in the shrine
Each six - winged, round the corner
Ever serving God alone”

The hymn starts with a statement that Isaiah has seen the seraphs in the Holiest place. We know that Holy Qurbana is a Heavenly worship. While participating in the Holy Qurbana, we have the feel that we are in Heaven. We meditate on God from

whom all the glory emanates and we are to stand in the church with absolute reverence. The Syriac word Beskudisha means Holy place.

Seraphs are angels with six wings. Isaiah saw them as shining like fire. The following lines describe how the Seraphine cover their face and body with wings.

“Covered each with two his face
Lest he sees that Holy Grace
Covered each with two his feet
Lest they burn in Holy heat”

Not to see the emanating glory from God, they cover their face with two wings. To escape being burnt from the glory of God, they use two other wings to hide their legs (body).

“Flapping their other two wings
They all shout and proclaim so
Holy, Holy, Holy, Thou
Holy art Thou Son of God”

They clap with the remaining two wings and sing in loud voice O Lord, you are holy, holy, holy. They praise and salute the ‘Son of God’.

“Holy art Thou Lord of Hosts
Praise to Thee be, all our boast”

This last stanza of our hymn is glorifying the Lord Almighty as Cherubim glorifying God. In class 4, we have learnt about Cherubim and how they glorify God. This too is a chant of glory continuously heard in Heaven. Cherubin is the plural form of Cherub.

The hymn is sung in the church incorporating halleluiah meaning ‘glory to God’, barekmor meaning ‘bless us Lord’ and Kuriyelaison meaning ‘Lord, have mercy on us,’ in between stanzas.

While this hymn is sung, we should meditate on the Seraphine glorifying God in Heaven as also the death and resurrection of Christ which is being observed inside the Holy sanctuary at that time.

The revelation to Isaiah is a very important topic for devotion during the Holy Qurbana. Now let us read Isaiah 6:4-8 also. The vision of God and Heaven filled Isaiah with repentance and he cried out, “For I am a man of unclean lips”. Then a seraph took a live coal with tongs from the altar and touched his mouth. And the seraph told him, “Your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for”. This purification with the live coal taken from the altar symbolizes Holy Qurbana. Once he was absolved of his sin, Isaiah got transformed and submitted himself to the call of God saying, “Here I am, send me.” In a similar way, we too are transformed after taking part in the holy Qurbana.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Lord, give us mind and read to glorify You unceasingly like the Seraphs.
Amen.*

.....

Resolution

While we take part in worship, we will sing hymns, understanding their meaning and the importance.

.....

Activities

1. Read Isaiah 6:1-10 carefully.
2. Find out the names of nine hosts of angels.
3. What are special about the Cherubim?
4. Don't you feel that the beauty and symmetry and fullness of this hymn gets lost if we stop singing after the verse "they all shout and proclaim so" just because the Holy sanctuary is ready to be opened? Discuss.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Isaiah 6:1-5
Monday	St. Matthew 18:15-20	Isaiah 6:6-10
Tuesday	St. Luke 1:11-20	Isaiah 6:11-13
Wednesday	Daniel 7:13-14	Acts 12:6-11
Thursday	Judges 13:2-7	St. Matthew 13:24-30
Friday	Psalms 91:1-16	Daniel 10:7-12
Saturday	2 Samuel 24:10-17	*

Chapter 15

Becoming Children of God

Purpose of this Lesson: To study the hymn “In Oblations and in Prayers” being sung just before the intercessional hymns called “Kukkulion” in the Holy Qurbana.

Verse to be Memorized: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

Introduction

The following prayer has been used in our homes during our morning prayers daily. “We shall remember our forefathers who when alive taught us true faith and helped us grow as children of God. In the Kingdom of God they are atoned by our Lord and are in fellowship with all our saints and righteous, praising God in all perfection. Oh Lord, have mercy on us.” It is the poetic version this prayer, we sing during the Holy Qurbana beginning “In Oblation and in Prayers”. We will learn this hymn understanding its meaning.

The Lesson

Here is the hymn that we learn today.

(Daivasudhanmarayiduvan)

“In oblation and prayers
Mention we our blest forbears
Taught they us the truth to see
Children of our God to be
Christ’s atonement be their stay
In God’s realm of endless day
With the righteous and the just
Praising God in perfect trust”.

We saw that this hymn in the Holy Qurbana is sung just before the Kukkulion. All the Kukkulions we sing in Holy Qurbana are intercessional prayers, where we remember the living and the departed. Here we beseech the intercessions of St. Mary and saints and then pray for the departed priests and believers. In this prayer, we say that we remember all those who taught us the true faith when they were alive and then we express our hope that Son of God will take them along with the saints and the righteous in Heaven.

This hymn reminds us the need to pray for our departed souls. Then we start singing Kukkulions whence we are in communion with St. Mary, the saints and the departed.

What do you mean by Kukkulion? The meaning of the word Kukkulion is a 'cycle of prayers'. In the Orthodox liturgy, there are several Kukkulions in use. In each Kukkulion, there will be a verse from one of the Psalms, a prayer, a couple of hymns called Kolo and a final concluding prayer. Sometimes, Kukkulion is sung descriptively adding up Promion and Sedra. In our morning worship, when we recite Kukkulion in general, the hymn we are discussing in this lesson for the departed souls is used. This is one of such hymns which reveal the special feature of Orthodox liturgy. Here, stress is not for so many supplications. The only one supplication is that believers shall live in true faith. That is, "Oh Lord, have mercy on us and help us". We use the Syriac terminology, namely "Morio rahem elain oo adarayin" in the above hymn.

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Lord, prepare us to remember in our prayers all those who taught us
Word of God and true faith. Amen.*

.....

Resolution

*We will remember and pray for all our departed in all worship.
We believe that they are alive and do pray for us.*

.....

Activities

1. Locate this hymn in our Sleebo and Kymtho morning liturgy.
2. Conduct a study comparing the different versions of this hymn.
3. Make an attempt to learn the Syriac version of this hymn.
4. Find out the word used in place of 'righteous' and understand the meaning.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Hebrews 13:1-9
Monday	Acts 28	2 Timothy 2:1-7
Tuesday	Romans 9:1-12	2 Peter 1:12-15
Wednesday	Hebrews 2:11-18	Hebrews 2:7-14
Thursday	Hebrews 11:1-6	2 Timothy 2:8-13
Friday	Hebrews 1:2-6	2 Timothy 2:22-26
Saturday	Proverbs 3:1-10	*

Unit 4

My Church

Chapter 16

Church and the Community in the Early Centuries

Purpose of this Lesson: In this lesson, we are trying to understand the circumstances under which the Church originated and started growing.

Verse to be Memorized: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners” (Isaiah 61:1)

Introduction

We do take certain preparations and precautions before planting some saplings in our courtyards. We take such precautions to ensure that the circumstances are conducive for the proper growth of the plants. For the growth and expansion of the Christian Church too, the socio religious scenario in the early centuries have been helpful. We are trying to understand these things in this lesson.

The Lesson

It would be beneficial to understand the social situation when God chose to become human. Let us examine them.

The political scenario: Palestine (including Jerusalem) was under the control Roman Empire then. People of different languages, different religions and cultural variations were held together under one banner by Roman emperors. It was the administrative efficiency of Romans that there used to be mutual co operation and effective communication and transport facilities. All these stood to the advantage of the growth of early Christian Church.

Intellectual scenario: Roman Empire was then dominated by Greek language and culture. Christian Church came up with answers to many questions raised by Greek philosophers and also with sensible interpretations to their intellectual arguments which were found beneficial to scholars. Church expanded fast as Greek language spread across the length and breadth of the Empire. It was quite helpful that the preaching of disciples as well as the gospels were in the Greek language.

Religious Scenario: During that time, blind and irrational belief was dominant in religions along with a cult of worshipping the emperor. The people worshipped unknown gods and goddesses. But many were attracted to Christianity because of the availability of specific answers to their thoughts like eternal life, life after death, resurrection and such other issues.

Social situation

Social stratification was based on wealth. Ethical values never had any significance. Truth, justice and morality were totally ignored. Fear of God and concern to fellow beings were simply absent in the community.

In such a situation, Christian Church which upheld virtues like truth, justice and morality was found a relief for many. The Christian doctrine was acceptable to intellectuals and ordinary people alike.

The Jewish background

The Jews were under the Greeks and the Romans faced oppression and dissenter. They were looking forward to the advent of a Messiah to save them from the foreign powers. The disciples showed the people that Jesus indeed was the Messiah. The uncompromising worship life of Jews including their synagogue prayers, faith in one God, sense of morality and regular reading of the Holy book were all helpful factors for the Christian Church to grow.

Thus, it is clear that the Greco – Roman influence as well as the Jewish culture served as fertile soil for the growth of early Church.

Hymn

Messiah rose from the dead
Guards and watchers were ashamed
Bride of Christ most holy Church
Jubilant; worship her Lord

.....

Let Us Pray

Oh God, just like You prepared the community for the coming of Your begotten Son and for the growth of the Church, prepare us too to receive Your life giving words. Amen

.....

Resolution

I will do my best to live according to the Gospel.

.....

Activities

1. Prepare a table showing the Greek – Roman – Jewish influences in the Christian Church.
2. Find out the Biblical references illustrating Greek – Roman – Jewish traditions.
3. Find out a few names of Greek and Roman scholars of that time.
4. Work out a note briefing how would you work towards the growth of the Church in an area where different religious and cultural circumstances are prevailing.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Acts 2:1-13
Monday	Acts 9:26-31	Acts 2:14-21
Tuesday	Acts 9:32-43	Acts 2:37-47
Wednesday	Acts 10:24-33	Romans 16:1-16
Thursday	Acts 13:1-12	Romans 16:17-20
Friday	Acts 14:8-15	Acts 8:1-8
Saturday	Acts 14:19-28	*

Chapter 17

The Churches Founded by St. Thomas

Purpose of this Lesson: We are going to learn about the churches founded by St. Thomas in South India (Malankara).

Verse to be Memorized: “It is zeal for your house that has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me” (Psalm 69: 9).

Introduction

We have learnt in the previous class that St. Thomas founded eight churches in South India. Of these, our Church is in possession of two of these churches namely, Niranom church and Thiruvithamkodu church. We are learning about these churches founded by St. Thomas in this lesson.

The Lesson

The eight churches founded by St. Thomas are Kodungalloor, Palayur, Paravoor, Gokkamangalam, Kollam, Niranam, Chayal and Thiruvithamkodu.

Kodungalloor

This church, perhaps, can be called the ‘ancestral church of Indian Christians’. This place in history is also known as Muziriz, Mahodayapuram, Thiruvanchikkulam and Maliankara. Those who were here were converted by St. Thomas. In the course of time, this church was taken away by sea.

Palayur

Palayur is located between Guruvayur and Chavakkadu. Being an ancient commercial center, there was considerable Jewish presence here. It is believed that a Hindu temple was transformed as a Christian church here. May be because of this, the conservative Brahmins left this place and settled elsewhere. Consequently, this was also known as ‘Shapakkadu’, meaning ‘cursed land’, which over a period of time got changed as ‘Chavakkadu’.

Paravoor / Kottakkavu

This was a commercial center and a port. Paravoor is a town on the lake side west of Aluva. Kottakkavu church is located close to this town. It is believed that St. Thomas proceeded to Mylapore from here.

Gokkamangalam

This place is located between Alappuzha and Thanneermukkam on the western coast of Lake Vembanadu. Many people were converted by St. Thomas here and erected a cross. But enemies destructed the cross later and the church too was destroyed in due course.

Kollam

This was the second commercial port of ancient Kerala. In the Ramban songs, it is stated that St. Thomas arrived at Kollam from Kodungalloor accompanied by a disciple Keppa. This church too is believed to have been lost to sea in the course of time.

Niranam

This again was a commercial center located close to the sea. St. Thomas erected a cross here, but enemies pulled it out threw away to the nearby river. But the cross instead of sinking in the river travelled and settled at the banks a little away and the present church came up there. This church is being taken care of by our Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. What we see today at Niranam is the renovated church.

Nilakkal / Chayal

St. Thomas had established a church at this commercial center, but the same was annihilated later. The residents too migrated away, may be due to the threat from robbers or due to furies of nature. This would have made the area deserted and caused the destruction of the church. Anyhow, an ecumenical church has come here.

Thiruvithamkodu

This is known as the *arapally* established by St. Thomas. The church is located close to Kanyakumari. This small church under the possession of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church contains plenty of remains of the ancient church. The name *arapally* is attributed to the tradition that this was built with the help of a king (built by 'arachan') This *arapally* may be translated as Royal Church or King's Church.

Thus, we can sum up the common characteristics of churches established by St. Thomas, like this.

- All these churches were established at main commercial centers.
- These places are located quite close to the sea.
- There was Jewish presence at all these centers.

- In all these places, considerable sections of the people were converted to Christian faith.
- Wherever believers resided, initially crosses were erected and gradually, they were transformed as churches.

Hymn

Oh St. Thomas, as in heaven,
Keep we here thy memory;
Hear us as we honor thee,
Thy entreaties be our aid.

Let Us Pray

Oh Lord, like St. Thomas who worked hard for building up the Church, enable us capable to work for the welfare of the Church. Amen.

Resolution

I will strive hard for spreading gospel like St. Thomas and work hard for the stability of our Church.

Let Us Think

1. To whom did St. Thomas assigned the charge of Gokkamangalam church?
2. What was the reason for Palayur came to be known as Chavakkadu?
3. Name those churches established by St. Thomas possessed by M O S C.
4. What are the common characteristics of churches established by St. Thomas?
5. How can we explain the term “arapally”?

Activities

1. How come that the Thiruvithamkodu church is called a ‘arapally’? Explore more than one possibility.
2. Work out a project on ‘Churches of St. Thomas’.
3. Pay a visit to the churches established by St. Thomas.
4. Identify the names of the dioceses of our Church where the churches established by St. Thomas and related places are located.
5. On a map of South India, mark the places related to St. Thomas.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Ephesians 1:15-23
Monday	Acts 16:1-5	St. Mark 16:14-18
Tuesday	Acts 16:11-15	1 Corinthians 14:26-33
Wednesday	Acts 16:19-34	Acts 15:1-5
Thursday	Romans 4:9-13	Acts 9:26-43
Friday	Romans 4:14-20	Galatians 1:11-18
Saturday	Romans 5:1-13	*

Unit 5

Holy Qurbana

Chapter 18

Holy Qurbana – Continuation of Eternal Worship

Purpose of this Lesson: To understand that Holy Qurbana is the continuation of our eternal worship.

Verse to be Memorized: “For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but He entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf” (Hebrews 9:24).

Introduction

We believe that worship goes on before God every day, who is the Creator of the whole universe, protector and the one who completes everything. God commanded Prophet Moses to set up everything in the manner similar to this worship, in the Tent of Meeting made by him. Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were all men of God to whom this heavenly worship was revealed.

The Lesson

Eternal Worship in New Testament

The heavenly worship is described in the Book of Revelation chapters 4 to 6. There, we see God the Father on the Heavenly Throne around which the slain Lamb is holding a scroll. Standing around this, there are 24 elders wearing crowns. They represent the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New Testament. We can see these elders removing their crown and prostrating before the Lamb in between because this is the Lamb of God bearing sin of the world (St. John 1: 29).

As stated in Isaiah chapter 53, He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, but he was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53: 4-8). Those twenty four elders while prostrating before Him sing, “Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come” (Revelation 4: 8). They also chant continuously, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4: 11). Hebrews 9: 23-27 shows that the worship we conduct

in earth is a shadow (or copy) of this Heavenly worship. In this continuous worship, the Bible teaches that the departed souls, the saints and the angels participate with us. (Revelation 6: 9, 7: 1-12).

Holy Qurbana: The Continuance of Eternal Worship

In our Holy Qurbana also, all those who are in heaven and on earth are taking part, about which we remember through the hymns we sing. As an example, we are now going to study the hymn, ‘With Mary, Virgin blest.....’. We will learn the meaning of this hymn in all its details by singing it carefully with total concentration.

1. ‘Nishtayil Ninneppeta...’

With Mary - virgin blest

Who bore Thee in Holiness

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing in praise along with the Holy Virgin who gave birth to You in pure virginity.

2. ‘Munnam Ninnagamanam...’

With Thy prophets divine

Who foretold of Thy coming

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing with praise along with the good prophets who prophesied Your coming quite earlier.

3. ‘Dandanapeedakaletta...’

With martyrs - confessors

Who suffered for Thy name’s sake

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing with praise along with the martyrs and saints who suffered lifelong persecutions and penalties.

4. ‘Mahithanmar...’

With Basil - Father great

And noble Gregorios

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing with praise along with the Cappadocian fathers Baselios, the Great and Gregorios of Naziansus who taught us true faith strongly.

5. ‘Parumala Mar Gregorios...’

‘Parumala Mar Gregorios

And with Father Dionysios

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing with praise along with the saints of Malankara namely, Parumala Geevarghese Mar Gregorios and Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius.

6. 'Ujjwaladeepa ...'

With those five virgins pure

Who kept there lamps burning through

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing with praise along with the five wise virgins who took lighted lamp with oil.

7. 'Vishwasathal parudeesa...'

With that thief who trusted

Whom Thou granted paradise

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing with praise along with the thief on the right side who was promised to be in paradise by his faith accepting You at the last moment, though he had been committing mistakes in his past life.

8. 'Anavarathasthuthi...'

With those heavenly host

Who adore Thee without end

Lord and our God - make us worthy, to extol - Thy name!

Meaning: O Lord, make us sing in praise along with the heavenly angels who are habituated in praising You continuously.

Our Participation in Eternal Worship

Based on what are stated above, we shall understand certain basic things about Holy Qurbana, which are summed up below;

- * In the Holy presence of Lord God Almighty, worship is taking place continuously without break.
- * Our Holy Qurbana is an earthly image of the eternal worship in Heaven.
- * In this Heavenly worship, St. Mary, Old Testament fathers, saints of the New Testament Church, Holy angels and those departed souls who lived in Christ all participate.
- * It is great privilege and blessing for us to have got the opportunity to participate in this Heavenly worship.

As such, if we participate in this Heavenly worship with repentance realizing like St. Paul that "we are wretched human beings", or like Isaiah, "we are people of unclean lips", we will be blessed.

.....

Let Us Pray

O Lord, empower us with the Holy Spirit, that we can attend the Holy Qurbana, which is the continuation of eternal worship. Amen

.....

Resolution

We will participate in the Holy Qurbana without failure on important days.

.....

Activities

1. Get acquainted with the hymn ‘With Mary, virgin blest.....’ from the service book of Holy Qurbana.
2. Let all children come to church on time for the morning worship so that all can sing this hymn together.
3. Who are the Cappadocian fathers? Though they are three, only two names are mentioned in this hymn. Discuss the reason for that.
4. In the hymn ‘With Mary, virgin blest.....’ two saints of our Malankara Church are remembered. Write down their full names.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. Matthew 1:18-21
Monday	St. Luke 2:1-7	St. Matthew 1:22-25
Tuesday	St. Mark 14:12-25	Isaiah 7:10-17
Wednesday	St. Luke 22:7-13	St. Luke 22:14-23
Thursday	St. John 13:21-30	St. Luke 1:26-38
Friday	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	St. Luke 1:46-56
Saturday	St. Matthew 25:1-13	*

Chapter 19

Bible Readings in Holy Qurbana

Purpose of this Lesson: To study about the Bible readings in Holy Qurbana and understand the arrangement of the Lectionary

Verse to be Memorized “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (St. Luke 4: 18).

Introduction

Bible reading is an important part of our Holy Qurbana. Apart from the Bible readings in worships, many Psalms are incorporated in our Canonical prayers, sacraments and service orders for different Feasts. In this lesson, we focus only on the Bible readings in the Holy Qurbana. Do you know the name of that Sunday on which our Church year commences? This Sunday is called Koodosh-Eetho. With the Feast of Koodosh-Eetho, our Church enters a new year. If October 30 or 31 happens to be a Sunday, that is Koodosh-Eetho, otherwise, it is on the first Sunday in November. Commencing from that Sunday, the Bible reading passages prescribed for the coming year are pre-planned by the Church and this is called ‘Lectionary’.

The Lectionary

According to Jewish tradition, commencement of Lectionary began at the time of Moses. They hold the view that the readings for their main feasts namely Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles were arranged with the Mosaic Laws. But the oldest Lectionary known today is the Jewish Lectionary worked out around 200 BC. In this, there are readings from the Books of Moses as well as from the Books of Prophets. Our Lord Jesus would have read from the Book of Isaiah from a scroll of this type. (Luke 4: 16-20) at the Synagogue of Nazareth.

Many scholars argue that in the history of Christian Church, the systematization of Bible readings had been the book form of readings prescribed for worship. Tatian prepared Diatessaron (“made out of four”). This would have been introduced by mid second century AD. Tatian combined four canonical gospels in Greek into a single harmonious narrative. Here, the life and teachings of Jesus is illustrated in 55 paragraphs. You would have listened to the gospel readings on Good Friday where some repetition occurs. The view held by some scholars that these Good Friday readings are borrowed from the Diatessaron of Tatian, need not be dismissed

altogether. Even then, the oldest known Syrian Lectionary is the one worked out by the monk Daniel of Edessa, and his disciple and Bishop Benyamin in 411 AD. This is archived at the British Museum. There have been many modifications to this Lectionary in later years.

The Lectionary we use now has been arranged beginning from the Sunday of Koodosh-Eetho. Within this there are many seasons. For example, from the Sunday of Koodosh-Eetho to Christmas, preceding the feast of Christ's birth, there are eight Sundays. For all these Sundays, the Bible readings would relate to the preparations for the birth of Jesus. In these, we have annunciation to Zachariah, annunciation to Mary, meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, birth of John, revelation to Joseph and the genealogy of Jesus coming up one after the other following the Koodosh-Eetho Sunday and Hoodos-Eetho Sunday. After Christmas, we have the season of Epiphany. This is followed by the seasons of Great Lent, Pentecost, Sleaaha and Sleaabo. In each of these seasons, there are about eight Sundays. The Bible readings for each of these seasons are related to the theme of such seasons. Western churches have their Lectionary spread over three years (cycle A, B, C), but we have it for one year.

The Bible Readings in Holy Qurbana

As indicated above, for each Sunday, we have a main topic of thought. The reading passages assigned from Old Testament and New Testament are related to this. All the three important readings from Bible are arranged at the beginning of the Holy Qurbana. In between the Old and New Testament readings, the hymn 'Velivu Niranjoreesho', *Maneeso* of Mar Severios and *Trisagion* are arranged.

In earlier times, the three readings were followed by the sermon. This part of the Holy Qurbana is called the Liturgy of the Word. Non believers and catechumen were allowed to participate in the service only up to this. As such, this portion of the Holy Qurbana was also known as the Liturgy of catechumen, in the early Church. Now let us think about each of these readings from the Bible.

1. Readings from Old Testament: Usually, there are three passages to be read from Old Testament. Of these, the first one would be from the Books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) and the second would be from writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes etc.) Apart from these, readings from Deuterocanonical books (Maccabeus, Tobith, Judith etc.) are also included. The third reading will usually be from the prophetic books. The Book of Isaiah is known as the 'Old Testament Gospel' and for this reason, most of the days the third reading is from the prophet Isaiah, who is introduced as 'from Isaiah, the glorious prophet'. As decided by our Holy Episcopal Synod, even those who are not entering the Holy Sanctuary can also read the Old Testament, including women.

2. Readings from New Testament Epistles: Shortly on commencement of Holy Qurbana, New Testament Epistles are read. On the north side of the opening to the

Sanctuary, Acts of the Apostles, and Catholic/general Epistles (James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude) are read. On the south side, portions from the epistles of St. Paul, 14 in number, including the one to Hebrews are read.

3. Readings from the Gospel: Reading of the gospel during the Holy Qurbana is a very important occasion and only a priest or high priest has the right to read it. Only on certain occasions, full deacons (misharushono) are allowed to read from the 'Gospel'.

Among the four gospels in the New Testament, the one matching the thought for that day prescribed in the Lectionary is read out. The term 'Evangelion' is the Greek equivalent to Gospel. The other readings for that day, New Testament as well as Old Testament, would be matching with the thoughts of the Evangelion reading.

In short, let us understand that there is a theology behind the readings from Bible. For each day, the Lectionary is prepared based on these theological insights. The readings do not follow a random pattern, but are made to suit the significance of the day of worship. During the New Testament readings, the congregation remains standing, and candles will be held on either side when the gospel reading is done. The gospel contains the words of God Incarnate, our Lord Jesus Christ. We must listen to the Bible readings with full concentration and meditate on them with the help of the sermon for that week delivered by the celebrant. This will certainly help us in our spiritual development.

Hymn

*(prarthipin sleehanmare karthavoday...
Sleeba Namaskaram, Evening prayer)*

Pray for us Apostles to Him Who chose you
That schisms and disputes cease in the - Holy Church
See! Heretics surround her on every 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 victory praise Him who magnified her

.....

Let Us Pray

*O Lord, help us to listen the Holy scriptural readings during the Worship
attentively and to live according to it. Amen.*

.....

Resolution

We will listen, meditate and share divine Words with reverence and purity.

.....

Activities

1. Try to get a Lectionary from your church and understand the contents.
2. Discuss the Bible portion read by our Lord at the synagogue in Nazareth.
3. What do you understand by the term 'Liturgy of the Word'?
4. Which is 'Gospel of the Old Testament'?
5. Prepare a list of the books which are read at the northern side of the door of the Holy Sanctuary.
6. How do you decide the day of Koodosh-Eetho?

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. John 13:1-10
Monday	St. John 6:26-31	St. John 13:12-17
Tuesday	St. John 6:32-40	St. John 13:18-30
Wednesday	St. John 6:41-46	St. John 13:31-38
Thursday	St. John 6:47-51	St. Luke 22:1-13
Friday	St. John 6:53-59	St. Luke 22:14-20
Saturday	Psalms 50:7-15, 23	*

Unit 6

The Basic Dogmas

Chapter 20

Role of Sacraments in Spiritual Growth

Purpose of this Lesson: To appreciate the fact that meaningful participation in the sacraments of the Church helps one to grow spiritually.

Verse to be Memorized: “ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (St. John 20:23).

Introduction

Last year we studied about the holy sacraments. Can you name the sacraments of the Church? The Orthodox Churches teach that the sacraments contribute to our healing, absolution from sin and continued spiritual growth. This chapter deals with the role of sacraments in the holistic growth of believers.

The Lesson

What do we mean by spiritual growth? In the human person, there are three components namely mind, body and spirit. There are people who consider that spirituality is related to the third component only among these. But, Orthodox spirituality does not think about such a differentiation. Good and evil exist in the human person. Growing in goodness by eradicating evil can be called spiritual growth. There was only one person in this world who possessed goodness alone and that was Jesus Christ. Though, there was temptation of evil, he could overcome all of them. St. John witnesses that “this is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1: 5).

It is God’s will that everyone shall reach this state in life. We may not reach the fullness of that stage in our worldly life, but our aim shall never be less than that. Jesus has given us the direction: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (St. Matthew 5: 48). The transformation from evil to goodness is called ‘Theosis’ or ‘Deification’ in Orthodox theology. This is to share the nature of God. When we grow into the nature of God, we become ‘spiritual’.

How do sacraments help in this growth? We have seen that Sacraments are celebrated in the Church. By analyzing the growth of a person from his/her birth, we can understand how the Church and sacraments help a person in his/her spiritual

growth. A child is born into a family; the family contributes to the growth of the child. The contribution of Church and sacraments in one's spiritual growth is similar to this.

Here, Church is the great family. In this Church, we have Mother of God, Apostles, Saints as well as the departed souls and all those who are alive in body. Sacraments are performed by all of them together as we have learnt earlier. For each believer to grow spiritually, they must be born again. This spiritual birth is similar to a physical birth. And this happens in baptism. For such a re-birth, the baptismal font is the womb, and Church is the mother. As the parents give food for their child's physical growth, Church gives spiritual food for the child's spiritual growth.

How many sacraments are needed for one's spiritual growth? Indeed, this is a quite meaningful question. The Roman Catholic Church has limited the number of sacraments to seven. In the first sixteen centuries, there was no such numbering. The Western reformist churches initiated by Martin Luther (1483-1546), treated Baptism and Holy Eucharist alone as sacraments and discarded all others which were sacraments followed by ancient churches. Catholic Church fixed the number as seven in their Trent Council (1545-1563) of sixteenth century. But Orthodox churches have not limited sacraments to a specific number. However, the seven sacraments finalized by Catholics are recognized by Orthodox churches too, which are Baptism, Holy Chrismation (Mooron), Confession, Holy Qurbana, Marriage, Priesthood and Anointing the sick. Of these, Baptism, Chrismation and Priesthood are not to be repeated. Priesthood is only to those who are specifically called for that. Marriage too is not to be repeated, but in certain specific circumstances, second marriage is allowed.

Apart from these, consecration of a church, consecration of Mooron, blessing of a house, funeral of the departed are all considered as sacraments by Orthodox Churches.

Does each of these sacraments bring blessings to help spiritual growth? Yes, and that precisely is the reason for the need of different sacraments. We will now look at each one of them briefly.

1. **Holy Baptism:** Baptism is the very first sacrament received by a faithful. We cannot differentiate into adult and infant baptism. Usually, this is done within very few months of the birth of a child. The child is not aware of its birth. The child doesn't know even the way it is fed with mother's breast milk. Just because the child is not aware of these, the physical growth of the child is not hampered. In a very similar way, even if the child is not aware, its baptism takes place and it is spiritually born again. It is here that the process of Theosis commences. During baptism, the child rejects Satan and accepts Messiah. The godfather or godmother, representing the Church takes this pledge for the child. The new life in Christ begins here.

2. **Holy Mooron or Anointment of Holy Spirit:** This anointment is done along with baptism. It is through Holy Spirit, the child is born again. The specially purified and consecrated Mooron symbolizes anointment of Holy Spirit. When the child being baptized is anointed with Mooron, the Holy Spirit comes live in the child. Holy Spirit once received shall be renewed, but is not to be received again. That is the reason why a baptized person who discards the true faith and goes elsewhere is not re-baptized, if he returns. The Church teaches that it is enough that he confesses his wrong and repents. It is the Holy Spirit who transforms a born again child from evil to good.
3. **Holy Confession:** One's spiritual growth is similar to the physical growth of a child. But, spiritual growth is a never ending process. At best, we can say 'growing to fullness'. The child which starts learning to walk falls quite often initially and in a similar manner, the believer too falls among the evils of this world. But he has to get up from such falls. For this, he has to repent about his wrong doings. He has to accept that he has erred. He has to confess his wrongs. Then, he should have full conviction that he has been absolved of his sins. It is for this, the Church has instituted the sacrament called Holy Confession.
4. **Holy Qurbana:** The Orthodox Churches teach that Holy Qurbana is the sacrament that completes all other sacraments; it is the 'queen of all sacraments'. The sacraments are accompanied with Holy Qurbana. Among all the food for spiritual growth, Holy Qurbana is the most important because through this we receive the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. There may not be another nutritious food better than this to transform us. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." The Orthodox Churches believe this literally. At the same time, it shall be remembered that unless one is not slowly transformed, receiving Holy Qurbana will end up as a routine exercise.
5. **Priesthood:** The holy sacraments are performed by the Church. If so, we need ordained ministers to perform and administer them. If everyone in the Church becomes celebrants, the situation will resemble a country where all the citizens are coming up as rulers. Just similar to elected rulers for the governance of a country, there must be celebrants in a Church to perform the sacraments for the believers. Our Lord has shown us the way for this too. He has chosen apostles and the Church has been choosing deacons, priests and bishops and training them and empowering them to be celebrants of sacraments. They make the believers grow spiritually. The clergy have the responsibility to look after the flock as the good shepherd Jesus has been doing.
6. **Marriage:** The Book of Genesis tells us that family is a creation of God. (Genesis 1: 26, 2: 18). If a man and woman have to live life long as husband and wife

and also as parents, they need God's grace in abundance. This grace is showered upon the couple through the sacrament of marriage.

7. **Anointment of the Sick:** Our Lord has conferred the apostles and evangelists the specific grace of healing the sick. This grace is given to the Church as well. St. James (5: 14-19) writes, "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another". Sickness denotes a disorder and imbalance in the mind or body or both. Also, sickness is a situation where people are most helpless. Under such conditions, healing is necessary and God does it in His grace. Anointment of the sick results in healing for the body, mind and spirit. Sins are forgiven and disorders of the body are removed. This sacrament is not the 'extreme unction' to be performed just before death. But this sacrament is one for healing and absolution of sins.

Again, in house blessing, consecration of a church and consecration of Mooron (Chrism) the grace of Holy Spirit is being showered aplenty. Through the funeral service, the departed souls receive protection of the grace of God because, "Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin" (Ruth 2: 20). Thus we acknowledge and experience that the sacraments bring blessings to all to help their spiritual growth.

.....
Let Us Pray

O Lord, help us to become godly through continuous sacramental experience. Amen

.....

Resolution

We shall try to study more about Sacraments and lead a sacramental life.

.....

Activities

1. Try to understand more about the graces in different sacraments.
2. Share your personal experiences of having received graces through sacraments such as Holy Confession, Holy Qurbana, Anointment of the Sick and so on.
3. Identify certain benchmarks to ascertain whether the process of Theosis has commenced in you, like the willingness to love enemies.
4. Have a combined discussion to study the statement, 'Holy Qurbana is the queen of all sacraments' or 'Sacraments of Sacraments'.
5. Find out evidence to prove that baptizing children is Biblical.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	1 Peter 4:1-6
Monday	St. John 14:8-13	1 Peter 4:7-11
Tuesday	St. John 14:14-24	1 Peter 4:12-15
Wednesday	Hebrews 11:1-6	1 Peter 4:17-19
Thursday	Hebrews 11:7-12	St. James 2:14-26
Friday	St. James 2:1-6	1 Peter 1:3-12
Saturday	St. James 2:7-13	*

Chapter 21

Fruit of the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Growth

Purpose of this Lesson: The power of Holy Spirit reaches us through the sacraments. Let us find out how do the graces of Holy Spirit help in the spiritual growth of the faithful.

Verse to be Memorized: “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Introduction

How do we get to know the help we receive from the Holy Spirit in spiritual growth? In our previous lesson, we saw that Holy Spirit helps us to grow into Divinization or ‘Godlikeness’ through sacraments. Administration of the sacraments is not an individual act, but it involves the Church, i.e. the community of believers. Those who partake in the sacraments with faith receive God’s grace. But each individual shall examine whether such a grace does exist in him/her. The details are examined in this lesson.

The Lesson

The Bible passages dealing with the operation of the Holy Spirit shall be referred to in the class. (St. John 14:16, 16:12-13, 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 13, Galatians 5:22)

What are the signs of operation of the Holy Spirit?

Two perceptible signs are identified. (1) Different graces or gifts and (2) Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

What are graces or gifts?

This world has to be transformed to the likeness of God for which the faithful have to do their part. Towards this, Holy Spirit gives gifts to individuals who are prepared to receive them. These are not the same in all individuals. “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. (1 Corinthians 12:4-31)

Graces or gifts may not be given to different individuals in the same measure and kind. They are bestowed to them so that everyone derives the benefits out of them.

For example, one may get the gift of healing; but this is not to be used for selfish purposes or to earn name and fame. Such gifts are expected to be used for the benefit of others without fan fare and also without a desire for worldly profit. It shall be recalled that after performing miracles, our Lord strictly warned the beneficiaries not to tell others about them.

Worldly Nature is Transformed

Though graces or gifts do not come to everyone in the same measure or kind, the Fruit of the Spirit can come to everyone. With this, the worldly nature gets transformed. Desires of the flesh always stand related to death. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Here the word death indicates not the physical death, but being removed from God’s grace. Even when the body is alive, spiritual decay and death can happen. If we carry on our life in obedience to evil or Satan, certainly it is life controlled by desires of the flesh.

St. Paul teaches us about this: “Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). When evil increases the acts of Holy Spirit are weakened. But, when Holy Spirit is active, worldly nature gets transformed to spiritual nature. St. Paul says further: “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22). Here it is mentioned as ‘the Fruit’ not ‘fruits’.

The nine attributes together form the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. This can be considered as the criteria to find out whether an individual has grown spiritually or not. We can say that wherever these nine fruits are produced, Holy Spirit is active in that person. The faithful shall earn these fruits and gifts by taking part in the sacraments and prayers, observing lent and by fasting, and loving our neighbor as they love themselves.

The Fruit of the Spirit are classified into three groups. This is done indicating our relation to God, to other human beings and to ourselves.

1. Relation with God: Love, Joy, and Peace

Through the relation with God, a believer reaches spiritual conditions of love, joy and peace. The Bible tells us, “God is Love” (1 John 4:9, 16). The eternal nature of God is Love. Love unites everything and everybody. The late H. G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios taught that there must be a single religion of love in this universe.

Joy doesn't mean a sensual feeling of happiness derived from material objects. Instead it means that experience of being content and happy in God in spite of the abundance or shortage of material comforts or the experience of good and bad coming up one by one in one's life. Likewise, Holy Spirit gives peace to true devotees, which is not available in the material world (St. John 14:27).

2. Relation between Human Beings: Patience, Kindness, and Goodness

The true sign of spirituality is loving God and neighbor. We know that Jesus was fully God and fully human. As we grow in the likeness of Christ, the relation with fellow human also will be set right. The relation with them grows deep and strong through patience, kindness and goodness. Our Lord has taught us to forgive our fellow beings seven times seventy and also to love our enemy. This is possible only if one possesses patience. Similarly, kindness that gives rise to empathy and sharing the sorrow of others, as well as extending a helping hand in their need, are all essentials of keeping good human relations.

3. Relation with Self: Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control

There are gifts of the Spirit which reveal an individual's spiritual condition in relation to one's self. Those who are humble always succeed in keeping good relations with others. The faithful shall be able to overcome evil temptations of Satan and will be able to exercise self control. They are to stay away from drinking and smoking and be controlled in food habits. Many fail to control their desires because they are not strengthened by the Holy Spirit. We shall introspect our behavior in the light of these nine gifts to gauge our spiritual growth.

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Let Us Pray

O Lord, let the Holy Spirit lead us to remove the desires of the flesh and to produce the Fruit of the Spirit abundantly in us. Amen

.....

Resolution

We shall try to remove the desires of the flesh from us.

.....

Activities

1. How do you differentiate between gifts of the Holy Spirit and Fruit of the Holy Spirit? What do we need more among the two for our spiritual growth?

2. Arrange a role play in the class where nine students take up roles as the Fruit of the Spirit and let them come out with the peculiarities of them as they understand.
3. Among all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is the greatest? Have a discussion about this based on 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. John 14:12-17
Monday	St. John 15:23-27	St. John 14:25-28
Tuesday	St. John 16:7-15	St. John 16:7-15
Wednesday	Ephesians 1:1-7	Galatians 5:16-26
Thursday	Ephesians 1:15-23	Romans 8:12-17
Friday	Ephesians 6:1-9	Ephesians 1:7-14
Saturday	Ephesians 6:10-18	*

Unit 7

Introducing Great Men

Chapter 22

St. Anthonios (St. Antony of the Desert)

Message: The Christian monks follow a life of abstinence, renunciation and self control. They renounce the world, their family and possessions. As ascetics, it is their attempt to follow the two commandments – Love of God and love of neighbor. St. Antony is considered as the Father of monks or the first Christian Monk (Sanyasin). May his intercession be of refuge to us. Let us, in this lesson, try to understand more about Orthodox Monastic tradition.

Verse to be Memorized: “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29).

Text Acquaintance

Monks are those who have accepted St. Paul’s admonition (“Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” — Romans 13: 14) and neglecting material comforts with all their temptations and live exclusively for Jesus Christ. Their contributions to the growth and stability of the Church, sustenance of faith, development of liturgy and so on are quite substantial and invaluable.

Introduction

Have you heard about Dayaras or Monasteries? Can you name some of the Dayaras? Mount Tabor Dayara at Pathanapuram, Bethany Ashram at Ranni, Vallikkattu Dayara at Vakathanam, Pampadi Dayara.

We have many saintly fathers who have come up to the leadership of our Church from our monasteries. St. Parumala Thirumeni, St. Vattasseril Thirumeni, Pampadi Thirumeni, Geevarghese II Bava Thirumeni, Mathews II Bava Thirumeni, Didimos I Bava Thirumeni, Geevarghese Mar Ivanios Thirumeni are all such saintly fathers. In this lesson we shall learn about St. Anthonios, who is considered as the one who instituted the monastic life in the Church.

The Lesson

St. Anthonios was born at Coma, an Egyptian town, in 251 AD to Christian parents who were quite wealthy. But both his parents were called to heavenly abode before he completed 18 years of age. Anthonios and his lone sister, inheriting large ancestral wealth continued to live at their parental house.

One day, Anthonios while attending the church worship, listened to the gospel of the day which read, “Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” (Matthew 19: 21). This gospel passage was the narration of the incident where Jesus was talking to a rich man. It struck Anthonios that Christ was talking to him direct. He, then, decided to obey what Jesus told him.

Anthonios distributed all his wealth to the poor and the oppressed. But he took care to earmark part of it for his sister and entrusted her to a Christian family known to him. Thereafter, he proceeded, initially for 24 years, to Egyptian deserts to live as a monk and spent the time there in prayer and manual work. Whenever he planted a seedling, he used to recite Psalms, prayers and hymns. He renounced all worldly things and interests and led a life of prayer and meditation. The hard monastic life led by Anthonios astonished the people and so, many people came to follow him and emulate him. St. Antony visited his parent town twice.

Once it was to encourage martyrs and to argue their cases in the courts of justice. His second home coming was at the age of 90 and this was to fight with St. Athanasius against the heresy propagated by Arius, and he stood behind the Nicene Creed strongly. Towards the end of his life, he came to be known all over the world and earned unprecedented acclaim. The number of those who followed him to the desert kept on increasing. Thus, St. Anthonios came to be known as the ‘Father of Monks’ in the Christian Church. The ‘Life of Antony’ written by St. Athanasius of Alexandria provide more information about this saintly monk. St. Anthonios died on AD 356.

Hymn

*(Nathan bhagyam nernnore! Vimalanmare...,
Sheemanamaskaram, Thursday Morning Prayer)*

Our Lord said to the saints, who hated this world
And all its pleasures
“Blessed are you for whom there is kept on high
The garden, the table of the Kingdom and
The marriage - chamber”.

.....

Let Us Pray

Oh Father Anthonios, you have left the world for the sake of our Lord and lived a life of monastic discipline in the desert; remember us in your prayers that we earn sufficient self control to defeat evil desires and ward off temptations. Amen.

.....

Resolution

We will strive to achieve purity of heart through prayer, fasting, contemplation, worship, meditating the Word of God, and charity.

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Let Us Think

1. What was the birth place of St. Anthonios?
2. In which year was he born?
3. When did his parent die?
4. Which Biblical verse inspired him to choose monastic life?
5. What did he do thereafter?
6. Which place was chosen by him for his monastic life?
7. How many years did he continue this monastic life?
8. How many times did he visit his parental town?
9. How is he known the world over?

Activities

Try to visit some monasteries close to your place. Try to identify the names of those fathers of the Church who has taken the name Anthonios.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Galatians 3:5-10
Monday	1 Peter 2:1-6	Galatians 3:11-22
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 2:13-15	Galatians 3:23-28
Wednesday	2 Thessalonians 3:1-5	Galatians 4:12-15
Thursday	Ephesians 5:1-6	Galatians 4:16-20
Friday	Ephesians 4:7-13	Galatians 1:3-14
Saturday	Ephesians 5:13-21	*

Chapter 23

St. Pachomios

Message: One's life becomes meaningful when he /she realizes God's will. St. Pachomios realized that God called him to enter monastic life and he did exactly that by throwing away the powerful military career he had. May the intercession of this saint help us understand what plans God has for each one of us. We shall, in this lesson, try to learn what these early Christian monks valued more than the worldly life.

Verse to be Memorized: "They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world" (St. John 17:16).

Text Acquaintance

To be successful in life, the characteristic called single – mindedness is an absolute necessity. To attain single – mindedness, one should practice unqualified self control. To attain self control, spiritual discipline such as fasting and contemplation are to be practiced. This is the principle of life for all. For our normal actions to succeed there should be an absolute concentration of mind and soul. It is a fact that the mind of a human is always wavering, and to bring it under control is really difficult. We have to try hard to be single minded so as to fully absorb what we learn. For this, it is necessary for us to practice the self discipline of our sages. This was the reason why students used to be called 'Brahmacharies' (celibates) during ancient times. St. Pachomios was a saintly monk who practiced this ascetic discipline and charity.

Introduction

We learnt about St. Anthonios in the previous lesson. You would remember we had mentioned about the monasteries of our Church. We also learned that St. Anthonios is considered as the father of Christian monks. But it is St. Pachomios who formulated monastic life as a systematic institution. We are going to learn about this saint in this lesson.

The Lesson

St. Pachomios was born at Esna, a town in Egypt in 290 AD. His parents were non Christians and were also idol worshippers. During his youth, he was a soldier in the Roman Army. One day, he was sent to Ethiopia along with other soldiers. During this journey, they met many Christians in the rural areas. These people invited the soldiers to their houses and they washed their feet and fed them. St. Pachomios was

attracted by the hospitality of these Christians and was excited at their noble dealings. After the war, St. Pachomios received baptism and became a Christian. He met a well known monk of that time called Palaemon and followed him.

Whenever a person came forward to join the monastery, St. Pachomios used to examine his sincerity and commitment as well as the strength of his intention. Moreover, he used to test his disciples on their capacity to withstand worldly desires and temptations.

St. Pachomios taught that to become a true monk, one should possess Holy obedience, love of God, voluntary poverty, celibacy, and piety. He gave importance to study of the Holy Bible and memorizing the Psalms and other Bible verses. He also taught the monks to read and write the Christian Creed of faith.

In AD 320, he set up a monastery on the banks of River Nile. He instituted certain common rules and regulations for monastic life. It was in this way the monasteries took shape and turned out to be the spiritual power houses of the Church. We do not know exactly when St. Pachomios died, but May 24 is observed by the Church as his day of remembrance.

Let Us Pray

Our father St. Pachomios, pray for us that we are able to exercise sufficient self control to overcome worldly desires and sins, and grow in Christ likeness. Amen.

Resolution

We shall practice self discipline and try to overcome the temptation of this world.

Let Us Think

1. Which is the birth place of St. Pachomios?
2. In which year was he born?
3. Who were his parents?
4. What was his profession?
5. Where and how was he attracted towards Christian life?
6. Who was responsible for St. Pachomios to choose the monastic life and how?
7. What are the qualities of a true monastic life?

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Hebrews 12:1-9
Monday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Romans 12:1-10
Tuesday	Romans 6:1-8	St. John 17:20-23
Wednesday	St. Mark 2:13-28	1 Corinthians 15:20-28
Thursday	1 John 5:1-12	Ephesians 6:10-20
Friday	Ephesians 4:7-15	St. Mark 11:20-26
Saturday	Ephesians 2:8-9	*

Unit 8

Good Habits

Chapter 24

Sacrifice – The Noblest Quality

Message: Having got inspired by our Lord’s sacrifice on the cross at Calvary, it should be the responsibility of Christians to practice the spirit of sacrifice.

Verse to be Memorized: “Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters” (Colossians 3:23).

Introduction

Do we have the habit of helping others in difficulty? Let us prepare ourselves for a selfless life extending our hands of love to the needy. Let us be inspired to do so by the Holy Spirit.

The Lesson

How much of our time can we spend effectively for our Lord? God acts in this world through those who surrender their life to the will of God. In fact, God wants us to be His co-workers. Are we prepared for this? If so, we must forsake selfishness and be ready to serve others. This is the beginning of a life of sacrifice.

We have heard people sacrificing their lives for noble causes. The greatest sacrifice is on the cross at Calvary. It is the sacrifice on the cross that saved humanity from perdition. He sacrificed His life for us. Let us recall the words of Jesus Christ here, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (St. John 15: 13). We see the height of true love and sacrifice in Jesus Christ. Jesus knew his mission clearly which was to lay down his life for others. “... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20: 28). It is this love that attracts people to Jesus. This love has inspired many people. There are many disciples of Christ now in this world serving the oppressed and consoling the sick by forsaking their comforts for the sake of Jesus.

We learn several good things from nature. Birds and animals strive hard to take care of their offspring. Even by sacrificing their life, they ensure the survival their offspring out of any impending danger. But for those who sacrificed for the sake of others, this world would not have remained as we have it today.

Let us look at the lives of a few individuals who are great examples of sacrifice for the sake of others. Such great personalities are real sources of inspiration for all.

A Catholic nun was travelling in train from Darjeeling to Kolkata late in the night. It was in the year 1948, shortly after India got independence. She had heard about the lepers who were wandering around in the city of Kolkata. She had also heard about infants being abandoned in the streets of Kolkata. But that night the voice of Jesus pierced her heart like a lightening. “And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’ (Matthew 25: 40). The nun took a bold decision instantly. ‘I will go to these slums and try to give a decent life to these orphans and the poor’. She implemented this resolve in letter and spirit. This nun is none other than **Mother Teresa (1910-1997)**, who came to be known as the ‘Mother of Destitute’ later. It was Christ’s sacrifice on the cross that inspired Mother Teresa and thousands of such other servants of Christ to live for the poor and the neglected.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), a great scholar, philosopher, doctor, theologian and musician abandoned all the worldly comforts and social standing and went to the unexplored interior forest areas of Africa to serve the uneducated and uncivilized tribal people. This great sacrifice made him known all over the world. And through him, many in Africa could come to know about Jesus.

Fr. Damien (1840-1889), was yet another great man who sacrificed his life for lepers. The teachings of Jesus got embedded in this young man very deeply, which made him sacrifice his life for the lepers in the Island of Molokoi. His life is a great symbol of a life of sacrifice. He cherished a thought that he would carry out his service as an unknown man to this world. But against wishes, his name spread across the world far and wide. A news paper in Hawaii wrote about him in 1881, “Fr. Damien, who set apart his life for lepers who were considered untouchable and unapproachable by all the people, is a great lover of humanity in the history of humankind and the epitome of sacrifice to mankind”. Fr. Damien lived with lepers and died as a leper; serving the lepers, he laid down his life for them. He has been beatified by the Roman Catholic Church.

In the Malankara Church, there were great Church fathers who led a life of service worth emulating. Let try to know more about some of them.

- * **The late HG Pathrose Mar Osthathios (1886-1968)**, moved among the marginalized segments of our society where many of the ‘untouchable’ people were suffering a lot not only out of poverty, but also because of neglect and contempt from the upper caste people. His Grace spent the whole of his life for uplifting of such oppressed people and founded the Missionary society called ‘Sleebe Dasa Samooham’ (Servants of the Cross Society)

- * All over India, there are many children born to parents suffering from leprosy as well as children of parents suffering from AIDS. Though these children have not been affected the disease, they were not welcomed in the mainstream of the society. **The late Sabharatnam H. G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios (1917-2012)**, set up institutions at many places to look after these children which helped them to grow as healthy children, and many have built up good career and are occupying responsible positions in society.
- * **The late H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas (1924-2012)** was a model of humility and was serving among the sick and marginalized providing them assistance as well as working hard among youth for their spiritual growth.

These were three of our fathers among others who showed us how to live to the call of God sacrificing our time and talents, and even life for the poor and the suffering. If we are living a life of comfort today, it must be born in mind that it would have not been possible had it not been for the hard work and sacrifice of many others. Our parents have made a lot of sacrifices on their part for our better future. There can be sacrifice only if there is love. Love without sacrifice can never be true love. Love without sacrifice becomes weak.

God has given us talents which are to be used in His service. We should not expect some gain for us, but look forward to do something for God. “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (St. Matthew 6: 33). “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received”(1 Peter 4:10). We shall surrender before God all those gifts, talents, hopes and dreams so that He will enable us to put them for Godly purposes.

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Let Us Pray

*Oh God, enable us to experience your love and do good for others
sacrificing our self interest. Amen.*

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Resolution

***We shall use our God given talents for the glory of God and work in
the Church to spread the message of Kingdom of God, and through
such selfless service, please our Lord.***

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Activities

1. Which is the greatest of all sacrifices in this world?
2. From world history, mention three examples of great sacrifices. Write down the names of those three individuals.
3. Try to look for a few other people who are examples of such sacrifices and make short notes on each of them.
4. Identify a few models of great sacrifices in Malankara Church.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St. Matthew 19:27-29
Monday	Philippines 1:1-11	St. John 3:10-16
Tuesday	Hebrews 10:8-18	St. Luke 18:28-30
Wednesday	Romans 8:28-30	St. Luke 17:33-37
Thursday	Isaiah 55:9-13	1 John 3:16-18
Friday	Romans 8:37--39	Romans 12:1-5
Saturday	2 Peter 3:8-18	*

Chapter 25

Respect and Observe the Law

Message: We need to observe the Laws given by God and laws of the land for the development of ourselves and society at large.

Verse to be Memorized: “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme” (1 Peter 2:13)

Introduction

We need to follow certain guidelines in this world where we live. In the absence of some sort of guidelines, our individual and social lives become miserable. It is the will of God that we shall lead disciplined lives. By enforcement of law, certain restrictions fall on everyone. Why should there be such laws? This lesson will make us realize the significance of laws and how beneficial they are for social welfare.

The Lesson

Very often we reach school before time and if so, what do we do there? Some of us spend the time playing whereas some others keep talking to friends. There are some others who may go to the school library and read some books or news papers. But when the bell rings indicating school time, everybody rushes to their class rooms. Why do we do so? We do so because that is the rule at the school. If we obey the school rules, our teachers will appreciate us. Laws maintain a general discipline, which is for the common good.

The Law in the Bible

After creating human beings and placing them in the Garden of Eden, God gave them freedom of will. But there was one restriction: “...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (Genesis 2: 17). Human beings was created with freedom of will - to choose good or evil. But this restriction was imposed on them to make them understand that they had to depend on God for everything.

During the time of Moses, God gave Laws to the people for them to lead pure and disciplined lives. God provided people of Israel the Ten Commandments through Moses (Exodus 20: 1-17). Further, as and when the need arose, God used to pass on directives through His prophets. Later, Jesus Christ gave true interpretation to these commandments.

Peter one day came to Jesus and told him about the demand of tax collectors, but Jesus said, he being the Son of God was not bound to pay tax to the temple. However he said further to Peter, “However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me” (St. Matthew 17: 27). Here we see the one who is the Creator of the universe, subjecting Himself to the law of the land.

Any community needs certain laws for its sustenance and existence. The community has the authority to implement it through a system formulated by it. Members of that community are bound to obey them and be subject to those laws.

Unwritten laws

Nature is sustained by adherence to certain laws. The Sun, Moon, stars, water, stone, soil and all such objects are controlled by laws of nature. It is as per these laws we see water flowing only downwards, the earth moves around the Sun and so on. These laws of nature form the basis for scientific laws and principles.

Compared to material objects, living objects are subject to certain other laws too. These laws can be called laws for living beings. It is a law of nature that pollination takes place in plants through butterflies. There are laws of ethics practiced among human beings. Such laws prompt men to desist from evil and live in goodness.

Written laws

Human beings live as a community and as nations and therefore laws are necessary for protecting the rights of citizens, which is the responsibility of the nation. By birth, humans are selfish and this prompts there to deny the rights of others resulting in disorders in public life. If someone threatens the safety of life and property of fellow beings, that disturbs the harmony of the community. Under such circumstances, laws are necessary for keeping order and protecting the rights of all humans. And, these gave rise to written law.

Why do we need laws?

All the laws are meant for the well being of the society. Those who walk on the road or drive vehicles shall obey the traffic rules. The rules are meant for the safety of road users. Law curtails evil; and can also breed the good.

To follow all laws of the land is obligatory. This is not to respect the nation alone but also to respect our fellow beings. Once we do everything as per our choice alone, we may be causing inconvenience and disturbance to others. Laws are formulated to protect the interests of all.

Laws are to ensure justice

Justice makes sure that one gets what he/she deserves. When justice is denied to a person, law comes to his/her relief. The constitution of the country ensures that everyone gets their due of justice as fundamental right. To have a welfare nation, there must be a legal system in force for everyone to enjoy justice.

Law enforcement departments

Even if we are aware of the law of land, there are tendencies to ignore law. This results in breaking of law in the society quite often. Under such situations, like crime investigation and judicial authorities need to act.

Law given by God

All powers come from God (Romans 13: 1-3), but some powers may turn satanic too (Book of Revelation 13: 1). The horns in Revelation 13:1 represent power. Our civil laws must be formulated in such a way that they are in line with God given laws. Always, remember that our obligation to God is the most important.

Laws are meant for the welfare of people. God's commands too must be understood the same way. God gave the Ten Commandments to Israelites so that fear of God, love of fellow beings, justice, truthfulness and such virtues shall prevail. The Beatitudes in Sermon on the Mount (St. Matthew 5: 3-12) can be said to be an explanation for the Ten Commandments. All laws are aimed at the good of the people. Laws are also for controlling evil. We have to appreciate the laws of the land as well as God given laws in this background. All laws are for good. Laws do not curtail our freedom. On the other hand, they are for protecting our freedom.

Hymn

*Teacher may help the student to sing
an English hymn connected with this lesson*

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Let Us Pray

*Our Creator God, lead us in the path of truth and justice to live according
to Your precepts Amen.*

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Resolution

*We shall observe and honour the law of the
Lord and Divine Commandments.*

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Activities

1. Have you heard about the Right to Information Act (RIA) implemented in India? By this law, a citizen has the right to know everything that happens in the country except certain matters of confidentiality particularly related to the defense of the nation.
2. What does the word 'law' mean in the Holy Scriptures? What are the important aspects of Jewish laws? Compare Jewish laws with the precepts of Jesus Christ.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	1 Peter 5:1-11
Monday	1 St. Peter 2:13-17	Romans 13:1-7
Tuesday	Exodus 22:1-3	Romans 9:19-26
Wednesday	1 Corinthians-. 10:23-33	St. John 18:28-32
Thursday	1 Timothy 2:22-26	Romans 16:17-0
Friday	St. Matthew 5:43-48	Ephesians 4:25-32
Saturday	1 St. John 4:19-21	*

