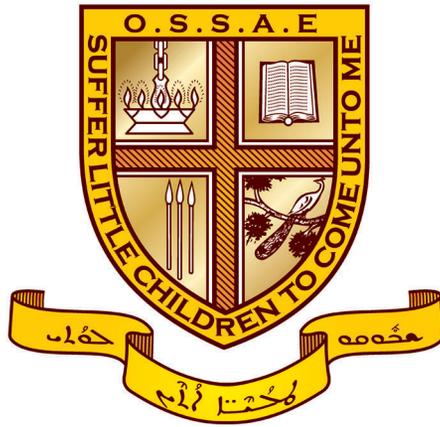


ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAYSCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



Nazreth Division Class III (English)

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AN OSSAE PUBLICATION

Sunday School Padavali-3

First Revised Edition December 2013

Copies 5,000

Price ₹ 50.00

Preface

Education is a continuing and refreshing endeavour which attempts to train and equip kids and the young people for a spiritual, active and successful life; and hence it is an 'investment' for today and tomorrow. The myriad possibilities of education have encouraged religion, countries and ideologies to adapt it for furthering their objectives and long term aims. In the Christian tradition "Christian education' is a ministry of the Church.

Secular education programme in every situation and country has undergone enormous transformation through the years. More and more study and research is going into the philosophical base, content, techniques of teaching and learning, learners' participation, technique of evaluation etc. So it is only natural that 'revisions' happen from time to time.

"Christian Education", for which the Sunday School lays the foundation and prods nurture, is never intended to be a carbon copy of what happens in the world of secular education. Christian education has its unique aim and objectives, philosophy, ethics and vision. However, it is not irrelevant to learn from the relevant and succesful 'techniques' available and adopted in the secular front. But we must be constantly careful, never to slip away from our firm Orthodox foundations!

It is highly commendable that the Orthodox Syrian Sundayschool Association has taken the bold step to completely revise the whole curriculum, trusting in God, who loves children. Every lesson and every detail is prepared after a pretty long stretch of study, discussion, correction and revisits by a team of people who have the interest and expertise to engage in this exacting and time-consuming exercise. Provisions are made to give proper guidelines and direction to teachers. All this study materials are being prepared in Malayalam and English simultaneously. The regional schools, especially, those outside India, shall adapt these basic materials to suit local situations, linguistic and cultural variances; and aptitudes of children but keeping the broad structure and basics intact.

These revised study materials are dedicated to the Church, with the fervent expectation that all those who love the Church, and our children who are dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, shall certainly welcome this venture.

Devalokom
20-10-2013

Yakob Mar Irenious Metrapolitan
President, OSSAE

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Introduction

We are living through a period of rapid changes. The educational sector reflects these changes to a great extent. Secular education is undergoing a lot of revisions and children are greatly influenced by secular education. Therefore Sunday School Curriculum also requires to be revised according to the new learning methods. The comprehensive revision of the curriculum is undertaken in the light of this reality.

We have no notion that just by implementing the secular methodology of learning, we can reform the character of our children. The fundamental principle there should be the teacher-student relationship modelled on the love between Christ and his disciples. The method of presentation followed in this book would help teachers and students alike in the transaction of the topics discussed.

This textbook comes as a product of the strenuous efforts of the Curriculum Revision Committee headed by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenius, President, OSSAE. The contributions of those who wrote various units are invaluable. This textbook, on its completion, owes much to all members of the curriculum committee, especially H.G. Mar Irenius, President OSSAE and executive editor Sam V. Daniel. Suggestions to improve this book are welcome.

Let me pray for this New Curriculum to inaugurate a new age of Spiritual Enlightenment in Sunday School education. Let me also place on record the gratitude to all those who worked for it. We are highly obliged to Prof. Jose K. Philip for preparing this English edition.

Devalokam
20-12-2013

Fr. Dr. O. Thomas
Director General

Dear students, teachers and parents

We are undertaking a comprehensive revision of the Sunday School Curriculum. Relevant changes have been brought about in the content and structure of the lessons. We are preparing a Teachers' Handbook along with the textbook for students. We expect that this arrangement will be helpful to teachers and students alike.

The period of learning from Pre-School to Class XII is divided into 5 stages

1. Bethlahem	Preschool class	Upto Age 5
2. Nazreth	Class I to III	Age 5-7
3. Galilee	Class IV to VII	Age 8-11
4. Jerusalem	Class VIII to X'	Age 12-14
5. Tabor	Class XI and XII	Age 15-16

This is the textbook for Class III in the Nazareth category. Let us look into the structure of the lessons given in the textbook.

1. Theme (What is this lesson about): The central idea that should be sensitised through each lesson is given here. We should give special emphasis to this idea while transacting a lesson.

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. Students may be encouraged to learn the verse, including its reference, by heart.

3. Learning Aids: Take care to provide pictures and books, connected to the central theme as well as the Holy Bible in the classroom.

4. Introduction: This section helps in making the lesson attractive and enjoyable. Simple questions, anecdotes connected with the life-experience of children and the things we see around are given here.

A simple and enjoyable introduction alone ensures easy learning further. Therefore the ideas given here are to be presented with diligence.

5. Reading Passage or text: This is the content of the lesson. We have tried our best to make it student-centred. The ideas should be presented in a participatory manner. There should be good amount of student involvement. The teacher should take the Holy Bible to class. He should read out the Biblical passages. The descriptions made should have the quality of a narration. The students should be encouraged through interaction questions. Certain significant passages could be recited by them in Chorus. Questions given in the 'Pause and reflect' section must be presented before the students. Song or hymns, picture stories, short plays etc. are given in the lesson.

Students shall be made to sing songs and enact small plays. Stories should be read out to them. There are separate units of Prayer, Hymns of Worship, My Church, Good habits etc. The unit 'Prayer' aims at making the students say prayers in the evening and in the morning regularly. Students should be encouraged to do that. Directions for this are given in each lesson.

6. Let us think: These are evaluation questions given to examine how far the students have grasped the ideas in the text. The teacher should ask these questions to the class. Space for writing the answers are also provided. Either teacher or parent can write answers for the students.

7. Activities: Most of the tasks given in this section are for enacting, drawing, physical action or narration. Children shall be encouraged to do these tasks. The number of lessons have been reduced. Hence we believe that there will be ample time for these activities as well.

8. Sing along: A song or hymn connected with the lesson is given here. The teacher should sing it for the class and the students should recite it in chorus. Most of the songs are quite simple and familiar. So the students can sing them easily. Songs of OVBS classes are also included. The teacher may seek the help of others who have musical aptitude. It will be better if the teacher can supplement the song with suitable actions while reciting the songs.

9. Let us Pray: A simple prayer connected with the theme of the lesson is given here. The teacher and the students shall together say

this prayer in the class. All should stand up and make the sign of the cross before the prayer. The teacher can recite it aloud and the student can repeat the prayer.

10. Resolution: An idea that can touch the students' mind like a decision and that can be implemented in their lives is given at the end of each lesson. Students can read it aloud.

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. If the students are unable to read them on their own, elders should read it aloud for them. The Biblical passages are arranged in such a manner that a student can read it from one Sunday evening till the next Sunday morning. Parents should encourage their wards to read the prescribed passages along with the prayers at home. We hope that this practice will prompt regular family prayers and meditation of Biblical verses.

The mode of evaluation for Nazareth category is oral examination. Hence students should be encouraged to say the answers clearly in the class. Teachers shall attempt to create a student friendly atmosphere in the class.

The service rendered by our Sunday School teachers in imparting spiritual training to the growing generation and confirming them in right faith and right worship is invaluable. Full co-operation of all students parents and teachers is essential for the successful implementation of the New Curriculum. Since the new system is different to a great extent from the old, teachers should handle the new curriculum and methods of learning carefully and diligently. Be kind enough to let your valuable suggestions and encouragement known to us. Let there be abundant blessings of the benevolent God on this righteous endeavour of Sunday School teachers and other authorities for the sake of the Holy Church.

Dr. Sam V. Daniel

Executive Editor

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Unit 1

Bible Stories

Lesson 1

Offerings that please our Lord

(Genesis 4: 1-15)

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

Verse to be memorized: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.” (Psalms. 51:17)

Learning Aids: Pictures of farmlands, animals and shepherds.

Introduction

Many people find happiness in helping others. We can have this happiness only if such help has certain good qualities. We should help others with goodwill. We should not give anything to others half heartedly or grudgingly. Saint Paul says, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Today we are going to learn the story of Abel and Cain who made their offering to God.

Reading Passage

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



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

Cain offered his farm products. Abel sacrificed the best of his first-born sheep. God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice. Cain was a sinful man. Hence God was not pleased with his sacrifice. Cain was angry. God commanded him to contain his anger and advised him to lead a sinless, pure life of good deeds. Cain became furious. He didn't like the suggestions to get God's blessings.

Let us reflect

- * Who were the first two children of Adam?
- * Are our offerings as good as Abel's?
- * How well do our families participate in the festival of First fruits' in our church.
- * Why do we hold charity collection/offertory in our Sunday School? Do we make our contributions happily?
- * God wasn't pleased with Cain's offering. Why?

Summary

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

Hymn

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

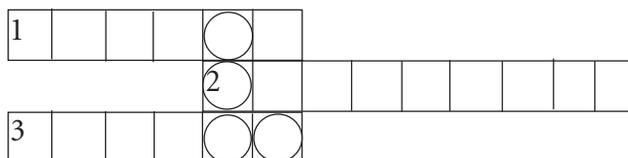
Our Decision

We will please God by making our offerings happily.

Activities

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

Crossword Puzzle



Right

1. "But whoever desires to become.....among you, let him be your servant." (St. Matthew 20:26) (5 letters)
2. The town where Jesus was born (9)
3. The child who lived with Eli the Priest; a prophet of Israel (6)

Word study

The word 'brother' refers to all

Siblings who share the womb of their mother. The word is also used in the sense of a colleague.

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

1. Keep silent patiently
2. Let the anger melt away.
3. Pray for getting mental strength.
4. Establish friendship once again/ Approach again with a smile.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Hebrews 11:1-6
Monday	Psalms 127:1-5	Acts 5:1-6
Tuesday	Acts 4:32-37	Acts 5:7-11
Wednesday	St. James 2:15-18	St. Luke 16:19-23
Thursday	St. Luke 16:24-31	St. Matthew 6:1-4
Friday	Proverbs 10:22-32	Leviticus 2:14-16
Saturday	Leviticus 23:22-25	Psalms 112:1-5
Sunday	Psalms 112:6-10	*

Lesson 2

Abraham's Broadmindedness

(Genesis 12, 13, 14)

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

Verse to be memorized: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity." (Psalms. 133:1)

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

Introduction

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

Reading passage

God told Abraham to leave his own country and people and go to another land. He would guide him. Abraham obeyed and got out with his nephew Lot. They were very rich in livestock and herdsman. The vast wealth and fight between herdsmen made it difficult for them to live together. So Abraham thought that it would be better for both families to live independently. Abraham loved Lot as his own son. He said to Lot "We are brothers. Look at the land in front of you. Let us separate. Take for you any part of the land you want. If you would turn west, then I would go to the east; If you choose east, then I shall go to the west."

Lot took a long look at the land. He selected the fertile plains of river Jordan lying to the east. They parted ways. Abraham stayed in the land of Canaan.

Pause and Reflect...

1. Who was Abraham's nephew?

.....

2. Why did Abraham and Lot part company?

.....

Lot chose the fertile lands in a selfish manner. He did not bother about Abraham's needs.

Summary

Lot lost all his wealth which he had selfishly chosen for himself neglecting Abraham's needs. He had to flee from the land without even looking back once. But Abraham who selected the remaining land and his descendants were blessed.

Our Decision

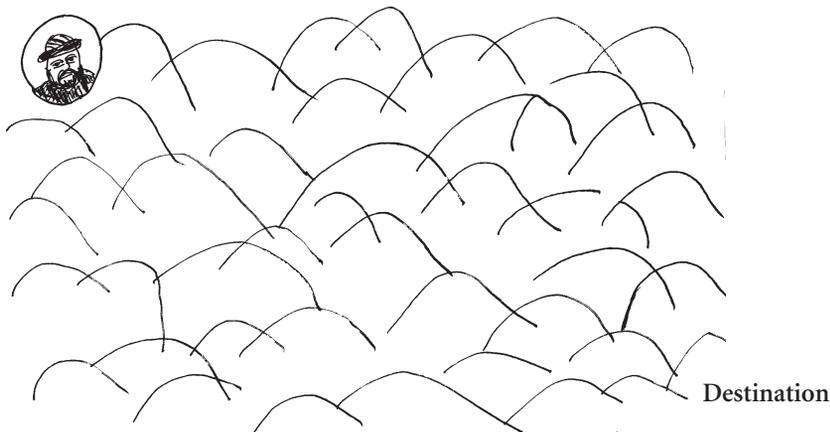
*We will develop selflessness and love for our brothers.
We will give importance to the Will of God in everything.*

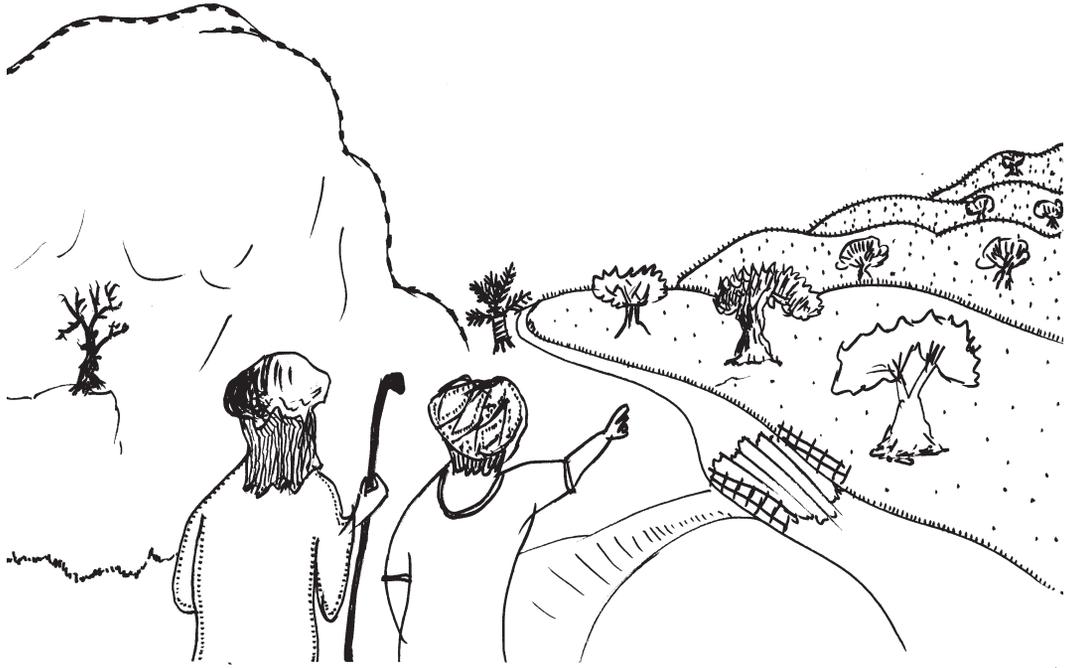
Activities

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

Find the way

Help Abraham come out of the mountain ranges.





Abraham and Lot

Word study

Abraham is called “Father of the Faithfull”

Do you know the different forms of the name ‘Abraham’.

Abraham-Avira, Avaran, Avarachan, Aby, Abel, Abhi, Abraham.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalms 103:1-3
Monday	Genesis 12:1-4	Psalms 103:4-6
Tuesday	Genesis 13:4-7	Psalms 103:7-110
Wednesday	Genesis 13:8-9	Psalms 103:11-13
Thursday	Genesis 13:10-11	Psalms 103:14-17
Friday	Genesis 13:14-16	Psalms 103:18-20
Saturday	Genesis 13:17-18	Psalms 103:21-22
Sunday	Hebrews 112 : 6-10	*

Lesson 3

Fire in the bush

(Exodus 3: 1-22)

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

Verse to be memorized: “Through God we will do valiantly.” (Psalm 60:12)

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

Introduction

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

Reading passage

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

Pause and reflect...

1. In which country did the people of Israel become slaves?
.....
2. Who did God chose to deliver them?
.....
3. Read from the Holy Bible, the passage dealing with Moses' meeting Yahoweh.

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

There is nothing impossible to God. See how Moses the stammering Shepherd, was made the great leader of his people for all times.

Those who accept God's assignment shall recieve lots of God's help. They can do great things. We should give up our old habits and become renewed.

Hymn

- (1) The thorn of bush seenby
Moses in Sinai
Is your true picture...
O blessed Virgin...
- (2) As Seen Unburn'd in the midst
of that bush of thorns
The Bright One dwelt in womb
of Mary and took His form.

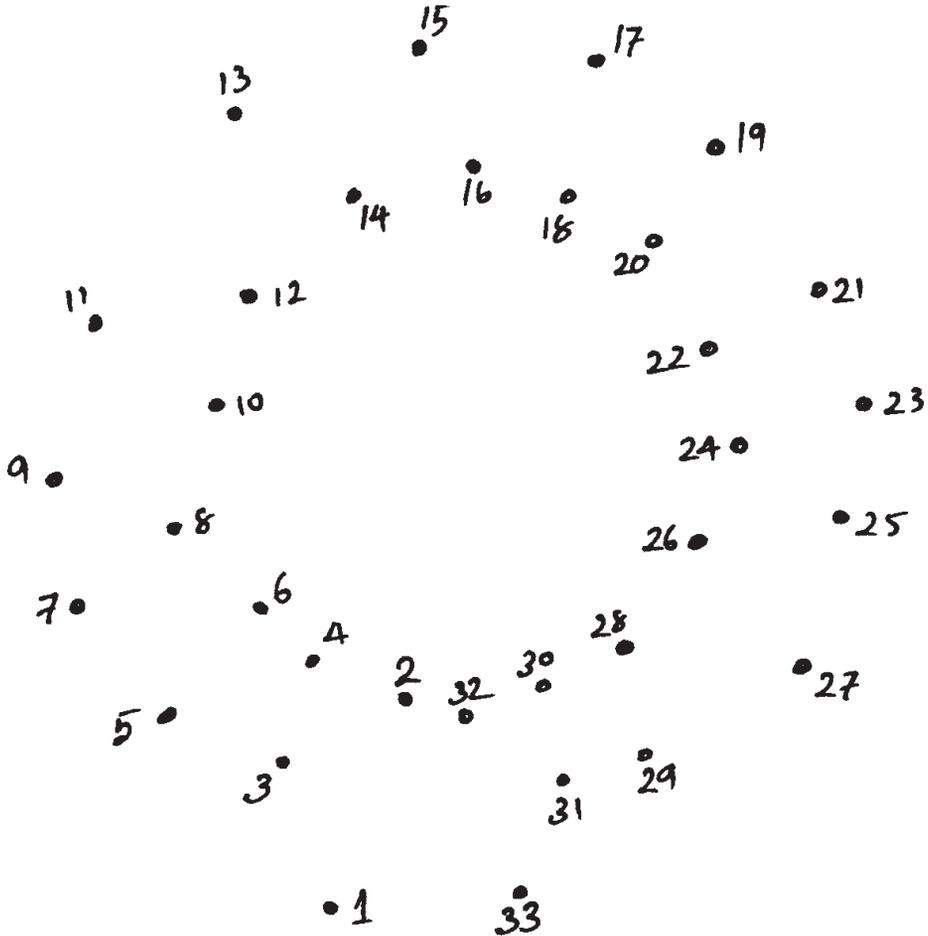


Moses and the bush on fire

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

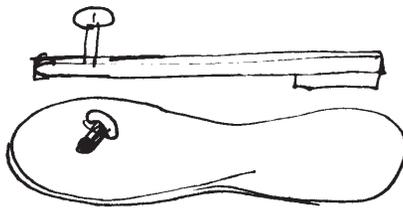
Activities

1. Join the dots and find out the bush on flames of fire.



Footwear

2. Memorize a biblical verse connected with shoes (St. John 1:27)
3. Recite the children's song and the hymn given below.



Children's Song (1)

'Let no sandals
Make unclean
Our consecrated
Church anytime.'

Hymn (2)

Moses standing in the forest
Tending his flock;
Saw a flame of fire in bush
That didn't burn it at all!

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 1:8-14
Monday	Psalm 37:29-34	Exodus 2:1-10
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 5:12-15	Exodus 4:1-5
Wednesday	St.John 1:29-34	Exodus 4:6-17
Thursday	St.John 1:35-42	St.Matthew 4:18-22
Friday	Psalm 130	Isaiah 6:1-8
Saturday	Psalm 103:11-18	St.John 1:43-48
Sunday	Psalm 16:1-17	*

Lesson 4

The strength of prayer and fasting

(Esther 3, 4)

Message: Prayer accompanied by fasting has great strength.

Verse to be memorized: “However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (St. Matthew 17: 21)

Learning Aids: Pictures of palaces, King, Queen and Jewish holy vestments.

Introduction

Several people face difficulties and crises in life. In times of danger people with a pure heart rely on God. They would do things with prayer and fasting. So God will help them in difficulties and deliver them. There are many such incidents in history. Today’s lesson deals with an incident that happened when a Jewish girl had become a queen.

Reading passage

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

Pause and Reflect

1. Who were the Jew among the slaves of Babylon?

.....

2. Name the cousin of Mordecai.

.....

3. How did Esther become queen of the land?

.....

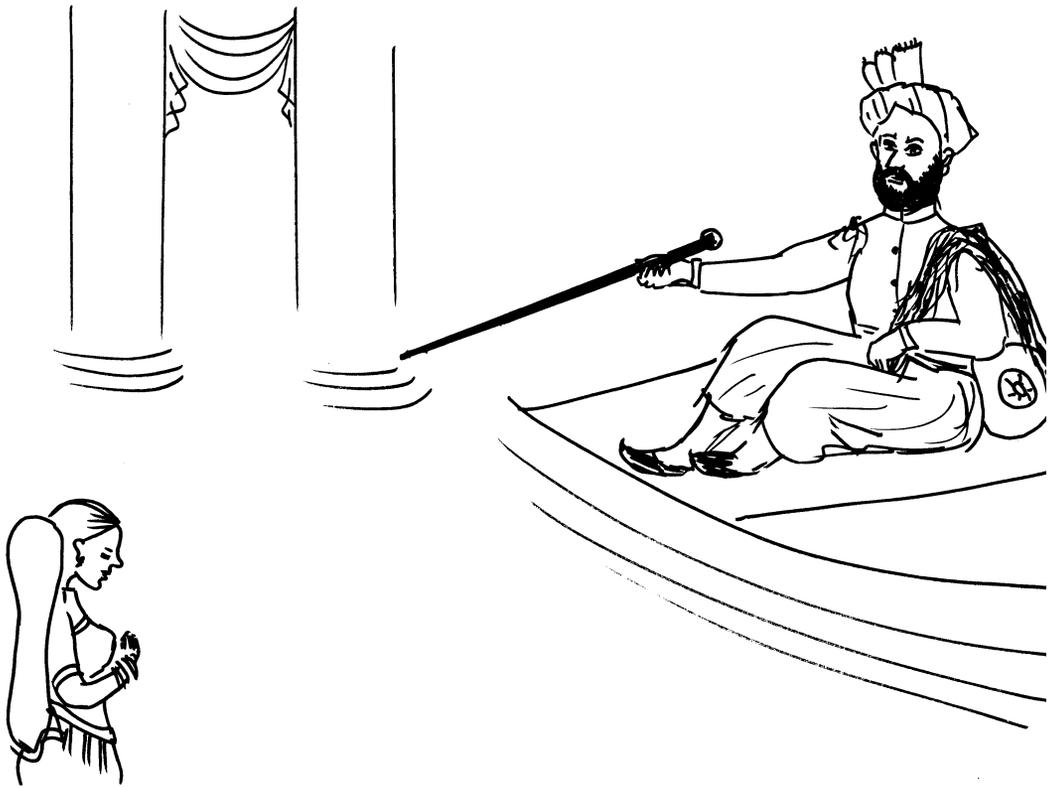
.....

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

Mordecai became aware of the great danger the Jews were in. He approached Queen Esther and prayed to save her tribe from doom. He reminded Esther. "If you keep quiet now, the hope and salvation of Jews will come from other quarters... It is for that you have come to the royal throne."

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

Dear children, haven't you understood that prayer, fasting and pleadings can wipe out the wicked who use evil and cruel deeds.



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

Hymn

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

Moses and Eliah
Took to fast for forty days
Jesus also had his fast
And defeated the evil one.

Our Resolution

We will overcome adversities through prayer and fasting

Activities

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

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Esther 5:1-5
Monday	Esther 5:6-11	Esther 5:12-14
Tuesday	Esther 6:1-7	Esther 6:8-14
Wednesday	Esther 7:1-4	Esther 7:5-10
Thursday	Esther 8:1-6	Esther 8:13-15
Friday	Psalms 89:17-27	Proverbs 10:7-14
Saturday	Psalms 138:1-8	Hebrews 2:1-4
Sunday	2 Corinthians 9:6-9	*

Lesson 5

Samson: The strength of Vow

(Judges chapters 13, 14, 15)

Message: We should maintain God's strength through Baptism by obeying His commandments.

Verse to be memorized: "Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways." (Psalms 128:1)

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

Introduction

Dear children, haven't you observed the vestments of metropolitans of our church? The great ascetic fathers of other churches also have similar peculiarities.

Do you know that all great ascetics follow a disciplined way of life? Such distinctions make them different from others. Have you heard of people who have acquired extraordinary gifts from God due to their special vows in life? St. Gregorios of Parumala was such a great soul.

How great would be the punishment if people who have taken their ascetic vows broke their vows and life style!

Have you heard of Samson and his fate described in the Holy Bible? Today's we are going to read his story.

Reading passage

Israelites were frequently attacked by Philistines. Samson was chosen by God from his mother's womb to save His people of Israel from the Philistines. God's angel had told Samson's parents never to cut their son's hair. For, he should be a 'Nazirite.'

- * **Nazirite**—A person set apart; one who is chosen by the Lord from the mother’s womb. (Eg. St. John the Baptist, Prophet Samuel, Samson). They should never drink wine or beer, never cut their hair and should live a dedicated life. There will be big danger if these vows are broken.

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

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

Pause and Reflect

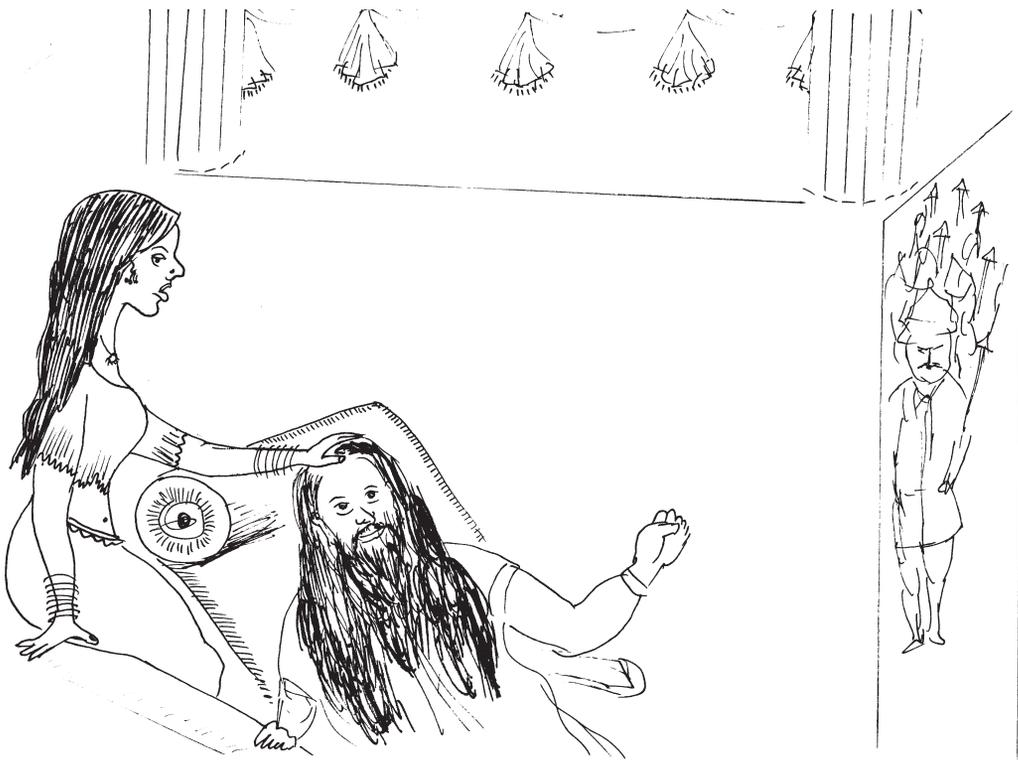
1. What was Samson?
.....
2. What are the special characteristics of Samson?
.....
3. Who is a “Nazirite”?
.....
.....
4. Narrate the incidents that reveal Samson’s strength.
.....
.....

Later the young Samson violated many of his vows. He married a Philistine girl but the relationship didnot last long. Later he fell in love with another Philistine woman, named Delilah and started living with her. Philistines secretly asked Delilah to find out the secret of Samson’s strength. At first Delila couldnot achieve any

success. Samson loved Delilah dearly. So she feigned love and pestered him again and again to get at the secret of his strength. At last he told her about the strength of his long grown hair.

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

Samson regretted his faults. He wailed and prayed to God. Slowly his hair started growing. Though blind, Yahweh's strength flowed through him once again. There



Samson and Delilah

was a festival at the temple of the Philistines. They brought the blind Samson to the temple for fun and bound him on a pillar. Samson shook the huge pillars on which he was bound and pulled them down. The pillars gave in and thousands of Philistines died and the Samson too met with his end. Thus he completed his mission to save the Israelites from Philistines.

Do you like the story?... Is it not a wonderful story!

This lesson teaches us that if those who receive the gifts of God, violate them they will come to harm.

Our Decision

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



Hymn

A wrestler named Samson
Hero of heroes
Had the vow of 'Nazir'
Blessed of Lord was he

Saw a girl named Delilah
Desirous of too much her
Revealed the truth of his own life
And consequently lost his life.

Activities

- * Collect pictures of ascetics and paste them in the Book of collections.
- * Make a note of your daily routine.
- * Write 5 Biblical verses which mention 'stength.'

- * What is a Nazirite?
What are the vows to be observed by a Nazirite?
What kind of life style should he follow?

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Judges 14:5-10
Monday	Judges 14:11-14	Psalm 119:9-16
Tuesday	Proverbs 6:6-11	St.Luke 2:22-27
Wednesday	St.Luke 2:28-33	St.Luke 2:34-40
Thursday	Ephesus 6:10-19	Psalm 15:1-5
Friday	Genesis 32:22-26	Genesis 32:27-32
Saturday	Job 42:10-17	Acts 9:1-9
Sunday	St.Matthew 3:1-12	*

Lesson 6

St. John the Baptist—The Burning Lamp

(St. John 5:35, St. Luke 7:28, St. Luke 1; 3:7-14, 3: 21-22,
St. Matthew 3:1, 2, 13-17, 14:1-12)

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

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

Learning Aids: The picture of a desert.

Introduction

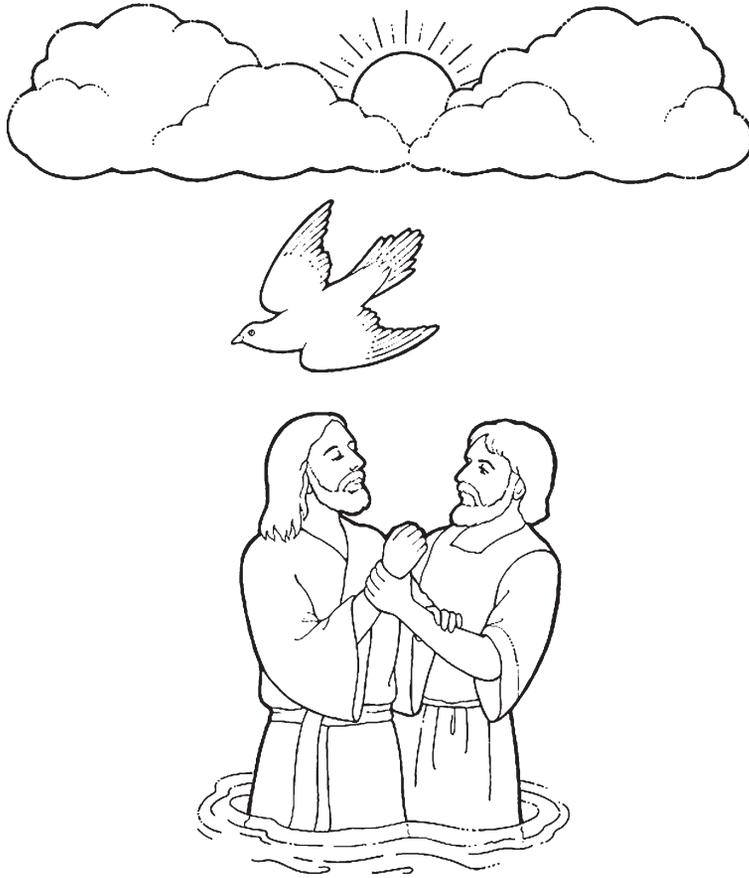
We have seen how the public worship of the Holy Eucharist begins. The priest encircles the altar and he is led by a deacon carrying a lighted candle. Do you know who the priest and the deacon stand for? The priest represents Christ, the deacon, St. John the Baptist who was the forerunner of Jesus Christ.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

Reading passage

Priest Zacharia and his wife Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless (St. Luke 1:)... They were old, but they had no children. Once Priest Zacharia was burning incense in the temple of the Lord. Then Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, appeared to him on the right side of the altar of incense. Zacharia was afraid. The angel said, “Do not be afraid Zacharia, for your prayer is heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. You shall call him John.” The angel’s words came true. Elizabeth, conceived and gave birth to a son in her old age. He was named John. He lived alone in the desert keeping his vows. There he got God’s commandment. Accordingly he called people to repent for their sins and get a baptism of repentance. Those who repented were baptized in the Jordan river. It was during this time that John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ.

Pause and Reflect

1. Who were the parents of John the Baptist?
.....
2. What were the good qualities of Zachariah and Elizabeth described in St. Luke 1:6?
.....
.....
3. What did Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, announce to priest Zacharia?
.....
.....



Jesus Christ gets baptized by John the Baptist

John the Baptist taught the people that Jesus Christ was mightier than him and was truly the Son of the Lord.

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

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

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

Let’s reflect

1. Name the parents of John the Baptist?
.....
2. Did John the Baptist baptize people?
.....
3. Name the angel of the Lord who announced about John the Baptist’s birth.
.....
4. What did John the Baptist baptize people for?
.....
5. Who said, “Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.”
.....

Activities

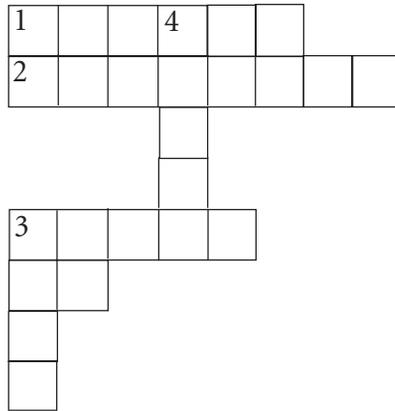
Arrange in the correct sequence of events.

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

Crossword Puzzle

Right

1. The river where John baptized.
(6 letters)
2. Another name of Shadrach
(8 letters) (Daniel 1:7)
3. He too was baptized by John the
Baptist (5 letters)



Down

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

Hymn

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

Let us pray

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

Tip to the teacher

Make the children read St. Luke chapter 1 aloud and explain the birth and other events of John the Baptist to students

Our Decision

We shall try constantly to show Christ to others.

Listen and comprehend

* Bath

Bathing means washing ourselves with water

We should take a shower daily. (This is one of the laws of personal hygiene)



* Baptism of repentance

This was the baptism given by John the Baptist.

St. Luke 3:3, Acts 19:4. It is a call to turn away from sins.



* Baptism in Holy Spirit

Here the baptism is in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

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



Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Luke 1:5-16
Monday	Psalms 89:1-10	St.Luke 1:67-80
Tuesday	Proverbs 15:1-10	St.Matthew 3:13-17
Wednesday	Psalms 119:1-8	St.John 13:3-11
Thursday	1 Samuel 23:14-18	Acts 16:25-31
Friday	St.Luke 8:19 -21	2 Corinthians 3:1-7
Saturday	Nehemiah 2:1-6	Isaiah 38:1-8
Sunday	Psalms 63	*

Lesson 7

Child Jesus at the Temple

(St. Luke 2:41-52)

Message: We should go regularly to the church.

Verse to be memorized: “Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You.” (Psalms. 84:4)

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

Introduction

Those who attend church services regularly please raise your hands. Well done children. Who do you go to the church with? Little children often go along with their parents. Some go by car. They return from the church after the service and Sunday School. We should participate in the worship regularly. Jesus Christ was also in the habit visiting the temple of Jerusalem. Today we are going to learn an incident that happened when young Jesus went for the Festival of Passover, at age 12.

Reading passage

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

Young Jesus and His parents were living in Nazareth. They would go to the far away temple of Jerusalem every year for the Passover festival. What fun, isn't it? Relatives, and neighbours would join together in the trip. They would go forward as a large group. Don't we usually see big crowds in church festivals? Yes.

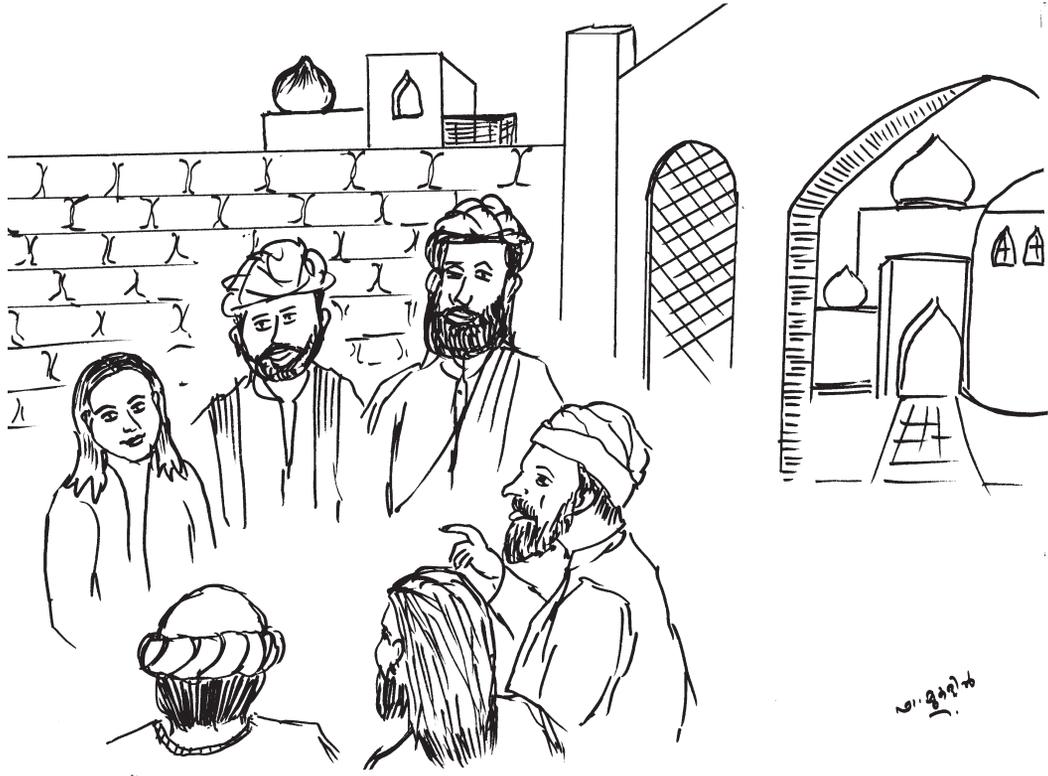
When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. After the festival, the parents of Jesus started their journey back home with their relatives

and neighbours. Joseph and Mary thought that Jesus too was travelling with the group. However even after a day's journey they could not see Jesus. So Joseph and Mother Mary were much worried. They searched for Jesus among their relatives. As they could not find him, they went back to the Temple of Jerusalem. They were surprised by what they saw there. Young Jesus was sitting in the midst of teachers, learning scriptures and asking questions. His speech and conduct surprised everyone. His mother said to Him, "Son why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." Then Jesus said to them "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Thus Jesus revealed that God the Father in Heaven was his real father. Then He returned with his parents to Nazareth and was subject to them.

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

Let's Reflect

1. What was the festival to which Jesus Christ went along with his family, when he was 12 years old?
.....
2. What did Joseph and Mary think about Jesus Christ while they were travelling back home?
.....
2. Where did they find the lost boy? What was he doing?
.....
.....
3. What was Jesus Christ's reply to his parents' questions?
.....
4. Do you think it a usual reply? If not, what is the meaning of what Jesus said?
.....



Jesus at the temple of Jerusalem for the festival

Findout

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

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

Word Study

The word 'Pesaha' is the Hebrew word for 'passover' (Pascha).

It means, "Passover."

'Pesaho' is the word in Syriac.

- * What did young Jesus go to the temple for?
- * Why do we go to the temple?
- * Can you recall the story belived the Jewish 'Passover' festival?

Song

Stoop, stoop, stoop and walk stooping old crone.
Though hunch backed, keeps Sabhath
Goes to church our old crone.
Old Crone... hunch backed old crone.

If lazy to go to church,
We can't see our Lord
We shall mise our peace of mind,
And the hunch of sin won't leave us.

Let us pray

Christ, Enable us to participate in worship faithfully and learn your teachings regularly.

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus. 12:1-12
Monday	St.Matthew 12:1-8	St.Matthew 6:9-15
Tuesday	St.Luke 19:1-10	St.Matthew 26:17p26
Wednesday	Acts 1:6-11	St.John 28:35-40
Thursday	Psalm 119:97-104	Ephesus 6:11-18
Friday	Psalm 119:105 -112	St.James 1:5-8
Saturday	1 King 8:27-30	1 King 3:7-15
Sunday	Genesis 7:1-5	*

Lesson 8

The Real Neighbour

(St. Luke 10:25-37)

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

Verse to be memorized: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (St. John 15:14)

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

Introduction

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

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

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

Reading passage

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

Pause and Reflect...

- * How might have the wayfarer travelled?
.....
- * What did the robbers attack him for?
.....

Let's continue

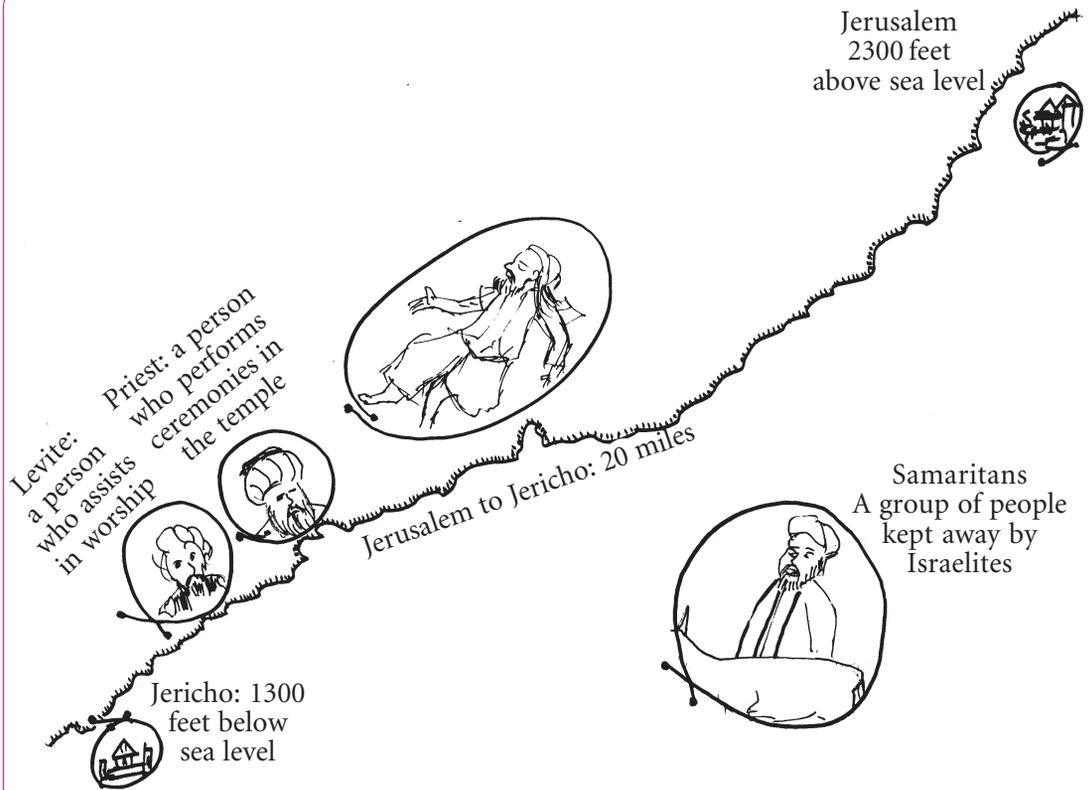
A certain priest and a Levite came down that road. However they neither cared for him nor came to help him. After sometime a foreigner, a Samaritan, came that way. He felt sympathy towards the wounded man. He jumped down from his donkey and went to the man. He comforted the injured man and bandaged his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

Pause and Reflect

- * Name the two persons who passed by neglecting the half dead traveller.
.....
- * Who nursed the traveller?
.....
- * What were used as balm for the wounds in olden days?
.....
- * After reading the story, say who is our 'neighbour.'
.....

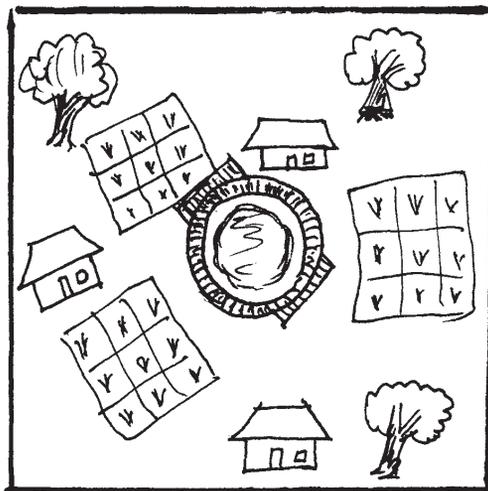
Then the Samaritan set the wounded man on his donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the inn keeper and said "Take care of him and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you." Then he went on his way.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

What could be the lawyer's reply? Do you think he was right?



Activities

- * Learn the song 'Once a Samaritan' which contains the parable of the real neighbour by heart.



- * Create good neighbours with three lines.
We can see houses, trees, and fields and a common well in the picture. Divide equally with three lines. The well is common. The lines can intersect.
- * Conduct the observance of a Neighbourhood Day called 'Good Samaritan Day.'
Visit homes in the neighbourhood and exchange compliments.
- * Prepare a neighbourhood chart containing names, housenames, jobs etc. of the families living around you.

Song

Thou art no stranger O Lord
In trials and pleasure alike
Let me... Let me, Lord,
Let me fall down at your feet.

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Luke 10:25-28
Monday	Ephesians 5:1-4	Galatians 5:13-15
Tuesday	Psalm 145:16-21	St.John 13:31-35
Wednesday	2 King. 6:1-7	1 Corinthians 16:13, 14
Thursday	Psalm 143:1-7	1 Kings 10:1-13
Friday	Psalm 143:8 -12	1 Kings 3:16-28
Saturday	1 John 3:13-18	1 John 4:7-12
Sunday	Psalm 97:9-12	*

Lesson 9

Nature Obeys its Creator

(St. Luke 8:22-25)

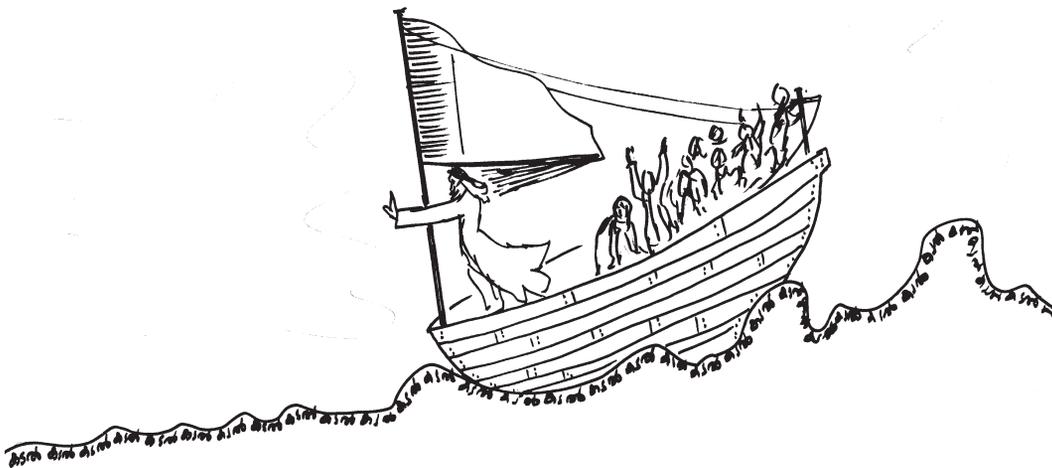
Message: Jesus is truly the Son of God and is the Master of all creation.

Verse to be memorized: “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.” (Hebrews 3:4)

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

Introduction

You might have heard about the killer waves called ‘Tsunami.’ Thousands of people died in the Tsunami disaster of 2004. The event is still alive in our memory. Man is often helpless before such natural disasters. But God, the creator of everything is also the master of such disasters. God alone is capable of controlling the forces of nature.



The boat in the stormy sea

One such incident happened when Jesus was sailing with his disciples. Let us see what Jesus did then.

Reading passage

Here is a small play for you.

Scene 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scene 2

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

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

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

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

(Jesus wakes up hearing the cries).

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

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

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

The disciples look at each other, amazed.

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

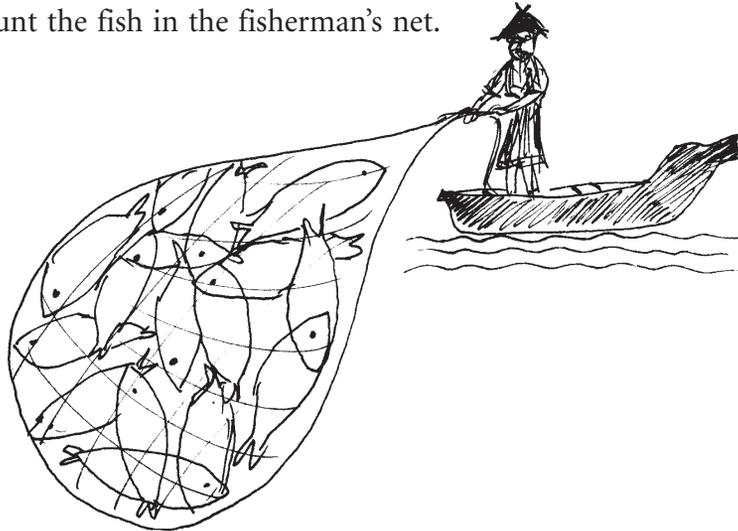
Peter: He is the real Messiah. Son of God. Let us bow to him.

(All fall on their knees and worship Jesus).

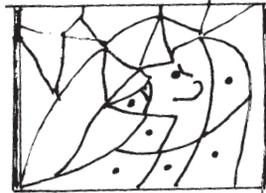
Activities

Find out and underline the odd one out.

1. Waves, Sea, coconut palm, boat, fish.
2. Tsunami, storm, earthquake, forest, flood.
3. Peter, Mary Magdalene, John, Andrew, Thomas.
4. Count the fish in the fisherman's net.



5. Find out the sleeping Christ. Colour the dotted columns.



Complete the story

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

Song

O Zion sailor to the yonder shore
Let no waves—frighten you—in the sea
He who can still; sea and the wind
Is your companion in the boat

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Luke 8:43-48
Monday	St.Luke 9:1-9	St.Luke 9:37-43
Tuesday	St.Luke 5:1-11	St.Luke 5:27-32
Wednesday	St.Matthew 4:23-25	St.Matthew 10:16-23
Thursday	Exodus 14:15-25	Acts 28:1-6
Friday	Exodus 14:26-31	St.Matthew 14:22-33
Saturday	Psalms 65	Acts 3:1-16
Sunday	Psalms 67	*

Lesson 10

The Call and Election of Apostles

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

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

Verse to be memorized: "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (St. Mark 8:34)

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

Introduction

Is there anyone who has no friends? Who do you make friends with? Some of our friends are very dear to us. How do real friends behave?

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

Reading passage

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

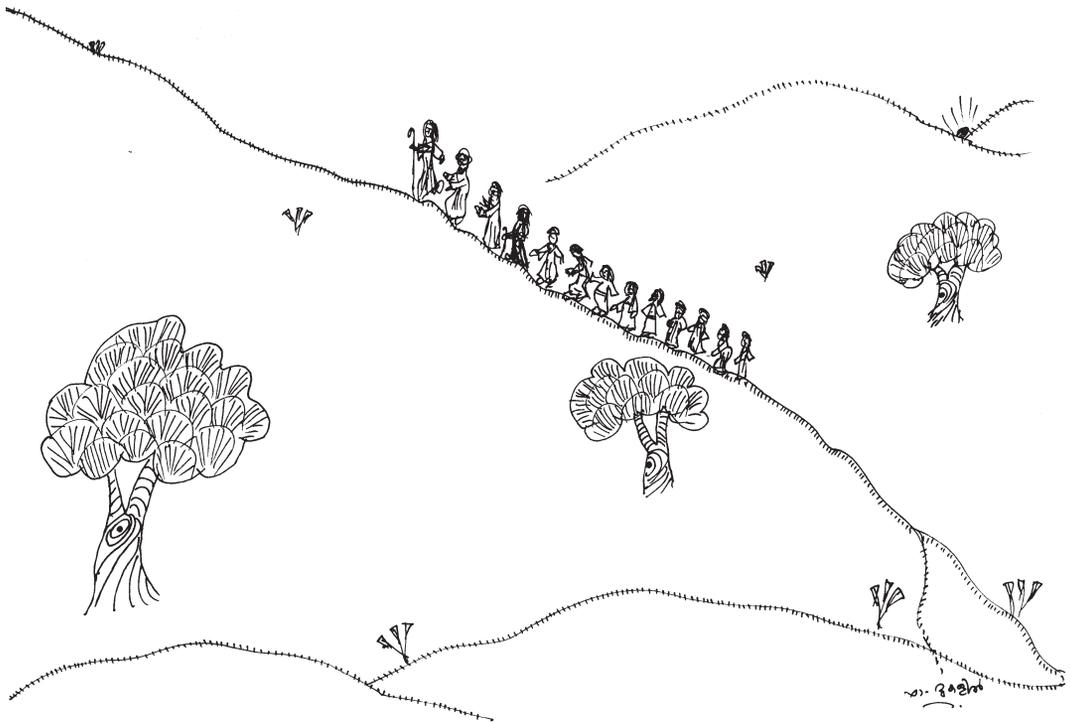
Among them Peter and Andrew were brothers and were fishermen. Similarly James and John were also brothers. They were from Bethsaida in Galilee, since they were quite rash in the early days. Jesus Christ called them Boanerges—which means 'sons of thunder'—Matthew was a tax collector in Capernaum. Thomas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

The fishermen were strong and patient people. Majority of the twelve disciples were fishermen. Christ chose his disciples from various sections of the walks of the

society and transformed them. All of them except Judas Iscariot proclaimed Christ's gospels across the world. Let us seek shelter in their intercession.

The twelve disciples of Jesus Christ

Blood brothers Peter and Andrew
James and John who was youngest
Philipose, Matthew, Bartholomew
Our apostle St. Thomas
Simon who was called Zealot
James the son of Alphaeus
Judas known as Thaddaeus
Traitor Judas Iscariot
Twelve in number Apostles.



The twelve disciples of Jesus

Let's Reflect...

1. Have you noticed the importance of number 12?

- 1. The number of Old Testament Patriarchs.
- 2. The number of bells in the censor.

Can you add more to the list?

2. Match the following

A

B

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Didimos | 1. Thomas |
| 2. Jesus | 2. Andrew |
| 3. James and John | 3. Traitor |
| 4. Peter | 4. Twin |
| 5. Judas Iscariot | 5. Nazareth |
| 6. The Guardian Father of India | 6. Idimakkal |

3. Write the malayalam forms of the names of Christ's disciples

Lead: Peter	-	Pathrose
Andrew	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-
.....	-

4. Answer the following

- 1. What did Jesus tell them when he called his disciples?
.....
- 2. Name the sons of Zebedee
.....

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

.....

4. Name the apostle of India

.....

5. The disciple who betrayed Christ.

.....

Hymn

Oh Apostles pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that,
Schisms among, children of the church be removed.
Evil forces to roam around holy church
To banish from it the real faith that You had preached
Let Your words in smelters of truthhood
Shine like gold-purified always
Priests shall bless Him who uplifts his holy church.

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Matthew 10:5-15
Monday	Psalm 119:65-72	St.Matthew 10:16-23
Tuesday	St.John 20:24-29	St.Matthew 10:24-33
Wednesday	St.Matthew 10:40-42	St.Luke 6 :20-26
Thursday	St.Luke 9:28-36	St.John 13:21-30
Friday	St.Mark 14:43-50	Psalm 23
Saturday	St.Luke 9:51-56	Acts 17:1-9
Sunday	Psalm 122	*

Unit 2

Prayer



Lesson 11

Let's pray remembering God's Love

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

Verse to be memorized: "By this we know love because, He laid down His life for us." (1 John 3:16)

Introduction

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

Reading passage

The prayer begins by calling Jesus Christ as 'Moran' or 'Our Lord.' Hence we can begin this prayer also as "Our Lord Jesus Christ..." The teacher shall recite each sentence of this prayer. You can repeat each sentence. Then we can learn the meaning of each sentence of the prayer.

O Jesus Christ, our Lord, close not the door of Thy mercy upon our faces."

Imagine that someone comes to a house asking for help. If he is a drunkard or a person of bad conduct what might the members of the house do? Right. They might shut the door against him. Here we pray that God should not shut the door of mercy to us who stand before him for help.

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

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

Then we state about God's love. God the son was born as man on this earth and was crucified because of His Love for us and because he wanted to redeem us from sins. Let us recite this prayer together.

*O Lord, Thy love for us didn't make Thee come down to us
from Thy place. That by Thy death, our death be abolished:
Have mercy upon us. Amen.*

Tradition says that this was the prayer said by Barabas who escaped from death sentence when Christ was sentenced for Crucifixion.

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

This prayer is recited in our Vespers (Evening prayer), Nooturn (Night prayer) and in our Matins (Morning prayer). Let us say this prayer fully once again. The teacher would recite and you shall repeat.

(All students stand up, cross themselves and recite the prayer faithfully)

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

Think and act

1. Learn this prayer by heart.
2. Find out how many times the word 'mercy' is used in this prayer.
3. Write two phrases we use in the sense of "Lord have mercy on us."
4. Comprehend the meaning of this prayer and recite it regularly along with your friends.
5. **Fill in the blanks**
 1. The meaning of word 'Moran' is.....
 2. O Lord, Thyfor us didn't make
6. **Tick (✓) the correct answer(s)**
 1. What do we request Christ through this prayer?

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

Vesper or Evening prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nocturn or Night prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matins or Morning prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>
In other suitable occasions	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hymn

My Lord Your mercy brought You
In the midst of these sinners
Have mercy upon the Church
That clings to the wings of Your Cross.
(Vespers of Kyemtha or Resurrection prayers)

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalms 121:1-4
Monday	Psalms 63:1-3	Psalms 121:5-8
Tuesday	Psalms 63:4-6	Psalms 91:1-4
Wednesday	Psalms 63:7-8	Psalms 91:5-8
Thursday	Psalms 84:1-4	Psalms 91:9-10
Friday	Psalms 84:5-8	Psalms 91:11-13
Saturday	Psalms 84:9-12	Psalms 91:14-16
Sunday		*

Lesson 12

Let's Pray to God, the merciful

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

Verse to be memorized: "Seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you."
(St.Luke 11:9)

Introduction

Do you know how many times an Orthodox believer should pray daily? Seven, right? We say the prayers for three canonical Hours in the evening prayer. They are None (Ninth Hour), Vespers (Evening Prayer) and Compline (Late Evening Prayer). Compline means "guard." When we sleep at night we require the protection by God. Compline is the prayer for that. The prayer 'O merciful God...' is the introductory prayer of the Compline. Let us learn this prayer today.

Reading passage

This prayer begins thus. 'O merciful God...' The word *merciful* reflects our understanding of the goodness of God. He is Love. He forgives sinners and saves them. He gives what we ask for if it is good for us. Let us recite this part of the prayer together. When the teacher recites aloud you shall repeat it.

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

The Holy Bible teaches us that God is merciful. "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy." (Psalm 145:8). "For I knew you were a gracious God, merciful, slow to get angry, and full of kindness." (Jonah 4:2). We come across many people who plead "Lord have mercy" in the Holy Bible. (St. Luke 18:13, St. Matt. 20:47). 'Pleading' means asking in a spirit of humility. Saying that "the voice of our prayer knocks at the door of God' would imply that God is listening to our prayer. How do beggars come to our homes asking for alms? They

often cry out ‘Mother, please help; give something...’ We hear this call, open the door and give alms. Similarly God should hear our petition, open the door of His mercy and help us. God will not prevent the petition of needs of his devotees if they plead with him. He would definitely grant them their prayers.

Now let us recite the next part. Let us repeat this part.

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

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

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

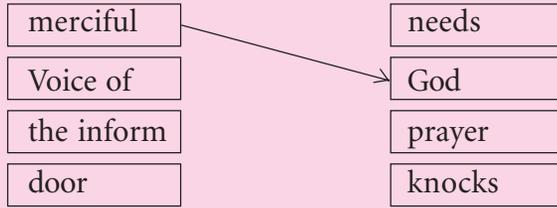
This is a prayer to the merciful God to hear the voice of our petitions and grant us our needs.

Think and act

1. Learn the prayer ‘O merciful God...’ by heart.
2. Say this prayer together.
3. A song which includes the lines of this prayer is familiar to you. Find out this song. Compare the lines of this song with those of this prayer.
(Hint: This song is sung when the Curtains in Holy or Holies are drawn during the Holy Eucharist)
4. **Fill in the blanks**
 1. O merciful God, the voice of ourknocks at Thy.....
 2. Prevent not from Thy devotees the

5. Match the connected words by drawing a line

(Eg. merciful God)



Let us sing

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

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

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

We will submit ourselves to God and ask for mercy.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalm 121:1-4
Monday	Psalm 63:1-3	Psalm 121:5-8
Tuesday	Psalm 63:4-6	Psalm 91:1-4
Wednesday	Psalm 63:7-8	Psalm 91:5-8
Thursday	Psalm 84:1-4	Psalm 91:9-10
Friday	Psalm 84:5-8	Psalm 91:11-13
Saturday	Psalm 84:9-12	Psalm 91:14-16
Sunday		*

Lesson 13

Let us pray to the Holy Trinity

Message: Let us learn the prayer, 'O Holy Father...' It is a prayer to the Holy Trinity.

Verse to be memorized: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16)

Introduction

Can you recite the first line of the 'Kauma' prayer? This is the praise of the Holy Trinity. Similarly the prayer 'O Holy Father...' is a prayer to the Holy Trinity. All of us recite this prayer every day. When do we say this prayer? In the morning or in the evening? Have you heard this prayer recited on other occasions. This is a beautiful prayer often used in public worship. This prayer is addressed to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, namely, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hence this prayer is known as prayer to the Holy Trinity. We are going learning this prayer today.

Reading passage

The first part of this prayer is a request to God, the Father. Let us repeat this sentence together.

"O holy Father, guard us by Thy sacred Name."

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

The next sentence is a prayer to God, the Son. Let us recite it together.

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

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

The third sentence is a prayer to the Holy Spirit. Let us recite it.

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

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

The next sentence is a general petition.

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

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

This prayer is also a proclamation of the belief in the Holy rinity. This prayer is govern at the end of the Book of Family Worship titled ‘Book of Common Prayer.’ Try to find it out.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the three persons of the Triune God. The prayer to the three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit is known as Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

Think and Act

1. When you attend the Holy Eucharist, keenly listen how the priest ends each prayer.
2. Learn the Praise of Holy Trinity given at the beginning of ‘Kauma’ prayer by heart.
3. Make the sign of the Cross whenever you hear the names of Holy Trinity said during prayers.
4. When The priest says the Syriac verse “Shubbaholabo...” which means ‘Praise to Father, Son and Holy Spirit’ we should make the sign of the Cross.
5. **Answer the following question**
Who are the three persons in the Holy Trinity?
6. **Fill in the blanks**
 - a) O holy Father, guard us by Thy sacred.....
 - b) O Son of God, our saviour, protect us with Thy victorious.....
 - c) O Holy Spirit, make us worthyof Thy holy.....

Hymn

Lord of angels of Heaven
Glorified by them always
We bow our head and praise you Lord.
Lord, accept our humble prayers
Three in One and One in three
Triune God is Holy One.
Father, Son and Holy Ghost
One true Lord praise unto Thee.

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

We would praise the Holy Trinity always.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalm 25:1-3
Monday	Psalm 63:1-2	Psalm 25:4-7
Tuesday	Psalm 63:3-4	Psalm 25:8-10
Wednesday	Psalm 63:5-6	Psalm 25:11-14
Thursday	Psalm 63:7-8	Psalm 25:15-16
Friday	Psalm 63:9-11	Psalm 25:17-19
Saturday	Psalm 123:1-4	Psalm 25:20-22
Sunday		*

Unit 3

Hymns in Worship

Lesson 14

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

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

Verse to be memorized: “Whatever He says to you, do it.” (St. John 2:5)

Introduction

You might remember the song ‘Stopnot thy Intercession’ you learned in class 1. (Let us sing it). The hymn ‘Thou whose praise the church doth sing’ is another song for the intercession of Mother Mary.

The hymn ‘By Thy Cross, O Jesus Lord’ is a prayer for saving us due to the intercession of Mother Mary.

Reading passage

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

Let us sing ‘Thou whose praise the Church doth sing

*Intercession for us bring,
Unto Him, Thine only Son,
That He May not mercy shun.*

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

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

Now let us sing the Hymn

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

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

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

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

Let us think and do

1. Sing together the songs we learned today.
2. Compare the songs 'O blessed Saints/Pray to Lord' which you learned in class II and 'By Thy Cross, O Jesus Lord.' Find out the difference between the last two lines of both the songs.
3. Sing these hymns with devotion when they are sung in the church.
4. Fill up the blanks
 - a) *Thou whose.....the church doth sing.
.....for ux bring
Unto Him, Thine only Sin,
That He may not.....shun.*

- b) *By Thy....., O Jesus Lord*
By Thy Mother's.....
Take from us and from our path
.....and

Let us sing

Look into the Book of liturgy and sing the hymns we learned today along with other intercessory hymns. This recital can be done as a class activity or in groups.

Let us pray

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

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

Others: Pray for us.

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

Others: Pray for us.

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

Others: Pray for us.

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Luke 1:26-33
Monday	Psalm 40:1-3	St.Luke 1:39-45
Tuesday	Psalm 40:4-5	St.Luke 2:15-20
Wednesday	Psalm 40:13-14	Psalm 71:1-3
Thursday	Psalm 40:15-17	Psalm 71:4-9
Friday	Psalm 71:10-12	Psalm 71:13-15
Saturday	Psalm 71:16-19	Psalm 71:20-22
Sunday	Psalm 71:23-24	*

Lesson 15

Let us Sing and Worship

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

Verse to be memorized: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
(St. Matthew 5:18)

Introduction

The teacher shall recite two hymns used in the Holy Eucharist. You should say when they are sung during the Holy Eucharist. The teacher sings the songs.

The students say that they are sung at the end of the Holy Eucharist. These songs are familiar to everyone. Today we are going to learn these hymns, along with their real meaning.

Reading passage

Today we learn two hymns sung just before the final benediction in the Holy Eucharist. These songs are called ‘Hoothomo.’ The word ‘Hoothomo’ means concluding prayer.

Liturgical worship in the Orthodox church ends with the ‘Hoothomo’ prayer. This can be in prose or verse. In the Holy Eucharist the practice often is that the priest will sing a hymn and the laity will join with another song. The songs sung in this section will vary according to the significance of the day and all of them are given in the Orthodox liturgy. However the songs given here are sung on ordinary days.

Let us sing the first song together:

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

This is another hymn used as the concluding prayer. It is prayer in which we seek refuge in the intercession of Mother Mary and the Saints.

This hymn means that “O Lord give us and our departed, Your Grace by virtue of the prayers made by Your Holy Mother and the Saints.”

This hymn was written by the church Father Mar Balai.

Note that we include our departed along with us in the prayer contained in both these hymns.

When we participate in the Holy Worship with fear and devotion, we earn heavenly blessings. When Mother Mary and the saints pray for us, we and our dead, earn blessings of the Lord.

Let us think and act

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

Holy Eucharist	gladdened
Departed	Appease
Angels	absolved

5. Fill up the blanks

By Thyplea
And of all the.....
Lord,our sins
And with us, Our dead

Let us sing

Practice the hymns we learned today and other intercessory hymns

Let us pray

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

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalm 112:1-4
Monday	Psalm 42:1-4	Psalm 112:5-10
Tuesday	Psalm 42:5-6	Psalm 113:1-4
Wednesday	Psalm 42:7-11	Psalm 113:5-9
Thursday	Psalm 116:1-3	Psalm 116:4-8
Friday	Psalm 116:9-12	Psalm 116:13-15
Saturday	Psalm 116:16-17	Psalm 116:18-19
Sunday	Psalm 117:1-2	*

Unit 4

My Church

Lesson 16

The Holy Altar ('Thronose')

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

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

Learning Aids: The picture of Holy of Holies.

Introduction

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

Reading passage

When we go to the church for worship, the sight of a beautifully decorated altar pleases us very much. Each object in the Holy of Holies helps us to be divinely

inspired. Its beauty cannot be described in words. Can we describe God's beauty? Never. However we can experience it. Similarly the beauty of the altar can only be experienced. The meaning and beauty of the altar can hardly be described.

Student: Teacher, tell us about the origin of the word 'altar'?

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

Student: Kindly explain its meaning.

Teacher: The Syriac word 'Thronos' means the throne. 'Thronos' is the throne of the Triune God.

Student: Then why is it called the altar?

Teacher: In the English language and Latin, the word 'altar' is used for Thronos. In the Orthodox tradition, the Holy Eucharist is submitted on the altar. Besides incense is a burned before the altar. The Holy altar is the wordly location where the invisible God reveals his presence to the Community of worshippers. The Holy Eucharist is celebrated only on the Holy altar. It is called altar because the Holy Sacrifice is mode on it.



'Tabalaitha' (Tablet) or altar stone



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



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



The Holy Altar

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

Student: Does it mean 'throne' only?

Teacher: No. The Holy altar represents the throne of God, Golgotha, Christ's Cross and is the sign of Christ himself. In the Orthodox tradition the Holy altar is also seen as Christ's tomb.

Student: Was the Holy altar in the olden days constructed in the same way as we see it today?

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

Student: What all can be placed on the altar as per the Orthodox tradition?

Teacher: A cross, candles, altar stone, Chalice and Paten and the liturgical Book can be placed on the altar.

Student: Why do we construct three altars in our churches?

Teacher: Only one Holy Eucharist can be offered on one altar a day. The three altars are constructed to offer more than one Holy Eucharist a day or to submit the elaborate Holy Eucharist said by three priests. This practice exists only in the Malankara Church.

Student: Describe the decorated dropings used to beautify the Holy altar.

Teacher: The Holy altar is decorated mainly using two types of coverings. They are 'Chithola' or decorated draping at the front of the altar and 'Virikkoottu' or the top altar cover. 'Chithola' covers the altar at the front. This cover is knit using three pieces of cloth. 'Virikkoottu' or the top altar cover is spread at the middle of the altar. White, green and red coloured pieces of cloth are stitched on both these dropings.

Student: Is there anything special about these colours?

Teacher: The red colour represents the universe, green colour earth and the white colour the Holy Church. This suggests that the Holy Eucharist is an offering made jointly by all animate and inanimate things of this universe.

Student: We read in the Liturgy Book of Holy Eucharist that the priest mounts on the 'darga' or step. What is that?

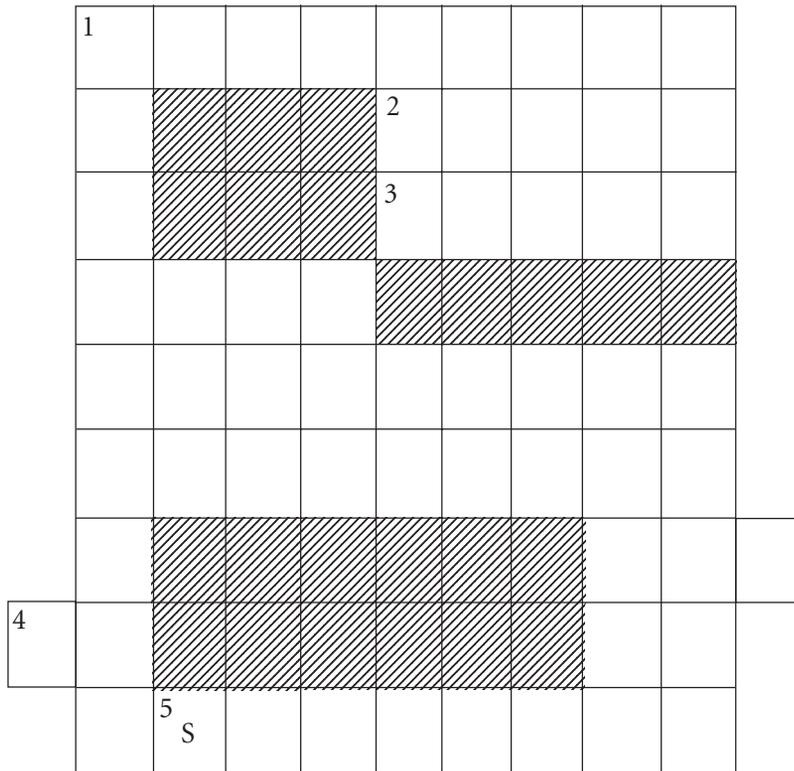
Teacher: The step at the foot of the altar is known as 'darga' or step. The priest mounts on this step when the second part of the Holy Eucharist begins. (Darga is a Syriac word meaning 'step'.)

Let us think

1. What is the meaning of the word altar?
.....
.....
2. Why does the Orthodox Church give a most important position to the altar?
.....
.....
.....
3. What are the different meanings of the "Holy altar"?
.....
.....
.....
4. Describe the significance of altar dropings.
.....
.....
.....
5. What are the colours used in the dropings? What do they stand for?
.....
.....
.....

Exercise

Cross word puzzle



Right

1. Consecrated wooden plank on which the Holy Eucharist is placed.
2. The meaning of altar.
3. Vessel containing the Holy wine.
4. Vessel containing the Holy Bread.
5. Most Holy place in the church.

Down

4. The table of heavenly Feast.

Let us pray

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

Hymn

Those who departed-steadfast in their faith
Should be remembered - in prayers we say
Let their names shall be-remembered on the
Altar, so that they, earn eternal rest
Haleluyah-Haleluyah
O Lord who resurrects - Our praise unto You

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Numbers 9:15-23
Monday	Exodus 33:7-11	Isaiah 55:1-3
Tuesday	Exodus 40:17-20	Isaiah 55:4-8
Wednesday	Exodus 40:21-25	Isaiah 55:9-11
Thursday	Exodus 40:26-29	Isaiah 55:12-13
Friday	Exodus 40:30-33	2 Chronicles 7:1-5
Saturday	Exodus 40:34-38	2 Chronicles 7:6-10
Sunday	Revelation 3:14-22	*

Lesson 17

Articles used in the Church

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

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

Learning Aids: 1. Picture of crucified Christ 2. Pictureof burning candle. 3. The Holy Bible.

Introduction

You know to make the sign of the Cross, right? Let us all make the sign of cross. Who do we remember when we make the sign of the cross? We remember Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. What a blessing it is to make the sign of the cross! The Cross is an important object used in our Worship. Similar in the case of the candle. Besides we use several other objects in our worship.

As Orthodox believers we should understand the significance of the objects used at worship in the Church. This is essential to understand the importance and meaning of worship and helps us to participate in it actively.

Today let us learn in detail about the Cross and the candle.

Reading passage

1. The Cross

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

The Cross was not used in the worship of the Church till 4th century A.D. With the conversion of Emperor Constantine, the persecution of Christianity came to an end and christianity became the official religion. In A.D. 345 Queen Helan recovered Christ's cross from Jerusalem. Then onwards the importance of the cross increased. As Christians got freedom of worship, churches were established. Church services developed and the tradition of using the cross in worship came become common.

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

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

The Old Testament leads

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

2. Candle

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

The teacher hold a lighted candle before the students and gives a brief description about the candle.

During the Old Testament period, oil lamps were used in the Temple of Jerusalem. Such oil lamps are used in Malankara Church even today. However in course of time candles became popular as they were convenient enough to be placed on the altar. There are no records of using candles on the altar before eleven the century A.D. We are now talking about 'light'. All ancient religions considered light as a symbol of God. Jesus Christ said that he was "the light of the world" (St. John 8:12). He reminds that those who follow him will not walk in darkness. When Jesus Christ was born, "the people who sat in darkness saw a great light." (St. Matthew 4:16). Light expels darkness and illuminates everything. Since Christ has described himself as light, the Church which is the house of light should be lighted up. Lamps were part of worship since ancient times. (Exodus 40:4). In the Holy Eucharist there should be at least two candles on either side of Cross on the altar. It tells of the movement from the darkness of sin to light. It gives the message that "The Lord is my light and my salvation." (Psalm 27:1). We see light through Jesus Christ who is light. This is the theme of the song we sing just before the beginning of the public worship of the Holy Eucharist. It is at this time that the deacon lights the candles on the altar.—first the one on the left and then the one on the right. Normally there are twelve candles in the altar of our churches. They are said to represent the apostles.

Let us think

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

.....
.....

2. Is bowing before the Cross idol worship?

.....
.....

3. Give a brief explanation for the Cross

.....
.....

4. Write the Old testament pointers to the Cross.

.....
.....

5. What is the theological meaning of the candle?

.....
.....

6. What message does the candle give us?

.....
.....

Hymn

The Cross conquered and conquers
The Cross conquered the Adversary
Let the Cross be the fort of
Those who bore witness to it.

By Thy light we see the light,
Jesus full of light
Thou True Light, dost give the light
To Thy Creatures all
Lighten us with Thy bright light
Thou The Father's light divine.

Let us pray

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Galatins 6:14-16
Monday	Genesis 6:9-21	St.John 8:12-14
Tuesday	Genesis 22:6	St.Matthew 5:13-16
Wednesday	Genesis 28:1-13	St.Matthew 4:12-10
Thursday	Exodus 12:8-16	1 Corinthians 1:7-19
Friday	Genesis 32:11	St.Mark 8:34-36
Saturday	Numbers 21:4-9	Psalms 100:1-5
Sunday	Revelation 22:1-2	*

Unit 5

Great Men of God

Lesson 18

St. Behanam and his sister Sara

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

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

Introduction

We have learned about Christ’s martyrs last year, right?

Do you remember some of them?

Yes. The infant Martyrs and St. Kuriakose.

What do you remember about them?

After the birth of Jesus, King Herod ordered the massacre of all infants below two years of age. The victims of that infanticide are called infant Martyrs.

Today we learn about a brother and a sister who died for Christ in the 1st century A.D.

Reading passage

Behanam and Sara were the children of Senharib, the king of Asoor in Persia. These children were put to death by their father himself. The king hated Christians bitterly.

While living in the palace Sara developed a terrible disease. It was leprosy for which no medical treatment was available in those days. They were very sad about it. Then Behanam had a vision in which it was said that there was a great ascetic living in the nearby mountain and he could cure Sara. Behanam and his friends

reached a monastery on the mountains. It was the abode of Mar Mathai. Behanam told him everything.

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

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

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

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

The King built a palace and a church beside it as a monument of his children (Behanam and Sara) who suffered martyrdom. Even today it is known as Sedguda monastery. Behanam was twenty five and Sara was twenty years old when they became martyrs. Their martyrdom caused the conversion of the King, queen and their subjects.

Let us think

1. Who was Sara's brother?
.....
2. Name the King of Asoor in Persia?
.....

3. Who was the holyman who cured Sarah?
.....
4. What disease afflicted the king who killed his own children?
.....
5. How did the king regain his balance of mind?
.....
6. How old were Behanam and Sara when they became martyrs?
.....
7. How was the King, Queen and their subjects converted to Christianity?
.....
.....

Activities

1. Why did the King kill his children?
 - a) as they had leprosy.
 - b) as they became christians.
 - c) as they were heathens.
 - d) as they were traitors.
2. How was Sara cured of her disease?
 - a) through medical treatment.
 - b) Mar Mathai healed her with a touch.
 - c) Since she confessed her belief in Christ.
3. How did the King and the Queen become Christians?
 - a) due to riots in the land.
 - b) as the King became mad.
 - c) as Mar Mathai placed his arm on his head, prayed and cured him.
4. Why did the King build a palace and a church as a monument?
 - a) To maintain the memory of his children who become martyrs.
 - b) To celebrate his return to sanity.
 - c) Since the King got baptized.

Hymn

Bliss to the Prophets
And the Apostles
And to the martyrs
At resurrection
O St. behanam as in heav'n
Keep we here thy memory
Hear us as we honour thee,
They entreaties be our aid.

Let us pray

Class leader: O Saintly confessor and martyr, St. Behanam.

Others: Intercede for us.

Class leader: O Saintly martyrs...

Others: Intercede for us.

Class leader: O Saint Mary, mother of Jesus...

Others: Intercede for us.

Class leader: O St. Gregorios of Parumala...

Others: Intercede for us.

Our Decision

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Hebrews 11:1-4
Monday	Hebrews 11:5-7	Hebrews 11:8-12
Tuesday	Hebrews 11:13-16	Hebrews 11:17-19
Wednesday	Hebrews 11:20-26	Hebrews 11:27-29
Thursday	Hebrews 11:30-36	Hebrews 11:37-40
Friday	Hebrews 10:32-35	Hebrews 11:36-39
Saturday	St.John 15:22-17	St.John 15:18-22
Sunday	St.John. 16:23-27	*

Lesson 19

Mother marthasmooni (St. Shamuna and her seven children) (Martyrdom of the Maccabees)

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

Verse to be memorized: “It is a wonderful heritage to have a wise father.” (Proverbs 20:7)

Introduction

Teacher: Can you name some of the Christian martyres?

The students reply that they have learned about St.Kuriakose, St.George, St.Stephen etc. The martyr Kuriakose and his mother were killed by Emperor Diocletian. St.Kuriakose was only three years old at the time of his death. They were killed because they didn't worship the deities of the King but confessed Jesus Christ instead. Those who confessed and followed Christ had always suffered persecution and death at the hands of ruthless rules who followed other religions.

Reading passage

Give the names of saints whom you know. (Give them the names of St. Thomas, St. George, St. Gregorios of Parumala, St. Dionysius of Vattasseril, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc.

We can categorise them into saints who lived before Christ and those who died for the sake of Christ. All of them being great devotees of God, led a life of faith and offered their lives to God. Among them there is a saintly mother and her seven children.

The mother's name is Marthasmooni (St. Shamuna). The word 'marth' in Syriac is a term of respect used to address saintly ladies whereas 'Mar' is used to address saintly fathers (Marthoma, Mar Baselius Marth Mariyam etc.)

Mother Marthasmooni (St. Shamuna) and her children lived about 200 years before Christ. Their history is given in the Book of macabees II chapter 7. (Try to tell the students that apart from the 66 Books that makeup the Holy Bible we use today, there are 'Apocryphal' books among which the Book of Macabees is one).

This saintly mother and her children were killed. Their history is as follows.

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

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

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

Let us think

1. Saintly women are addressed using the Term...
.....
2. How many children did mother Marthasmooni have?
.....

3. Name the ruler who killed this mother and her children.
.....
4. Give the Syriac word which means martyr.
.....
5. Who was the Greek emperor, known as 'the Great', who attacked North India?
.....
6. Name the Jewish priest under whom the Jews organized themselves and defeated the Greeks?
.....
7. What did the king ask Marthasmooni and her children?
.....
.....
8. What was the reply given by Mother Marthasmooni to the King?
.....
.....

Activities

1. Identify and prepare a list of saints of Old Testament times.
2. Find out the names of books included in the Apocrypha.
3. Match the following by drawing lines

Alexander	the Fourth
Antiochus	Priest
Judas Maccabees	the Great
4. List few churches established in the name of Marthasmooni in our Church

Hymn

Those martyr's who longed
 For seeing the Christ
 By their death took wings
 And fluttered to Heights

Let us pray

(One student shall say this prayer aloud. Others should pray for intercession.)

Student Leader: O Mother Marthasmooni, who laid her life for God.

Others: Pray for us always.

Our Decision

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

(Reference: Epistle to the Romans 8:35)

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Luke 18:9-14
Monday	St.John 11:1-4	Psalms 78:1-5
Tuesday	St.John 11:5-8	Psalms 78:6-8
Wednesday	St.John 11:9-11	Psalms 78:9-14
Thursday	St.John 11:12-15	Psalms 78:15-22
Friday	St.John 11:16-20	Psalms 98:1-5
Saturday	St.John 11:21-23	Psalms 98:6-9
Sunday	St.John 11:24-26	*

Unit 6

Good Habits

Lesson 20

Forgiveness—The ideal way to respond

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

Verse to be memorized: “Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” (Colossians 3:14)

Introduction

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

Reading passage

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

why, when Lord taught us to pray he asked us to pray “forgive us our debts and sins as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

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

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

The first Christian martyr St. Stephen also prayed for those who stoned him. We read about it in Acts of apostles (Acts 7:60).

Following these great examples, we can cultivate the habit of forgiving others. Anger, and not patience, is the weakness of many people. As a result they and those who live and work with them face several difficulties. Anger will lead us to several dangers.

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

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

When we are unhappy about the behaviour of another persons, we may become angry and return the same form of behaviour. When we take revenge in this way, we are no better than bad people. But if we can forgive them, we become good Christians; we become like Christ.

Jesus said: “But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him. (St. Matthew 5:39). This principle influenced Mahatma Gandhi very much.

Even when our neighbours or fellow students behave in a bad manner, we should not try to do them harm. Instead if we can do good to them we will definitely win over them. Jesus has taught us to overcome evil with goodness.

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

Hence we should be patient and forgiving. It will lead our minds to peace. We will earn the love and respect of others through patience. That is the way in which

we can bear Christ's witness before others. If we keep hatred and vendatta against others, we will certainly lose our peace of mind. It will distort our outlook and will make us unable to see virtue. The peace and comfort got from forgiving each other cannot be easy defined. It is something worth experiencing.

Our Decision

We will forgive those who do us wrong.

Activities

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Luke 21:14-19
Monday	1 Corinthians 13:4-7	St.Matthew 18:33-35
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 13:8-13	St.Mark 11:22-26
Wednesday	Colossians 3:13-15	Psalms 86:1-5
Thursday	Ephesians 4:30-32	Proverbs 19:8-11
Friday	Ephesians 4:2-6	Psalms 32:1-3
Saturday	Colossians 3:12-15	Psalms 37:1-5
Sunday	2 Corinthians 2:10-11	*

Lesson 21

Charity: A good and gracious way of responding

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

Verse to be memorized: “Yet I am among you as the One who serves.” (St.Luke 22:27)

We have a responsibility towards the society in which we live. Our society will be well knit only if each person fulfils his duty. Our duty is to help others. Through this lesson we shall learn how to live as a charitable person.

Introduction

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

Reading passage

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

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

Christ was incarnate for the salvation of man. He gave food to the hungry, sight to the blind, cured the sick and made the lame, walk. Jesus taught us to “love our neighbours as ourselves.” He was reminding us of our duty to take care of our

fellow beings always. We should never think of utilizing others for satisfying our selfish needs. Instead we should think what we can do for the good of others. If we think like that our conduct will be useful and pleasant to others. We have plenty of opportunities to show our love and sympathy for others. We should neither shut our eyes towards them nor turn our backs on them. Instead of confining ourselves to religious observances and rituals we should extend the arms of brotherhood and love. God commands that He is pleased not in sacrifice but in mercy.

While travelling in buses and trains, some people offer their seats to mothers with little children and old people. Some others never care for such needy people. Those who lose their opportunity to help others, will face similar neglect from others in future. It is God's decree that man should help, and cooperate with one another. The same principle is seen in nature too.

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

It is wrong to think that we can live without the help of others. We can't live a single day without the help of others. We need not give monetary help to others always. We need to give financial help only when there is a real need.

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

Those who imitated Christ and dedicated their lives to help others shall always be an inspiration to us. Great men like Father Domien, Mother Teresa and Albert Schweitzer are examples. The paths showed by H.G. Pathrose Mar Osthathios and H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios are also before us. They lived as the companion of the poor.

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

Our Decision

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

Activities

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

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	2 Corinthians 8:1-6
Monday	St. Matthew 25:31-34	2 Corinthians 8:7-9
Tuesday	St. Matthew 25:35-40	2 Corinthians 8:10-15
Wednesday	St. Matthew 25:42-46	2 Corinthians 8:16-9
Thursday	Proverbs 19:16-17	2 Corinthians 8:10-15
Friday	Deuteronomy 25:13-16	2 Corinthians 8:16-19
Saturday	Deuteronomy 26:1-2	2 Corinthians 8:20-24
Sunday	Malachi 3:7-12	*

