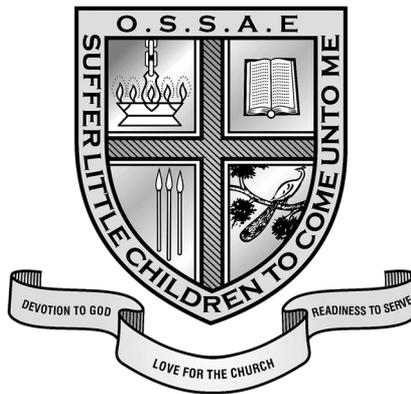


# ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



## Galilee Division Class V (English)

Sunday School Central Office  
Devalokom, Kottayam-686004  
[ossaebodhanam.org](http://ossaebodhanam.org), [ossae.org](http://ossae.org)

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## Foreword

Biblical education has been considered to be of utmost importance in the spiritual and liturgical practices of our church. Our Lord in His words “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these” expresses His great tender care for children and recognizes their value. Growing up by knowing God from childhood is a blessed privilege of the Christian life. We should develop a lifestyle in which the basics of spiritual life are practiced and reinforced, because a strong spiritual foundation is necessary to make our life meaningful. Training our children in Christian witness is a mission and a big responsibility before God. Sunday School education is a sacred service where we impart the knowledge of the Scripture to the children to help them to experience God. It helps them to experience the life of the saints who understood the beauty of that experience, the glory of worship which is a grateful response to the divine experience, and the social responsibility which is to be carried out in the fullness of that experience and identity. The greatest gift that we have to offer our children is the strong Orthodox faith that has been handed down to us through generations.

Sunday School education should not be evaluated in terms of secular education. It is a quest for the divine in which the teachers and students partake together making it a life-long learning experience. Sunday school education becomes perfect only with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The aim of this learning system is to recognize the value of the divine revelations that happened before ages and to interpret it according to the needs of the present age. This must be fulfilled in the model we see in the Holy Scripture. God has raised prophets and visionaries in different ages to reveal the divine will to His own people. The Sunday School teachers fulfill this great responsibility.

Sunday School education becomes meaningful only when the parents involve in the teaching and learning process. Values instilled from the Sunday School should be further reinforced and practiced at homes to make them part of their personality. Moses told the Israelites to teach their children the commandments of God “recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

We should train the new generation to respond with a Christian conviction to the changes in the society. Our young generation should be able to share the models of love and forgiveness in this troubled society. Only then our new generation will inherit the blessings of those children who are blessed by our Lord. This is the universal responsibility that the Church has to carryout for the transformation of our society to goodness, and its growth to the Kingdom of God.

Our Sunday School curriculum has been developed effectively to teach the Scriptures and the spiritual practices of our church. This is visible in the content and teaching modules. Also, the online resources have been very valuable in the learning process. Let our Sunday School teachers and students make use of the available resources and opportunities to make the Sunday School learning a joyful experience which will enhance the moral and spiritual values of our younger generation.

01-06-2022

**Alexios Mar Eusebius Metropolitan**  
President  
O.S.S.A.E

## Introduction

Reading is necessary for all to achieve their goal in life. Today a reader, tomorrow a leader is quietly trusting maxim in human life. Really a book opens a door of infinite possibilities and probabilities in life; new persons, new ideas and ideals which may transform the whole life. It is interesting that no entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. For learning and success, books have an unavoidable part in human life. As Patrick Rothfuss says, "I always read. You know how sharks have to keep swimming or they die? I'm like that. If I stop reading, I die".

This text book for OSSAE class IX comprises contents like bible studies including both Old Testament and New Testament, Prayer, liturgical hymns, ecclesiology, liturgy, dogmas and biographies of great men of God. Also the text includes current affairs like ecology, media and psychological issues faced by teenagers. The lessons are prepared after a pretty long stretch of study, discussions and corrections by a team of people who have expertise in the field of education, theology and liturgy. However, suggestions for improvement are most welcome. The contributions of those who prepared various lessons are invaluable. Being the notable teachers who paved the way for the coming generations we owe them a lot.

A book communicates knowledge, and not only knowledge but wisdom of all kinds. The lessons you study from this text may become best friends who will never walk away from you. They will help you to build a life which is centered in Christ. May it help you to have knowledge about our Lord Jesus Christ, great men of God and the way of spiritual life. Thus you can improve yourself in order to take better decisions in the future. The aim of Sunday School education has been based on Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God. It is the continuation of Jesus' teaching ministry in order to equip the people to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Hence our ultimate purpose is the achievement of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

May God continue to bless you all.

**Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese**  
Director General

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# STRUCTURE OF THE LESSONS

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

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



# Unit 1

## Bible Events

### Chapter 1

## Moses at the Palace of Egypt

(Exodus 2:1-5)

**Message:** Let us realize that God is compassionate towards all. When we are in trouble, God comes to our rescue. Though we are weak, God will strengthen us so that His purposes shall be fulfilled through us.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).

**Learning Aids:** Picture of a royal palace.

### Introduction

What do you call the large houses in which kings and emperors live? They are called palaces. Kings, queens, princes and princesses live in the royal palace. Today we shall learn about a person who lived like a prince in a palace. His name is Moses.

### Lesson

Moses was the son of Amram, a member of the priestly tribe of Levi of Israel. His mother was Jochebed. He had a brother named Aaron and a sister named Miriam. Moses, the younger son of Amram and Jochebed was handsome.

Israelites (Hebrews) were treated as slaves in Egypt. King Pharaoh of Egypt was jealous of the growth of Jews in number. Hence he ordered the genocide of all male children of Israelites. The parents of Moses desired to save the life of their child. Hence they hid the child from others for three months. However, they feared someone would hear the cries of the child. They could no longer hide him. So they made a small basket from papyrus reeds, water proof of it with tar and put the baby in it. They laid the basket among the papyrus reeds on the banks of river Nile. This spot was used by the daughter of Pharaoh for taking bath. When the princess came down with her maids to bath, she heard the cry of the baby. She saw the little basket with the baby floating in the river among the reeds.

She was moved by the sight of the innocent and handsome child. She took him up in her arms and told her maids to find a mother to suckle and nurse the child. The baby's sister Miriam was watching all this from a distance. She approached the

princess and asked “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” (Exodus 2:7)

The princess agreed. So the little girl rushed home and called the child’s mother. Thus the child’s own mother got an opportunity to suckle and nurse the child at home; and she was paid for this! The princess named him Moses (meaning “drawn out of water”). When child grew up the mother brought him bask to the princess. Is it not amazing that Moses’ mother paid for nurturing her own baby.

Moses was destined to deliver the people of God (the Israelites) from Egypt. Hence God gave him wisdom and the opportunity to grow up like a prince in the place. “Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds” (Acts 7:22). He got food, education and nurturing like a prince. But he never forgot his own people. While he was being groomed at the palace, he was moved by the difficulties faced by his own fellow Hebrews. His heart bled at the slave-life of his Hebrew brethren. “By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:24, 25). Moses lived for forty years in Pharaoh’s palace.

What are the qualities of a good leader? People love, respect and follow good leaders. They in turn show love and concern for the people. A true leader is one who guides his people through the right path. Leaders should have the wisdom and common sense required for this. Moses who became the deliverer of Jews from Egypt, gained his learning, common sense and leadership qualities from the royal palace. There is no doubt that it was all ordained by God.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Kyamtha Namaskaram, Sixth Hour, Qolo, *Kaadeeshanmar...*)

Saints are invited-to the High Kingdom  
Which ear has not heard  
Nor has the eye of flesh seen  
Nor the human heart conceived  
That which God has prepared for  
Those noble ones who loved Christ  
Bless’d are those-who are made worthy

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, give us wisdom and teach us to be humble and humane so that  
we can do good to others. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**  
.....

*We would make use of our opportunities in a right manner. We would study well and also try to help others who are in need.*  
.....

**Let Us Think**

1. Name the tribe in which Moses was born.  
.....
2. Who were the parents of Moses?  
.....
3. Name the siblings of Moses  
.....
4. Name the martyr in the New Testament who spoke about Moses and his growth. Find out and write down the quoted verse from the reading passage.  
.....  
.....
5. What is said about Moses in the list of those who bore testimony of faith in Epistle to Hebrews?  
.....  
.....

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Exodus 1:6-11
Monday	Hebrews 11:23-26	Exodus 1:15-22
Tuesday	Hebrews 11:27-31	Exodus 2:1-10
Wednesday	Mark 7:6-13	Exodus 2:11-15
Thursday	Mark 9:2-8	Exodus 2:16-22
Friday	Mark 12:26-27	Exodus 2:23-25
Saturday	Luke 9:28-36	*

## Chapter 2

# The Lord Calls Moses

(Exodus 3:1-4:17)

**Message:** The Lord calls us for fulfilling His purposes. Let us respond to and obey the Lord's call and surrender ourselves to Him.

**Verse to be Memorised:** Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people" (St. Mark 1:17).

**Learning Aids:** The pictures of burning bush and Moses tending his flock.

### Introduction

Is it not wonderful to know that God has plans and expectations about our lives? God calls us to fulfil His will as we grow up. Let us remain powerfully vigilant to listen to that call. When we listen to and obey the call, we would become useful to many others. Today we are going to learn about a leader who was called to deliver his people from slavery in Egypt. He is none other than Moses, the great leader of the Hebrews.

### Lesson

Moses fled from the palace of Pharaoh and started tending the flock of Jethro, the priest of Midian. He married Zipporah the daughter of Jethro. He lived in Midan for forty years, tending the flock of Jethro, the priest. Thus the prince became a shepherd in the desert. This job enabled him to learn patience and concern for the poor and oppressed. Moses learned his early lessons to lead the people of God while he was tending the flock of sheep.

Moses went up to Horeb with his flock. There he saw a strange sight. A bush of thorns was on fire. But the flames didn't burn it. What Moses saw was very different from the common forest fires he was used to. He went near the flames out of curiosity. Moses heard someone calling him "Moses, Moses" from the bush of thorns. "Here I am", he replied. He also heard a voice. "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground". The voice instructed him to change his ways of life and tread a new path. God told him, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob". Moses was afraid to look at God. However it was necessary for him to ascertain who the Lord was. The voice from the burning bush commanded Moses to tell the people of Israel that "I Am" has sent him to them. This statement reveals the eternity of the Lord.

The Lord was moved to pity by the sufferings of His chosen people. He wished to deliver them from the Egyptians and take them out of Egypt to freedom. God entrusted this task with Moses. He was to take the people to the land of Canaan “flowing with milk and honey”. God sent Moses to the Pharaoh with the demand to let the Hebrews send out of Egypt. The Lord also gave him three miracles to be performed before the Pharaoh. These miracles were sufficient to prove that Moses was the ambassador of the Almighty God. The miracles were.

1. God commanded Moses to throw his shepherd’s rod on the ground. When Moses threw it down it became a serpent. When he took it back it became a rod in his hand again.
2. God commanded Moses to place his hand inside his robe near the chest. The hand turned white with leprosy. The Lord commanded to place the hand next to the chest once again. Then it became normal.
3. Moses took water from the river Nile and poured it on the ground upon God’s commandment. It turned into blood.

Moses then pleaded with God, “O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue”. When the Lord heard it. He said “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak”. God appointed Aaron as the assistant to Moses. God sent Aaron who was a good speaker to the Pharaoh with Moses who had speech impediment. Then Moses accepted his appointment as the one to deliver the Hebrews from the Egyptian bondage.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Pre-Qurbana Hymn, *Mulmarameriyatherithe...*)  
As fire rested on the bush and it did not burn,  
So God descended and rested in the Virgin  
He chose to take flesh from her,  
Guarding her virginity

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord! You have given an assignment to each one us. Bless me to realize  
this and do good to others. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

*I will accept Lord’s call with humility and  
shall try to fulfil it as best as I can.*

## Let Us Think

1. “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground”. What do you think was the reason for this direction?
2. Make a list of the miracles performed by God through Moses. Describe each of them.

## Activities

Write down the conversation between God and Moses at the bush of thorns after reading the relevant biblical passage in the form of a dialogue.

## Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Exodus 3:1-6
Monday	Acts 6:7-15	Exodus 3:7-10
Tuesday	Acts 7:18-25	Exodus 3:11-14
Wednesday	Acts 7:30-34	Exodus 3:15-22
Thursday	Acts 7:44-50	Exodus 4:1-5
Friday	Acts 13:38-41	Exodus 4:6-10
Saturday	Acts 24:10-15	*

## Chapter 3

# The Ten Plagues on Egypt

(Exodus Chapters 7-11)

**Message:** God performs miracles to reveal His power and glory, in His purpose of delivering us from evil and bondage.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “O give thanks to the Lord of lords; who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever” (Psalm 136:4).

**Learning Aids:** Flash cards exhibiting the ten plagues in Egypt and pictures explaining the plagues.

### Introduction

The Lord performs miracles to rescue His chosen people who had been treated as slaves and tortured in Egypt. God always has mercy for His people. He has great concern for those who suffer. God wants to liberate them. The Lord knows the sufferings of people and delivers them from their misery.

### Lesson

The Lord sent Moses and Aron to the Pharaoh, and asked him to allow the Hebrews to go. The Pharaoh was persecuting the Hebrews who had been treated as slaves in Egypt. But Pharaoh refused to let the people go. He forced them to do hard labour, and never gave the proper wages. Moses came to the palace on God’s command to demand the release of His people. Moses performed the first miracles before the Pharaoh. He threw down his rod before the court and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh’s sorcerers also threw down their rods. Their rods too became serpents. But Moses’ serpent swallowed the rods of the sorcerers. Pharaoh remained unmoved by this miracle and still refused to let the people of Israel go. So the Lord sent ten afflictions on the Egyptians.

**1. Water of Nile Turned to Blood:** Moses struck the water of the river Nile with his staff and, the river turned to blood. Similarly all waters of Egypt became blood. The fish died and the river stunk. Then Moses asked Pharaoh to release his people as per the Lord’s command. But Pharaoh refused.

**2. Hordes of Frogs in Egypt:** Hordes of frogs covered the whole of Egypt. Pharaoh asked Moses and Aaron to plead with God to take the frogs away. Then he would let the people go away. All the frogs died and were piled into

great heaps. Pharaoh's heart hardened again and he refused to release the people.

**3. Lice:** Upon God's command, Moses struck the dust on the ground with his rod. Suddenly lice infested the entire nation, all the people of Egypt and their animals. But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he refused to let the people go away.

**4. Swarms of flies:** Since the people of Israel were not released, terrible swarms of flies came and covered Pharaoh, his men, the Egyptians and their homes.

**5. Plague:** A deadly plague affected the animals of Egypt. But the herds and flocks of Hebrews were spared. All cattle of the Egyptians died.

**6. Boils on people and animals:** Moses took ashes from the kiln and stood before the Pharaoh. When Moses loosed it into the sky boils broke out on people and animals alike throughout Egypt.

**7. Hailstorm:** Some of the Egyptians were terrified by God's threat of hailstorm. They brought their cattle and slaves in from their fields. But those who had no regard for the word of Yahweh left them out in the storm. At God's command Moses held out his hand towards the sky. The Lord send thunder, hail and lightning, and ruined the land.

**8. Locusts:** The Pharaoh was still unwilling to let the people of Israel go. So locusts came and covered the land. They ate every bit of vegetation on the land.

**9. Darkness:** When Moses lifted his hand at the Lord's command, thick darkness descended on the land. But the Hebrews and their settlements had light.

**10. Death of the First Born:** In spite of the terrible afflictions, Pharaoh's heart was hard. Yahweh said to Moses that He would send one more disaster on Pharaoh and Egypt. After that the Pharaoh would let the people go. All the first born in every Egyptian family died. This dance of death claimed all from the first born child of Pharaoh to the first born child of the slave. The wail of death resounded throughout the land. Even the first born of animals died. Yahweh commanded that none of these disasters will harm the people of Hebrews.

Moses and Aaron performed all these miracles before the Pharaoh. However Pharaoh's heart remained hard throughout these disasters. He let the people of Israel go only after the tenth affliction. Those ten disasters were the Lord's judgement on the Pharaoh and his deities.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Pre-Qurbana Hymn, *Lokam thaatha sahodarar...*)  
The martyrs hated the goods of this passing world  
They renounced their fathers, brothers, and their nations  
They chose death for Jesus' sake  
Their mem'ry is glorified

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, help us to discern good and evil, and help us to choose divine things. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

*I will try to understand the commandments of the Lord.*

**Activities**

1. Make a list of the ten afflictions.
2. Write the miracle performed by Moses before the ten afflictions.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Exodus 6:1-9
Monday	Exodus 7:1-15	Exodus 7:8-25
Tuesday	Exodus 2:23-25	Exodus 8:1-15
Wednesday	Leviticus 12:1-4	Exodus 8:16-32
Thursday	Luke 16:19-31	Exodus 9:1-15
Friday	Luke 24:13-21	Exodus 9:22-35
Saturday	Luke 24:22-33	*

## Chapter 4

# Deliverance of the Jews

(Exodus Chapters 12-14)

**Message:** To Learn the purpose of divine interventions and submit ourselves humbly before God. God then will take care of all our needs and remove our woes.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free” (Psalms 105:20).

### Introduction

The Lord with His mighty hand delivered His people from slavery. Along with this, commencement of a great feast in memory of this incident is ordained by the Lord. We see a community which goes forward undaunted by crises and problems. The people experienced the love and care of God. This lesson helps us to realise the history of a divine grace.

### Lesson

When the tenth afflictions happened, Egyptians became afraid of Moses and the God of Moses. The servants and subjects of the Pharaoh considered Moses as a great man. However Pharaoh’s heart was hard. He changed his mind only when the tenth disaster, namely, slaughter of the first born happened. This was unbearable to the Pharaoh and he was forced to release the Hebrews. However, the angel of wrath “passed over” the houses of Hebrews, the doorposts that were marked with the blood of the lamb.

### Observance of the Passover

The Passover is observed as the memorial of the deliverance of Hebrews from their captivity in Egypt. It is also the beginning of a new era and new life. The history of the Jews begin in the month of “Abeeb” or “Nissan”. On the tenth day of the month of Abeeb each family should select a lamb and keep it till the fourteenth day. It should be killed in the evening of the fourteenth day. The lamb should be a one year old male without defects. The blood of the slaughtered lamb should be collected in a vessel and it should be smeared on the two side frames of the door of every home and on the panel above the door. The meal should be roasted and should be eaten with bitter herb. It must not be eaten raw or boiled. The Jews should eat only unleavened bread for the seven succeeding days. In the New Testament context, the observance of the Passover indicates the redemption of the sinners through Jesus Christ. Jesus was the Lamb who bore the sins of the world.

Later the Jews settled down as a nation in Canaan (present day Israel) and the practice of killing the lamb at home stopped. Instead, the sacrifices were offered in the temple of Jerusalem. The practice of smearing blood on the doorposts ended. The blood was poured at the foot of the altar itself. Besides, the practice of burning the fat and eating meat also began. Each family with not less than ten members could celebrate the Passover at home. That is why Jesus Christ and His disciples observed the Passover in a large furnished house. Jesus Christ, the sacrificial lamb of the Passover, was crucified the very next day itself. On the day of Passover, Jesus Christ founded the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday which was the tenth day of the month of Nissan. He became the sacrificial lamb of the Passover. The lamb became an offering after four days. The Passover of the Old Testament was a memorial of the deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross saved us from sin, satan and death. The Holy Eucharist founded by Jesus Christ is believed to be the offering for the redemption of sinners.

### **The Deliverance**

The Holy Bible records that the Jews were slaves for 430 years in Egypt (Exodus 12:40-41). When Yahweh foretold Abraham about this captivity, the time span recorded is 400 years (Genesis 15:3). When the people of God began their journey from Egypt, all the Egyptians were busy burying their dead first born sons (Numbers 33:4). About six lakh men, except women and children, began their journey on foot from Egypt.

### **Crossing the Red Sea**

The people of Israel coming out of Egypt had to cross the Red Sea. The Red Sea was a great hurdle in their journey. The people were so afraid with the Red Sea in front and the enemy army in the rear. They cried out to the Lord to help them and spoke against Moses. They told Moses that it was better to be slaves to the Egyptians than be dead in the desert. But Moses told the people. "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still" (Exodus 14:13-14).

God commanded Moses to hold his staff over the water and split the Red Sea. Moses stretched his staff over the sea. The water split apart and stood as walls on either side. The people of Israel walked through the dry seabed and reached the other shore. The Egyptians chased after the people of Israel. Pharaoh's horses, chariots and the horsemen followed them into the middle of the sea. In the early morning, Yahweh looked down from the cloud of fire upon the array of the Egyptians and began to trouble them. Then Moses stretched his hand again over the sea and the sea returned

to normalcy. The water came back and drowned the chariots and horsemen of the Egyptians.

Thus Yahweh saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians. The people of Israel saw the Egyptians dead, washed upon the seashore. The Red Sea became the site of victory. The people of Israel became happy and sang praises of the Lord. Miriam took a tambourine and led the people in their songs of rejoicing. Thus they continued their journey.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Pre-Qurbana Hymn, *Thookapettu marathil...*)

The martyrs saw Christ, their Lord, hanging on the wood  
From His side pierced by the lance, blood and water flowed  
They encouraged each other;  
“Come, let us die for our Lord”

.....

**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, who delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt, lead us under Your guidance. Just as You helped the Hebrews cross the Red Sea, help us to overcome the challenges of life. Amen*

.....

**Resolution**

*We will understand and follow God’s will throughout our life.*

.....

**Let Us Think**

1. How was the Old Testament Passover observed? How do we Christians observe the ‘Passover’ today?
2. Read the song to the Lord sung by People of Israel (Exodus chapter 15), which refer to this journey.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Exodus 12:21-28
Monday	Psalm 68:7-14	Exodus 12:29-36
Tuesday	Psalm 68:19-23	Exodus 12:37-42
Wednesday	Psalm 68:24-31	Exodus 12:43-51
Thursday	Psalm 68:32-35	Exodus 13:3-10
Friday	Isaiah 43:1-7	Exodus 13:11-14
Saturday	Isaiah 43:8-13	*

## Chapter 5

# Exodus of the Hebrews through the Desert

(Exodus Chapters 15:22-18:27)

**Message:** We should fulfil our Christian pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan, by trying to know the call of the Lord and living accordingly.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance” (Psalm 78:25).

**Learning Aids:** A historical map of the Exodus.

### Introduction

God in His mercy provides for our needs and give us guidance in life. We depend on God for everything. The Exodus of the people of Israel thought the desert is the history of God’s grace and mercy showered on a community. Their journey is a profile for the pilgrimage of the Christian community.

### Lesson

God protects His people. He redeemed the people of Israel from destruction in the Red Sea. They were protected in the shade of a guiding cloud during day, and by a pillar of fire that gave them light during night. Thus the Hebrews travelled safely during their exodus from Egypt.

### The Bitter Water of Marah

The Hebrews reached the desert of Shur. They didn’t get water for three days. Arriving at Marah, they couldn’t drink the water because it was bitter. The people complained to Moses. Moses pleaded with the Lord to help them. The Lord showed him a tree to be cut and thrown into the water. Then the water became sweet. This tree is a symbol of the holy Cross at Calvary. Yahweh said to them, “I am the Lord who heals you” (Exodus 15:26). He promised them that He will not make them suffer the plagues He sent on the Egyptians.

### Manna and Quail

Later the people of Israel reached Elim. There were twelve springs and seventy palm trees in that place. They camped there beside the springs. Later they left Elim and journeyed into the Shin wildness between Elim and Mount Sinai. The people were starving without food.

They spoke bitterly against Moses and Aaron in that place. They moaned, “If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots

and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Exodus 16:3). When the people complained against their starvation, the Lord said, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you”. When the dew disappeared in the morning, a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost was seen on the ground. The people gave it the name ‘Manna’. It tasted sweet. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Each person could collect about three quarts (one omer) of ‘manna’. On the sixth day they could gather twice as much as usual and keep it for Sabbath on the next day. The food stored for the next day on all other days became stale with maggots. So they gathered the food every morning and captured quails. Those who gathered little had no lack. They continued to get it until they reached the land of Canaan. Upon the Lord’s instruction, they kept three quarts (one omer) of ‘manna’ as memorial for the later generations to see. Aaron put it in a container and kept in the Ark of the Covenant. Thus the people of Israel received Manna and quail as their food in the desert.

### **Water from the Rock**

When the people left Shin desert and reached Rephidim they had no water to drink. Once again the people quarreled with and complained to Moses. God commanded Moses to strike the rock on Mount Horeb. Moses did as he was told and water gushed out. Moses named the place Massah (‘Massah’ means test or temptation) and Meribah (meaning strife or quarrell).

On another occasion when the people reached Kadesh, they rebelled against Moses for there was no water. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock. Moses and Aaron summoned the people and said “Listen, you rebels, shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” (Numbers 20:10). Then Moses struck the rock twice with his rod. Water gushed out. The people and their animals drank water and were satisfied. God had asked Moses to command the rock. But Moses who became angry with people and against God’s command, struck the rock twice with his staff. Because of this disobedience, God punished Moses and Aaron. They were to die before they entered the promised land. Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me, to show my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them” (Numbers 20:12).

### **Great Administrator**

Moses used to settle the disputes between people. When Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses saw this, he advised Moses to appoint judges under him. Moses appointed judges for each group of one thousand, one hundred, fifty and ten people respectively. Thus he decentralized authority and served the people of Israel with justice. Later he selected seventy elders filled with God’s spirit and appointed them as judges of people of Israel. The system of having council of elders who ruled the people of Israel

originated there. The people of Israel enjoyed God's love and care most during the time of Moses. Moses led the people of Israel as an ideal leader in World history.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Pre-Qurbana Hymn, Vettan veenappol Daveedamodal...)

At the morning time-David went to pray  
At the house of God and he begged of Him  
“Hear my words, O Lord, -my meditation  
Attend to my cry Savior of the World  
Halleluyah w’ Halleluyah  
Make me worthy to receive forgiveness”

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, who gave food and water to people of Israel in the desert  
miraculously, give us what we need and bless us. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

**We will depend on God in all trials and difficulties of life.**

.....  
**Let Us Think**

1. Give three instances of God's presence experienced by Hebrews during their exodus through the desert.
2. What was the promise given by God after turning bitter water to sweet in the desert of Shur?
3. Write the meaning of the following: Marah, Massah and Meribah.
4. What kind of a food was Manna?
5. How did the council of elders originated in Israel?

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Exodus 12:37-42
Monday	Exodus 17:1-7	Exodus 12:43-51
Tuesday	Numbers 33:5-6	Exodus 13:1-10
Wednesday	Hebrews 3:1-6	Exodus 13:17-22
Thursday	Exodus 19:1-8	Exodus 14:5-14
Friday	Exodus 19:9-13	Exodus 14:15-30
Saturday	Exodus 19:14-24	*

## Chapter 6

# Parables of Jesus

(St. Matthew 13:3-50)

**Message:** To receive the messages in the parables of Jesus into our life.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (St. Mathew 13:11).

**Learning Aids:** Picture of a man sowing seeds, pictures showing different places where the seeds fell, a paddy plant or wheat plant, picture of a fishing net, a few mustard seeds, an ear of paddy or wheat.

### Introduction

Do you like to hear public discourses? Are you in the habit of attending church conventions enthusiastically? We do like to hear certain talks? Messages in those talks will sustain in us, and we shall not at all be bored of those. Such were the talks given by Jesus Christ. Jesus used to teach with the help of small stories (parables) which touched the hearts of the listeners. The listeners of Jesus were mostly farmers, daily labourers and fishermen. They assembled around Jesus on the seashores, valleys and deserts. Today we are going to study certain parables told by Jesus Christ on such occasions.

### Lesson

The Stories told by Jesus were simple and they contained deep messages. These stories are called parables. Some of them are very popular like parable of good Samaritan, prodigal son and parable of the sower. Among these, parable of the sower is an important parable.

### Parable of the Sower

One day Jesus Christ was teaching the people assembled at a seashore. Jesus told the story of a sower on that day. As the sower sowed, some seeds fell on the wayside and the birds came and ate them up. Some seeds fell on rocky ground, where there was not much soil. They sprang up quickly but when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no roof they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty fold and some thirty.

The disciples also couldn't understand the meaning of the parable. Jesus taught them the meaning of the parable. The seed sown by the sower is the Word of God.

Seed sown on the wayside represents the word heard by the person but the devil snatches away the word from his heart. Seed sown on rocks is the word which is accepted but stumbles when tribulations and persecutions arise. He who received the seeds among thorns is he who receives the word and the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becomes unfruitful. The seed sown on good soil represents the word which is heard and obeyed to produce fruits accordingly. The message of the parable is that we shall receive the word like this and produce good fruits.

### Group Activity

Teacher may divide the students into four groups. The groups are named as wayside, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil. Select a leader for each group. The students shall have the Holy Bible with them. Each group shall find out from the Holy Bible, the meaning of the seeds fell on the place corresponding to their group name. After a fixed time the leader shall report the findings in the class. Teacher shall give explanations where ever necessary.



.....  
**Hymn**

(Pre-Qurbana Hymn, Kshippram maayyunnoor...)  
If this morning which-is passing away  
Drives away darkness and lightens the world  
How great will it be-on that morning when  
Our Lord comes again and raises the dead  
Halleluyah w' Halleluyah  
You who crown Your worshippers, have mercy.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O God, bless us to be fruitful as the seeds on good soil. Help us to obey  
Your word even in tribulations and persecutions. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

*We will live with firm faith in the Word of God.  
We will read and meditate the Word daily.*

.....  
**Activities**

1. Mention the places where the seeds fell from the sower and write what happened to them.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

2. Explain the meaning of the following.

1. Seed.....  
.....
2. Seeds that fell on wayside.....  
.....
3. Seed that fell on rocks .....  
.....
4. Seeds that fell on thorns.....  
.....
5. Seeds that fell on good soil.....  
.....

3. Write the letters corresponding to the correct word against the statements:

Wayside            A  
Rocks                B  
Thorns              C  
Good soil           D

- i) Plants that sprang up here were withered away due to lack of soil.
- ii) Here seeds sprag up but choked.
- iii) Seeds fell here were taken away by birds.
- iv) Seeds fell her gave good yield.

4. Find out and explain the parables in the Holy Bible which indicates the Kingdom of God.

- i) Hidden treasure (St. Matthew 13:44)  
ii) Parable of the dragnet (St. Mathew 13:47-50)

5. Match with lines.

Seed                Devil  
Good soil        Heart without faith  
Birds              Worldly cares  
Rocks              Word  
Thorns             Fruitful

### Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Luke 8:4-15
Monday	Luke 10:25-40	Luke 12:13-21
Tuesday	Matthew 13:44-45	Luke 13:6-9
Wednesday	Matthew 13:47-50	Luke 13:18-21
Thursday	Luke 12:13-33	Luke 14:15-24
Friday	Luke 15:1-10	Luke 15:11-31
Saturday	Luke 16:1-8	*

## Chapter 7

# Transfiguration of Our Lord

(St. Matthew 17:1-13, St. Mark 9:2-9, St. Luke 9:28-36)

**Message** It is revealed that Jesus Christ is God through the transfiguration incident. God the Father, witnesses this fact. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the living and the dead. Disciples who saw the transfiguration were sent to those who suffer in this world.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed” (Psalm 34:5).

**Learning Aids:** Picture of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

### Introduction

Do you pray daily in the morning and evening? Do you use to choose certain places for personal devotion and worship? Jesus Christ used to go to some secluded places in the morning and evening to pray and meditate. In the Holy Bible we read that ‘ In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed’ (St. Mark 1:35). One day Jesus Christ went to a high mountain (Tabore) along with Peter, James and John. We are going to study the incident happened there while Jesus was praying.

### Lesson

Jesus Christ was praying on the top of the Mount Tabore along with three disciples. Suddenly the appearance of His face changed; it shone like the Sun. His clothes became dazzling white. The disciples saw two men, Moses and Elijah talking to Him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of the departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’ (St. Matthew 17:4). Actually Peter didn’t know what he said. While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”

When the disciples heard the voice, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. Jesus came and touched them saying “Get up and do not be afraid”. By this, the cloud and the two men disappeared. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered the disciples not to tell anybody about the incident then. When they came down, a crowd was waiting there to get cured and relieved from their diseases and sufferings. Jesus led the disciples towards them to teach them the real mission.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Post-Gospel Hymn, Feast of Transfiguration, *Keepayum yohannanum...*)  
The Lord took to Mount Tabor Peter, James, and John  
Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke to Christ  
Before their eyes-Christ was Transfigured  
And His face shone-as bright as the sun  
A cloud then descended and overshadowed them  
And a voice was heard from the cloud saying, “This is  
Halleluyah-My Beloved Son”

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord Jesus Christ, on the mount Tabore You have revealed that You are  
the God of the living and the dead. Help us to hear from You in this life  
and the life after. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

***We understand that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.  
We will listen to Him and obey Him.***

.....  
**Let Us Think**

1. What was Jesus doing at the top of the mountain?  
.....
2. Who were the two persons appeared there?  
.....
3. What was the change happened to Jesus?  
.....
4. Who was behind the voice from the cloud? What was the voice from the  
cloud?  
.....
5. What do you know about Moses and Elijah?  
.....
6. Why Jesus did not support Peter’s suggestion to dwell on the mountain?  
.....
7. What do you understand about the real mission of the disciples of Jesus?  
.....

## Activities

1. Present a skit on the Transfiguration incident.
2. Three students come forward to present the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah.
3. Match the following

Tabore	Bright like sun
Appearance of the face	Father
Cloud	Transfiguration
Prophets	Peter
Three dwelling places	Moses and Elijah
4. Give a '✓' mark against the statements you agree.
  - i. Jesus went up the mountain with twelve disciples.
  - ii. Jesus and the disciples were transfigured.
  - iii. Moses and Elijah were persons who were not alive.
  - iv. Bright cloud represents the presence of God.
  - v. Jesus never wished to make a dwelling place on the top of the mountain.
  - vi. Gods voice from above revealed that Jesus Christ is God.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Matthew 17:1-8
Monday	Luke 9:28-36	2 Peter 1:6-8
Tuesday	2 King 2:1-4	2 Corinthians 3:12-18
Wednesday	2 King 2:5-14	2 Corinthians 4:1-6
Thursday	Matthew 5:17-20	2 Corinthians 4:7-12
Friday	Matthew 20:20-28	2 Corinthians 4:13-18
Saturday	Mark 10:35-45	*

Chapter 8

## Lord's Prayer– The Prayer That Jesus Christ Taught

(St. Matthew 6:9-13)

**Message:** Lord's Prayer is included in all the prayers of the Church and also in the Holy Qurbana. We ought to say it with a pure and repentant heart.

**Verse to be Memorised:** "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts" (Psalm 96:8).

**Learning Aids:** A picture of a family in prayer, a picture of our Lord praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, charts with the verses in Lord's Prayer written on them.

### Introduction

Don't we pray in the morning and evening? The Church Fathers have arranged our prayers in seven canonical hours. Do you know which are the Seven Canonical Hours? They are Vespers, Compline, Matins, Lauds, Terce, Sext, None. The names of the seven Canonical Hours correspond to Evening, Soothoro, Midnight, Morning, Third Hour, Sixth Hour and the Ninth Hour. The Lord's Prayer is an important part of the Kauma. Let us learn more about this prayer.

### Lesson

All our divine services start with the Lord's Prayer. When we say the Lord's Prayer our eyes and open arms should be raised towards heaven. This prayer is seen in two Gospel passages: St. Matthew 6:9-13 and St. Luke 11:2-4.

Our Father who art in heaven

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive our debts and sins, as we have forgiven our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation.

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Thine is the Kingdom, Power and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### Context for Teaching this Prayer

"Jesus was praying in a certain place..." (St. Luke 11:1). In the Jewish religion, rabbis used to teach their disciples. Accordingly, John the Baptist taught his disciples

to pray. Jesus Christ too, was following the same tradition, when He taught His disciples to pray. St. Matthew has given a relatively full text of the Lord's Prayer in his gospel.

### **Meaning of Each of the Sentences in this Prayer**

There are six petitions in this prayer. The first three petitions are based on our hope for the Kingdom of God which will be fully established at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The last three deal with the basic needs of human beings on this earth.

**1. Our Father who art in heaven.** God is our Father, and He has granted us the blessed state of being called His children. We have the freedom to call Him, "Our Father". Besides, the term "our" suggests that we form a fellowship. We are related to each other. We are members of the one Body of Christ. We are never alone. We are part of a community in Christ. As we approach God the Father as His own children, we begin to establish a deep spiritual relationship with Him. Here we come to the realization that we are neither strangers nor slaves before Him, but His own children. In prayer, we can approach God's presence in freedom as His children.

**2. Hallowed be Thy name.** This prayer is said acknowledging the holiness of God. The word "name" shall be specially noted. In Jewish thinking, the name of a person represents his whole personality. So God's "name" stands for all God's characteristics, God's being. Also here is a pledge that we who have the honored status of the children of God shall never do anything to belittle the glory of God. This idea is clear also from the prayer of Agur in the book of Proverbs (chapter nine). "Praise the Lord! Praise the name of the Lord; give praise, O servants of the Lord, you that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for he is gracious" (Psalm 135:1-3).

**3. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.** Here we pray that the whole creation be under the rule of God.

**4. Give us this day our daily bread.** This prayer teaches us to submit our temporal concerns to the primacy of Kingdom of God. The 'bread' either meant 'the bread necessary for physical existence' or 'the spiritual bread'. The disciples are allowed to pray for their material needs. But they should focus not on desires, luxury, accumulation or excess. Instead they should focus on essentials and daily requirements.

**5. Forgive our debts and sins, as we have forgiven our debtors.** The forgiveness offered by God the Father is always a gift to the undeserving. "But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression" (Psalm 19:12-13). The grace received through forgiveness should overflow as grace to others. Unforgiveness indicates alienation from God. This petition expect self-examination, confession and repentance from believers.

**6. Lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from the evil one.** If we fall into the trap of the temptations of Satan, it will not be easy to extricate ourselves from them. So, we ask God not to let us fall into the enemy's temptations. This means that when temptations come, we should be equipped to resist them, with the strength we receive from God. In such exigencies, we require the grace of God not to be defeated by the evil designs of the evil one; and we need spiritual strength for that. What will happen if we make friends with bad people? Those bad people will influence us in a bad way and try to make us also evil! We may end up sick in body and soul, and may meet with damnation. Thus this prayer becomes so meaningful and relevant. However, when we fall sick, the sacrament of 'Anointing the Sick' will make us whole. Also, the sacrament of Holy Confession will cleanse us of our sins and transgressions.

**7. For Thine is the Kingdom, Power and Glory forever and ever.** The Lord's Prayer ends with a sense of total surrender and dedication to God. Surrender before God would be possible only when we say good-bye to our selfishness, pride and all other evil. As we surrender before God, we become free. Then only we realize that what we earn in this earthly life are not our own, but that everything belongs to God and we receive all amenities as a gift from God. Such a realization and state of mind shall make us humble, and enable us to understand the love and greatness of God.

We say the Lord's Prayer in the Holy Qurbana. The fourth section in the Holy Qurbana starts with the Lord's Prayer. You should listen carefully to the prayer that the priest says just before the Lord's Prayer. He entreats God to enable us to say this prayer with sanctity of the body, cleanliness of the tongue, self confidence and a broken heart (meaning with repentance). It is a call to get ready to say this prayer. We shall say this prayer with full dedication and concentration of mind and soul.

.....  
**Hymn**

(Pre-Qurbana Hymn, *Karthave njangal...*)  
We come to You, Lord-and knock at Your door  
And all our requests shall be granted us  
He who asks received-and he who seeks, finds  
The door of mercy opens if he knocks  
Halleluyah w' Halleluyah  
Blessed is He Whose door is opened to us.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*All rise, make the sign of the Cross, raise their eyes and hands towards heaven and join the teacher to say the Lord's Prayer. Amen*

.....

## Resolution

*We shall say the prayer taught by our Lord every day, and experience the joy and satisfaction it offers to us.*

.....

### Let Us Think

1. Identify the three requests in the Lord’s Prayer which are for the coming of the Kingdom of God.
2. What are the three blessings necessary for a life which is surrendered to the “Rule of God”?
3. Why do we learn to say prayers?
4. To whom are our prayers addressed to?
5. Why should we pray to God?
6. Who gets transformed through prayer?

### Activities

1. Write the Lord’s Prayer in big attractive letters and hang it on the wall in your room. Look at it and repeat the prayer.
2. Say your morning and evening prayers regularly.

## Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Matthew 6:1-4
Monday	Luke 6:27-31	Matthew 6:5-6
Tuesday	Matthew 6:32-36	Matthew 6:7-15
Wednesday	Matthew 11:9-13	Matthew 6:16-18
Thursday	Psalms 25:1-7	Matthew 6:19-23
Friday	Psalms 25:8-16	Matthew 6:24-27
Saturday	Psalms 25:16-22	*

## Chapter 9

# “I am the Good Shepherd”

(St. John 10:11)

**Message:** To understand the qualities of a good shepherd, and learn to follow Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (St. John 10: 11).

**Learning Aids:** A pictures showing Jesus holding a sheep, depicting a shepherd and a flock of sheep.

### Introduction

The shepherds were the people, who first came to know of the birth of Christ. ‘Shepherd’ is the term used to call those who take care of herds of sheep. The shepherd leads the sheep to green pastures, and helps them to have their full. He takes them to water fountains, where they quench their thirst. He lays himself down near his flock to protect them from wild beasts. If they get injured, he will apply oil to the wounds for healing. The shepherd is ready to risk his life for the safety of his sheep. These are the characteristics of a good shepherd. Jesus told the people that he is the ‘Good Shepherd’. In this lesson, we are going to learn about Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

### Lesson

Psalm 23 is familiar to all of us. It is a beautiful song in which King David, who was once a shepherd himself, extols God as ‘The Shepherd’, in the light of his own experiences in life. Here is a list of the qualities of a good shepherd as seen in Psalm 23.

- ✦ He makes the sheep to lie down in green pastures.
- ✦ He leads them to still waters.
- ✦ He restores the soul of the sheep (i.e. he gives strength).
- ✦ He protects the sheep and so, they are not afraid.
- ✦ He always stays with the sheep.

Psalm 23:4 says, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me”. The rod and staff are the tools used by the shepherd to help sheep to find food, and to protect them. The rod is used to draw the branches of trees so that sheep can easily reach them. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd protects and provides for us. We will never be afraid, even in difficult situations, since Jesus is with us. When we do wrong, he warns and reprov

us. The “staff” is also used to punish the sheep, if it goes astray. Thus the Good Shepherd is our “comforter” in life. He protects us from our enemies.

Psalm 23: 6 says, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”. We shall enjoy the goodness and mercy of God, as long as we are alive. This Psalm also looks to the future: “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long”. So we have eternal hope in our Lord, here in this life and life afterwards. He is our Good Shepherd!

There are seven “I am...” statements of Jesus Christ. All these statements are in the gospel according to St. John. They are,

1. St. John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd”.
2. St. John 10:9 “I am the door.”
3. St. John 6:35 “I am the bread of life.”
4. St. John 8:12 “I am the light of the world.”
5. St. John 11: 25 “I am the resurrection and the life.”
6. St. John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth and the life.”
7. St. John 15: 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches.”

Now let us look into the New Testament where Jesus Christ claims He is the Good Shepherd. St. John 10: 1-15 mentions the qualities of the good shepherd as explained by Jesus Himself.

✠ The sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd.

✠ The shepherd calls his sheep by name and leads them out.

Recall Jesus calling Zacchaeus to come down from the fig tree (St. Luke 19:1-10).

✠ The shepherd walks ahead of the sheep. When a wolf come to catch the sheep, the shepherd protects the sheep even risking his own life.

Many people followed Jesus to listen to Him because He was the Good Shepherd. This Good Shepherd is always with us, guarding and guiding us all the way. It is a unique nature of this Good Shepherd that He lays down His life for the sake of His sheep. He who is a hired labourer and not the real shepherd runs away when he sees the wolf coming; and the wolf catches the sheep and kills them. But Jesus our Good Shepherd gave His life for us and saved us on the Cross on Calvary.

.....  
**Hymn**

Jesus, our Good Shepherd  
Takes care of us everyday.  
Day and night, in weal and woe  
Will never abandon us.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd  
Gave his life for us.  
That we may live in peace  
And with him, forever.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, gather us all to Your presence, and help us to be Your obedient sheep. Give us the wisdom and humility to listen to Your voice and follow You all through our lives. Amen.*

.....  
**Resolution**

***We will never be afraid, for Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd takes care of us. We shall obey the commandments of God; and live in His presence as His beloved children.***

.....

**Let Us Think**

1. To whom and where did Jesus Christ say “I am the resurrection and the life”?  
.....
2. From your reading of Psalm 23, list the characteristics of the Good Shepherd.  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. What are the unique qualities which we find in Jesus as “Good Shepherd”?  
.....  
.....  
.....
4. Jesus declared, “I am the Bread of Life”. To which sacrament would you relate this declaration?  
.....
5. Locate the following verse in the New Testament: “You are the light of the world” [Clue: our Lord’s ‘Sermon on the mount’]  
.....



Chapter 10  
**The Sermon on the Mount**  
(St. Matthew Chapters 5,6,7)

**Message** To learn what should be our relation with God and also our relation with our fellow beings.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (St. Matthew 5:8).

**Teaching Aids:** The Holy Bible, a picture of Jesus sitting and teaching.

### **Introduction**

What was the methodology of Jesus Christ when he was teaching? Jesus taught the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven through stories and simple examples. The Sermon on the Mount (St. Matthew chapters 5 to 7) is an important teaching carried out by Jesus on these lines. We are now going to learn the Sermon on the Mount.

### **Lesson**

During the early part of His public ministry, Jesus Christ had been teaching His disciples and the people who came to listen to Him. He was teaching them mainly on the following subjects. Who is blessed in the eyes of God? Once we are with God, how shall we live with our fellow beings as also with the creation? Based on the Sermon on the Mount, we will learn some of the virtues such as how to pray and how to keep our body and our heart clean and pure as Jesus taught us. He has also re-defined some of the standards followed by the Old Testament to make them more meaningful and practical.

**1. Beatitudes:** At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has given eight beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-10). Here, He declares who all can be called blessed. Each of the nine beatitudes is a declaration of God’s promise to the marginalised, giving them assurance that Kingdom of God and eternal joy belongs to them. For example, what is meant by “poor in spirit”? God provides us everything. All good gifts come from God. We must, therefore, always be humble before God and thankful to Him. One who is poor in spirit will never be proud. He will never be heavy headed. He is always humble. (Like this, students shall understand the meaning behind each of these beatitudes with help of the teacher). Now, let us try to understand some other teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

**2. You are the light and salt of the earth:** What is the specialty of light? Rays of light emanating from a source help us see the surroundings clearly. Jesus tells us that

we ourselves should be light for others. What are the peculiarities of salt? Salt gives taste to our food. Also salt is used to preserve certain food items. From this example we can understand that our life should be useful to others just like salt is useful to others.

**3. Jesus gives new interpretations to laws given through Moses:** Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (St. Matthew 5:17). One of the Ten Commandments is, “You shall not murder”. This means that one who kills another will be brought before judgment. Based on this, Jesus says that it just not enough that one doesn’t kill another, but one shall not ever shower abuses on another. One shall not call another “fool”. These are all offences attracting judgment and punishment.

Again, Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” (St. Matthew 5:38-39). The Laws given through Moses says ‘eye for eye’ and ‘tooth for tooth’ indicating instant revenge. But Jesus teaches that you are not supposed to work against a friend who behaves rudely, instead love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you.

**4. Keep your body and heart clean and pure (St. Matthew 5:27-28):** One of the Ten Commandments is, “You shall not commit adultery”. Here Jesus explains that one who looks at a woman with lust commits adultery in his heart.

**5. About prayer and fasting (St. Matthew 6:5-7:11):** Jesus dismisses all sorts of showing off while praying. He taught that God accepts only sincere prayers coming out of a pure heart. God knows our needs in advance. Likewise fasting should be an act that comes out of one’s heart. This is not something to demonstrate before others. Jesus also taught a prayer (Lord’s Prayer which we have already learnt earlier, St. Matthew 6: 9-15). Jesus encourages to keep on praying because God is our father who loves us (St. Matthew 7: 7-11).

**6. Judging others (St. Matthew 7:1-5):** God alone is the Judge, the only one Judge. We shall not, therefore, indulge in judging our fellow beings. Thus, the Sermon on the Mount teaches us how to love God, how to love others and how to develop good virtues.

.....  
**Hymn**

*(Velivu niranjoressho nin velival...)*

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.

Thou who dwellest in the light mansions holy, pure:  
Keep us from all hateful thoughts, from all passions vile,  
Grant us cleanness in our hearts,  
Deeds of righteousness to do.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*Our Lord, teach us to pray, teach us to love our enemies also and help us  
to keep our body and heart holy. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

**We will pray before our God with utmost sincerity.  
We will not judge others. We know God is the only one Judge.  
We will live with our faith in God.**

.....  
**Let Us Think**

1. What is the meaning of "Blessed are those who mourn"?  
.....
2. "I am the light of the world". Find out the verse carrying this statement of  
Jesus Christ from the Gospel according to St. John.  
.....
3. What are the characteristics of salt?  
.....
4. Who is the Judge of all creations?  
.....
5. Is it possible to love your enemy? How?  
.....
6. How does Jesus explain the Commandment, "You shall not murder"?  
.....
7. What does Jesus say about true prayer? (St. Matthew 6:5-8)  
.....

## Activities

1. Prepare a chart containing the eight beatitudes.
2. Present the beatitudes in class as two students reciting them alternatively like, 1: Blessed are the pure in heart; 2: For theirs is the Kingdom of God.
3. Present a skit in the class explaining how to pray. This shall be based on the prayers of the tax collector and the Pharisee.
4. Match the following:

A	B
Those who mourn	Will inherit the earth
Poor in spirit	Will be shown mercy
The peacemakers	Will be filled
Pure in heart	Will be comforted
Merciful	Theirs is the Kingdom of God
Meek	Children of God
Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	They will see God
5. Find out what is true fasting and proper lent? (Isaiah 58: 5-7, St. Matthew 6: 16-18)

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Matthew 5:1-10
Monday	Matthew 6:14-18	Matthew 5:11-16
Tuesday	Matthew 6:19-24	Matthew 5:17-20
Wednesday	Matthew 6:25-34	Matthew 5:21-26
Thursday	Matthew 7:1-6	Matthew 5:27-30
Friday	Matthew 7:13-18	Matthew 5:31-42
Saturday	Matthew 7:24-29	*

## Unit 2

# Prayer: Responses in the Holy Qurbana

### Chapter 11

## Old Testament Readings

**Learning Objective:** Memorize the responses and prayers in the Holy Qurbana.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” (Psalm 118:15-16).

### Introduction

We all participate in Holy Qurbana. It is our responsibility to participate with attention and devotion. We should attend the worship by responding properly using liturgical texts. We have to participate in worship by chanting prayers and singing hymns. It is important to attain concentration. If we lack concentration, our mind will move to various issues. When we participate in worship by chanting prayers and singing hymns, then we would be able to move gradually to spiritual experience and concentration. If we think that we pray only after getting devotion and concentration, then it will become impossible. Only through prayers and singing hymns we attain mindfulness and attention.

### Lesson

**‘In reverence, will I enter Your house, and offer my vows to You’.**

Whenever we enter into the church, we should pray with signing of the Cross and pray that “We enter Your house...”. We should enter and remain in the church with reverence by understanding that we are in the church where God dwells. We should enter the church with offerings (Psalms 61:8, 66:13).

**‘The song of glory and salvation, in the tabernacle of the righteous, the Holy Spirit through David did sing’.**

Have you noticed this proclamation? The reader or deacon proclaims this just before the Old Testament readings. Two things are evident from the statement, ‘the Holy Spirit through David did sing’.

1. This is the song of the Holy Spirit.
2. Holy Spirit sings this song through David, the king and prophet.

What is the 'tabernacle of the righteous'? The Holy Church is the 'tabernacle of the righteous'. The Word of God is the song of glory and salvation. The reader says that the Word of God, which is the 'song of glory and salvation', is proclaimed in the Church. We have to observe carefully from which book, the Old Testament readings are selected. We have to say the appropriate responses mentioned in the *Kurbanakramam*.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, help us to participate in worship with attention and piety. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

*We will participate in the Holy Qurbana by chanting prayers and singing hymns with reverence and attention.*

.....  
**Activities**

Understand the proclamation of the reader and its appropriate responses of the people for the books mentioned below.

1. Exodus
2. Joshua
3. Psalms
4. Job
5. Proverbs
6. Isaiah
7. Bara Sirah (Deutero Canonical Book).

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Psalm 67:1-7
Monday	Ephesians 6:14-19	John 9:31-33
Tuesday	Matthew 6:5-13	1 Corinthians 8:5-6
Wednesday	Matthew 7:7-12	Psalm 103:1-14
Thursday	Jonah 2:1-10	Psalm 103:15-22
Friday	John 17:1-26	Psalm 44:1-3
Saturday	Romans 8:26-27	*

## Chapter 12

# Readings from the Apostles

**Learning Objective:** Understand the proclamation and responses related to the readings from the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles of the Apostles.

**Verse to be Memorised:** ‘Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults’ (1 Corinthians 14:20).

### Introduction

The public celebration of the Holy Eucharist begins with the liturgy of the Word of God. Three readings from the New Testament are included in this part. Let us learn more about this.

### Lesson

In the Northern end of the Holy of Holies, readings from the Acts of the Apostles, letters of St. Peter, St. John, Jude and St. James are included. Readings from the fourteen epistles of St. Paul are read in the Southern end of the Holy of Holies. We have to listen to the proclamation of the reader or deacon in order to respond properly. The teachings of the Apostles on Jesus Christ and His Church are mentioned in these readings. The important reasons for including these New Testament readings are the following.

1. The Apostles preached and interpreted Jesus Christ as Son of God in the background and support of Old Testament.
2. We understand the teachings and liturgy of the Apostolic Church from these books.
3. We get the instructions to the Church and the ethical principles taught by the Apostles from these books.

The reader proclaims this; “The lesson from the Acts of the Holy Apostles, Habibai Barekmor.” The response should be “Glory be to the Lord of the Apostles and His mercy be upon us forever.”

When the reader proclaims, “The lesson from the General Epistle of St. Peter/John/Jude/James, Habibai Barekmor,” then the response should be “Glory be to the Lord of the Apostle and His mercy be upon us forever.” The reading on the Southern end of the Holy of Holies should be always from the Epistle of St. Paul. The reader proclaims, “The lesson from the Epistle of St. Paul, the Apostle, to the..... (Name of the epistle), Ahai Barekmor. The deacon addresses the congregation, ‘Habibai’ and ‘Ahai’. They mean ‘my beloved’ and ‘my brethren’. We should say the responses and prayers with keen attention and piety.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, help us to attend the Holy Qurbana right from the beginning till the end with devotion and attention. Amen*

.....

**Resolution**

*We will attend during the time of readings from the New Testament and Holy Qurbana with utmost attention and piety.*

.....

**Activities**

The reader addresses the congregation by saying ‘Ahai’. Find ten verses from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians’ where the Apostle addresses the community “my brothers”.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Psalm 104:1-9
Monday	Romans 10:11-13	Psalm 104:10-15
Tuesday	Romans 12:9-16	Psalm 104:15-23
Wednesday	Romans 15:7-13	Psalm 104:24-30
Thursday	John 15:11-17	Psalm 104:31-35
Friday	Luke 23:40-43	Psalm 105:1-6
Saturday	Mark 11:22-26	*

## Chapter 13

# Prayer of Praise used in the Matins

**Learning Objective:** Learn the prayer of praise “How good it is to give thanks to Thee, O Lord...” said in our morning prayer.

**Verse to be Memorised:** ‘O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water’ (Psalm 63:1).

### Introduction

The prayer “How good it is to give thanks to Thee, O Lord...” is a prayer of praise included in the Hourly prayer of Matins. This prayer is not usually used in the Sunday morning worship in the Church. However it is included in the morning prayers of Good Friday. Psalm 92:1-3 have close similarity with the prayer we are learning today.

### Lesson

**“How good it is to give thanks to Thee, O Lord and to sing praises to Thine exalted Name; to declare Thy loving kindness at the break of the day and Thy faithfulness during the night.”**

This is a hymn of praise used to submit our praise and thanks before the Lord in the morning before we go about our day to day activities. Like the Psalmist we also pray that praising the Lord for His kindness and love, in the morning is most appropriate.

What do we thank the Lord for? There are many ways of expressing our gratefulness to God. In the rest of the prayer also a strong influence of the Psalms is seen, like “ **O Lord hearken to our voice at the dawn of the day and in the morning, let us be found ready by Thee.**” The idea here sounds very similar to Psalm 5:3. We pray to the Lord to help us be prepared for morning worship. In the morning we are getting ready to meet the Lord, and feel his presence. The preparation is important. No one could remain lazy without preparing for morning worship. Remember, the Lord is waiting to listen to our prayer.

**“O Lord, absolve and pardon all our sins. O Holy one, overshadow Thy right hand upon us and heal all our infirmities for the sake of Thy eternal Name.”**

Do you think that sin may lead to diseases of body and mind? Do you notice that asking for pardon for sins is an important part of our prayers? Here we pray for the absolution of our sins and cure of our disease of transgressions. Sin is a disease in

itself. Here, we request to heal us from the diseases caused by sins. When we are genuinely joyful, God is also happy. God heals our infirmities. The result is that God's Holy Name is glorified in and through us.

### Let Us Think

1. Who is the source of all healing? Discuss.

.....

2. Find out a passage in the Bible wherein sin and sickness are related.

.....

.....

### Activities

1. Say this prayer in chorus.
2. Read Psalms 5 and 92 and meditate on them.
3. We should develop the habit of praying for all and people also for us.

### Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Psalm 118:1-9
Monday	Matthew 6:5-8	Psalm 118:10-14
Tuesday	Psalm 126:1-8	Psalm 118:15-19
Wednesday	Psalm 130:1-8	Psalm 118:20-25
Thursday	Psalm 131:1-3	Psalm 118:26-29
Friday	Psalm 138:1-4	Psalm 118:33-40
Saturday	Psalm 138:5-8	*

## Unit 3

# Hymns of Worship

### Chapter 14

## Hymns before Readings from the New Testament

**Learning objective:** Learn to sing the hymns and understand their meaning.

**Verse to be memorised:** “As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed” (Galatians 1:9).

### Introduction

How many readings from the Holy Bible are made in connection with the Holy Eucharist? There are readings of two or three passages from the Old Testament, one passage each on either side of the Holy of Holies and one passage from the Gospels. The people are prepared for the readings from the Holy Bible, by singing a hymn each before those readings. Let us learn them in detail today.

### Lesson

The Orthodox Church gives great importance to the Holy Bible. There is no liturgical service without reading the Holy Bible. Psalm 51 which is a prayer of atonement or confession is included at the beginning of most of the liturgical services. There is hardly any liturgical service without it.

After the morning worship the deacon would come to the Alb and read the Holy Bible during the service of the Holy Eucharist. He reads from the Old Testament. Now a days girls or women too read the Old Testament portion. This is called ‘Readings’ (‘Vayana’). The deacon would read one passage standing at the northern side and another from the south end of the entrance to the Holy of Holies after the public worship of the Holy Eucharist begins. The readings made at the north end of the Holy of Holies will be from either Acts of the Apostles or from the General Epistles (Catholic Epistles). The readings made at the south end will be from Epistles of St. Paul only. They are read at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist.

After the public worship of the Holy Eucharist begins, the Trisagion Prayer is recited. Then the deacon proceeds to the north end of the Holy of Holies. The hymn sung before he makes his reading is the first hymn (‘Those Apostles, chosen sent by God...’) we are learning today. The deacon address the congregation, ‘Habibai’ and ‘Ahai’. They mean ‘my beloved’ and ‘my brethren’.

We have already learned the books of the Holy Bible from which the reading at the north end of the Holy of Holies is made. These books describe the evangelical activities of Apostles of Jesus Christ and St. Paul in various parts of the world. They preached about the Kingdom of God inherited by those who accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This song exhorts us to listen to the passage to be read with the same faith and conviction.

The Apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit. So they preached gospel in all parts of the world, to both Jews and non Jews. They preached that kingdom of God is at hand, given to all who receive the gospel about Jesus Christ. This is the central theme of the first hymn. The reading follows this hymn. The hymn exhorts all of us who want to inherit God's Kingdom to listen to the reading carefully.

The next hymn ('Paul the Blessed saint...') is sung before the reading at the south end of the door of Holy of Holies. Which are the epistles read at the south end? The epistles of St. Paul. At first the evangelical activities were carried out among the Jews. The non Jews (gentiles) were evangelised only later. That is why readings from the Apostle of the gentiles that is, St. Paul's epistles are included as the second reading. Let's now learn the hymn sung before the second reading.

The hymn is a versified rendering of the ideas in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 1:8. The hymn begins saying, 'let us listen to the warning given by St. Paul. St. Paul said that if someone preaches something contrary to what they had preached, he will be cursed. The curse of the Church will fall upon him 'even if he is an angel from heaven.' Several false ideas and wrong teachings originate and spread in the world. Those who remain steadfast in the teachings of God from beginning to the end will be blessed.

Right teaching is the one made by the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. This biblical passage also reminds us that individual interpretations of the Holy Scripture might go wrong. The hymn asks us not to accept even an angel if his teachings are against those of the Church. This hymn is very significant in modern times because a number of individuals and religious groups talk against the teachings of the Church.

### **Let Us Think**

1. Make a list of the biblical passages referred to in the first hymn.

.....

2. Explain the meaning of 'Habibai' and 'Ahai'.

.....

.....

3. What response do we make to the deacon addressing the congregation before reading the Bible passages.

.....

.....

**Activities**

1. Read Epistle to Galations 1:8.
2. Note the variant statements made by the deacon and the faithful before reading different passages at the north end of the Holy of Holies.
3. Imagine that some one comes to your house with a teaching different from that of the Church. What will be your response?

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	John 6:25-31
Monday	Psalm 63:1-2	John 16:32-40
Tuesday	Psalm 63:3-4	John 1:1-9
Wednesday	Psalm 63:5-6	John 1:10-14
Thursday	Psalm 63:7-8	Luke 1:46-50
Friday	Psalm 63:9-10	Luke 1:51-53
Saturday	Psalm 63:11	*

## Chapter 15

# Hymns Following the Reading from the Gospel (Evangelion)

**Learning Objective:** To help children learn the hymns sung after the reading from the Gospels (Evangelion) in the Holy Qurbana.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (St. John 6:51).

### Introduction

Who makes the reading from the Gospels during the Holy Eucharist? The gospel passage is always read by the priest. The Greek word ‘Evangelion’ is used to refer to the Gospels. After the reading from the Gospels, a hymn is sung by all before the priest proceeds to read the ‘promeyon’. There are several hymns given in the Book of liturgy to be sung on this occasion. We have learned one hymn for the occasion in Class IV. Other two hymns sung in most churches are. Today we are going to learn two hymns given in the Book of the Holy Liturgy.

### Lesson

The first hymn is: Remember we  
Those prophets and Apostles  
who preached the  
Christ to gentiles  
Those crowned ones just and righteous:  
Those martyrs and confessors,  
Who bore torments and distress;  
God’s mother, saintly heroes,  
Those faithful departed one’s  
Their entreaties be for us  
At all times a strong fortress.

This hymn remembers all noble and saintly people who departed from this world and seeks refuge in their intercession. We remember prophets, Apostles who preached the gospel around the world, saintly and just people, martyrs, messengers, and to the Mother of God through this hymn. Let their prayer inspire us.

The second hymn is: “The bread of life I am” declared Lord Jesus  
Descended from high above to nourish the world  
Father sent me the eternal Word

Like a farmer-sown by Gabriel  
 Mary like the good soil borne Him in her womb  
 Priests like angels in their hands  
 Halleluiah- celebrate on altar.”

At this point let us try to explain the meaning of the hymn, line by line. The first line of this hymn is based on the Gospel according to St. John (6:51) which says “I am the living bread that came down from heaven”. The first two lines of the hymn in fact quote this biblical verse. Other lines are also statements made by Jesus Christ on various occasions. This hymn is presented in the form of statements made by Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ is the ‘Word’ (St. John 1:1) was sent by God the Father to save the world. Archangel Gabriel sowed this word like a farmer, on this Earth. Like a fertile land receiving the seed, the womb of St. Mary received the seed of that Word from Archangel Gabriel (St. Luke 1:38). Now the priests praise and celebrate me (‘the Word of God’) on the Holy Altar, just like I am praised by the Angels in heaven. This line refer to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, celebrated by the priest. This hymn gives in nutshell the Orthodox theology of the Incarnation of our Savior and relates the Incarnation to the Holy Qurbana. This hymn emphasizes the importance of the Holy Eucharist, the greatness of St. Mary and the goal of Christ’s Incarnation.

### Activities

1. Learn the meaning of other songs sung after the ‘Evangelion’
2. Read the biblical passages referred to in the lesson.
3. Find out a variant version of the hymn.
4. Find out the word used there in place of “sowed”.
5. Sing the hymn meditatively comprehending its meaning.

### Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Romans 15:14-19
Monday	Ephesians 6:1-3	Acts 9:15-18
Tuesday	Ephesians 6:4-6	Romans 11:13-15
Wednesday	Ephesians 6:7-9	Romans 11:16-18
Thursday	Ephesians 6:10-12	Romans 11:19-21
Friday	Ephesians 6:13-15	Romans 11:22-24
Saturday	Ephesians 6:16-18	*

# Unit 4

## My Church

### Chapter 16

## The Church during the Apostolic Times

**Learning Objective:** To form an idea about the origin and development of the early Church.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “They devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

### Introduction

Christian Church and Christian faith are rooted in the incarnation and the salvific works of Jesus Christ. In this chapter, we learn about the early Church.

### Lesson

The biblical passage which tells us about the origin of the Christian Church is the first part of chapter 2 of Acts of Apostles. After Christ’s Ascension, His disciples prayed in one accord in the upper Room (Mansion of St. Mark). Suddenly the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of ‘tongues of fire’ and they began to speak in other languages. After the speech made by St. Peter, about three thousand people joined the Church on that day. Thereafter the growth of the Church was very rapid. The Church spread out among the Jews at first. Several Jews were attracted by the teachings and preaching of the Apostles and joined the Church.

### Features of the Apostolic Church

The Apostolic Church had four important characteristics as given in the New Testament. (1) Acceptance of the teaching of the Apostles. (2) Observance of fellowship. (3) Breaking the bread. (4) Prayer.

**1. Form of Worship of the Apostolic Church:** The form of worship of the early Church had close resemblance with that of the Jews. The place of worship of the early Church were the Synagogues. Later worship was shifted to the homes of the believers. These were, later called ‘house churches’. The Old Testament was read and interpreted in the early Church as the Holy Scriptures. Besides they confessed that Jesus Christ was the ‘Messiah’ they had awaited. The earliest Christian creed is “Jesus Christ is Lord”.

**2. Selection of Deacons:** When the Church grew in numbers seven deacons were selected for the service of orphans and widows. St. Stephen was the chief among them.

**3. Conversion of Saul (St. Paul):** The growth and development of the Church created jealousy and anger in the Jews and their priestly classes. So they turned against the Church. Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee. He repented and became a Christian. This was a milestone in the history of the early Church (Acts 9, 22:6-21; 26:12-18, Galatians 1:12-16). The followers of Jesus Christ got the name 'Christians' for the first time in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Saul surrendered to Christ and became the greatest missionary in history and he became the greatest promoter of the Christian Church.

**4. Activities of the Apostles:** The Apostles who were the disciples of Jesus Christ, travelled to different countries and preached the Gospel to the people. Large number of people believed in Christ and joined the Church. Their witness enabled the spread of Christianity in the world. Apostle St. Thomas came to India preach the Good News. Church spread in the world as a result of the missionary activities of the Apostles. It became the major religion in the world.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord! We praise You for showing us the path of Christian life. Help us to remain steadfast in the true faith. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

*We would observe and conserve the faith and holy traditions of the Church.*

.....  
**Let Us Think**

1. What were the features of the Apostolic Church?

.....  
.....

2. What was the Scripture followed in the early Church?

.....

3. What were the responsibilities of the deacons?

.....

4. How did the Apostles propagate the Christian Church?

.....

5. How did the martyrdom of St. Stephen affect Saul?

.....

## Activities

1. Read more about the Apostolic Church from the Acts of the Apostles.
2. Enact the conversion of St. Paul in the class.
3. With the help of a map, identify the areas of Apostles' missionary journeys.

## Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Acts 2:1-13
Monday	Acts 13:1-5	Acts 2:43-47
Tuesday	Acts 15:1-14	Acts 4:32-37
Wednesday	Acts 15:15-21	Acts 4:17-26
Thursday	Acts 16:6-10	Acts 6:8-15, 54-60
Friday	Acts 16:11-15	Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-19
Saturday	Acts 16:16-34	*

## Chapter 17

# Apostolic Foundation of the Malankara Church– A Historical Perspective

**Learning Objective:** To understand and appreciate ancient history, authority and the Apostolic tradition of the Malankara Church founded by St. Thomas.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (St. Mark 16:15).

### Introduction

There exist two traditions regarding the Apostolic mission of St. Thomas to India and the founding the Christian Church. They are the North Indian tradition and the South Indian tradition. Evidences of the Apostolic foundations of the Malankara Church are discussed in this chapter.

### Lesson

**1. Commercial relationship of Kerala with foreign lands:** The South Indian tradition states that St. Thomas came to Kerala in AD 52. He landed at Kodungalloor (Thrissur district of Kerala). But the North Indian tradition says that St. Thomas first came to Gondophoros, the ruler of Taxila (currently in Pakistan). Kerala had maritime commercial relationship with the West Asian and European countries from very ancient times. Muziris or Kodungalloor, where St. Thomas landed was in those days a major port visited by ships from abroad.

**2. Jewish presence in Kerala:** In the previous lesson we learned that Jesus Christ’s disciples and the early Church functioned at first among the Jews. It is a historical fact that those Jews have lived in Kerala since the time of King Solomon (refer 1 Kings). This Jewish presence was helpful for the activities of St. Thomas in Malankara.

**3. A Christian community claiming the heritage (way and lineage) of St. Thomas:** One major evidence for the Apostolic mission of St. Thomas is the eight churches (or ezhara pallikal) established by St. Thomas when he came to Kerala in AD 52. The tradition also believes that St. Thomas ordained priests from families like Pakalomattom, Sankarapuri, Kali and Kaliyankal.

**4. Overseas travelers have recorded that they met a Christian community claiming the heritage of St. Thomas in the early centuries in Kerala.**

**5. Traditional songs:** Certain traditional songs and art forms used by Christians of Kerala during special occasions like marriage, festivals and feasts throw light on the foundation of Malankara Church by St. Thomas. ‘Ramban’ songs (‘Thoma Parvam’), ‘Maargamkali’ songs, and ‘Villadichaan’ songs are examples.

**6. The tomb of St. Thomas:** St. Thomas suffered martyrdom in AD 72 and was buried at Mylapore near Chennai. This fact supports the claims of South Indian tradition. The relics of St. Thomas were taken to Uraha (Edessa) after AD 160.

**7. The testimony of Church fathers and international travellers:** Church Fathers like St. Ephrem, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Clement of Alexandria and Ambrose of Milan and travellers to India like Marco Polo, Cosmos, and John Marinjoli confirm that the Malankara Church was established by St. Thomas.

### Hymn

(Marthoma salgunanidhiye...)  
O Resplendent St. Thomas  
May the concord of your Lord  
And His peace flow in the Church  
Which honors you forever

.....

### Let Us Pray

*O Lord, help us to preserve the heritage of our father St. Thomas and enable us to praise You along with him. Amen*

.....

### Resolution

*We will preserve the heritage and succession of St. Thomas gifted to us by our Lord.*

.....

### Let Us Think

1. Which are the two traditions connected with the visit of St. Thomas to Kerala?

.....  
.....

2. What is the connection between overseas trade relations of Kerala with St. Thomas?

.....  
.....

3. Name the families from which St. Thomas selected priests?  
.....
4. What are the important Christian art forms and songs existing in the Malankara Church? Find their significance.  
.....
5. Name the Church Fathers and travellers who stated that the founder of Malankara Church is St. Thomas?  
.....
6. How can we provide to prove that St. Thomas founded the ‘Malankara Church’?  
.....

**Activities**

1. Visit monuments like the Jewish Synagogue of Mattancherry, and the Tomb of St. Thomas in Madras and collect details about them.
2. Collect more statements of Church Fathers and travellers about the heritage of St. Thomas.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	John 11:1-16
Monday	1 Peter 1:13-16	John 20:24-29
Tuesday	1 Peter 2:1-5	Luke 9:1-6
Wednesday	1 Peter 2:6-10	Luke 14:1-7
Thursday	1 Corinthians 5:9-13	Matthew 10:1-4
Friday	Matthew 18:1-5	Matthew 10:5-10
Saturday	Matthew 18:10-14	*

# Unit 5

## Holy Qurbana

### Chapter 18

## The Holy Eucharist: A Fellowship of the Whole Church

**Message:** Students shall understand that the Holy Eucharist is a fellowship of the visible and the invisible Church.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

### Introduction

A beautiful element in the Christian Church is its fellowship. The word used for this fellowship in the New Testament is ‘Koinonia’. In this fellowship, the members of the invisible Church and the faithful of the visible Church come together to Jesus Christ. The fellowship of the Church becomes complete only when the living and the departed come together. The time of celebrating the Holy Eucharist is the greatest moment in which the complete fellowship of the Church gets expressed and experienced.

### Lesson

Let us analyse the Bible passage which tells us about the fellowship in the Holy Worship.

### Revelation Chapters 4 to 6

Revelation 4-6 presents the meaning and objective of worship in the early Church. Jesus Christ who Incarnated for the salvation of the world was called, “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” by St. John the Baptist (John 1:29). We read in Revelation how the Church worships this Lamb which was sacrificed on the day of the Passover for the salvation of the world (Revelation 4-6). The important ideas of this passage could be summarised as follows.

1. God the Father sits on a throne in heaven. Twenty four elders sit around this throne. They represent twelve tribal heads of the Old Testament. The Lamb which

was slain stand in the middle of heavenly creatures who shout “Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come” (Revelation 4:8).

2. Several terms (eg. Amen), gestures (eg. Prostration or falling on the ground and worshipping) and liturgical instruments (eg. Censer) we use in the Holy Eucharist today are found in the description of this worship.
3. The worship of the Lamb takes place where one lakh forty four thousand people assemble, twelve thousand each representing each tribe of Israel. The souls of those who were slaughtered for the Word of God and for the testimony they had given are seen under the altar (Revelation 6:9). From this we can understand that this worship is an assembly of the living and the dead.

### **The Holy Eucharist as a fellowship of the heavenly hosts and earthly**

**Church:** We have seen that heavenly hosts and earthly creatures assemble alike in the Holy Eucharist. The angels, the saints and the faithful departed come together and join the living the Eucharist. We believe that the visible and the invisible Church assemble in our present day Eucharist also. The invisible Church includes the angels, saints and martyrs. That is why we pray for the presence of angels, and symbolically leave isle of the church building free for the presence of the invisible Church. You might have seen deacons offer incense bow before this invisible Church. Icons of angels and saints help to realise the presence of the ‘invisible Church’ with us.

**The dead and the living assemble in the Holy Eucharist:** The Orthodox faith holds that the souls of the departed participate in the divine worship. That is why we remember the departed at our prayers. In the litany and hymns in the Eucharist, we pray with and for the departed. Moreover on commemorative prayers called ‘Thubden’ (Diptychs) we remember the martyrs who died for Jesus Christ and the Church Fathers as well as our departed relatives.

In the hymn “In oblations and in prayers...”, sung after the elevation of the Holy Mysteries in the Eucharist, the following idea is presented. We should remember our departed parents, brothers and sisters in our canonical prayers and the Holy Eucharist. They have taught us the Orthodox faith so that we shall became the children of God. May the Son of God would give them comfort with saints and the righteous ones in the eternal world of the Kingdom of God. O Lord help us and have mercy on us.

When you participate in the Holy Eucharist, you shall be aware of this fellowship of the visible and the invisible Church. Though our dear relatives departed from this world, they worship the Lord along with us in the Holy Eucharist.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, enlighten and purify us to praise Your glory. Amen*

.....

**Resolution**

*We will partake in the Holy Eucharist with reverence.*

.....

**Activities**

1. Find out the prayers and hymns commemorating the departed used in the our Holy Eucharist.
2. Read the Book of Revelation Chapters 4 to 6 and write down the prayers you see there.
3. Find out from the list given below the members of the invisible Church remembered in the fourth 'Thubden'.

St. Mary	Sarah, wife of Abraham
Prophets	Teachers
Apostles	Martyrs
Evangelists	St. John the Baptist
Job	St. Stephen
Philip	St. Thomas
Peter	St. Paul

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Luke 4:1-6
Monday	Matthew 19:1-6	Luke 4:7-12
Tuesday	Matthew 19:7-12	Luke 4:13-20
Wednesday	Matthew 19:13-20	Luke 4:21-27
Thursday	Matthew 19:21-26	Luke 4:28-32
Friday	Matthew 19:27-28	Luke 4:33-40
Saturday	Matthew 19:29-30	*

## Chapter 19

# Meaningful Participation of the Faithful in the Holy Eucharist

**Message:** The laity are not mere spectators in the Holy Eucharist. There should be full and perfect participation of the body, mind and spirit.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them” (St. John 6:56).

### Introduction

The Holy Eucharist required our meaningful participation in the Holy Service. Certain Churches permit their priests to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in private (eg. Roman Catholic Church). But our Church doesn't permit such a practice. We can understand this if we examine the Book of Liturgy carefully. There are prayer to be said by the priest, the deacon and the laity through out our Liturgy. Some Churches require only the priest and the choir to complete their worship. But our holy liturgy becomes complete only with the meaningful participation of the congregation through appropriate responses to the prayers. Moreover, as the priest prays for the laity, the laity need to pray for the priest in return. Do you remember what the priest says at the last part of the Final Benediction at the end of the Holy Eucharist? He requires the congegation of pray for him always. This is similar to the Jews standing in the valley of Mount Sinai and praying for Moses while the prophet was conversing with the Lord up in the mountain. The participation of body, mind and spirit in worship to very essential. We realise this through the experiences of our sense organs, both internal and external.

### Lesson

#### **Complete participation of an individual in the Holy Eucharist.**

The Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches give great importance to preaching in their scheme of worship. The focal point of their Holy Communion is the preaching. However in our Liturgy, the laity are not supposed to be mere 'listeners'. The participation of all the five senses are very important in our worship. Our Holy Eucharist gives opportunities to see, hear, taste, smell and touch.

#### **Look at this passage**

The Apostles gave witness to “what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life...” (1 John 1:1). Our worship will become complete only if we have a similar experience of God in all aspects of our persons.

**1. Seeing (Isaiah 6:1-8):** The Orthodox Churches insist on decorating the place of worship beautifully. The decorations, candle light, icons and paintings in the church and the Holy of Holies should be as meaningful as those arrangements made by Moses upon God's command in the Tabernacle and by Solomon in the Temple of Jerusalem. In the Byzantine Orthodox churches, the icons on the inner and outer walls of the church provide a heavenly experience to the laity. Even though we do not have elaborate icons, the decorations in the altar and the vestments of the priest are pleasant to the eye. Moreover each of them have the scriptural background of the Holy Bible and the Holy Eucharist.

**2. Hearing (Revelation 5:11-13):** Chanting and melodious singing are the essential elements in the Orthodox worship. We say that we chant the liturgy rather than 'read' it. The orderly 'choir' in the churches enhance the auditory sweetness of worship. However, the Holy Eucharist shall never end up a 'musical concert'. That is why musical instruments are not allowed in excess within the church. The prayers and hymns should be related by the congregation of believers. The duty of the choir is to lead them for this. Neither the sound of musical instruments nor the song of the choir should drown or supercede the prayers of the congregation. The laity should recite the prayers harmoniously when they participate in the Holy Eucharist. The sounds produced by bells and the 'fan' (Marvahas) should accompany the recitals of the laity. We also have the practice of tolling the church bell during the important parts of the Holy Eucharist.

**3. Smell (Malachi 1:11, Revelation 8:4):** The use of sweet incense during the Holy Eucharist is a very meaningful practice. The fragrance from the censer in which frankincense is burned creates a heavenly atmosphere. Haven't you seen the practice of bowing before the Cross on Good Friday? There too the incense has a significant meaning presence of God and saints. It symbolizes the prayers going up to heaven.

**4. Touching (Isaiah 6:7):** Earlier the Kiss of Peace at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist was conducted with the laity physically kissing each other. Later this was changed to hugging and shake hand in certain places. We follow the practice of touching the palms of the other person with our palms. When the prayer of peace is said we shall exchange the 'Kiss of Peace' looking into the eyes of the fellow worshippers. It should not be a mechanical exercise. We should not have any hatred towards any one. Jesus Christ asks us to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters before offering our gifts on the altar (St. Mathew 5:23-24).

**5. Taste (Psalms 34:8):** Our participation in the Holy Eucharist becomes complete with the Holy Communion. We receive the body and blood together in our Holy Communion. The priest pours the blood (wine) in the Chalice onto the body (bread)

in the Paten before giving us the Holy Communion. They are the blood and body of Christ who became Incarnated, Crucified and Resurrected from the dead for our salvation. So we receive the living body and blood of our Lord in faith. Thus the Holy Eucharist is not meant to be a public performance which makes us more spectators or listeners. Our body, mind and spirit should participate in it in one accord. We should 'experience' it through our five senses.

**Activities**

- Say how the following sense organs contribute to our sensory experience of the Holy Eucharist.
  - Eye: .....
  - Ear: .....
  - Nose: .....
  - Tongue: .....
  - Skin: .....
- Conduct a discussion in the class about the need and role of choir in the Holy Eucharist.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	1 Corinthians 12:1-6
Monday	Acts 10:1-4	1 Corinthians 12:7-10
Tuesday	Acts 10:5-9	1 Corinthians 12:11-16
Wednesday	Acts 10:10-16	1 Corinthians 12:17-21
Thursday	Acts 10:17-21	1 Corinthians 12:22-26
Friday	Acts 10:22-26	1 Corinthians 12:27-29
Saturday	Acts 10:27-30	*

# Unit 6

## The Basic Dogmas

### Chapter 20

### 'Moranaya' Feasts

**Learning Objective:** To Learn about the feasts that shall be observed like Sundays.

**Verse to be Memorised:** "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long" (Psalms 23:6).

#### Introduction

Orthodox Churches retain the Holy Tradition, sacred liturgy and writings of Church Fathers. 'Moranaya' feasts are connected with the incidents in the life of Jesus Christ, recorded in the Holy Bible. In this lesson, we learn more about this.

#### What are Moranaya Festivals?

The Syriac word 'Moran' means 'Our Lord Jesus Christ'. The Moranaya feasts are described as the feasts related to Jesus Christ. Though all days in the life of Jesus Christ are important, the Church has given supreme importance to some of them. These feasts help us to meditate and participate in spirit in the life of Jesus Christ and experience God's presence in our lives.

#### How are Moranaya feasts celebrated?

The "Moranaya" day is observed like a Sunday. Like on Sunday, The Holy Eucharist is celebrated on these feasts days and the faithful shall participate in it. The 'Promeyon', 'Sedra', readings from Holy Bible, 'Evangelion' and hymns for each feast are specific for the day. There is no kneeling or prostration down from the vespers of the previous day till the None of the next day (just as we do on Sundays). If the feast falls on Wednesday or Friday, there is no need to observe fasting, as we receive the Holy Communion. This also means that we should partake of the Holy Communion on these days. We should stay away from worldly activities, as on Sundays and devote our time for activities like spiritual reading and charity work. Since the Moranaya feasts of Easter and the Pentecost fall on Sundays, the list of feasts given doesn't include them.

#### Which are the Moranaya Feasts?

**1. The Feast of Christmas or 'Yeldo':** Yeldo is a syriac word meaning 'birth' or 'revelation'. The birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated with twenty five days Advent Lent. The feast of Yeldo is properly known in 'Christmas'. Orthodox tradition gives more

importance to twenty five days lent and the special liturgical service of Yeldo held in early morning of December 25.

**2. The Feast of Epiphany or 'Danaha':** Though Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, He started His public ministry only at the age of thirty after being baptized by St. John the Baptist in River Jordan. So Baptism of Jesus Christ is the time of His 'descend' in this world. We celebrate Feast of 'Danaha' on January 6 to commemorate this event.

**3. 'Maayaltho' or Presentation of Jesus Christ at the Temple of Jerusalem:** Jesus Christ was presented to the Lord on the fortieth day of His birth at the Temple of Jerusalem. This event is remembered on February 2.

**4. 'Suboro' or The Feast of Annunciation (March 25):** The Incarnation of Jesus Christ became possible because St. Mary submitted herself to the Lord's will. Hence Annunciation event is very important. Annunciation to St. Mary is also remembered on the fifth Sunday preceding Christmas. Even if the feast of Annunciation comes during the Passion week during the Great Lent, the Holy Eucharist should be celebrated. The prayers and prostration usual for Great Lent are not allowed on the day and the day should be observed like a Sunday.

**5. The Feast of Transfiguration of Jesus Christ (August 6):** It commemorates the revelation of Jesus Christ's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mount Tabor). It is also called the Feast of Tabernacle.

**6. 'Suloko' (Ascension of Jesus Christ):** The date of this feast is not fixed. Ascension is celebrated on the Thursday which comes forty days after Feast of Resurrection. The Sunday that falls on the tenth day after Ascension, is observed as the day of the Pentecost. The Church teaches that the ten days between Ascension and the Pentecost should be observed as 'Days of Awaiting'. That is why the Church doesn't permit marriages during those ten days.

**7. Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14):** Queen Helen, mother of Emperor Constantine who proclaimed Christianity as one of the official religions of the Roman Empire visited Jerusalem and discovered the Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. This Cross was taken to Rome with great devotion and honour and was placed on the altar of a newly built Church with a lot of festivities. The Church remembers this incident as the day of the discovery and exaltation of the Holy Cross.

### **Feasts to be observed like Moranaya Feasts**

All the above mentioned feasts are directly connected with the life of Jesus Christ. Some other feasts do not have direct connection. Yet they are important in understanding the Christian faith and tradition. Hence such three feasts are included in the group of feasts to be observed in the same status as Sunday. They are:

**1. The Memorial Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29):** The thirteen days lent (Lent of the Apostles) which begins on June 16 ends with the feast St. Peter and St. Paul on June 29. St. Peter was crucified upside down and St. Paul was executed in AD 64 during the persecution by Roman Emperor Nero. This feast commemorates their martyrdom.

**2. 'Dukrono' or the Memory of St. Thomas (July 3):** St. Thomas, the Apostle of India was martyred on December 21 at Mylapore. His relics were taken to 'Uraha' (Edessa) in the fourth century. This event is remembered on July 3. The Malankara Church observes his memory on December 21 as well because St. Thomas is the founder of the Indian Church.

**3. 'Shuoyo' or the Ascension (Dormition) of St. Mary (August 15):** At the end of Sunoyo lent for fifteen days (from August 1 to 15), we observe the Feast of Dormition of St. Mary. The tradition of the Church tells that the Mother of God was taken to heaven with special honours.

### Activities

1. What do we mean by 'Moranaya' feasts? What is meant by saying that they should be observed like Sundays? Find out how each Moranaya festival is celebrated?
2. Are we able to celebrate all these feasts like Sundays? If not, identify the reasons.
3. Generally Sundays are holidays. But Moranaya feasts fall on week days. How can we make their observance more effective?
4. What is the importance of August 15 besides being the feast of St. Mary? How can we combine all these significances in our observance of the day? Discuss your suggestions.
5. Read and comprehend the list of Lenten seasons.

### Further Reading

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Luke 2:8-20
Monday	John 6:55-59	Luke 3:2-22
Tuesday	1 Peter 3:18-22	Luke 2:41-51
Wednesday	John 20:19-23	Luke 1:26-38
Thursday	John 6:50-71	Matthew 17:1-13
Friday	Psalms 40:6-11	Luke 24:50-53
Saturday	1 Corinthians 13:8-13	*

## Chapter 21

# Holy Sacraments - An Introduction

**Learning Objective:** To understand the meaning and significance of the Sacraments and comprehend their Biblical and theological bases.

**Verse to be Memorised:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (St. Matthew 28:19-20).

### Lesson

Let us look at reference to the sacraments given in the Holy Bible (eg. the Baptism of Jesus Christ).

Baptism ( St. Matthew 28:19-20, St. John 3:5, 16, St. Mark 16:16)

Mooran (Sacred anointment, 1 Corinthians 3:6)

The Holy Eucharist (St. Luke 22:19-20, St. John 6:48, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Priesthood (Acts 6:16, 14:23)

Anointing with Holy Oil (Sacrament of Healing, St. Mark 6:13, James 5:14-16)

Confession (St. John 20:23)

Marriage (St. Matthew 19:2-9, Ephesians 5:25)

### What are Sacraments?

The English word ‘Sacrament’ comes from the Latin word ‘sacramentum’. The Orthodox Churches prefer to call the sacraments as ‘Holy Mysteries’. The word ‘mystery’ came from the Greek word ‘mysterion’. Augustine of Hippo described a sacrament as ‘an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.’ We cannot comprehend the essence of sacraments using our intellect. The Orthodox Churches give importance to participating in the sacraments meaningfully and receiving the special experience of them.

### An Entrance to the Lord’s Court

H.G. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios, who is a renowned scholar, describes the sacraments as follows. ‘There are ranks of heavenly hosts consisting of Apostles, saints and angels standing around the throne of the Lord. We can describe it in human terms as God’s court. It is a great fortune to get an opportunity to enter this court. This court is realised in this world through the sacraments. In each sacrament, Mother

of God, Apostles, and the departed saints join with the sinful humankind.' The bishop teaches us that the sacraments enable us to grow in purity.

The ultimate aim of sacraments is to lead us to sanctity. Even though our personal sorrows and needs can be removed through the sacraments, our ultimate goal should not be this. Jesus Christ has commanded us in St. Matthew 6:33. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you". A good relationship with God will provide us all our physical needs. When we reach this stage of relationship with God, we won't try to attain our greedy and selfish needs through prayer.

### **How should we understand the Sacraments? What is meant by saying that they are Holy Mysteries? How are the Sacraments different from other prayers?**

There are numerous prayer groups around us. While some people participate actively in the worship in the church, other prefer such prayer groups. We should learn how the Sacraments of the Church are different from those prayer groups. There are two important features which distinguish the sacraments.

**1. The Sacraments originate in Jesus Christ.** The Church Fathers teach us that Jesus Christ Himself is a sacrament. This means, it is impossible for human beings to save the humankind which had fallen into sin as a result of the disobedience in the garden of Eden. Only God can work out human's salvation. A God-man who combined divine and human nature was required for God to commune with humans. Hence Jesus Christ who was the second person of the Holy Trinity took human form without shedding His divine nature. Jesus Christ became the means through which God's grace was given to the world. It is in this sense that we say that Jesus Christ is the prototype of all the sacraments.

**2. The Church owns all Sacraments.** Individuals can come together and pray. But they cannot administer the sacraments. God has entrusted the Church to administer sacraments. During this Incarnation, Jesus Christ selected twelve Apostles and gave them authority to continue all that had done in this world. Later seventy messengers were also given this authority (St. Luke 10:1-16). Christ gave authority to cast out evil spirits, resurrect the dead and heal the sick as well as all His graces to the Church. For example in order to baptize a person there should be water, a priest to conduct baptism, and the presence of Holy Spirit. All these aspects were there when Jesus Christ received His baptism. We see water of Jordan river, St. John as the Baptist, and the descend of the Holy Spirit (St. Mathew 3:13-17).

When Jesus Christ broke bread and gave it to His disciples saying that it was His body and blood, He was making use of mere earthly matter (bread and wine) for His

purpose. But when Jesus Christ gave them to His disciples, they were transformed into real body and blood. The disciples who travelled to Emmaus were once again convinced of this fact (St. Luke 24:13-35). If God's grace is to permeate on matter, an individual, however personal goodness he has, cannot do it alone. This grace has to spread out in the world through the Church. God's grace will spread out through matter like water, oil, bread, wine, ring or chain. This invisible grace comes to us through visible means when the priest authorized by the Church officiates them, together with the believers, within the Church. Hence the Orthodox Churches believe and teach that sacraments are better means of receiving god's grace.

### **Number of Sacraments**

Roman Catholic Church talks about seven sacraments. But the Orthodox Churches do not fix the number like that.

### **Activities**

1. How do sacraments differ from prayer fellowships? Discuss.
2. In what sense do we say that Jesus Christ himself is a sacrament? Discuss.
3. If the ultimate goal of all sacraments is acquiring godliness, can we receive sacraments for personal benefits. Discuss in groups.
4. Why is that the Orthodox Churches do not insist on the number '7' for sacraments, like the Roman Catholic Church?

### **Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	St. Matthew 28:19-20, St. John 3:5
Monday	Acts 19:1-6	Acts 8:14-17
Tuesday	St. James 5:14-15	St. Mark 19:22-25
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	St. Mark 2:1-10
Thursday	St. John 20:21-23	St. Mark 6:12-13
Friday	Acts 20:25-31	St. Mark 10:2-12
Saturday	Ephesians 5:32-33	*

## Unit 7

# Great Men of God

### Lesson 22

## St. George, the Martyr

**Theme:** St. George was a great martyr who lived and died for Jesus Christ. He exemplified the words of St. Paul that “For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain” (Philippians 1:21). We shall seek refuge in his intercession for strength in times of adversity.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it” (St. Luke 9:24).

### Introduction

We have already learned about the saintly martyrs in lower classes. We call them ‘martyrs’ because they renounced the world, family, and clan for Jesus Christ and lived and died for Christ. Haven’t you heard about the St. George Orthodox Church at Puthupally in Kerala? Have you ever visited this Church? Who was St. George? St. George is one among the great martyrs. He began his life as a soldier, fought well, conserved faith and attained the crown of glory. Today we are learning about St. George.

### Lesson

What comes to our minds when we hear the name of St. George is the picture of an armored soldier mounted on horseback in the act of killing a poisonous serpent with his lance.

St. George was born into an aristocratic Christian family of Cappadocia in AD 283. When his father died, he went to Palestine with his mother and lived there. Palestine had been his mother’s native place. When he grew up into a well-built and energetic youth, he joined the military service. Because of his intelligence, proactive attitude and service mindedness, he was promoted to various cadres of military service and finally became the commander of the army. He enjoyed the favours of Emperor Diocletian (AD. 284-305) who entrusted several, administrative responsibilities with him.

The emperor delegated him as his ambassador to various foreign countries. Thus he could visit various foreign countries and carry out diplomatic missions. One

important centre of his activity was England. As a result he was raised to the status of the Patron saint of England in later ages. While in England he heard about the anti-Christian proclamation of Emperor Diocletian and returned to his home land. He declared his Christian faith before the Emperor. He tore away the copy of royal decree to register his protest. The emperor flew into a fit of rage and subjected him to terrible torture. He was mounted on a spiked wheel and was inflicted with terrible injuries. Later he was drowned and thrown in bonfire with the purpose of killing him. But he survived all these tortures. Finally he was guillotined at Nicomedia on April 23, AD. 303 and he became the first martyr during the time of Emperor Diocletian. Devotees around the world observe April 23 as his day of Commemoration.

The story of the serpent is a famous legend associated with his life. A poisonous serpent appeared in the marshy lands of a village called Salena in Libya. The poisonous gas that exuded from its mouth caused terrible diseases to people. Moreover it began to hunt humans and animals for food. People grew afraid. They started giving two goats everyday as food for the serpent. When goats became scarce, they drew lots and sent a human being each to the serpent. Once the lot fell on the princess of the land. The unfortunate virgin was decorated like a bride and was placed near the marsh. As the king and the people were retreating from the marshes, St. George came that way. He saw the princess and enquired. When he learned that the serpent was the cause of all that trouble, he killed the serpent and rescued the virgin. The trunk of the slaughtered serpent was carried off in four chariots. The king and his subjects were converted into Christianity.

The truth of this legend had been controversial. Whether true or false, this legend gives us a great message. Christian life is a struggle. Each Christian should be a soldier fighting for true faith, righteousness and justice. He should also fight against vices, injustice and devilish forces.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O, St. George the martyr, intercede for us. Help us to remain steadfast in faith in times of temptations, problems and adversity. Amen*

.....

**Resolution**

*Like St. George we will readily lay down our lives in our fight against injustice.*

.....

## Let Us Think

1. Who was St. George?

.....

2. In which period did he live?

.....

3. When is his day of commemoration observed?

.....

4. Name the Emperor who reigned during his time.

.....

5. Name a few famous churches founded in the name of St. George?

.....

.....

6. What is the famous legend associated with St. George?

.....

.....

## Activities

Sing 'Maargam Kali' songs about St. George and teach the students those lines. Teach 'Maargam Kali' if possible.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Romans 8:31-35
Monday	Luke 6:20-26	Matthew 10:26-33
Tuesday	2 Timothy 1:1-12	Hebrews 10:26-29
Wednesday	1 Thessalonians 2:1-15	Romans 13:1-14
Thursday	2 Corinthians 6:1-10	Romans 9:1-13
Friday	Acts 12:1-19	Romans 5:12-21
Saturday	2 Corinthians 4:7-10	*

## Lesson 23

# St. Joseph

**Theme:** St. Joseph, the step father of Lord Jesus Christ is a saint who renounced his personal likes and submitted himself to the will of God. He lived according to the word of God. The Holy Bible testifies that he was a just man. Let his intercession help us to live according to God's righteousness.

**Verse to be Memorized:** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (St. Matthew 5:6)

### Introduction

Recollect what you have learned about the birth of Jesus Christ and about St. Mary in the previous classes. Do you remember the names of the saints of Malankara Church? Who are saints? They are people who lived according to God's will. They provide good models of philanthropy and communion with God. St. Joseph is one such saint. The incomparable role of Virgin Mary in the Incarnation of the Son of God is almost equaled by the role of St. Joseph. The references in the Holy Bible portray the role of St. Joseph in the scheme of salvation of Lord Jesus Christ. Yet most people don't acknowledge and respect him as a saint and seek his intercession. We shall look into the greatness of this saint on the basis of biblical proofs.

### Lesson

Joseph, the step father of Jesus Christ was born into the tribe of Judea and the clan of David (Refer to the genealogy given in St. Matthew 1:1-7 and St. Luke 3:24-38). It is generally believed that St. Joseph got married twice. It is traditionally held that the brothers James, Joses, Simon and Judas mentioned in St. Matthew 13:55 are the sons in his first wife. He married Mary after the death of his first wife. Virgin Mary got conceived by the Holy Spirit after the betrothal of Joseph and Mary. When Joseph came to know about it, his response was noble and great. We find Joseph's first response to the news in St. Matthew 1:19. "Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly".

The common procedure was to put away publically. But Joseph realized that it would cause shame to her before the world. Hence he decides to do it secretly. A just man is one who doesn't want to put another to shame before the world. Those who accuse others in public can't become just. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said. "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (St. Matthew 1:20-21).

Joseph obeyed the Lord's command and took Mary as his wife. We can't find another person like Joseph in the New Testament who directly received God's command. Joseph received the Lord's command four times in his dream. When Mary was pregnant with the child, Augustus Caesar issued the decree that all people should register their names. Joseph went from Nazareth in Galilee to his own city, Bethlehem. He took Mary with him. What we see thereafter is the greatness of the pains taken by Joseph for the sake of Jesus Christ. They travelled a long distance to reach Bethlehem. But they didn't get room in the inn. Mary was in pain to deliver the child. The agony of Joseph when he couldn't find room for his wife to deliver the child would have been great. The Holy Bible doesn't state clearly where Mary gave birth to the child. St. Luke 2:7 records that the Child was laid in a manger because there was no room in the inn.

The child was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Jewish Scripture (St. Luke 2:21). On completion of forty days the child was taken to the temple of Jerusalem and a pair of doves were sacrificed (St. Luke 2:24). Simeon and Anna visited the child. The Magi from the east came and submitted gifts to child Jesus. Joseph was present on all these occasions.

When everything is settled, King Herod's ordered to kill all children below the age of two. However Joseph was warned by the angel of the Lord regarding the massacre of the Innocents. He fled to Egypt with the child. We do not know how long did he live in Egypt. We don't know how they earned their daily bread there. After the death of Herod, Jesus and Mary returned and dwelt in Nazareth. Thus Jesus Christ got the name 'Nazarene'. Joseph worked as a carpenter and looked after his family.

Later we see Joseph when Jesus Christ is twelve years old (St. Luke 2:41-51). A Jewish boy is raised to the status of 'son of the scriptures' at the age of twelve. He thereafter has to obey the laws completely. Joseph and Mary used to go to the Feast of the Passover every year. When he was twelve years old, Jesus Christ also went with them to the temple. The parents returned home leaving boy Jesus in the temple. They didn't notice that the boy wasn't with them because of the large crowd at the temple. His mother thought that he would be with the father and the father thought that he would be with the mother. They realized that Jesus wasn't with them only after a day's journey. We can imagine the panic of the parents at that time. They found him at the temple only after three days of searching. This reveals how anxious the parents have been. The last verse of the description is also notable. "Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (St. Luke 2:51). This passage teaches as that we should respect and obey our parents.

Here after the Holy Bible doesn't say anything about St. Joseph. Yet it is not wrong to believe that Joseph wasn't alive during the time of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. It is generally believed that Joseph died when Jesus was entering his youth

hood. Let the intercession of this saint who obeyed Lord's commands and suffered for the sake of Jesus Christ help as to defend ourselves during hardships in life.

.....  
**Hymn**

O Israelite - Son of king David-  
Master Carpenter  
Sentinel of Mother Mary -  
Grand old man revered by us  
Patron father of Jesus  
- O St. Joseph Perfect man  
Intercede - ever on our behalf.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O St. Joseph, pray on our behalf to Jesus Christ so that we are not disheartened in our sufferings. Help us to realize that sufferings yield tolerance, tolerance yield enlightenment and enlightenment yield hope so that we can praise Lord even in our sufferings. Amen*

.....  
**Resolution**

*We would do justice to Jesus Christ's commandments forever in our lives.*

.....  
**Let Us Think**

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Joseph'?  
.....
2. Which tribe was Joseph born into?  
.....
3. Where was Joseph born?  
.....
4. Where did Joseph live with his family?  
.....
5. What was Joseph's occupation?  
.....
6. How does the Holy Bible describe Joseph?  
.....  
.....

7. Name the sons of Joseph?

.....

8. How many times did Joseph see the Lord in his dreams?

.....

### Activities

I. Why did Joseph decide to put away Mary secretly? Tick (✓) the correct answer.

1. As per the scriptures.
2. To avoid putting her to shame before the world.
3. Fearing the humiliation he is likely to face.

II. What are the features of Joseph's character? Tick (✓) the correct ones and cross (✗) the wrong ones.

1. Just
2. Helpless in adversity.
3. Obeys Lord's commands.
4. Readiness to take up hardships.

III. Match the following suitably.

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Augustus Caesar | House of Bread        |
| Herod           | Let Lord Increase.    |
| Joseph          | Registration of Names |
| Bethlehem       | Massacre of Innocents |

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Matthew 1:18-24
Monday	Exodus 20:8-12	Matthew 2:1-12
Tuesday	Proverbs 6:20-23	Matthew 2:13-18
Wednesday	Genesis 2:18-25	Matthew 2:19-23
Thursday	1 Corinthians 3:9-12	Luke 2:1-7
Friday	1 Peter 5:5-7	Luke 2:21-24
Saturday	Luke 2:41-51	*

## Unit 8

# Good Habits

### Lesson 24

## Hospitality

**Theme:** Always show love, kindness, hospitality and respect towards others and be prepared to do good to others.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (St. Matthew 7:12).

### Introduction

When we visit another home, what reception do we expect from the inmates? We expect the hosts to welcome us and serve us food whole heartedly. We would be pleased only if the host behaves with love and hospitality. Today we are learning how to receive guests and behave hospitality towards them.

### Lesson

Imagine two guests visiting you at home. What will be your response when you see them? Will you be happy or will you feel irritated? We should receive guests with happiness. Good manners demand from us love, kindness and respect towards others. There are several good manners which we should observe. We should take special care in receiving guests and behaving cordially towards them.

One afternoon the parents went out to visit their friends. They left behind their children - eleven year old daughter Susan and eight year old son Rijo – at home. By five O’ clock in the evening their mother’s sister and her husband came to their house. Susan was doing homework and Rijo was playing cricket at that time.

As soon as the children saw the guests, they ran towards them and invited them to their living room. Susan greeted them and talked to them for a while. Then she went to the kitchen and prepared tea. She took some pieces of cake and a bunch of plantain from the cupboard and served her guests with them. Meanwhile Rijo was engaging the guests in a conversation. By the time the guests were about to leave, the parents returned. Their mother expressed regret in not being able to treat the guests. But the guests were quite happy with the hospitality shown by the children. They praised Susan and Rijo for their good behavior. Rijo had abandoned his computer

game to talk with them and Susan had laid the table for them. It was an act of appropriate conduct. Dear learners, what would you do if you were Rijo or Susan?

Good conduct is an important hallmark of culture. Possessing a behavior that can impress others and create happiness in them is a great asset. It will lead us to greater heights in life. We cannot get it merely from formal education. What is required is good training in manners. It is said that the British King George V had kept a board on his table on which it was written: "We would pass through this world only once. We should not fore go any opportunity to help and please others during this journey." All of us should uphold this principle in life.

One should receive one's training in good manners from the family at a tender age. The basic lessons of hospitality are learned from the cordial behaviour between members of the family. The training in receiving guests cordially and behaving with love and respect towards them should be got at a tender age itself. The children learn it from parents and other elders.

### **Abraham's Hospitality**

The hospitality of Abraham, our father of faith and the Lord's minion is a model for all of us (Genesis 18:1-10, 16). Abraham was living with his family in the oak grove at Mamre in Hebron. One day he had a pleasant experience. Three men came to the tent where they were living. They were strangers. Yet Abraham sprang up and ran to them and welcomed them. He bowed before them and pleaded not to go any further from them. "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant" (Genesis 18:3-5). These three men revealed Lord's plan for Abraham. As Abraham received these strangers and served them food, he became blessed. The guests who visited him in the tent were satisfied with the reception given to them. They gave the blessing that a son will be born to Abraham within a year.

### **The house that received Jesus Christ (St. Luke 10:38-42)**

Jesus loved Lazarus's home in Bethany very much. Jesus was given a loving welcome in that house. They took pleasure in listening to His words and serving Him food. Hence Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead and showed the greatness of hope.

One of the repeated themes of St. Paul's teachings is reception of guests. "Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers" (Romans 12:13). When St. Paul talks about heads of the Church, he reminds this to Timothy. "A bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable,

**hospitable**, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money” (1 Timothy 3:2-3). During the New Testament times very few inns were available for travelers. They were not safe as well. Hence believers reaching a place often longed to take lodgings, in the homes of other believers in that region. We should think that hospitality is the responsibility of our family. Those who maintain good friendship with others will be interested in hospitality.

A person, who pays attention to his behaviour and conduct, will be diligent while dealing with all others. When we show cordial and warm attitude towards relatives, guests and colleagues, we attract them to us. This helps us to maintain our friendship with them.

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, grant us the glorious company of saints, angels and Your beloved.  
 Amen*

.....

**Resolution**

*We will receive our guests with love and hospitality.*

.....

**Activities**

1. Who did Abraham welcome to his tent at Mamre? What did he do for them? Find out from the passage ‘Abraham’s Hospitality.’
2. Zacchaeus received Jesus Christ at his house. Read St. Luke 19:1-10 and say what transformation happened to Zacchaeus.
3. Write the biblical passage in which St. Paul speaks about hospitality and receiving guests.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	Romans 12:1-9
Monday	Genesis 18:1-8	Romans 12:10-21
Tuesday	Genesis 18:16-15	Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday	Genesis 18:16-19	1 Timothy 3:1-4
Thursday	Luke 10:38-42	1 Timothy 3:5-11
Friday	John 11:1-16	1 Timothy 6:17-22
Saturday	John 11:17-44	*

## Lesson 25

# Punctuality

**Theme:** Make your life successful by being punctual in life. When we do our work systematically we will achieve success in life. It help us to lead a satisfied life.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15)

### Introduction

Some achieve success in life. Some others fail in life. Have you ever thought why such failures happen? Life in this world is a gift of God. It is gifted to us in order to be lived according to God’s will. When we act with this goal in mind, life becomes successful. When we see life casually it becomes a failure. This lesson deals with how to lead an orderly life.

### Lesson

What do we see in the mornings? The sun rises in the east. New buds bloom on plants. Bees and butterflies flutter around for drinking nectar from flowers. Birds ring from tree tops. Thus a new day makes all creatures of nature do their work actively. All activities in this universe take place as decided by God. The various activities of nature take place like parts of a well oiled machine as decided by God. Human beings should also observe certain orderliness in their life.

However most of us fail to be punctual in life. Birds wake up in the morning and sing God’s praise. They won’t change this routine during any reason. But what about us? On some days we gets us early; on some others we gets up late. We pray on certain days; on other days we doesn’t pray. Sometimes children won’t spend their time for studies. Instead they would devote more time for entertainment, mobile phone games, chatting and browsing. We should study our lessons systematically. We think we can study when exams approach. But we will fail to study all the lessons together at the time of exams.

The main reason for this failure is lack of punctuality. Laziness causes lack of punctuality. Mahatma Gandhi has said that laziness is the cause of all evil. His life was a true model in the case of punctuality. His body and mind worked like a clock. Gandhi had to deal with a lot of things; but he set apart time for each work and followed his schedule.

There are people who abandon the work they had begun; some others continue with it half heartedly. If we run after many things at the same time, we cannot complete

anything satisfactorily. We fail to concentrate on one thing. No one will trust such people. Whatever work we do should give us satisfaction. We should allot time for each work and do it within the allotted time. We will get satisfaction only when we complete the works we have begun. Satisfaction prompts us to take up more tasks and do them properly. Thus our lives will become proactive ones.

We should not underestimate any task we undertake. We should neither feel discouraged that we cannot fulfill the tasks before us. We should complete our tasks systematically however small the tasks are only such people will be respected. Remember what Jesus Christ has told us: "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much" (St. Luke 16:10).

### **The Parable of Talents**

Lord Jesus Christ exhorts us to increase what we have got through the parable of the talents (St. Luke 19:11-27). The parable tells us that a noble man gave ten minas to his ten servants before he went to a far country. After he returned he called three of them to know what their achievements were. One servant earned ten minas and another one earned five. But the third servant was prejudiced against his master and had tied his mina up in a handkerchief. He did not make use of what he had got. The master scolded and punished this third servant (A variant of this parable is seen in St. Matthew 25:14-30).

Not making use of your talents is punishable. We need to have faithfulness, punctuality and sense of purpose to make use of our talents.

### **The Parable of Ten Virgins (St. Matthew 25:1-13)**

Five out of ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom forgot to take oil for their lamps. As a result they would not meet the bridegroom who came at midnight. These virgins were lazy ones. People who are punctual would do the right things at the right time. The blessed ones are those servants who remain awake when the Master comes.

### **Observe Discipline in Worship**

The prayer of Canonical Hours, the Holy Eucharist, feasts and fasting make us punctual in Christian life. Besides it will help us to be disciplined even in worldly life. Hence regular prayers, total participation in worship and genuine interest in feasts and fasting will make our lives well disciplined. Only those who can order their lives well and grow in goodness can achieve success in life.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), a scientist, statesman, and political philosopher took certain decisions in his life to manage time and execute all his duties well.

He said, "We should set apart time for each of the tasks before us before getting up from bed. I would plan out what I should do that day. I also want answer to what good I did that day before I go to bed at night."

What we often postpone are things which we have no interest in and which we find difficult to complete. But our burden doesn't decrease merely by postponing them. We should complete what we have to do a day within that day itself. Laziness and lethargy prompts us to postpone our work. Those who desire for efficiency will try to complete their tasks for a day before night.

Apostle James says: "Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14).

.....  
**Let Us Pray**

*O Lord, make us wise to use time prudently. Amen*

.....

**Resolution**

*We would lead a well disciplined life believing that time is precious.*

.....

**Activities**

1. Find out the differences between the parables of talents described in the gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew.
2. Write the parable of ten virgins in the form of a conversation.
3. Who does Apostle St. James address using the verse quoted in the lesson? Find out from the Holy Bible.

**Further Reading**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>
Sunday	*	James 4:13-17
Monday	Luke 16:1-4	Matthew 5:13-16
Tuesday	Luke 16:5-9	Ephesians 5:15-21
Wednesday	Luke 16:9-13	1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Thursday	Luke 19:11-27	1 Timothy 6:3-10
Friday	Matthew 25:1-3	1 Timothy 6:11-16
Saturday	Matthew 25:14-30	*

