

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

Sunday School Curriculum

Grade 6



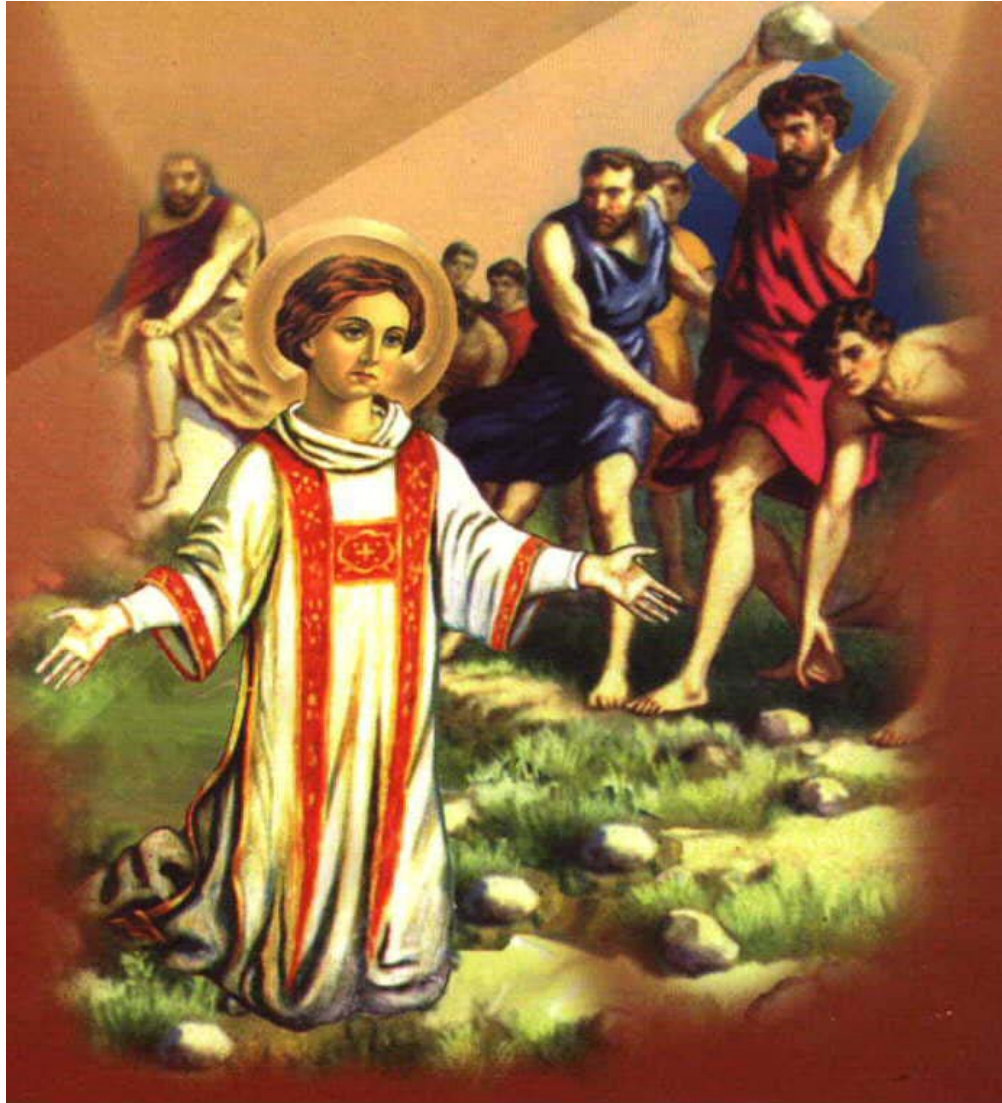




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PREFACE

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”
(1 Samuel 7:12)



INTRODUCTION

This grade 6 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 Nayrouze) on September 11:

- 3 lessons for the month of September
- 4 lessons for 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.

The question that faces the child at this age is "Who am I?" That is why the programs set for that age are always designed to help the student to know himself and form his relationship with the Lord Jesus. The child asks more questions about the meaning and the reasons behind the faith. He needs clear, simple and convincing answers. So the Servant of such child must note that:

1. The personality of the child before him is the most important sources of the lesson. Through discussion, the child can find himself and react to the Lord Jesus.
2. The Servant must be concerned with establishing the habits of worship, spiritual activity such as prayer, Bible study, confession, communion and the class notebook.
3. The Servant should give due care to the child's talents by encouraging him/her to read more.

It is advisable that the Servant should give his children some other books and stories to read.

The Servant's interest in both the child and the lesson and the spirit of his dedication constitute the basis of his service. Every Servant must prepare his lessons well. This Curriculum, together with the Book, "How to serve the Elementary Stage" is an attempt to help the Servants to prepare their lessons. The Servant has to make use of it as the need arises, but not to depend entirely on it. After all, this can still be considered as a preliminary modified curriculum for grade 6 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

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. Repentance: Moses The Black
2. Endurance and Patience: Job
3. Serving Others: The Good Samaritan
4. St. Marina
5. Receiving Holy Communion
6. The Book of Tobias
7. Joseph in Egypt

1- Repentance: Moses the Black

Objective

- ❖ Repentance and returning to God

Memory Verse

- ❖ “Return to me, and I will return to you” (Malachi 3:7)

References

- ❖ “The Precious Gem” (Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa), Part I
- ❖ “The fifth generation: The Story of the Coptic Church” Iris El Massry
- ❖ “St. Moses the Black” The Paradise of the Monks, Pages 63-68

Introduction

What is repentance? It is when we realize we have done something wrong, and then we ask for God’s forgiveness and determine not to do it again. Repentance has changed the nature of a slave who was an unbeliever, adulterer and apostate and turned him into a father, a servant and a priest who laid rules for monks, and whose name is mentioned on the altars and his body is buried in Al-Baramus Monastery in Egypt.

Lesson Outlines

Today we are going to hear about a saint whose reputation is not good but the strange thing is that he became a saint and his name is mentioned in the mass. This holy man is Moses the Black. He was an Ethiopian... he was tall... a mighty murderer... a street man. He used to beat men, call them bad names, eat the meat of a whole lamb each meal and drink a barrel of wine. He was a slave. His master dismissed him because of his bad conduct.

He gathered a band of about seventy men of robbers around him. He worshipped the Sun and used to say to it, “If you are god tell me... and O God whom I do not know, let me know you”. The Lord heard his prayer. A voice from heaven said to him, “The monks in the wilderness will tell you about Me”. He held his sword and quickly went into the wilderness.

- ❖ Who can remember the names of the saints who lived in the wilderness? Maximus, Domadius, Macarius and Isothorus the priest.

When Priest Isothorus saw Moses, he was afraid. He made the sign of the cross. He had heard of Moses the Black and his gang. The monks used to pray for them. Moses greeted him and said, “I want you to tell me who God is”. The priest was surprised. He laid the cross on Moses’ head and said, “What made you come here?” Moses told him everything. The priest rested his head on his staff and prayed for Moses... He lifted up his eyes and found Moses weeping... He knew that those were

tears of repentance. He rejoiced and said, “Why do you weep?” Moses said, “Because of my sins and wicked deeds. I want the Lord to accept me”. The priest said to him, “If your repentance is true, the Lord will accept you as the Lord says: Return to me and I will return to you”.

- ❖ What is the name of the priest of the wilderness?
- ❖ Describe his stature and his clothes.
- ❖ Why was Moses weeping?
- ❖ Say the verse: Return to me...

Moses bowed to the ground before the priest and confessed his sins loudly. He wept bitterly. Anba Isothorus saw a plank in the sky full of black writing (the sins of Moses) and the angel of the Lord cleaned the plank till it became white and clean. The priest sent him to Anba Macarius after praying for him... Anba Macarius was very pleased with him. He taught him, guided him, baptized him and he became Christian. He sent him back to priest Isothorus and dressed him in the monk's clothes (What are these clothes like?). He advised him to stay in the wilderness to struggle, pray, worship and read the Bible... He quickly progressed in grace till he became a saint and he had disciples of monks and he guided them. The church commemorates his martyrdom on the 24th of Baunah. His body is buried in Al-Baramus Monastery. The blessings of his prayers be with us. Amen.

- ❖ Tell the story of St. Moses' repentance.
- ❖ How did he face his end?
- ❖ Where is his body now?
- ❖ Let us repeat the verse: Return to me...

Conclusion

- ❖ Note that the voice did not come from heaven to Moses except after Moses' earnest prayer and deep desire to know the True God.
- ❖ Show that the Lord accepts sinners whatever their sin is.

Applications

- ❖ Read the Holy Bible regularly ...Pray all the time... Treat your parent, your brothers and your colleagues well.
- ❖ Relate the story to your parents.

2- Endurance and Patience: Job

Objective

- ❖ To learn to be patient and have endurance

Memory Verse

- ❖ “Let patience have its perfect work” (James 1:4)

References

- ❖ The Book of Job
- ❖ “Interpretation of the Book of Job” Sporting
- ❖ “Stories and tales from the Holy Bible” Part 10, Beirut

Introduction

- ❖ Review the previous lesson with the students.
- ❖ How would you feel when you are ill and in trouble?
- ❖ Would you murmur against the Lord? Would your heart turn away from Him? Or would you submit to Him and endure your suffering?
- ❖ Do you feel that the Lord will deliver you from your pains and that His love for you will make your problems bearable and endurable?

Lesson Outlines

Use means of illustration such as films, a magic lantern, etc. to show scenes from the story of Job will have a great effect.

Job was an upright and straight man before the Lord. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, one thousand head of cattle and five hundred donkeys. He also had a large number of servants. Job’s sons used to take it in turns to give a feast, to which all the others would come.

The Lord praised Job and his faithfulness, but Satan said that Job was faithful to the Lord because he was rich. The Lord allowed Satan to take all what Job had. News came to him that his cattle had been taken away, his servants had been killed, and all his sheep and camels had been killed. News came to him later that the house was blown down and his sons and daughters were killed. Job said, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord” In all this Job did not sin.

The Lord allowed Satan again to hurt his body but not to hurt his life. Then Satan made sores break out all over Job’s body from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. Job sat among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity...Curse God and die”. But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”

Job's three friends came to condole with him and comfort him. They talked to him. Then out of the storm, the Lord answered Job and spoke to him. The Lord said, "Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words?" Job said, "I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes". Job submitted himself completely to the Lord and acknowledged his sin and weakness. The Lord said to Job's friends, "Take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you and I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you as you deserve. You did not speak the truth about me as he did". The Lord restored Job to his former condition with ever-greater prosperity than before. Job owned 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 3,000 head of cattle and 1,000 donkeys. He was the father of seven sons and three daughters. Job lived 140 years after this, long enough to see his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, four generations.

- ❖ Why did the Lord allow Job to be tempted?
- ❖ How did the Lord reward Job?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: Let patience have...

Conclusion

- ❖ Servant draws the children's attention to the fact that steadfastness (patience) does not mean weakness or laziness, but it means submission to the Lord's will while we work and struggle.
- ❖ The Servant and the children contemplate the following emotional situations, concentrating on the positive aspects: Job lives in peace with his family. Calamities afflict him. Job is afflicted with loathsome sores from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. His wife deserts him. His friends annoy him with their words. In the end, he attains the crown of righteousness for his patience and steadfast love.
- ❖ The Servant should explain that the Lord did not allow Job to be tested unless he knew that temptation for Job was like fire to incense or perfumes the smell of which will spread and the Lord's name will be glorified.

Applications

- ❖ Read the story of the Good Samaritan at home (Luke 10:30-37) and bring the Gospel with you next week.

Recitation

- ❖ The children begin to study the last part of the hourly prayers "Lord have mercy on us".
- ❖ Children use this part in their prayers regularly

3- Serving Others: The Good Samaritan

Objective

- ❖ Urge the children and encourage them to love people and help them.

Memory Verse

“When He saw him, He had compassion on him” (Luke 10:33)

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31)

References

- ❖ Luke 10:30-37

Introduction

- ❖ Christian life does not know selfishness nor self love.
- ❖ Christian life always searches for others to help and assist them.
- ❖ Let us ask ourselves, to what extent did we apply this motto in the past? What were the obstacles that we faced?
- ❖ Read Ephesians 4:32 and Matthew 25:40.

Introduction

The Story in Pictures:

You can teach the parable of the Good Samaritan on a blackboard. Draw four square: In the first square draw the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Let Jerusalem appear in the upper corner of the road, and Jericho in the lower corner of the square. Draw some palm trees near Jerusalem and Jericho. On the road, draw a man walking from Jerusalem to Jericho. In the second square, draw a man falling down on the ground and five runaway robbers. In the third square, draw three men. Two of them are keeping away from the rich man and the third man stands by him. In the fourth square draw the inn and two dinariis (coins) (a line and a circle can stand for a man).

Lesson Outline

If a person insults you and you see him in difficulty, how will your feeling be towards him? Which of them is better... someone you know but does not help you or a stranger who helps you? Which of them is nearer to you indeed?

One day, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The robbers attacked him, stripped him and beat him up, leaving him half dead (Jerusalem is 830 meters above the sea level while Jericho is 276 meters below sea level so a man leaving Jerusalem for Jericho must go down). A priest and a Levite were going down that road but when they saw the man, they walked on by, on the other side. In spite of their religious mission they did not help the man. But the Samaritan cared for the wounded man although the Jews and the Samaritans were enemies. The Lord Christ advised the man who asked him to follow the example of the Good Samaritan.

Be careful. Do not emphasize the attitude of both the priest and the Levite lest the children should have little respect for priests.

Conclusion

- ❖ The wounds could be spiritual wounds and the wounded man is that who keeps away from the church. Our service to him lies in guiding him and leading him to church and Sunday School.

Applications

- ❖ The Servant encourages the children to perform a spiritual exercise in serving others such as visiting some poor people.
- ❖ Ask some children to act the part of robbers, the wounded man, the Priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. Ask another child to read the story while the others act their parts.
- ❖ Draw a circle before the words that show the following:
 - I can be a good neighbor if I am: angry -loving -kind -selfish -bold.
 - I can be a good neighbor to: a stranger -my friends -a citizen -a lady -a boy.
- ❖ Who is my neighbor? Make use of the following words to give the answer: mercy -who -with me -make.

4- St. Marina

Objective

To teach the children how to:

- ❖ Live the life of purity and faith.
- ❖ Be able to recognize and face evil and overcome it.
- ❖ Endure all suffering for God's name
- ❖ Be the light that shines and turns many to righteousness.

Memory Verse

“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3)

References

- ❖ Coptic Synaxarium
- ❖ The Book of Saints

Introduction

The Coptic Church recognizes two saints by the name “St. Marina”. One is St. Marina the nun whom we celebrate her departure on the 15th of Misra. The other is St. Marina the martyr and the subject of our lesson today. The church celebrates her martyrdom on the 23rd day of Abib.

Lesson Outlines

St. Marina, the martyr, was born in Antioch in southern Asia Minor. Her parents were pagan. When her mother died, her father sent her to be raised by a nanny. The nanny who was Christian taught Marina many Christian virtues, not just by words but also by actions. She lived the true faith in Jesus Christ. At the age of fifteen Marina's father died. Marina grew to be a courageous Christian girl.

One day, St. Marina went out with her maiden servants, and on her way she passed by Lopharius, the governor, who admired her much when he saw her. Lopharius ordered that she would be brought to him. When Marina noticed that the soldiers were coming to take her to their governor, she started praying and told the soldiers that she was Christian. The soldiers went back to the governor with this news. When the governor heard that, he was troubled and vowed to change her beliefs either by persuasion or by force. He commended the soldiers to bring her in front of him.

The governor asked her, “What is your name? And where are you from?”

Marina answered, “My name is Marina from the tribe of Jesus Christ”

The governor asked, “Who is your God?”

Marina answered, “My God is the Creator of heaven and earth”.

The governor asked, “Then, you believe in Jesus Christ whom the Jews crucified?”

Marina answered, “I call upon His Holy name, though I am not worthy. I have faith that He will save me from your atheism.”

Lopharius tried to persuade her by making her promises and promising to marry her, but she did not heed him. When he could not convince her he ordered her body scraped with iron combs, then rubbed with vinegar, salt and lime. Nevertheless she endured with patience. The soldiers cast her in prison, thinking that she was about to die. Immediately the angel of the Lord came, and healed all her wounds.

The next morning, the governor ordered her brought to him. When he saw that she was well, he marveled much, and told her “Marina, your sorcery has become evident today, so listen to me, worship the gods and much good would be for you”. She looked at him and the dumb idols with contempt and said, “I worship the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, the God of heavens and earth”. The governor ordered her tied to the squeezing wheel, and squeezed very tightly. They did so, and then cast her in prison.

In prison the devil appeared to her sitting in the left corner of her cell with his arms around his knees. He said to her, “O Marina, obey the governor for your own sake for he is merciless, and he wishes to erase your name from the face of the earth”. She realized that he was the devil. Immediately she caught him by his hair and started beating him. Then she bound him with the sign of the cross, not to depart from before her until he told her all about what he does to human race. The devil answered, “I put in their hearts all kinds of bad desires. I also curtail all their good deeds, so that they become blind, and won’t see the nature of God and His justice. And if I do not overcome him I steer sleep and laziness against him, so he will not pray and ask for forgiveness of his sins.” St. Marina straightaway expelled him.

The governor and his soldiers continued the torture; they brought a vessel full of water to drown her. When they did so, she asked the Lord to make this a baptism for her for till now she was not baptized. The Lord sent His angel in the form of a dove. She immersed herself in the water three times saying “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God Amen.” A voice from heaven called her and said, “O Marina you have been baptized in the baptismal water”. She rejoiced exceedingly and all those who were present heard what had happened. Many of them believed and the governor ordered they all be put to the sword. Afterwards the governor ordered the soldiers to behead her. But the executioner said, “I can’t do that, and kill the blessed servant of Jesus Christ.” Then Marina begged him to carry out the order. So he killed her and also killed himself.

The Lord had manifested from her body many signs and healing miracles. May the prayers and the supplications of this great martyr St. Marina be with us all. Amen

Conclusion/ Questions

- ❖ Notice how St. Marina turned many by her steadfastness in the Lord. Does our behavior show our Christianity?
- ❖ Where was St. Marina born?
- ❖ Who taught Marina about Christianity?
- ❖ How old was Marina when her father died?
- ❖ Why did the governor torture St. Marina?

Applications

- ❖ Show an icon or a picture of St. Marina. Notice her holding the cross with one hand and binding the devil with the other.
- ❖ How did St. Marina overcome the devil?

5- Receiving Holy Communion

Objective

- ❖ Standing firm in Christ

Memory Verse

“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (John 6:56)

References

- ❖ John 6

Introduction

- ❖ What does “an ecclesiastical Sacrament” mean?
- ❖ How many sacraments are there? Mention them...
- ❖ What are the conditions for the fulfillment of the sacrament?
- ❖ What are the conditions of the lawful confession?
- ❖ When did the Lord establish the Sacrament of Communion?

Lesson Outlines

The Lord Jesus established this Holy Sacrament for us in the night of His passions (on Maundy Thursday) when He held the Bread in His pure, spotless and undefiled hands, gave thanks and blessed it, and He broke It and gave It to His saintly Disciples saying: Take and eat of It you all for this is My Body... So too with the Chalice... He gave thanks and gave it also to them saying: Take and drink of it, you all for this is My Blood of the New Covenant which is shed for you and for many others. It is given for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:26-28).

This Sacrament is necessary for Salvation. The Lord Himself said to us, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53).

He said “He who eats...” Let us repeat together, “He who eats...”

In practicing this Sacrament and by His sayings to us, our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that the bread and wine after being sanctified turn into His Body and Blood. When we receive the Holy Communion, we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine. That is why believers should be prepared before they receive communion:

- ❖ They should purify their conscience through true repentance and confession to a priest.
- ❖ They should start fasting in the middle of the night.
- ❖ They should wash their body and put on clean clothes.
- ❖ They should pray with faith before and after receiving Communion.

Conclusion/Questions

- ❖ What are the bases of the Sacrament of Communion? When? How?
- ❖ What are the conditions for receiving the Holy Communion?
- ❖ What do bread and wine turn into after being consecrated?

Applications

- ❖ Let the children write the previous questions in their notebooks and answer them at home.
- ❖ Make sure that the whole class receives communion regularly and record it in their diary.
- ❖ Read Genesis 22.

6 - The Book of Tobias

Objective

- ❖ To introduce the students to the second canonical book (Apocrypha)
- ❖ To learn the story of Tobias
- ❖ To learn that the solutions to our problems always come from God.

Memory Verse

“Let us pray today, tomorrow and after tomorrow for in these three days we unit with God”
(Tobias 8:14)

References

- ❖ The canonical books
- ❖ Interpretation of the book of Tobias (Al Baramus Monastery)

Introduction

There are 9 books in the Bible recognized by our orthodox church but are not included in the usually used protestant Bibles, which are widely available. These books are included in the Bibles printed by our church or the Catholic Church. These books are:

- ❖ Tobias (14 Chapters)
- ❖ Yahodet (16 Chapters)
- ❖ The remainder of Esther (Chapters 10-16)
- ❖ The wisdom of Solomon (19 Chapters)
- ❖ Joshua the Son of Sirack (51 Chapters)
- ❖ The prophecy of Paroak (6 chapters)
- ❖ The remainder of the book of Daniel (chapters 13 and 14)
- ❖ The first Makabeen (Chapters)
- ❖ The second Makabeen (15 Chapters)

This lesson will focus on the book and story of Tobias. The name Tobias means God is kind. The book of Tobias is placed after the book of Nehemiah in the Orthodox Bible.

Lesson Outlines

The events of this book falls in an environment that is similar to a great extent to what happened to our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Between two Jews families the first was Tobias’ family living in Nineveh, and the second was family living in Iraq (or Iran now).

The book was written in the 7th century B.C. and they have different opinions about who wrote it whether Tobias the dad or the son but Tobias the son occupies the major part in the book's events.

The name Tobias is a Hebrew name meaning the good or the kind from the tribe of Tobias. The father was a righteous man lived during the exile of Babylon and he stood fast to loving the poor and having compassionate towards them.

He got married to a girl from his tribe her name was Hannah and they lived in Nineveh. God granted them their only son Tobias and they raised him in the fear of God and a lot of good virtues.

One day the father felt asleep in the back yard of his country house in hot day while his face was not covered and it happened that a bird passed over his head and rested on the wall over him and let its droppings over his eye leaving him blind. He visited a lot of physicians to cure him were they let him use a lot of anointments but unfortunately none of them helped. He became so sad and disappointed especially when he found himself need help in all his life activities because he can't see.

He started to raise a lot of prayers to God to heal him and he thought that God gave him this temptation as a punishment to something that he did wrong. But as for a spiritual man he turns to God on the time of troubles or temptation.

One day he remembered that he left certain amount of money with one of his relatives and he thought of sending his son to get this money back. They were in need of this money, especially after his wife started working cleaning people houses. So he called his son and talked to him about this issue and advised him to find a companion for him in this trip and start to go and retrieve this money back and share part of it with almsgiving. He told him "son I feel like I will die soon and my advise for you is to get married to a lady from your tribe to receive the blessings and may God multiply your sons like your forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

He agreed to what his father asked him to do and he went out to find him someone that knows the way to this man's house and get the money back. He met a man out there and after a long conversation asking who you are and where are you from he learned that he was one of the Israelites the people of God and he is aware of the way to that city he is heading to. He felt happy and comfort to meet him and he asked him to go with him because he needed to introduce him to his dad so he can feel comfort too.

When they both returned back to him they greeted him and he gave them back the peace greeting and he asked the dad if he is doing good and he replied sadly how come when I lost my vision and my sight. So the man smiled at him and told him he'll be healed soon.

They both greeted the mom and dad and went on their way to the city. After a while when they felt hungry they went fishing and a big cod came out of the water. The man told Tobias we can eat from its meat during the journey but you have to save its heart and gallbladder and keep them aside because they can cure. He obeyed without understanding but without arguing as well.

Later on he asked what's there in them so he told him the smoke that comes out of the heart can cast away any devil spirit from anybody while the gallbladder if it is wiped over the eye of a blind person it can heal him, so it was a great hope in his spirit that he can help his dad with that.

When nighttime came they found themselves tired so the man asked Tobias if they could spend the night at a nearby house where Tobias' relatives live.

They spent the night at the house and the man told him that he is going to ask the father of the house to give him Sarah his daughter as a wife to Tobias. The father told them about her past stories that she's been married seven times before and every time after the wedding ceremony is over her

groom dies because of the devil. So Tobias was scared when he heard that because he is the only son to his parents and they need him around especially after the dad became sick. So the man told him don't be afraid and raise a prayer to God that He have mercy on both of you and you take from the Cod liver and heart when you go back home and burn it over the censor. A very bad smelly smoke will come out of it and this will cast away that devil who kills the groom every time.

After they got married, her dad was scared that this might happen to Tobias like the other men so he sent his servants to prepare a burial place for him in case it happens. But Tobias did as the man commanded him and all the family rejoiced that he didn't die and they extended the celebration for seven more days. After the ceremony, he went to complete his journey and got the money back to his dad. He then asked his father in law if he can release them to go back to his parents' house and tell them that he got married so he agreed and they sent them back with lots of money and gold that they can use.

His mom was waiting for him so eagerly so when she saw him from afar she ran to meet him with a lot of hugs and weeping and the dad followed her with the help of one of his servants and he introduced his wife to them and they all rejoiced when they heard this news.

He took from the gallbladder and poured it over his dad's eye and God returned to him his vision once again and this doubled the family's happiness.

Then finally the man revealed himself to the family that he was Archangel Raphael. God sent him to them to help and they all was surprised and thanked God for His caring.

He took care of his parents until they passed away and he buried them and he asked his wife that they have to go back and take care of her parents as well and until they also died and he buried them also.

Conclusion

- ❖ The story of Tobias is a very interesting story that demonstrates the response of God to our prayers even after a long time.

Applications

- ❖ What are other situations in the Bible when angels helped people? Search as a project.
- ❖ What is the relationship between this story and weddings?

7- Joseph in Egypt

Objective

- ❖ Demonstrate to children the virtues of Joseph
- ❖ Encourage the students to adopt one or more of Joseph's virtues

Memory Verse

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22)

References

- ❖ The new open Bible

Introduction

Hand each student a piece of paper and a pen and ask the following questions to them and let them answer each question. Discuss answers after all questions have been asked.

- ❖ If your brother or sister stole \$50 from you and spent it in one day without telling you, how would you feel?
- ❖ What would you do to them?
- ❖ Say that one night you had a dream and God told you that one day you would be president of America and in your dream you saw everyone doing everything you said in a heartbeat. How do you think you would react?
- ❖ Pretend that you are fasting for Lent and you went to a birthday party. At the party, there was nothing but pizza and a delicious ice cream cake!!! What would you do?
- ❖ And finally, would you still have faith in God if you were put in jail for something you didn't do?

Lesson Outlines

- ❖ How do we know that we really have the Holy Spirit within us?
- ❖ What things should we look for?

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul tries to convey to them what “side effects” the Holy Spirit would have on the person that it dwells inside of.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was not inside everybody, like us now after baptism and confirmation. Only few people received it and may be temporarily for a certain task or message that God assigned them for. Usually it was in good kings, prophets and righteous people.

One of the greatest examples of a person who had the characteristics of the Holy Spirit is Joseph!!!

- ❖ Summarize the story of Joseph (most should know about him)

Joseph was a good example of a person full of the fruits of the Spirit as mentioned in Galatians 5:22. Let us see how did he use them:

- 1.) **Love and Gentleness** – If Joseph really didn't love his brothers; he wouldn't have been able to forgive them for selling him to merchants. Although Joseph had the power to have each and every one of his brothers killed, he did not. He LOVED them, provided for his family and took care of them.
- 2.) **Joy and Kindness** – Not once in the Bible does it mention that Joseph yelled or complained when his brothers threw him into the deep well. Also, when Joseph saw his brothers again after so many years he was in tears of joy. How would you have felt if you saw your brother or sister after 10 years when they sold you to be a slave??
- 3.) **Peace** – Well, when Joseph had his dream, he took it very peacefully and calmly and told his family about it without fuss. The peace he had in his heart probably also stopped him from reacting badly after seeing someone who betrayed him so many years ago.
- 4.) **Self-control** – Joseph was being pressured by one of the richest and most beautiful women in all of Egypt to commit sin with her, but, even with knowing that he could be punished for refusing, he FLED!!! He didn't just leave; he fled! That, my friends, is self-control.
- 5.) **Longsuffering and Faithfulness** – The pain and suffering that Joseph went through when he was thrown into jail for something he didn't do would have probably been unbearable for most people. He was sentenced to death!!! But Joseph took it as it was, thanked God for everything that he had and endured his time in jail. And in all, he kept his faith in God.

Conclusion

- ❖ We all need to look at ourselves more closely and see where we really are with Christ. Is the Holy Spirit living in us like a raging fire or is it just a little flame barely thriving?

Applications

- ❖ At this point, read over the questions again and go over the answers that were discussed. Compare those answers to the situations Joseph was in and how much more severe his were.

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

Week 1: Kuzman And Dimyan

Week 2: An Angel delivers Jerusalem from Sennacherib

Week 3: David, Solomon and the Building of the Temple

Week 2- Kuzman And Dimyan

Objective

- ❖ Standing firm in faith till death

Memory Verse

- ❖ “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippines 1:21}

References

- ❖ The Bible: Hebrews 2
- ❖ “St. Kuzman and St. Dimyan and their brothers” Virgin Coptic Church, Alexandria
- ❖ “Some wonderful stories of martyrs” Alexandria
- ❖ “The Story of the Coptic New Year’s Day” by Siliman Nesseem

Introduction

- ❖ Candles -dates -pomegranates -guava -flowers.
 - Children go around carrying candles and flowers. The Servant uses the bell and they all chant, “Our righteous martyrs”.
 - An icon of one of the martyrs is to be put before the children and lighted candles are to be put before the icon.
- ❖ The Servant sets the scene by giving some questions such as:
 - What is the name of today’s feast? What does the word “Nayrouze” mean?
 - Why do we buy red dates?
 - Who can think of some names of saints and martyrs?
 - How does the church honor those martyrs?

Lesson Outlines

There was martyrdom in Egypt. There was martyrdom in other countries as well. Today we are going to listen to a story about two foreign martyrs, “Kuzman and Dimyan”. They were twins born in Asia Minor in the third Century A.D. who came from a rich family and they had three brothers. They were ordained as monks. Their father died and their mother brought them up. Their mother was pious and she taught them the fundamentals of Christianity. Kuzman and Dimyan excelled in their studies. They studied medicine and became two clever doctors.

- ❖ What are the names of these two saints?
- ❖ From what country are they?
- ❖ What did they study?

Because of their deep love to Christ, they used medicine and medical treatment for the glory of Christ. The Lord supported them and healed many patients through them, not because of the effect of the medicine, but by the power of God.

When a patient stood in front of them, they sign themselves with the sign of the cross and raise a short prayer to the Lord, “O, Jesus... You are the real and true Physician... Heal him O Lord Jesus so that he may believe in you O Lord... Amen”. Then they examine the patient and write the prescription. Then they continue steadfastly in prayer for the patient. In this way the two saints opened the eyes of the blind and drove out many demons. They healed many patients so a great number of pagans believed in Jesus Christ.

When the pagan ruler saw that the whole city might be converted to Christianity, he became angry with the two saints. He sent for them. When they were summoned, he threatened them and sent them away saying, “Go away now, but watch out, do not talk to people about Christianity. If you preach the Gospel again, I’ll punish and torment you”.

The two saints went away saying, “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain” and they gave their full time to the work of preaching with great eagerness in spite of the ruler’s threats.

- ❖ How did the two saints heal patients?
- ❖ Did you once pray for a patient and the Lord healed them? Who are they? Give thanks to God.
- ❖ Do you know any sick man? Pray for him.
- ❖ Who can recite the verse: “For to me to live...”

The governor knew that they were still preaching and healing patients and that people believed in Christ. He arrested them and ordered that their hands and feet should be tied and that they should be tormented and thrown into the sea with their hands and feet tied. But the Lord preserved them and brought them back safe to the land... they stood up and said “We are not afraid of torments because, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain”.

The governor was surprised and he gave orders to crucify the two elder brothers and to stone them. As for the other three brothers, the governor ordered to tie them between the two crosses and to throw arrows at them, but the stones and arrows went back to harm and injure those who stoned the saints so they were forced to withdraw. The governor flew into a rage. He threw them into the heart of a blazing fire, but they walked out in the fire. They were singing praises to the Lord. “Our righteous martyrs” and not a single hair were singed.

The mother encouraged her five sons to stand firm in their faith in Christ... At last the governor ordered to cut off their heads. They were driven to the place of martyrdom and they were singing praises to the Lord “Our martyrs...” Many people believed in Jesus Christ... the five brothers were buried with their mother. The church celebrates two festivals to honor them on the 22nd of Hatour and the 22nd of Baouna every year. There is a monastery called the Monastery of Kuzman and Dimyan at Manyal Sheeha in Guiza. May their holy prayers be with us and glory be to God at all times.

Conclusion/Questions

- ❖ What are the names of the two saints of our story?

- ❖ What was their profession?
- ❖ Why was the governor angry with them?
- ❖ By the end of the lesson ask the children to go around again while chanting, “Our righteous martyrs...” and give the thanksgiving prayer.
- ❖ Distribute dates and pomegranates among the children.
- ❖ Do not concentrate on the passive aspects of murder but clarify how the saints were happy and quiet. Draw the children’s attention to the light that surrounds the saints so that the children may recognize the symbols of happiness and delight.
- ❖ Note that the lesson is divided into sections and stages preceded by the sign of the cross and followed by questions. If the Servant has time or wish to change the lesson of Kuzman and Dimyan, he can teach the lesson of St. Dimyana.
- ❖ Write about all the types of persecution that the two saints had faced. Write the verse.

Applications

- ❖ We pray for (so and so) who is sick. We visit him.
- ❖ Write five sentences about “How to honor saints”.
- ❖ Write the sentences down in your notebook.

Week 3- An Angel delivers Jerusalem from Sennacherib

Objective

- ❖ The Angels guard and serve the saints.

Memory Verse

“The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them” (Psalm 34:7).

References

- ❖ 2 Kings 19
- ❖ Dictionary of the Bible

Introduction

A picture of the guardian angel in a large size or the picture of the Holy Family in her journey to Egypt in company with the angel who guards and guides them.

- ❖ Who fed Elijah when he was staying at the river?
- ❖ Who fed him when the river dried up?
- ❖ Mention the miracles that took place at Zarephath, near Sidon.
- ❖ Who can recite the verse?
- ❖ Have you read 2 Kings 19?
- ❖ What happened in the last part of it?
- ❖ How many angels killed the soldiers of the Assyrian army?
- ❖ How many soldiers were killed? One angel killed 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrian army.
- ❖ The Servant reads verses 35-37.
- ❖ Who are the angels and what is their work?

Lesson Outlines

King Sennacherib was king of Assyrian. This king was the enemy of Hezekiah, King of Judah. King Hezekiah was righteous and zealous. His concern was the glory of God and worshipping Him. He destroyed the pagan places of worship. The Lord was with him and he was successful in everything.

Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem and sent a letter to Hezekiah threatening him. He said, “If you do not surrender to me, I shall destroy the city. Who is that god that can rescue you?” He also warned the people of Jerusalem saying, “Do not rely on the Lord because He cannot save Jerusalem from me. So not listen to Hezekiah”.

- ❖ What is the name of the King of Assyrian?

- ❖ What is the name of the city he wanted to besiege?

The Lord answered Hezekiah's prayer and sent him a message by Isaiah the prophet, the man of God. The message ran thus, "The Lord listened to your prayer concerning Sennacherib". King Hezekiah was comforted and waited for the work of the Lord. At that same night, while Sennacherib and his army were asleep in their tents, the Lord's angel came to the tents and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. What a wonderful victory!

In the early morning, a small number of soldiers got up and found that all the other soldiers were dead... they were frightened... Sennacherib went back to Nineveh and stayed in his house. One day when he was worshipping in the temple of his god, two of his sons killed him. Thus the Lord revealed his power and granted victory to all that trust in Him.

- ❖ What is the name of the king who loved God?
- ❖ Why was he sad?
- ❖ To whom did he go for protection?
- ❖ Where did he pray?
- ❖ How did the Lord answer Hezekiah's prayer?
- ❖ Did you pray for something and the Lord answered your prayer? Thank the Lord for that.

Conclusion

- ❖ St. Basil said, "Each believer is in company with an angel and the angel attends him, teaches him, guards him and guides him in his life".
- ❖ One of the saints said, "In every place you find yourself, and in every corner...respect your angel".
- ❖ St. Irenaeus also said, "How valuable the souls are; there is an angel appointed for each of them to guard each soul".

Applications

- ❖ Draw a picture to show the effect of Hezekiah's prayer for Jerusalem. Show that the Lord sent an angel as a result of Hezekiah's prayers.
- ❖ Treat the children's fear, as children are afraid when they are alone. They are afraid of the darkness. They are afraid during the sleeping hours. If they feel the presence of their guardian angel, they will not be afraid. (You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man).
- ❖ Our guardian angel sees all what we do because he is always with us, that is why we must not do anything that may grieve the Lord.

Homework

Answer the following questions:

- ❖ What do you know about the guardian angel?

- ❖ Does the Lord protect us although we are sinful?
- ❖ Write one verse to prove that angels guard us.

Recitation

- ❖ Psalm 19 suits this lesson “The heavens are telling the glory of God”. Children begin to use it in their prayers. It should be distributed to the children whether in the printed form or in handwriting.

Week 4- David, Solomon and the Building of the Temple

Objective

- ❖ To give the children an idea about people's love for God and how their love was so deep and strong that they built a great Temple to worship God.

Memory Verse

"I have sanctified this house which you have built to put My name there forever" (1 Kings 9:3)

References

- ❖ 1 Kings 6,7,14,15,8,30
- ❖ "Interpretation of the First Book of Kings" Sporting, Alexandria

Introduction

Ask the children to hold a discussion about the buildings in their village or town... What makes the building attractive? Mention some of the attractive buildings.

Today's lesson is about a building that was built in seven years and cost millions of dollars and the man who built it was the greatest king on earth at that time. "Solomon" means "Peace", Solomon ruled for forty years. He was David's son who ruled after him. He was the greatest king and he was very wise and very rich.

Lesson Outlines

I. The Temple

This is the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. It looked like the Tent of Meetings in its structure and appearance. David had prepared the material for building the temple and Solomon started building it in the fourth year of his reign and the building was complete in the eleventh year. It was the pride of Jerusalem and the most beautiful building in the world at that time.

- ❖ How long did it take Solomon to build the Temple?

II. How the idea of building the Temple came to Solomon's mind

King David desired to build a temple for the Lord and the Lord was pleased but the Lord said, "Your son Solomon will build the temple". So David designed the building and chose its location. He prepared large amounts of gold, silver, copper, iron, and cedar wood for building the temple. It is difficult to evaluate such materials nowadays as they are worth millions and millions of dollars.

III. Solomon builds the Temple

When Solomon sat on the throne, he ordered his men to collect and gather building materials. It took them three years to gather the materials and in the fourth year, they started building the Temple. Solomon employed a great number of workers. 70,000 workers carried stones. The building materials

were prepared in a place far away from the building itself (1 Kings 6,7). The vessels and instruments used in the temple were covered with gold.

IV.The Designs of the Temple (The Servant reads 2 Samuel 7; 14-17, 1 Kings 5, 6, 7)

People gave their offerings and took part in building the temple. Think of the things people offered for building the temple and the work they did in order to help and participate in building the temple. The first book of Kings gives us a clear picture of the numerous deeds performed by the people.

- ❖ Where did the offerings come from?

We also recognize the great love of those people for the Temple, as it is the House of God. All the classes of the people volunteered to do the job. The king, the laborers, the skilled workers, all volunteered to work. This spirit should prevail, as we should offer the church all that she needs.

- ❖ Who of the kings, thought first of building the temple?
- ❖ Who built it?
- ❖ Who took part in building it?
- ❖ How did the people offer their gifts?
- ❖ Where was the temple built?
- ❖ How can you express your love for the church?
- ❖ Do you offer your offerings (your gifts) in the church treasury?

Conclusion

The Servant holds a discussion with the children as to how they should love others.

- ❖ They should offer their gifts to the church so that she may be able to complete her projects.
- ❖ They should give gifts to poor children on feast days especially Christmas and Easter.
- ❖ The Servant encourages the children to save some money to be offered to the church as a sign of love for the House of God.

Applications

- ❖ Study this verse by heart: "I have sanctified this house which you have built to put My name there forever" (1 Kings 9:3).
- ❖ Cross the wrong words between parenthesis:
 - a. The Temple of God was built in (Cairo -Baghdad -Jerusalem).
 - b. (Solomon -David -Saul) built the Temple.
 - c. The people gave their gifts (sadly -angrily -joyfully).
 - d. Write in your notebook 1 Kings 8:22-53.
 - e. Study the Orthodox creed by heart (the Servant divides it into parts so that it can be easily studied).

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

Week 1: The Lord Appears in the Temple

Week 2: King Josiah and the Repair of the Temple

Week 3: Elijah and Restoring the Widow's Son to Life

Week 4: Nehemiah and the Rebuilding of the Walls of Jerusalem

Week 1- The Lord Appears In The Temple

Objective

- ❖ To give the children an idea about people's love for God and how their love was so deep and strong that they build a great Temple to worship God.

Memory Verse

"That Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day" (1 Kings 8:29)

References

- ❖ 1 Kings 9
- ❖ "Interpretation of the First Book of Kings" Sporting, Alexandria

Introduction

- ❖ Let us read and learn well Solomon's long prayer with which he dedicated the Temple (1 Kings 8:22-53).

Lesson Outlines

When King Solomon finished building the Temple, he made a great feast that the world had not seen its like. He brought the Ark of the Lord God and put it together with all the vessels used in the service in its new place. Those vessels were in the Tent of Meetings. Then Solomon dedicated the House of God and God was pleased with Solomon for all what he did. The Glory of God came on the Temple in the form of a cloud all the days of the feast. That cloud used to appear over the Tent of Meetings in the wilderness, and it was a proof that the Lord filled the Temple, people felt that the Lord still desired to dwell among his people. The age of Solomon was an age of peace.

- ❖ What did Solomon do after he had finished building the Temple?
- ❖ What does the word "dedicate" mean?
- ❖ How did the Lord show that He was pleased with Solomon?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: "That Your eyes may be open..." This verse is a part of Solomon's prayer when he dedicated the Temple.

When the Ark of the Lord was set in its place in the Temple, Solomon stood before all the people and blessed them in the Name of the Lord then he prayed and said... (The Servant reads a part of Solomon's prayer). Sacrifices then were offered on the altar of the Temple. They offered oxen and sheep. The people were in complete joy and happiness for fourteen days. Then Solomon asked the people to leave, each to go to his house. They all went home and they were happy because of the blessing they received; that blessing which the Lord promised to give to David and Solomon was fulfilled. Then the Lord appeared to Solomon once more and told him that he heard his prayers and answered them. The Lord said to Solomon, "If you will serve Me in honesty and integrity... If you

obey My laws and do everything I have commanded you I will keep the promise I made to your father David when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by his descendants”.

- ❖ Who attended the dedication of the temple?
- ❖ How long did the feasts take?
- ❖ What did the Lord say to Solomon when he appeared to him the second time?
- ❖ Who remembers the verse: “That Your eyes may be open...”

Conclusion

- ❖ Draw the children’s attention to the fact that the Lord dwells in the church so they must enter the church with reverence and awe. They must not speak inside the church because God dwells in it.

Applications

- ❖ Draw your church inside a rectangle. Color the door and the windows of the church, which you have drawn. Give them a brown color.
- ❖ Read 2 Kings 22 at home.

Week 2- King Josiah and the Repair of the Temple

Objective

- ❖ Let us help the children to understand that they can take part in caring for the House of the Lord.

Memory Verse

“Blessed are those who dwell in Your House, they will be praising You” (Psalm 84:4)

References

- ❖ 2 Kings 22:1-24:18
- ❖ “Interpretation of the Second Book of Kings” Sporting, Alexandria

Introduction

- ❖ The Servant holds a discussion with the children about how a dirty place cannot help people to worship the Lord, and how people sometimes behave in the streets when they throw pieces of paper and other things here and there.

Lesson Outline

Our lesson today is about Josiah, the good king who was about your age and he loved the House of the Lord and cared for it. The temple was ruined and not clean. The walls were dirty... the covering layer was removed... the stones were broken to pieces and the pieces of wood cracked. When Josiah the king saw the Temple in that sad state, he felt very sad.

- ❖ What is the name of the king?
- ❖ In what state was the House of the Lord?
- ❖ What did Josiah do?

The king consulted the priest about what they should do. The priest brought a closed box with a hole in it (an opening) and he put the box beside the door of the Temple where people used to enter and there they put their gifts in the box till it was full of money. The king and the priest gathered a big sum of money from the people and then the workers and builders came to repair the House of God. They repaired the walls, the doors, and the windows and the Temple became splendid once more.

- ❖ Who of you wants to be like Josiah and cares for the House of the Lord?
- ❖ What can you do to make the House of God clean and beautiful?
- ❖ Write this verse in your notebook: “Blessed are those who dwell...” and study it by heart.

Conclusion

- ❖ Read Psalm 84. How can we care for the House of the Lord spiritually and materially?

Applications

- ❖ Sometimes we find that the rooms of Sunday School are not clean and torn pieces are here and there and chairs are not well arranged. Ask the children to clean and beautify the place where we worship God.
- ❖ Mention some of the things that need repair in the church and think out how you can help the children of this age in doing that.
- ❖ Ask a group of children to do the following: cleaning and lighting the church -distributing hymn books -gathering hymn books at the end of the service -opening the windows -sweeping the floor -shutting the doors -lighting the lamps -bringing the priest a cup of water -cleaning the carpets and putting them in their place -turning fans on when it is hot -shutting the windows in winter -Let them do that with activity and pleasure.
- ❖ Divide the class into groups -Some of the children perform these actions for one month then others do the same task next month and so on.
- ❖ Read the first chapter of the Book of Nehemiah.

Week 3- Elijah Restoring the Widow's Son to Life

Objective

- ❖ God's care for his children and people.

Memory Verse

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find" (Luke 11:9).

References

- ❖ 1 Kings 17
- ❖ "The Life of Elijah" Translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ "Practical Contemplations on the Life of Elijah of Tishbet" Translated by Wagdi Girgis

Introduction

- ❖ The picture: The Servant sets the scene by giving some questions about the previous lesson.
- ❖ The Servant then checks the children's notebooks to have a look at the previous week's homework and to encourage the children.

Lesson Outline

This is an example of one of the men of God whose name is Elijah... a friend of God, he loves the Lord and he obeys Him... During the famine, the Lord sent him food with the ravens, then the Lord said to him, "Now go to the town of Zarephath, near Sidon and stay there". The Lord commanded him to live with a poor widow at Zarephath.

- ❖ Who, of you, prays for the poor?

Elijah stayed with the widow. He stayed at the upper chamber (a small room at the top of the house when Elijah used to rest and to pray). The Lord sent them flour and oil according to their needs... The Lord blessed her home... Elijah told them tales from the Bible.

One day the widow's son was playing outside the house. When he came back he was very ill. The boy was crying because of pain. His mother ran to him... took him and laid him in bed. She hoped that the boy would get better but the days passed and the boy's health did not improve... his illness was serious... his temperature rose up... the boy died... his mother wept bitterly... he was her only son... the verse came to her mind... "Ask and it will be given to you". She stood up... carried the boy and took him to Elijah the prophet and said, "My son has died... I beg you to pray for him and I am sure that the Lord will answer your prayer and restore the boy to life".

Elijah was sad because the boy died. He took the boy from his mother's arms. He carried him to the upper room and laid him on the bed on which Elijah used to sleep. He bowed down to the earth... then he raised his eyes and hands to heaven and prayed "O Lord, you said: Ask and it will be given to you. I implore You to bring this boy back to life". Elijah stretched himself out on the boy

then bowed to the earth in prayer and repeated the same words three times... The child started breathing again and revived... the boy opened his eyes... stood up...wonderful! Who heard of a man who died and then came back to life? No one...God cares for us...and He said: “Ask and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find”.

- ❖ What is the name of God’s prophet?
- ❖ Who fed Elijah during the famine?
- ❖ Who sent him food?
- ❖ Who can recite the verse?

Elijah carried the boy to his mother and said to her, look your son is alive... the woman was very happy... she knelt down and worshipped God. She thanked God and said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God. I believe in God”. The child chanted, “When I am ill...” Elijah took courage because the Lord performed this miraculous deed by his hands.

Conclusion

Elijah teaches us the following:

- ❖ Satisfaction: He lived on very small resources of a poor widow. Those resources were not enough for the daily needs.
- ❖ Patience and self-control in time of danger: When the widow said to him, “Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?” all he said was, “Give me your son” (1 Kings 17:18-19).
- ❖ Struggling in his solitary place: He took the boy from her arms, carried him upstairs to the room where he was staying, and laid him on the bed. Then he prayed aloud.
- ❖ Modesty: He stretched himself out on the boy three times and he did not lose hope.

Applications

- ❖ Draw a picture of Elijah in a situation that stimulates your admiration.
- ❖ Read 2 Kings 19

Week 4- Nehemiah and the Rebuilding of the Walls of Jerusalem

Objective

- ❖ Jealousy for the glory of God and his church

References

- ❖ The Book of Nehemiah
- ❖ “Interpretation of Ezra and Nehemiah” Sporting, Alexandria
- ❖ “Nehemiah’s Work and Struggle” Edward Dennett
- ❖ “Stories and Tales from the Holy Bible” Part 10, Beirut

Memory Verse

“Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach” (Nehemiah 2:17)

Lesson Outlines

Nehemiah was a servant in the Court of the King of Persia... He was the King’s wine steward, i.e. he served him drinks. He was a pious man who loved God and God’s people who were in Jerusalem... He heard that the people in Jerusalem were in difficulty because of their enemies and that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and cannot protect the city. He was sad. He sat down and wept for the Holy City Jerusalem then he thought, “My tears for the city will not build her walls... The best thing to do is to pray to the Lord”. So he prayed, “O Lord, we are sinners but we return to you... My Lord, listen to my prayers... and grant me mercy in the sight of the king”.

- ❖ What is the name of the servant?
- ❖ What is his job?
- ❖ What news did he hear about Jerusalem?

He waited for a suitable chance to ask the king to allow him to go back to Jerusalem. One day when Nehemiah was pouring wine in a cup to give to the king, he felt that the king was watching him and they started this conversation:

King: Why are you looking so sad, seeing you are not sick?

Nehemiah: May your Majesty live forever. How can I help looking sad when the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire, and its walls need someone to build it?

King: What is it that you want?

Nehemiah prayed to God and said to the king; “Let me go to Jerusalem the city of my ancestors to rebuild it”.

King: How long will you be gone?

Nehemiah felt secured and he thanked the Lord who granted him mercy in the eyes of the pagan king. Nehemiah told the king how long he would be gone. The king allowed him to travel and gave him letters to the governors of the provinces through which he would pass to help him in his mission. He also gave him a letter to deliver to the keeper of the royal forests instructing him to give Nehemiah timber needed for building and for the house he would live in. (The children can act actively the dialogue between the king and Nehemiah).

Nehemiah happily went to Jerusalem. The king sent some army officers and a troop of horsemen with him... He arrived at the city... he took rest for three days. One moony night he went out to have a look at the walls of the city. They were completely ruined. Even the doors were burnt with fire. The remains of the walls were only heaps of broken stones, dust and ashes. It was clear that nothing could protect the city from the enemies. He went back to the city. He called the elders of the people and said to them, "Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem". Some enemies stood against him but Nehemiah's faith was deep and the Lord strengthened his heart. In a short time, all the people decided to build the wall. Although the enemies mocked him, the work continued and half the wall was built. When the enemies saw this, they decided to fight Nehemiah and his people. When Nehemiah knew their plots against him, he ordered his men to carry arms. He divided his men into two groups: The first group carried arms to guard them and the second group carried their swords and continued building the wall. Some men stood on the wall and others watched the enemies. Some of them blew trumpets when they saw the enemies drawing near. When the enemies knew that their plan was known, they retreated. The men worked for fifty-two days from sunrise to sunset. The Lord blessed them and helped them in answer to Nehemiah's prayer. The wall was built at last and the city was well fortified and its inhabitants were secured and lived in peace inside it.

- ❖ How many days did it take people to build the wall?
- ❖ Who took part in building the wall?
- ❖ Who tried to fail the plan?
- ❖ How can you overcome the devil?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: "Come, Let us build the wall..."
- ❖ Let us sing a hymn together: O Soldiers of the church...

Conclusion

- ❖ We have to take care of our church and make sure that everything in it is in the best shape and condition. We have to be careful not to damage or destroy anything in the church.

Applications

- ❖ Tell the story in a lively way and pay attention to situations of strong feelings, describe them in detail... indulge yourself completely in the situation.
- ❖ When you meet anyone this week that troubles and annoys you, pray for him so that the Lord may turn him into a good man.
- ❖ Fill in the spaces: Come, let us ... the wall of ... that we may no longer suffer ...
- ❖ Read Chapter 1 from the Book of Ezra.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Week 1: Ezra the Priest

Week 2: Jesus Heals blind Bartimaeus

Week 3: Jesus Heals A Paralytic

Week 4: The Great Flood: the Ark of Noah

Week 1- Ezra The Priest

Objective

- ❖ Caring for the House of God.

Memory Verse

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:1)

References

- ❖ The Book of Ezra
- ❖ “Interpretation of Ezra and Nehemiah” Sporting, Alexandria

Introduction

Ezra was a descendant of Aaron. He did not practice his lawful job because of the exile, but he kept the law of the Lord and prepared his heart to seek it and practice it. He became a skilful writer of the Law. He did not expect that one day he would be a leader of his people during their second return to Jerusalem. And, you, my dear friend, do not despise yourself being still young as it is the Lord who works in man.

Lesson Outlines

Ezra was a man of knowledge and wisdom. He tells us about what happened during the reign of Cyrus, the king of Persia. That king sent a letter to the people of Babylon saying: “The Lord, the God of heaven ordered me to build a temple for him in Jerusalem in Judah. May God be with all of you who are his people. You are to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of the Lord your God”. All the believers were filled with joy and obeyed the king’s command. Their pleasure grew greater when they knew that Cyrus had given orders that all the gold and silver vessels taken by Nebuchadnazzar from the Temple of Jerusalem to be returned to the Temple.

- ❖ Who was Ezra?
- ❖ What was the name of the King of Persia?
- ❖ What was the letter he sent to the people of Babylon?
- ❖ Who obeyed the king’s command?
- ❖ What increased their happiness?

About 50,000 men of the people of God carried gifts and made for Jerusalem. They built an altar there and offered their sacrifices twice each day as their custom was before the exile. But the altar was small so it was necessary for them to build the House of God in Jerusalem. Thus, those men found themselves in Jerusalem after seventy years of exile. They hurried and quickly bought cedar wood from Lebanon, and after setting the foundation of the House of God, each one of them cried with joy because work began. They all sang hymns of praise “O Give thanks to the Lord, for He is

good, for His steadfast love endures for ever”. They cried, “Give thanks to God”. The old men wept when they remembered the glory of the first house and how God’s fire used to come down from heaven and burn the sacrifices. They remembered the manna and Aaron’s staff which they could not bring back. Prophet Haggai came to the builders and told them that the glory of the house they were building would be greater than that of the first one, as the Messiah whom they were waiting for would come to that temple in heavenly glory. These words made the elders rejoice. No one thought of the glory that would come to Jerusalem when Lord Jesus came to Jerusalem, walked in its streets and taught in the Temple.

- ❖ How many men went to Jerusalem?
- ❖ What did they do when they arrived at Jerusalem?
- ❖ How long did the ancient people stay in exile?
- ❖ Mention the verse, “O Give thanks to the Lord...”
- ❖ Why did the elders weep? Who comforted them?

While they were building the House of God (the Temple), the Samaritans came to Jerusalem and deceitfully offered to help the Jews in building the temple. They wanted to stop the great work. Those people had inhabited the land after the exile to Babylon. The Samaritans said, “Let’s help you”, but Zerubbabel, who knew them well, refused saying, “No, we build the Temple for the Lord our God as king Cyrus ordered us to do”. The Samaritans became very angry and tried to keep the Jews from building the Temple. They kept on annoying them till they stopped working to avoid problems. The building of the Temple took 16 years.

During this period, the rich built houses for themselves but they neglected building the Temple. Prophet Haggai and prophet Zechariah came and encouraged people to go on building the Temple. They trusted the Lord and built the Temple and then built the walls of their city.

- ❖ Why did they stop building the Temple?
- ❖ How many years did they stop work?
- ❖ Who of the prophets encouraged the people to continue the work?
- ❖ When did they finish building the Temple?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: “O Give thanks to the Lord...”
- ❖ Let us sing a hymn together: “O Soldiers of the church, arise...”

Conclusion

Who is Ezra? He was a descendant of Aaron... He could not practice his lawful job because of the Exile, but his heart being filled with Divine love for his God, refused to keep away from the way of the Lord. He kept the Divine Law and became a skilful writer of Law. To correct the people’s way of living, Ezra took the following steps:

- ❖ Not to depend on men (Ezra 8:22).

- ❖ Calling for fasting although the way was long and the journey was difficult (Ezra 8:22).
- ❖ Being crushed with grief and being humbled before the Lord (Ezra 9).
- ❖ Keeping away from evil -confessing the sins and the sins of his people -people repented then Ezra could gather the people (Ezra 10:11).

Applications

- ❖ Children write short notes about Ezra the priest and writer in their notebooks.

Week 2- Jesus Heals The Blind Bartimaeus

Objective

- ❖ Christ's ability to heal.

Memory Verse

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47)

References

- ❖ Matthew 20:29-35
- ❖ Mark 10:46-52
- ❖ Luke 18:35-43
- ❖ "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" Fagala, Page 88
- ❖ "The Gospel according to St. Mark" Page 81-82
- ❖ "The Gospel according to St. Matthew" Guiza

Introduction

- ❖ Contemplate the system of the planets and the movement of the sun and remember the wisdom of God in His work.
- ❖ Contemplate the plants' system and the power of life, the colors of roses and the smell of flowers and thank God for the grace of eyesight and the other graces the Lord has given you.
- ❖ The dearest grace to us is that Christ is the light of the world. We follow Him in everything and we have trust and faith in Him.
- ❖ "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (Corinthians 5:7).

Lesson Outlines

There was a poor man whose name was Bartimaeus. He lived in Jericho. He lived in the fields and rural districts where flowers grew and trees are numerous. But he could not enjoy looking at the beautiful flowers neither could he see his relatives or friends. He could not do so because he was blind. He felt his way with his staff. He walked very slowly. Every day, he sat by the road under a tree and stretched his hand to the passers-by hoping that he would take something from them. People had pity on him and gave him alms to help him buy his food.

- ❖ What was the name of the blind man?
- ❖ What did he hold in his hand? Why? Where did he sit?

Bartimaeus the Blind could recognize the sound of things. He could recognize the different steps of people near him. For example he knew whether the children were running, jumping, playing or quarrelling. He felt the rays of the sun on his back and the rain when it fell on his face. He heard the

sound of the Wind and the songs of swallows, the steps of horses or camels that walked slowly before him. To him day and night were the same, as he saw nothing but darkness all his life.

One day, Bartimaeus sat under a tree as usual. He listened attentively. He said to himself, "I hear the sound of many feet. A crowd of people is passing in front of me. They are laughing and speaking. Who is coming?" A little child of your age heard him, so he drew near to him although he was running to join his friends. The child said to him, "Yes, Uncle Bartimaeus" and Bartimaeus said, "My child, I can see nothing, tell me what the matter is. Who is coming?" The child told him that it was Jesus who was coming. Jesus is coming! Jesus of Nazareth is here in our town?"

- ❖ Who told Bartimaeus that Jesus was coming?
- ❖ What was the name of the town?

Jesus was passing Jericho. The people of Jericho gave Him a warm welcome. They were shouting in a loud voice. The grown ups were crying, "O Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy on us". The children were shouting and singing hymn: You love us... You love us... You love us our Lord... That is why you came to us... You came to where we are...

People said: Welcome, welcome, welcome our Lord Jesus Welcome, welcome, welcome our Lord Jesus. The children said: All people love you and so do we... The happiest day in the universe is the day of your happy birth. Each day you are with us O Lord, is a feast for us. Bartimaeus desired to see Jesus as he heard that Jesus healed many people so he cried loudly, "O Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy upon me". Then he said to himself, "O Lord... I hope that Jesus will help me... There is no doubt that He will help me, if I ask him to do so". Then he took hold of his staff and rose crying, "O Jesus, have mercy on me... O Jesus heal me..." But his voice was not loud enough because of the crowds that surrounded Jesus. Bartimaeus cried more loudly than he did before, "Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy on me". The people were angry with him and asked him to keep silent and stop crying... You disturb us and you disturb Jesus. But the blind man did not care and continued crying, "O Jesus, have mercy upon me. Jesus heard his cries. He stopped and said to those around him: "Bring him to me". Some children ran to Bartimaeus and said to him, "How lucky you are uncle Bartimaeus, Jesus call you, come with us". They took hold of his hand and led him to Jesus. Because of his great happiness, he jumped, his cloak fell down but he left it on the ground and went to Jesus. Jesus gently asked him, "What do you want?" Bartimaeus said, "Lord, I want to see". Jesus put His hand on the eyes of the blind man and said to him, "Go your way, your faith has made you well" and immediately he received his sight. The blind man's eyes opened and he saw the gentleness of Jesus. He saw the sky and the herb... he saw the people's faces. He saw light. Bartimaeus loved Jesus and followed Him and became His disciple.

- ❖ What is the name of the town where Bartimaeus lived?
- ❖ Who led the blind man to Jesus?
- ❖ What did Bartimaeus say?
- ❖ How did Jesus heal him?
- ❖ If you are ill, what should you do?
- ❖ How can you help a blind man?

Conclusion

- ❖ God is the healer of all our sicknesses and the helper when we are in trouble. We just have to ask for His help and He will always help.

Applications

- ❖ Study this passage from the Morning Prayer and write it in your notebook and use it in your morning prayers: The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. O Lord, you came to the world through your love for men and when you came, all the creation rejoiced... When you came, you saved Adam, our father from the seduction of the Serpent. You saved Eve, our mother from the pains of death. You gave us the spirit of prophecy. We worship You, and bless You saying: Zoxapatri...glory be ...

Week 3- Jesus Heals A Paralytic

Objective

- ❖ The power of faith

Memory Verse

“Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you” (Matthew 9:2)

References

- ❖ Matthew 9:1-8
- ❖ Mark 2:1-12
- ❖ “Studies in the New Testament: Matthew” Pages 41,42, Fagala.
- ❖ “Studies in the New Testament: Mark” Pages 18,19, Fagala.

Introduction

- ❖ Review previous lesson with children. After examining the children’s notes, the Servant distributes the picture of the new lesson.
- ❖ What do you see in this picture?
- ❖ How many men are at the top of the picture?

They brought their friend to the Lord... they broke part of the ceiling and lowered their sick friend. He was paralyzed and could not walk... Do you see his bed? This man was paralyzed... What does “paralyzed” mean?

Lesson Outlines

One day Jesus entered a house at Capernaum... Many people gathered around Him... sick people and people who love Him. The Lord received them and welcomed them all. The house became crowded with people... There was a man in Capernaum who had been ill for a long time... This man and his relatives heard that Christ was coming to the city and that He was in one of the houses. The paralyzed man said to his friends, “Have mercy upon me... take me to Jesus to heal me”. Four of his friends put him on a mat because he was completely paralyzed and could not move neither his hands nor his legs. All the way they were praying, “O Lord, heal our brother and friend because he is paralyzed”.

- ❖ What is the name of the city?
- ❖ Where did Jesus go?
- ❖ Who carried the paralyzed man?

The friends found that the house was very crowded both inside and outside... They climbed up a ladder to the top of the house where they put the man. They made a hole in the ceiling. They succeeded in making an opening to lower their friend through it. They tied their friend with ropes. They lowered him till he reached the ground. Jesus looked at him then he looked up... He smiled... He loved them. He looked at the paralyzed man and said, "Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you".

The people who were present murmured and said to themselves, "God is the Only One who can forgive sins". The Lord Jesus knew what they were thinking and He said to them, "Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk?" They did not answer. They kept silent.

- ❖ How was the paralyzed man brought to Jesus?
- ❖ Who brought him down?
- ❖ Why did the people murmur?
- ❖ What did they say?
- ❖ What did Jesus say to them?
- ❖ Let us say together, "Son be of good cheer..."

Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, pick up your bed, and go home". These words sent a wonderful power into the body of the paralyzed man... He stood up... thanked God... picked up his bed and went home happily and singing hymns, "When I am sick..." His friends went home happily... but the people who saw the miraculous deed wondered greatly and glorified God... One of them said, "The Lord says a word and healing occurs immediately"... complete healing... another said, "The man was carried before us and went out carrying his bed". All the people said, "We have never seen such a thing".

- ❖ What did Lord Jesus say to the paralyzed man?
- ❖ How did the man go home?
- ❖ What did the people say?
- ❖ Are there any sick people in our family?
- ❖ What service can you offer them?

Conclusion

- ❖ Teach the children that God gave us life and that He answers our prayers in an appropriate which is unknown to us and that He knows what is good for us more than we know.
- ❖ Prayer with faith performs miracles, as "For with God all things are possible".

Applications

- ❖ Complete the following sentences:
 - a. The priests baptize babies according to the faith of

- b. The Lord Jesus showed mercy to the paralyzed man and said to him
- c. The Lord Jesus performed many miraculous deeds in Capernaum such as
- ❖ Together with your students pray to the Lord for the names of some persons that He may guide them to His way. Intercede with the saints. God guides those brothers in answer to the sincere prayers of the saints and your prayers.
- ❖ Form a friendship between you and the saints so that they may help you with their prayers and intercessions and bring you to the Lord in times of affliction and suffering.

Week 4- The great Flood: the Ark of Noah

Objective

- ❖ Noah the Righteous is rewarded for his obedience

Memory Verse

“The Just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17).

References

- ❖ Genesis 6,7
- ❖ The Bible Dictionary

Introduction

Use pictures of a flood or a picture of a dove, a crow and a branch of an olive tree

- ❖ Does God accept wrong doers and sinners?
- ❖ How is a wicked man punished?
- ❖ How are saints rewarded in the end?

Lesson Outlines

Adam and Eve lived outside the Paradise of Eden and people increased in number. But sorry to say, evil spread and most people walked with the devil and after many years, there was only one house that worshipped God. God was not pleased with all the people as all what they did was wrong. The Lord said to Noah, “Noah... You are a good-hearted man and I am pleased with you because you are faithful and sincere. Make yourself an ark of three decks”. Noah and his sons worked hard and made that big ship. Wicked people asked Noah about what he was doing and Noah told them that God would destroy the world with floodwaters if the people did not repent. The people laughed at him and mocked him saying that he was mad, “Noah is building an ark in the center of the Town. Of course he is mad... he has deceived us and lied to us. Noah do not waste your time”.

- ❖ What did the Lord order Noah to do?
- ❖ Why did God choose Noah in particular?

Noah went on in his work till he finished making the ark and the day appointed for the flood came (By the way, it took Noah and his sons 120 years to build the ark so imagine how big the ark was!) Then God said to Noah, “Go into the Ark, you and all your household... Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, males and females; and a pair of the animals that are not clean; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, to keep their kind alive upon the face of all the earth”. And Noah said to the Lord, “How can I gather all these animals and birds?” And the Lord said to him, “Stand by the door of the Ark and I will send you all the animals and birds”. When they all went into the Ark (the eight persons and all the animals and birds)... Noah requested and warned the people to repent but the

people were indifferent and did not care. The Lord then shut the door of the Ark so no one could either enter or go out. Rain began to fall... All the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the floodgates of the sky were opened and rain fell on the earth. The water became deep enough for the ark to float. The water became deep and the ark drifted on the surface. People ran to the ark but the Lord had shut the door of the ark. People looked for a place to protect them but in vain, neither high buildings nor mountains... nor... nor... anything could shelter them. And the flood continued for forty days.

- ❖ How did Noah gather all beasts, animals and birds?
- ❖ How many persons went into the ark?
- ❖ Who shut the door of the ark?

Noah sent out a raven after a long time, but the raven did not come back (why?). Then he sent out a dove and it returned to him as it could not find a place to alight. Then he sent out the dove once more and it returned to him with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then he sent out the dove again but this time it did not come back, so Noah understood that plants appeared. And the Ark came to rest on the mountain of Ararat.

- ❖ Why didn't the raven go back to Noah?
- ❖ What do you think of the two doves' behavior?

Conclusion

- ❖ Obedience is essential to prove our faith and to strengthen our relationship with God.

Applications

- ❖ What is the relationship between the Ark and the church? What are the similarities?
- ❖ What happened to those who followed the advice of the man of God and what happened to the others?

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

Week 1: St. John Chrysostom

Week 2: Jacob And Esau: Begging For Blessing

Week 3: Isaac Blesses Jacob

Week 4: Jacob Loses His Son Joseph

Week 1- St. John Chrysostom

Objective

- ❖ Showing courage in announcing truth.

Memory Verse

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12)

References

- ❖ “The Precious Gem” (Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa), Part 1, Page 265
- ❖ “The Egyptian Church” Page 54

Introduction

- ❖ Review the previous lesson with the students.
- ❖ Who knows the name of the Patriarch of this picture?

(The Servant distributes the pictures among the children as a means of illustration)

Lesson Outlines

John Chrysostom was not Egyptian, but he was a foreign scholar whom the church loved and valued in the whole world. He was born in Antioch and was soundly brought up. Thanks to his mother who instructed him in the holy instructions and orthodox faith. He was famous for his virtue, piety, righteousness and boldness in telling truth and courage. He was called the Second John the Baptist. He was ordained deacon and then he was chosen to be Patriarch of Constantinople.

- ❖ Where was St. John born?
- ❖ Who brought him up?
- ❖ Why was he called the Baptist?
- ❖ Where was he ordained a Patriarch?

We know that the children of God who are honest and sincere always meet with temptations and persecution and the Scripture says: All who desire to live a godly life... the devil fights them making use of different means and persons. This is what happened to St. John Chrysostom. Empress Indoxia was furious with him because he reproached her for her recklessness and her actions that were not suitable. Let us give some examples.

Empress Indoxia passed by a widow's field and she admired it. She took it to herself. The widow complained to John Chrysostom and requested him to restore her field back to her from the empress. The saint wrote to the queen but she did not answer him. He sent some people to request her to give the field back to the widow but she refused. John intended to punish her by using the authority of the

church. So when she came to the church on the Cross Day to attend the Holy Mass he stood by the door and prevented her from entering. One of her guards drew out his sword to kill him but his hand became paralyzed and the queen returned to her palace.

This saint suffered from many persecutions that caused his death. John was eloquent and fluent in preaching that is why he was called Chrysostom. He wrote many beautiful writings such as essays, preaching, interpretations of the Bible and several letters. The blessing of this saint be with us all, Amen.

- ❖ Why was he given the title “Chrysostom”?
- ❖ Why was the queen angry with him?
- ❖ How did the Pope punish her?
- ❖ What are the works of this saint?
- ❖ Who remembers the verse?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: All who desire to live...

Conclusion

- ❖ St. John Chrysostom was known for his nice words that enriched the church for long time till the present time. We can learn to watch what we say and make sure that our words are constructive and beneficial to others.

Applications

Fill in the spaces with a suitable word:

- ❖ Pope John Chrysostom was ordained Patriarch of
- ❖ St. John was given the title Chrysostom because he was and was called the Second John the Baptist because he was
- ❖ All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be

Week 2- Jacob And Esau: Begging For Blessing

Objective:

- ❖ Recognizing the value of the blessing.

Memory Verse

“Looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God” (Hebrews 12:15)

References

- ❖ Genesis 25- 27
- ❖ “The Life of Jacob” by F. B. Mayer
- ❖ “Stories of the Fathers and the Prophets: Jacob and Esau” by Fr. Louis Barsoum

Introduction

The Servant checks the homework and the verse and sets the scene for the new lesson as follows:

- ❖ What is Abraham’s most important characteristic?
- ❖ What is the name of Abraham’s wife?
- ❖ Who is the son of both Abraham and Sarah?

Lesson Outline

We know that Abraham is Isaac’s father. Isaac married Rebecca. Rebecca became pregnant and then gave birth to twin sons. The second was weak and slim. He was born holding tightly to the heel of Esau, the red son. The first was given the name Esau and the second was given the name of Jacob.

- ❖ What are the names of Isaac’s sons?
- ❖ How were they like?

The two children grew up together but their ways of living were different. Esau became a hunter, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home and bred animals. Isaac preferred Esau because he enjoyed eating the animals Esau killed and because Esau was his first-born son. But Rebecca preferred Jacob because he was quiet and dwelt in tents (Concentrate on the concept of birthright and its importance).

- ❖ The first born becomes a leader among his brothers.
- ❖ He inherits the blessing.
- ❖ The Spiritual heritage is his.
- ❖ Christ is descended from the first born...

So the birthright is a very good heritage. Esau did not care for birthright and he did not care for the blessing... He came in from hunting... he was hungry and tired... he asked Jacob to give him a pottage of lentils and declared that he was ready to sell him his birthright. Thus Esau despised his birthright and deprived himself of the blessing.

- ❖ What are the advantages of birthright?
- ❖ Compare between Esau and Jacob.

Isaac Blesses Jacob

- ❖ Read Genesis 27
- ❖ What did Jacob's mother do so that Jacob may receive the blessing?
- ❖ Where did Esau go at that time?

Jacob's characteristics and the promise... Jacob deserved the blessing... The story of Jacob and his mother and how he deceived his father... The blessing is Jacob's... We know why Isaac was convinced that Jacob was the son who deserved the blessing. Isaac ate the food Jacob offered him and gave him all the blessings... and then Esau came but there was no blessing left... This is a punishment for his recklessness and carelessness.

- ❖ Why was Jacob accepted and Esau rejected?
- ❖ What will Esau do when he knows what Jacob has done?

Conclusion

- ❖ You can be blessed like Jacob and you can get rid of Esau's defects when you lift your eyes sincerely and truthfully to the Lord Jesus, with your heart full of faith.
- ❖ Jesus will give you the new nature and the spiritual blessing through the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Do not be in a hurry, be patient as the blessing is coming to you so long as you deserve it.

Applications

- ❖ In your notebook write the words of blessing with which Isaac blessed his son Jacob (Genesis 27,28,29)
- ❖ Children act this story.
- ❖ Rearrange the words of the following verse and study it: God -so -of -to -grace -it- the -that - no one -obtain -to -fail

Week 3- Jacob Works With His Uncle Laban

Objective

- ❖ Good work saves its doer.

References

- ❖ Genesis 29
- ❖ “Studies on the Book of Genesis” Sporting, Alexandria

Memory Verse

“I am with you and will keep you wherever you go” (Genesis 28:15)

Introduction

- ❖ Review with the children the previous lesson.
- ❖ How did Jacob receive the blessing and how did he behave when he knew that Esau was angry with him?

Lesson Outline

On the way ...When Jacob left Beersheba for Haran so that Esau might be calm... and he went on in his way with the help of God and through the blessings of his parents... he went on walking till dark fell and he raised his blessed prayer and promised the holy promise and slept between the hands of God and saw the wonderful dream... the ladder... a stairway from earth to heaven with angels going up and coming down in it.

- ❖ Why did Jacob pray and what did he promise?
- ❖ What was the dream that he saw?

Beside the well at Haran: Jacob arrived at the well and sat there... he watered his uncle's sheep... His uncle Laban knew him through his daughters. They invited him to stay with them.

- ❖ Why couldn't the girls take water from the well?
- ❖ What did Jacob do?
- ❖ How did Laban know that he was his relative?

Jacob the Shepherd: Because of Jacob's wisdom and God's blessing Laban's sheep increased in numbers... Laban asked Jacob to stay with them at Haran. Jacob was a very clever shepherd.

- ❖ How many years did Jacob stay with Laban?

- ❖ Why did Laban love him?

Conclusion

- ❖ In times of trouble, do not fall into despair but be sure that God is near.
- ❖ How awesome is the church! Do not forget that it is the gate to heaven and the house of angels so always direct your heart to Christ, as the church is his.

Applications

- ❖ The Servant gives the children questions to be answered in their notebooks.
- ❖ Studying vespers that suit this lesson: “We thank You, O our merciful king...”
- ❖ Children use it in their prayers till the end of this term... Vespers should be distributed either in print or the children could copy it from books and the Servant can run competitions.

Week 4- Jacob Loses His Son Joseph

Objective

- ❖ To learn from Joseph's obedience, love, sacrifice, self-denial.

Memory Verse

"He made him a tunic of many colors" (Genesis 37:3)

References

- ❖ Genesis 37
- ❖ "The Life of Joseph" by F. B. Mayer
- ❖ "I'll see if my brothers are safe" by Fr. Youssef Asaad

Introduction

The Servant checks the homework and gives some questions to set the scene for the new lesson.

- ❖ What is the name of Abraham's son?
- ❖ What are the names of Isaac's two sons?
- ❖ Who was the elder?
- ❖ Who received the blessing?

Lesson Outline

Jacob's sons had gone to take care of his flock. They spent several days out so Jacob was anxious. He waited for his children to come back but they did not come. His anxiety grew more.

Jacob sent Joseph: Joseph was ready to go to his brothers. He carried food to his brothers. He searched for them. He was tired... at last he met them.

The plot against Joseph: Joseph's brothers took revenge. They decided to kill the dreamer... The well... the Ishmaelites... the wolf... the colored robe.

- ❖ In what were Joseph and Christ similar? (Father's love -brothers hated him -both were sold -conspiracy - murder -forgiveness).
- ❖ Mention the pains Joseph suffered and endured.

Conclusion

- ❖ God cares for every soul and for every person. He also cares for you. He cared for Abraham, Jacob and Joseph and He still cares for you.
- ❖ He helps us in times of trouble. His angels guard us and He cares for our future "I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:15).

Applications

- ❖ The children write the aforementioned questions in their notebook and answer them.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

Week 1- Simon the Elder and Prophetess Anna

Week 2- Why Christ is Incarnated

Week 3- Epiphany: Baptism

Week 4- The Wedding at Cana in Galilee

Week 1- Simon the Elder and Prophetess Anna

Objective

- ❖ God's humbleness

Memory Verse

“Behold, a virgin shall be with a child, and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel”
(Matthew 1:23)

References

- ❖ Matthew 1
- ❖ Luke 1,2

Introduction

- ❖ Jesus was born in a humble manger to comfort the poor “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Lesson Outlines

Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem... as a decree was sent out for all citizens to register themselves for the census. Everyone went to register himself, each of his own town... The time for Christ to be born drew near... They searched for a place to dwell in but they could not find any place... Mary gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger... There was no room for them to stay in the inn.

- ❖ Where was Christ born?
- ❖ Why hasn't he born in a house?

Some shepherds were spending the night in the fields taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:10-14). The Shepherds were happy to hear the good news of the Savior's birth and went to the manger to see the newborn baby. Let us repeat the angels' song of praise together: “Glory to God...”

Prophets of old prophesied of the coming of the Lord Jesus to the world. There were two sincere people waiting impatiently for Him to come. Those people were Simon the Elder, who was pious and righteous and the old Prophetess Anna who never left the temple; day and night she worshipped God, fasting and praying. Simon was a good priest who always went to the temple and read the Scriptures. One day Simon the Elder read the verse: “Behold a virgin shall be with child”. He could not believe

what he read and he doubted the truth of the words. The Lord said to him, “You will not die until you see the truth of this verse”. Simon waited and waited a week after a week, and a year after a year till he became very old. He was about 250 years of age. That is why he was called the Elder. One day, when Simon was in the temple, he saw Joseph and Mary bringing the child Jesus into the temple. Jesus was forty days old at that time. According to the Law, the firstborn child was offered to the Lord and the child’s mother was to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to the Lord. Simon’s heart was filled with joy as he knew that the child who would be born of a virgin as the scripture said, was Jesus. Simon took the child in his arms and said, “Now, Lord, you have kept your promise. And you may let your servant go in peace. For with my own eyes, I have seen your salvation”. That same night, Simon the Elder died.

- ❖ Who sent the good news of the Lord’s Nativity to the shepherds?
- ❖ Mention the Angels’ song.
- ❖ Why did Joseph and the Virgin go to the Temple?
- ❖ When did they go to the temple?
- ❖ What was Simon the Elder doing in the Temple?
- ❖ What was the Lord’s promise to him when he did not believe the scripture?
- ❖ Why was Simon called the “Elder”?
- ❖ What did Simon the Elder say when he took the child in his arms?

Conclusion

- ❖ The Lord Jesus Christ desired to correct the mistakes that prevailed among human beings. Therefore, He came to us and brought us a model to follow.

Applications

- ❖ The children write the previous questions in their notebooks and answer them.
- ❖ Always bear in mind that your aim is to introduce Christ to the children clearly so that they may know Him and have a true knowledge of Him. The baby Christ here blesses the babies... The child Christ blesses the children. He is always with them and they must be always with Him.
- ❖ Act some scenes to show the joy in heaven (angels) and the pleasure on earth (Shepherd) when the Savior was born.
- ❖ The children should make a Nativity Cavern under the Servant’s supervision. This is a good idea and the children like it as it clarifies the notion of Nativity to them. Encourage them to bring the parts of the Nativity Cavern (of the Nativity Tree) small statues of sheep, shepherds, a babe, a manger, straw, candles, pieces of colored paper, etc. and give due concern to how the angels appear in the cavern.
- ❖ The children could act a simple play about the virgins, the child Jesus and Joseph when they went into the Temple and when they met Simon the Elder.

Week 2- Why Christ is Incarnated?

Objective

- ❖ To understand the greatness of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to us through the story of incarnation.
- ❖ To understand the church belief about the incarnation.

Memory Verse

- ❖ “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son” (John 3:16)

References

- ❖ “The Nature of Christ” by Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ “Athanasius On the Incarnation”, <http://www.gty.org/~phil/history/ath-inc.htm>

Introduction

As we approach the nativity, we have to understand the reasons behind the incarnation and its purpose. The word incarnation means to take human form. Thus God came down from heaven in a human form and became man. He is still God with all His characteristics but in the form of man with all the characteristics of a man (Luke 1:26-38). As a strong and mighty God He was able to calm the sea and perform miracles and raise the dead. On the other hand as a man He hungered, wept and slept.

Lesson Outlines

The story of incarnation can be traced back to the fall of Adam and Eve in sin (Genesis 3:1-24). God has commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden but the serpent tempted and deceived Eve to eat from the tree. Eve also gave Adam and he ate from the tree. Thus Adam and Eve were disobedient to God and they sinned against Him. They also became knowledgeable of good and evil after they ate from the tree. Therefore, God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden and prevented them and their descendants from entering again. However, The merciful God wanted to restore man to his original place in heaven to enjoy the company of God again. So, He promised that out of the woman seed a Savior would come who will save us from the bondage and authority of the serpent.

I. The Characteristics of the Savior

A suitable Savior to reverse the sin of Adam and Eve must have the following characteristics:

- ❖ Must be born of the woman seed, i.e. a man.
- ❖ Must be without sin to be able to triumph against the evil serpent.
- ❖ He must die to be able to go to Hades and free all the righteous people waiting there.
- ❖ He must be unlimited because the sin against God was unlimited.

The only suitable Savior to meet these characteristics would be God but born from a woman in the form of a man (the incarnated God). Thus God Himself became man and came to earth as the only suitable Savior for the human race.

V. The Blessings of Incarnation

- ❖ The paradise was opened again for the righteous.
- ❖ God Himself became man and a real example for us to follow.
- ❖ He gave us His blood and body in communion as a continuous process for forgiveness of our sins.
- ❖ He left on the promise of preparing a heavenly place for us.

Conclusion

- ❖ God came as a man to save us from the hand of the devil and to open paradise again for us. He has done all of this for us because He loves us.

Applications

- ❖ Draw a manger with all the characters that were around the birth of the baby Jesus.

Week 3- Epiphany: Baptism

Objective

- ❖ Baptism is the new birth.

Memory Verse

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17)

References

- ❖ Matthew 3
- ❖ John 1
- ❖ “The Sacrament of Baptism” Road El Farag
- ❖ “Stories and Tales from the Holy Bible” Part II, Beirut

Introduction

- ❖ Review the previous lesson.
- ❖ Bring the children to the icon of Jesus’ baptism at the Front of the church (A picture of Orthodox tradition). If this is not possible, we recommend using means of illustration such as the picture of John the Baptist baptizing Christ if the children cannot get direct experience.

Lesson Outlines

- ❖ Where was Christ baptized?
- ❖ Why was He baptized? How?
- ❖ Is it necessary for us to be baptized?
- ❖ Who of you attended the baptism of a child?
- ❖ Do you see the Holy Spirit coming on the water?
- ❖ Did you see the priest anointing the child with the holy Myron (Chrism)?
- ❖ Did you see the Holy Spirit coming on the child? This is a mystery. We called it a mystery because we cannot see the Holy Spirit when He sanctifies the heart, but he works.

I. Baptism and Chrism (Myron)

1. What do you usually do when your body is not clean? You wash.
2. Then what will you put on... clean clothes or dirty clothes?
3. What would happen if I did not take a bath and put on clean clothes?
4. What would happen if I took a bath and put on dirty clothes? Baptism means washing the heart and the nature of man, and Chrism is the coming of the Holy Spirit and this means that we receive a new nature inside us, “For as many of you as were baptized in Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).
5. How can we make ourselves clean from every sin?
6. Can this be done by our deeds or the deeds of others? “Not by works of righteousness which

we have done, but according to His mercy He save us, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

7. Is our baptism the same as the Baptism of John? (The Servant tells the children the story of John’s Baptism) (Acts 19:1-6).
8. Does the Holy Spirit come on children? (The Servant tells them the story of the Virgin’s visit to Elizabeth and the coming of the Holy Spirit on John when he was in his mother’s womb).

II. What is Baptism like? What can we compare it with?

It is like Noah’s Ark. It is like the crossing of the Red Sea. Water surrounded the people and there was a cloud over them. So it is performed by immersion.

- ❖ How was Jesus baptized in the Jordan River?

VI. The Story of Chrism (Myron)

The apostles practiced it first by laying hands as we read in the Book of Acts. Then they found a suitable material, i.e. the ointments which were on Christ’s body and which were prepared by the women who went to the grave on Sunday morning. These ointments were used by the apostles in anointing the newly baptized persons “But you have an anointing from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20).

Applications

- ❖ Show a video of Baptism of one of the church children.
- ❖ It is recommended that the children attend a baptism celebration so that they see for themselves how this sacrament is practiced and to take part in the prayers.

Week 4- The Wedding at Cana in Galilee

Objective

- ❖ Sharing the people their joys and sorrows is a religious necessity.

Memory Verse

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15)

References

- ❖ John 2:1-11

Introduction

- ❖ Who remembers a miracle performed by Christ?
- ❖ Where did he perform it?
- ❖ Use the picture of the Wedding at Cana for demonstration.

Lesson Outlines

There was a wedding in the village of Cana in Galilee near Nazareth. Mary, the mother of Jesus was one of those invited. St. Mary went to the wedding party to share them their joys as the verse says: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep”. Jesus also came with His disciples. The Lord Jesus always shared people their joys and grief.

They entered the house. There at the door were six big jars filled with water. People washed the feet of those who entered and offered them water to drink. In one of the rooms, some men were drinking wine. It seems that those people were poor. The wine was all drunk up and there was no more wine to drink. People began to whisper and the people celebrating the wedding felt ashamed, as they could not offer wine to the guests and to their neighbors. But Virgin Mary was sure that Jesus, her Son could do everything, so she whispered in His ear saying, “There is no wine”. Jesus looked at her and knew that she wanted Him to perform a miraculous deed. But Jesus had not started making miraculous deeds yet...of course He had started teaching and preaching and He had disciples but the time for performing miracles had not come yet and the time for showing and declaring His power to the people had not come yet. But St. Mary knew that Jesus loved her and that He would do something so she went immediately to the servants and said to them, “Do whatever He tells you”. And St. Mary waited for the miracle to happen.

- ❖ What happened to the wine? Why?
- ❖ Complete to verse: “Rejoice with those who...”

Lord Jesus Christ does not like drinking wine, neither does Virgin Mary ...He saw that the people were poor and ashamed so He wanted to give them something better than wine. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill those jars with water”. The servants obeyed Him and filled the jars up to the brim.

Jesus said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast”. So they took it. The miracle happened... the water turned into wine. But the wine, which Jesus made, was good wine and it made the drunkards come back to their minds, as it was good different kind of wine. When the steward tasted the water that was turned into wine, not knowing what happened, he was astonished as the wine tasted very nice and he said, “Why did the bridegroom keep this good wine till the end of the wedding? This good wine should have been served first, then the poor wine should have followed.

- ❖ Who performed the miraculous deed?
- ❖ What sort of wine did Jesus offer?
- ❖ Who told Jesus that the wine gave out?
- ❖ Why did the Lord perform this miracle?
- ❖ Let us say together: Through the Intercession of the Mother of God...

The Servant must clarify that when Christ blessed the wine, He did not mean to encourage people to drink wine, as that wine was juice in taste and power. The Lord Christ obeyed Virgin Mary and He performed this miracle although He had not yet begun the time of making miracles. The Servant must also emphasize Christ’s attitude on every occasion and the child must be responsive and cooperative in the society in which he lives. He must share other people in their joys and grief without fanaticism.

Conclusion

- ❖ Jesus performed His first miraculous deed to honor Virgin Mary. So resort to her... ask for her protection. Ask her to pray for you... and intercede with her Son to give us what we need.

Applications

- ❖ Write this prayer in your notebook and study it... Recite it before you eat: O Lord bless us... Let your right hand bless this food, which we are having and give food to the hungry.
- ❖ Recite the following prayer after you eat your meal: We thank You O Lord as you are merciful to us and you offer us all good things. We pray to you to give us a share in the heavenly meal. Amen.
- ❖ The Servant divides the class into groups and these groups should visit patients and pray for them. They also visit those in grief and pray for them.
- ❖ The Servant asks the children to bring St. Mark Gospel with them and read chapter 10:46-52.

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 Fast: Maximus and Domadius

Week after Fast: Gideon (I)

Week before Fast - Maximus and Domadius

Objective

- ❖ Continuous prayers...prayer all the time

Memory Verse

“Always ought to pray and do not lose heart” (Luke 18:1)

References

- ❖ “The Precious Gem” (Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa), Part I
- ❖ “The Fifth Generation: Maximus and Domadius” Alexandria, the Garden of the Monks.

Introduction

- ❖ Review the previous lesson.
- ❖ Who of you has ever visited a monastery?
- ❖ How many monks live there?

Lesson Outlines

I. Their Childhood

This is the picture of two monks. They are two saints. Their names are Maximus and Domadius. Their father was King Phalintianus (Lauindius) King of Rome. Their father brought them up well and instructed them in Christian faith. They used to pray as the Scripture says: “Always ought to pray”. They used to fast all the year around breakfasting only on feast days. They used to celebrate the Saints’ days. Maximus grew up and when he was 17 years old, he had a small beard. Domadius at that time was 25 years old. They both loved the Lord and decided to become monks. The two brothers prayed: “Jesus, we love you. We desire to become monks. Guide us to the holy place. Amen”. After they had prayed, they said to their father, “Allow us to visit the Monastery Church”. Their father agreed...The two brothers thanked God, “Lord, we thank You because You have answered our prayer”. The Lord guided them to a Monastery in Syria where they met Father Aghabius.

- ❖ What are the names of the two saints?
- ❖ What is the name of their father?
- ❖ What did they pray for?
- ❖ Did their father agree?
- ❖ Where did they go?
- ❖ What is the name of the Priest of the Monastery?

II. With Father Aghabius

They reached the monastery in Syria and met Father Aghabius...They bowed to the ground... then they said to him, "We want to become monks". The priest said, "The monks' life is difficult. You cannot bear it as I see you are accustomed to the life of luxury". They said, "May God strengthen us and we are ready to work by our hands and pray as the Scripture says: Always ought to pray...We are also ready to fast". Father Aghabius was glad to hear this and dressed them in the monk's clothes, which is a long black cloak. He taught them how to work with their hands and make sails for ships. The saints became famous. King Lauindius looked for them everywhere but in vain. He was in great grief. One day, one of his officers was traveling on a ship and he saw that there was a big cross on the sail and the two names Maximus and Domadius were written on the cross. The officer kept silent, as he was surprised. Then he said to the sailor, "What are these names?" The sailor said, "These are names of saints and they live in our town". The officer said, "What are they like?" and the sailor said, "The younger has a short beard and the elder has a long beard. The two are dressed in black but they seem to be princes". "Is this their ship?" said the officer. "No, it is mine" the sailor answered, "but I bought the sails from them and when I discovered that they are good hearted people, I wrote their names on the sail of my ship as a blessing". The officer asked, "Where do you come from?" "From Syria", the sailor answered. The officer said, "Could you guide me and lead me to their place because their father is a king and he has been searching for them for a long time?"

When the officer knew where they were, he informed King Lauindius, who together with the queen and their daughter visited the saints and tried to make them go back with them but they refused and preferred the life of a monk to that of a prince. Their father was pleased with them and asked them to pray for him and for the palace. They promised to do so and he left the place.

- ❖ Who led the king to the place where his sons were?
- ❖ Let us say the verse: Always ought to pray...

III. With Father Macarius

Father Aghabius advised them to go to Egypt to stay with St. Macarius as he himself would depart soon. They stayed with him till he died. They went to St. Macarius. They bowed to him and the following conversation ran between them:

Two Brothers: Peace be to you.

Anba Macarius: Peace and grace be to you.

Two Brothers: Guide us because we want to be your disciples.

Anba Macarius: The monks' life is difficult.

Two Brothers: Jesus will give us power. You advise us and we shall obey you.

Anba Macarius: Go and dig a hole for you to live in and bring palm leaves from the forest and make a roof for your cell and stay there (He said this and he thought that they would leave).

Two Brothers: What shall we do for our living?

Anba Macarius: Make baskets and give them to the night guard and he will sell them and buy you food (He showed them how to make baskets).

- ❖ Who became their father in Egypt?
- ❖ How did they earn their living in Syria?
- ❖ How did they earn their living in Egypt?
- ❖ What did they eat?
- ❖ How did they prepare their cell?

VI. Their Life in Egypt

They used an axe and made a hole in the rock and continued digging till they made a cell. They covered it with palm leaves and made an opening for light to enter. They spread two mats on the ground and made a wooden cross and raised it to the top of the door of their cell. They spent three years in that place. They spoke to no one. They left the cell only to go to church. St. Macarius was anxious so he went there to visit them to know how they lived. They welcomed him and were pleased to see him. They bowed to him and kissed his hands. They wove the palm leaves. At three O'clock, St. Macarius laid the table. He put three loaves and a jug of water on the table. St. Macarius prayed: "O Lord, bless this food. We pray you give the needy their food. Amen".

When night came, St. Macarius said, "I shall spend the night with you". They spread out a mat for him beside the wall. St. Macarius brought a brick of stone and put his cloak on it and made the sign of the cross, shut his eyes and pretended that he was asleep, but in fact he was praying: "O Lord, let me know everything about these two saints". The two saints also pretended to sleep, and when they saw that St. Macarius had closed his eyes, the two saints stood up and prayed. They made the sign of the cross and continued praying all the nightlong.

- ❖ What does the Scripture say?

They bowed down and St. Macarius opened his eyes and saw the cell lit up as if it were daytime and he saw angels around the saints holding swords to drive demons away... The two saints went on praying till the next morning. They threw themselves to the ground and slept and St. Macarius pretended that he was fast asleep and then he got up rubbing his eyes. The two saints also rubbed their eyes and stood up again to pray. After they had finished their prayer St. Macarius greeted them and said to them: "Remember me in your prayers". They said to him, "The Saints' prayers and your prayers father" and they bowed to him.

- ❖ What did St. Macarius see at night?
- ❖ Where did he sleep?
- ❖ What were the angels holding in their hands?

V. Their End

A few days later, the elder brother fell ill...What is his name? The younger brother went to St. Macarius to call him...he came. He prayed for him but that was the sickness of death...He died. St. Macarius prayed for him and buried him. After three days the younger brother died and St. Macarius prayed over his body and buried the body. Their pure bodies are buried in an old church sanctuary in the Baramus Monastery. There is a cavern in the Monastery called the King's Sons' cavern...May the blessing of their prayers be with us...Amen.

- ❖ What are the names of the saints?
- ❖ Who was a father to them in Syria? And in Egypt?
- ❖ Where were they buried?

Conclusion

- ❖ We are in need of prayer for our soul like food for our body
- ❖ Prayer is more enjoyable if we contemplate the prayer before reciting it.
- ❖ Have you tested the power of prayer and its effect in your life and how the Lord answers your prayer? The Scripture says: “Knock and it will be opened to you”. Try to pray more earnestly.

Applications

- ❖ Let us pray for our friend (name) who is sick.
- ❖ Let us pray so that the Lord may keep us from evil.
- ❖ Make a review of the texts of recitation as a preparation for the next lesson.

Week after Jonah's Fast - Gideon (I)

Objective

- ❖ To learn about Gideon and his story in the Old Testament.
- ❖ To learn that God can change the weak person into a strong mighty man and the doubt into certainty.

Memory Verse

“Surely, I will be with you” (Judges 6:16)

References

- ❖ Sunday School book for grade 5 from the Greek Orthodox Church.
- ❖ “The Book of Judges” By father Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “The Book of Judges” The New Open Bible

Introduction

After King David and his son king Solomon died, Judges guided the Israelites. A Judge was someone with wisdom, courage and guided by the spirit of God to lead and judge among the Jews at that time. Samson, Gideon and Deborah were the most famous judges. In this lesson we will learn about Gideon and how he met with God.

Lesson Outlines

After getting into the Promised Land the Israelites forgotten the great things that God did for them. They started worshipping idols and statues. Even, Gideon's father had an altar to Baal and a wooden image beside it to worship it. So, their enemies (the Midianites) stole their land, animals and crops. The children of Israel asked God for help to save them from their enemies. Surely, God would never turn down His children's request and He would rush to help them.

One day God came and sat under a tree in the land of Gideon's father (Joash). Gideon was working on their wheat in the winepress place. He was hiding his father's crop from their enemies. God appeared to Gideon and greeted him and said: “The Lord is with you, you mighty man” and Gideon said to Him: “if the Lord is with us why then all this has happened to us?” (Judges 6:12-13). God told Gideon that he would be the man to save his people from their enemies. He encouraged him and told him “Surely, I will be with you”.

Gideon wanted to be sure that this is a message from God so he asked God to wait until he brings him something to eat. Gideon prepared a young goat and unleavened bread. When he brought the goat and the bread to the Lord to eat, the Lord instructed him to put the meat and the bread on a rock. Then, the Lord touched the meat and the bread with a staff that He had in His hand and fire rose from the rock and consumed the meat and the bread. The Lord also disappeared instantly. So, Gideon was amazed and was sure that he had seen God. Gideon built an altar to the Lord in this place.

The Lord had asked Gideon to destroy Baal's altar and the wooden image in his father's house. He also asked him to take a bull and to offer it as a sacrifice. In the same night Gideon took ten men

with him and broke Baal's altar, burned the wooden image and sacrificed the bull as God told him. In the morning when people woke up and found out what he did, they wanted to kill him. But his father defended him and told them that if it is a true God, he should defend himself. So, all the enemies of Israel gathered together against Gideon and his people because he broke the altar of Baal. Gideon sounded the trumpet and gathered the tribes of Israel with him to go in war against the enemies.

- ❖ Whom do you think will win the war Gideon and his followers or the enemies? We will find out the answer next lesson.

Conclusion

- ❖ God came immediately to the help of His children the Israelites once they asked for His help.
- ❖ This is the same way that He treats us. If we ask for His help, He will always be there to help us and save us from all evil things.

Applications

- ❖ Look in the book of Judges for the names of other judges for Israel.
- ❖ Study the story of one more Judge and write it down in 1-2 page project.

LESSONS FOR THE GREAT FAST PERIOD

Week 0: Gideon (II)

Week 1: Fasting: Esther

Week 2: Offering Of Isaac

Week 3: Confession

Week 4: The Talents: Rewarding the Hardworking Man

Week 5: Christ Washes His Disciples' Feet

Week 6: The Holy Week

Week 7: No Lesson

Week 8: (Resurrection Sunday) – No Lesson

Week 0- Gideon (II)

Objective

- ❖ To learn that God gives victory to His children
- ❖ God can win with a small number of people

Memory Verse

“The people who are with you are too many for Me” (Judges 7:2)

References

- ❖ Sunday School book for grade 5 from the Greek Orthodox Church
- ❖ “The Book of Judges” By father Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “The Book of Judges” The New Open Bible

Introduction

- ❖ Review the previous lesson about Gideon and how he saw God. Check if they remember where the previous story of Gideon ended?
- ❖ Gideon was surrounded by his people to enter into a war against the Midianites because he broke the altar of Baal and burned the wooden image.

Lesson Outlines

Gideon wanted to be sure that God is with him and He will help him to win the war against the enemy. He asked God to show him a sign. He placed fleece of wool outside and asked that God would make it wet when all the ground around it would be dry. So, it happened just as he requested. Then he asked God again to make the fleece of the wool dry when all the ground around it would be wet. So, in the morning the fleece of wool was dry when all the ground around it was covered with dew. Then, Gideon was sure that God is with him and will save Israel with his hand.

When God saw that there were too many people gathering around Gideon for the war, He told Gideon that He need to decrease the number so they would know that God is the one who helped them to win not their own large number or power. Gideon asked anyone who is afraid to return back to his home. So, twenty-two thousands of the people returned. Yet, God thought that the people left is still too many so He told Gideon to take them down to the water to drink and then said to him, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink. And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. Then the Lord said to Gideon: By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place”.

And it happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, “Arise; go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp. Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said: I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed. Then his companion answered and said: This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.” And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said: Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand”.

Gideon gave every man of the three hundred a trumpet and a torch inside an empty pitcher. They all surrounded the camp of the enemy. Then Gideon blew the trumpet in his hand and all the men below the trumpet and broke the pitchers and they cried “ The sword of the Lord and Gideon. Their enemy got scared and they fled. So Gideon won the war just as the Lord told him.

Conclusion

- ❖ God is the one who gives triumph and victory to his children. He chose Gideon and was with him all the way till he won the war with very small number of fighters, only 300 men.

Applications

- ❖ Write a story of one of the other judges of Israel.
- ❖ Read the story of Gideon in the Bible in Judges 6-8.
- ❖ Search the web for things related to Gideon.

Week 1- Fasting: Esther

Objective

- ❖ Fasting strengthens our worship

Memory Verse

“Consecrate a fast call a sacred assembly” (Joel 1:14)

References

- ❖ The Book of Esther
- ❖ “The Interpretation of Esther” Sporting, Alexandria

Introduction

- ❖ Where can you find the Book of Esther in the Holy Bible?
- ❖ Do you know who is Esther? And what did she do for her people?

Lesson Outlines

Xerxes, king of India and Persia gave a banquet for all his officials. For 180 days he made a show of the riches of the imperial court with all its splendor and majesty. The king sent for his wife, as he wanted to show off her beauty to all the officials and all his guests. But the queen refused to come. This made the king furious. He issued a royal proclamation that Queen Vashti may never again appear before the king. The king made a search to find some beautiful young virgins to choose one of them to be queen instead of Vashti. Mordecai brought Esther his cousin to the king who admired her beauty and chose her to be queen instead of Vashti. Two of the palace eunuchs plotted to assassinate the king. Mordecai told the queen and the queen told the king. This good deed of Mordecai was written down in the official records of the empire. The king had appointed Haman a minister and ordered all his officials in his service to show their respect for Haman by kneeling and bowing to him. Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. Haman was furious when he realized Mordecai was not going to kneel and bow to him. He ordered all his servants to bow down to him they all bowed to him except Mordecai and Haman became very furious. Haman decided to kill all the Jews and took permission to do that.

A proclamation was sent to all rulers, governors and officials. It contained the instructions that on a single day all Jews were to be killed. When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes in anguish. Then he dressed in sackcloth, covered his head with ashes... wailed loudly and bitterly. There was loud mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept and wailed. Mordecai explained the situation to Esther and asked her to go and plead with the king and beg him to have mercy on her people. Esther advised Mordecai and the Jews to fast and pray for her, and not to eat or drink anything for three days and nights.

Esther entered the King's room and invited the king and Haman to a banquet she was preparing for him. The king and Haman accepted the invitation. Haman had the gallows built to have Mordecai hanged on it. The same night the king could not get to sleep, so he ordered the official records of the empire to be brought and read to him. The part they read included the account of how Mordecai had

uncovered a plot to assassinate the king. The king ordered Haman to get the royal robes and a horse, the royal crown and provide these honors to Mordecai. So Haman got the robes and the horse, and he put the robes on Mordecai. Mordecai got on the horse, and Haman led him through the City Square, announcing to the people as they went, “See how the king rewards a man he wishes to honor”. Esther invited the king and Haman to another banquet. The king said to Esther, “Tell me and you shall have it. I’ll even give you half the empire”. Esther told the king about what Haman wanted to do with her and her people.

The king was furious and ordered that Haman would be hanged on the gallows which he prepared for Mordecai. The king gave his ring with the seal on it to Mordecai who quickly wrote letters and sent them to all towns ordering rulers and governors to protect the Jews and not to destroy them. The Jews observed the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar as holidays every year. These were the days on which the Jews had rid themselves of their enemies: They called the feast the Festival of Purim.

- ❖ The Servant should draw the children’s attention to the fact that Esther the orphan girl could not deliver her people except by fasting and prayer. The case is also true with us, no matter how young we are, we can deliver the church if we fast and pray with submission.
- ❖ He who digs a hole for his brother falls in it. This is a fact, which is always true. The children must apply this to their practical life.
- ❖ The children learn from the events of the lesson that when the church is in trouble, the members of Sunday School must begin their work by fasting and praying. The church nowadays is in need of people who can bear responsibility...those people who devote their life for worship, those people who have zeal like Esther, zeal without worship is useless.
- ❖ In your lesson use a picture of the cross on which Mordecai was going to be hanged on.
- ❖ Let the children repeat the lesson’s verse with you.
- ❖ Read the details of the story in the Holy Bible. When you say that Esther advised her people to fast, encourage the children to fast Wednesday and Friday.

Conclusion

- ❖ By fasting and prayers demons go out, your self-control becomes strong, your worship becomes supported and you can attract many people to God.

Applications

- ❖ What do you know about: Esther, Xerxes, Haman, and Mordecai (this question should be answered in the notebook).

Week 2- Offering Of Isaac

Objective

- ❖ Obedience to God

Memory Verse

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all you mind” (Luke 10:27)

References

- ❖ Genesis 22

Introduction

- ❖ What is the name of Abraham’s only begotten son?
- ❖ What is his wife’s name?
- ❖ When was Isaac born?

Lesson Outlines

Abraham loved Isaac his son very much. The Lord tested Abraham by saying: “Abraham, Abraham, take your only begotten son whom you loved and offer him to Me as a sacrifice”.

- ❖ What did the Lord order Abraham to do? Why?

Abraham loves the Lord and knows the verse “You shall love the Lord your God...” He called to Isaac his son. The boy went to him quickly as he was obedient to his parents. He said to him, “Isaac, carry the wood for the sacrifice and walk with me to the mountain to offer a sacrifice to God”. That happened in the early morning. Abraham ordered the servants to cut the wood, put it on his donkey and he, his son, and the servants went on a long journey that took three days. On the third day, they reached the mountain. Abraham ordered his servants to wait. He said to them, “Stay here... the boy and I will go over there and worship and then we will come back to you”. Abraham made Isaac carry the wood for the sacrifice and he himself carried a knife and live coals for starting the fire. As they walked along together, Isaac said, “Father”. He answered, “Yes, my son?” Isaac asked, “I see that you have the coals and the wood, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?” Abraham answered, “God Himself will provide one”.

- ❖ Who carried the wood?
- ❖ Who would provide the lamb?
- ❖ Who remembers the verse?

Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Isaac looked around but the lamb was not there, but he was sure that God would provide the lamb. Then Abraham declared, “You my son, are the sacrifice”. Isaac neither refused nor escaped. He was sure that the Lord is good and what He desires is good. Abraham tied up his son and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he picked up the knife to kill him. But the angel of the Lord called him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham”. He answered, “Yes, here I am”. “Do not hurt the boy or do anything to him” he said. Now I know that you honor and obey God because you have not kept back your only son from me”. Abraham looked around and saw a ram caught in a bush by its horns. He went and got it and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son. Abraham and Isaac, his son went back happily. Isaac was a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ who offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross to redeem people.

- ❖ How did the Lord test Abraham? Why?
- ❖ Whom did Isaac stand for?

Conclusion

- ❖ God is the most important thing in our life and he should be obeyed above all our feelings, desires. He should also be obeyed above all other men.

Applications

- ❖ Give something you like to a poor child to learn the spirit of sacrifice.
- ❖ Write the story of offering Isaac as a sacrifice and read it to your parents and brothers.

Week 3- Confession

Objective

- ❖ Standing firm in Christ.

Memory Verse

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all Unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9)

References

- ❖ “Let us go to church together -Repentance and confession -My Lord, I confess to You” booklets from Sporting, Alexandria

Introduction

- ❖ As a Servant, list all your sins precisely, pray and remember what you should confess, go to confession and receive communion.
- ❖ What is a sacrament?
- ❖ What is the meaning of an ecclesiastical Sacrament? It is a consecrated work through which a believer receives an invisible grace through visible material.
- ❖ How many sacraments are there?
- ❖ How is a sacrament fulfilled? A lawful priest utters some holy words, which are known, and uses a known material such as water in Baptism.

Lesson Outlines

In the lesson about Baptism, we know that we through Baptism acquire a new nature, but we live in the world so we may make mistakes. How can we clean ourselves from these mistakes? Through new washing and clean clothes... Tell the children the story of the washing of the disciples' feet. (John 13).

During the Last Supper, on Maundy Thursday, the Lord Jesus Christ poured some water into a vessel and asked His disciples to draw near so that He might wash their feet. Peter said, “No, Lord...” but Jesus said to him, “If I do not wash your feet, you will no longer be My disciple”. Peter said, “Lord... then wash my hands and head too”. All of you are clean... whoever has taken a bath is completely clean, and does not have to wash himself, except for his feet, to clean himself from the dust of the world, i.e. sin “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”. Sin is like pus in the wound... If we do not clean it, it will corrupt the wound and then you have to put a cleansing material on the wound. Thus you have to confess and then receive the Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

I. What Makes Confession Lawful?

1. Confession should be to a priest (John 20:23).
2. You must examine your conscience and count your sins, which you made against the Lord

and against your neighbors.

3. You should feel how ugly and horrible sin is. You should repent and have the intention of not returning to it through the grace of God.
4. You should come to the priest, bow before him, make the sign of the cross, say the Lord's Prayer, and confess your sins precisely without hiding any sin.
5. You must not mention any names during confession lest you should reveal their mistakes.
6. You should obey the priest and follow his advice.

- ❖ Why was the sacrament of penance and confession set?
- ❖ Why did the Lord take flesh and became man?
- ❖ When and how did our Lord lay the foundations of this Sacrament?
- ❖ What are the conditions that make confession lawful?
- ❖ Mention the verse: If we confess our sins...

Conclusion

- ❖ Like washing our cloth regularly to be clean, so is confession to the soul. It is a regular washing process from our sins so that we are spiritually clean and ready for communion.

Applications:

1. The children should practice the following:
 - ❖ Prayer
 - ❖ Reading the Word of God
 - ❖ Attending the Holy Mass in the early morning
 - ❖ Not to swear
 - ❖ Not to call others names
 - ❖ Repent, confess and receive communion.
 - ❖ Read John 6 as a home assignment for next lesson.
 - ❖ Confess at least once a month.
 - ❖ Create a spiritual diary for the students to follow on their regularity in these spiritual habits.
2. The servant should accompany the children to confession at least once a month.

Week 4- The Talents: Rewarding the Hardworking Man

Objective

- ❖ Encourage the children to use their talents in serving God and refer to the lazy man who is punished for hiding this talent in the dust.

Memory Verse

“Give an account of your stewardship” (Luke 16:2)

References

- ❖ Matthew 25:14
- ❖ “St. Matthew’s Gospel” Fagala, Page 106,107

Introduction

- ❖ Review the previous lesson.
- ❖ The Servant reads the parable of Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 then he asks about the points of this parable. Of course you will feel ashamed if somebody calls you a servant, but what we mean by “servants” is people who are loyal to their masters.

To The Servant

1. You have been entrusted with a precious property, i.e., the children whom you have to serve. They need your effort and care. This is the property of which you will hand in a complete account... Examine yourself... did you trade with them and win other children or did you leave them as they are or did you neglect what the Lord had given to you?
2. Remember each one of them when you pray... Be a good model for them. Woe to him by whom temptations come.
3. Consider the talents that God has given you and see how you traded with them (Knowledge - health -time - the members of your body).
4. Contemplate the case of the Dishonest Steward who invested what would be taken from him in order to prepare a happy living for himself later on. Compare this with the matters pertaining to this world, which will be taken from us after death, and consider how we must trade with them in the hope that we may gain eternal life (Luke 16:1-13).

Lesson Outlines

One day, the master of some servants had to travel. He called his servants and entrusted them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one (A talent of silver equals thirty Egyptian pounds). The master wanted his servants to work and trade and because when he comes back they would “Give an account of your stewardship” (Luke 16:2).

- ❖ What are the talents?

Talents are gifts like wisdom, thinking, discrimination, will, arts, science (knowledge), etc. It is also found in each member of our body. As for us, has the Lord given us talents? The Lord does not give us property all the time, but sometimes He gives us potentialities.

- ❖ What is your talent?
- ❖ The Servant helps the children to discriminate their talents and potentialities, which God gave each one of them.

We can all pray and prayer is the most important talent, as through prayer, the gates of heaven open. Prayer is the means through which we get food for our life. Samir can deliver a speech; Monica can play the piano; John is intelligent; Peter and Andrew are clever at playing basketball; all of us have the talent of reading as we joined schools and we can read.

- ❖ How many talents did the first servant receive?
- ❖ How many talents did the second servant receive?
- ❖ How many talents did the third servant receive?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: Give an account of your stewardship.
- ❖ What did the servant who took the five talents do? He worked hard and sincerely. He was honest...

The money increased. The servant who took the two talents struggled honestly and the money increased. But the servant who took one talent dug the land and hid it. He is a lazy servant.

- ❖ What do you think of a Sunday School child who takes the alms money from his parents and spends it?
- ❖ What do you think of a child who neglects his homework?

Many people began with a small simple business, but through honesty, hard work, and almsgiving, they became great traders. Many technicians began by establishing small workshops, but through good manners and honesty, they became rich and great technicians. Many children love reading books and reading a lot helped them to become scientists.

- ❖ What is the good manner necessary for the simple worker, the Christian trader, the child...
- ❖ We are the servants who serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

We shall stand before Him one day to give account for what we did, and He will ask us about each talent He gave us. He will say to us, "Give an account of your stewardship". If we are honest, He will say to us, "well done".

- ❖ Which one of the three servants traded and won?
- ❖ How many talents did the first win? The second? The third?
- ❖ Say the verse...

Applications

1. Place the mark X (wrong) before the talents or the gifts that lose or use it wrongly and the mark √ (right) before the talents you use to glorify God.
 - ❖ I befriend bad people ()
 - ❖ I read a story for my younger brother ()
 - ❖ I tease my friend ()
 - ❖ I sing hymns ()
 - ❖ I help the poor ()
 - ❖ I write neatly ()
 - ❖ I spend money foolishly ()
 - ❖ I am happy ()
2. Rearrange the following words:
 - ❖ Stewardship -Give -your -of -an -account
 - ❖ Much -over -you -set -will -I -little -a -over -faithful -been -have -you.

Week 5- Christ Washes His Disciples' Feet

Objective

- ❖ Christ's modesty and self-denial.

Memory Verse

"A new commandment I give you, that you love one another" (John 13:34)

References

- ❖ John 13

Introduction

- ❖ Where did the Lord Jesus and His disciples meet the day before the Passover Festival?
- ❖ Why is this Festival now called Maundy Thursday?

Lesson Outlines

The concept of Christ's washing His disciples' feet: "Do you understand what I have just done to you?" He asked. You call me Master and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Master, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet". A new Commandment "All of you are clean... all except one". We know, for sure that He meant Judas, as it was Judas who betrayed his Master. Although the Lord knew this, He washed his feet...

- ❖ Do we have this standard of love?
- ❖ Do you want to be a disciple to Christ? Serve others... Remember what Jesus did...

Conclusion

- ❖ Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Lord of hosts, washed the feet of His disciples to teach us how to be humble.
- ❖ So to what extent are we humble with those we live with following the example of the beloved Jesus?

Applications

- ❖ Rearrange the words of the verse: another -a -one -new -love -commandment. you -I -that -you -give.
- ❖ Answer the following question: What are the deeds that you can perform to make all the members of your family happy?
- ❖ Read Luke 22.

Week 6- The Holy Week

Objective

- ❖ The passions of Christ purify us of diseases.

Memory Verse

“Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42)

References

- ❖ Luke 22
- ❖ Mathew 23,24,25,26,27
- ❖ “With Christ in His Passions, Death and Resurrection” Guiza
- ❖ “Contemplation on the Passions of Christ and His Resolution” H. H. Pope Shenouda III

Introduction

- ❖ The Holy Week is probably the most important spiritual week through out the year in the church.
- ❖ During this week we participate and walk the path of the Lord Jesus to the cross. We have to concentrate on prayers only and forget about TV and music and all the earthly distractions.

Lesson Outlines

The church contemplates the passions of Christ and all the events that took place till Resurrection during the Holy Week:

I. Lazarus Saturday

On that day, we commemorate the bringing of Lazarus back to life. In the house of Lazarus in Bethany they prepared a dinner for Jesus. Many people came to Bethany to see the man whom Jesus raised from death.

II. Palm Sunday

The next day, crowds of people came out to meet Jesus when He entered Jerusalem. The crowds took the branches of Palm trees and went out to meet Him, shouting: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

III. Public prayer for the Repose of the Dead (Requiem)

Prayers for the repose of the dead are forbidden in the Passion Week, so after the liturgy on Palm Sunday, the church performs a public requiem. The sanctuary doors are to be closed, the sanctuary veils are drawn, and prayers for the repose of the dead are raised.

IV. Prayers of the Holy Pascha

The word “Pascha” means “Passover” and it refers to the destroyer when he passed over the houses of the Hebrews which were sprinkled with the blood of the Passover lamb which in turns stands for the sacrifice of the Cross (“Pascha” in Coptic and “Fissh” in Hebrew).

“Pascha” is the name given to the period between Palm Sunday and Good Friday.

The Passover lamb was selected and kept from the tenth day of Nisan (Abib) till the fourteenth day Of Nisan, then, it was offered as sacrifice. That is why the doors of the sanctuary are shut after the Palm Sunday and are kept closed for four days without any liturgies till Maundy Thursday, then they are shut again till the celebration of the Holy Burial on Good Friday. The Pascha prayers are raised in the Second Chorus of Church indicating that Christ suffered and was crucified outside the camp. During Pascha prayers the church sings the hymn of “To You is the Power and glory”. This hymn is taken from Revelation 5:12.

A. Monday

Jesus left Bethany in the morning and on His way to Jerusalem, He was hungry and He cursed the fig tree, which did not bear fruit. Then He went to the temple and drove out those who were buying and selling and He spent the whole day teaching the people in the temple. He left the envious chief priests and went to Bethany to spend the night there.

B. Tuesday

Jesus left Bethany in the morning. As He walked along the road, He saw that the fig tree dried up and died. A conversation took place between Jesus and the high priests. He warned the Pharisees and gave many parables about the kingdom of God.

C. Wednesday

The Lord of Glory retired in Bethany, as He wanted to be alone for sometime. The Council of the seventy high priests (the Sanhedrin) held and Judas made a plot and betrayed Jesus to the chief priests. Judas started looking for good chance to hand Jesus over to them. This day is called Job Wednesday because of the severe pains that Job suffered. Prophet Job was patient and in his patience, he became a symbol of Christ.

D. Maundy Thursday

The Lord came back to Jerusalem. He ate the Passover meal with His disciples then He washed their feet. He handed them the Sacrament of the Holy Communion and then went out to the Mount of Olive to pray. That is why in the arrangement of the prayers that are raised on Maundy Thursday, the prayer of the blessing of water and washing of the feet are performed then the Holy liturgy is celebrated. There He was arrested and taken to the house of Caiaphas, then to the Council.

E. The Good Friday

Caiaphas questioned Jesus and accused him of blasphemy because He said that He was the Son of the Living God. Pilate questioned Jesus for the charge of being King but He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” The Lord of Glory was crucified accepting death on behalf of humanity, and He himself became our Pascha. He was offered as a sacrifice for us and His blood became eternal Salvation to us.

The Crucifixion Icon is to be decorated with roses, flowers, candles and censers. At 6 O’clock (12 at noon) the time when the Lord our Savior was crucified. The honest thief’s words are to be said, “Lord, remember me when you come to Your kingdom. Candles are to be put out between 6 and 9

O'clock to remind the people of the darkness that took place on the earth at that time. At 12 O'clock we bow in worship to God asking for his mercy one hundred times towards the east, then one hundred times towards the west, then one hundred times towards the north, then one hundred times towards the south to show that we worship Christ who is crucified for us, and through His crucifixion, He redeemed the believers in all parts of the earth. Then we make the procession of the Crucifixion Icon, and the burial Icon.

F. Holy Saturday

Prayers are raised in the church all the nightlong. This night is called Apocalypse, i.e. the Revelation as the whole Book of Revelation is read that night and sweet hymns like those of the angels are sung all over the night.

G. The Eve of the Resurrection

The Easter Mass continues till after midnight as the Lord Christ rose at Dawn on Sunday.

Conclusion

- ❖ “In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Applications

- ❖ The Servant holds a discussion with the children about the events of that week and the children write notes in their notebooks whenever possible.
- ❖ The children sing the hymns of this week especially “thok te ti gom...”, “Remember me...”, so that they may be able to participate in the church prayers.
- ❖ The children read Mathew 28.

LESSONS FOR THE PENTECOST PERIOD
(Fifty Days After Resurrection)

Week 1: The Lord Appeared While They Were Catching Fish

Week 2: St. George the Martyr

Week 3: St. Mark's Feast

Week 4: TV and The Internet

Week 5: The Angel Saves Lot from Sodom: God's Care for His Children

Week 6: Treating Others Well: Abigail and David

Week 1- The Lord Appeared While They Were Catching Fish

Objective

- ❖ Joys of Resurrection

Memory Verse

“You know that I love you” (John 21:15)

Reference

- ❖ John 21:1-23

Introduction

- ❖ How long did the Lord stay in the tomb?
- ❖ To whom did He appear after the resurrection?
- ❖ How did He enter the room where the disciples were?

Lesson Outlines

The last time, the disciples saw their Servant at the shore of Lake Galilee was after His resurrection. The disciples were waiting anxiously... long hours passed... but Jesus did not come...and then “Simon Peter said to them: I am going fishing. They said to him: We are going with you also. They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them: Children, have you any food? They answered Him, ‘No.’ And He said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter: It is the Lord! Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them: Bring some of the fish which you have just caught. Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them: Come and eat breakfast. Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him: Who are You...knowing that it was the Lord” (John 21:3-12).

- ❖ Where did the disciples go?
- ❖ Did they catch anything at night?
- ❖ Where was Jesus?
- ❖ When did they know that He was Jesus?
- ❖ What did John say?
- ❖ What did Peter do?

- ❖ What did they see on the shore?

“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter: Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him: Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him: Feed My lambs. He said to him again a second time: Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? He said to Him: Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him: Tend My sheep. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him: Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him: Feed My sheep”. Peter remembered that he denied Jesus three times but Jesus wanted to restore his discipleship. Thus, on the shore of Lake Galilee, the disciples spent happy long hours with Jesus who showed them that He still trusted them and loved them. He was pleased to hand them over the responsibility of caring for His sheep.

- ❖ Why did the Lord ask Peter, “Do you love me?” three times?
- ❖ What does the statement, “Tend My sheep”, mean?
- ❖ Who evangelized Christianity in Egypt?
- ❖ Who is the successor of St. Mark?
- ❖ What is the Pope’s Title?
- ❖ Who helps the Pope in the See?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: You know that I love you...

Conclusion

- ❖ The Lord cares for our living affairs as well as our spiritual purity. The commandment of God leads us to perfect faith in God’s steadfast love.
- ❖ If we know that even the hairs of our heads are counted, so what about that which is more important than the hair of the head in value.

Applications

- ❖ Let us pray for the See of St. Mark. The See of St. Mark is now in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Jerusalem, America, Europe and many African countries.

Recitation

- ❖ The absolution of Compline Prayer (before you sleep): “O Lord, all our sins...” The children should use that when they pray in the class and at home.

Week 2- St. George the Martyr

Objective

- ❖ Be firm and acknowledge Christ

Memory Verse

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” (Hebrews 13:7)

References

- ❖ Synaxarium Baramudah 23

Introduction

- ❖ The intercession of this saint is very powerful and he answers those who call him quickly. Many miracles took place because of his prayers not only in Egypt but also in Syria, England and Russia so the Russians made his picture their slogan and the English people put his picture on their coins. Every day we hear about the work of God through this saint.
- ❖ Use a picture of St. George for demonstration. This saint is drawn riding a horse and holding a spear in his hand with which he attacks a dragon to save a girl from it. This is symbolic not real. The dragon is a symbol of the worship of idols; the girl is a symbol of Christians whom the saint defended during the time of persecution.

Lesson Outlines

This great saint was born in the city of Cappadocia in A.D. 280 and was soundly brought up. When he was 20 years old, his mother died. He joined the army in the reign of King Diocletian the Pagan...He was promoted and became a leader. When this king persecuted the Christians, this saint distributed his property among the needy and set all his slaves free. He met the king to defend the Christians and said to him “Why do you, your majesty, show anger to the Christians who are humble, modest and righteous? Why do you force them to follow a religion, you yourself doubt its truth as it believes in idols made of stones and they are not gods? Jesus Christ is the true God. He is the Lord of glory”. The king became very furious because of these words and the boldness of the saint George. The king said to him “Are you a Christian?” The saint said, “I am the servant of Christ Jesus and I trust in Him. That is why I have come to you to bear witness to the truth”. The king said, “I have promoted you and raised your status so for the sake of your career and your high position, deny Christ by words only and raise incense to the idol and I will give you a big reward”. The saint said, “I pray my God to bring you to Him so that you yourself may worship Him and desert worshipping idols. How can I deny My Lord Jesus Christ whom I love?” The king was furious because of these words and he tormented him severely. He put him inside a machine full of swords to cut his flesh into pieces and force him to deny his faith. The saint prayed and begged the Lord to help him. The Lord healed him. Then the king put him in hot lime, but the Lord delivered him. The saint kept saying: “How can I deny my Lord Jesus Christ?” At last they cut his head with the sword and he attained the crown of martyrdom.

- ❖ What was St. George's job?
- ❖ In whose reign did he live?
- ❖ What did St. George say when the king asked him if he was a Christian?
- ❖ Why was the king angry with him?
- ❖ How was he tormented?

Conclusion

- ❖ Do you declare the truth to every person on every occasion?
- ❖ Do not worry about the people's opinion of you, but do the things that please the Lord.
- ❖ We must obey God rather than men...Note that there is a cross waiting for you, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Applications

- ❖ Seek the intercession of the saint when you are in trouble and the Lord will show you mercy through the prayers of the saint...Amen.
- ❖ Tell the children to look for a story about a miracle you know as this saint performed many miracles.

Week 3- St. Mark's Feast

Objective

- ❖ The love of St. Mark the apostle for Christ in all situations.

Memory Verse

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

References

- ❖ Mark 14:13,51,52
- ❖ “Biography of St. Mark the Evangelist” Kamel Saleh
- ❖ “The Precious Gem” (Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa)
- ❖ “The first generation: The Story of the Coptic Church” Iris El Massry

Introduction

- ❖ The Servant reads a part of the Holy Bible (Mark 14) and indicates that the person carrying the Jar of water “verse 13” is St. Mark. He is also the young man who followed Jesus, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body (Verse 51).

Lesson Outlines

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

After St. Mark left Rome he went to Egypt in 61A.D. 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 sandals and the shoemaker worked on them while St. Mark waited. Suddenly the awl pricked the shoemaker's hand and he screamed in pain saying “O 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 happened 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, 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.

- ❖ Who is St. Mark?
- ❖ What do you know about him?
- ❖ How did he come to Egypt?

Conclusion

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

Applications

The Servant concentrates on St. Mark's Gospel and trains the children on picking quotations from the Holy Bible and read in a loud voice. The children should use their notebooks, carry the Gospel and discuss the following points:

1. The number of chapters.
2. The miracles mentioned only in this Gospel and where we can find them:
 - ❖ Healing the dumb man (7).
 - ❖ Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida (8).
3. The parables mentioned only in this Gospel:
 - ❖ The seeds that grow in secret (4).
 - ❖ The owner of the house and his servants (13).
 - ❖ In the temptation on the mountain, he said, "He was with wild animals".
4. Equality between the genders (Mark 10).
5. Choosing His disciples (Mark 3) and sending them (6).

Week 4- TV and The Internet

Objective

- ❖ To understand the effect of media on our life as Christians.
- ❖ To learn to be selective in what we expose our senses to.

Memory Verse

“You shall be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44)

References

- ❖ “Let me Grow” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty (English and Arabic)
- ❖ “Worshipping the Devil in the Present Age” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ The Story of Father Youstos El Antoni

Introduction

- ❖ Ask the students if they like TV more than the Internet or visa versa? Why?
- ❖ Discuss also how much time everyday they spend interacting with TV or the Internet?
- ❖ Also find out which programs or Internet websites they watch or use frequently?

Lesson Outlines

I. Media As A Constructive Tool In Our Lives

- ❖ Educational, e.g. History channel and discovery channel.
- ❖ Awareness to events around the world, e.g. News.
- ❖ Some Christian movies and religious messages are very helpful spiritually.
- ❖ We can take the example of some good characters, e.g. mother Teresa.
- ❖ The Internet can be a source of very good Christian and educational information.

V. Media As A Destructive Tool

- ❖ Exposure to sex and violence, which destroys the purity of the mind and heart.
- ❖ Bombarding the hearing with dirty language.
- ❖ Justification of sins as the norms of the society, e.g. acceptance of homosexuality, adultery and abortion
- ❖ Waste of valuable time of our life in non-constructive activity, e.g. talk shows, browsing the Internet without an aim or for immoral websites.
- ❖ Pre-occupation with celebrities, e.g. actors and singers.
- ❖ Many songs may encourage the youth to stay away from religion and God or actually may push others to commit suicide, e.g. rock and rap music.

VI. How do we avoid the destructive impact of the media and the internet??

- ❖ Fill your free time with God and His word.
- ❖ Watch how much time are you spending with God and how much are you spending in front of the TV or the Internet. David the king admits clearly that our lives are short so do not delay your meetings with the Lord (Psalms 89:47).
- ❖ We have to realize that every minute of our lives count towards our eternal life. Father Youstos El Anthony was famous for frequently asking the question “What is the time?” to remind himself that he is continually getting closer to the last minute in his life and reminding others around him. This will make us appreciate the value of time and help us minimize the time wasted in front of the TV or on the Internet. So we have to manage our time wisely “redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:16-17).
- ❖ We must be selective for what is beneficial to our spiritual and mental growth and what is wasteful and unfruitful (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- ❖ Guard your senses of what they receive and protect your heart, soul and mind of the small offences that gradually build up to ruin our purity.

Conclusion

- ❖ TV and the Internet have a great impact on our lives, thoughts, and behavior. Therefore we have to watch very carefully and be critical about their impact in our life and our spiritual growth.

Applications

- ❖ Limit the time you spend in front of the TV as a practice for this week and try to make this a habit.
- ❖ Investigate the effect of violence and media on the rate of crime in the western world.

Week 5- The Angel Saves Lot from Sodom: God's Care for His Children

Objective

- ❖ The Lord saves Lot and his family from the fire, which will burn Sodom

Memory Verse

“Escape for your life” (Genesis 19:17)

References

- ❖ Genesis 19
- ❖ “The Life of Abraham” by F.B. Mayer

Introduction

- ❖ Abraham was Lot's Uncle. They went out together from their land to a land that the Lord promised to show them. They stayed together for sometime during their trip until they decided to separate.
- ❖ Why do you think they wanted to separate? Let us find out...!

Lesson Outline

You know that Abraham was rich... He had many sheep and cows, which used to graze together in the green pastures... One day Lot's shepherds quarreled with Abraham's shepherds because there was not enough pastureland for them. So Abraham and Lot his nephew held a meeting and the following conversation ran between them:

Abraham: Good morning Lot

Lot: Good morning Uncle Abraham

Abraham: My son, I heard that quarrels broke out between your men and my men because of green grass and water... so why should we quarrel?

Lot: My Uncle, the men who take care of your sheep attacked my men and gave them a good beating and pushed them away from the green grass and water wells and my sheep spent a whole day without food and water.

Abraham: My dear son, Lot, my companion in my journeys... I have no son and you are my son... We are one family and we worship God so why should we quarrel? God does not love people who quarrel. We are sojourners on this land... Take all the green pastures and all the wells that are full of water and do not be angry.

Lot: Thank you Uncle Abraham for your kindness and love (The children act the dialogue)

Lot dwelt in Sodom and it was like a paradise in his sight. Sodom was a fertile land but the people of Sodom were wicked and we know that God hates sin. So God sent two angels to destroy the city.

Lot was sitting by the gate of the city. When he saw two men approaching, he stood up and ran to meet them. He bowed to the ground before them and said to them, “Sirs I am here to serve you. Please come to my house. You can wash your feet and stay the night”. He kept on urging them, and finally they went with him to his house. Lot ordered his servants to bake some bread and prepare a fine meal for the guests... Before the guests went to bed, the men of Sodom surrounded the house. They called out to Lot, “Bring your guests out to us”. Lot refused to bring his guests out lest the people should do harm to them. Lot went outside... he tried to calm them but in vain. They said to him, “Out of our way, or we will treat you worse than them”. They pushed Lot back and moved up to break down the door, but the two angels inside reached out, pulled Lot back into the house, and shut the door. Then they struck all the men outside with blindness, so that they could not find the door.

- ❖ Who were Lot’s guests?
- ❖ Why did they come to Sodom?
- ❖ Will the Lord save Lot?

The two angels said to Lot, “If you have anyone else here, sons, daughters, sons-in-law, or any other relatives living in the city get them out of here. You know that Sodom’s evil is great and that wage of sin is death... God has sent us to destroy the city with fire. As for you, run for your life and get out of this city, you and all whom you have... your sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters go and warn them. Lot went out at midnight... He was broken-hearted... He knocked at a door... A man looked out of a window and the following dialogue ran between them.

Son-in-law: Who is knocking at the door?

Lot: I am your father-in-law.

Son-in-law: Yes, what do you want? All people are asleep... It is late at night.

Lot: I have two visitors from heaven. They say that the Lord will destroy the city and they advise me to get out... Come and let us go out together.

Son-in-law: Ha... What a pity... you are very simple Lot... Sodom is good and full of people... There are no sign indicating that it will be destroyed (The children act the dialogue. They repeat after the Servant).

When Lot came back, he was very sad, as he could not convince them... Lot told the angels of what they did... At dawn the angels tried to make Lot hurry. They said, “Take your wife and your two daughters and get out so that you may not lose your lives”. When Lot hesitated and lingered, they took him, his wife and his two daughters by hand and led them out of the city saying, “Run for your life... Do not look back and do not stop in the valley. Run to the hills so that you won’t be killed.” The two angels ordered Lot to go to a certain place where he would be safe. When he had reached the place, they destroyed the city with fire. The Lord ordered Lot and his household not to look back. Lot’s wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. Smoke arose from the city... like smoke from a huge furnace... The city was completely destroyed.

If there is a place full of evil, we should not go there... we should keep away from it and not to look back at it... we should keep away from sin.

- ❖ Who were saved from Sodom?
- ❖ Who turned into a pillar of salt?
- ❖ How many persons were saved?
- ❖ Repeat after me: Escape for your life...

Conclusion

- ❖ The Lord always tries to save his children from evil and danger.

Applications

1. Each one of us must think of a list of his/her sins or one sin and decide to keep away from them. Let's pray to the Lord to strengthen us all this week.
2. In a few lines of your own, write how those of old used to entertain guests. Write about what you can do now to make your guest happy.
3. Mark ✓ (right) before the correct statements:
 - ❖ Abraham drove Lot away and took his sheep ().
 - ❖ Lot was angry with his uncle Abraham and left him ().
 - ❖ Abraham treated Lot gently and kindly ().

Week 6- Treating Others Well: Abigail and David

Objective

- ❖ Loving my neighbors

Memory Verse

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mathew 22:39)

References

- ❖ 1 Samuel 25
- ❖ “The Life of David” Translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud

Introduction

- ❖ Do you know anything about David?
- ❖ What do you know about him? He loved to pray...
- ❖ Who remembers a verse about prayer? He used to recite psalms...
- ❖ Who remembers one of David’s famous psalms?
- ❖ Who can recite this psalm?

Lesson Outlines

David was an honest gentle shepherd. 600 men accompanied him. David and his men used to guard the sheep of the shepherds near them and help them because the Scripture says: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There was a man called Nabal who was from the town of Maon. He was a very rich man, the owner of three thousand sheep and one thousand goats. David and his men helped Nabal’s shepherds... The day came for men to shear the sheep... The custom was that after shearing the sheep, the owner of the sheep used to make a party and a big feast. He used to invite all those who helped him in taking care of his sheep. Nabal made a big feast (Describe it). He should have invited David and his men and give them their wage but he didn’t. David was in need of money and hoped that Nabal would send him his share.

- ❖ What do you know about David?
- ❖ How many men were with him?
- ❖ Where did Nabal live?
- ❖ What was the custom that was followed during shearing the sheep?
- ❖ Who can say the verse: You shall love...

David sent ten of his men to Nabal to ask him to send him even a small portion of his wage. Nabal grew angry and raised his voice. He mocked David and called him bad names and drove the men away. David was angry and said, “It is our right and Nabal must give us our wage. We have to go to

him and take our wage. We can hurt him but we shall not go together. Some of us will go to him and the others must stay here”. David and some of his men went to him but he did not want men to quarrel with one another... One of Nabal’s men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife that Nabal ill-treated David and his men. Abigail was a wise and intelligent woman who knew how to do well. She prayed... and requested the Lord to guide her. Abigail quickly prepared a present (1 Samuel 25:18...Read this part to the children). She ordered a servant to go on ahead. The servant met David. David had reached a group of men coming to him. Master David... this is Lady Abigail’s present. Abigail came and bowed to David saying, “Forgive me I did not have the honor to see your men when they came. Nabal is mistaken”. David said, “You are a blessed woman... Thank you”. Abigail went back happily. She did not tell her husband anything the first day, as he was drunk. The next day, after he had sobered up, she told him every thing and how she saved him from death. Nabal was sad. He suffered a stroke and was completely paralyzed. Some ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died. She became a widow. Then David sent a proposal of marriage to Abigail because she was wise. She agreed and was comforted after the death of her husband... She helped David.

- ❖ What did David want?
- ❖ Why did he decide to go to Nabal on that day?
- ❖ How did Nabal treat David’s men?
- ❖ Who told Abigail?
- ❖ What did she send?
- ❖ Whom did she marry after the death of her husband?

Conclusion

- ❖ Treat others well, be gentle, love all, like your Lord the Savior whose heart loved all and considered all equal.

Applications

Complete the following:

- ❖ You shall your as yourself.
- ❖ There was a man from whose name was and his wife’s name was
- ❖ The number of David’s men was

Week 7- The Child Jesus Enters the Temple

Objective

- ❖ To learn obedience to parents from the Lord Jesus
- ❖ To grow in the spirit at a young age

Memory Verse

“ Jesus increased in wisdom and stature” (Luke 2:52)

References

- ❖ The New Open Bible (Luke 2:39-52)
- ❖ “The Interpretation of the Book of Luke” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction

- ❖ Sometimes we answer our parents rudely or refuse to respond to their requests. Other times we are not willing to listen to them or do what they tell us to do. As the children of God we should be obedient to our parents.
- ❖ The Lord in the Old Testament gave His 10 commandments to His people. The first four commandments were concerning the relationship between God and man and the remaining 6 were about the relationship of man with his fellow men.
- ❖ The first commandments in these 6 were regarding the obedience and the respect to the parents “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be longer upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12).
- ❖ The child Jesus Christ was very obedient to His parents St. Mary and St. Joseph the carpenter. Although He was God, He respected and listened to what His parents’ request from Him.
- ❖ Check with the children if they memorized the Ten Commandments. If they do not remember them, they should memorize them for next week as homework.
- ❖ Today’s story demonstrates how obedient was the child Jesus to His parents.

Lesson Outlines

St. Mary and St. Joseph used to take the child Jesus every year to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover. When Jesus Christ was twelve years old, they went to Jerusalem according to their habit to celebrate the feast. After they finished celebrating the feast, St. Mary and St. Joseph started their trip back to their home in Nazareth. Both of them thought that the child Jesus Christ is with them while He stayed behind in the temple. When St. Mary and St. Joseph discovered that Jesus was not with them, they were so worried and did not know where was Jesus. They started looking for Him everywhere and asked all the people if they have seen the child Jesus but no body knew where was He. After searching for three days, they rushed back to Jerusalem to continue looking of the child Jesus. There, they found Him in the midst of all the teachers and the elders. He was listening to them and asking them questions. All the elders and teachers were amazed at His questions and answers. His understanding and wisdom also impressed them at this young age.

- ❖ How old was the child Jesus at that time?
- ❖ Where was the child Jesus?
- ❖ Why was He in Jerusalem?
- ❖ Who was looking for Him?

St. Mary and St. Joseph were relieved when they finally found Him in the temple but they were amazed when they saw Him sitting with all the teachers and the elders. When they came up to Him, St. Mary told Him: “Son, why have you done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought you anxiously” (Luke 2:48). Jesus answered very politely and said that He was doing His father’s business. He meant that was teaching as God has planned for Him on earth. He immediately went back with them to their home in Nazareth. So, Jesus was polite and respectful to His parents and He obeyed them on the way back.

- ❖ What did St. Mary say to Jesus when she found Him?
- ❖ How did Jesus answer her?
- ❖ Where did they go after that?

Conclusion

- ❖ We should be like the child Jesus Christ in all aspects but specifically, His obedience and respect to His parents.
- ❖ Also, the child Jesus taught us how to seek knowledge and good understanding for the word of God. He taught us how to be curious about it and would ask the teachers to know more. Similarly, we ought to increase in understanding the Bible and the church.

Applications

- ❖ Count how many times this week you obeyed parents and how many times you did not.
- ❖ Make sure to read the Bible everyday to increase in understanding and wisdom like Jesus Christ did when He was only 12 years old.
- ❖ Prepare questions for Sunday school teacher or to the priest about things you do not understand in the church to find the answers to them?
- ❖ Gradually build the habit of asking about the things you do not know to increase in the knowledge of God and the church.

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 Apostles' Feast: The Revelation of John and the Heavenly Jerusalem

Week 3: St. Stephen

Week 4: Showing Hospitality to Strangers: Anba Bishoy

Week 2- The Revelation of John and the Heavenly Jerusalem

Objective

- ❖ Love the Kingdom of Heaven and follow the example of the Saints.

Memory Verse

“Praise the Lord! Praise God in His Sanctuary” (Psalm 150:1)

References

- ❖ Revelation 21

Introduction

Use beautiful pictures to show the beauty of heaven. Artistic conditions should be observed so that a wrong picture may not be printed in the mind of a child about heaven. Angels’ wings, candles, palm leaves.

- ❖ What is the name of the first martyr in Christianity?
- ❖ What did he request the Lord to do for those who stoned him?
- ❖ When did the Lord’s disciples begin their evangelism in the world?
- ❖ Who evangelized in Egypt?

Lesson Outlines

A glimpse about some of the disciples and apostles of the Lord Jesus: Peter the apostle was one of Christ’s disciples. He evangelized the Lord Christ openly in public and his shadow healed patients. Paul the apostle is not one of the twelve disciples. The Lord chose him to preach His name before kings and the kingdoms of the world that were pagans at that time. Many people received faith and believed through him. He established many churches in the world. Paul and Peter were martyred in Rome. The Emperor sentenced them to death. Peter requested them to crucify him with his head down and he was crucified in the manner he desired but Paul was beheaded with the sword. They attained the crown of glory and went to the bosom of the saints.

- ❖ How was Peter the apostle martyred... and Paul?
- ❖ Where are they now?
- ❖ Let us sing a hymn: Peter and Paul the two apostles...

Years went by and all the apostles died except John. The Roman Emperor arrested him and ordered that John should spend the rest of his life alone in Patmos far away from his friends and acquaintances. The Lord did not leave John alone, but he appeared to him and revealed to him what was about to happen to the church and the world in the future. John wrote; inspired by the Holy Spirit, all that he saw in a book called Revelation. It is the last Book in the Holy Bible. The Lord

showed him the Holy City, New Jerusalem. He saw a beautifully colored door and two angels were guarding that door. The ground of Paradise was green and covered with bright colors. He saw the angels dressed in white and the sky was shining. He saw the place where Christ dwells and two rows of angels bowing in worship and shouting with praise saying “Holy, Holy...etc. He saw a very big chair of gold on which Christ sat and very bright light surrounded him. Twenty-four priests surrounded Him. He saw four living creatures giving glory to the Lord as well as many people rejoicing and glorifying God. All the people there bowed and worshipped the Lord saying, “Holy, Holy, Holy...” Angels flew around the Lord singing sweet songs saying, “The Cherubim worship You...” John longed to enjoy what he saw. He longed to see the Lord coming again: He said, “Come, O Lord Jesus”. John heard the Lord say, “I’ll come soon” and John said, “Amen, Come O Lord Jesus”. As for you, are you longing for His second coming? Lead a good Christian life to show that you are really waiting for the second coming of our Lord from heaven.

- ❖ Where was John when he saw this vision?
- ❖ Who sent him into exile?
- ❖ Why? What do you say to a man who asks you about your religion?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: Praise the Lord...
- ❖ Who can say the verse?

Conclusion

- ❖ Paul the Apostle could not describe heaven. All he said is: “What no eye has seen, nor ear hear, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”.

Applications

Answer the following questions:

- ❖ How was each of Peter, Paul and Stephen martyred?
- ❖ Describe the angels as Beloved John saw them.

Week 3- St. Stephen

Objective

- ❖ Honoring saints and praising their firm stand in faith.

Memory Verse

“If we live, we live to the Lord and if we die we die to the Lord” (Romans 14:8)

References

- ❖ Acts 7:54-60

Introduction

- ❖ Who was the first martyr in the church?
- ❖ Who knows the meaning of the name “Stephen”.
- ❖ Write it down in your notebook.

Lesson Outline

The Christian faith spread on the hands of the apostles whom Christ sent. The Christians continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They needed men to devote themselves for the service of widows, orphans and the poor. They chose seven deacons who were known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Stephen was among them. He served the poor and the needy and distributed gifts and alms among them. He also preached in the church and convinced the non-Christians...and the number of believers increased.

- ❖ Who is Stephen?
- ❖ What does the word “deacon” mean?
- ❖ How do Christians live?

One day, a large crowd of Jews gathered and discussed religious matters with Stephen. He answered them quoting texts from the Scriptures. He explained that Christ was the only Savior through whom we can enter heaven. His words did not appeal to them. They took him to the synagogue and prosecuted him.

Jews: What is your name?

Stephen: I am Christian.

Jews: Don't mention that name.

Stephen: I love Christ.

Jews: We will kill you.

Stephen: I do not fear death...if we live we live to the Lord...

Jews: We crucified Christ...

Stephen: You crucified Him and He was buried. He stayed in the grave for three days but then He rose and ascended to heaven and I am going to Him.

- ❖ Who answered him?
- ❖ What will you say if anyone asks you about your Christian religion?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: If we live we live to the Lord...
- ❖ Who can repeat the verse?

The Jews were angry with him because he told the truth. They wanted to kill him so they accused him of blaspheming against God and Moses. They rushed at him, dragged him in the streets and when they were out of the city the men stopped and stripped him of his clothes. The witnesses left their cloaks in charge of a young man named Saul who approved of his murder. They dug a hole in the ground, threw him in it, picked big stones and threw them at Stephen's head, legs, back, chest and arms. His body was broken. He fell to the ground. The Lord strengthened him. He knelt down and prayed lifting his eyes up to heaven and saw the heavens open and saw Jesus surrounded by angels in great glory and a host of angels dressed in white and shining with bright light. They were coming down saying "Holy, Holy, Holy". Stephen rejoiced on seeing the vision. One of the angels was holding a crown. The people stood in great surprise because Stephen was happy in spite of the stones thrown at him. They asked one another: Why does Stephen look at heaven. What does he see? They threw the stones at his head. The stones were thrown at him but he was happy.

He said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God". They threw the stones at his mouth to prevent him from speaking. Stephen said, "Lord do not hold this sin against them". Stephen could see demons keeping away from him as they could not draw near him. The angels were driving them away. His face shone as the face of an angel, then he fell asleep.

- ❖ Who taught Stephen to forgive those who stoned him?
- ❖ Can you forgive a child who has called you bad names... beats you without reason...or vexes you while you play?
- ❖ Let us repeat the verse together: If we live we live to the Lord...

Conclusion

- ❖ Show the spirit of love and forgiveness that Stephen showed towards those who stoned him.

Applications

- ❖ If a person asks you about your religion say: I am Christian.
- ❖ If anyone insults you say, "May the Lord forgive you".
- ❖ Read Revelation 21 (New Testament).

- ❖ Advise the children not to be afraid of non-Christians when they ask them about their religion.
- ❖ You can use the picture of angels or the wing of an angel to connect martyrdom with heaven.
- ❖ You encourage the young deacons to perform their service in the best way and ask them to attend the hymn lesson and to participate in the service.

Week 4- Showing Hospitality to Strangers: Anba Bishoy

Objective

- ❖ Showing hospitality to strangers

Memory Verse

“Do not forget to entertain strangers” (Hebrews 13:2)

References

- ❖ Synaxarium 8th of Abib
- ❖ “The Biography of St. Bishoy the Great” Fr. Ibrahim Anba Bishoy

Introduction

- ❖ Give the children an idea about the monks and monasteries as an introduction to the lesson.

Lesson Outlines

St. Bishoy was born in Egypt. He had six brothers. His mother saw, in a vision, an angel saying to her, “The Lord says to you: Give me one of your sons to serve me”. “My Lord, take whom you want” she answered. The angel chose Bishoy who was weak and whose body was slim. The mother said, “Lord, take a strong one to serve God” but the angel said, “The Lord chose this one”. When he grew up, Anba Bishoy went to Sheheit Wilderness, where he was ordained a monk. He practiced his ascetic life and worshipped the Lord and he became famous. Some monks who had heard about St. Bishoy visited him and asked him to allow them to stay with him and to support them with his prayers so that they might deserve his holy blessings. He received them happily as he loved all people.

They stayed with him for some days. He taught and guided them. Some days later, St. Bishoy desired to stay alone to practice his service and ascetic life, so he said to them “Go to the wilderness of Upper Egypt and observe a solitary life there in the mountain. They obeyed him. He blessed them and they left for the place he had told them about and stayed there. It happened that some robbers entered a cell of one of the brothers and took his possessions. There was an old man in the monastery who pretended to divine what the future has in store. The old man said that he knew hidden things through revelation announced to him by the angel of the Lord. The monastery abbot went to him and said, “Tell us who robbed the brother’s cell”. The old man said, “The two brothers who came here a few days ago”. All the monks believed him and the abbot drove them out, suspecting that they were the robbers. But Anba Bishoy, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, knew that the two brothers were innocent. So, he quickly went to the mountain (Who remembers its name) and there he found the two brothers in prison. He said to the abbot of the monastery “I know these two brothers. They have never been accused of such a thing before. The abbot said that the old man who knows the future said so and so. St. Bishoy said, “Please, let all the brothers come here”. The abbot did so and the old man came with them. They all bowed before Anba Bishoy and received his blessing. He asked them “What evil deed have these two strangers done?” The old man said, “They took away the possessions of our brother (name). Anba Bishoy took a deep breath and said to the old man, “Dear brother...

please say: The demons have led me astray” The old man said, “The demons cannot lead me astray. This is the truth”. Anba Bishoi said to him, “Then, please say: The demons have tempted me”. The old man forced himself and said, “The Demons have tempted me”. As soon as he said these words, a demon came out of him in the form of a pig opening his mouth to devour him but St. Bishoy ordered the demon to disappear and he disappeared. When the brothers saw what happened they bowed thankfully and said “Our holy father, forgive us”. St. Bishoy then said to the abbot, “Go to the place of...(name) and you will find the stolen things”. But he did not tell him who stole the things. He advised him not to tell anyone that he guided him to the place where the stolen things are. The abbot found the stolen things so he and his monks glorified God and His great saint Anba Bishoy.

Instructions

Explain that the demon dwelt in the body of the old man because he neglected his spiritual life as he did not repent nor did he receive communion.

- ❖ Where was Anba Bishoy born?
- ❖ What did his mother see in a vision?
- ❖ Describe Anba Bishoy?
- ❖ What did he do to the brothers who came to him?

Conclusion

- ❖ The Lord chose that holy man in spite of his weak slim body. The Lord looks into the depth and does not care for appearance and the eloquent tongue.

Applications

- ❖ Prayer was very important. Check that you pray regularly and daily. Let not one day pass without prayers.
- ❖ Look for a story of another monk that used to pray a lot.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

Week 1: Guard Yourself From Greed: Anba Arsanius And The Beans

Week 2: How to Develop Spiritual Habits

Week 3: Jesus Heals A Deaf-Mute

Week 4: The Virgin's Feast: The Miracle of the Church of Atreeb

Week 1- Guard Yourself From Greed: Anba Arsanius And The Beans

Objective

- ❖ Curing greed, satisfaction and content.

Memory Verse

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness” (Luke 12:15)

References

- ❖ 1 Corinthians 5:10, 6:10
- ❖ 2 Corinthians 7:2
- ❖ Ephesians 5:5
- ❖ “The Garden of Monks” page 44

Introduction

- ❖ Set the scene by asking some questions: Mention some of the Lord’s gifts to you...Where does our food come from? Our clothes?
- ❖ Do you thank God for all that He gives you?

Lesson Outlines

One day Anba Arsanius was eating boiled beans with his brothers the monks in the Monastery. Their custom was not to peel the beans or select special types of beans but he used to select the white beans to eat them. The abbot was not happy as this might change the system followed in the monastery. The abbot said to one of the brothers “Endure what I shall do to you for the sake of the Lord”. The brother said, “All right, father”. The abbot said, “Sit beside Arsanius and select the white beans and eat them”. The brother did so but the abbot gave him a strong slap on his face saying, “How do you select the white beans for yourself and leave the black ones for your brothers?” St. Arsanius stood up, then bowed to the abbot and to the brother and said, “This slap is not for you but it is for me. Arsanius the Teacher of kings’ sons does not know how to eat beans with the monks of Egypt”.

Anba Arsanius was brought up in the court of the king so he was used to luxury. That is why he could not imitate the Egyptian monks in their ways of living in a short time. He trained himself to do so little by little. He was not in need of a direct way to learn, but he learned through observing what goes around him and many times, a gesture was enough to teach him as what happened in this story.

Give the children some questions while telling them the story to see if they are following you up. You can give the children an idea about the life of Anba Arsanius before he became a monk.

Conclusion

- ❖ We are often greedy and we ask more money for ourselves. We like to hold better posts and be richer. We often envy those who live better than us.

- ❖ Sometimes we are spiritually greedy and we seek to glorify ourselves and decorate them with artificial virtues to acquire the praise of others.

Applications

- ❖ Thank God for all things put in front of you.
- ❖ Read Acts 7 at home as a preparation for the next lesson.
- ❖ Recitation: Incarnation, From the Morning Prayer (John 1:1-14) “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory; the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father full of grace and truth.”

Week 2- How to Develop Spiritual Habits

Objective

- ❖ To teach the students at a young age to develop good spiritual habits
- ❖ To open their minds to the necessary spiritual habits for their spiritual growth.

Memory Verse

“Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor “ (1Co 3:8)

References

- ❖ “Paradise of the Spirit” Bishop Youannes – Part II
- ❖ The Holy Bible

Introduction

- ❖ Anything we train ourselves to do will eventually become a habit and easy for us to do.
- ❖ We should start by knowing what is a habit? A habit is something that we do regularly without much effort and we cannot stop it easily, e.g. an athlete trains a lot to be good in any kind of sport or to be an Olympic gold medallist (give examples of famous sports characters known to the students).
- ❖ The same applies to spiritual exercises to be winners of crowns in heaven. We all need to do a lot of spiritual exercises to be good in special important spiritual habits. Once we acquire a certain habit then we should start exercising to adopt another one. Meanwhile we do not lose the first habit we acquired. Gradually, we climb the ladder of virtues.

Lesson Outlines

Spiritual exercises are divided into two types:

1. Positive Exercises: When you practice some good habits like prayer, reading the Bible, fasting, etc.
2. Negative Exercises: When you try to get rid of bad habits like lying, laziness, swearing, etc.

So basically a positive exercise is when we are trying to add a good habit and a negative exercise is when we are trying to get rid of a bad habit.

I. How Do We Find Out Which Exercises We Need To Start?

1. **Previous sins:** If I realize that I am doing something bad and I am creating problems for myself and for others with my bad behavior, then, I have to think of training myself to stop this bad behavior. For example, if I am a liar and I get others and myself in trouble because of my lies, then, I would have to train myself to stop lying.
2. **The Bible:** The word of God and His voice through the Bible will always open my eyes for new exercises that I need to adopt and train myself to it. For example, if I do not like to fast

and/or break my fast whenever I am with non-fasting friends, I might get encouraged when I read the story of Daniel and the three young men. When they fasted even when they had all the luxuries and delicacies of the king's palace available to them (Daniel 1). The servant can tell the story of Daniel and the three young men here.

3. **Father of Confession:** Your father of confession could help you and guide you on how to start some spiritual exercises and to grow in it until you develop a good spiritual habit. The father of confession will help you on developing the habit of continuous and regular prayer, reading the Bible regularly and even growing in the habit of regular confession with him.
4. **Church Practices:** As the whole church practices certain useful spiritual exercises, you will be encouraged and motivated to do like everybody else. For example when the whole church fasts, the old and the young then you would want to be part of the group and fast like everyone else in the church. When we follow the church fasting repeatedly, we gradually develop the habit of fasting.
5. **Lives of Saints:** The virtues of the saints are very good examples to us to try to follow their paths and imitate them. For example, I can start to train myself on the virtue of obedience when I learn the story of St. John the short (the servant can tell the story of obedience of St. John the short here). Another example is Anba Abram of El-Fayoum who was generous to the poor. So, I can start training myself to be like Anba Abram, loving, caring and giving to the poor. All the saints had good virtues that we can learn from them and start to train ourselves with different spiritual exercises to be like them.

II. How to Start and Continue in a Spiritual Exercise Till we Develop a Spiritual Habit?

1. **Clear exercise:** The exercise has to be clear and very specific. For example, you cannot say that you will train yourself to be righteous because there are many virtues under righteousness that will have to be acquired. These could include controlling your words and behavior, being gentle and loving to others, praying, fasting, and caring for the poor and sick. So, if you want to be righteous, then you would have to train yourself on each of the specific individual virtues to attain the mother virtue.
2. **Suitable timing:** The suitable time for the exercise is very important. It has to be the right time for you and for others to practice the exercise. You cannot possibly practice silence on a day when there are visitors coming to visit you and spend time with you. You also may not be able to give to the poor when you have no money. So, it is very important to choose the right time to start and continue your exercise. If you want to acquire the habit of regular prayer, then you would have to pick the time when you are comfortable physically and mentally. When you can concentrate and enjoy the prayers with no distractions (TV, telephone calls, or brothers and sisters playing). You also have to give yourself enough time to pray without hurry or rush to finish the prayers. The same applies to the habit of daily Bible prayers.
3. **Gradualism:** Spiritual exercises also have to be gradual in duration and frequency. For example as you are young, you start fasting for few days only every fast. Gradually increase the number of days until you can fast all the fasting. The same applies to all other exercises. Another example is reading the Bible, when you can start by reading only few verses everyday and gradually increase to half a chapter and then one chapter everyday. This may gradually increase to reading many chapters a day.

4. **Persistence:** It is also important to be persistent in any exercise and not get discouraged if you don't follow the exercise for few days. This means that you have to start again with more energy and regularity. You must persist all evil tricks trying to discourage you and stop you from developing good spiritual habits.

III. How Long Should A Spiritual Exercise Last Before It Becomes A Habit?

It may take very long time...weeks, months or even years. There are saints who spent many years for their lives training themselves on a single spiritual exercise like not judging others. So it really does not matter how long it take to develop a spiritual habit as long as you keep doing the exercise without discouragement and under the guidance of the father of confession.

Conclusion

- ❖ Always ask for God's help because you cannot accomplish anything without Him. When you do succeed in that exercise, thank God for helping you and do not think that you have accomplished it on your own.

Applications

- ❖ Start to pray and read the Bible every day as a spiritual exercise.
- ❖ Make a spiritual notebook with the days of the weeks and mark for yourself the days you prayed and read the Bible. This will help you to track how you are doing on your exercise.

Week 3- The Virgin's Feast: The Miracle of the Church of Atreeb

Objective

- ❖ Honoring St. Mary the Mother of God.

Memory Verse

“For behold henceforth all generations shall call me blessed” (Luke 1:48)

References

- ❖ “Forty miracles of the Virgin: The third miracle” Page 15

Introduction

- ❖ What is the meaning of intercession?
- ❖ Can you think of a story in the Bible where St. Mary's intercession to the Lord Jesus were answered?

Lesson Outlines

During the reign of Haroun Al Rasheed, a severe ruler governed Egypt, he persecuted Christians and destroyed their churches. His assistants went on destroying the churches till they came to the City of Atreeb near Banha (a city in Egypt). There was a church in that city bearing the Name of the Virgin. It was a big splendid building. Its pillars were made of marble covered with gold. The priest felt that they had come to destroy the church. He went inside the church and prayed with tears. He interceded with the Mother of Light the owner of the church. He went out to meet the prince. He showed him the church and the precious things inside it... and the Icon of the Virgin. He said to the prince, “Give me three days till I bring you a decree from the Caliph not to destroy this church”.

The prince laughed and said, “The Caliph is in Baghdad and there is a long distance between us that takes no less than two months. How do you say that the decree will come after three days? This is not logical”. The priest said, “I am sure and I'll pay the cost of your stay and the costs of those with you”. He gave him 300 dinariis. The prince took the money and said, “This church must be destroyed”. And the priest said, “I am sure that the Virgin Mary can prevent you from destroying her church and she will defend her church”. The priest knelt before the Icon and prayed “Save us O Virgin... Forgive us... interceded with your Son for us... help us... Don't allow those to destroy your church”. He did not taste food. The Lady Virgin spoke from her Icon “I am the Virgin. I'll help you. Do not be afraid of the prince... his boss will order him not to destroy this church.”

- ❖ What is the name of the Caliph?
- ❖ How were the Christians persecuted?
- ❖ What did the priest do when the Caliph's assistants drew near the church?
- ❖ What do you usually do when you are in trouble?

While the priest was praying... It was night and the Caliph was asleep in Baghdad. The Caliph saw a bright Divine light. He got up in horror. He saw the Virgin the Mother of God. He was disturbed... he said, "Who are you? She said, I am Mary, the Mother of Jesus whose churches you destroy... How do you sleep in comfort and all the Christians are suffering. I am the Virgin the Mother of God... Repent otherwise you will suffer unbearable pains".

The Caliph shook with horror and said, "I am ready to do what you want and do not hurt me, please". She said to him, "Now write a decree in your own handwriting, stamp it with your seal and send it to your assistants in Atreeb. Give an order that your soldiers stop destroying the churches and attacking the Christians". The Caliph said to her, "How can this letter arrive to Egypt today? It is impossible by land or by sea". She said to him, "Just write the decree and with the help of God it will reach the prince before he gets up in the early morning".

The Caliph was afraid. He wrote the letter, "I am the Caliph Haroun Al Rasheed. Come here soon. Do not destroy the churches of the Christian". He stamped the letter and wondered what would happen. Behold, a bird with a big beak came and snatched the letter from his hand and flew quickly. The Virgin at that moment disappeared. After a short time the bird was in Atreeb. He came to where the prince was sitting and threw the letter to him and flew away.

The prince opened the letter... He was surprised... The letter was from Haroun Al Rasheed... ordering him to go to him soon. He read it three times. He examined the stamp and the handwriting. It is from Haroun Al Rasheed no doubt. He wondered. He sent for the priest. He asked him, "Tell me, what have you done?" The priest said joyfully, "The Mother of Light facilitates everything for us". He told him how he prayed before the Icon. The prince was surprised. He received faith and believed in the Lord Christ. He entered the church and kissed the Icon and requested the Virgin to guard him during his travel and listen to him. The prince gave the 300 dinariis back to the priest and gave him 100 dinariis as a souvenir. He left the churches and went to Baghdad. He met the Caliph. He found him perplexed. He saluted him and then said, "Your majesty, a letter came to us from you. Is this true?"

The Caliph said, "It is I who sent the letter. Tell me what happened". The prince told the Caliph all that he saw and all that happened and the story of the priest, the letter and the bird. The Caliph said, "We will build a church to Christians after the name of the Lady Virgin the Mother of Light to help me in my life and deliver me". They built a splendid church and put many precious things in it. They also put the Virgin Icon in it. The persecuted Christians gathered there and prayed and were happy. Thus, thanks to the intercession of the Virgin, Christianity won victory and the banner of the cross rose high and the counsel of the stubborn was corrupted. May her Intercession be with us and guard us all. Amen.

Conclusion

- ❖ Ask the intercession of St. Mary, who are sincere to the human beings, to intercede for us before her Son Jesus Christ that He may have mercy on us and forgive us our sins, guard us, make us firm in faith till the last breath... Amen.

Applications

- ❖ If possible let the children act the dialogue that ran between the priest and the prince, the Lady Virgin and the Caliph, the Caliph and the prince.
- ❖ You can put candles before the Icon of the Virgin and make a glorification.

- ❖ The picture of Virgin Mary is suitable for this topic and pictures should be distributed.
- ❖ Ask the children to relate this miracle to their families. Ask them to intercede with her and put her picture in their sleeping room and put a lamp or a candle in front of the Icon.

Week 4- St. Dimyana the Martyr

Objective

- ❖ Standing firm in faith till death

Memory Verse

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippines 1:21)

References

- ❖ Synaxarium, 12th of Bashans

Introduction

- ❖ A picture of St. Dimyana should be set in the class and the candles should be lit before the picture. At the end of the lesson, the children carry the picture and make a small procession and say, “Axia, Axia, Axia, Ti Agia Dimyana” i.e., “Worthy, worthy, worthy St. Dimyana”.
- ❖ Whom should we obey? And who else? And if daddy says, “Do not go to church,” what shall we do? We tell him that the church is very important because it is the House of God.

Lesson Outlines

Mark, the governor of Al-Zaafran Province, the North of the Delta, had only one daughter. Her name was Dimyana. She was 15 years old. She refused to marry because she had made a vow that she would devote her life to Christ. Her father built her a palace where she could worship the Lord together with 40 virgins. In that palace, they spent their time in prayers, worship and contemplation.

- ❖ Who is Dimyana?
- ❖ Why did she refuse to marry?
- ❖ How many virgins were with her?

The king sent for her father and ordered him to worship the idols. Her father was frightened so he raised incense to the idols. When his daughter, Dimyana heard about this, she hurried to him and rebuked him saying, “I would rather hear that you had died than hear that you had forsaken Christ. If you do not give up worshipping idols, I’ll not confess that you are my father. O Father, if you die here as a martyr you will live with Christ, but if you live as a pagan you will die with the devil”. She gave him a moment to think. Her father was deeply affected by her words... he wept bitterly. He went back to the king and confessed that he was Christian. He said, “For to me to live” ...and he won the crown of martyrdom.

The king knew that Dimyana was the cause of her father’s return to Christianity. He sent an officer to tempt her to worship the idols but she said, “Aren’t you ashamed of yourselves? Do you call these stones gods? There is no god but Christ whom we worship”. He put her in prison, squeezed her with torturing machines, cut her flesh into pieces and put her in boiling oil and tormented her severely. An

angel appeared to her and healed her and during torturing, she kept saying, “For me to live...” At last the officer cut off her head and also the heads of the 40 virgins.

The believers collected the bodies and put them in the palace, which her father had built for her then the bodies were shrouded and buried. A church was built for them. This church can be seen now in Bilkas, North of the Delta. People go there each year to visit the church of St. Dimyana. The 12th day of Bashans is still the day when people, on the way to the church, still repeat the words “O Dimyana... We have come back... many happy returns”.

- ❖ Where did Dimyana live?
- ❖ How many virgins were with her?
- ❖ What did she do when she heard that her father had departed from the faith?
- ❖ Where is her body?
- ❖ Recite the verse.

Conclusion

- ❖ God should be obeyed more than people. We should be strong in the faith just like St. Dimyana was through out her life.

Applications

- ❖ Choose a friend from the saints to be your friend and intercessor. Someone you like his story.
- ❖ Use the intercessions of St. Dimyana in your prayers for this week.

**Lesson of the First week of September
Before the Coptic New Year**

Week 1: Athanasius and All the World Against Him

Week 1- Athanasius And All The World Against Him

Objective

- ❖ Being firm in faith till death.

Memory Verse

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” (Hebrews 13:7)

References

- ❖ “The Precious Gem” (Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa), Part I, Page 298
- ❖ “The Story of the Coptic Church” Page 186
- ❖ “The Biography of Athanasius the Apostolic” Kamel Saleh Nakhla

Introduction

- ❖ Review the lesson of last week.
- ❖ Who is the saint in the picture in your hands?

Lesson Outlines

Athanasius is called “The defender of the Orthodox Faith”. He was a very great patriarch in the history of the church. He defended the Christian faith against unbelievers and proved the truth of Christianity to the whole world. His parents were pagan (What does the word “pagan” mean?). His father was rich. He died when Athanasius was a little child. His mother brought him up. She sent him to a Christian School. He lived with the Christian children. He began to observe them when they play, speak, pray and showing their love for one another. They asked him about his religion. He said, “I worship idols”. The children said to him, “Idols are not gods... Christ is God”. Athanasius said, “Indeed I desire to become a Christian”.

- ❖ What is the name of the man in this picture?
- ❖ What was his parents’ religion? Who died first?
- ❖ Where did he receive his education?
- ❖ What did his friends say to him?

He wanted to be baptized... but his mother refused. She brought a magician to convince him to desert Christianity. The magician said to her, “Do not be in trouble... he is Christian”. They went to Alexandria and were baptized. The mother died... He was left with Pope Alexandria. Athanasius acted Baptism with the children. The Patriarch was pleased with him. He was ordained a priest. He served in the church, read the Bible and prayed. When he grew up he became a brave patriarch. He always said the truth and feared nobody. That is why he is known all over the world as “Athanasius

who is against the world”. Because of his love for God, truth and his people, he was sent into exile five times but the Lord was always with him, gave him power and victory.

- ❖ What is the name of the Patriarch?
- ❖ What is the title of Athanasius? Why?

You can give the children an idea about the defense of Athanasius against Arius, and the laying of the Orthodox creed. See to it that the children study it and recite it daily.

Conclusion

- ❖ Athanasius was young but strong in faith. He had good understanding of the word of God. Thus he was able to defend the faith strongly.

Applications

Mark (✓) right or (X) wrong at the end of the following:

- ❖ Athanasius’ parents were Christian ().
- ❖ The Lord is pleased with us whenever we mix with evil people ().
- ❖ Athanasius is called the defender of the Orthodox Faith ().