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**The Coptic Orthodox
Diocese
Of the Southern USA**

Sunday School Curriculum

Grade 5



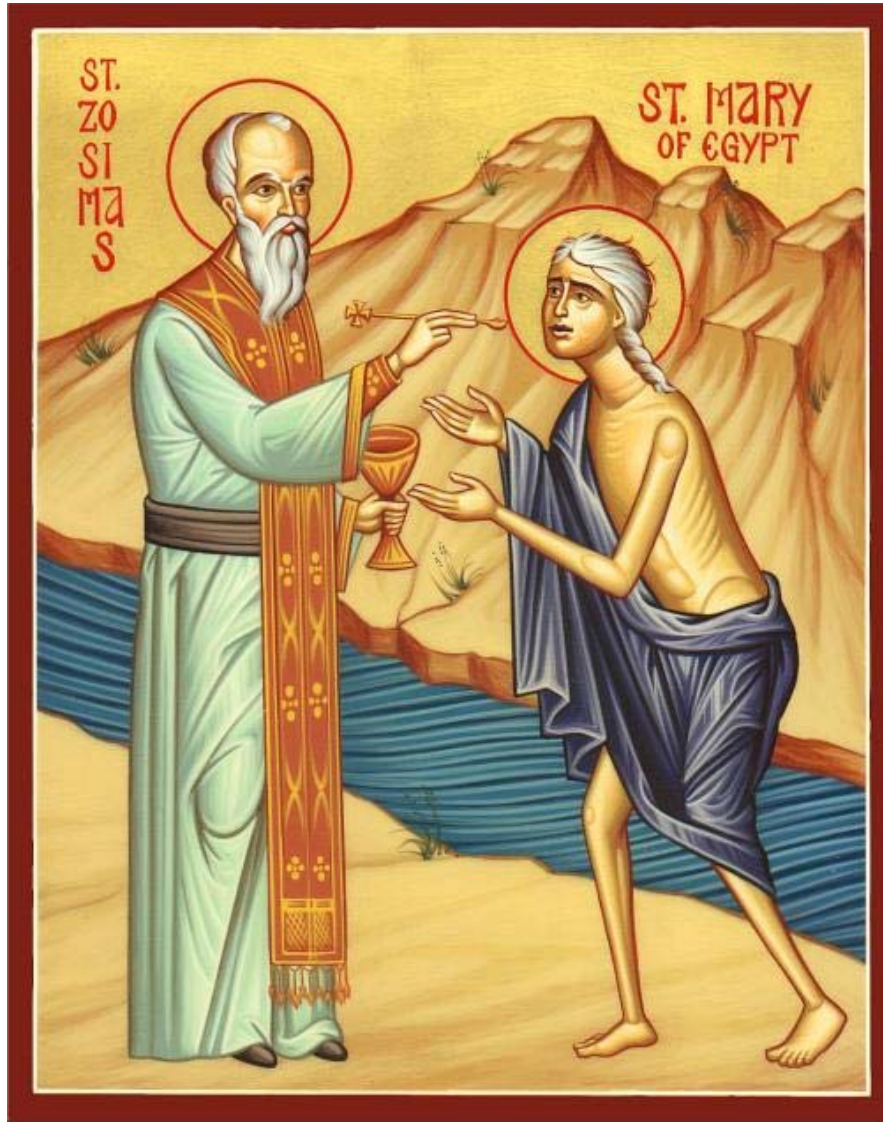




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PREFACE

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States, under the auspices of His Grace Bishop Youssef, felt the pressing need for a modified Sunday School Curriculum which would be better suited to address the problems and issues facing children both in America and the lands of immigration. Therefore, the efforts and time of many faithful servants have been dedicated to modify and improve the presently used English translation of the syllabus published by the Youth Services Committee of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. This has resulted in the elimination of many existing lessons from this syllabus and the substitution with new lessons that are more appropriate for our youth in American society. These additional lessons give greater consideration to the differences in quality of life, education, media influence, cultural differences and the surrounding diversity of beliefs between Egyptian society and that of the west

We pray that God may bless this work for the spiritual growth of our children in the immigration countries. We also thank His Grace Bishop Youssef for his continued support, prayers and motivating guidance in this service.

May God reward every servant who offered time and effort toward the completion of this Sunday School Curriculum.

“Thus Far the Lord Has Helped Us”

(I Samuel 7:12)



INTRODUCTION

This grade 5 Sunday school curriculum has been modified by substituting 25 lessons from the previous curriculum published by the Youth Service Committee of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate with new lessons that are suitable for the youth in America. The order of the lessons has also been changed to follow the major events in the church. This resulted in the following order assuming the starting date is the first week after the Coptic New Year celebration (El Nayrooz) on September 11:

- 3 lessons for the month of September
- 4 lessons for each of the months of October through January
- Variable number of filler lessons for the period between the beginning of February and Jonah's fast.
- 2 lessons, one before and one after Jonah's fast
- 7 lessons during the Great Fast
- 7 lessons for the period between Easter and the Feast of the Pentecost
- Variable number of filler lessons between the Feast of the Pentecost and the Apostles' Feast
- 3 lessons for the remainder of July after the Apostles' Feast
- 4 lessons for August
- 1 lesson for the first week of September

Please note that filler lessons can also be used for the occasional fifth Sunday in any month. These filler lessons are in the beginning of the book and it is preferable that they be used in sequence for the sake of unity in all the churches.

A. The Ten Year Old Child

The children need to perceive the likeness between their personal experience and the experience of the children of God, in the past and at present. In this way they perceive the continuous work of God in them. The students of grade 5 will still enjoy stories with visual aids but they are more critical of what they hear. They particularly like to ask logical questions and like to hear logical answers. The main theme to be conveyed at this age is that they are loved and respected. The child is sensitive in this age to his teacher's image. It is also a critical stage for developing their self-esteem.

B. Instructions to the Servant

Take your children and make a journey to several places where you meet several people in everyday life so that they may learn the good behavior of the saints. In the church they enjoy worship and fellowship with the church. In history they see the saints and the Lord working in them everywhere and at all times. Servants should also observe the following:

1. They should submit their life completely to the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. They should be friends to the children and good listeners to what they say.
3. They should help the children to cooperate in the class and develop good behavior.
4. They should expect sound discussions from the class and give the children due care.
5. They should prepare their lessons in an organized and interesting way.
6. They should be prepared to answer all questions
7. They should keep their classes in good condition and ask the children to help in this matter.

C. The Children

We notice the following:

1. They respond although they are indifferent sometimes.
2. They perfect what they do and like to receive information.
3. They like movement in work and tend to be independent.
4. Boys like to play with boys and girls like to play with girls. This is important to observe in journeys, in clubs and outdoor activities.
5. They like to perform their work secretly (personal matters, unknown places, writing autobiography). Hence they form groups in which they discuss their social concerns. They form theories, which may be wrong or right.

D. The Lesson

Church Education Service is divided into:

- A lesson full of prayer, knowledge, hymns and group interaction.
- Assignments in the form of Scripture studies, answering questions, drawing, etc.
- External social activities in which parents, pastors and children meet.
- Partaking of all types of public worship, teaching and various occasions.
- Deacon Servants should commit themselves to attending to the children with interest.

After all, this can still be considered as a preliminary modified curriculum for grade 5 that will require your feedback as a servant in order to continue the improvement process. Any inquiries or comments can be forwarded to **ssc100@juno.com**

May the Holy Spirit guide every servant using this curriculum.

FILLER LESSONS

These lessons are to be used for the fifth Sunday in a month and to fill the empty weeks due to the changing date of the Resurrection Feast.

1. Anba Pijimi
2. Incense
3. St. Mary the Egyptian
4. Solomon's Wisdom
5. Ahab and Naboth of Jezreel
6. St. Philip and the Ethiopian Treasurer
7. The Rich Man and Lazarus

1- Anba Pijimi

Objectives:

- ❖ To learn the story of Anba Pijimi
- ❖ To truly love our God with all our heart, soul, and mind

Memory Verse:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37)

References:

- ❖ Matthew 22
- ❖ The Coptic Synaxarium: 11th day of Kiahk (December 20)

Introduction:

- ❖ What is a monk?
- ❖ Have you ever seen a monk?
- ❖ How do monks live?
- ❖ Where do monks live?

Lesson Outlines:

A. The Life of a monk

A monk is a man who loves God very much and decides to leave the world and live in a monastery because he truly loves God from all his heart, soul, and mind. The only person the monk thinks about everyday is God. He does not think about the people in the world or the problems of the world, but his mind is totally occupied with God.

B. A boy named Pijimi

There was a boy named Pijimi that was born in Feesha, a city in Egypt. Pijimi from his very young age loved God very much. He loved God with all his heart, soul, and mind, and showed this love to God by always praying, fasting, and praising Him. Pijimi also continually showed his love to others always helping and obeying them.

C. A young man comes to Pijimi

Even though Pijimi was very young, he had a strong desire to live in God’s presence. So one day, when Pijimi was about 12 years old, a young man came to him. Pijimi was working in the field shepherding his father’s sheep. This young man came and told Pijimi “let us go and become monks.” Pijimi had this strong zeal because he always loved God with all his heart, soul, and mind. And so Pijimi agreed to go with this young man.

D. The young man is angel from God

As the young man and Pijimi walked in the desert of Scete, they talked about God's glory, sang hymns, and prayed showing that they truly loved God with all their heart, soul, and mind. As they arrived to the monastery of Scete, the young man all of a sudden disappeared. Pijimi understood that this young man was an angel from God guiding him to the monastery. Pijimi thanked God for His guidance.

E. The elders of Scete

As Pijimi knocked on the door of the monastery, three older monks, or elders, came to open the door. Pijimi told them about his desire for loving God with all his heart, soul, and mind and about how God sent an angel to guide him to the monastery. The three elders were happy with Pijimi and agreed that he could stay with them.

F. Twenty four years

Pijimi stayed in the monastery with the elders for twenty four years serving and obeying them. After twenty four years, the elders died, and Pijimi decided to move to a valley in the desert where he could live in total solitude with God. By living alone, his love and zeal for God would increase.

G. Anba Pijimi fasts

Since Anba Pijimi loved God very much with all his heart, soul, and mind, he did not care about eating. So Anba Pijimi used to fast for a whole week without eating while being absorbed in his prayers. At one time, he fasted for 80 days, where at the end of the fast, he ate a handful of dates and drank a little water.

H. God instructs him to go to Feesha

One day while praying, an angel appeared to Anba Pijimi and told him that God wanted him to go back to his city (Feesha). Anba Pijimi obeyed God and went to Feesha where he strengthened the people. The people saw that Anba Pijimi was a very good example for loving God, and they saw his face always shining with God's grace.

I. His death

After Anba Pijimi became old, it was time for him to depart from this world. Anba Pijimi did not fear death because he knew this would mean seeing his Beloved Christ. As Anba Pijimi was laid on his bed, he saw a choir of saints coming to him, and then he gave up his pure soul. Angels came and carried his soul to heaven singing hymns and praises.

Review Questions:

- ❖ When did Anba Pijimi begin to love God?
- ❖ Who appeared to him? What did this young man tell him?
- ❖ Where were they going? Who was really the young man?
- ❖ Who did Anba Pijimi stay with? For how long?
- ❖ Where did Anba Pijimi go after 24 years?
- ❖ And what did he do in the valley?
- ❖ Who appeared to him during his prayers? What did God want him to do?

- ❖ What did the people of Feesha see in Anba Pijimi?
- ❖ What did Anba Pijimi see before he died?
- ❖ What do we learn from this lesson?
- ❖ What is the verse?

Conclusion:

What does it really mean to love our God with all our heart, our soul, and our mind? It means to have complete trust in God and to have complete submission to His Word. To truly love God, we would have no fear about the decisions we must make, about the future, or about anything for “perfect love casts out all fear” (1 John 4:18). By loving God, we have complete trust in Him and we know He will take care of us and any problems that may arise in our life. We pray that God grants us this complete trust and love without fear.

Applications:

- ❖ ***Anba Pijimi’s love for God at a young age.*** How old did we say Anba Pijimi was when he began to love God with all his heart, soul, and mind? He was about 12 or even younger. So this teaches us that we **MUST** begin to love God **NOW**, while we are young. Most of you here are about the same age, so it is not too early, but this is the **BEST** time to really **LOVE** God.
- ❖ ***How do we love God?*** We love God by always thinking about Him and not doing things that we know will upset Him. For example, saying bad words, do you think this will upset God or not? Does this show that we love God or not? We should say nice words to others whether at church or at school or around our neighborhood. Also, sharing our toys with others shows that we love God. By sharing what we have with others shows that we love others and we love God. Obeying our teachers whether at school or at church shows God that we love Him. By being obedient to those who are older than us, shows God that we love Him and we are listening to His commandments.
- ❖ ***Others see God’s love in us.*** When Anba Pijimi went to Feesha, what did the people see in him? They saw that truly he loved God, and so we truly love God, it appears on our faces and our behaviors. If a person at school drops his books, many people would laugh at this person. But if we help this person pick up his books, we would be a good example for others. We would be an example of how much we love God by doing good things for others.
- ❖ ***Prayer is LOVING GOD.*** Of course doing all these things show that we love God very much, but prayer also shows that we love God. During Anba Pijimi’s life, he used to pray constantly showing his love to God. We show our love to God in our prayers because this is the time we speak to Him and tell Him exactly how much we love Him. If we have a best friend, we call our best friend and speak to him on the phone maybe for an hour or so because we love our best friend and we love speaking to him. So what about God, do we love talking to God and is He not our True Best Friend?

So it is very important that we pray in the morning as we wake up. In our morning prayers we are telling God “Good morning Jesus, Please be with me today. Protect me, etc.” And at night before we sleep we pray to God “Good night, Jesus. Thank you for being with me this day, and being with my brothers and sisters and my mom and dad, etc.”

2- Incense

Objective:

- ❖ Emphasizing the ritual spirit in worship
- ❖ Understanding the significance of rites since childhood so that the children may get used to worshipping with joy

Memory Verse:

“Let my prayer be set before You as incense” (Psalms 141:2)

References:

- ❖ Numbers 16:41-50
- ❖ Revelation 5:8
- ❖ “The Precious Pearls - The Minaret of the Holies”

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare a censer or a picture of a censer as a visual aid to the lesson.
- ❖ Ask:
 - ✠ Questions about showing severance for the House of God
 - ✠ Questions about how to be attentive when you pray
 - ✠ What can you see?
 - ✠ Of what use are the incense and the censer?
 - ✠ What do they mean?

Lesson Outlines:

This censer, which the priest uses in the prayers of the Divine Liturgy and the incense in it refer to the Virgin Mary (the Virgins Womb) who carried the Divine fire in her womb (Jesus Christ; the sweet-smelling incense and the Divine Fire). The censer’s dome and the three chains stand for the Holy Trinity (Discussion).

- ✠ When does the priest use this censer? In the evening raising of incense, in the morning raising of incense and in preparation for the Holy Mass.
- ✠ Incense is a sweet smelling (aroma) as the sweet-smelling life of the saints.
- ✠ Incense rises up to heaven as the prayers of saints do.

- ✠ Incense spreads everywhere and this refers to the fact that people see the image of Christ in the saints everywhere. So, whenever we see incense, we have to obey the deacon's warning and pray (Questions).

In fact, incense has been used in prayers since the time of Moses and Aaron (Questions about the story of Korah, Dathan and Abirarn and their destruction together with the rebels). Then the whole congregation rebelled against Moses and Aaron. Moses became very sad. The Lord was very angry. The Lord sent an epidemic and more than fourteen thousand people died. All houses were weeping and crying. Moses ordered Aaron to put fire coal in the incense and raise incense. As soon as incense rose, the epidemic stopped. The people thanked the Lord, as the prayers accompanied by incense were powerful. They promised never to rebel again (Questions).

Even in heaven, the Lord Jesus is sitting on the Throne surrounded by twenty-four priests carrying censers filled with incense, which is the prayers of the saints. That is why David says: "Let my prayer be set before You as incense" (Questions).

Conclusion:

When you see the incense in the church, let your prayers go up with them so that the Lord may accept them as sweet-smelling incense with the prayers of the saints.

Applications:

- ❖ Attend the Mass. Go early to church to attend the morning raising of incense.
- ❖ Pray to the Lord as soon as you see the censer.
- ❖ Select the right word in parenthesis:
 - ✠ Incense is the symbol of (reading the Bible -prayers -love).
 - ✠ When Aaron raised incense (the epidemic continued -the epidemic stopped).
 - ✠ In heaven there are twenty-four priests surrounding Christ and they are carrying (palm leaves -censers).

3- St. Mary the Egyptian

Objective:

- ❖ A worldly life keeps us away from God
- ❖ Repentance is the first step to get closer to God

Memory verse:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1)

References:

- ❖ Coptic Synaxarium
- ❖ “The Book of Saints” St. George and St. Joseph Church Montreal
- ❖ Butler’s lives of the Saints

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ We always read about the saints who led godly lives and we try to learn from their behavior and their sayings. However there are some saints were not as godly at the beginning of their lives. St. Mary of Egypt is one of those who lived a life of sin and led others to sin with her until she realized how far away she was from God.

Lesson Outlines:

In the reign of Theodosius the Younger, there lived in Palestine a holy monk and priest named Zosimus. Having served God with great fervor for fifty-three years was divinely directed to leave the monastery for one near the Jordan, where he might learn how to advance still further on the path of holiness. He found that the members of this community on the first Sunday of Lent after Liturgy used to disperse in the desert to pass in solitude and penance until Palm Sunday.

It was at that season, about the year 430 AD that Zosimus found himself a twenty days’ distance from the monastery, and sat down one day at noon to say his psalms and rest. Suddenly, something that looked like a human form appeared to him. He made the sign of the cross and finished his psalms. Then, looking up he saw a white-haired, sun-tanned figure which he took to be a hermit but which ran away as he went towards it. He shouted “In God’s name don’t run away”. As he said this the human figure cried, “Father Zosimus, I am a woman. Throw me your cloak that I may cover myself for I am naked”. Surprised that she should know his name, he complied and they entered into conversation.

In reply to his questions the woman told him her strange story with many expressions of shame and repentance. “My country is Egypt” she said. “At the age of twelve while my father and mother were still alive I went without their consent to Alexandria. I cannot think without trembling of the first steps by which I fell into sin or of the excess that followed”. She then

described how she lived as a prostitute for seventeen years, not for money, but to satisfy her lust. At the age of about twenty-eight, curiosity led her to join a band of people who were going to celebrate at Jerusalem the feast of the Holy Cross. Even on that journey she continued her evil courses, corrupting some of the pilgrims.

Upon her arrival in Jerusalem she tried to enter the church with the rest of the congregation but an invisible force held her back. After two or three attempts, she withdrew into a corner of the outer court, and for the first time a full realization of her sinfulness swept over her. Raising her eyes to an Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary she wept and asked the help of the Mother of God, vowing that if she could enter the church she would live the life of repentance and go wherever the Holy Spirit lead her.

She prayed and found herself able to enter the church. As she was going out of the church she heard a voice saying “Go over to the Jordan and you will find rest”. With these words she set out to her journey. At sunset she reached the church of John the Baptist on the bank of the Jordan. She spent the whole night weeping. In the morning she had communion, then went out to the shore and crossed to the other side. She found herself in the wilderness. She had seen no human being and had lived on edible plants and dates. The winter cold and the summer heat afflicted her body and she was tortured by thirst. She had been tempted to regret the luxuries and the wines of her life in Egypt. She fought these and other temptations for seventeen years. At her request, Zosimus agreed not to tell her story until after her death and promised to meet her again beside the Jordan on the Holy Thursday of the following year to give her Holy Communion.

The next Lent, on the Holy Thursday, Zosimus took the Body and the Blood of the Lord and he put some food in a basket and went to the Jordan. After a while he saw her coming on the surface of the water towards him. She asked him to bless her and she received the Holy Communion. Then she thanked him and asked him to come back the following year to the same spot.

Another year passed, and Abbot Zosimus went again in the wilderness. He reached the spot only to see her dead body lying on the sand and beside her on the sand were traced these words “Father Zosimus, bury the body of humble Mary. Render earth to earth and pray for me. I died the night of the Lord’s Passion, after receiving the Communion”. Father Zosimus was astonished about the way she returned to this place on the same night after receiving the Holy Communion last year, and how her body remained without decaying throughout the whole year.

At that moment a lion came from the desert to assist him and with his claws helped him dig her grave. Zosimus went back to the monastery and told the story of St. Mary to all the monks.

Review Questions:

- ❖ Who told the world about the life of St. Mary of Egypt?
- ❖ What made her have a change of heart towards God?
- ❖ How did she live a life of repentance?

Conclusion:

The Lord waits for us to come to Him, so He can show us His love. He is giving more time for sinners to repent. Let us make sure that nothing would keep us away from God.

Applications:

- ❖ Find names of other saints who started their lives as sinners and later came to the Lord in repentance.
- ❖ Every sin separates us from God. Try to identify the main sin you commit that separates you from God and repent and confessed it.

4- Solomon's Wisdom

Objective:

- ❖ Ask the Lord to give you wisdom before you do anything such as studying or playing.

Memory Verse:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10)

References:

- ❖ 1 Kings 3:16-27
- ❖ "Explanation of First Book of Kings" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare the picture of the lesson; a picture of a palace and a throne.

Lesson Outlines:

There was a great king named Solomon before the good king Hezekiah. Solomon became king after David his father (Describe how he was enthroned). He went to Gibeon to pray and ask the Lord to give him the grace of work. The Lord appeared to him and asked what he wanted to be given (Conversation between the Lord and Solomon. He did not ask for wealth or the death of his enemies or a long life but he asked for wisdom). The Lord was pleased and gave him everything. He began his rule with wisdom. They all noticed it and thanked the Lord (Questions).

One day two women came and presented themselves before King Solomon (let us call them the honest woman and the dishonest woman). They were weeping. They complained. They were living in the same house. They gave birth to two baby boys. One night, the dishonest woman accidentally rolled over her baby and smothered him. She got up during the night and replaced her dead son with the honest woman's live son. The next morning when the honest woman woke up and was going to feed her baby, she saw that he was dead. She screamed and was sad. When she looked at him more closely, she saw that he was not her child. She ran to the dishonest woman and told her: this is your son... where is my son? The dishonest woman replied: No, this is my son (Describe the feelings of the real mother, and their quarrel and their decision to go to King Solomon). The people standing at the king's palace were listening in amazement. How will this problem be solved? What will the king do? He will he prove the truth of either of these women? They were all perplexed... tears... discussion (Questions).

The king raised his heart to the Lord and prayed for wisdom. He sent for a sword and when it was brought he said, "Cut the living child in two and give each woman half of him". The real mother, her heart full of love for her son, said to the king, "Please...your Majesty, don't kill the child: Give him to her". But the false mother said, "Don't give him to either of us, go ahead and

cut him in two” (Describe the feelings of the real mother and the indifference of the false mother). Then King Solomon said, “Don’t kill the child! Give him to the honest woman... she is the real mother”. When the people of Israel heard of Solomon’s decision, they were all filled with deep respect for him, because they knew that God had given him the wisdom to settle disputes fairly. They said, “The Lord gives wisdom to anyone who asks for it... The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Questions).

Explain how the problem was complex and strange and that cutting the boy in two was out of wisdom granted by the Lord.

Conclusion:

- ❖ How lovely Solomon’s request was! He did not desire wealth... He did not want the heads of his enemies... He only asked for wisdom. Examine the types of your requests and concerns... are they spiritual or according to the desires of the flesh?
- ❖ Wisdom is necessary for the spiritual road and for everyday life. Pray to the Lord, the Father of Lights, to grant you wisdom.

Application:

- ❖ Pray and ask the Lord to give you wisdom before you study and before the examinations.
- ❖ Complete the following:
 - ✠ King Solomon asked the Lord to give him and the Lord gave it to him.
 - ✠ King Solomon said the child was the son of the woman who and not the son of the woman who
 - ✠ King Solomon was the son of King

5- Ahab and Naboth of Jezreel

Objective:

- ❖ The child should be accustomed to being satisfied with what he has. Do not desire anything that belongs to others and do not envy them.

Memory Verse:

“Be content with such thing as you have” (Hebrews 13:5)

References:

- ❖ 1 Kings 21
- ❖ “Explanation of First Book of Kings” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students what do they do if they want something or ask their parents for something and they do not get it?

Lesson Outlines:

King Ahab was a wicked king who did evil before the Lord as he married a pagan woman name Jezebel and through her paganism spread among the people of Israel. Jezebel cared for about 850 priests. So the Lord was angry with the people and prevented the fall of rain for three years (Discussion). Ahab did not repent but he went on committing sins and keeping away from the Lord and his heart was thick and dark. He was a cruel man as he sold himself to the devil (Questions).

One day, Ahab went out for a walk... He saw Naboth's vineyard. He asked about the owner of the vineyard (Describe the King and the people around him answering his questions). He sent for Naboth (a conversation between the merciless king and Naboth the poor man who insisted on keeping the land of his fathers for himself.) Ahab fell ashamed before the people. He was annoyed and went back home sadly (Describe how he entered the palace and how the soldiers saluted him and the music that was heard and how he grieved). Jezebel welcomed him. She was surprised to see him sad (A conversation between them... he refused to eat... She encouraged him to treat Naboth cruelly and promised that she would give him the vineyard...Questions).

Jezebel used the king's seal and called for the elders... They proclaimed a day of fasting... They got a couple of scoundrels to accuse Naboth of cursing God... The elders carried out the plan (Describe how they gathered people through horns. People were surprised. What is up? The people came quickly to the place of judgment).

The court was held... They stood in silence... Judgment began... They asked him... he denied... they bore false witness... They stoned him to death... They were all deceived... They left his dead

body for the dogs to lick it... They came back to Jezebel (Describe them when they told Jezebel of what they did...Jezebel and Ahab rejoiced). Ahab went out to take possession of Naboth's vineyard... He rejoiced as his hope was fulfilled (Questions).

Next morning, he woke and sat on his throne happily then he went to the vineyard. He saw a man coming from a distance... a girdle of leather around his waist... Ahab was horrified. That was Elijah... "Have you caught up with me, my enemy?" (Describe the conversation between them in a lively way... The Lord's judgment grieved Ahab)... he went sadly back to the palace... He told Jezebel of what happened... Days went by... The Divine words came true... Ahab was killed in the battle and the dogs licked up his blood, as they did for Naboth... and the same thing happened to Jezebel later on (Questions).

Explain that one of the causes of the king's wickedness is that he married a pagan woman and he acted according to her opinion and he agreed to all her wicked thoughts.

Compare the sharp contrast between Solomon's wisdom and Ahab's injustice as two kings ruling one people.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Injustice is a common sin -desire for having what belongs to others -cruel treatment - despising others because of their weakness or any spiritual blemish or inherent or social deformity is injustice.
- ❖ Injustice means a denial of the existence of God. It is known that God defends the oppressed and that the oppressor does not see that great and able supporter.

Applications:

- ❖ When you desire anything that belongs to your colleague, pray and ask the Lord to forgive you and say, "Be content with what you have".
- ❖ Search for another story in the Bible about injustice.
- ❖ Choose the right word:
 - ✠ Ahab was (a good king -a wicked king).
 - ✠ Jezebel caused the worship of (idols -God) to spread.

6- St. Philip and the Ethiopian Treasurer

Objective:

- ❖ To appreciate God's care for the gentiles
- ❖ To learn the importance of guidance in explanations of the Holy books
- ❖ To know the importance of baptism for the believers

Memory Verse:

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37)

References:

- ❖ The New Open Bible- Acts 8: 26-40
- ❖ The Arabic applied explanation of the Bible
- ❖ "Explanation of the Book of Acts" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Who are the gentiles? Explain to the students.
- ❖ What do you do when you read something in the Bible and you do not understand it?
- ❖ How frequent do we read the Bible? What is the importance of reading the Bible?

Lesson Outlines:

St. Philip was one of the disciples preaching Jesus Christ in cities around Jerusalem after the resurrection and the Pentecost. After he preached in Samaria, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him to go down the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. St. Philip followed what the angel told him and went to where he was told. There he met with an Ethiopian man who was the treasurer for the Ethiopian queen. He was also a man of a great authority. This Ethiopian treasurer came to Jerusalem to worship. St. Philip was lead by the Holy Spirit to go and meet this Ethiopian man. When St. Philip approached him he found him reading from the book of Isaiah (Ask the students what they know about the book of Isaiah. Give them a brief description of the book).

The Ethiopian treasurer was reading the following verses: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken" (Isaiah 53:7-8).

St. Philip asked the Ethiopian man if he understands what he is reading. The man answered that how can he understand without someone explaining for him. Then St. Philip was

immediately ready to tell him about Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected for our sake. The Ethiopian man believed in the Lord through the words of St. Philip.

As they were going down the road they came across some water. The Ethiopian treasurer then asked St. Philip to baptize him. St. Philip wanted to confirm that he believed in Jesus Christ before he baptized him. The man answered and said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). St. Philip immediately took him down to the water and baptized him.

When they came out from the water, the spirit caught St. Philip to another city called Azotus where he continued to preach. The Ethiopian treasurer saw him no more but he was rejoicing and very happy to become a Christian.

Review Questions:

- ✝ What was the job of the Ethiopian man?
- ✝ What was he reading?
- ✝ How did St. Philip find him?
- ✝ What did they do after he believed?
- ✝ What we learn from this lesson:

Conclusion:

- ❖ We must believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is our Savior and that the baptism is essential for us to inherit the kingdom of heaven and to be with our Lord Jesus Christ eternally.
- ❖ The Lord cared about everyone, Jews and gentiles. He wanted to spread the good news to all and therefore, the Holy Spirit guided St. Philip to preach to a gentile.
- ❖ Notice how St. Philip was ready to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus Christ immediately. We should also be ready to tell others about our belief and religion anytime we are asked.
- ❖ Also notice how important to seek guidance from spiritual individuals to understand the Bible.

Applications:

- ❖ Choose a trusted servant or a priest to help you understand unclear things in the Bible.
- ❖ Read the book of acts this month, one chapter every day. The servant should run a quick discussion about what was read every week with the students.
- ❖ Write a short 2 or 3 page project about Baptism.

7- The Rich Man and Lazarus

Objective:

- ❖ To obey God's commandments and to be merciful.

Memory Verse:

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7)

References:

- ❖ Luke 16:19-31

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the children where they think good people go to after they die?
- ❖ What do they think the heavens are like?
- ❖ This story can be read during class and acted out by some of the children.

Lesson Outlines:

This story is about a very wealthy man who lived a luxurious life while at his doorstep was a poor man named Lazarus, who barely had anything to eat. Lazarus was very hungry and his body was covered with sores. He desperately needed food but the rich man never cared much for Lazarus even though he knew that the law commanded people to care for the poor. One day both the rich man and Lazarus died. The rich man went to Hades and Lazarus went to the bosoms of Abraham. When the rich man saw Lazarus sitting with Father Abraham, he cried to Abraham and asked him to send Lazarus over to give him a drink to cool him from the fire of Hades. But Abraham refused because the rich man was being punished for not having been merciful while on earth. So the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers so that he can warn them about their bad behavior before it was too late. But Abraham told him that his brothers already have the prophets and the word of God to learn from.

- ✠ Children should know that wealth did not lead to the rich man's destruction but his cruelty and selfishness resulted in his destruction, and Lazarus was not rescued because of his poverty, but because of his patience, endurance and worship.
- ✠ Repentance and following the commandments of God are necessary.

You can make use of the stories about saints who used to give alms such as the story of Anba Sarabamun and Anba Abraam.

Review Questions:

- ❖ What do you think of the rich man's attitude towards Lazarus?
- ❖ What could he have done to help Lazarus, who was lying at his doorstep?
- ❖ Does this mean that all rich people are bad and all poor people are good?

Applications:

- ❖ Try to help one needy person this week.
- ❖ Recitation: Coptic Words
 - Jesus = Isous
 - God = Ifnoty
 - Our Father = Peniot
 - Love = Aghapi
 - Christ = Pikhristos
 - Savior = Soteer
 - Pray = Ishleel
 - Peace = Ireeni
 - And with the Spirit = Keto ebnevmati so

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
(Starting with the Coptic New Year)

Week 2- The Coptic New Year: John the Baptist

Week 3- Deborah the Judge

Week 4- Elisha Purifies the Water

Week 2- The Coptic New Year: St. John the Baptist

Objective:

- ❖ To learn the Christian courage

Memory Verse:

“Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man” (Mark 6:20)

References:

- ❖ Luke 1
- ❖ John 3
- ❖ Matthew 1,14
- ❖ “John the Baptist” translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ “John the Baptist” by Kamel Saleh Nakhla

Introduction:

- ❖ Sing the following hymn: O righteous people come...Let us go to the heavenly Jerusalem.
- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare the following visual aid: The pictures of John the Baptist carrying his head on a plate.

Lesson Outlines:

Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous people. They lived good lives in God’s sight. They prayed to the Lord that He might give them a son. They were very old. Zechariah was a priest (talk about his clothes, his work, the rituals in the temple, hymns, psalms, sacrifices, prayers, confession of sins). He always prayed. One day he was doing his work as a priest in the Temple. An angel of the Lord appeared to him standing on the right side of the altar (Describe the angel and the surprise). They spoke together (Lively conversation from the Bible). The crowds of people were outside praying and they were surprised to see him taking a long time. They kept silent and looked to one another and wondered “Why is he late? Is he dead? Later, he came out and they asked him... He made signs to them with his hands. He had seen a vision. They all waited to see the meaning of that vision and the mystery of that wonderful expected baby (Questions).

Days passed... Old Elizabeth gave birth to a baby boy. All the people were surprised...they were happy... The neighbors came to congratulate her. What will his name be? They asked his mother and she said, “John”. They refused that name, as it did not appeal to them. They asked Zechariah He wrote “John”. They were amazed. He spoke again. Their joy became double. Zechariah spoke about the child. He is an angel sent by the Lord, before sending His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ, to pave the way for Him... happiness... joy...repentance. The boy

grew up and Herod desired to kill him. The angel took the boy to the wilderness with the angels (Questions).

He grew up and was now thirty years old. People were sitting on Jordan Bank. This man is putting a leather girdle around his waist. Who is this? A stranger! Who are you? I am a voice crying out in the wilderness. They knew he was the Baptist and that he was to come before Christ. They all gathered to listen to him “His words were like fire”. He reproached people for their sins... They all wept... They all ...merchants, soldiers, officials...asked him “what must we do?” and he guided them... He who confessed his sins and repented was baptized in the Jordan... He said to the people: Christ will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (Questions).

One day the Lord Jesus came and John saw him and said, “This is the Lamb of God. This is the Son of God. People were happy to see Christ. Christ was baptized (describe the voice and the dove). Jesus went to the wilderness and fasted for 40 days. The King heard of John. He called him and listened to him. He feared him because he was a holy man. John warned him and drew his attention to his sin; marrying his brother’s wife (Herodias) while his brother was still alive. She was a wicked woman who encouraged the king to do evil and hated John because he used to warn him saying: This is not lawful. One day, during the king’s birthday party, her daughter danced. The king was drunk and made a promise to give her anything she might ask. She asked her mother of what to do and Herodias told her to ask for John’s head. He then ordered the beheading of John’s and John went up to heaven. The witness that Christ bore to him is enough for him, “Among those born of women, there has raised no one greater than John the Baptist”.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The Baptist was a model of Christian modesty so the Lord praised him saying: Among those born of women there has raised no one greater than John the Baptist.
- ❖ The Baptist was holy and righteous, so Herod was afraid of him... Modesty and holiness are the way of greatness.
- ❖ The Baptist bore witness to truth without showing anger, without defaming others or injuring their feelings. He spoke to the king and gently reproached him with love for he wanted to rescue him. He was ready to die for others.

Applications:

- ❖ Be brave. If you are asked to bear witness say the truth regardless of the consequences.
- ❖ Rearrange the following words: holy -man -and -a righteous -was -that -he -knowing -feared -Herod -John.
- ❖ Complete: Herod..... John as Herodias’ daughter on a plate.

Week 3- Deborah The Judge

Objective:

- ❖ To learn the story of Deborah as a wise judge
- ❖ To learn from the courage and leadership that she enjoyed

Memory Verse:

“Let those who love Him be like the sun when it comes out in full strength”

(Judges 5:31)

References:

- ❖ The New Open Bible- Judges 4 and 5
- ❖ The Arabic applied explanation of the Bible
- ❖ Judges for Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse with the students
- ❖ Ask the students what is the difference between a king and a Judge?
- ❖ Let them give examples of Kings and Judges from the Bible.
- ❖ Ask them what is the meaning of a prophetess?

Lesson Outlines:

Today we are going to talk about one of the judges of Israel. She was a woman and her name was Deborah. She was a prophetess and a wise woman. She used to Judge between the children of Israel under a palm tree. The children of Israel were suffering under the mercy of the king of Canaan.

One day Deborah sent and called for the Barak, the leader of the Israelites army and she told him that the Lord has commanded you to take 10 thousand men and lead them to war against the king of Canaan. The Lord has promised to deliver the commander of his army, Sisera, into their hands and they will win the war. Then Barak asked Deborah and said, only if you come with me I will go to war. Deborah told him that she would go with him but the people may say that they won the war because of the company of the prophetesses, Deborah. However, Barak did not care and still insisted that she would go with him and she did. Subsequently, Barak and Deborah gather the 10 thousand men and went to the mount Tabor. When Sisera knew this he gather his 900 chariots of iron and all his men and went to meet Barak and Deborah in battle.

When it was the right day and time as God revealed to Deborah, she told Barak this is the day we should go for war against Sisera. Barak listened to Deborah and started the battle and God was with him and with his army so they won the battle and Sisera fled from his chariot and ran on foot to escape death.

Sisera finally got into the house of a lady called Jael to hide. So Jael welcomed him into her house and she covered him with a blanket to rest. Sisera was very tired from the battle and asked Jael to give him water because he was thirsty. Jael instead gave him milk, which he drank and was satisfied. Sisera was about to fall asleep but before he slept he told Jael to stand at the door of the tent and if anybody comes to inquire if she has a man in the tent she should say no. Then Sisera went into deep sleep. Jael took a peg and a hammer and hammered it into Sisera head so he died.

Barak then came to the tent of Jael seeking Sisera. So Jael told him to come and see Sisera. When Barak entered her tent he found Sisera dead. Thus the children of Israel won the battle against King Jabin of Canaan and they become strong again.

Who is Deborah?

What was special about Deborah?

Who is Barak?

Why did they win the war?

Conclusion:

Deborah was a wise and courageous woman who loved God and was guided by Him. She guided her people to victory through her relationship with God and her prophecies. Similarly if we have a strong relationship with God we can lead others to better life and better relationship with God.

Applications:

- ❖ Read Judges 4 and 5 at home during this week.
- ❖ Write 1-2 pages project about another Judge in the Old Testament. Reward the students next week
- ❖ Be courageous like Deborah who did not fear and went with Barak to war, This does not mean that we go to war but to be courageous when the situation requires courage.

Week 4- Elisha Purifies the Water

Objective:

- ❖ The power of God is revealed in the children of Saints.

Memory Verse:

“The prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 2
- ❖ “The Life of Elijah” translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ “The Life of Elisha” Nagi Fawzy

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Who know the prophet Elijah? What do you know about him?
- ❖ Who was his disciple?

Lesson Outlines:

After the death of Elijah, the Lord comforted Elisha his disciple by saying, “I am with you...” Elisha took courage and stood before the Jordan River. He imitated Elijah. He struck the water with Elijah’s cloak but the water did not divide. He cried to God “O Lord, why does this stubborn water disobey me? You said: I am with you. O Lord perform a miraculous deed, not for me but for the people to believe that you have sent me after Elijah. You said: “The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects”. Then once again Elisha struck the water with Elijah’s cloak saying, “O Lord, Elijah’s God” and the water divided and he sang a hymn “The Lord is my shepherd...” Let us repeat the verse together: “The prayer of a righteous man avails much”.

One day, the men of Jericho heard that Elisha was in their town they went to him and said: “Our city is fine but the water is bad. Do us a favor and turn this bad water into fresh water so that the land may bring fruit and agriculture and commerce may flourish”. Elisha said to them, “Put some salt in a new bowl and bring it to me”. They brought it to him, and he went to the spring, threw the salt in the water and said, “O Lord, make this water pure so that it will not cause any more deaths or miscarriages”. And the water became pure ever since, just as Elisha said it would be. And Jericho became full of food, palm trees, herbs and trees.

- ❖ Why did Elisha order them to bring him a new bowl?
- ❖ What did the Lord mean when He said: You are the salt of the earth?

- ❖ What are the good qualities of both Elijah and Elisha that you like to have?
- ❖ What is the name of the city the water of which was bad?
- ❖ What did Elisha do to purify its waters?
- ❖ You can speak about the topic of Intercession... as Elisha interceded with Elijah's God to split the Jordan River.

Conclusion:

God gave Elisha the power to do miracle and He can give His children gifts and authorities to overcome all troubles and obstacles in their way.

Applications:

- ❖ Let's pray this week and say to the Lord, "O Lord, abide in us and prepare us to be your servants when we grow up".
- ❖ Mention what you know about the following cities and write them down in your notebook: Jericho and Jordan.
- ❖ Draw one of the scenes of this lesson and color it.
- ❖ Advise the children to intercede with one of the saints and befriend them.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

Week 1- Elisha Brings the Shunammite's Son to Life

Week 2- The Prophets and the Poisonous Food

Week 3- Jesus and Zacchaeus the Tax-Collector

Week 4- Haggai

Week 1- Elisha Brings the Shunammite's Son to Life

Objective:

- ❖ Emphasizing the power of God in his saints

Memory Verse:

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live"
(John 11:25)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 4
- ❖ "The Life of Elisha" Nagi Fawzy

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ In ancient times, before Jesus was born, God dealt with His people through His holy prophets. Through them, He showed His power. The people saw their works and glorified God. For example, Elisha was able to purify the water of Jericho. There is another great miracle, which God made by the hands of Elisha.

Lesson Outlines:

Shunem was one of the towns that Elisha served. There was a great, rich and pious woman living in Shunem. Her husband owned wide land and many reapers worked for him. Whenever Elisha went to that town, this lady used to invite him to her house saying: Please come to our house, honor us and bless us and eat food. Because of her simplicity, he answered her call and accepted her invitation. As a model minister, Elisha used to visit the towns he had visited again and again. He visited the patients, comforted those in grief, prayed for them, preached them and solved their problems, but he had nowhere to dwell in, neither in Shunem nor in any other town.

- ❖ What is the name of the town?
- ❖ What is the name of the prophet?
- ❖ Where did he spend the night?

One day, the woman said to her husband, "Let us make a small roof chambers...so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there". Her husband agreed and they made a small roof chambers and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp (Discuss why and what was each used for).

When the prophet Elisha came there, they showed him the roof chamber and the prophet thanked them. He used to turn into the chambers and rest there (God liked the Shunammite's house). Elisha wanted to reward the woman so he said to his servant Gehazi, "What is to be done for that woman?" The prophet knew that she had no son, so he said to Gehazi: Call this Shunammite and Gehazi called her. The woman stood before him at the door and the following conversation ran between them:

- + Peace be with you.
- Peace and grace be with you.
- + You have taken all this trouble for us...
- There is no trouble at all. We are pleased to have you among us.
- + What is to be done for you? How shall we reward you?
- Thanks be to God. We need nothing. We are satisfied with what we have.
- + At this season, when the time comes around, you shall have a son.
- How can this be? My husband is old.
- + Do you have faith?
- I believe that what you say will come true through your prayers, O man of God.

After a year, God gave her a son. The boy grew up and he used to go to the field with his father. He went out one day to his father among the reapers. The reapers were busy gathering the crops. It was very hot and the boy could not bear the heat of the sun. He suffered from a sunstroke attack. He felt giddy. He was very tired. He went to his father...My head...My head. The father said to his servant, "Carry the boy to his mother".

The mother embraced her son, kissed him, put him on her lap... he had a temperature... he wept... the mother prayed: "God have mercy... O God, I did not ask for children..." The boy became cold... he stopped breathing... The boy died... "Thy will be done, O Lord". The mother went up and laid the boy on the bed of the man of God in the roof chamber... She knelt down beside the bed and prayed, "O Lord, I had no son, and through the prayers of Elisha, your holy man, you gave me this child... The child is dead but you can bring him back to life. I thank You O Lord on every condition, in every condition and for all conditions, Amen".

- ❖ What caused the boy's illness?
- ❖ What was the result?
- ❖ What did the Shunammite woman do?

She knew that the man of God was at Mount Carmel. She went to him. When he saw her coming, he sent Gehazi to her to ask her what she wanted. Gehazi said to her, "Is it well with

you?” and she said, “It is well”. “Is it well with your husband?” he asked and she said, “It is well”. “Is it well with your child?” he asked, and she said, “It is well”.

She was a woman with great faith. The woman drew near to the man of God. She dismounted from the donkey and knelt down to the ground before him. The man of God looked at her face and he felt that she was in bitter distress. She told him what happened in brief. The man of God expressed his sorrow for that severe trouble. He ordered his servant Gehazi to go to her house. He said to him, “Take my staff in your hand, gird up your loins and go ...if you meet anyone do not salute him... lay my staff upon the face of the child”.

But the Shunammite woman insisted that the man of God would go with her and he did so. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff upon the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and told him, “The child has not awakened”.

- ❖ Why did the woman go to the man of God?
- ❖ What did Gehazi do?

When Elisha was on his way to her house he prayed, “O Lord, glorify your name”. He arrived at the house. He prayed... The boy is dead. He was perplexed... “O Lord, you are the Almighty God. You can do everything... Glorify your name... Bring the soul of this boy back to his body so that this family may believe in you, Amen”. Elisha went up and laid upon the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, his hands upon his hands. He stretched himself upon him... This case needs struggle and seems difficult. The child’s body became warm. The prophet got up and walked in the house praying and crying to the Lord repeating the same words... Then he went up again and stretched himself upon the child. The child sneezed seven times... How wonderful! The child opened his eyes. Thanks be to God. The child stood up.

The miraculous deed was performed... God answered Elisha’s prayer and the Scripture says, “I am the resurrection... The Lord is God”. He thanked God, then summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the woman”. The woman came in. She saw the child alive. She was very happy. “Carry your son, your son is alive”, the prophet said. The woman fell at his feet bowing to the ground. She thanked God. She kissed Prophet Elisha’s hands. She carried her son, kissed him and she glorified God through Elisha, the holy man. Her faith was great.

- ❖ What did the woman do when her son died?
- ❖ What were the questions that Gehazi said to the woman and what were her answers?
- ❖ How did the woman honor the man of God?
- ❖ Who can complete this verse: I am the resurrection...

Conclusion:

The only son of the Shunammite woman died. She left him in his bed and went to the Prophet Elisha who said to her, “Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the

child?” And she answered, “It is well”. This is the peace of faith, which no one can remove from the hearts of the faithful whatever the circumstances may be.

Applications:

- ❖ Pray for (so and so) who is ill... visit him... ask the priest to visit him and pray for him and anoint him with oil. Pray and say, “O Lord, I pray you heal my friend (so and so).”
- ❖ Answer the following questions: Where do you find the story of the Shunammite woman in the Bible? Write the text.
- ❖ Complete the following: Jesus said, “I and and he who though yet shall he live”.

Week 2- The Prophets and the Poisonous Food

Objective:

- ❖ God protects His children

Memory Verse:

“And if they drink any thing deadly, it will by no means hurt them” (Mark 16:18)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 4
- ❖ “The Life of Elisha” by Nagi Fawzy

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Who of you prays before eating?
- ❖ Who thanks God after eating?
- ❖ How do you make the sign of the cross over food?
- ❖ Who of you had received a guest last week?

Lesson Outlines:

One day, Elisha entertained the children of the prophets (there were about 50). Elisha was sitting and they were sitting before him... They loved to listen to his teachings and his stories. They were happy to listen to his stories because they were useful and sweet. Elisha loved them, sat with them, asked them and answered them and listened to them.

There was a famine in the land in those days, as rain did not fall. The land dried and plants died and the land did not give forth its fruit but the Lord said, “I will not neglect you”.

Elisha thought of giving them food besides the spiritual food so he decided to entertain them. He said to them, “You must be hungry...come and have dinner with me”. The men accepted his invitation. Elisha ordered Gehazi his servant to put a big pot on the fire and make some stew for them. But Gehazi was a disobedient lazy disciple. He did not go to the fields to bring fruits because the fields were far away. He found a vine, and picked as many gourds as he could carry. The gourd is a large, hard skinned fleshy fruit of climbing or trailing plant like Colocynth or bitter cucumber. He filled his lap and went back. He sliced them up into the stew and no one saw him doing that. But that food was bitter and poisonous. It moves the bowels, causes colic and vomiting. When the men tasted it, they wouldn't eat it.

- ❖ Who were Elisha's guests?

- ❖ How many prophets were there?
- ❖ Why did they like to sit with him?
- ❖ What did Elisha order Gehazi to do?
- ❖ What did Gehazi do?
- ❖ What was the result of Gehazi's laziness?

It seems that Elisha did not eat with them but he only served them. When they felt that the food was poisonous they said to Elisha, "O man of God, there is death in the pot". Elisha knew what happened by the Spirit. He said to them, "Do not be afraid as God says: And if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them". Elisha said, "Then bring some flour". And he threw it into the pot and asked them to eat. And there was no harm in the pot. Elisha stood up to serve and entertain them... They glorified the Lord for this miracle that He performed through His prophet Elisha. Then they left him saying: Thanks for your hospitality and teachings. Pray for us. What the Lord says is always true: "And when they drink any thing deadly, it will by no means hurt them".

- ❖ Explain how the miracle was performed.
- ❖ What does this miracle stand for?

The children write notes in their notebooks:

- ❖ The meal in the offerings of the Old Testament refers to the Body of Christ.
- ❖ Gourd is bitter and sin is bitter.
- ❖ Gourd + meal = good food.
- ❖ Repentance + incarnation of Christ = Eternal Salvation.

Conclusion:

God does not make a miraculous deed unless it is necessary. Miracles should always glorify God not human beings. This miracle was performed by God on the hand of His prophet Elisha. The miracles happened to protect the faithful prophets to the Lord from any harm. Any miracle that does not glorify the name of God and to the benefit of people is not a true miracle.

Applications:

- ❖ Pray so that the Lord may send His blessings and bless the food offered to you, and make the sign of the cross over your food.
- ❖ Search for another miracle that happened in the Old Testament to glorify the name of the Lord.

Week 3- Jesus and Zacchaeus the Tax-Collector

Objective:

- ❖ Emphasizing Christ's love for sinners

Memory Verse:

"Jesus said to him: Today, Salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9)

References:

- ❖ Luke 19

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ What does the word "tax collector" mean? (= the man who collects taxes)
- ❖ Why was a tax collector a sinner?
- ❖ Why did all the people hate him?

Lesson Outlines:

Zacchaeus was a short man. He was a tax collector. He was greedy who loved money so badly. His friends were very few because he was selfish... but Zacchaeus desired to see Jesus.

- ❖ Who was Zacchaeus?
- ❖ Whom did he desire to see?

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus Christ. He came to know that He is coming to the city of Jericho.

Zacchaeus went out quickly, leaving his papers and files on the table. But Zacchaeus only saw crowds of people drawing near. Because Zacchaeus was a short man and wanted to see Jesus he thought of a plan. There was a Sycamore tree near him and children were playing on its branches. He ran to it forgotten his job, status and age and made an attempt to climb the tree. He made a great effort, as the tree was so smooth that it was difficult to climb. After many attempts, he managed to climb the tree and found himself among the leaves. His desire to see Jesus increased. He hoped to see Jesus. The crowds approached him - children, women, men, young men - all surrounded Jesus and each one wanted Jesus to bless him and heal him. The crowds passed under the tree and stood there for some time. Why? Jesus lifted up His eyes and the crowds did the same. They thought that Jesus was praying but He fixed His eyes on Zacchaeus and said: "Zacchaeus". Zacchaeus was surprised, "How did he know my name?" he thought. "Come down quickly, Zacchaeus, I will have dinner in your house". Zacchaeus was very happy. He went down quickly. He bowed down to Jesus. Jesus kissed him. Zacchaeus invited all those people to have dinner in his house. He made a great feast (Describe it). Zacchaeus served them

(Describe Zacchaeus' feelings of joy when Jesus entered his house and mention the words you think he said to make Jesus and the guests happy) and ask the children:

- ❖ How would you entertain your guest?
- ❖ How did Jesus know the name of Zacchaeus?
- ❖ What does the Lord Jesus know about you?

Then Zacchaeus stood up before the Lord and the crowds and said, "Lord, I was a wicked man, unjust and cruel. I love money before I knew you. I now repent...forgive me... I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much. The widow, from whom I took 25 coins, will be given 100 coins. I'll do this with joy so long as You have accepted me and love me (Describe how the Lord was pleased with Zacchaeus who repented and His declaration: Today salvation has come to this house). Jesus became a friend to Zacchaeus and many people became friends to Zacchaeus too.

- ❖ What is the name of the city?
- ❖ How was Zacchaeus able to see Jesus?
- ❖ What did Zacchaeus make to entertain Jesus?
- ❖ Say the verse: Jesus said to him...

Conclusion:

The Lord cares about us more than we care about ourselves. Jesus, who sits by the well of water to speak to the Samaritan woman, is He who passes by the Sycamore tree to invite Zacchaeus and promised to visit him.

Applications:

- ❖ Always go to church and invite others to go with you.
- ❖ Invite friends or neighbors to your house as an example of the Christian loving house
- ❖ Plan to give up something you like this week for the sake of Christ, e.g. chocolate, computer games, etc.
- ❖ Select the right word:
 - ✠ Zacchaeus was a (short -tall) man.
 - ✠ Zacchaeus loved (God -people -money).
 - ✠ Zacchaeus climbed a (fig -sycamore) tree to see Jesus.
- ❖ Arrange the words of the following verse: Jesus - him -to -said -this -house -to -come - today -has -salvation

Week 4- Haggai

Objective:

- ❖ Giving God the first priority in our life to receive His blessings

Memory Verse:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33)

References:

- ❖ Book of Haggai
- ❖ “Interpretation of Haggai” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Review with the students how many books are in the Bible? How many in the Old Testament? And how many in the new Testament?

Lesson Outlines:

Haggai prophesied in 520 BC. The meaning of Haggai is probably derived from the Hebrew word “hag”, which means “festival”. It may also be an abbreviated form of Haggiah meaning “festival of Yahweh”. Thus, Haggai’s name means festal or festive.

He was about seventy five when he prophesied. It is equally likely, however, that he was born in Babylon during Captivity. He returned from Babylon with the remnant under Zerubbabel and evidently lived in Jerusalem.

In 538 BC, Cyrus of Persia issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild their temple. The initial optimism upon returning to their homeland was dampened by the desolation of the land, crop failure, hard work, hostility and other hardships.

In 536 BC, work on the temple began. The pessimism of the people led to spiritual lethargy and they became preoccupied by their own building projects. It was in this context that God called His prophets Haggai and Zachariah to the same task of urging the people to complete the temple.

Haggai acted as God’s man in God’s hour, he started giving a strong and frank series of four terse sermons. He told them the work on the temple has ceased and the people have become more concerned with the beautification of their own houses than with the building of the central sanctuary of God. The four messages were:

- A) The completion of the latter temple (1:1-15)
- B) The glory of the latter temple (2:1-9)

- C) The present blessings of obedience (2:10-19)
- D) The future blessings of promise (2:20-23)

A. The completion of the latter temple (1:1-15)

When the remnant returned from the Babylon under Zerubbabel, they began rebuilding the temple of the Lord. The work soon stopped and the people found excuses to ignore it as the years passed. They had no problem in building rich dwellings for themselves while claiming that the time for building the temple had not yet come. God communicated directly to them through His prophets Haggai, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest. All the people responded and twenty three days later again they started to work on the temple.

B. The glory of the latter temple (2:1-9)

In a few short weeks the enthusiasm of the people soured into discouragement; the elders remembered the glory of Solomon's temple and dishonored the present temple. Haggai's prophetic word of encouragement reminded the people of God's covenant and promises in the past, and His confident plans for their future (the glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former 2:9)

C. The present blessings of obedience (2:10-19)

Haggai's message to the priests illustrated the concept of contamination of sin that block the blessing of God. Because the people have obeyed God in building the temple, they will be blessed from that day forward.

D. The future blessings of promise (2:20-23)

On the same day that Haggai addressed the priests, he gave a second message to Zerubbabel saying: God will move in judgment and in His power He will overthrow the nations of the earth (2:21, 22). At that time, Zerubbabel, a symbol of the Messiah to come will be honored. The Messiah is portrayed in Zerubbabel: "I will take you, Zerubbabel and I will make you as a signet ring for I have chosen you" (2:23) sealing both branches together.

Conclusion:

His basic theme was clear, that they must reorder their priorities and complete the temple before they can expect the blessing of God upon their efforts. Haggai brought them to an understanding that circumstances become difficult when people place their own selfish interests before God's. When they put God first and seek to do His will, He will bring His people joy and prosperity.

Applications:

- ❖ Read the two chapters of the Book of Haggai at home this week.
- ❖ Chose a verse you like and write down your meditation and thought about it. Bring it to the class next week to share it with the rest of the class.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Week 1- Honor Your Father and Mother

Week 2- Exploring the Promised Land

Week 3- Jesus Heals a Bleeding Woman

Week 4- The Bronze Serpent

Week 1- Honor Your Father and Mother

Objective:

- ❖ Teach the children to obey and respect their parents
- ❖ Children should learn how to reward their parents for their love
- ❖ Children should learn how to respect each other

Memory verse:

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land” (Exodus 20:12)

References:

- ❖ Nelson Study Bible

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ God gave His people the Ten Commandments to live by them.
- ❖ Honor your father and your mother is the fifth commandment given by God. It comes before “you shall not kill” this means that the Lord regards this commandment as very important.

Lesson Outlines:

A. Consequences of disobeying this commandment

God not only commanded us to honor our parents but He made it clear that whoever disobeys, curses or abuses them will be severely punished, “And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 21:15), “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9), “He who mistreats his father and chases away his mother is a son who causes shame and brings reproach” (Proverbs 19:26).

Disobedience could be by words of cursing or even by looking at them without respect, “The eye that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it” (Proverbs 30:17).

B. How to honor our father and mother?

You can honor your father and mother by obeying them with understanding, “My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother” (Proverbs 1:8). Be nice and cheerful when they ask you to do something for them and show respect in the way you talk to them and in your discussion with them.

Make them feel your love for them. Jesus taught us that we should love our enemies, how much more then should we love our parents and sacrifice everything for them and always pray

for them “A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (Proverbs 10:1), “A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother” (Proverbs 15:20).

Support them for the Lord said that honoring parents and supporting them and providing them with the money they need is more important than offering money as sacrifice to the temple, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

Our society, Christians and non-Christian, dedicate a certain day of the year for each of them. We celebrate Mother’s Day and Father’s Day to honor them and show them how much we value them.

It is important to obey them in the Lord. This means to have always Christ in front of us and to obey them in what pleases the Lord Jesus.

C. Rewards of honoring our parents

Honoring your father and your mother is the only commandment out of the Ten Commandments that is followed by a promise, “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you” (Deuteronomy 5:16). God promises a reward “that your days be long” This proves to us how important it is for God that we obey this commandment.

- ❖ Why did the Lord command that man should honor his parents?
- ❖ Who else should we honor other than our own fathers?
- ❖ What promise comes with this commandment?

Conclusion:

Honoring the parents and respecting them is a commandment of God to His children. It is the first commandment with a promise of a reward even on earth. Let us respect our parents according to the word of our Lord as Jesus Christ respected His mother St. Mary and St. Joseph.

Applications:

- ❖ Try to show your parents this week how much you love them.
- ❖ Write down all the things that your parents do for you and you need to thank them for.
- ❖ Draw a “Thank you” card for your parents thanking them for things they have done for you.
- ❖ Show respect for everyone around you.

Week 2- Exploring the Promised Land

Objective:

- ❖ Complete trust in the God's promises

Memory Verse:

"I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 1:5, 6)

References:

- ❖ Numbers 13 & 14
- ❖ "The Life of Moses" F. B. Mayer, translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Who remembers the state of the ancient people in the land of Egypt?
- ❖ What is the name of the King?
- ❖ Whom did the Lord call to bring the people out of Egypt?

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord regarded the distress of His people and what pharaoh did. The Lord wanted to save His people from the land of bondage. The Lord chose Moses to lead the people to the land, which he promised to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey.

- ❖ Who remembers the name of this land?

Moses obeyed the Lord and trusted Him. He led the people to victory. The Lord says; "I will not leave you or forsake you". On their way out of Egypt they were singing the hymn "All your children my Lord". The Lord performed many miraculous deeds.

- ❖ Who remembers some of these miracles?

Moses led the people till they reached the Jordan River. The Lord ordered Moses to send men to explore the Promised Land, the Land of Canaan. Moses chose a man from each tribe.

- ❖ How many tribes were there?

From the tribe of Judah he chose a man whose name was Caleb and he chose Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim. Moses held a special meeting for them and reminded them of the words of God, “I will not leave you or forsake you”.

- ❖ What did Moses say to them in that meeting?
- ❖ Who remembers the verse?

The twelve men asked the people to pray for them then they started their journey. On their way to the land they were singing the hymn together “All your children my Lord...” When any of them became tired they encouraged him by reciting the verse, “I will not leave you or forsake you” and sometimes they stopped to pray. At last they reached the city ...they found that the land was rich and fertile. It was the season of grapes. They brought with them pomegranates, figs and a bunch of grapes, which was so heavy that it took two men to carry it on a pole between them. They returned after spending forty days in the land.

- ❖ How many men spied out the land?
- ❖ What did they carry with them?

The twelve men returned and met Moses. They blew the trumpet... the people gathered... they told them that the land was fertile and flowing with milk and honey ...the land was covered with green vegetation, beautiful flowers and tasty fruits... the men showed them the bunch of grapes so that they might believe them (the Servant can tell the children about the conversations that ran between the people and the twelve men).

Ten men spread fear among the people and discouraged them saying that they were so weak that they could not defeat the people of the land and enter it... the people of the land were giants and the cities were well fortified surrounded by high walls. The people were afraid and wanted to choose a leader from among them to lead them back to Egypt (the Servant should emphasize Joshua’s faith and Caleb’s faith, the two men who tried to silence and calm the people and encourage them saying that the land was fertile and the Lord will give it to them and the roads that lead to it were easy to cross and the Lord says, “I will not leave you...” Remember the miraculous deeds, which the Lord performed among us and so long as the Lord is with us we do not fear them.

The people refused to listen to them. The people cried loudly and raised stones at them. The glory of the Lord appeared to all the Israelites over the tent. The Lord said, “None of these people will live to enter that land”. The Lord said that only Joshua and Caleb who obeyed the Lord and were faithful to Him would enter that land. The war began and the Lord was with His people and the people won victory over the enemy, the giants because God said, “I will not leave you or forsake you”. None of the twelve men entered that excellent land except Joshua and Caleb (the Servant should emphasize the fact that the person who trusts the Lord and relies on Him in

all his affairs and movements succeeds and wins victory and when we trust in the Lord and struggle against the sin, the Lord will grant us victory and success in all our life).

Conclusion:

The Lord cares for the birds of the sky and the lilies of the field. Am I not of more value than many birds (Matthew 6:26-34). The Lord emphasizes that all the hairs of our heads are counted and known to Him. Does not this fact strengthen our trust in Him? “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of who shall I be afraid?” Notice the faith of Joshua and Caleb and their trust in God and His promises in spite of the logical and natural obstacles. This is the trust of the children of God who know the faithfulness of the Lord.

Applications:

- ❖ Pray that the Lord care for you and your family.
- ❖ Complete the following passage by inserting one word in each blank: sent twelve to explore the Promised Land. The men came back and said that the land was excellent and rich. They brought with them, and a of grapes which was so heavy that two men it on a between them. Two men told the people that they could the enemies as the Lord said, “I will not leave you or forsake you”.

Week 3- Jesus Heals a Bleeding Woman

Objective:

- ❖ To learn the work of faith in our life

Memory Verse:

“Your faith has made you well. Go in peace” (Luke 8:48)

References:

- ❖ Luke 8
- ❖ Matthew 9
- ❖ “The Lord Jesus at the Shore of Lake Galilee”, Beirut

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.

When Jesus touched the coffin and said: “Young man. Get up I tell you”, the dead young man was brought back to life. And today we see that anyone who touches Jesus will be healed. I mean if the hand of the Lord Jesus touches our life or if we seek Him in our life, He will answer all the requests of our hearts.

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus and His disciples spent some time on the shore of a lake. When they returned to Capernaum, they saw a large crowd waiting for Jesus. Jesus had no time for rest. He sat down on the shore and taught the crowds with patience and love and He helped all.

- ❖ Where was Jesus sitting?
- ❖ What is the name of the town?
- ❖ What was He doing?

Then a man named Jairus arrived. He went through the crowds and bowed down at Jesus’ feet. This man held a high position. He was an official in the local synagogue...many people knew him. Jairus was confused and perplexed. He cried loudly and said: My daughter is dying. She is only twelve years old. Please come quickly and lay your hand on her. I am sure that she will be completely healed. Jesus went with Jairus. The disciples and the crowd followed them. The people crowded Jesus from every side. They all desired to see what would happen. But suddenly, Jesus stopped and asked, “Who touched me?” The people waited to hear and answer but no answer came. Peter said, “Master, the people are all around you and crowding in on you”.

- ❖ Where were the crowds going?
- ❖ What did Jesus say when He stopped suddenly?

Jesus said again: “Someone has touched me... for I knew it when power went out of me” there was complete silence... A woman came trembling and threw herself at Jesus’ feet. She said to him, “It was I sir... I have suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years. I have spent all I have on doctors, but no one was able to cure me. I heard amazing things about You O Jesus the Great Healer. So I came to you... while I was among the crowd, an idea came to my mind: If I could touch the edge of his cloak, I would be healed.”

- ❖ What did this woman suffer from?
- ❖ What did she hear about Christ?

Then I drew near you O Jesus... and touched the edge of your cloak and I was healed immediately and the bleeding stopped. Lord I thank You...I thank You. Jesus gently said to her: “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace”. Then Jesus went to Jairus’ house and brought his daughter back to life.

- ❖ Where was Jesus going to? And who was with Him?
- ❖ What did the woman do?
- ❖ How did Jesus feel the woman’s touch in spite of the crowd?
- ❖ What did Jesus say to her? Your faith has made you well...Go in peace.
- ❖ Study the verse...
- ❖ Who can say the verse?

Conclusion:

Your promise is always true O Lord. You say: Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith. This woman came to you believing that You alone can heal her even if she touches Your clothes she will be healed. And she touched Your clothes and was healed.

O Lord give me that faith... Many people crowd around Jesus without believing in Him. O Lord do not let me be one of those.

Applications:

- ❖ Let us visit (name) who is sick and pray for him and give him a Qurbana.
- ❖ Let us ask the priest to pray for (name) the sick man and to anoint him with the holy oil so that he may be well.
- ❖ Fill the spaces with one work each: The woman was suffering from, the woman spent all her money on, the woman Christ’s and the bleeding

Week 4- The Bronze Serpent

Objective:

- ❖ God dislikes sin

Memory Verse:

“We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you” (Numbers 21:7)

References:

- ❖ Numbers 21

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Who gives us our food, our clothes, etc?
- ❖ Are we used to thanking the Lord for His gifts?

Lesson Outlines:

You know how the Lord cared about His people in Egypt and how He saved them from the bondage of Pharaoh. He chose Moses as a leader and provided him with miraculous deeds. Do you know how the Lord gave him favor in the eyes (the sight) of Pharaoh and that the miracles he made amazed the Egyptians and made the Pharaoh submit to the will of God and release the people. The people went out under the leadership of Moses. Moses struck the sea with his staff and the people crossed on dry ground. The Lord led them by the cloud by day and by a pillar of fire by night. The Lord sent them the manna and quails so that they might not starve. When they were walking in a barren land and needed water, the Lord brought them water out of a rock. The Lord also cared spiritually about them. He cared about their souls and gave Moses the tablets of the Covenant.

- ❖ What did the Lord provide Moses with so that he might become a great leader of his people?
- ❖ How did the Lord care about His people when they were in the wilderness?

In spite of all this the people spoke against the Lord and against Moses. They complained of the manna and the quail. Serpents bit them. Serpents were found everywhere, inside and outside their tents. Serpents bit many of them and those who were bitten died. The plague was severe and powerful. They suffered from severe pain. The people realized that the hand of the Lord was laid heavily on them. They came to Moses and said: We have sinned; for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Now pray to the Lord to take these serpents away. We are sinners and

the Lord will not listen to us. Moses asked them, “Will you repent and stop complaining?” They said, “Yes, we repent”.

Moses went to a lonely place, bowed down and worshipped the Lord then he stood up and prayed: O Lord I have sinned and these people sinned against you. Forgive me and forgive them. O Lord, take these serpents away. Glory be to you. Amen”.

The Lord loved His servant Moses because he was honest and obedient so he answered his prayers. The Lord, said to Moses: “Make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and be healed”. So Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. He gathered the people and said to them, “The Lord commanded that he who looks at this serpent with the faith will be healed”... and the people believed and were healed.

- ❖ Were the people thankful to the Lord for His gifts?
- ❖ What did they say to Moses about the manna?
- ❖ How did the Lord punish them?
- ❖ What does the bronze serpent stand for in the New Testament?

The children write in their notebooks: It stands for the Sacrifice of Christ. The people carried those who were bitten by the serpents and put them before the bronze serpent and they were healed. Some of them were bitten a long time before and some were bitten a short time before and immediately looked at the bronze serpent. Even those to whom the serpents drew near to bite them, hurried to look at the bronze serpent and the serpents could not do them any harm.

If we committed a sin a long time ago or if we have just sinned or if the devil is coming to fight us, we should hurry and look at the cross and say, “My crucified Lord, have mercy on me” and the Lord will have mercy on you.

- ❖ Who was saved from the serpent’s poison?
- ❖ Who will save us from the Serpent’s Poison?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: We sinned...
- ❖ Give the children some crosses.
- ❖ Encourage the children to benefit from the power of the cross in their practical life.

Conclusion:

Moses raised a metal serpent and put it on a pole in the wilderness according to the Lord’s commandment so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and be healed. In this the Lord desired to make all the people look at that holy sacrifice, which would be put on the cross and anyone who believed in Him and looked at Him would live, body and soul. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him, should not perish but have eternal life.

Applications:

- ❖ Pray this week and say; “My crucified Lord, have mercy on me”. Repeat it several times by day and night.
- ❖ Make many types of crosses, draw them, color them and bring them with you to the Sunday School. Put one of them in the place where you pray.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

Week 1- The Exile in Babylon

Week 2- The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Week 3- Jesus Heals the Canaanite Woman's Daughter

Week 4- Jesus Raises a Widow's Son in Nain

Week 1- The Exile in Babylon

Objectives:

- ❖ God hates sin

Memory Verse:

“God be merciful to me, a sinner” (Luke 18:13)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 25

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Show how the Lord was kind to His people.
- ❖ How did the people presume upon God’s kindness?
- ❖ In the previous lessons we saw how God’s mercy and steadfast love were met with disobedience on the part of the people. In 2 Kings 25, the Scripture tells us about the story of Exile. What does the word “Exile” mean?
- ❖ When did that Exile happen?

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord is Holy. He does not like sin so when people sinned, they were punished by being sent into exile.

Zedekiah, King of Jerusalem sinned against the Lord. The people followed him and sinned. They turned aside from the Commandments of God. So the Lord punished them. There was another King whose country was a neighboring country. What is his name? He was a great King. He was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonian.

This king came to fight the king of Jerusalem. His army got into the city. They looted the city and killed many people. They built towers around it and besieged it. The siege lasted for two years. The people in the city suffered from severe hunger. They needed bread. King of Jerusalem and a number of his soldiers fled at night. They left by way of the Royal garden, went through the gateway and fled in the direction of Jordan Valley. But the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah, captured him in the plains near Jericho, and all his soldiers deserted him. Zedekiah was taken to King Nebuchadnezzar and there King Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him. While Zedekiah looked on, his sons were put to death when Nebuchadnezzar had Zedekiah’s eyes put out, placed him in chains and took him to Babylon.

- ❖ How did the Lord punish the people when they sinned?
- ❖ What does the word “exile” mean? What does “spiritual exile” mean?

- ❖ Who can forgive sins?
- ❖ What was the sentence passed on the King of Jerusalem?

King of Babylon entered Jerusalem (what is his name?): He burnt down the temple, the palace, and the houses of all important people and his soldiers tore down the city walls. He took away to Babylon the people who were left in the city. He took away all the people of Jerusalem into exile and plundered them. He sent all the people into exile, except Prophet Jeremiah. The people suffered oppression for a long time. During this long period of suffering their hearts returned to God. They cried, O Lord, have mercy on us...we have sinned against You. Remember Your promise and Your covenant, O Lord. When will You come back to us and to have mercy on us? We are all sinners...let us repent and say: O Lord, have mercy on us, sinners.

- ❖ What did Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon do with the City of Jerusalem?
- ❖ What did Nebuchadnezzar do with the King of Jerusalem and the people of Jerusalem?
- ❖ What did Nebuchadnezzar do with the Temple, the King’s palace and the houses of all the people?
- ❖ What caused all these tribulations?

Conclusion:

Although God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love; yet He dislikes sin and He is righteous. He gives sinners many chances to repent and return but when man lives in sin all of his life, the Lord punishes him “Or do you presume upon the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (Romans 2:4, 5).

Applications:

- ❖ Confess your sins this week to the Lord before the priest.
- ❖ Pray this week and say: Lord be merciful to me, a sinner. Repeat this prayer several times day and night.
- ❖ Give the children an opportunity during the lesson or after the lesson to pray so that the Lord may forgive them their sins. End your lesson with a suitable hymn such as:

When I sin	To whom shall I go but you
It is you that will be merciful to me, O Jesus	I worship you and pray to you

Week 2- The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Objective:

- ❖ Being prepared for the Kingdom of God.

Memory Verse:

“Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him” (Matthew 25:6)

References:

- ❖ Matthew 25

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Set the scene by asking the children about what they know about the wedding parties and the attitude of the virgins.

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus told them many things in parables. Why? He told the people a story about ten virgins who were invited to a wedding party. They took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom but five of them went in with Him to the marriage feast and the other five were rejected. Five of them were wise and the other five were foolish. When the foolish took their lamps they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered. But at midnight there was a cry, “Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet Him”.

- ❖ Why were five of them called wise and the others called foolish?
- ❖ What did all of them do when the bridegroom was delayed?
- ❖ What was the cry heard at midnight?

Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out”. But the wise replied, “Perhaps there will not be enough for us and you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves”. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with Him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us”. But He replied, “Truly, I say to you, I do not know you”. Then Jesus said to the people, “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour”. After telling the story in an interesting attractive way, let the children deduce the symbols of the story through the questions:

- ❖ Who are the wise m virgins (Those who are ready)?
- ❖ Who are the foolish virgins (Those who are not ready)?
- ❖ What is the oil? (Works).
- ❖ Who is the bridegroom? (Jesus).
- ❖ What does this statement mean, “Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you?” (The righteous man is scarcely saved).
- ❖ What does the statement “the door was shut” mean? (On the Day of Judgment, any attempt to repent is useless).

Conclusion:

No one knows when we will meet the Lord again, so we have to be always prepared for this meeting. We have to be awake and careful about our spiritual life and to make use of every minute in our lives to come closer to the Lord. Thus when He comes He would know us and we would know Him well.

Applications:

- ❖ If you feel that you do not want to pray, or read the word of God, or go to the House of the Lord, make the sign of the cross and obey the commandment.
- ❖ Ask ten children to bring in ten lamps (they can be made of paper). Five of them contain a candle each and the others are without candles. Children can act this parable under the supervision of the Servant.

Week 3- Jesus Heals the Canaanite Woman's Daughter

Objective:

- ❖ Christ's power of healing sick people

Memory Verse:

"Then Jesus answered her: O woman, great is your faith" (Matthew 15:28)

References

- ❖ Matthew 15
- ❖ "Explanation of the Gospel of St. Matthew" by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ "Explanation of the Gospel of St.. Matthew" by Guiza Sunday School

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Who remembers some miracles of healing that Jesus performed?
- ❖ What should you do if one of your relatives is sick?
- ❖ Who are your friends? Are they all your citizens? Are they all from your village? Are they all your relatives?

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus helped all people whoever they were. You remember what He did to Zacchaeus the tax collector, and to the mad, blind and dumb boy. Jesus helped people in many ways. Sometimes He gave them what they wanted quickly and sometimes He postponed answering them on purpose.

There was a Canaanite woman who had a mad daughter... She was sorry for her... She wept day and night because she saw her suffering. She wished her quick recovery. When the woman heard that Jesus healed all diseases, she asked where He was. She heard that He was near the cities of Tyre and Sidon, so she hurried to meet Him but the place was very crowded with people. She cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me". She repeated these words many times. "My daughter is mad and in a terrible condition". But Jesus did not say a word to her. The woman went on crying. His disciples came to Him and begged Him, "Send her away, she is following us and making all this noise".

- ❖ Where was the woman from?
- ❖ What did her daughter suffer from?
- ❖ What did she say?

The Lord Jesus knew that the faith of that woman was great. So He did not want to answer her request instantly. He wanted to give the crowds a lesson in faith.

- + What do you want? You have disturbed us with your noise.
- Have mercy on me, Lord and heal my daughter. My daughter is mad.
- + Of what race are you and where do you come from.
- I am a pagan from a town near Tyre and Sidon.
- + I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.
- (The woman bowed down to Him and said) “O Lord, help me... strengthen my faith”.
- + What do you want?
- Heal my daughter... Have mercy on me.
- + I told you I have been sent only to the lost sheep of Israel and it is not right to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.
- That is true, my Lord, but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their master’s table. Give me what is thrown to the dogs.

When Jesus saw that the woman had a deep, strong, firm faith, He said to her, “You are a woman of great faith. What you want will be done for you”. And at that very moment her daughter was healed.

Conclusion:

The Canaanite woman who was of a foreign race came to Christ and her heart was full of faith as no one but Christ could heal her daughter. So she insisted on meeting Christ. The Lord tested her faith by words that could make her lose hope but because of her deep faith, her contrition and her earnest prayers, she deserved the Lord’s pity. O Lord, grant me this spirit when I pray to you.

Applications:

- ❖ In your notebook, write down the name of your friends who do not come to church. A).....
b) c) Ask them to accompany you to the Sunday School or to the church to learn how to love the Lord Jesus.
- ❖ Hold a discussion with the children and go together to the people around us whom Jesus wants us to help... all the people, of all classes, jobs... whether they are servants, students, beggars, porters, leaders, doctors, engineers, servants, girls or boys, etc.

Week 4- Jesus Raises a Widow's Son in Nain

Objective:

- ❖ To appreciate Christ's authority over death

Memory Verse:

"Young man, I say to you, arise" (Matthew 15:28)

References:

- ❖ Luke 7
- ❖ Matthew 15

Introduction:

- ❖ Review previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ What is the meaning of a widow and an orphan?

In the previous lesson we saw how our Lord Jesus Christ has authority to cast out demons, and today we speak about His authority to raise the dead.

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord Jesus was in a town called Capernaum. He spent a night there and He healed the slave of the Roman Captain. On the second day, He went to a town called Nain. Crowds of people, men and women, followed Him. Many men, women, young people and children wanted to be blessed and to be healed. The Lord stretched His hand and blessed them all and He healed those who were sick... The Lord saw a great crowd gathering at the entrance of the town. He sent some of His disciples to see what was up. The crowds drew near. Loud cries were heard. The people were sad. Woman were dressed in black...they were screaming, crying and weeping. It was a funeral procession. The disciples asked one of them:

- + What is the matter?
- A funeral. Who?
- + A widow's son from the town.
- Does he have brothers?
- + No, he is her only son.
- Sad news.

The disciples looked at one another. Cannot Christ raise this young man? Of course He can. The disciples ran to the Lord. They asked Him to come near the funeral procession, which was on its way to the tomb.

- ❖ What is the name of the town?
- ❖ Where was Jesus at that time?
- ❖ Whom did the Lord send?

Lord Jesus Christ went there. There were loud cries. Men and women were weeping. Jesus walked over and ordered the men carrying the coffin to stop, and the men stopped. The people asked themselves, “What will Jesus do?” The Lord asked, “Where is his mother?” and they told Him where she was. When the Lord saw her weeping, His heart was filled with pity for her, and said to her, “Do not cry”. The woman said, “He is my only son. He is my supporter. His father died. He left me alone. I do not have any other sons”. The Lord said to her, “Do not weep... You will see the glory of God. I will bring your son back to life”. The woman became comforted and dried her tears. She believed...

The Lord drew near the coffin and touched it and said, “Young man, get up, I tell you” (Notice that the Lord spoke to a dead man). How wonderful. There was a movement in the coffin. The dead man raised the covering and the shroud. He sat up. Women rejoiced and the men said: Glory be to you Lord Christ. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. The young man unbound the handkerchief, which bound his head. He unbound the ties. The people congratulated the widow. Your son has been brought back to life. Congratulations! Jesus has brought the young man back to life. The boy began to speak. The Lord took him and gave him to his mother. Take your son... he is alive. The woman felt happy. She bowed down before him. She raised her hands and thanked God. She got hold of her son’s hands to make sure that he was alive. He was raised. The crowds were amazed. A powerful miraculous deed took place among them. All the people glorified and praised the Lord. We also glorify and praise the Lord with them and say: When I am tired...

- ❖ What did the Lord Jesus say to the widow?
- ❖ What did the Lord Jesus say to the young man? Let us repeat together...
- ❖ Draw the children’s attention to the fact that Christ comes in the suitable time to solve our problems. The distance between the dead young man and the tomb was very short. Christ came to the town gate in the right time to raise the dead man.
- ❖ The children must understand that Christ was not at the town gate incidentally or by chance, but He was there in that place and that time to raise the dead young man.

Conclusion:

Truly, Lord, you visited this widow when she was in severe trouble but through your kindness, she restored her son. The children of God imitate the Lord. In them, the miserable find

comfort and the upset find peace, and the hopeless finds faith. O Lord, have mercy on me and let me live in this true religion. It is written “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (James 1:27).

Applications:

- ❖ Arrange a visit with the students to an orphanage.
- ❖ How many miracles of raising the dead by Jesus Christ are mentioned in the Holy Bible?
- ❖ What are these miracles?

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

Week 1- Celebrating Christmas Differently

Week 2- The Epiphany: Nicodemus and Baptism

Week 3- The Flight into Egypt

Week 4- St. Anthony the Great

Week 1- Celebrating Christmas Differently

Objective:

- ❖ Understand the deep meaning of Christmas celebration

Memory Verse:

“My soul magnifies the Lord and My spirit rejoiced in God of my salvation” (Luke 1:46)

References:

- ❖ From the Inspiration of Christmas by Pope Shenouda III

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse

Christmas has many spiritual meanings; one of the most important of them is the love of God towards man. God out of His great love toward man descended to mankind and dwelt among them. He sent His only begotten son, incarnated and lived on earth among them to save them. He made Himself one with our nature. The birth of Christ was the beginning of a true practical love.

Lesson Outlines:

The birth of Christ is a source of joy in our life, when man failed to reconcile with God, He came Himself to us, God descended to man. And that is why this should be our belief and our way in celebrating Christmas. It is not all about exchanging gifts and be busy with them. The most important thing is exchanging the gift of Love to those who really need it. Usually we offer our best gift to our best friend, forgetting or neglecting that there might be another person in the same group or class who is left behind without anyone of us paying attention to him/her and we don't share our love to them. Love shouldn't be only offered as a form of gifts, although the Maggie offered gifts to Christ when He was born but this is one of the aspects but the most important one is the gift that Christ offered to us in His birth, which is HIMSELF.

He left heaven in all its glory to come to us the poor on earth. He offered love in the form of healing the sick, comforting the troubles and heavy leaden, in offering peace on earth with the promise of inheriting eternal life with all its happiness to those who love God. He offered the most precious gift of giving Himself and His life for us on earth up till the death on the cross.

It is not only offering materialistic gifts, and to those who are only close to our hearts. Or don't let the world to deceive you by the bright way of celebration with a lot of lights or decorations everywhere, but rather go deeply inside the spirit of Christmas to understand what's behind it; what is the true meaning of exchanging gifts or filling the world with bright lights. There is a spiritual meaning that the world among the busy time concerning about the outside face of celebration forgot its true value.

While decorating your Christmas tree remember to decorate your life with virtues, while lighting it remember that Christ came to enlighten our path and asked us to be the light of the world, with every Christmas gift you wrap remember to outreach to everyone around you as Christ offered to all of us without exceptions. And finally when it takes your eyes and your heart by how beautiful it is remember Christ, the reason of the season is the most excellent of men.

So when you celebrate the true spirit of Christmas you give from your comfort, time, effort, possession, precious things to your heart, and money. It could be as simple as helping that day whoever around us by stretching your hand doing their daily routinely tasks and give them time to rest instead, etc.

Don't forget in making your offerings that Christ descended to us to offer Himself. He gave up something precious which is His throne in heaven and praising of the Cherubim and the Seraphim, and descend with it to those whom the world look to them as unworthy and left behind.

When you experience how the act of love brings joy to others same like what we received from God in Christmas, then at that time you will truly experience the joy of Christmas and the unity of the body of Christ. Then you'll enchant with Saint Mary "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoiced in God of my salvation"

True Joy is:

Jesus first

Others second

Yourself last

Conclusion:

May the Lord give us the insight to give as He gave us so we can enjoy the good tidings of comfort and joy.

Applications:

- ❖ Discuss with the children according to their age what acts of Love they can offer and help them achieve this task.
- ❖ As an example, take them to distribute presents to orphans or sing Christmas carols to nursing homes.

Week 2- The Epiphany: Nicodemus and Baptism

Objective:

- ❖ To understand the work of baptism that we attained when we were children.

Memory Verse:

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5)

References:

- ❖ John 3
- ❖ “The Mystery of Baptism” by Ana Gregory
- ❖ “Birth from water and the Spirit” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “Baptism” Rod el Farag
- ❖ “The Sacraments of the Church” by Habib Girgis

Introduction:

- ❖ Give the lesson in the Baptism Room in the church or bring with you picture of a small doll and some water.
- ❖ Mention the Seven Church Sacraments.
- ❖ What is the first sacrament?

Lesson Outlines:

A man named Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He knew that Jesus was a good Master, so he came to Jesus by night and said to him...Conversation... Mention the conversation in a lively way.

- ❖ What is the name of our feast today?
- ❖ What is the man’s name?
- ❖ Why did he come by night?
- ❖ What did Jesus say? Did he understand?

When he didn’t understand, Jesus said to him “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit... Take this opportunity and explain the rituals of Baptism... By immersion into the water three times, this stands for Christ’s burial and his resurrection into a new life... and the practical application which lies in repentance, keeping away from the first works and the beginning of a new life of holiness, quiet full of obedience and love... Nicodemus thanked Jesus but he needed an example from the Old Testament.

- ❖ How is the Sacrament of Baptism practiced?
- ❖ What does this mean?
- ❖ How can I live in baptism now?
- ❖ What did Nicodemus ask for?

The Lord reminded him of the bronze serpent... Faith heals us... i.e. love for the Crucified Christ, repentance, receiving the Holy Communion keep the poisonous sin away from us and thus we become pure... Nicodemus thanked Jesus again and left happily.

- ❖ What was the example that the Lord gave? Explain it.
- ❖ What does it mean?
- ❖ What is there in common between the bronze serpent and the Cross?

Conclusion:

- ❖ Do we learn a lesson from Nicodemus and go to the Lord to consult Him about our problems?
- ❖ Baptism is a new birth and repentance is a second birth; do we always walk in the spirit of repentance?

Applications:

- ❖ We have to confess our sins and repent and receive the Holy Communion so that the work of baptism may be renewed in us.
- ❖ Fill in the blanks:
... went to meet by night and Christ spoke about the Sacrament of
Unless one is born of and he cannot the Kingdom of God.

Week 3- The Flight into Egypt

Objective:

- ❖ Shun (keep away from) evil

Memory Verse:

“Arise take the young child and His mother, and flee to Egypt” (Matthew 2:13)

References:

- ❖ “Egypt receives the Virgins” by Siliman Nesseem

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare the following visual aids: A picture of the Holy Family in Egypt, a picture of the Virgin tree and some places which were sanctified when the Holy Family stayed in them, etc.
- ❖ Ask the students: Did the Magi return by the same route? Why?

Lesson Outlines:

The Magi returned by another route. His ministers and leaders in the palace surrounded Herod. They were all upset. He was pacing. They asked him... but he did not answer...days went by and they all felt that the King was confused. One day he realized that the Magi would not come back. He sent his leaders to Bethlehem to kill the children who are two years old or under. They asked why but he refused to answer... they understood... they did not want to do that but he insisted.

- ❖ Why was Herod upset?
- ❖ When did he send to kill the children?
- ❖ What was the purpose by so doing?
- ❖ Why did he say “two years and under”?

A group of soldiers and officers went there... The city was in great disorder... What happened? The orders were issued. Mothers tried to escape but they could not. The soldiers divided the city. They killed the children...cries were heard in every house... people cursed the tyrant (Explain what happened during the meeting and how Herod was disappointed).

- ❖ What did the soldiers do?

- ❖ Was the king pleased? Why?

Herod wanted to kill Christ...Will God let that happen? The angel appeared to Joseph and said, "Rise, take the child and His mother and flee to Egypt". Joseph rose... When they entered Egypt the idols fell down (Describe the journey and the places the Holy Family stayed in and how happy we are because Christ visited our land: Ancient Cairo, Mattariyah, Natrun Valley - use a map and some pictures).

Conclusion:

God had a perfect plan for the Holy family so that Jesus Christ would be protected. This plan was perfected to complete our salvation. The flight of the Holy family to Egypt is a great blessing to the land of Egypt. Egypt was the only country Jesus Christ had visited beside Israel.

Applications:

- ❖ Search the internet for a map of the Holy family trip in Egypt.
- ❖ Answer the following questions:
 - a) Why did the Holy Family flee into Egypt?
 - b) What happened to the idols when Christ entered Egypt?
- ❖ Read John 3.

Week 4- St. Anthony the Great

Objective:

- ❖ To learn about Monasticism and the strength of the solitude life of monks

Memory Verse:

“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Matthew 19:21)

References:

- ❖ “Coptic Church Review” Volume 1, No. 4, pp. 166-167
- ❖ “Coptic Church Review” Volume 15, No. 1,2
- ❖ “Life of Antony,” by St. Athanasius
- ❖ “The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other Principle Saints” by the Rev. Alban Butler Volumes 1, 2 & 3

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and memory verse with the students
- ❖ Ask the students of what they know about monks?
- ❖ What are the main characteristics of monks?
- ❖ Who started Monasticism in the whole world?

Lesson Outlines:

The origin of monasticism is associated with the name of St. Antony. He was born in Coma, a village of Upper Egypt, in a rich Coptic Christian family. After the death of his parents, when he was about twenty, he heard in the church the words of the Gospel, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Matthew 19:21). These words were a divine call which determined his life. He gave away all his property, which consisted of 300 acres of fertile land, and devoted himself entirely to the ascetic life.

At first he retired near his village, imitating the lives of the holy elders who lived in the area. Whenever he heard of an ascetic distinguished for some virtue, he sought him out as a bee seeks the flowers, and never left him until, he had gathered something good to carry home. He spent his days in continuous prayer, and either reading or working with his hands. After the year 285 AD, he retired into complete solitude; in the ruins of a castle and then he went to the Inner Mountain near the Red Sea.

Saint Athanasius the Apostolic, the pope of Alexandria at that time described St. Anthony’s ceaseless struggle with the devil. The devil appeared to him in visions, in dreams, and even in

daylight, in all possible forms. He tempted him by wealth, by the shape of fascinating women; by reminding him of his former life and a sister he had left behind. He frightened him by the shapes of wild animals. St. Antony was always victorious, because of his only weapon—faith in Christ.

After the year 305 AD, disciples were attracted to him and he had to leave his seclusion to become their teacher and leader. Some of his teachings to the monks are preserved to us by St. Athanasius; others are present in the “Sayings of the Fathers.” We have also seven spiritual letters attributed to him. In his life he founded several monasteries, and the number of his monks reached 100,000 during his life time.

St. Athanasius described him as “a physician given by God to Egypt.” He was frequently visited and resorted to for consolation and aid, by Christians and non-Christians, by ascetics, sick and needy. He received a letter from the Emperor Constantine, on the occasion of which he told his disciples, “Wonder not that the emperor writes to me, for he is a man; wonder much more that God has written the law for man, and has spoken to us by His own Son.”

Twice he left the desert. In the year 311 AD, during the persecution under Maximianus he went to Alexandria to assist the martyrs and confessors. Again in 338 AD, at the request of his disciple and friend, St. Athanasius, he came to the same city to bear witness to the Orthodox faith against Arian’s heresy. During his visit many heathen went to church asking to see the “man of God” and were converted. He refused to stay longer in Alexandria, saying, “As a fish out of water, so a monk out of his solitude dies.”

During the last fifteen years of his life he retired again to solitude at Mount Colzim, keeping only two disciples with him. They were with him at the time of his death in the years 356 AD, when he was 105 years old.

Then the monks, as he had ordered them, prepared his body for burial and hid it in the earth as he ordered them adding: “In the day of the resurrection, I shall receive it incorruptible from the hand of Christ.” And to this day no one knows where he is buried.

His final words to the monks who were with him, “I will be going the way of the fathers, as it is written, for I see myself being called by the Lord, and I am going to Him. Now you watch yourselves, and do not deviate from the ascetical practice you’ve been doing for so many years, but act like you are just starting out with your asceticism and keep your enthusiasm. You know the tricks of the evil demons. You have seen what weaklings they are; do not be afraid of them, but entrust yourselves to Christ at all times and get your strength from Him, spreading the sweet smell of incense in Christ. As though you were going to die each day, remember the things you have heard from me.”

The monastery of St. Antony of Colzim has been, since its foundation in the fourth century, a main center for monasticism in the Eastern Egyptian desert.

A. St. Anthony’s Character

St. Anthony was never troubled because his soul was at peace; he was never sad because his heart rejoiced always. He was a person of good character, being pure in heart; he thoroughly honored the canons of the church. He was never ashamed to bow his head to bishops or priests and, moreover, if a deacon came to him at any time for help, he would speak profitable words to him. If he was going to pray, he would defer to him in praying, asking to listen to those with him.

And he always acknowledged “I’ve learned from this,” if anyone said something profitable in his presence.

His face had a great charisma in the presence of the Savior: if he was in the middle of a crowd of monks and someone whom he did not know wanted to see him, immediately that monk would walk inside, ignoring all the other monks who were with St. Antony, and he would go inside to see him as if St. Anthony’s face were drawing him to him.

B. St. Anthony, the man of God

St. Anthony’s soul and virtue were beloved by God, thus his fame spread everywhere, and everyone who saw him marveled at him, and those who never saw him loved him. He was not known through books he wrote, or through some kind of outside wisdom, but only through his devotion to God. For how did his fame spread to reach Spain while he sat hidden on a mountain? Moreover, how was his name heard in Rome and Africa unless God, who commands those who belong to him be known everywhere, made a promise to St. Antony from the beginning? For even if they act in secret and do not reveal themselves, the Lord reveals them to everyone, like a lamp, so that those who hear might receive zealously for virtue.

Once the saint saw in a vision the whole earth covered so thick with snares, that it seemed scary to set down a foot without falling into them. At this sight he cried out, trembling: “Who, O Lord, can escape them all?” A voice answered him: “Humility, O Anthony!” He always looked upon himself as the least and the very outcast of mankind; he listened to the advice of everyone, and professed that he received benefit from that of the meanest person.

He watched great part of the nights in heavenly contemplation; and sometimes when the rising sun called him to his daily tasks, he complained that its visible light robbed him of the greater interior light which he enjoyed, and interrupted his close application and solitude.

In an excellent sermon which he made to his disciples, recorded by St. Athanasius, he pathetically exhorts them to renounce the whole world for heaven, to spend every day as if they knew it to be the last of their lives, having death always before their eyes, continually to advance in fervor, and to be always armed against the assaults of Satan.

C. His Saying

St. Anthony said: Just as fish die if they remain on dry land so monks, remaining away from their cells, or dwelling with men of the world, lose their determination to persevere in solitary prayer. Therefore, just as the fish should go back to the sea, so we must return to our cells, lest remaining outside we forget to watch over ourselves interiorly.

St. Anthony taught St. Ammonios, saying: You must advance yet further in the fear of God. And taking him out of the cell he showed him a stone, saying: Go and insult that stone, and beat it without ceasing. When this had been done, St. Anthony asked him if the stone had answered back. No, said St. Ammonios. Then St. Anthony said: You too must reach the point where you no longer take offence at anything.

Conclusion:

Chronology of the life of St. Anthony:

A.D.

- 251 Birth of St. Anthony at a village in Upper Egypt.
- 271 St. Anthony enters the Ascetic life.
- 285 Seclusion in the Outer Mountain.
- 305 Monastic Community Established in the Outer Mountain on East Bank of the Nile.
- 311 St. Anthony visits Alexandria to encourage the Martyrs.
- 313 St. Anthony goes to the Inner Mountain near the Red Sea.
- 338 Second visit of St. Anthony to Alexandria.
- 341 St. Anthony visits St. Paul of Thebes, the First Hermit.
- 356 Death of St. Anthony.
- 357 St. Athanasius writes the Life of St. Anthony.

Applications:

- ❖ Search the internet about St. Anthony and find pictures for him
- ❖ Find a story about another monk and tell it to the class next week.

BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY TILL JONAH'S FAST

Use Filler Lessons (placed at the beginning of the book) until the Sunday before Jonah's fast.

LESSONS FOR JONAH'S FAST

Jonah's fast comes two weeks before the Great Fast on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. These lessons are for the Sunday before and the Sunday after Jonah's fast.

Week before the Fast: Life after death - Heaven

Week after the Fast: God Judges Korah

Week before Fast: Life after death - Heaven

Objective:

- ❖ To learn about the quality of living in heaven

Memory Verse:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (Matthew 2:9 from Isaiah 64:4)

References:

- ❖ “Heaven” by the late Bishop Youannis

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.

Let's say our parents were notified that they would have to move with their job to a different city or state or even they decided to move to another country. Now the parents at that point would make an effort to learn more about that new place they're moving to. They probably check on the schools in that area, on the crime rate in the neighborhood, and other concerns they might have about that new place. It was probably a good idea for them to do such research, and so let's stop and think for a minute. That's very similar to our situation here on earth. We know at some point we'll have to depart and move to a different place, and for the believers that would be heaven. Well, the moral of this story is that we need to also get ourselves familiar with that wonderful place, and most importantly we need to prepare ourselves to fit in the environment of such a place. So in this lesson, let us introduce through the Holy Bible the very little that was said about our life in the heavens after the physical death.

Lesson Outlines:

First it is very important for us to note that no matter how much we describe heaven, we will never be able to totally comprehend what it is really like living in heaven. Even when St. Paul was taken to heaven, he said, “How he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Corinthians 12:4). Here St. Paul tells us that he couldn't express what he saw, and the second part of that statement means that he couldn't dare to even try to express what he saw! Having this point in mind, we could still attempt to describe some of the few values of living in heaven:

A. No hunger, no thirst, no hot or cold in heaven

While Christ blesses those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake” here on earth, St. John the beloved tells us in Revelation 7:16 that in heaven “they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat.”

How come they won't hunger or thirst, what will they eat or drink? The answer in Revelation 2:17 and 7:17 respectively is "To him who overcomes I will give some the hidden manna to eat" and "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters."

B. No weeping, no pain or sickness

In Revelation 7:17, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" and in Revelation 21:4, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." What a beautiful thing to know that in heaven the troubles of this world would be over! Sorrow and pain is a result of sin, and in heaven there shall be no sin; thus, we would always be in a happy atmosphere.

Our dear Coptic church teaches us that the Holy Lent is a symbol of our life here on earth, and through Christ's death and resurrection, we attain salvation. And since the Holy Fifty Days are a symbol of our victory in heaven, we do not fast or participate in any sorrowful spiritual practices such as the metania (prostration).

C. No lust or physical needs

Since Satan will be destroyed in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, there will not be any lustful temptations from him. Also this is clear through Christ's response to the Pharisees when they asked him about the woman who married several brothers and they wanted to know as to whom she would be married in heaven. Christ said, "For in resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

D. No covetousness, no envy, and no hatred

As prophesied in Psalm 133:1-3, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing- Life forevermore." We know that this is a prophecy about heaven because it's referring to eternal life through the use of the term "Life forevermore."

E. More great features in heaven

No cursing but blessing from God, no darkness because God is the God of light, no ignorance, but rather full knowledge, living among the courageous Saints such as the blessed and honored St. Mary, and praising the Lord with the angels.

F. Finally the most important aspect of heaven is living with God Himself

How lovely it is to live with God. During the transfiguration, St. Peter said to Christ when He was in His heavenly glory, "Master, it is good to be here." Christ likened heaven to a wedding, where the church including the believers would be the bride and Christ would be the groom. Earthly love between a husband and wife entails that these people enjoy living with each other and are just satisfied by each other's company. Likewise we will be with Christ and Christ with us. In the book of the Song of Solomon, the church tells God, "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (2:16). St. Augustine said, "We will need nothing, we will want nothing, and our richness

would be God Himself.” How beautiful it is to know that Christ will be everything we will ever need or want in heaven, He will truly be our fulfillment.

Conclusions:

As it has been explained earlier, our living in heaven will be totally the opposite of our life here on earth. It will be a life full of peace, love, light, and many other blessings. Most of all nothing will separate us from the presence of God, and Satan will have no existence. So our goals in life should be heavenly ones or ones that will prepare us for eternal life. God said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33), meaning that if we focus on preparing ourselves to living in heaven, God will automatically fulfill our earthly needs. Preparing for our life in heaven means for example, that if we know that we will live in unity with the believers in heaven, then we need to make peace with them on earth and learn to forgive each other. Also, if we do not know how to praise or appreciate worshipping the Lord, then how will we join the angels in heaven?! Finally, if we are used to profanity here on earth, how will you use that same language in heaven?! The moral of this lesson is that we learn about living in heaven so that we would prepare ourselves to fit heaven’s environment.

Applications:

- ❖ Read the book of Revelation to learn more about the end of this world and the quality of living in heaven.
- ❖ Focus on your heavenly life versus your limited life here on earth.
- ❖ Pray that the Lord may count you among those who will enjoy living in the heavenly Promised Land.

Week after Jonah's Fast: God Judges Korah

Objective:

- ❖ To learn to respect the priesthood and the priests
- ❖ To learn that God is the one who calls people to the service
- ❖ To learn about the role of intercessions in the Old Testament

Memory Verse:

"No outsider, who is not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the Lord" (Numbers 16:40)

References:

- ❖ Numbers 16
- ❖ "Explanation of the Book of Numbers" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ The Arabic life applied Bible

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.

Showing respect to the priests is a very old commandment that God required from His people. God chose the Levites, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, to serve the tabernacle of God and take care of its requirements and needs. He also chose Aaron, the brother of Moses, to be the priest. Moses and Aaron represented the people of Israel in front of God. Thus, God has chosen certain people in the Old Testament to serve as priests. Similarly, in the New Testament He chose the twelve disciple and the apostles to lay the hands and be able to ordain priests and bishops (Acts 6:6, 13:3, 1 Timothy 3:1-2, Titus 1:7). Thus, the priesthood is an order assigned and chosen by God and He required us to respect the priests. Today's lesson is about the outcome of three men who rebelled against Aaron's priesthood and Moses' representation of the people in front of God.

Lesson Outlines:

The Israelites wandered in the desert of Sinai (Show the students a map) for 40 years after they came out of Egypt. They rebelled against God many times during those 40 years. This time the rebellion was led by three men called Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Korah was from the tribe of Levi and Dathan and Abiram were from Reuben. They led 250 of the leaders of Israel in their rebellion against Moses and Aaron. They gathered against Moses and Aaron. They thought that the entire congregation is holy so Moses and Aaron need not to exalt themselves above the people as leader and priest, respectively. Korah and his company felt that any of them could act like a priest and raise incense to the Lord. So, Moses felt on his face and told Korah and his

company to raise incenses in their censors in the morning and let God choose who is His and who is holy. Moses rebuked Korah because he was not satisfied by being a Levite and enviously wanted to raise himself to be a priest. Moses also sent to talk to Dathan and Abiram but they refused to come and talk to him. Moreover, they complained that Moses brought the Israelites from the land of Egypt to suffer and starve in the wilderness of Sinai. Moses was very angry and complained to the Lord. Moses asked God not to accept their offerings.

In the morning, Korah gathered the entire congregation at the door of the tabernacle of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the place. God spoke to Moses and Aaron only and said to them: “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment”. But Moses and Aaron interceded on behalf of the congregation and asked God not to consume the whole congregation for the sin of Korah. So, God listened to their intercessions and told Moses to tell the people to stay away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all that belong to them. Subsequently, the earth split and opened up and swallowed the three rebelling men and their families and tents. God also sent fire from the heaven, which consumed the 250 men who were raising incense in their censors in front of the Lord. However, the censors in their hands were not consumed. God had asked Moses to tell Eleazar the priest to hammer the bronze censors into layers and cover the altar with it as a reminder to the people of the fate of those who force themselves to be priests while they are not chosen by God. Eleazar was the son of Aaron and was a priest like his father who was chosen by God for the priesthood. Thus, no one can make himself a priest except when he is called from God. That is also the case in the Coptic Church now and in the sacrament of the priesthood. Any person who is ordained priest or called to the service has to be invited to the service with guidance from God.

This story also shows the role of the intercessions of the righteous in front of God and its work for the sake of others. Moses asked God to preserve the life of the congregation and not to destroy them because of the sin of Korah. God considered and listened to Moses’ request. Our church is a strong believer in the intercessions of the saints and the righteous in front of the throne of God on behalf of all the believers who seek their intercessions.

A very important lesson to learn from Korah’s mistake is the outcome of being self-righteous. Korah thought that he is as holy as Moses and Aaron and he envied them for the responsibilities that God gave them. He was not satisfied with his role as a servant of the tabernacle, since he was a Levi; rather he wanted higher authority and position. He completely forgot that everybody, after all, is serving God. This story shows the result of self-bride and self-righteousness.

Ask the students what other lessons they can learn from this story and stimulate them to meditate on some of the verses.

Conclusion:

Priesthood is an assignment from God not from men. Priests have to be respected and honored since they convey the word of God to us and guide us on the spiritual path. The story of Korah’s punishment is a good example of the fate of those who do not respect their spiritual leaders and the priests (Moses and Aaron).

Applications:

- ❖ Discuss with the students the ways of showing respect to the priests and the servants.
- ❖ Ask the students to search at home for the chapter in the Bible where God called Aaron for the priesthood.

LESSONS FOR THE GREAT FAST PERIOD

- Week 0:** Murmuring Against God
- Week 1:** Daniel and Fasting
- Week 2:** The Prodigal Son
- Week 3:** Eli the Priest and His Sons
- Week 4:** Rahab's Faith
- Week 5:** The Passover Lamb
- Week 6:** Maries in the Bible
- Week 7:** (Palm's Sunday) - No lesson
- Week 8:** (Resurrection Sunday) – No Lesson

Week 0- Murmuring Against God

Objectives:

- ❖ To learn the outcome of murmuring against God
- ❖ To trust in the effect of the priest's prayers
- ❖ To learn about forgiveness

Memory Verse:

"I will rid Myself of the murmuring of the children of Israel" (Numbers 17:5)

References:

- ❖ The Book of Numbers 16:41-50
- ❖ "Explanation of the Book of Numbers" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ The Arabic life applied Bible

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.

The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram as we studied in the previous lesson, had raised doubts in the hearts and minds of the people of Israel. They started to doubt the promises of God and to rebel against Moses and Aaron. Thus, the three rebellion men, although punished severely by God, had raised the feelings of anger, rebellion and doubt in the Israelites. So, the story did not end by the death of Korah, Dathan and Abiram with their families but rather started a general rebelling and murmuring attitude in the whole congregation.

Lesson Outlines:

Although the Israelites witnessed the severe punishment that God brought upon Korah, Dathan and Abiram, they still continued to murmur against Aaron and Moses. They accused them of killing the people of the Lord in the wilderness. They thought that they are the killers of the three rebelling men not God. The picture was confused in their minds. The congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron toward the tabernacle of meetings. Suddenly, the cloud, which indicated God's presence in the tabernacle of meeting, had filled the place. God in the cloud had spoken to Moses and Aaron. He told them to separate themselves from the congregation so He can destroy them in a moment because they murmured against their leader Moses and their priest Aaron who were chosen and guided by God.

However, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces to the ground and asked God to forgive the people of Israel despite their murmuring against them. This shows the great forgiveness and care of both Moses and Aaron for the people of Israel although they were rebelling and murmuring against them.

So, Moses told Aaron to take a censor and fill it with incense and run in the midst of the congregation. Notice even Moses himself he did not take the role of the priest because Aaron was the priest and he respected his role. He was to help Moses as the leader and the communicator with God but Moses never tried to take over as a priest or do what Aaron was supposed to do. So Aaron listened to Moses and ran with the censor in the midst of the congregation but the plague from God has already started and people were dying. However, the plague stopped and there was a sharp separation between the dead and the living exactly on the sides of the path that Aaron took between the people. So, God stopped the plague in response to the atonement that Aaron did for the people. This also reminds us of the role of the priests in the sacrament of unction of the sick. Finally, the plague has killed fourteen thousands seven hundred in this instant.

❖ What do we learn from this lesson?

God has defended Moses and Aaron against the rebellion and envy of the rest of the Israelites. Also God defends His children and fights for them.

God does not like the people when they lost their faith in God and doubted His chosen leader and priest in reaching the Promised Land. God definitely punished them for their continuous murmuring and rebellion against God. We have to learn to believe and trust in God's promises to us and do not murmur if He takes time to fulfill them for us. We have to remember always God's previous good works with us and be thankful.

Every one of us has a role to do in life and we should respect each other's roles and do not try to take over. Similarly, Moses acted as a leader and Aaron as a priest and the rest of the people should have followed them.

We also see the great role of the priest Aaron, his prayers and incense in stopping the plague and standing between the living and the dead. This teaches us to respect the strength of the prayers of the priests on our behalf.

Conclusion:

Murmuring against God is a reviled sin and He can punish for it harshly if He wills. Instead God always fulfills His promises to us; we just have to be patient. We have to be thankful believers and always remember the good things that God had previously done for us.

Applications:

- ❖ Make sure that all the students memorize the thanksgiving prayer from the Agpeya.
- ❖ The students have to respect the priest and his prayer for them.
- ❖ The students are to do a project about the censor and the incense. Give prizes for the best project.

Week 1- Daniel and Fasting

Objective:

- ❖ The blessings of fasting in our life and the necessity of fasting with the church

Memory Verse:

“When the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast” (Matthew 9:15)

References

- ❖ Daniel 1
- ❖ “Fasting” The Paradise of the Spirit”, Part 2, Late Anba Youannis

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Introduce the virtue of brotherly love and Christ’s love for us as He fasted and was crucified for our sake.

Observe church fasting and let it be associated with prayer, contemplation on the Word of God and receiving communion. Abstain from food for a certain period. Consult your father of confession. Church fasting includes Wednesdays and Fridays (Discuss the reasons with the students), the Lent, Nativity fasting (43 days), the Virgin’s fasting, the Apostles fasting and Jonah’s fasting in addition to vigils and private fasting.

Lesson Outlines:

Fasting is an old virtue that was practiced in the Old Testament and the Lord ordered Adam and Eve not to eat the fruits of the Tree. If they had fasted, they would not have done that sin because this was fasting. David fasted and Daniel fasted. Daniel was a pious young man. He was an Israelite. When the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem and attacked it, they brought him to Babylon as a captive. He was a good-looking, educated, and intelligent young man. He was successful in his life. He did not stop worshipping God even when he was in the land of his enemies. He was not afraid of them (Questions).

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonian ordered Ashpenaz, his chief official, to select from among the Israelites’ exiles some young men of the Royal family and of the noble families. They had to be handsome, intelligent, well trained, quick to learn, and free from physical defects so that they would be qualified to serve in the royal court. Ashpenaz and his slaves went out to search for such young men among the captives. Then they brought a number of them; among whom was Daniel and the three young men. Ashpenaz gave them new names; Daniel was named Belteshazzar (Explain how the young men entered the great palace and the meeting Ashpenaz held for them). You will stay here... The king ordered that they should be given royal food and

wine. After three years you will see the king so that he may choose whichever he wanted to serve him. They all bowed down and thanked Ashpenaz and declared their complete obedience. The time for dinner came. A filling meal of wine and sweets was presented... The young men rejoiced and began to eat but Daniel and the three young men refused to eat that food. Ashpenaz was surprised. He asked them (a lively conversation filled with blessed teachings about the necessity of self control, the importance of holding fast to the commandment of God whatever the circumstances may be, attempts made by Ashpenaz to convince them to eat but they insisted on not eating the royal food, etc.). Ashpenaz was a good-hearted man. Daniel suggested for him to let them eat their vegetarian food (vegetables -lentils - beans) and then test them for ten days. Ashpenaz agreed but he was afraid that they might be weak in body and health. Daniel told him that everything would be all right (Questions).

The ten days passed and they entered Ashpenaz's room. They were healthy, lively and good-looking. Ashpenaz was amazed. Daniel bore witness to the work of God, which rewards us for our fasting and holding fast to his commandments by giving us spiritual blessings. He blesses our bodies, souls and health. Ashpenaz admired them and admired their faith and principles. He praised them. They went on like that. When time came for them to be presented before the king, they were much better than the others. The King came (Describe in detail the rites of the meeting and its awesome atmosphere) and chose the four young men. He tested them in wisdom and intelligence. They impressed him more than any of the others. No matter what question the king asked, or what problem he raised, these four knew ten times more than any fortune-teller or magician in his whole kingdom. He appointed them as members of the court (Questions).

Conclusion:

Fasting is grace and calmness and a blessing for the senses of the body. This kindles the soul and releases her through her worships and activities without any obstacles.

Applications:

- ❖ Let us fast Wednesday and Friday. Let us convince our parents that it is necessary to fast and describe to them the meaning of fasting.
- ❖ Choose the right word:
 1. When Daniel and the three young men ate lentils (they became weak -they became strong).
 2. Daniel refused to drink wine as it is (illegal -legal).
 3. When Daniel suggested eating vegetables, Ashpenaz (agreed -refused).

Week 2- The Prodigal Son

Objective:

- ❖ The practical steps for repentance

Memory Verse:

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight” (Luke 15:21)

References:

- ❖ “The Paradise of the Spirit” Part I, Late Anba Youannis
- ❖ “The Guide to Confession” Anba Bemin
- ❖ “Turn me O Lord and I will turn” Fr. Youssef Asaad

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.

The story of the Prodigal Son will remain an abundant spring for the mercies of God. The church reads this parable at the beginning of the Lent. In this parable we find the following:

- ❖ The deep love of the Father who always forgives.
- ❖ The state of the sinner and how sin corrupted the life of man, destroyed him and caused his misery.
- ❖ Self-righteousness, Phariseism, and dependence on human strength in life are useless.
- ❖ A warning against fall, rewarding the repentant and forgiving sins as the true repentance is renewal of life.

Lesson Outlines:

A. Steps of repentance in the life of the Prodigal Son

The First Step: He began to be in need: Being in need of fatherhood is the first step towards repentance. Hunger and thirst for righteousness is the main gate through which repentant enter. But those who lead the life of the Pharisees, who sit with Simon to judge the woman who sinned (and repented after meeting the Lord and became righteous), those who are self-satisfied, those who admire their self-righteousness, and those who are filled with pride because of their human virtues, are not in need of the Christ of sinners: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick”.

In this stage in the life of the Prodigal Son the Scripture says: “So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine” (Luke 15:5). How miserable is that man who makes human attempts and resorts to people, thinking that men can solve his problem and release him of his troubles, isolation, emptiness and misery.

Such a man will increase his misery. He will desire to fill his inside with anything but no one will comfort him or release him of emptiness and isolation. The devil gives him delight when he sins so he rushes towards sin but finds no delight, “Nobody gave him” as the Scripture says.

The Second Step: He came to himself. True repentance does not mean mere grief, but is it the blessed grief? It is the positive grief of which the Scripture says: “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but ungodly grief produces death” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

- ❖ The blessed grief is the grief for the sake of God.
- ❖ The blessed grief is the grief that the Lord beautified saying; “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).
- ❖ It is grief accompanied by tears but through it we have hope.
- ❖ There is pain, there is weeping, but there is also confidence in the Father’s bosom. In it, there is murmur against the ugly sins of the past, but there is also confidence in the Blessed Divine promises.
- ❖ The repentant who grieves at sins, hears the Lord’s voice in his heart saying: “And him who comes to me I will not cast out. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

In this stage, the Prodigal Son says: “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger. I will arise and go to my father as I have confidence in his fatherhood and his love whatever my sins are”. The devil encourages man to sin and fall and when man falls, the devil seeks to drive him into despair. The spiritual man struggles before he falls, but if he stumbles, he hurries to rise saying: “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise” (Micah 7:8).

One of the characteristics of this stage is contrition of the heart: “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants”. The Lord looks from heaven, at the humble hearted and raises them whatever their sins are. It is written: “The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground”. “He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap”.

Ahab sold himself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, when Jezebel, his wife, incited him and when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about dejectedly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself fore me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring evil in his days” (1 Kings 21:25 -28).

God does not treat us according to our sins but according to His great mercy, He regards our humility and humble hearts and accepts our repentance through the mercy of His Son Jesus

Christ who offered Himself as an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world: “The blood of Jesus His son cleanses us from all sin”. He regards the humble sinner through the sacrifice of the cross, accepts him and gives him the blood of His beloved Son that has the power of forgiveness.

The Third Step: Taking a decision “He rose and came to his father”. Repentance is a change of attitude and a deep change of the heart’s attitude. This situation has two sides: the inner side and the outer side. The inner change is represented in the holy grief, contrition, faith and confidence in the promise of God. One of the best examples is the thief on the right who believed and his faith has been reckoned to him as righteousness. St. Baessa is a good example. She refused to go back to the place where she used to sin. When she died, St. John saw her with the souls of the Saints who perfected faith and proved that repentance turns adulterers into virgins (Synaxarium 2 Missra).

But the outer side implies two phases: The first phase is to manifest this internal movement in the form of actions, situations and conduct before God and men. The Second phase is to go to confession. St. Paul’s preaching to the Ephesians shows that, “Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver” (Acts 19: 18, 19).

Zacchaeus repented before all the people and decided to give half of his property to the poor and if he cheated anyone, he would pay him back four times as much. In this situation we can concentrate on the following attributes:

1. Complete confidence in the promises of God and His love and never to depend on self-righteousness.
2. Deep hatred of sin, its circumstances and sources.
3. Deep love for the Lord Jesus and great appetite for worship.
4. Practical love, ministry and modesty in conduct in general.
5. Join the fellowship with the believers in the church.

These attributes make repentance not only mere spiritual rejoicing that takes place in a moment when one is affected by a preacher or moved by one of the verses, but it is also a continuous life, which is the life of God in us. St. Paul expresses this by saying: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”. Repentance then is to desert the egocentric life and adopt the life of Christ in us. It is the Passover from the land of bondage to the Land of Canaan, the Land of true comfort.

The Fourth Step: Going to confession. What remains then is the final step which is declaring the inner repentance and the change of situation, and showing what happens inside man to the priest to whom believers entrust their secrets and confessions and who is given the power of

loosening and binding according to the apostolic power received by the apostles from the Lord Himself.

In the early church, confession was made in public when the believers met to practice liturgies. That is because he who sins, sins against Christ who is the Head of the church, and against His body, which is the church. But after the spread of Christianity, the church preferred that confession would be in secret before one priest.

- ❖ What would happen if I did not go to confession?
- ❖ Should I confess to God or to a priest? Why? Is there a difference?
- ❖ What are the steps to be followed before going to confession?

Conclusion:

There is no place better than the Father's house where He cares for us and leads us in green pastures. There is no rest and comfort for us away from our Father's house. We pray that we may never leave His house.

Applications:

- ❖ Let us resist our sins through practicing the exercises given to us by our father of confession.
- ❖ Let us hold prayer meetings so that the Lord may bring back those who are outside the Church and help the repentant to stand firm in faith.
- ❖ Let us make a wall Chart about the parable of the Prodigal Son through writing, drawing and pictures.

Week 3- Eli The Priest and His Sons

Objective:

- ❖ Children should show reverence for the House of God by entering and going out with reverence and prayer, by sitting calmly, listening and understanding what is said.

Memory Verse:

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations” (Mark 11:17)

References:

- ❖ 1 Samuel 2
- ❖ “First Book of Samuel” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare pictures of churches, the picture of a Tent, etc.
- ❖ The House of the Lord is holy because the Lord is present in it by His Body and Blood.
- ❖ Conduct discussion about how to enter the church.

What shall we say: “But I through the abundance of Your steadfast love will enter Your house. I will worship toward Your holy temple in Your fear”. Pray before you go to bed. Pray while you are walking in the street. Pray during the mass. Watch how the priest and the deacons act and move and try to understand. Receive the blessings of the icons. Do not give your back to the Sanctuary when you go out (Questions about this stage).

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord insists on keeping His house holy. In the Old Testament, there was a priest named Eli. He had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas who helped him. When the people offer their sacrifices, the priests sanctify themselves and follow a certain order for offering them to God. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were wicked men who sinned in the house of the Lord. They were scoundrels. They paid no attention to the Lord or to the regulations concerning what the priests could demand from the people. The people were annoyed and murmured against them. Many of them despised the Holy Place (Questions).

The Lord heard the people’s complaints and saw the evil deeds. He was angry with Eli and his sons. He ordered Eli to rebuke them. Eli advised them not to do that again but gently. The Lord was angry with Eli. The boy Samuel was in the temple. The Lord appeared to Samuel and told him that He decided to kill Eli and his sons. Eli knew the judgment of the Lord and was sad (Questions).

There was a severe war. The Israelites were defeated. Hophni and Phinehas were killed in battle. Eli heard the sad news. He knew that the enemies took the Ark of the Covenant. He fell to the ground and died. So those who despised the holy place of the Lord died.

Conclusion:

We have to show cordial true clear love and respect for the house of God. The House of God is the place where we are alone with God away from all our daily worries and routine. We care to spend quality time with God in His house.

Applications:

- ❖ Observe how you enter, exit, and stand in the House of the Lord.
- ❖ We have to be attentive to the reading and prayers whenever we are in the church.
- ❖ Choose the suitable words from the second column to complete the words from the first column:

Eli the priest was	pleased the Lord
The Boy Samuel	because they despised the House of the Lord
Hophni and Phinehas died	a high priest

Week 4- Rahab's Faith

Objective:

- ❖ God rewards every good deed
- ❖ Rahab had faith in the God of the Israelites and she acted on this faith
- ❖ God accepts gentiles even in the Old Testament

Memory verse:

"For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11)

References:

- ❖ The new open Bible- Joshua 2:1-24 , 6:22-23
- ❖ The applied explanation of the Holy Bible
- ❖ "Explanation of the Book of Joshua" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students what is faith? Then read to them Hebrews 11:1
- ❖ Ask them what do they believe in as Coptic Christians?
- ❖ The servant should use visual aids during the story.

Lesson Outlines:

Joshua was a great leader to the Israelites after Moses. He led his people into the Promised Land after a long 40 years of wandering in the desert of Sinai. The first city they wanted to enter in the Promised Land was Jericho. However, before they entered the city Joshua sent two men to go and spy the city of Jericho. So, they went to Jericho and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab and stayed there. So, the king of Jericho sent to Rahab and asked her to bring out the two men who came to her house because they were spies. Rahab told the king's messengers that the two men had left and they probably escaped through the city gate. Mean while she hid the two spies on her roof under the stalks of flax. So the King's messengers ran after the spies to the gate and then the gate was closed behind them.

Before the Israelite spies went down from the roof of Rehab's house, she told them: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath."

Rahab then requested from them that they spare her and her family when the Israelites take over the city of Jericho. So, they promised her that if she keeps their matter a secret that they will treat her kindly and her family because she showed them kindness.

Rahab subsequently let them down the wall through a window in her house by a robe. She told the spies to run to the mountains and hide there for 3 days until the king's messengers return then they can go back to Joshua. So the spies told her to let this same robe of scarlet down her window when they come to attack and take over Jericho, so they would know her house and spare her and her family. They also told her to keep all the member of her family inside her house or otherwise they might be killed. The spies then went to the mountains as she told them and stayed there for three days and then went back to Joshua. They told Joshua what Rahab told them that the Lord had delivered all the land into their hand because the people of the land are fainthearted because of the reputation of their strong God that is protecting them.

When the Israelites took over Jericho and entered it, Joshua told the two spies to go and look for Rahab's house and family and save them and keep them with the Israelites. Thus Rahab and her family were saved by showing kindness to the two spies.

Conclusion:

Because of Rahab's act of kindness and her faith in the power and ability of the God of Israel she was saved and became a mother of Boaz who is the grandfather of King David. And we all know that Jesus Christ came from the descendants of King David (Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25).

Applications:

- ❖ We need to show kindness to all people around us.
- ❖ Show care for your family as Rahab cared to save her family not only herself.
- ❖ Read the second chapter in the Epistle of St. James.

Week 5- The Passover Lamb

Objective:

- ❖ Children should receive the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood so that the Lord may forgive us our sins as He forgave the people in old times.

Memory Verse:

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7)

References:

- ❖ Exodus 12
- ❖ "Explanation of the Book of Exodus" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare a big picture of people brushing blood on their doors.
- ❖ Review with the students the ten plagues that hit Egypt.
- ❖ Ask questions about incense and honoring the Lord's house, the importance of prayers and receiving the Holy Communion (This is the aim of the lesson).

Lesson Outlines:

Receiving the Holy Communion is very important. This is shown by a story that took place in the Old Testament (Ask questions about the Israelites' bondage in the land of Egypt, about their suffering and cries, about the Ten Plagues till you reach the powerful tenth plague). The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to tell the people that each family would kill a lamb named the Passover lamb "The Pasch Lamb" (Pasch = Passover). They should take part of the blood and lay it on the doorposts and the upper beam so that when the destroyer saw the blood, he would pass and would not kill them. He told them to eat the lamb's meat in the evening with bitter herbs, their loins girded, their staffs in their hands, their lamps lit, as they should be prepared to go out of the Land of bondage (Children already know the story so you can give the lesson through discussion). At midnight the angel came and killed the firstborn of all Egyptian families and saved the Israelites because they offered the sacrifice. The Pasch lamb stood for the Lord Jesus whose blood was poured on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

We commit many sins (disobedience -sins of the tongue -anger -dispute -selfishness). If the Lord judged us, He would destroy us as He did with those sinners... but he, who desires to escape punishment, must receive the Holy Communion, the Blood of Christ. When the angel sees the blood, he will pass away (Discussion about the blessings of the Holy Communion). Be prepared when you go to receive the Holy Communion. Repentance before receiving the Holy Communion is a must.

Conclusion:

The people put the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts and the beams above the doors of their houses. This has a symbolic meaning: The Blood of Christ protected us and the Divine Justice will not punish us. The Blood of Christ forgives us our sins we committed in the past, and purifies us of our sins at present, and sanctifies us for a pure life in the future.

Applications:

❖ Go to confession in the spirit of repentance after you count your sins and then receive the Holy Body and Blood in communion.

❖ Match the following:

The Pascha lamb	is a symbol of	The Lords forgiveness
The blood of the lamb	is a symbol of	The Lord Jesus
The angels passing	is a symbol of	Christ's blood

Week 6- Maries in the Bible

Objective:

- ❖ To learn How many women named Mary was mentioned in the Bible and their role.
- ❖ To learn from the virtues of each one of them and on top of them all St. Mary the mother of God.

Memory Verse:

“The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace” (Psalm 45:13)

References:

- ❖ St. John Magazine, Vol. 15, No.163, August 2003. An article by Fr. John Iskander.
- ❖ The New Open Study Bible
- ❖ The Applied Explanation of the Holy Bible.

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.

The church has dedicated two weeks during the month of August as a fast for St. Mary starting on August 7 and ending on August 21st. This is in memory of the two weeks that the disciples fasted prior to seeing St. Mary’s body being taken to the heaven as St. Thomas described what he had seen on his way back from India. St. Thomas actually did not attend the departure of St. Mary from this world but on his way back from preaching in India he saw when St. Mary’s body was taken into heaven on the right hand of the Lord surrounded with angels. St. Thomas described what he saw to the remainder of the disciples who went back to St. Mary’s burial place and did not find her body. Thus they knew that what St. Thomas saw was true. Then, they fasted and prayed for two weeks to see what St. Thomas saw and they did see the same seen again at the end of the two weeks. Therefore we also fast for two weeks in memory of that event.

Lesson Outlines:

Today we are going to find out how many Maries were mentioned in the Bible and what was the role of very one of them. We will also see where they were mentioned in the Bible (Ask students: Do you know of any other Mary in the Bible beside St. Mary the Virgin?). There are 7 Maries mentioned in the Bible. We are going to look at three major events related to each one of them.

A. Miriam the Sister of Moses and Aaron

- ❖ She was wise when she asked the daughter of Pharaoh to bring a nursery for Moses and then called his mother.

- ❖ She showed zeal and leadership when she took the timbrel with her hands and all the women went after her glorifying the Lord after crossing the red sea (Exodus 15:20).
- ❖ However, she made a mistake when she talked badly about Moses when he married the Ethiopian wife. Thus God has punished her with leprosy for seven days (Numbers 12:1-10).

Thus we learn not to have different tongues that would praise God at one time but condemn people at another time.

B. Mary Magdalene

- ❖ The Lord Jesus Christ had cast seven demons out of her and cleaned her from her sins (Mark 16).
- ❖ She also served the Lord and His disciples from her money (Luke 8).
- ❖ She was the first to see Jesus Christ after His resurrection and the first to bring the good news to the rest of the disciples (John 20).

In the life of Mary Magdalene we see how a person can be changed completely from being possessed with demons to a preacher through the touch and love of Jesus Christ.

C. Mary the Sister of Lazarus

- ❖ She sat at the feet of Jesus Christ when He visited them and had chosen Him as the good guide for her.
- ❖ She wept at the feet of the Lord when her brother Lazarus died so Jesus Christ wept as well.
- ❖ She anointed Jesus Christ's feet with fragrant oil as a sign of his burial.

Mary the sister of Lazarus had chosen the Lord as her good shepherd and she gave all her precious things to thank Him for His love and salvation.

D. Mary the Wife of Clopas

- ❖ She is the sister of St. Mary the Virgin and the mother of James, Joses, Simon and Judas, the cousins of Jesus Christ. She was called Mary because her first sister St. Mary the Virgin was given to the temple when she was three years old. So, her parents named her sister Mary as well to keep her memory in the family (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3, 15:40, 16:1, John 19:25).
- ❖ St. Mary and her sister stood under the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ with Mary Magdalene in their company. Thus, she shared St. Mary in her sad and difficult time. She also went with her to the tomb carrying spices for the body of Jesus Christ in the tomb.
- ❖ She was one of the first few who knew about the resurrection of the Lord. When they knew He was risen they brought the news of the resurrection to the rest of the disciples and apostles.

She was a loving and caring sister to St. Mary the Virgin in her difficult time. She also presented her two sons (Judas and James the less) willingly to follow Jesus Christ and to the service. These are two important virtues that we can learn from her.

E. Mary the Mother of St. Mark

- ❖ She is the mother of St. Mark who brought Christianity to Egypt and wrote the gospel of St. Mark.
- ❖ She opened her house for the Lord and His disciples to celebrate the Passover and to put the foundation for the sacrament of communion.
- ❖ She brought up St. Mark in the fear of God and he was chosen by God to be one of the apostles and to write one of the gospels
- ❖ Her house became the first church in the world because it is believed that this is the place where the disciples and the apostles were gathered when the Lord Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection and when they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It was also a house of prayer for the sake of St. Peter when he was in prison.

May our houses be like her house when the Lord, the Holy Spirit and feeling of fellowship dwells.

F. Mary who Labored in the Service

- ❖ She was mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans when he said “Greet Mary, who labored much for us” (Romans 16:6).
- ❖ She served with all her efforts as St. Paul mentions the word labored to indicate how effort and suffering she participated with in the service.
- ❖ She was mentioned briefly in the Bible although she labored a lot in the service. This does not change her great reward that awaits her in heaven.
- ❖ It seems that she served St. Paul out of love and respect as a good example of the fellowship in the service of the Lord.

Let us all learn to serve others in love and respect without laziness or selfishness.

G. St. Mary the Virgin

- ❖ She is the queen and the mother of us all, the Theotokos the mother of Jesus Christ. Her virtues are countless.
- ❖ She was presented to the temple when she was 3 years and was engaged to St. Joseph the carpenter when she was 12.
- ❖ St. John took care of her after the crucifixion of our Lord until she died.
- ❖ She was obedient to the priests in the temple.
- ❖ She was the mean of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ She served her relative St. Elizabeth even when she was pregnant herself.
- ❖ She took good care of the baby Jesus and tolerated all suffering for His sake and to keep Him safe, e.g. the flight to Egypt.
- ❖ She served the people in their needs as in the wedding of Caana.
- ❖ She tolerated the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross with patience.
- ❖ She served with the disciples and the apostles after the resurrection (Acts 1:14).

Conclusion:

There are seven Maries mentioned in the Bible. They all had role in serving God so they deserved to be mentioned. St. Mary the Virgin surpasses them all in her virtues that we always ought to ask for her intercessions for us in front of Her Son and Lord Jesus Christ.

Applications:

- ❖ Choose one of the Maries to adopt her virtue this week and gradually for every time.
- ❖ Make a Bible search for the events that St. Mary the Virgin was part of. This should be a project with prizes
- ❖ Make sure that all the students memorize the prayer, “We magnify you the mother of the true light...”

LESSONS FOR THE PENTECOST PERIOD
(Fifty Days after Resurrection)

Week 1: Observe the Lords Day and Keep It Holy

Week 2: St. John the Apostle

Week 3: Friendship

Week 4: Simon and Sorcery

Week 5: Demetrius, the Vinedresser

Week 6: Prayer: Hannah the Mother of Samuel

Week 7: Prayer: King Hezekiah

Week 1- Observe the Lord's Day and Keep It Holy

Objective:

- ❖ Observing Sunday as it is the day on which the Lord rose from the dead by receiving communion, reading the Bible, attending Sunday School and helping the poor.

Memory Verse:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8)

References:

- ❖ Numbers 15
- ❖ “Explanation of the Book of Numbers” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Draw several pictures to represent the way of observing the Lord's Day: a person praying, a person bowing down, a person receiving communion, a person reading the Bible, a visit to a poor person, etc.
- ❖ What are the Ten Commandments?
- ❖ Why did the Lord command that the Sabbath should be observed?
- ❖ What did the children of Israel do on the Sabbath?
- ❖ What is the Lord's Day now after Resurrection? Why was Sunday chosen?

Lesson Outlines:

One day, while the Israelites were still in the wilderness, a man was found gathering firewood on the Sabbath. He was taken to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community and was put under guard because it was not clear what should be done with him (Write down the conversation that ran among the people, between the men and Moses and between Moses and the man). Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must be put to death, the whole community is to stone him to death outside the camp. So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the Lord had commanded.

- ❖ What did the man do?
- ❖ What did Moses say at first?
- ❖ What did the Lord say to him?
- ❖ Why did the Lord command that all the community was to stone him? (So you may not forget that breaking this commandment is dangerous).
- ❖ Which of the following sentences are right?

- ✠ The Jews observe the Sabbath.
- ✠ The Christians observe the Sabbath.
- ✠ Keeping Sunday holy means that on that day we are to play with our friends.
- ✠ Christ likes us to visit the poor people on Sunday.

Hold a conversation about how to keep Sunday holy. Let the children give their suggestions and then make an agreement with the children to go to church and attend the Holy Mass, receive the Holy Communion, pray, read the Bible, visit the sick people and the poor people on that day in particular.

Conclusion:

- ❖ We should always observe Sunday, the Lord's Day and we should thank God for He is merciful to us. He does not treat us if we did not observe it the same way as He treated the people of the Old Testament.
- ❖ Let us observe Sunday... let us worship the Lord, receive the Holy Communion, read the Holy Bible, give alms, not to do anything that can be postponed so that we may devote our time to prayers and contemplation.

Applications:

- ❖ Make an attendance diary for each student to record attendance to church, communion, praying and reading the Bible every week.
- ❖ Arrange that all the students of the class go for confession and communion next Sunday.
- ❖ Arrange to visit an orphanage after Sunday liturgy with the students.

Week 2- St. John the Apostle

Objective:

- ❖ Holding fast to Christ and moving closer to His side in prayer as John did.

Memory Verse:

“Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last” (Revelation 1:17)

References

- ❖ Revelation 1
- ❖ Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa, Part 1

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare a picture of St. John the beloved, some pictures of heavenly scenes, a map of Palestine and Asia Minor, etc.
- ❖ Ask questions about St. Paul the apostle and his service (Refer to the map), about his love for Christ (2 Corinthians 11), his desire to serve those places, about the feast of the apostles and how St. Paul and St. Peter were martyred.

Lesson Outlines:

John the beloved was a fisherman in Galilee. His brother was James son of Zebedee. The story of how they met the Lord Jesus, how they caught large amounts of fish and how they were called “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17), how they left their father, their work and their servants, and that they were rich. The High Priest knew John because of his jealousy, his godliness and his wealth. They followed the Lord Christ and became His disciples. John liked to lie on Jesus’ bosom, as he loved Christ very much. He walked with Him in his journeys and service and saw His miraculous deeds, heard His teachings, and held fast to His discipleship in spite of the Jews persecution of the Lord. When Jesus was crucified, he stood under the cross and took His kind mother with him. He saw the resurrection and the ascension (Questions). John began his service in Palestine then in Asia Minor. He lived till he was about one hundred years old. All the apostles were martyred. So he became the only Bishop in the whole world who saw Christ at that time. So when heresies spread, and when John saw that they were against the Divinity of Christ, he wrote his gospel and three epistles to his Christian children. They were model of excellent service (The story of the young man he had given to the Bishop and when he came back he found that the man had become a robber... and how he ran after him and made him repent) (Questions).

But John’s service was not without pains. Emperor Domitian laid him in boiling oil in 96 A.D. Then he sent him into exile in the island of Patmus. But the Lord was with him in his exile and He granted him the eternal revelation. Let us read together chapter 1 of the Book of

Revelation. Then the Servant and the children contemplate the scene. Seven golden lecterns... Seven stars... a sword (the word of God). Draw a simple picture of the scene on the blackboard. Let the child imagine the heavenly scene to see the priests with their censers and crowns and to see the throne with the four animals, and the angels with their wings, etc. (Questions).

Conclusion:

John the Beloved was a model of prayer and contemplation. He learned all these things because he was always closer to Jesus' side. Do you move closer to Jesus' side and test His love?

Applications:

- ❖ Let us imagine the Lord Jesus when we pray and lie in His bosom and speak to Him.
- ❖ Read Revelation 1:12-20.

Week 3- Friendship

Objective:

- ❖ Teach the children the basis of how to choose their friends
- ❖ Help the children evaluate the people they call friends
- ❖ Jesus is our best friend

Memory verse:

“A friend loves at all times” (Proverbs 17:17)

References:

- ❖ Nelson Study Bible
- ❖ Children’s Ministry Resource Bible

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ What is a friend? The dictionary says a friend is one attached to another by affection, or esteem.
- ❖ Most of us have friends but there are good friends and bad friends. How do we know if this person could be a good or bad friend?
- ❖ Ask several children to describe some of their friends and tell why they are good friends.
- ❖ Why do we need friends?

Lesson Outlines:

Tell the story of David and Jonathan. Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul’s son, delighted greatly in David. So Jonathan told David, saying, “My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place and hide. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell you.” Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, “Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you for he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?” So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, “As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed.” Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past (1 Samuel 19:1-7)

Jonathan was a good friend to David. Jonathan warned David of the intention of his father Saul to kill him. He had the courage to go and speak to his father. He spoke well to Saul his father about David. Saul heard Jonathan and changed his mind and swore not to kill David.

Jesus said “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). Jesus wants us to be good friends and to have friends.

- ❖ Get the children to tell what they like about their best friend?
- ❖ What do I look for when I choose my friends?

a) Very popular	b) Very intelligent	c) Strong Christian
d) Honest	e) Funny	f) Very dependable
g) Good looking	h) Has a nice house	I) Kind and considerate
j) Good listener	k) Has no other friend	l) Like to play

We have to choose friends that would help us get closer to God not the ones that make us fall in sin and lead us to ways that are not acceptable to God. The qualities of a friend should be as St. Paul says in the Bible: “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection” (Colossians 3:12-14).

- ❖ How can I be a good friend?
 - ✚ I should be kind.
 - ✚ Not selfish.
 - ✚ Forgiving.
 - ✚ Be happy when they are happy and sad and comforting when they are sad.
 - ✚ Do not be bossy but accept others’ wishes and ideas.
 - ✚ Always think “what would Jesus do” in any situation I find myself in.

The Bible tells us “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

Conclusion:

Let the children know that God wants them to have good friends. Jesus Himself had many good friends, a close group of people men and women with whom He spent a lot of time. He taught them how to be good friends and neighbors to others. Jesus also wants to be our friend. He is a friend who “sticks closer than a brother”. If we have Christ as our friend, we will have also many other friends who also know about Christ.

Applications:

- ❖ Ask the children to go through the list of their friends and evaluate them one by one.

- ❖ Distribute a sheet of paper with the following questions to answer at home:

Name of friend!

Why he or she is my friend?

Does he or she get me closer to God?

What I contribute to our friendship?

How our friendship could improve?

The children don't have to return that sheet if they feel this invades their privacy or let the name part be optional.

Week 4- Simon and Sorcery

Objective:

- ❖ To understand that sorcery is not of God
- ❖ To know the amazing work of the Holy Spirit

Memory Verse:

“They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17)

References:

- ❖ The New Open Bible – Acts 8:5-24
- ❖ “Explanation of the Book of Acts” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students if they know what sorcery is.
- ❖ Is sorcery good or bad? And why?

Lesson Outlines:

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Pentecost Day, the disciples started going into many surrounding cities and countries preaching the word of God. Philip was one of the disciples went to a city called Samaria. Many people believed in Jesus Christ through the preaching of St. Philip. He also performed many miracles and cast many unclean spirits out of them. He also healed many paralyzed and sick people. So, the city of Samaria was in great Joy.

Meanwhile there was a man called Simon who performed many acts of sorcery in Samaria. He became famous because of his sorcery and the people used to fear him thinking that he has the power of God. However, when they saw what St. Philip did in their city they believed and were baptized. Simon also believed, was baptized and became a Christian. He followed St. Philip in his work and was amazed of what he was able to do.

When the rest of the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that many Samaritans had become Christians and believed the word of God, they sent St. Peter and St. John to them. When they arrived they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Then, they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw this power he went to the disciples and offered them money to give him the power and the authority of laying the hands to receive the Holy Spirit. St. Peter was upset with him for his worldly thinking. He still wanted to be in power and of unusual abilities to keep his reputation and fame in Samaria. St. Peter told Simon that his money might be lost with him since he thought that the gift of God could be bought with money. He also told him to go and pray that

God may forgive him his bad thought and intentions. Simon felt bad for what he has done and asked St. Peter to pray for him that God may forgive him.

- ❖ What was the name of the city where Simon the sorcerer lived?
- ❖ What is the name of the disciple that went to preach Samaria?
- ❖ Why was Simon famous in Samaria?
- ❖ Who came to Samaria to lay the hands on the believers?
- ❖ What happened when St. Peter and St. John laid the hands on the believers?

Conclusion:

Simon was self centered, all what he wanted is to keep his prestige in the city by replacing his sorcery with the power of laying the hands that the apostles were given from God because it was stronger and awesome. He also used an earthly mean to receive this gift which was money. The gifts that God gives to us are given freely and we should use them for the glory of His name. Money cannot buy any of God's gifts or any of the spiritual blessings.

Applications:

- ❖ Search if the word sorcery came in the Old Testament and what was written about it.
- ❖ The servant can discuss all kinds of sorcery and Psychic types that are not acceptable in the Christian faith.
- ❖ Teach the children the word of the sign of the cross in Coptic.

Week 5- Demetrius, the Vinedresser

Objective:

- ❖ Learn from the purity and dedication of Pope Demetrius.

Memory Verse:

“He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly” (Luke 1:52)

References:

- ❖ The Synaxarium- Baramhat 12

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students who is our Pope at the present time? What are the characteristics of a Pope?
- ❖ Ask them if they know of a Pope that was married in the history of our church.

Lesson Outlines:

In the year 199 AD, the tide of Coptic history was taking a turn: the peace that had been enjoyed by the church up till then was about to be disturbed. Anba Demetrius, heretofore a simple vinedresser, was chosen to sit on the Chair of St. Mark. The choice came about when his predecessor, Anba Yulianus, had seen a vision, wherein he was told by an angel that his departure from this world was imminent, and that he was to choose as his successor the man who came to him on the following day with a bunch of grapes. On the next day, Demetrius, the Vinedresser, appeared carrying a bunch of grapes, the first fruit of the season, as a gift to his holiness. Anba Yulianus immediately retained him and related his vision to those around him. On that very same day he died and was gathered unto his forebears. The people, true to the counsel of Yulianus, declared Demetrius as his successor. Thus he became the 12th successor of St. Mark the Apostle.

St. Demetrius was married when they made him Pope. He was the only Pope in the history of the Church who was married. Some of his people thought of him as not deserving to be a Pope because he was married. The angel appeared to Pope Demetrius and asked him to clear the doubts from the people and prove to them that he was living with his wife only as brother and sister. On the next day Pope Demetrius celebrated the Divine Liturgy and after the service he asked his people not to depart the church. He called on his wife to come forward, and he took an amount of burning charcoal and put it on his clothes and on his wife's and the clothes did not burn. The people were surprised and asked him why he did this. The Pope explained that he and his wife were living in complete purity as brother and sister. This clarified the doubts of his people (Notice that the Popes and the Bishops of our Church are not married).

Demetrius had been a man of little learning. When he was chosen Pope, the first goal he set for himself was to seek learning persistently and diligently, and to make himself worthy of serving his people. It is said of him that he used to sit at the feet of his teachers saying, “Let men seek knowledge with true humility and an ardent desire to learn, forgetful of rank or position?”

As time went on, Demetrius became one of the most learned of prelates -a bright and shining star in the firmament of the Coptic Church which was destined to be filled with shining stars.

One of the many significant original achievements of Anba Demetrius is the method he devised for calculating the date of Easter so that it would always follow after the Jewish Passover, just like the first Easter Sunday, according to the historical Biblical events. This method is known as the “Epact”, and to this day it is followed by all Eastern Orthodox Churches in determining their Easter date many years in advance. It involved making a correlation between the lunar Jewish year and the solar Egyptian year. This was necessary because the lunar year is shorter than the solar year by eleven days, and a fixed date in it can fall in any season as the years go by, and would deviate Easter from the Passover.

When Anba Demetrius made the Epact calculation, he summoned the Holy Council, and explained it to its members. They approved it and decided to abide by it. Many years later, in 325 AD when the first Ecumenical Council of Nicene met, this calculation was submitted to it, and again approved unanimously. It continued to be followed by all Christian Churches until 1582 AD when the calendar was changed by Pope Gregory XIII of Rome. Since then the Western Churches departed from it, and now they observe Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon following the Vernal equinox, regardless of the Jewish Passover. The Eastern Churches, however, still adhere to this old calculation, hence the divergence between the Eastern and Western Churches on the date of Easter celebration.

The first few years after Anba Demetrius had taken the helm of the Church were peaceful years. Then the severe persecutions of Emperor Severus broke out, and many staunch believers were martyred. Among them was St. Leonidas, father of one of the most famous figures of the early Christian Church, Origen. During the persecutions, a Roman prefect marched with his troops into the Church of St. Mark and robbed it of all its holy vessels. Then he seized Anba Demetrius, and sent him into exile to a town called Wissim, where he remained until the persecutions ceased.

On his return to his See, Anba Demetrius learned that Clement, Dean of the School of Alexandria, had gone to his rest. The school was thus in dire need of a new Dean to give it a strong impetus. The Christians of the city who had been enduring the trials and tribulations of those hard times, all witnessed the great heroism, ardent Christian zeal, and brilliance which characterized the young Origen. Upon hearing of this, Anba Demetrius immediately appointed him Dean of the school. He was then exceedingly young, only eighteen years old. Nevertheless, he got the appointment because of what had been said of him.

Origen proved that his Christian devotion and his passionate interest in the School more than made up for his youth. Through his efforts it flourished again, and a period of constructive work followed. The faithful increased in number continually; Anba Demetrius found it necessary to consecrate several new bishops, to shepherd the people and keep the lamp of their newly acquired faith shining bright.

About the year 228 AD, Anba Demetrius, discerning how brilliant Origen had become, sent him on an evangelistic mission to Achaia, to teach and preach about the Living Word of God. When he terminated his mission and was returning home, he passed through Palestine; there Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, one of his former fellow-students, and Theostite, Bishop of Caesarea, detained him and ordained him bishop without asking permission of Anba Demetrius. This angered the Pope, and he summoned a council wherein, despite Origen's towering personality, he excommunicated him. He based this on two reasons: the first, he considered the ordination of any Egyptian priest the privilege of the head of the Church of Egypt; and, in the second place, and more importantly, Origen had committed a sin against his own body, having made himself an eunuch, and thus had lost the right to priestly ordination, for only men without blemish could be ordained (please emphasize how Pope Demetrius was elected or chosen).

Conclusion:

Anba Demetrius lived to be one hundred and five years old. Yet he ceased not to teach and to preach to the very end of his life. Like unto John the beloved and apostle, he used to be seated on a chair and carried to the church, where he would speak words of comfort to his people.

Then, having governed the church for thirty-two years and seven months, during which he traded diligently with the talents entrusted to him by his Lord, he was gathered unto his forebears, shortly before the terrible persecutions of Maximanos fell heavily on the faithful.

Applications:

- ❖ Respect our teachers. Anba Demetrius was a Pope and used to sit at the feet of his teachers.
- ❖ Never think badly about other people even if it is obvious. The people thought he was married and was not supposed to accept the Pope's position. He showed them his purity.

Week 6- Prayer: Hannah the Mother of Samuel

Objective:

- ❖ To know that the heavens answer sincere prayers.

Memory Verse:

“And prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish, then she made a vow” (1 Samuel 1:10-11)

References:

- ❖ “The Life of Samuel” Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ 1 Samuel 1

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare picture or slides of Samuel praying, picture of the Temple, and picture of the altar and the priest
- ❖ Ask the children what is the characteristics of the acceptable prayers?
- ❖ Ask them if they pray regularly?

Lesson Outlines:

In the Old Testament, there was a man called Elkanah who had two wives, Hannah and Perinnah. The second wife had children and the first did not have children. She was depressed because she had a desire that Christ would be her descendant. Perinnah despised her. Elkanah was a good-hearted man. He comforted her all the time (Describe Hannah’s bitter feelings and some of the aggressive attitude of Perinnah without giving details about negative effects. Concentrate on the positive ones. Of course a picture of Perinnah must make the child hate her bad qualities).

On the feast day, all the people were happy, each one in his house... arrangement of clothes, sacrifices and vows... happiness was everywhere... Children play and speak about the journey and the rituals of the feast. Hannah was sad and she wept. Elkanah was much affected and because he loved her, he comforted her and tried to convince her to eat. They ate and drank in Shiloh. Eli the priest (discuss church festivity; censers, new clothes, processions, sacrifices, hymns, etc.) and all the people were happy except Hannah (Questions). Hannah went alone to the Temple and she was deeply depressed but she lifted up her heart in prayer.

- ❖ To whom was she praying?
- ❖ How was she praying? (Tears -worship -meditation -striking the chest -sighing -unheard voice).

Eli the priest noticed this. He thought that she was a drunken woman. He advised her not to drink wine (Here you can speak in detail about the lively conversation between Eli and Hannah and make use of this conversation to teach everything about prayer, how the Lord answers our prayers, submission, patience, the Lord's promises and steadfast love). Eli told her that the Lord will give her a son and she rejoiced. She went out and thanked the Lord. Everyone noticed the change (Questions). They went back home. The feast ended. Days went by. She gave birth to Samuel. She rejoiced. They all rejoiced. She waited till she weaned him. On the feast day she took him to the temple and gave him to Eli the priest (another lively conversation between them - Eli rejoiced as the promise was fulfilled. They were all around them, listening and thanking the Lord. Samuel stayed in the Temple and he became a great prophet... Questions).

Conclusion:

Prayer is the feelings of a needy heart not the expression of the mind and lips. The Lord gave Hannah a great blessing at last because she prayed with a sincere heart and strong faith that God will grant her what she requested. The same for us, if we pray with a sincere heart and strong faith our prayers will be answered.

Applications:

- ❖ Pray so that your problems may be solved (a child who annoys me, sickness, poverty, etc.).
- ❖ Match the words:

Hannah	had children
Perinnah	had no children
E1kanah	is Hannah's son
Samuel	is Hannah's and Perinnah's husband
- ❖ In the Old Testament women who did not have children grieved as they were not going to be mothers of the expected Messiah. Can you find a story of another woman in the Bible that had similar problem like Hannah? Give prizes next time to the students who can find a similar story in the Bible.

Week 7- Prayer: King Hezekiah

Objectives:

- ❖ To learn about the power of prayer that is offered with faith and contrition

Memory Verse:

“I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you” (2 Kings 20:5)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 20

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students how many forms of prayers they know about? Personal, Agpeya, liturgy, short fast prayers, group prayers, etc.
- ❖ Prepare the picture of the lesson; a big picture of Isaiah or Hezekiah, or one of the Royal Palaces.

Lesson Outlines:

Hezekiah was a good King. When he became King, he found that the Israelites worshipped idols and the bronze serpent (who remembers its story?). The king burnt them and destroyed the altars of idols and stopped that worship. He mended the Lord’s house, opened it and began worship in it. The kingdom flourished during his reign whether in civil domains or in spiritual domains. The Lord was pleased with him because of his fidelity so he made him overcome his enemies through many miraculous deeds. His guardian angel killed 185,000 of his enemies when Assyria besieged Jerusalem (The story is found in 2 Kings 18, 19) (Questions about Hezekiah’s deeds).

King Hezekiah fell ill and almost died. The prophet Isaiah went to see him. Hezekiah longed to know the will of God (a lively conversation between them). “The Lord tells you that you are to put everything in order, because you will not recover. Get ready to die” Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed (What did he say to the Lord?). Isaiah left the king, and before he passed through the central courtyard of the palace, the Lord told him to go back to Hezekiah, ruler of the Lord’s people and say to him, “I have heard your prayer... I will let you live fifteen years longer. I will rescue you from the king of Assyria”. Isaiah went back to the king and told him (Describe Hezekiah’s feelings when he saw Isaiah coming back. He thought that the Lord might have been displeased with his weeping but when he heard the good news, he rejoiced. The whole members of the Royal family and the people living at the Royal Palace were happy... ministers; chiefs, soldiers, and servants rejoiced... hymns, lights (Questions). They asked Isaiah, “What shall we do to the King? Shall we bring doctors?” But Isaiah said, “The Lord will perform a miracle. Doctors cannot heal him. Put a paste made of figs on the boil and he will get well”.

Some of them doubted... others were confident... They put the paste made of figs on the boil and waited... The king got well... he was healed... happiness increased... The news was fulfilled... it came true... The king asked for a sign and Isaiah spoke to him... Give me a sign... I cannot imagine that I shall live. The shadow will go back ten steps. The sun went back ten steps... They were all surprised and praised the Lord... The king got well and left his bed... he began to work as usual... He served the Lord till he died after fifteen years (Questions).

- ❖ John said, “You have been anointed by the Holy one, and you all know... I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and know that no lie is of the truth”. That is why my father the priest anointed me 36 times all over my body so I have become a Temple and a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ The Lord Himself added 15 years to Hezekiah’s life. Explain that the paste of figs in itself was not the cause of healing but it was only a means.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Prayer with contrition and confidence pleases God.
- ❖ Confidence in God makes the simple tools very strong.
- ❖ The pure heart sees the Lord and understands His purpose... Isaiah the prophet is a blessed model of this.

Applications:

- ❖ If you see a sick man in your house, when you visit someone -in the street or anywhere - raise your heart with prayer for him so that you will hear the Lord’s words: I have heard your prayers.
- ❖ Say whether these statements are right or wrong:
 - ✠ Isaiah was a great king.
 - ✠ Hezekiah was an evil king.
 - ✠ The paste made of figs healed the dangerous disease with the Power of God.
- ❖ Memorize the seven Sacraments of the church.
- ❖ Search about the Sacrament of Chrism (Myron).

THE APOSTLES' FAST PERIOD

Use Filler lessons (at the beginning of the book) between the feast of Pentecost and the second week of July.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

Week 2: The Church during the Apostolic Era

Week 3: Elisha and the Chariots of the Lord

Week 4: The Healing of Naaman

Week 2- The Church during the Apostolic Era

Objective:

- ❖ Display the condition of the church during the 1st century.
- ❖ Describe the established values in the church after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.
- ❖ Define the contributing places and people involved.

Memory Verse:

*“Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world”
(Psalm 19:4)*

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students how many were the apostles?
- ❖ What is the difference between the disciples and the apostles?
- ❖ What is the apostolic era?

Lesson Outlines:

After the resurrection Christ established the sacraments of priesthood as it is written:

- ❖ “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying: All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20)
- ❖ “And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them; receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23, Matthew 18:18).

The church started to grow and was characterized by the following:

1. Unified church

From day one the church learned to be together. We see the abidance in the Book of Acts:

- ❖ “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14).
- ❖ “And when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1).
- ❖ “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46).

- ❖ “It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul” (Acts 15:25)

2. Evangelism

- ❖ To the Jews:
 - ✚ The first time when St. Peter addressed the crowd after the Pentecost (Acts 2:14-47).
 - ✚ “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts:2:41).
 - ✚ “Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).
 - ✚ “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14).
 - ✚ “For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord” (Acts 11:24).
 - ✚ The Ethiopian who was baptized by Philip (Acts 26-40).
- ❖ To the Gentiles:
 - ✚ Cornellius was the first that St. Peter visited and baptized him and his family (Acts 10: 23-48).

3. Persecution

- ❖ We all know the story about Saul and his conversion (Acts 9) and the killing of James by Herod.
- ❖ The Jews inflicted the early church with many afflictions, it was considered as a sect: “For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5) and “But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere” (Acts 28:22). The attack on Christianity started by attacking Christ Himself (John 8:48, Matthew 9:34, 12, 24, Luke 11:15). This led them to falsely accuse Christ and crucify Him. After the destruction of Jerusalem they organized attacks on Christians led by a Rabbi named Tarpho who said “the gospels deserve to be burned”, he also labeled Christians as dangers to Judaism for they know the truth and disobey it intentionally. They put restrictions for dealing with Christians. Gamalian the second (the end of the 1st century) established punishments for those who convert to Christianity. We read about the persecution in El-Hameer country (Yemen now) and how thousands of Christians were martyred at the hands of the Jewish King Zonowas in 523 AD. On the other hand many of their philosophers were amazed with Christ and His teaching; among them were the French Barouch Sbinwoz and Henry Bergson.
- ❖ Christianity was also persecuted from the Romans. This started right after Christianity was declared as a religion separate from Judaism (98 – 117 AD). It is said that Emperor Tragan considered Christianity to be a bunch of hallucinations and magic and rights to live as a Christian were denied. The attacks were physical and verbal; their philosophers wrote many books and letters disputing the Christian faith. Celcus wrote a book named

“The True Letter” in it he attacked Christianity with harsh criticism, which led the Christian teacher Origen to write the book “Anti-Celcus” to refute his accusations. Many others like Lucian and Philostratus were encouraged to write against Christianity by Julia Domna, wife of Emperor Saporius. Philostratus created a character named him Apollonius and gave him many of the characteristics of Jesus (193-211 AD).

4. Established Churches

Jerusalem

Alexandria

Rome

Antioch

Conclusion:

The church was strong in faith and evangelism in the apostolic era. The apostolic period is the first 100 years after Christ. During this period the Christianity spread throughout the world and the books of the New Testament were written. May God bless the church with the spirit of unity as in the apostolic era.

Applications:

- ❖ Write the names of the apostles you know and bring to class next time.
- ❖ Call a friend that did not come to church today to ask about him and encourage him to come next week.

Week 3- Elisha and the Chariots of the Lord

Objective:

- ❖ God protects His people from their enemies
- ❖ One needs to pray to God and depend on Him all the time

Memory verse:

"I am the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:3)

References:

- ❖ 1 Kings 6

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Elisha was a prophet of God who lived in the land of Israel. Elisha had a very good relationship with God. He used to pray to God who advises him on what to do in any occasion.

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ In the time of Elisha, the king of Syria wanted to go to war against Israel. For many weeks the Syrian army had been raiding deep into the surrounding country, but each time they found that the people there, were forewarned, had driven off their flocks and herds and had hidden their stores. The king of Syria began to suspect that there were spies in his camp.
- ❖ "No, my lord" said his soldiers, "we have no spies here, but Elisha the prophet of Israel can hear every word you speak in your bedroom". The king of Syria answered "Then we must kill him. Go and find out where he is, so that I can take him prisoner". The king's spies went to look for Elisha and when they returned, they reported that Elisha was in a city called Dothan. The king commanded his generals, "Take my horses and chariots and an army blockade the city, capture Elisha and bring him to me"
- ❖ So the great army appeared and camped in the hills around Dothan. Now when Elisha's servant saw them he was afraid not knowing what to do. Elisha told him "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them". Then Elisha prayed saying "O Lord, open his eyes so that he may see". Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.
- ❖ So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed that the Lord strike them with blindness. The Lord God struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. Then Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, nor the city. Follow me and I will bring

you to the man you are looking for”. But he really sent them to Samaria the capital city of Israel.

- ❖ When they came to Samaria Elisha prayed for the Lord to open their eyes and when the Lord opened their eyes they saw that they were in Samaria. Now the king of Israel asked Elisha if they should kill them all but Elisha told him it is not right to kill captives. Instead Elisha asked to give them food and drink and to send them back to their king. So after they ate and drank, they went to their king and they never came back to the land of Israel.

‡ Who wanted to capture Elisha?

‡ What did Elisha do when he saw the army of the Syrians?

‡ What did Elisha asked the Lord to do to the Syrians?

‡ What did Elisha order to do to the Syrians in Samaria?

Conclusion:

God protects His children from every danger no matter how big it is. He sends His angels to surround and camp around those who love Him and trust in His protection. We also need to depend entirely on God to keep us safe and to protect us from every evil.

Applications:

- ❖ Search the Bible for another story where God protected His prophet.
- ❖ The servant can prepare a simple cross word about this lesson and give it to the students to solve in the class and give prizes to the first to complete it.

Week 4- The Healing of Naaman

Objective:

- ❖ To learn that the outcome of Greed is bad.
- ❖ Compare the outcome of Naaman's obedience and Gehazi's disobedience to Elisha

Memory Verse:

"Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel" (2Kings 5:15)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 5
- ❖ "Explanation of the Second Book of Kings" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ Arabic Life Application Bible

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Ask the students what is the meaning of greed? And what are the forms of greed?
- ❖ Also ask them if they know any story about greed?
- ❖ What do you know about the prophet Elisha?

Lesson Outlines:

Elisha was a great prophet with double the spirit of Elijah. God gave him so many spiritual gifts and he was able to perform many miracles. One day there was a commander in the Syrian army, his name was Naaman. He had a special place in the eyes of the King of Syria because he won victory in battles to Syria. However, he was a leper. Do you know what the meaning of a leper is? Leprosy is a disease that would change the color of the skin and make people disfigured and look ugly. But Naaman's wife had a young Israelite girl who was serving her. The girl told Naaman's wife about the prophet Elisha and that he would be able to heal her master Naaman from his leprosy. Naaman's wife told Naaman about what the captive Israelite girl said. So, Naaman went and asked the king to allow him to go and find Elisha that he may heal him. The king gave Naaman the permission and gave him a letter to take to the king of Israel. So, Naaman took the letter, expensive presents (10 talents of silver, 6000 shekles of gold and 10 changes of clothing) and some of his companion soldiers and went to the king of Israel.

When the king of Israel read the letter he tore his clothes and he said: "Am I God....to heal this man from his leprosy?" but when Elisha heard what the king of Israel said, he sent to him and told him to send Naaman to him. The king of Israel then directed Naaman to Elisha's place. When Naaman reached Elisha's place he stood with his horses and chariots at the door of Elisha. Elisha sent him a messenger to tell him to go and wash himself in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman was upset that Elisha did not even come out to meet him and he said: "Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" But

Naaman's servants told him to listen to Elisha the prophet especially that he is asking a simple thing from Naaman. So, Naaman did what Elisha told him and he was healed from his leprosy. Naaman returned to Elisha and told him that his God is the only God in all the earth. Naaman also wanted to reward Elisha with the gifts he brought with him but Elisha refused to accept any gifts. Naaman promised to give sacrifices to the Lord and Elisha dismissed him in peace. But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, ran after Naaman and told him, that after you left two of the sons of the prophets came and the prophet Elisha wants to give them a talent of silver and two garments of cloth. Of course this was a lie from Gehazi because he was greedy and wanted to get some of the gifts that Naaman offered for Elisha. Naaman responded by giving Gehazi two talents of silver and two garments carried by his servants to Elisha's house. When they got close to the house Gehazi took the gifts from the hands of the servants and sent them away.

Now Gehazi entered the house and Elisha asked him "where did you go Gehazi?" and Gehazi answered and said: "your servant did not go anywhere?" Notice this is the second lie. See how one lie leads to another and warn the students from the consequences of lying. Elisha was unhappy with Gehazi because he knew that he was lying. Elisha told Gehazi that you will become like Naaman, a leper, and this will pass to your children too. Immediately Gehazi became a leper and his skin changed and became white.

What do we learn from this lesson?

- ❖ The consequence of greed is bad.
- ❖ The outcome of Naaman's obedience to Elisha was good and he was healed from his disease.
- ❖ The outcome of Gehazi's disobedience to Elisha was bad and became a leper himself.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Greed is a hated sin and always leads to destruction of the person spiritually and may also lead to great losses in life. The Lord said "Blessed is giving more than receiving".
- ❖ Obedience is also an important virtue with great blessings. Obedience to the parents, elders, church servants and above all to God is essential to grow in spirit and to receive God's blessing.

Applications:

- ❖ Find another story about greed or obedience to tell it to the class next Sunday.
- ❖ Share your things and games at home with your brothers, sisters and friends.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

Week 1: Aaron's Rod

Week 2: Wrestling with God

Week 3: Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

Week 4: The Agpeya

Week 1- Aaron's Rod

Objective:

- ❖ Children should show reverence for our fathers the priests and pray for them so that the Lord may help them to care for us.

Memory Verse:

*“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me”
(Matthew 10:40)*

References:

- ❖ Numbers 17
- ❖ “Explanations of the Book of Numbers” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ The Sacraments of the Church

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ Prepare some vestments, pictures, a model of the Ark of the Covenant, some sticks, etc. as visual aids.
- ❖ Ask questions about the awesome Ark of the Covenant, its plagues, its blessings, its carriers.
- ❖ Ask who Aaron is and what was his job?
- ❖ Ask questions about who baptized us, give us communion and the difference between a priest and a deacon who reads the Holy Bible and the Epistles.

Lesson Outlines:

Some persons of the Old Testament desired to become priests. They rebelled against Moses and Aaron (What did they say?) Those rebelled were Korah, Dathan and Abiran and 250 other leaders. They rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. When Moses heard this, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, then he said, “Tomorrow morning the Lord will show us who belongs to Him... Take fire pans put live coals and incense on them and take them to the altar. Then we will see which of us the Lord has chosen”. They all went home...What you think people said to each other on that night: May Moses win victory over those wicked people... O Lord punish those wicked people, etc.

- ❖ What are the names of the rebels?
- ❖ Against, whom did they rebel? Why?
- ❖ What did Moses do?

- ❖ What did Moses arrange so that the Lord might declare His desire?

Next morning, the rebels came carrying censers. All the people assembled to see what would happen. Moses and Aaron prayed: “O Lord, solve this problem”. Every man took his fire pan, put live coals and incense on it. The ground shook under them. They all cried in fear. The earth split under them and swallowed them.

The others ran away in great fear. They searched for the rebels but they were under the ground. The Lord honored Moses and Aaron.

- ❖ What happened in the early morning?
- ❖ How did the Lord declare His will?

The Lord wanted to show the people that He had chosen Moses and Aaron. He ordered the leaders of the community to give Moses twelve sticks, one from the leader of each tribe and to write each man’s name on his stick. Aaron also did so. The Lord said to Moses: The stick of the man I have chosen will sprout. Moses then put all the sticks in the Tent in front of the Lord’s Ark of Covenant. The next day, when Moses went into the Tent, he saw that Aaron’s stick had sprouted. It had budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds. How did that happen? In no time... without water or soil! It was a miraculous deed... They all showed respect for Aaron and came to kiss his hand and ask him to forgive them and pray for them. The same as we do now when we kiss the hand of the priest as it is he who puts Christ’s Body on his hands, preaches us, receives our confessions and prays for us.

Conclusion:

The rod is a symbol of St. Mary the Virgin who conceived Christ without human seed. Let us take Christ into our hearts and our life and let us always intercede with His kind mother.

Applications:

- ❖ Go to confession, receive the Holy Communion and pray for our priest that the Lord may help him to serve us.
- ❖ Complete the following: When, and rebelled against and the Lord declared that He had chosen Aaron when his sprouted.
- ❖ Read Numbers 15
- ❖ Children study Matthew 5:1-12

Week 2- Wrestling with God

Objective:

- ❖ Persistence in prayer

Memory Verse:

“And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will, knock and it will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9)

References:

- ❖ Genesis 32:22-32
- ❖ Luke 18:1-8, 11:9-13

Introduction:

Pose this question to the kids: When you really want something from your parents, and they say no at first, what do you do? For example, you want this new Nike shoes or you want to spend the night at your friend’s house. Do you give up right away or do you keep trying until you get what you want? Typically we all keep trying and asking until we get what we want. Well, God is no different and in this lesson we will talk about the importance of persistent requests or prayers to God.

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ The importance of persistent prayers is covered in several areas in the Holy Bible, but in this lesson we will convey the message through the story of Jacob wrestling through the night with God to bless him. This story is covered in the Genesis reference mentioned above. (Please note that reviewing the story with the kids after it has been read is highly recommended since usually kids have a short attention span and they might not catch the story when read aloud by others).
- ❖ There are several key points that can be taught through this story:
 - ✠ The importance of being blessed from God – Jacob wrestled all night with God to make sure that he would get blessed. That’s why greeting people with blessings shows the Christian love. It is important for the Christian to know that the source of blessings is God alone.
 - ✠ The importance of persistence in our requests to God – It took Jacob all night to get God to bless him. Jacob was not willing to let go of God until he is blessed. What a great faith that we all need to have!
 - ✠ The importance of persistent prayer is also captured in the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8. In this case, the widow was pleading in front of an unjust

judge, and through persistence, the unjust judge avenged her of her enemies. If the unjust judge listens through persistence, then what would our merciful God do when we continue to pray to him with our requests. Christ said in Luke 11:11-13, that parents though sinful like everyone else give their children the best, thus God the most wonderful to us would give us even better.

✠ Jacob asked for blessings not materialistic things.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Christ commanded us to pray to the father with faith and persistence.
- ❖ God will always give us ALL what is best for us when we ask Him through persistent prayers.
- ❖ We should ask God for spiritual things not just materialistic things. Spiritual things that we should ask for are blessings, love, faith, and the fruit of the spirit as mentioned in Galatians.

Applications:

- ❖ As an exercise in your prayers for this week, ask God to bless you and come up with a spiritual request.
- ❖ Have faith in God that He will always give us the best, and whenever we need anything, quickly seek God in prayer. Prayer is one of the most important tools in a Christian's life.
- ❖ Ask God to bless others around you, for example, when you are leaving your friend, you should tell him/her, "have a blessed day." Find different ways to incorporate this in your everyday life.

Week 3- Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

Objective:

- ❖ In whatever task we are trying to complete, we must always give our best effort in order for us to receive God's blessings.

Memory Verse:

“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her” (Genesis 29:20)

References:

- ❖ Genesis 29:1-30

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson and verse.
- ❖ After taking Esau's birthright, Jacob ran away from his brother's anger. He went far away on a long journey during which he had many difficulties but God was with him all the way and step by step.

Lesson Outlines:

While on his journey, Jacob saw a well covered with a large stone in a field with three flocks of sheep lying beside it. Jacob asked the shepherds tending to the sheep where they were from. They told him that they were from a town called Haran. Jacob then asked them if they knew his uncle whose name was Laban. They said that they did know him.

In the distance they pointed out to him that Laban's daughter Rachel was coming. Jacob helped the shepherd roll away the stone so that the sheep could drink. Jacob then told Rachel that he was her father's relative and Rachel ran to tell her father. When Laban found out, he ran out to meet Jacob and took Jacob back to his house and welcomed Jacob. Jacob stayed with Laban for a month and worked for him. Laban asked him what he wanted to be paid for his work and Jacob told him that he wanted to marry Rachel.

Jacob told Laban that he would work for Laban for seven years if Laban would let him marry Rachel. Laban agreed and Jacob worked for Laban for seven years. At the end of the seven years, Jacob asked to marry Rachel. Laban made a feast for the wedding but at the wedding he tricked Jacob and married him to Leah who was Rachel's older sister instead.

Jacob then found out and asked Laban why he tricked him. Laban told him that the custom in their land was that the older daughter should get married first. Laban then asked Jacob to work for him another seven years in order to marry Rachel. Jacob agreed and worked for Laban another seven years. Finally he married Rachel, the one he loved and wanted as a wife from the beginning.

Conclusion:

Jacob was faithful in his work for Laban and so God gave him what he wanted. We learn from the example of Jacob that, no matter what it is we are doing, we must do it faithfully, putting forth our best effort.

Applications:

- ❖ We have to work hard studying and doing our homework to get the best grades we can so that God will bless us.
- ❖ Another example is that if our parents ask us to do something such help with cleaning around the house, we should do the best job we can so when God see that we are faithful in all what we do, He will bless us.

Week 4- The Agpeya

Objective:

- ❖ The benefits of praying the Agpeya
- ❖ Learn how the Agpeya are arranged and how to pray using it

Memory verse:

“Seven times a day I praise You” (Psalm 119:164)

References:

- ❖ The Agpeya, St. Antonius Coptic Church

Introduction:

- ❖ The word Agpeya means ‘the book of the hours’. It is called this name because it comprises the prayers as we should pray at specific hours of the day. David the prophet and the king said, “Seven times a day I praise You” (Psalm 119:164); therefore the church arranged that we pray the Agpeya seven times everyday.
- ❖ Prayer is our way to communicate with God. The Agpeya teaches us to pray and allow us to involve God in everything in our life.

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ The Agpeya comprises prayers for different hours of the day, each one reminds us of God and His love and care for us.
- ❖ The Agpeya is a very complete prayer for through it we remember the greatness of God, our creator and our Father. We offer thanks to the Lord for everything He gives us. We ask Him for all our needs and we praise Him and glorify Him.
- ❖ At the time of our Lord’s life on earth the day was calculated as from sunrise to sunset. So the first hour of the day correspond to 6a.m., the third to 9 a.m., the sixth at noon and so on.
- ❖ Prime (Morning Prayer): we should pray early in the morning as soon as we wake up. It reminds us of our Lord Jesus Christ incarnation, death and Resurrection. We pray it to give thanks to the Lord for having us rise from the sleep and to grant us the power of His resurrection.
- ❖ Terce (Third Hour): reminds us of three events, Christ’s trial by Pilate, His ascension to the heavens and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. We pray that the Holy Spirit Who descended upon the disciples on the Pentecost Day would be with us and purify us.

- ❖ Sext (Sixth Hour): reminds us of the crucifixion of our Lord. We ask the Lord that through His passions He delivers us from every evil thought and that we always remember His commandments.
- ❖ None (Ninth Hour): commemorates the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and the repentance of the thief. We ask God to accept our repentance as He accepted that of the thief.
- ❖ Vespers (Eleventh Hour): commemorates the act of taking down Christ's body from the cross. We give thanks to God and ask Him to count us among the laborers who were called at the eleventh hour of the day.
- ❖ Compline (Twelfth Hour): reminds us of the burial of our Lord Jesus Christ. We ask God to forgive us our sins and protect us through the night.
- ❖ Midnight prayers: commemorates the second coming of the Lord. These prayers contain three watches corresponding to the stages of Christ's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane
- ❖ The Veil: This is an extra prayer directed to be read by the bishops and the monks as a means of examining the heart.

The order of prayers for every hour is as follows:

- ❖ Each of the hours starts with the Lord's prayer, the prayer of Thanksgiving and Psalm 50.
- ❖ After these three prayers we then pray the psalms, a part of the Gospel and the litanies.
- ❖ These are followed by kyrie-eleison repeated 41 times reminding us with the 39 scourges our Lord suffered and the crown of thorns put on His head and the slap on His face.
- ❖ Each hour ends with the absolution of the hour followed by the conclusion of every hour.

- ✠ How many times did David praise the Lord daily?
- ✠ What do we pray for in the third hour?
- ✠ How many Kyrie-eleison do we repeat every hour?
- ✠ Which psalm we pray every hour?

Conclusion:

The Agpeya prayer is well arranged to keep us continually in touch and in relationship with God. It is a complete prayer that contains all the component of the acceptable prayer in front of God. However, the most important thing is the spirit of the believer during praying with the Agpeya.

Applications:

- ❖ Start praying with the Agpeya if you are not using it now. It is good to start with part of the hour and gradually increase the number of Psalm prayed.

- ❖ Memorize the conclusion of every hour for next week.

LESSON OF THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER
BEFORE THE COPTIC NEW YEAR

Week 1: St. Mark's First Entry to Egypt

Week 1- St. Mark's First Entry to Egypt

Objective:

- ❖ St Mark is the founder of our Church. He spread the Word in Egypt.

Memory verse:

"There will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt" (Isaiah 19:19)

References:

- ❖ "St. Mark" H.H. Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ The Book of Saints; Vol. 1
- ❖ "The History of Early Christianity" Aziz Attia

Introduction:

- ❖ St. Mark is considered the founder of the Coptic Orthodox Church. He is the first of the unbroken chain of 117 patriarchs. St. Mark was of Jewish parents. He was born in a city called Pentapolis on the Northern African coast, west of Egypt. His family moved to Jerusalem where he met our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ His family was very religious. He was chosen as one of the seventy disciples that Jesus sent to preach His Gospel. It was in his house in the upper room that our Lord Jesus Christ had the Last Supper.

Lesson Outlines:

After Jesus' ascension, St. Mark started preaching the Gospel with St. Peter in Jerusalem and Judea, and with St. Paul in Antioch, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Colossi and Rome.

After he left Rome St. Mark went to Egypt in 61 AD. St. Mark entered the city of Alexandria, from the east from the five-western cities. St. Mark began wandering in the streets and roads of Alexandria; he kept walking all day until the straps of his sandals were torn. He went to a cobbler (shoemaker) called Ananias to mend them for him. After greeting him, he gave him his shoes and the shoemaker worked on them while St. Mark waited. Suddenly the awl pricked the shoemaker's hand and he screamed in pain calling the "One God". At this moment, inspired by the Holy Spirit, St. Mark felt that the divine providence had caused this incident to happen, in order to pave his way in the land of the Pharaohs. He spat on the ground and made a piece of mud and rubbed Ananias' hand with it saying "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ this hand would return whole". At once the wound healed as if nothing happened.

Ananias was surprised at what did and St. Mark interrupted his surprise and asked him: "What do you know about the One God Whom you mentioned?" Ananias replied, "I only hear about Him, but I don't know Him." St. Mark began to talk to him about the Lord Jesus, His birth of Virgin Mary in Bethlehem about thirty years ago, His life, service, teachings, and miracles. As

Ananias finished mending the sandals and St. Mark was ready to go. Ananias invited him to visit his house so that he might give his family his blessings. St. Mark accepted the invitation, and on entering the house he talked to them all about the Lord Jesus Christ and their need to believe in Him for the sake of their own salvation. He also cured their sick by the power of Jesus Christ.

Ananias and all his family believed in Christ, and St. Mark baptized them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus the family of the simple shoemaker was the first in Egypt to join the Christian faith.

St. Mark made Ananias' house a center for preaching the word of salvation. Many people gathered to hear his teachings, and many people -Egyptians and Greek- believed in Jesus Christ. St. Mark continued wandering and walking throughout the city of Alexandria preaching the good news defying all the difficulties and obstacles he faced. The number of believers increased and their spiritual reputation spread everywhere. In 62 AD, St. Mark ordained Ananias bishop of Alexandria.

St. Mark is considered the first Pope of the church of Alexandria. After his martyrdom Ananias succeeded him as Pope.

- ❖ In which city of Egypt did St. Mark start to preach?
- ❖ How did St. Mark meet Ananias?
- ❖ What words did Ananias say that encouraged St. Mark to preach to him?
- ❖ How did St. Mark heal Ananias' hand?
- ❖ Who ordained Ananias a bishop?
- ❖ Who is the first Pope of the Church of Alexandria?

Conclusion:

The Word of God is the source of faith. The more we hear or read the Word the better we know God. Let us feed our faith on the promises of God and it will grow day by day.

Applications:

- ❖ Read one chapter in the gospel of St. Mark over the coming two weeks.
- ❖ Tell the story of St. Mark to your family when you go home.