



**COPTIC ORTHODOX**  
**DIOCESE *of* LONDON**

**Year 5**  
**Part I: Tout – Kiahk**  
**(Mid-September – December)**



# Table of Contents

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
1st Week of Tout: 3rd Week of September	The commemoration of the Saints
2nd Week of Tout: 4th Week of September	<b><u>Feast of the Cross:</u></b> The Cross is a Symbol of Salvation: The Passover Lamb
3rd Week of Tout: 5th Week of September	<b><u>Faith:</u></b> Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus
4th Week of Tout: 1st Week of October	<b><u>Faith:</u></b> I believe in One God: A Trinity is His Nature <b>AND</b> Theophany: God is One with the Holy Trinity - A journey to the Council of Constantinople
1st Week of Baba: 2nd Week of October	<b><u>Faith:</u></b> The Strength of The Faith <b>AND</b> By Faith the Walls of Jericho Fell Down
2nd Week of Baba: 3rd Week of October	<b><u>Faith:</u></b> How to Grow in your Faith? – (I) <b>AND</b> How to Grow in your Faith? – (II)
3rd Week of Baba: 4th Week of October	<b><u>Faith:</u></b> Our Holy Bible is Inspired by the Holy Spirit: The Faith of Dionysius the Patriarch
4th Week of Baba: 1st Week of November	<b><u>Virtue:</u></b> Contentment and Thanksgiving: Job the Righteous
5th Week of Baba: 2nd Week of November	<b><u>Virtue:</u></b> A Strong Character in Honesty: Elijah and Baal Prophets
1st Week of Hatour: 3rd Week of November	Psalm of David: Psalm 23 “The Lord is my Shepherd, I Shall not Want”
2nd Week of Hatour: 4th Week of November	<b><u>Community:</u></b> I am Influential in my Family, Church & Community: Esther
3rd Week of Hatour: 1st Week of December	<b><u>Church:</u></b> I Enjoy Partaking in Church Fasts: The Church Fasts
4th Week of Hatour: 2nd Week of December	<b><u>Bible:</u></b> God is Ready to Forgive: Elijah Talks to King Ahab
1st Week of Kiahk: 3rd Week of December	<b><u>Bible:</u></b> The Promise of the Coming of the Messiah as Mentioned in the Old Testament
2nd Week of Kiahk: 4th Week of December	<b><u>Virtue:</u></b> The Parable of the Talents: Our Talents and How to Use Them
3rd Week of Kiahk: 5th Week of December	The New Year, How Do I Start?





The first week of the month of Tout  
(September)

## The commemoration of the Saints

**Lesson purpose:** To learn about God's Saints and benefit from them.

**Bible verse:** *"Wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial of her" (Matthew 26:13)*



## Background information to servant

### OUR FRIENDS IN HEAVEN

“Assuredly I say to you, wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told for a memorial of her.” (Matthew 26:13)

- Long time ago, before Christ was crucified, a woman came to the house where Christ was staying. She brought along with her a bottle of very expensive perfume and poured the perfume on Christ’s feet. Christ was so pleased with what the woman did, that He told His Disciples that whosoever they preached the Gospel, they must tell the story of this woman, so that people will always remember what she did. Although the woman is in Paradise now, we still remember her whenever we read the Bible.
- In the same manner, we also remember all God’s Saints that have pleased Him with their good deeds since the world began. We do this in our Liturgy when we mention the communion of the Saints.
- We remember the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We remember the Prophets like Moses and Elijah. We also remember the Evangelists. How many Evangelists do you know? What are their names?
- We also remember the martyrs, and the Confessors (remember who they are), and all the spirits of the righteous that became perfect in their faith.
- Of course when we think of the Saints, first of all we think of the Queen of all Saints; have you already guessed who she is? ...that’s right! Of course she is the ever-Virgin Mother of God, Saint Mary.
- Then we remember Saint John the Baptist, who baptized our Lord Jesus Christ and the greatest man ever born of a woman. Do you know who said that?
- We also remember Saint Stephen, the first Martyr. I am sure you know his story.
- Then we remember Saint Mark; who preached Christianity in Egypt, and also became a Martyr. Then we remember all the other Saints listed in the Communion of Saints.

- All those Saints we remember in our Liturgy are our friends in Heaven! They all love us, and always pray to God on our behalf. That is why in many of our Hymns we ask them to pray for us, or ask God to have mercy upon us through their prayers.
- After the Commemoration of the Saints, we pray for all the people whose souls God has taken into heaven. We pray that God may find them worthy to be with Him in Paradise. We pray for them because we love them and we care for them. They are also our friends.
- Isn't this a wonderful kind of friendship? We on earth pray for our friends in Heaven, and at the same time, our friends in Heaven pray for us! After all, what are friends for?

**Take with you to class our church book of the Divine Liturgy.**

## **The Lesson**

### **PLEASE EMPHASIZE:**

- Why do we have a special prayer in the Divine Liturgy to commemorate the saints? We are going to learn about why we remember the saints and what role they should play in our lives.
- Please read the attached sheet in the class, explain it and ask the students the simple questions that it contains.
- In every Divine Liturgy, we have “The commemoration of the Saints”. We remember the Saints because:
  - 1) When we remember the Saints we see a good example of a person in whom the grace of God has worked together with this person's efforts. The grace of God coupled with our will and efforts are needed so that we can live a good life that satisfies the Lord.
  - 2) We look at them as good examples and follow their footsteps. Sometimes we think that the commandments of God contained in the Bible are too difficult for us to follow, for example, when Jesus said “Love your enemies”. We sometimes feel that these commandments are good for angels not for humans, but when we remember the community of the Saints and the way they lived, we find that these people have applied God's commandments. They are like signs for us on the road. Saint Paul said, —Since, we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin

which so easily enslaves us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).

3) We ask them to pray on our behalf. Since they have a special favour in Jesus' sight because they have faithfully followed Him, their prayers and requests are well heard by our Lord Jesus. Remember that the first miracle that Jesus did at the wedding of Cana of Galilee was performed because of the intercession of St. Mary. In the Coptic Orthodox prayer book of the hours called "The Agbeya" we ask for her intercession when we say: "Hail to Thee! We entreat Thee, O Saint, full of glory, the ever-virgin, the Mother of God the Christ, to lift up our prayer unto thy beloved Son that He may forgive us our sins. Hail to her, the Saint, the Virgin, who gave birth to the true Light, Christ our Lord, entreat the Lord to have mercy on us and forgive us our sins."

4) When we remember the Saints, we remember that the day will come on which we, like them, will leave this world. —For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away' (James 4:14)

- In the Orthodox Church, St. Mary is always put at the head of the list of saints and is considered our first intercessor because she is the Mother of God; Theotokos. (Theo = God, tokos = mother).
- Who are the confessors?  
They are the Christians who suffered persecution to maintain their faith and were jailed. They were ready to be killed but their lives were spared.
- St. John the Baptist was called the forerunner because he came before Jesus to tell the people that Jesus was the Messiah.
- At St. Mark's home, Jesus had His Last Supper meal.
- **Who was St. Mark?**  
St. Mark was one of the seventy apostles of our Lord. It was at his house that Jesus Christ our Lord made the Last Supper. At Gethsemane, when all forsook Jesus and fled just before His arrest, it was St. Mark, the young man, who stayed behind until the soldiers laid hold of him and he escaped. (Read Mark 14:50-52). St. Mark was the Apostle who preached Christianity in Egypt and he is its Patron Saint.
- After the Commemoration of the Saints, we pray for all the people whose souls God has taken into heaven.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) We remember the saints and we study their lives so that we would be able to follow in their footsteps.
- (2) The saints intercede on our behalf before the throne of God. Their prayers and intercessions are well received and well heard by Him.
- (3) Each one of us should have a Patron Saint, a friend from the community of the saints with whom he talks, and whom he will have as a personal intercessor.



**The Cross is a Symbol of Salvation**

**The Passover Lamb**

**Bible reference:** Exodus 12

**Lesson content:** The Passover Lamb as a Symbol of Christ's salvation

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** the story of the Passover Lamb as a symbol of Christ's Crucifixion.
- **Feel:** God's love for His people in both the Old and the New Testament.
- **Practice:** thanking God for His love as part of their prayers.

**Bible verse:** *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us." (1 Corinthians 5:7)*



## Activities to introduce the lesson

You can use the one of the following ways to introduce the lesson.



### Handicraft

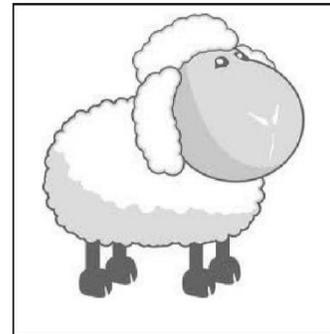
#### Let's Make a Lamb

##### Materials:

- Paper
- Scissors
- Watercolours
- Cotton
- Small Ziploc bags

##### Method

1. Print an image of a lamb onto pages of A4 paper. The image should take up one half of the page.
2. Distribute the materials to your students, giving each student an A4 page with the image of the lamb.
3. Ask the students to fold their A4 page in half, then ask them to cut out the lamb in such a way as to keep the two halves of the page connected from one side.
4. Ask them to mix red watercolour paint with water and put it in a small Ziploc bag. Then ask them to stick the bag between the two sides of the page at the lamb's neck.
5. They can also stick cotton around the lamb to decorate (this will be useful as the cotton will absorb the red water later on).
6. Instruct your students to keep the lamb to use later in the lesson.



#### The Passing of the Angel of Death

##### Materials:

- Cardboard
- Red watercolour paint
- Paintbrushes

##### Method:

1. Instruct the students to draw a picture of houses built consecutively next to each other
2. The red watercolour paint symbolises the blood of the slain lamb

3. Show the students how the Israelites marked their doors with the blood of the slain lamb and ask them to use the red paint to mark the doors of the houses in their picture

## The Lesson

The Israelites continued to live in the land of Egypt after Joseph's death. When the Pharaoh who knew and loved Joseph died, the Pharaoh who took his place humiliated God's people, forced them into hard labour and treated them as slaves. The people of Israel cried out to God to rescue them from slavery. The Lord heard their cries and appeared to Moses, saying to him "I have heard the cries of My people and have come to save them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh to tell him to free My people so that I may guide you out of the land of Egypt and return you to the land of your father Jacob, to the Promised Land." As you know, Pharaoh refused to release the people of Israel, the people that had been serving him. So God began inflicting plagues on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Do you remember what the plagues were?

- 1- The transformation of the river Nile's water into blood.
- 2- The plague of frogs.
- 3- The plague of lice.
- 4- The plague of flies.
- 5- Diseased livestock.
- 6- Boils on the Egyptians and their livestock.
- 7- The plague of hail.
- 8- The plague of locusts.
- 9- Darkness for 3 days.

All these plagues affected Pharaoh and his people. After each plague, Pharaoh would shout at Moses, promising to free the Israelites if Moses prayed to God to stop the plague. Each time God lifted the plague, Pharaoh would change his mind and refuse to release the people of Israel. After the 9<sup>th</sup> plague, God told Moses "there is one plague left to deliver that will torment the house of Pharaoh and the house of every Egyptian in the land. After this plague, Pharaoh will release My people". This was the plague that killed the firstborn of every house in the land of Egypt.

***But how were the Israelites protected from this plague? This is where the story of the lamb comes in!***

God spoke to Moses, saying "instruct each house of the children of Israel to slay and cook a lamb; if one lamb is too big for one household to eat then they must share it with their neighbour so that the whole lamb is eaten."

***But would any kind of lamb be acceptable or are there specific terms? (Because this lamb was to be a symbol of Christ). Everything in the sacrifice of the Passover lamb was to be a symbol of sacrifice of the Cross.***

And so God began to describe to Moses the terms of the Passover lamb...

- 1- It must be a one year old male lamb, taken from a sheep or a goat. The lamb must be without blemish.

*Just as our Lord Jesus Christ was holy and without sin.*

- 2- The lamb must be under your care from the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Each household must slay their lamb in the evening.

*Just as there was darkness from the 6<sup>th</sup> hour to the 9<sup>th</sup> hour of the evening that our Lord died on the cross.*

God continued to instruct Moses, saying “each household must take the blood of the slain lamb and mark it onto their door, on the top of the door frame and on both sides, for the angel of death will pass in the night and kill each firstborn. But every house marked with the blood of the lamb will be protected from this plague. No firstborn in a house marked with the blood of the lamb will die on this night.

Moses asked the Lord, “what shall we do with the lamb itself?”

The Lord answered Moses, saying “you must eat the lamb on this night, roasted by fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Make sure that no one boils the lamb in water and eats it, it must be cooked whole in fire only, from its head to its tail and with all its organs. Everyone must eat of the lamb until they are full. Any leftovers must be burned with fire in the morning. You must eat the lamb with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it quickly and in a rush, it is the Lord’s Passover.

The Lord continued to instruct Moses, saying “do not let a foreigner of the land of Israel eat of the Passover lamb, neither guest nor servant. Also, make sure none of the bones of the lamb are broken.”

### **Why did our Lord impose all these terms about the Passover lamb?**

**Because the Passover lamb was to be a symbol of Jesus’ Crucifixion...**

- 1- A lamb without blemish.

Jesus Christ was without sin.

- 2- A male lamb.

Jesus was to take the appearance of a man.

- 3- A lamb under your care until the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

Our Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month (Palm Sunday) and was arrested on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month (Covenant Thursday).

- 4- Slay the lamb in the evening.

It was in the evening that Jesus was arrested. It was also in the evening that the people cried out to Pilate saying “crucify Him! His blood will be on us and on our children”. Our Lord also gave up His spirit on the cross on the 9th hour, and remained hanging on the cross until the 11th hour.

- 5- Mark the blood on the top of the door frame and on both sides and your firstborn will be protected from death.

For it was only through the blood of our Lord that we were to be freed from the bonds of death.

- 6- Eat the lamb roasted by fire, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Eat it quickly and in a rush.

Unleavened bread & eaten in a rush as we wish to quickly and urgently escape the bonds of death.

Bitter herbs & roasted by fire as a symbol of the painful and bitter way our Lord chose to die for our sins.

***‘Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. (John 6:53-57)***

- 7- None of the lamb should be left until the morning.

This was a sign that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was not left on the cross until the morning.

***...“because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay.” (Acts 2:27)***

- 8- No foreigner shall eat of the lamb.

Just as anyone who is not baptized in the Church cannot partake of the Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

- 9- None of the bones of the lamb shall be broken.

Just as none of Jesus’ bones were broken on the cross.

## Application



### Comprehension Questions

- Can you remember the 10 plagues of Egypt?
- What were the terms God gave Moses for the Passover Lamb?
- What did each term symbolise?



### Exercise...

To have Holy Communion weekly to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus which is of the new covenant.



### Prayer

***Meditate on it ... live it ... pray it on the level of the kids***

O Lord, You endured the injustice of the wicked, You gave Your back to be scourged, You gave Your cheeks to be slapped. For my sake, O my Master, You did not turn Your face from the shame of being spat upon. (Divine Liturgy of St. Gregory)

Grant me, O my Saviour, to consider Your suffering my treasure, the crown of thorns my glory, Your sorrows my joy, Your bitterness my sweetness, Your blood my life, and Your love my pride and my thanksgiving. (Annual Fraction to the Son)



## Evaluation

Did your children get the aim of the lesson:

The Aim	At the end of the lesson check that you children can:	Evaluation
<b>Know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remember the 10 plagues</li><li>• Remember the terms of the Passover lamb and their symbolism</li><li>• Remember the lesson's Bible verse</li></ul>	
<b>Feel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appreciate and thank the Lord in prayer for His sacrifice for us</li><li>• Understand the sacrifice our Lord made for us on the cross</li></ul>	
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participate in the lesson's activities</li><li>• Consistently partake in Holy Communion</li></ul>	



The third week of the month of Tout  
(September)

## Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

**Bible reference:** Mark 10:46-52

**Lesson purpose:** To show the Lord Jesus' power to heal our spiritual blindness and to be able to see the heavenly kingdom which is prepared for us.

**Bible verse:** *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me"*  
(*Luke 18:38*)



# The Lesson

## PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

### INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

Can you see? Everything? Can you see Heaven? Can you see God?

Many of us are actually blind and cannot see at all. We cannot see the things that are really important in life.....Christ, Heaven.

- Read the Gospel according to St. Mark Chapter 10:46-52, explain and discuss with the students its contents.
- This miracle of healing blind Bartimaeus was the last declared miracle that our Lord Jesus did before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11) and all the events that led to His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to heaven. Jesus performed this miracle of opening the eyes as His last one before crucifixion to emphasize the need for all human beings to have spiritual sight and the ability to see and appreciate the heavenly kingdom. There are so many people who have eyes but they cannot see and have ears but cannot hear. We mean by this that they are spiritually blind and spiritually deaf; therefore, they cannot accept the word of God.
- Bartimaeus was miserable because he was blind; he could not see the sun, the sky, the trees, etc. and someone had to lead him to walk. He was also poor and someone had to give him some money.
- The people around Bartimaeus could not stop his shouting.
- Whence heard that the Lord Jesus was around, he thought that this was his chance of a life-time. He shouted "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me" This shows that Bartimaeus had faith that Jesus was the Messiah for whom the Jews were waiting, to come from the descendants of King David. This is the reason why he called Jesus "Son of David". It was also known that when the Messiah comes, He will open the eyes of the blind "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" (Isaiah35:5). There were so many people around Jesus, but one of them had faith in Jesus' power and presented his needs to Jesus asking for His mercy.
- Jesus is kind and powerful and we must ask Him for our needs.

- “Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord” PS 130:1. David who wrote this Psalm had an experience. King Saul wanted to kill him by any means. But David cried from the depths and God protected him. Let us cry from the depth of our hearts as David did and Bartimaeus did.
- When an individual is baptized he or she obtains spiritual understanding. “We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding” John 5:20. We have to maintain this pure understanding that we get when we are baptized. If we lose it because of sins we gain it through repentance. This is why repentance is considered a “second baptism” because through repentance Christ will open up our spiritual eyes (i.e. understanding) to know the truth just as he gave sight to Bartimaeus.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) Our Lord Jesus Christ who opened the eyes of the blind man so that he could see Him and follow Him is also able to heal our spiritual blindness in order to see Him in His loving kindness and follow Him.
- (2) We have to ask our Lord Jesus in our prayers to give us depth and understanding of His Word when we read the Holy Bible so that we can get a clear message from Him. Then we can truly live by His Word in our daily lives, love Him from the depth of our hearts and love all people as well.



**I believe in One God**

## A Trinity is His Nature

**Bible reference:** Deuteronomy 6:4, Genesis 1:26, Matt 28:19, Luke 1:35, 1 John 5:7

**Lesson content:** The Holy Trinity

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** What is the Holy Trinity?
- **Feel:** The work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
- **Practice:** prayer of the Third Hour, asking the Holy Spirit to fill us and sanctify us, and teach us to do God's will.

**Bible verse:** *“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” (1 John 5:7)*



## **Background information to servant**

### **Doctrine of the Trinity and its union**

- The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was not made up by human beings. It is a truth declared to us by God Himself for the salvation of man. Therefore, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, like all doctrines of faith, is not a result of human ideas, but its roots come from God's declaration, and from Him all its [doctrine] teachings are derived, and are bound to Him. No church doctrine exists without it stemming from the Divine declaration that is fulfilled by Jesus Christ "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known." (John 1:18). The Son - the Word of God, has made it known to us, revealing the mystery of the Trinity, for He is the One who *"revealed to us the light of the Father; Who bestowed upon us the true knowledge of the Holy Spirit."* (Liturgy of St Gregory).
- The trinity of idolatry/paganism: "Isis, Osiris, Horus" are 3 separate entities, husband, wife and son, each having a separate spirits, mind and self, as well as having separate time gaps between each of them.
- The Christian Trinity: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are equal in Divinity, perfection, eternity, omniscience (all knowing), and holiness – 3 hypostases in one essence.

### **The Divine essence has three individual qualities/characteristics**

- The quality of 'presence': the presence of God is called the 'Father' which is a Syriac work to mean the origin, or the presence, or the Divine entity/existence.
- The quality of having 'intellect and wisdom': God is rational/intelligent, in fact He is the source of intellect and wisdom across all existence, we call this the 'Son' or the 'Word'. The Greek name for the 'Word' is 'Logos', derived from the Greek verb 'Lego', which means to say/vocalize/pronounce/enunciate, He is the origin of intellectual articulation, by this we understand that the phrase 'the Word' means 'the articulate mind of God' or 'the spoken mind of God'.
- Quality of being 'alive': God is alive, he is the source of all life, we call this quality the 'Holy Spirit'. Since God is present Himself (Father), articulates through His Word (the Son), alive by His Spirit (Holy Spirit), we can say, in the name of the Father and His Word and His Holy Spirit.

This is how we pray and make the sign of the Cross saying, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, One God. Amen. We do not say, in the name's of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Also, we don't say 'in the names of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit.

- The truth of the Holy Trinity did not begin when the only begotten Son was incarnated, but it is an eternal and infinite truth. In the Old Testament we find excerpts that the [church] fathers have found to reveal the truth about the Holy Trinity, such as when God said in plural terms "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." (Genesis 1:26). Also, by the incarnation of the only begotten Son, the true nature of God was declared, this has fully revealed to us the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

### **How can the three be one? What is the nature of this union?**

- The idea of being numerous in unity, is not strange or irrational (for example a human being).
- Let's not conclude that the Father is the Son and is the Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son and is not the Holy Spirit.
- St Athanasius the Apostolic says "The qualities of the Father are exactly the qualities of the Son, except for one difference, the Father is a father and the Son is a son."  
How would the qualities of the Father be the same as that of the Son? The Son is of the Father and carries the essence of the Father.
- St Gregory the Theologian said, "There is a unity between the three and a distinction, which is beyond any expression and beyond understanding. The distinction between the hypostases does not weaken the nature of the unity, and the unified essence does not lead to the mingling of the three hypostases.

## Activities to introduce the lesson

You can use the one of the following ways to introduce the lesson.

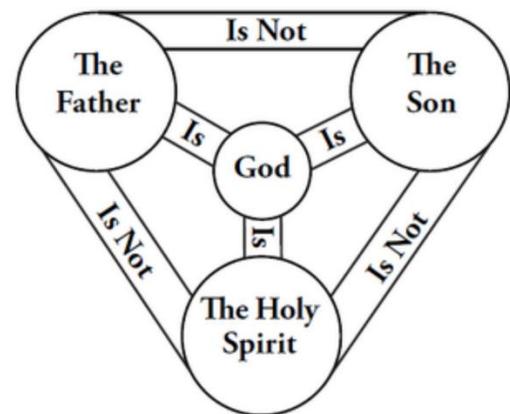


### Discovery Activity

1. The 'Triangle' analogy (below)
2. A paper cut-out illustration

Explain that in the Old Testament, we used to deal with God the Father, in the presence of His Son and Holy Spirit. In the New Testament we deal with God the Son, in the presence of the Father and Holy Spirit.

Verses that help to explain the Holy Trinity "...*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*" (Luke 1:35)



"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:17), during the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Son was in the water, the Father was in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit was in the image of a dove.

**Explore:** Light a candle, what do you see? Flames, light, and heat.

Which came first? All 3 are together

Can you separate the? Of course not.

Fire is made up of flames, which produces light and makes heat

## The Lesson

- The lesson suggests that a group of servants perform a simplistic (and unnecessary) role play to explain the nature of the Trinity.
- A child is upset and confused because he was made fun of in school. One of the other children in school accused him of worshipping three Gods, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The boy does not understand how to explain to the other child that all three are one in essence, so he asks Abouna.

- Abouna explained: If an ant was to pass by us and if we were to talk to her and describe ourselves, the ant will not have the mind to understand because there is a big difference between us and the ant. Similarly, there is a big difference between us and God, there are many things about God that we will not be able to understand because God's nature is much greater than we are. However, we can use some analogies to try and understand the nature of the Holy Trinity. For example, the analogy of the candle; one cannot have a flame without light and heat, or heat without light and a flame, all three elements must be present together, and it is one fire.
  
- Similarly, God is one, although He has three hypostases [single=hypostasis, plural=hypostases]. The word hypostasis means a living being (Divine being), distinctive in nature and cannot be separated from the other 2 hypostases that are part of one Divine nature. All the three together are one God, they cannot be separated, without this unity the Divine essence would not exist. The Father cannot be present without the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son cannot be present without the Father and Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit cannot be present without the Father and the Son.
  
- Another analogy is that of the sun in the sky. The sun has a core/disk, it gives out light and heat, we cannot have a sun without light and heat, and they are not three separate suns. (1 x 1 x 1 = 1)
  
- Human beings are also created in the image of God, they have a rational mind, self (human), and a soul, all three are one.
  
- Our Christian faith does not have strange things, everything is logical, but one may have to ask to understand.
  
- The doctrine of the Trinity can be summarized as follows:
  1. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one essence and one God.
  2. Each of the three hypostases have personal elements/characteristics but they are one.
  3. If one of the hypostases is separated from the other, which is impossible, it would no longer be God.
  4. Each one of the hypostases is in union with the other two hypostases, and this unity that cannot be separated, is God.

5. Each hypostasis is equal to the other two hypostases in its being/existence and glory.
6. The act of salvation performed by each of the hypostases is best described in the Holy Bible as follows: first is the Father the source, second is the Son of God (born of the Father), third is the holy comforter (begotten from the Father).
7. Just as the three holy hypostases are one Divine being, so they are one in the will, intentions, authority, eternity, and all other Divine characteristics, but they each have a different role to perform, which cannot be separated from the other two – in everything, the Father works with the Son and Holy Spirit [and vice versa], (i.e. everything was made by God, the living being, with His rational mind/intellect).  
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are: Creator, Redeemer, Pantocrator, Holy, Loving, Merciful.

### **Verses from the Holy Bible**

#### Old Testament

- “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26)
- “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)

#### New Testament

- “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)
- “And the angel answered and said to her, “*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35)
- “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” (1 John 5:7)

### **Important note for servants**

No example can fully explain the nature of God. However, we use examples and analogies to shorten the distance and get closer to understanding, especially for children. The hypostases are not parts that God is made up from, because He is not put together like humans. They are also not descriptions/characteristics of God, because they are intertwined with loving relationships, witnessing, consignment, and dialogue.

**Lesson’s verse:** “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” (1 John 5:7)

## Application



### Comprehension Questions

- What is the Holy Trinity and how can He be one?
- Describe the analogies used to explain the Trinity.
- Describe what is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and why is He a precious gift from God.
- Repeat the lesson's verse.



### Exercise...

The Holy Trinity is a declaration from God and exist since eternity. Each of the hypostases have a role, the Father is the creator, the Son is the redeemer, and the Holy Spirit declarer of the salvation. but all three are one in essence, and all are one God. The hypostases cannot be separated from one another. We worship One God, not three. The Son existed with the Father and Holy Spirit since the beginning



### Prayer

***Meditate on it ... live it ... pray it on the level of the kids***

Prayer of the Third Hour from the Agbeya



## Theophany

### God is One with the Holy Trinity

#### A journey to the Council of Constantinople

**Bible reference:** Job 2:19, Deuteronomy 6:4, Romans 3:30

**Lesson content:** God is One with the Holy Trinity

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** God is One with three hypostases, know the evidence of the nature of the Holy Spirit (The Holy Spirit is God)
- **Feel:** The Holy Spirit is inside you.
- **Practice:** Reciting the Creed every morning when you pray, understanding our Orthodox faith and confess/acknowledge it. Attend the Liturgy and partake in Holy Communion regularly.

**Bible verse:** *“The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” (Job 33:4)*

## Background information to servant

- We are currently celebrating the feast of the Epiphany/Theophany, where God declared to us His Divinity and that He is one with three hypostases. The Son was being baptized in the Jordan river, the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit was present in the form of a dove which alighted upon Him.
- The Bible says: “And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt 3:17). This was not an incarnation of the Holy Spirit but an appearance. He [Holy Spirit] appeared to St John and to us in this image in order for us to believe, and in His appearance He declares to us that He is one with the Father and the Son in dignity and authority, and one mystery.
- St John said: the dove (Holy Spirit) ‘alighted upon Him’ because the Spirit inspires the words and works of the prophets, however the Holy Spirit is always in Jesus Christ.
- Some may say ‘upon Him’ may imply that they are separate, however we should take into consideration that in this part he is referring to the son of man, since He is being baptized as the son of man [human]. According to His Divinity, the Holy Spirit is not ‘upon Him’ but is ‘in Him’ because the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father.
- St Athanasius the Apostolic said: The Holy Spirit resting upon Jesus Christ is for sanctifying us. He also said that the Father does all things with His Word in the Holy Spirit, and by this the unity of the Trinity is preserved.
- Christ came in the flesh and the Holy Spirit prepared the way for Him, He came in the flesh but the Holy Spirit had never parted from Him. He performed miracles and granted things by the Holy Spirit, e.g. forgiveness of sin is granted by the Holy Spirit, “<sup>And</sup> such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11).
- The Holy Spirit appeared in a physical form so that St John can see it and know it, as he said, “I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’” (John 1:33).

- Finally, the voice of God the Father came from the heavens to say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”, The voice did not say “Now you have become my son”, He has is the only one that is called The Son and has always been the Son of God. To you and me however, he says ‘Now you have become my son’, since we are sons and daughters by adoption but not naturally. He is an eternal Son, but you and I have come into grace recently.
- At this stage we will briefly consider the heresies of Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople (495-511 AD), and their responses. Macedonius rejected the Divinity of the Holy Spirit but did not reject the Divinity of Jesus Christ. His teachings were judged by the second ecumenical Council at Constantinople (381 AD).
- St John’s Gospel was used to respond to the heresies, when Jesus Christ said about the Holy Spirit, “All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you. “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” (John 16:15-16), and that He doesn’t speak on His own authority, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (John 16:13). Also based on the fact the He witnesses to the Son based on what was said by Jesus Christ, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” (John 15:26).
- Macedonius forgot what the Divine revelations said about the Son, “Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” (John 5:19). If Macedonius had read the verse carefully, he would not have assumed that the expression “the Son can do nothing of Himself” implied the Son is lower in status than the Father, and if we followed the same assumption as Macedonius, we would also be guilty of the heresy of rejecting the Divinity of the Son. Since the erroneous assumption would imply that the hypostases of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit does not work together, each one is separate from the other two.

- Many verses prove the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, for example, in the book of Job, “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” (Job 33:4), He is the God the Creator.
- Also, in the conversation with Ananias and Sapphira, St Paul implied that whoever lied to the Holy Spirit lies to God, “...You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:4). This is because the Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father is God and the Son is God, in the same essence. Many verses prove the Divinity and hypostasis of the Holy Spirit.

## **Activities to introduce the lesson**

**You can use the one of the following ways to introduce the lesson.**



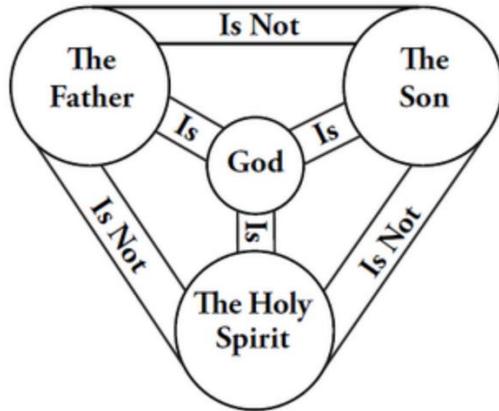
### **Drama ...Pantomime**

Perform a role-play of the Council of Constantinople, comprising the roles of Pope Timothy Patriarch of Alexandria, St Gregory the Theologian, and Macedonius the heretic at Constantinople. Macedonius would first present his heresy, then Pope Timothy would get up and defend the Holy Spirit, quoting a part of the Creed. St Gregory would then get up to defend the Christian faith, quoting the excerpt from his Gregorian Liturgy about the Holy Spirit, “O You who are, Master, Lord, true God of true God: Who revealed to us the light of the Father; Who bestowed upon us the true knowledge of the Holy Spirit.”. Pope Timothy would subsequently provide a summary that the Holy Spirit is God, and is not an angelic creature. The servant would conclude that the faith in the Coptic Orthodox church has been handed down to us by Christ through the Apostles and the church fathers.



## Discovery Activity

Look at the gold triangle analogy, it has three sides but is still one triangle.



## The Lesson

### Intro

- Today's lesson will take us on a journey with several stops, so we must be fully focused.
- **First stop:** the journey begins over 2000 years ago, when our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnated, born from St Mary, grew up, and was baptised by St John. We call this the feast of the Epiphany as well as the feast of the Theophany [appearance of God], when God declared to us that He is One God with three hypostases. This simply means that God has an existence/being/self, He has a Mind, and a Spirit, just like you and I have a body, mind and a soul. The difference is that you and I are limited but God is unlimited, so we're trying to get closer to understanding is nature.
- We call this the Theophany because during the baptism of Christ they saw the Son being baptised, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove coming down to settle on Him, and Father was heard saying this is my beloved Son with whom I am pleased.
- Why did this happen? God was incarnated for two important reasons, firstly to redeem us, secondly to change our nature that has been corrupted by sin, hence the Theophany (appearance of God) took place. He did not need to be baptised, but did it to demonstrate

to us that when we get baptised we become His children and He will give us His Holy Spirit to sanctify us. This is what He said about the Holy Spirit, “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:14).

- **Second stop:** there are people that don't understand this, and assume that the Holy Spirit must therefore be less than the Son, if He [Holy Spirit] takes from Him [Son] then the Holy Spirit does not have everything like the Son and is therefore not God?!
- Macedonius was the man who came up with this assumption, when someone says such erroneous things that go against God's teaching or God's nature it is called a heresy. When heresies arise, it is important that the Patriarch and Bishops come together to create a council meeting to respond to these heresies. Indeed, a council was formed in Constantinople, it was called the Second Ecumenical Council year 381 AD, and it was attended by 150 Bishops, including Pope Timothy I, Patriarch of Alexandria (22nd Pope).
- **Third stop:** Macedonius did not understand that the three hypostases must work together all the time, just like if you were to think of an idea, for people to see this idea, you must:
  1. Be present, have an existence.
  2. Be alive, can't think if you're dead.
  3. Must have a rational mind to think with.
- So if we were to mention yourself and your spirit, or yourself and your mind, neither of those are lesser than one another. If you think Macedonius may be correct, which is impossible, then consider what was said in the book of Job, “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” (Job 33:4), which means that the Holy Spirit is a creator, no one can create other than God. Also, St Paul said to Ananias and Sapphira that when they lied to the Holy Spirit, they were lying to God, because the Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father is God and the Son is God, in the same essence.
- Let's look together at the verse that confused Macedonius and led him to commit the heresy, Jesus Christ said, “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:14-15). This means that He [Holy Spirit] does not only take of what is the Son's and declares it, but also takes of what is the Father's and declares it, because whatever belongs to the Son also belongs to the Father, this is why Jesus Christ continued to say “Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”

- Therefore, the Holy Spirit takes of what is Jesus Christ's and declares to us, not because He [Holy Spirit] is lesser than the Son, as Macedonius claimed, but to affirm that Christ is the Head of the church, and that the gifts and talents given to us are from Christ, and that we can abide as parts of one body, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and is also the Spirit of the Son, Christ, as it was written (1Peter 1:11).

## Application



### Comprehension Questions

- Be able to recite the Creed from "Truly we believe...".
- Describe the scene of the Christ's baptism in the Jordan river.
- Explain your faith is the Holy Trinity as One God
- Explain why the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople was formed
- Memorize the lesson's verse.



### Exercise...

- Recite the Creed every morning in your prayers, and have an understanding of the Orthodox faith.
- Ask the Holy Spirit that dwells in us to guide us and help us to truly live like children of God.
- Attend the baptism of a friend/relative



## The Strength of The Faith

**Bible reference:** Mark 2:3-12 “A Paralytic Carried by Four Men”, John 4:46-53 “Healing the Son of the Nobleman”

**Lesson purpose:** To learn that if we have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing will stand in our way

**Bible verse:** “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrew 11:1)



## Background information to servant

### **LEVELS OF FAITH**

**By H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

- There might be a person *"who is weak in the faith"* (Rom 14:1) or, *"of little faith."* Mt 8:26
- Another person needs to *"perfect what is lacking in his faith"*. (1 Thess 3:10) A third is *"slow of heart to believe,"* like the two disciples of Emmaus. (Luke. 24:25)
- On the contrary to this, there are levels of faith...
- A faithful person,
- Another, *"not a novice,"* (I Tim 3:6)
- A third, *"... his faith grows exceedingly,"* (2Thess 1:3) or he *"abounds in faith."* (2Cor. 8:7)
- A fourth, *"continues in the faith, grounded and steadfast"* (Col 1:23)
- A fifth, *"steadfast in the faith."* (1 Pet 5:9)
- A sixth, *"rich in faith."* (Jas 2:5).
- Above all those, a seventh, *"full of faith."* (Acts 6:5)
- The Lord said about some, *"great is your faith"*. (Mt. 15:28)
- There is a strong faith in which *"signs will follow those who believe"* (Mk 16:17) and faith that, *"could remove mountains"* (1Cor. 13:2), and a greater faith which makes everything possible, *"all things are possible to him who believes."* (Mk 9:23)
- Concerning all this, what is your position in faith? Are you a true believer? Do you have that... *"faith working through love"*? (Gal. 5:6) Do you grow in faith? Or is your faith strong and great? Or you need prayers so *"that your faith should not fail"*? (Lk. 22:32)
- Brethren: *"examine yourselves as to whether you are in faith. Prove yourselves?"* (2Cor13:5)

- Undoubtedly, the word faith bears deep meanings.

## The Lesson

### PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Have you ever been in such a tough situation and you had no idea how you were going to get out of it?  
Maybe you are having a difficult time at school, at home, or someone you love is very sick and there is no medicine to make this person better.  
How would you feel? Lost? Confused? Worried?  
Would you lose hope?  
Today, we are going to explore how if we have faith in God, everything will work out to our advantage, no matter what happens.
- **What is faith?**
  - Faith is the strong belief in the power of God.
  - If we have faith in God, we can even move mountains, as our Lord Jesus said.
  - In the Old Testament, Abraham had faith in God. So, when God ordered him to leave his home town and relatives and go to where God was going to tell him, he obeyed...he did not even hesitate. His faith told him that God will take care of him, no matter what, read this in class (Heb. 11:8): **“By faith Abraham obeyed** when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive an inheritance. And he went, **not knowing** where he was going.”
- Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the **evidence of things not seen**. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. **“By faith we understand** that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:1-3). This shows us that by faith we understand things that are not seen through the evidences which are seen. For example, when we look at creation around us, the sun, the moon, the sky, etc., we can understand and have faith that there is a Creator who is God.
- Faith influences the behaviour of people towards God. People who have faith do things that show their belief in God. For example, Abraham had faith: **“By faith Abraham obeyed** when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive an inheritance. And he went, **not knowing** where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8). Please read about the faith of

the important personalities in the Old Testament as mentioned in Hebrews 11:4-end, and give some of these examples to the students.

- Tell the two stories from the Bible: “A Paralytic Carried by Four Men” and “Healing the Son of the Nobleman”.

- **“A Paralytic Carried by Four Men”:**

- After a few days, our Savior entered Capernaum and it became known that He is in one of the houses which may be Peter’s house. A large crowd came to the house to the extent “that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.”
- Four men came carrying a paralytic seeking the power of the Lord Jesus to heal him. The paralytic was heavy, they came a long way and when they arrived, they could not reach Jesus because of the crowd. It was easy to give up. But they did not. Their faith was strong. So, they insisted on having the sick man brought in front of Jesus somehow. “They uncovered the roof where He was. And when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When **Jesus saw their faith**, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”
- These four men represent the church. Having strong faith in her Lord, she feels responsible to go and bring the world which is paralyzed by sin before the healing power of Christ.

- **“Healing the Son of the Nobleman”:**

Our Lord Jesus was in Cana of Galilee. The sick person was in a different city; he was in Capernaum. The nobleman came to Cana of Galilee seeking Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son. “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said, “Go your way, your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.” The man believed in Jesus’ power to heal even without touching the sick child or going to Capernaum. That was just by the word that He spoke.

- Judas Iscariot did not have faith although he saw all the miracles that Jesus did, but still he betrayed Jesus and loved money more than Him.

- St. Peter had gone a long way in his faith. At one point in time he denied that he knew Jesus in front of a servant. But after he gained the strength of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost, he was able to witness without any fear in front of the highest Jewish council that Jesus is the Messiah.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) A strong faith in God can even make miracles happen. Have that kind of faith and see...God will never let you down. Let us not question the word of God. Let us only obey, believe and act.
- (2) As the four men carrying the paralytic did not give up despite the several difficulties they faced, we must never give up. We must do our best and have faith that God will have everything work to our advantage no matter what happens.
- (3) One also has to ask himself or herself: What is the reality concerning the strength of my faith? Let me make this a regular prayer: asking God to enhance my faith. Lord give me "...the hope of righteousness by faith." (Gal. 5:5).



## By Faith the Walls of Jericho Fell Down

**Bible reference:** Joshua Chapters 5&6s

**Lesson purpose:** To learn that we must trust and do what God is telling us even if we do not understand now. The two stories in the lesson show that we win if we submit to God easily.

**Bible verse:** *“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.” (Hebrews 11:30)*



## Background information to servant

### **FAITH**

***By H.H. Pope Shenouda III***

- Faith is not just a set of rigid beliefs that we learn by from theology and teachings of the church. But faith is rather a deep inner conviction and complete confidence in God, His attributes and His work.
- Our faith in God, His existence, care and protection gives us inner peace and comfort in the heart and in the mind. It gives us confidence that as far as God exists. He cares about us more than we do about ourselves. Therefore we have to live in this peace and continue in it.
- The believer never becomes disturbed because anxiety contradicts faith... faith in God's love, care and protection...
- If one believed in God's existence everywhere, one would have an inner feeling of the holiness of any place, since God is always there. As he feels secure in the presence of God, he also feels the necessity to be precise in all his actions, knowing that God sees, hears and observes all his deeds...
- In every sin, one says with the righteous Joseph, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Gen. 39:9).
- One's faith that God reads one's thoughts and knows the secrets of his heart, his intentions and feelings; such faith grants him modesty in his thoughts and feelings, making him bashful of God who examines all these emotions...
- One's faith in the world to come and the day of judgment when he gives an account of all his deeds, thoughts, feelings and sayings, makes him sure that this world is perishing. One then sees the need to be prepared for that fearful day working for eternal life after death...
- One keeps this thought in his heart saying with David, "Lord make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. " (Ps 39:4)
- Faith is not just to be mentally convinced but is an action inside the heart, to lead one through his whole life...

- It is not a specific moment where Man accepts God. It is a life-time job, where one lives in confidence that, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb 11:1)
- Therefore, the word faith in most cases means the whole Christian life with all its beliefs and deeds...

## The Lesson

### PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Two weeks ago, we spoke together about faith. What did we learn from that lesson? (We must do our best and have faith that God will have everything work to our advantage no matter what happens).

Today, we are going to continue to talk about the power of faith.

Imagine that there is a very tall, strong, brick wall.

Now imagine that someone told you that if you walk around this wall a few times, and then shout as loud as you can, this very strong, tall wall would just crumble and fall.

Would you believe this person? Would you do it?

Well, this is exactly what happened to Joshua.

Let us explore this story together

- Faith is the After the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, "Now therefore, rise, go over this Jordan to the land which I am giving to them - the children of Israel. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."
- The Israelites laid siege around the city of Jericho. They camped around it, so that no one could go in or out. Then the Lord instructed Joshua how to capture the city. The priests carried the ark around the city walls, preceded by seven priests blowing rams' horns. The armed soldiers went ahead of the trumpeters and the rearguard followed the ark. Joshua told the people to be silent as they marched. They marched around the city in this manner once a day for six days. Then on the seventh day, they marched around seven times. During the seventh march, the priests blew the trumpets and all the people shouted as loud as they could. The walls of the city collapsed, and the Israelites walked right into the city and they seized it and massacred the inhabitants. Those inhabitants were non-believers of God.

- We have to trust the word of God even if we do not understand it. Follow what has been said and you will fully understand later. The Israelites under the leadership of Joshua obeyed what God told them to do in order to capture Jericho. It did not make sense that encircling Jericho, walking around it and blowing horns would make the walls of the city fall. But they did. This is the power of faith.
- At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, St. Mary asked the Lord Jesus on behalf of the people to give them wine because they ran out of it. Jesus said to them, “Fill the water pots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. The people in the wedding had faith and obeyed Jesus by filling the water pots with water. It does not make sense that filling the water pots with water would help to get wine. But they did it anyway. With God everything is possible even if we cannot understand now or even if it does not make sense. But let us obey.
- Let us praise the Name of the Lord because He takes care of us as He did with the Israelites.
- Blessed are those who believe without seeing.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) As we grow up we will understand more about what God is telling us to do. All we have to do now is trust God and obey Him.
- (2) If we have faith, we must not worry about anything because we believe that our life is in God's hands. Hence, a true believer in God will always have peace.



## How to Grow in your Faith? – (I)

**Bible reference:** Mark 9:17-31

**Lesson purpose:** To learn that in order for us to grow in our faith, we have to ask the Lord in our prayers to strengthen our faith. This is part I of a series of two lessons on the steps of growing in our faith

**Bible verse:** *“I believe, Master, help my unbelief.” (Mark 9:24)*



# The Lesson

## PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Last week we talked about the walls of Jericho and how they fell because of the faith of Joshua and the Israelites. We learned that even if we do not understand what God is telling us to do, all we have to do now is have faith by trusting God and obeying Him, because we will understand more as we grow up.

Two weeks before that, we also spoke about faith, and learned that God will have everything work to our advantage.

We now know that having faith is so important: The more faith you have, the more power from God that you will get.

But, wait a minute! How do we even get this faith? Did you ever think of that?

Today, we will learn how to grow in our faith.

- Tell the story of the father who brought his son to the disciples, then to Jesus, possessed by a dumb spirit. (Mark 9:17-31)
- Emphasize the following points:
  - 1) Jesus said to the boy's father: "Bring him to Me."

In other words: No doubt that you came here knowing that, if anybody could do anything at all for your child, that somebody would be Jesus Christ. Then, what are you waiting for? "Bring him to Me", said the Lord Jesus.

We go through the same thing ...We have a problem or a need .... We try everything to have the problem solved or the need fulfilled ...All our efforts go down the drain, all our struggle is in vain ... We realize that we need a miracle from God to save the situation. And many times we stop at that.

Here, our Lord Jesus is telling you ... What are you waiting for? Bring this problem or this need to Me.

- 2) "If you can believe..."

Again Jesus said to the boy's father: "If you can believe ... all things are possible to him who believes."

In other words: Do you have faith? Things can happen only if you have faith. In fact Jesus is saying: “Mr. ...The problem is not whether I can heal your boy or not ...The problem is whether or not you have faith that I can heal him.” The more faith you have, the more power you get.

Of course, the father had some faith, otherwise he wouldn't have brought his boy to our Lord. But again he had some doubts too. For many long years he had met one frustration after the other. He had taken his child from one doctor to the other ...none could help. He had tried all kinds of medicine ...none could cure him. He brought him even to Jesus' disciples, and even those could not cast away the dumb spirit.

The father was very honest when he spoke to the Master: “I believe, Master, help my unbelief.”

That was one of the short prayers in the Bible, but it was very honest, very sincere and very strong.

He was saying: “I have faith ...but my faith is not strong enough ...Lord, strengthen my faith.”

- Now ask the students: How do you grow in your faith? How do you strengthen your faith?  
The answer is: By prayer  
Be persistent in your prayer. Make it honest, sincere and strong. But how?
- How do you make your prayer very honest, very sincere and very strong?  
Or, putting the question in a different way: Why do you sometimes feel that your prayer is weak?  
Invite answers. The answers could be something like this:
  - Because we pray at the end of the day, when we are tired and very sleepy.
  - Because when we pray in the morning, we are rushing to get ready to go to school.
  - Sometimes we pray even without thinking ... etc.
- It is good that you pray. But I don't think that you pray just because you want to pray or because you have to pray.
- You want your prayer to be heard and answered. You want to have things moving. You want to feel that you are improving and growing in your faith, in your behaviour ...in your spiritual life.

- How do you do that?

Very simple ...Take some time off before you pray. Jesus said: “When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matt. 6:6). After you read your Bible and before you pray, prepare yourself for prayer.

- Count your blessings so that you can thank God for them one by one if possible .... Remember what we said about the life of thanksgiving the Sunday before last.
- Remember the sins that you committed that day ... the things that displeased God ...And when you pray, mention them before God and ask for His forgiveness ... Ask Him to help you overcome them.
- Remember the special things that you want to pray for
  - a) For yourself ... (as an example) Ask Him to strengthen your faith ...etc.
  - b) For others ...members of your family, your friends, your church, the Pope, your priest, your Sunday School teachers ... and those with special needs, somebody who is sick, or having an exam, or not coming to church, the poor and the hungry ...etc.
- Having prepared yourself ... then, pray.

I am sure your prayer will be very honest, very sincere and very strong.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) Before you pray, prepare yourself for prayer.
- (2) Ask God to help you grow in your faith.



## Prayer

***Meditate on it ... live it ... pray it on the level of the kids***

Please God, strengthen my faith so that I can take the sufferings and the pains without complaining to please You ... Strengthen my faith so that I can stand strong against all the temptations that face me ... so that I can feel secure being beside You, getting the protection I need, the help I need, the forgiveness I need, the peace I need and the wisdom and guidance I need. Amen.



## How to Grow in your Faith? – (II)

**Bible reference:** James 2:14-26

**Lesson purpose:** To learn the importance of —good works|| that should accompany our faith. One must make a move forward towards God. This is part II of a series of two lessons on the steps of growing in your faith.

**Bible verse:** *“Faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26)*



# The Lesson

## PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Don't just stand there, do something.

The teacher may tie together the previous lessons on faith as follows:

- 1) We spoke last Sunday about the faith of Abraham. He had the strongest faith that God would provide him with what he needed. But what if he had not obeyed God and had not left his home? How could he have shown that faith? God praised him because he showed his faith by his deeds, by his obedience to God's command, by taking a step forward.
- 2) The father who had a son possessed by a dumb spirit. He had some faith that Jesus could heal his little boy. But he didn't do anything about it. He didn't even bring the boy to Jesus.
- 3) We said that this, sometimes, happens to us. We have all the faith that God can do the miracle ...but that is the end of it, we stand there doing nothing. We have to take a step forward.
- 4) The four men who brought the paralytic to our Lord. They had a strong faith that Jesus could heal him ...a strong faith that made them persist and not give up in spite of all the obstacles they met. What if they had that faith, but they didn't go through the trouble of bringing the paralytic to Jesus? They took a step and moved forward.
- 5) Even the nobleman who couldn't bring his sick boy to Jesus to heal him. He did something ...He came to bring Jesus to the sick boy. He took a step and moved forward.
- 6) Joshua had great faith in God especially after God told him: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you." His faith assured him that God would give him the city of Jericho. But he didn't let his faith stop there. He obeyed God and he led the Israelites and encircled the city for seven days as God ordered him.
  - a. What are these examples telling us? They are telling us the following:
  - b. Have faith ...Do your part ...Obey God ...Use your talents ...and leave the rest to God.

- The disciple St. James gives us examples:
  - 1) If you see somebody who does not have clothes to wear or food to eat, and you tell him: “Go, put on some clothes and get something to eat so that you won’t get sick.], but you don’t give him clothes or food ...what is the use? Would your advice give him the warmth and the satisfaction he needs?”
  - 2) All through the Old and New Testaments, Abraham was known for his faith, why? Not because he said that he had faith ...but because, when he was asked to sacrifice his only beloved son Isaac, hard as it was on him, he obeyed.

Now, please read (James 2:14-26)

Again, what are these examples trying to tell us? They are telling us that faith has to be accompanied by good works. Or, that faith is not faith if it stands alone without good deeds. Or, to put it in another way: To grow in faith means to grow in good deeds. Someone said: “Without God, man cannot do ...and without man, God will not do.”

- Who is the greatest?  
Two of the most beloved disciples of our Lord, John and James, asked of Him, one day, Master, “Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory.” They believed that He was the Messiah, that is why they asked that.

The other Disciples, when they heard them request that, they began to be angry at them for their selfishness, and they were also angry with themselves for not thinking about these positions first.

So Jesus our Lord solved the problem by putting this principle very clear. He said that, in My Kingdom, “whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.” (Mark 10:43).

The thing that makes you great in the sight of God is faith which is shown through good works.

- How can I serve?  
You can point out the following:
  - 1) God is putting great importance on the little talent that you have or the service that you can do. The little service that a one-talent man can do equals, in God’s eyes, exactly the

great service that a five-talent man can do. Christ our Lord praised the poor widow who put in the synagogue's offering box two pennies.

- 2) God might have given us only a little human understanding or a little compassion, or a little kindness or even a little faith ...maybe our gift for prayer is small ...But, use these little talents and they will grow, or bury them and you will lose them. In other words, your talents, whether they are big or small, use them or lose them. There is no other way.
- 3) Remember the story about the fig tree. After 3 years without producing fruit, the owner gave order to cut it down. But, because of the plea (or the intercession) of the gardener, it was given a one-year grace ...it either bears fruit, or be cut down. Just to stay alive is not enough, we have to produce. This lesson is for every Christian, young or old.
- 4) You can use your talents by helping others, or pleasing your parents, or doing something for the church, or sacrificing a meal a week and giving its worth to the hungry, or giving up drinking pop for a month and sending the money to the poor ...etc. There are unlimited ideas and projects of service that one can think of. Try to help the students to express out their thoughts concerning this subject.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) To grow in faith means to grow in good deeds too. Take a step forward towards God and let Him help you.
- (2) In your preparation for prayer, find out whether or not you are using the talents which God has given you ...how are you using them? ...What more can you do? Thank God and ask Him to help you to grow more and do more.



**Our Holy Bible is Inspired by the  
Holy Spirit**

## The Faith of Dionysius the Patriarch

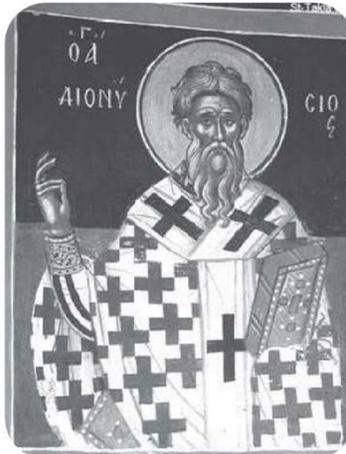
**Lesson Reference:** The Synaxarion (3rd of Abib) – Pope Dionysius

**Lesson content:** The Holy Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** the story of Dionysius the Patriarch's life.
- **Feel:** the importance and power of a Christian faith that is grounded in Holy Scripture.
- **Practice:** reading the Holy Bible, getting enlightened by its teachings and relevance.

**Bible verse:** *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16)*



# The Lesson

## Saint Dionysius, the 14<sup>th</sup> Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

- Orthodoxy means “the righteous faith”. We call Orthodoxy this because Orthodox Christians receive their faith as it was received by those who personally accepted it from Christ when He was incarnate on Earth. The Orthodox Church is now the only church that has preserved its faith without distortion or alteration through the ages, despite the attacks and challenges it has met over time.
- In this lesson we will get to know a righteous saint from the great Patriarchs of the Orthodox Church who laboured to preserve the Orthodox faith. This saint is called “Father Dionysius” and he is the 14<sup>th</sup> Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.
- The beginning of his life was a bit strange....
- Dionysius was born from non-Christian parents. They worshipped the planets and he grew up learning this religion from his parents, who taught him its rituals.
- One day, an elderly woman passed by him. She had a collection of papers and asked him “would you like to buy these papers?” These papers were a collection of letters written by St. Paul. Dionysius replied telling her “show me”, and he began to read them. He found himself enjoying the letters as they contained new, profound ideas and teachings. He turned to the elderly woman and asked her “could you bring me the rest of these letters and I will pay you more than their price?” She replied to him saying “yes, these were passed down from my ancestors, let me see if I can find the rest.” (For at that time there were no printers, so no one had a Bible at home, they relied on listening to the Bible being read out in church.)
- The elderly woman found more letters and brought them to Dionysius, but there were parts missing. She told him “this is all I have, but if you want the rest of the book then you can find it at my church.”
- Infatuated by the letters and eager to read more, Dionysius went to the church and there he met a deacon and asked him for St. Paul’s letters, which he then took and read to completion. The letters moved him so much that he decided to go to the Patriarch and learn from the Patriarchs themselves. He went to Bishop Demetrius, the 12<sup>th</sup> Patriarch of

the See of St. Mark, who taught him and gave him many books to read. He also enrolled him in the Theological School of Alexandria.

- Dionysius was baptised immediately and loved God very much. He fully understood the Christian doctrine and the Holy Bible, so much so that Bishop Demetrius appointed him as the people's Teacher. Father Athanasius spoke of him as "the Teacher of the World". Dionysius became the head of the Theological School of Alexandria. After the passing of Pope Demetrius and his successor, Pope Heraclas, the people agreed to appoint Dionysius as the 14<sup>th</sup> Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.
- Pope Dionysius witnessed much persecution and wrote the biographies of many martyrs that he saw personally. This is something the Church cherishes very much. In the year 257AD, the Roman Emperor Valerian persecuted the Church and exiled Pope Dionysius to a place in the desert. There, Pope Dionysius was a witness to Christ and baptised many people. This angered Emperor Valerian and so he exiled Pope Dionysius to a faraway place where no one was. Pope Dionysius spent his time in exile praying and writing letters to his people to encourage and support them. He also travelled around helping the poor and offering them love.
- Pope Dionysius was met with many heresies. One of these was the heresy of Sabellius, who opposed the idea of the Trinity, claiming that God was one indivisible entity who revealed Himself in three manifestations/modes throughout time as the Father in Creation, the Son in Salvation and the Spirit in Sanctification. Pope Dionysius defended the true Christian doctrine and stood against this heresy. When the Pope in Rome heard Pope Dionysius' argument against Sabellius' heresy, he exiled Sabellius. There were many other heresies that threatened the true Christian doctrine and Pope Dionysius challenged them all with the Grace of God.
- Pope Dionysius sat on the throne of the See of St. Mark for 17 years, 2 months and 10 days. May his blessings be with us all.
- It was reading the Holy Bible that brought Pope Dionysius to the Christian faith and turned him into the great Father of Orthodoxy that he was.

- **The Holy Bible**

*What does the Bible consist of?*

The Bible consists of two testaments – the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is made up of 39 books, including 7 other books not present in the Bibles we have today, but available in a separate book. The New Testament is made up of 27 books written after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*When was the Bible written?*

The first Scriptures in the Bible are more than 3, 500 years old. Moses wrote the first 5 books of the Bible in around 1445-1400 BC and St. John wrote the last book of the Bible around 98 AD.

*Who wrote the Bible?*

God inspired around 40 different authors to write down the Word of God. They all differed in their circumstances, education, vocation, location and time. Among them is St. Luke the physician, Daniel the minister, Matthew the tax collector and Peter the fisherman!

*Where was the Bible written?*

The Bible was written across 3 different continents (Asia, Africa and Europe). Parts of the Bible were written in king's palaces (Solomon), as well as in the midst of the desert (Moses), in the middle of battlefields (Joshua), in the pastures (David) and many other places.

*The Unity of the Bible*

Despite the fact that the Bible had many writers and was written in many different locations and across many different eras, the content of the Bible works in harmony in a way that defies all logic and reason. Despite its variability, the Bible delivers one unified message of love, one focused story of Salvation and one God. That is because the Bible is the inspired Word of the Holy Spirit.

*The Structure of the Bible*

Old Testament (5 – 12 – 5 – 5 – 12):

1- 5 books of Law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

- 2- **12** books of history (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
- 3- **5** books of wisdom (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)
- 4- **5** books of major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
- 5- **12** books of minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Deuterocanonical Books:

- 1- II Ezra
- 2- Tobit
- 3- Judith
- 4- I, II, III Maccabees
- 5- Wisdom of Solomon
- 6- Wisdom of Sirach
- 7- Baruch
- 8- Epistle of Jeremiah

New Testament (4 – 1 – 14 – 7 – 1):

- 1- **4** Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- 2- **1** book of history (Acts)
- 3- **14** epistles written by St. Paul (Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews)
- 4- **7** epistles (James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude)
- 5- **1** book of prophecy (Revelation)

*What evidence is there that indicates the Bible is the Divine Inspired Word of God?*

- 1- There is scripture in the Bible itself that testifies that the Bible is the Word of God: ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).***
- 2- The scriptures surpass the knowledge of the writers themselves. How could Isaiah write in full knowledge that ***“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14)*** or ***“It is He who sits above the circle of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22)***, when everyone at the time believed that the Earth was flat?
- 3- Despite writing in different times, the writers are in complete agreement in their teachings and prophecies. If the Bible was a series of lies, then how could so many writers across over

1600 years maintain and agree to commit the same lie? Also, the writers are very candid about their own shortcomings, like David who committed murder and adultery and Peter who denied Christ 3 times.

- 4- The Bible is understood by all kinds of people around the world, whether educated or otherwise.
- 5- The Bible has a strong effect on all kinds of people emotionally and spiritually.
- 6- The unity of the books of the Bible, as mentioned above.
- 7- Scientific knowledge mentioned in the Bible that surpasses the knowledge and technology of its time (eg. the Bible mentioned that the Earth was round before scientists discovered it!)
- 8- The fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament, especially those that describe events surrounding Jesus’ life (eg. the prophecy that Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).



## Evaluation

**Did your children get the aim of the lesson:**

The Aim	At the end of the lesson check that you children can:	Evaluation
<b>Know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know who Pope Dionysius is</li> <li>• Know his life story</li> <li>• Know the structure of the Bible, when it was written and by whom</li> </ul>	
<b>Feel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel confident in the strength and reliability of the Orthodox Church and its faith, which is grounded on Biblical knowledge</li> </ul>	
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the Bible every day and appreciate its application in their life</li> </ul>	



**Contentment and Thanksgiving**

**Job the Righteous**

**Bible Reference:** The Book of Job

**Lesson content:** Contentment and Thanksgiving

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** to give thanks to God for His goodness at all times.
- **Feel:** the power of God's protection.
- **Practice:** offering God reverence and thanksgiving.

**Bible verse:** *"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)*



## The Lesson

**Narrator:**

Job was from the Land of Uz and loved God very much. He was married and had 7 boys and 3 girls. Job was very wealthy and had a lot of livestock. He was a righteous man among people. The Lord was always by his side and blessed him in everything he had. He was loved by his children and loved by God. Job and his family would meet daily and Job would sacrifice one of his animals so that God would forgive any sins his children committed.

One day the angels were talking to God when Satan appeared among them.

**God:** Where have you come from?

**Satan:** From the Earth on which I walk.

**God:** Have you visited my servant Job? There are none like him on the Earth for he is a righteous man.

**Satan:** He is only righteous because of all Your blessings and all the things You have given him, but if You were to reach out your hand and strike him and all he has, he would leave you and no longer serve you.

**God:** Alright, I leave everything that Job has under your authority, do what you wish with it all on one condition – you do not touch Job’s soul.

**Narrator:**

The first thing Satan did was kill all of Job’s livestock. When Job’s children gathered in one house, a great wind came and blew the house down on them, killing them all.

Job confronted God, crying to him and praying, saying “the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord”. So instead of turning away from God as Satan thought he would, Job was content with what he had and gave thanks to God, acknowledging that his possessions were not his but the Lord’s.

On another day, the angels were speaking to God when Satan appeared among them again.

**God:** Where have you come from?

**Satan:** From the Earth on which I walk .

**God:** Have you visited my servant Job? There are none like him on the Earth for he is a righteous man, and has remained faithful to me. The trial you inflicted on him was pointless.

**Satan:** Job might be able to be deprived of his possessions, but I bet that if I hurt his bones and flesh that he would surely turn his back on you.

**God:** Fine, I give you authority over his bones and flesh, do with them what you wish on one condition – you do not touch Job’s soul.

**Narrator:**

And so Satan went to Job and covered his flesh in sores, boils and open wounds. When his wife saw him, she cried to him saying “are you still faithful to God after all that has been done to us?”

Job replied to her saying “you are talking like a foolish woman, shall we accept good from God and not trouble?”

Despite all his suffering, Job did not sin against God. God allowed Job to suffer so that Satan could see that he was wrong. Even though Job had his moments of weakness and questioned God, he remained faithful, praying for strength and giving thanks despite his suffering.

Because Job remained faithful to God and thanked him even in times of suffering, God restored to him more than what he had. The Lord gave him 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. He also blessed him with 7 sons and 3 daughters. Job lived 140 years and saw his children and grandchildren for 4 generations before passing away.



## Evaluation

Did your children get the aim of the lesson:

The Aim	At the end of the lesson check that you children can:	Evaluation
<b>Know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remember the name of the land Job was from</li><li>• Remember how many children he had</li><li>• Remember the dialogue between God and Satan</li><li>• Understand why God allowed everything to be taken away from Job</li></ul>	
<b>Feel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appreciate the great love and faithfulness Job had for God despite his suffering</li></ul>	
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thank God for everything at all times</li><li>• Remind others to be thankful for everything the Lord gives them</li></ul>	



## A Strong Character in Honesty

### Elijah and Baal Prophets

**Bible reference:** 1 Kings 18

**Lesson content:** Introduction to the First Book of Kings

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** Not to give up on the truth, no matter what the situation.
- **Feel:** The power of standing up to honesty.
- **Practice:** To learn to hold on to stick to honesty, not to fear, as well as not to get involved in matters that do not concern us.

**Bible verse:** *“How long will you falter between two opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21)*

## Background information to servant

- Who is Elijah?

Elijah is a Hebrew name, it means 'my God is Yahweh'. He is a great prophet who lived in the Northern Kingdom (the Kingdom of Israel), (the Southern Kingdom is called the Kingdom of Judah). He was also known as Elijah the Tishbite because he was born in the village of Tishbe, but has lived in Gilead. Elijah was well known for his asceticism, he wore a garment made from animal hair and a leather belt (2 Kings 1:8), he spent most of his time in the desert living with God, and was known for saying, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand..." (1 Kings 17:1)

- Elijah is the voice of truth that God had sent to confront the evil that Ahab King of Israel had brought on to his people when he married Jezebel, the idol worshiper. Ahab was weak in character, so she was able to lead him to idol worship, he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in the town of Samaria.
- The Bible describes the event, "And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him." (1 Kings 16:33)
- Jezebel and the Baal prophets that she brought, managed to sway the people into worshipping idols, there was no greater evil than what Jezebel and Ahab did. There was no prophet as brave, fiery, and strong in honesty as Elijah.
- Elijah confronted Ahab with strength and bravery:
  1. When he told Ahab that the rain will not fall unless he says so.
  2. When God had ordered him to return to stand in front of the king 3 years later, because God was going to bring rainfall.
  3. When he gathered the nation to declare to them the truth, about who is the true God.

"And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21)

He told the people that he is the only remaining prophet of the Lord, whereas there were 450 Baal prophets. Even if he was alone, he was supported by the power of God, and he will declare the truth. He ordered the Baal prophets to offer their sacrifices, and he also offered a sacrifice to God after repairing God's Altar that had been broken down. The God who answers by fire, He is God. Indeed, the fire of the LORD fell and consumed Elijah's burnt sacrifice, and all the people fell to their knees and worshiped God saying, "The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!" (1 Kings 18:39).

4. When he ordered the people to kill the Baal prophets, which caused Jezebel to hunt him down, in order to kill him.

- Elijah was worthy of meeting God vocally and speaking to Him (1 Kings 19:9-18), it was he who was taken up to heaven by a chariot of fire in front of his servant Elisha. He remains a symbol of bravery and strength in confronting evil. John the Baptist was said to have the power and spirit of Elijah (Luke 1:17).

## The Lesson

### Preliminary Introduction

- Ahab was one of the Kings of Israel, he married Jezebel the idol worshipper, she worshiped an idol God called Baal. Jezebel had a strong character unlike Ahab. She led Ahab to worshipping idols, and in turn he also led his people to idolatry.
- The king who God ordained over His people, built a temple and an altar for idol worship, and the evil queen [Jezebel] brought prophets/priests for this temple and led the people into idol worship.
  - God sent Elijah, a great prophet, to bravely confront this king and his wife
  - Elijah stood in front of the king and told him that God will punish him and the people by a drought [no rain]
  - After 3 years, God commanded Elijah to return to Ahab because the Lord will bring rainfall. (Remember to mention how the ravens fed Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-7))
  - How was God going to send the rain when the people still worshipped idols, what was the point?
  - Therefore before rainfall came, the brave prophet had to announce to everybody who the true God is, so that he could lead the people to God first then rain would fall (repentance first).
  - Let's consider together what Elijah did.

[Note to servant: try to make the discussion interactive]

- The situation was risky, Elijah asked Ahab to gather all the Baal prophets at Mount Carmel, there were 450 Baal prophets. He confidently told all the people there, to offer a sacrifice to their God [Baal] and ask him to respond. Whilst Elijah would also offer a sacrifice and pray to the real God. Whichever God would respond with fire, He would be the true God. Elijah asked

them to start first because there was a lot of them, so they took a bull, prepared and offered it, then they called on the name of Baal “O Baal, hear us!”, they cried out to Baal and danced as usual from morning till evening, but there was no response.

- Elijah told them to scream harder, perhaps their Baal God was asleep, so they screamed more, but as expected there was no response. They even cut themselves and bled, as was their custom, but there was no response.
- So, Elijah repaired the old Altar on which sacrifices were offered to God, he used 12 stones [which represents the 12 tribes of Jacob] to build the Altar in the name of the Lord and built a trench around the Altar. He cut up the sacrifice [bull], laid it on the wood, then poured water on it three times until the trench was full of water.
- Elijah said a strong prayer to God (preferably distribute Bibles to the children so that they can all read it together), then fire of the Lord came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice and dried up the water. This happened in front of everyone, all the people who saw this fell on their knees and worshiped God, saying “The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!”, and they got rid of the Baal prophets.

## Application



### Comprehension Questions

- What evil things did Ahab and his wife do?
- Describe Elijah’s bravery when he stood before the king?
- What did Elijah do in front of everyone to prove that our Lord is God?
- Be able to explain that it was God who sent the fire from heaven.
- Recite the verse of the lesson.



### **Exercise...**

- Stick to telling the truth without fear
- Attend Bible study groups if available
- Be consistent in your prayers



### **Prayer**

***Meditate on it ... live it ... pray it on the level of the kids***

My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, thank You. My Lord Jesus You are the Truth, and You always teach Your children to be honest and to stand up to the truth. Give me the strength and courage to live truly as your child, to do everything to please you, and for Your image to resonate clearly in my life. Amen.



The first week of the month of Hatour  
(November)

## Psalm of David: Psalm 23 “The Lord is my Shepherd, I Shall not Want”

**Bible reference:** Psalm 23:1-6

**Lesson purpose:** This is the second lesson on the Psalms of David. In this lesson we learn that the Lord takes care of us. My feeling that the Lord exists and He takes care of us is very comforting.

**Bible verse:** *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”*  
(*Psalm 23:1*)



## Background information to servant

### **GOD EXISTS**

**By H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

**A problem, by itself, without God, could cause trouble for some. But the problem, with the presence of God, would not cause trouble...**

Hope in God and His interference gives the heart joy and confidence. As the Apostle said, *"Rejoicing in hope."* (Rom 12:12)

- **Was the lions' den fearful to Daniel?** Surely it was not, as far as he knew the phrase, *"My God sent his Angel and shut the lions' mouths."* (Dan 6:22)
- **Was the fiery furnace a source of loss for the three youths?** No it was a different case, with a **"fourth"** like the Son of God, walking with them in the midst of the fire.
- **Did Goliath, the giant, look fearful to David?** He was like that to the army of soldiers who faced Goliath without God. As for David, he was strong and did not fear Goliath and his threats because he had God with him in the battle. He said, *"For the battle is the Lord's. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand."* (1 Sam 17:48)

Our feeling that God is with us is the reason of our confidence. God's name is a strong fortress that the righteous take for a refuge.

***"The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in."*** (Ps 121: 7-8)

"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is my right hand and I shall not be moved." (Ps 16:8)

Truly, letting God in a problem solves it...

- In God's name, Elijah faced Ahab.  
And in God's name, Moses and Aaron faced Pharaoh... And in God's name, Paul faced Festus and Agrippa.
- The Lord was the strength for these Saints and others like them.  
The Psalmist said, *"The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation."* (Ps 118:18). And, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation."* (Ps 27:1)
- We deal with God and not with people... We set God in front of us in all our problems and He gives us strength.

If you weaken one day, it means you forgot God's strength.

## The Lesson

### PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Last week, by examining the meaning behind Psalm 19, we learned that the heavens and earth which God created declare His glory and that He gave us His word in the Holy Bible to live by and give us light and strength and salvation.

Are you ever afraid of anything? We all fear something.

So, today, we will learn the meanings behind Psalm 23, which we can always remember in times of fear.

- **The Lord is my shepherd:**

Our Beloved Jesus is the Good Shepherd —I am the Good Shepherd||. He gives spiritual and material gifts to His people. He hovers over them and protects them from the devil and the enemies.

- **I shall not want:**

This is an expression of the complete confidence that God is taking care of us. I do not want or need anything because I am the temple of God and God is inside me. If I lose all, I will not care because I have God Himself within me.

- **He makes me lie down in green pastures:**

The spiritual green pastures are:

- 1) The word of God contained in the Bible which fills my hungry soul.
- 2) The church with all her sacraments.
- 3) The Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus which I eat and drink to continue my spiritual growth.

- **He leads me beside still waters:**

- The water is usually used for both washing and drinking:

- 1) For washing: He (the good Shepherd) led us to baptism through which we were cleansed from our sins. (Read I Peter 3:21)
- 2) For drinking: He gives us the living water also in the Holy Communion. Both the pasture that the sheep eat and the water that they drink are the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ which we eat and drink. (Read John 4:14 and John 6:35 and 53-56)

- **He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake:**

- The Good Shepherd helps to get me back to Him through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession. Observing this sacrament leads me to righteousness and rest. Here you can mention the story of the Prodigal son, and how the father (God) waits for his repentant son to return, and how does he receive him.
- All these blessings are given to us because of Jesus' name and not because we deserve them.
- **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death:**
  - The shadow of death means suffering and temptation. It also means the death of the body. We, the sons of God do not fear death because through the death of the body we go to a better life. But the death of sinners is an eternal death or eternal damnation.
  - As long as God is with us, even if we die, we live.
- **I fear no evil for thou art with us:**

God is with us so we do not fear evil, persecution, death or anything and we can go through the shadows of death with great courage because the Good Shepherd is with me.
- **Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me:**
  - The rod of the shepherd does two things:
    - 1) It beats and drives away the enemies of the sheep (the wolves). And through the Cross (the rod) our Lord did beat the devil and gave us victory over sin, over demons and over death.
    - 2) It keeps the sheep within the fold, and even if one goes astray it brings it back. This is what the crucifixion does for us; even if we sin it gives us salvation and through it we return to the fold of the redeemed children of God.
  - The staff is used for support and the Cross is our support. It is, for us the believers, the source of power and strength. (Read I Corinthians 1:18).
- **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies:**

The table is great because of the greatness of what is on it. In our case Jesus Himself is presented to us on the table (the altar) to strengthen us against our enemies.
- **You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over:**

We were anointed with the Chrism (i.e., the Myrrour) to receive the Holy Spirit. And this great blessing filled us with joy like what happened on the day of Pentecost when the Disciples were full of joy to the extent that some people thought that they were drunk.

- **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever:**
  - The house of the Lord is similar to the place where the sheep enter and find shelter. In the House of God we enjoy inner peace and comfort.
  - When we get tired from the world and all its problems and tribulations we must rush to the House of God where we find rest.
  - Originally in the church, the believers used to go twice daily to church: in the morning before they go to work and in the evening after they return from work.  
What a comforting exercise!!!

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) Today, we learn the lesson which St. Paul learned and lived by what he wrote: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Since we have God with us we fear no evil, but each one of us can go through life confident that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13).
- (2) When we have problems at school, home or with anyone in the society we live in, we must remember that God exists and He cares. Without this feeling the burden of the problems will be too much for me.



**I am Influential in my Family,  
Church & Community**

## Esther

**Bible Reference:** The Book of Esther

**Lesson content:** I am influential in my family, church and community

**Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:

- **Know:** the problems in their family, church & community, and propose solutions.
- **Feel:** the power of fasting and prayer for their family and church.
- **Practice:** being consistent in fasting and prayer.

**Bible verse:** *“Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; The snare is broken, and we have escaped.” (Psalm 124:6-7)*



## The Lesson

- This story begins when King Ahasuerus appointed someone called Haman as his prime minister. Haman was an evil man and had everyone worshipping him, bowing down before him. Only Mordecai, who was secretly a Jew and the palace's doorkeeper, refused to bow down to Haman. Haman found out that Mordecai would not bow to him because he was a Jew and only worshipped God. He grew a hatred for the Jews and decided to eradicate them from the kingdom.
- Haman went to the king and told him that the Jews were a problem in his kingdom and did not follow the king's orders. Haman convinced the king that the Jews should be put to death, and so the king gave him the authority to do what he wanted to the Jews.
- Haman sent a decree to all the districts in the kingdom, telling them that by order of the king, on a specified day, they must kill all the Jews in their district, young and old. He marked this decree with the king's seal and sent it all over the kingdom.
- When the Jews in the kingdom heard this decree, they cried out and mourned grievously. They prayed to God to rescue them. Mordecai cried out to the Lord, tore his clothes and prayed fervently. Mordecai had raised his uncle's daughter after she was orphaned. Her name was Esther. The king had fallen in love with her and appointed her as queen of the kingdom. Mordecai had beseeched Esther to keep her Judaism a secret, fearing her life. After Haman's decree, Mordecai sent a letter to Esther asking her to speak to the king, telling her that perhaps this is why the Lord had brought her into the king's palace, so that she may save their people.
- Esther replied to Mordecai saying, 'how can I speak to the king? You know that only those summoned by the king may enter to see him, and that he kills those who go to him unsummoned.' Mordecai beseeched her saying, 'there is no other solution, you are your people's only hope'. Esther asked Mordecai to ask all the Jews to fast and pray for 3 days before she attempts to confront the king. After 3 days of fasting and prayer, Esther went to go see the king. He was very happy to see her and gifted her a gold rod as a sign of his approval. This was the first miracle.
- When the king asked Esther what she wanted, Esther requested that he and Haman come to the banquet that she is organising. The king accepted her invitation and went to the

banquet with Haman. The king was very pleased with the banquet and told Esther that he would grant her any request she makes of him, even if she requested half his kingdom. Esther simply requested that he and Haman attend another banquet the following day. At this point, no one knew that Esther was a Jew or that she was related to Mordecai.

- When Haman entered the palace, he saw that Mordecai still refused to bow down to him. Enraged by this, he ordered that a wooden gallows be made, plotting to convince the king at the banquet to hang Mordecai.
- That night, the king could not sleep so ordered that the palace's chronicles be read to him. In them was recorded that Mordecai had once saved the king's life by reporting that he overheard of a plot to assassinate him. The king insisted that Mordecai be bestowed many gifts to honour him – a royal robe, a horse and royal crest. He ordered Haman himself to deliver these to Mordecai. To his utter humiliation, Haman followed the king's orders and paraded Mordecai through the city, announcing his honour to all.
- The king and Haman attended Esther's banquet. Again, the king enjoyed his time and was very happy. He asked Esther to make any request of him that he may grant it. Esther told him that there was a man plotting evil against her and conspiring to kill all her people. When the king asked her who this man was, Esther told him that it was Haman. The king became enraged and went to find Haman. Haman heard of this and went to Esther to plead for his life. When the king returned and saw him with her, his anger increased and he had him taken away. One of the king's servants told him of the gallows that Haman had built, telling him that he had planned to hang Mordecai on it. The king ordered that Haman be hung on the gallows he built for Mordecai.
- After this the king rescinded the decree sent out by Haman, saving the Jews from persecution. The Jews carried on living in the land in joy and gladness.



## Evaluation

Did your children get the aim of the lesson:

The Aim	At the end of the lesson check that you children can:	Evaluation
<b>Know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remember the main figures in the story</li><li>• Remember the main events of Esther's story</li><li>• Remember the lesson's bible verse</li></ul>	
<b>Feel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand Esther's importance in the protection of her people</li><li>• Acknowledge that God had a plan for Esther to be in the palace to save her people</li></ul>	
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try to be a positive influence on his family, church and everyone around them</li><li>• Use fasting and prayer as a source of strength and connection to God</li></ul>	



**I Enjoy Partaking in Church Fasts**

**The Church Fasts**

**Bible Reference:** Esther 4:16 – Daniel 9:3 – Acts 13:2

**Lesson content:** The fasts of the Church

- Lesson objectives:** to help the child to:
- **Know:** the fasts of the Church and the meaning of the word 'Baramoun'.
  - **Feel:** the importance of fasting and abstinence.
  - **Practice:** being committed to fasting every Wednesday and Friday.

**Bible verse:** *"However, this kind does not go out except by fasting and prayer." (Matthew 17:21)*



## The Lesson

- Do you know why we fast? Because the power of fasting can move mountains. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us this when he fasted for 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain and overcame Satan’s temptations. When the Pharisees asked Jesus why the disciples were not fasting, He said to them that they will fast when He dies and rises again. Jesus said that fasting and prayer expels demons from our hearts, and that is why the Church gave us fasts to partake in to strengthen our spiritual lives.
  
- **Fasts of the Church**
  - Vegan Fasts (no fish)
    - Wednesdays and Fridays (except for during the 50 day fast)
    - Easter – 50 days (40 days Christ fasted + Preparation Week + Holy Week)
    - Jonah’s fast – 3 days (2 weeks after Easter fast)
    - Baramoun of Christmas – 1-3 days before Christmas fast
    - Baramoun of the Epiphany – 1-3 days before Epiphany fast
  
  - Pescetarian Fasts (fish is allowed)
    - Christmas – 40 days (40 days Moses fasted before receiving the 10 commandments)
    - Apostle’s fast - varies
    - St. Mary’s fast – 15 days (15 days the apostles fasted before St. Mary’s Assumption)

‘Baramoun’ is a term in the Church that means ‘continuously ready’. It is used in anticipation of an upcoming fast.



## Evaluation

Did your children get the aim of the lesson:

The Aim	At the end of the lesson check that you children can:	Evaluation
<b>Know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember the Church’s fasts</li> <li>• Describe the different kinds of fasts</li> <li>• Explain why the Church appoints times of fasting</li> <li>• Remember the lesson’s bible verse</li> </ul>	
<b>Feel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciate the importance of fasting</li> </ul>	
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partake in Church fasts</li> <li>• Fast on Wednesdays and Fridays</li> </ul>	



The fourth week of the month of Hatour  
(December)

## God is Ready to Forgive: Elijah Talks to King Ahab

**Bible reference:** 1 Kings 21

**Lesson purpose:** God is ready to forgive our sins if we repent, confess and take communion. In this lesson we also learn that the human anger and greed can lead the individual to huge sins.

**Bible verse:** *“You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive”*  
(*Psalm 86:5*)



## Background information to servant

### **HUMAN ANGER**

**By H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

- Sometimes, a Holy anger happens for God's sake, but it does not have nervousness and loss of temper, it is a Holy zeal.
- James, the Apostle, said about human anger "*... for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*" (Jas 1:20)
- Our Saintry fathers, have many sayings on dispraising anger.
- Mar Aughoris said, "*The prayer of the angry is a defiled and rejected incense and the offering of the angry is unaccepted.*" He also said that "*Anger is an action of the insane... It makes humans like beasts... the eyes of the angry are evil, full of blood, while the face of the gentle is radiant and his eyes look with dignity.*"
- Anba Agathon used to say, "*Even if the angry raised the dead, it is not accepted by God and nobody will come forward to him.*"
- An elderly man said, "*The one whose heart is not saddened when his brother disputes with him is like the angels. If he disputes with him, too, then regrets and reconciles immediately, this is the action of strugglers. On the other hand, he who upsets his brothers and gets angry with them and hatred settles in his heart, is a follower of the devil, disobedient to God and God will not forgive his sins as far as he does not forgive the sins of his brothers...*"
- Mar Ephram, the Syrian said, "*The wrathful kills himself. He is a stranger to blame and has poor health because his body withers all the time. His spirit is sad and is hated by all.*"
- "Mar Ephram also said, "*he who hides envy in his heart is like the one who keeps a serpent in his lap. Smoke drives the bees away and hatred drives knowledge away from the heart.*"
- Abba Isaiah said, "*Anger is desiring to achieve what you want by force, without exercising humility.*"
- St. Augustine said, "*What is anger? It is the desire for revenge... If God, despite our offences, does not wish to wreak vengeance on us... do we ask for revenge for ourselves and sin against God everyday?!*"
- St. Gregorius, the Bishop of Nassis said, "*Anger makes the black bitterness spread all over the body.*"

- St. John of Assiut said, *"the weapon of anger hurts its possessor... Anger in the heart is like a woodworm in timber."*
- If we refer to the Holy Bible, we will find that it says, *"Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry. For anger rests in the bosom of fools."* (Ecc. 7:9) It also says, *"Make no friendship with an angry man. And with a furious man do not go."* (Prov 22:24)

## The Lesson

### PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Is anyone perfect? Is there any human being that is perfect in the whole world? No one is perfect, so we will always make mistakes and commit sins. But then what? Today we will talk about what we all have to do as soon as we commit any sin, by learning about King Ahab of the Old Testament.
- Please read Chapter 21 of 1 Kings with the students and explain as you go along.
- **Naboth is murdered for his vineyard:**  
King Ahab who was very rich wanted to take the vineyard of the poor man called Naboth in return for another vineyard or for money. Naboth refused both offers because he inherited the vineyard from his father and it became so dear to him.  
Ahab was angry. His wife Jezebel prepared a wicked plan that would lead to the killing of Naboth. With false witnesses who said that "Naboth has blasphemed against God and the king", the people stoned Naboth and he died. When Ahab heard that Naboth was killed, he went to take possession of the vineyard.
- **The Lord condemns Ahab:**  
The Lord sent Prophet Elijah to Ahab telling him what the Lord intends to do in punishing him, his wife Jezebel and all his family. "When Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning." Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days; but in the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house." God knew in advance that his son would be very bad. "Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin" (1 Kings 22:51-52).
- Why did King Ahab want to take the property of Naboth?
  - He wanted more. Wanting more materialistic things is a sin and leads to more sins. Our Lord Jesus advised us not to care for materialistic things. Jesus said, "For what

advantage is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost?" (Luke 9:24).

- He did not care about other people. He was very angry and in his anger he fell in huge mistakes.
- Jezebel thought that nobody would know about the purpose of her wicked plan. But nothing can be hidden from God. He sees and knows even the secrets of one's heart and He is the One Who judges every person.
- What did Ahab and his wife do when they heard that Naboth is dead? They were very happy and they rushed to take possession of his vineyard.
- Ahab humbled himself before God and God promised not to bring evil in his days.
- There are several examples in the Bible for people who repented and God forgave their sins.
  - David: Please read 2 Samuel 12:1-15 and tell it briefly to the students. David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die." (2 Samuel 12:13)
  - Peter: Please read Matthew 14:66-72 and tell it to the students briefly. Peter denied the Lord Jesus in front of a maid. When the rooster crowed and Peter remembered the word that his Beloved Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 14:30). Then Peter wept, and repented. He was forgiven.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) We must humble ourselves before God and He is ready to accept us. The important thing is that we must be serious about our repentance and our request to receive His forgiveness.
- (2) We must not get angry at things we do not like. Our anger does not help anything. We can fall into huge mistakes as King Ahab did in his anger.



The first week of the month of Kiahk  
(December)

## The Promise of the Coming of the Messiah as Mentioned in the Old Testament

**Lesson purpose:** To illustrate the promise of God about the coming of His only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. For many generations the whole world had been waiting for the Saviour to come until He actually came.

**Bible verse:** *“Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16)*



# The Lesson

## PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- For the last four weeks, we have been speaking together about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. These fruits are virtues we all, as Christians, want to try hard, to achieve. However, how did we become Christians in the first place? Wasn't it because Christ came to save us, His children? Let us then, talk about how God saved us.
- **God's plan for the salvation of man:**  
Adam fell in sin and died. His sin was inherited by his offspring God, because of His mercy, prepared a plan for salvation. Because the sin was against God who is unlimited, it was necessary for someone unlimited to die for that sin. An angel or a prophet could not do that to fulfil God's justice. There is no unlimited entity except God who does not die. So, due to the mercy of God and His love, He found that He must take flesh and die with this flesh to save man and hence satisfy both the justice of God and His mercy.  
"Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"  
(Psalm 85:10).
- **Christ is God incarnate:**  
Thousands of years before His coming, the prophets of the Old Testament foretold many things about Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophesied saying: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called —Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6).
- **The Meaning of the Incarnation and Redemption:**  
"The Word became flesh" (John 1:14): in this lies the ultimate joy of the Christian faith. The same Incarnate Lord is both perfect God and perfect man. He came down from Heaven to redeem the earth, to unite man with God for ever. St. Irenaeus wrote "the Son of God became the Son of Man, that man also might become the Son of God." In that lifting up of human nature into an everlasting communion with the Divine Life, the Fathers of the early Church unanimously saw the very essence of salvation, the basis of the whole redeeming work of Christ.
- **The Incarnation is the best proof of God's love for us.**  
"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

- With the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, He came down to our world to raise us to heaven.

“At that day you will know that I am in My Father and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20).

## Application



### Exercise...

(1) God proved His great love for us by coming to us for our salvation. Can we go to Him as He came for us? Let us live our life with Jesus.

(2) When the Lord Jesus came to our world, He did not mean just to give us commandments. He meant to unite with us and give us heavenly power.



The second week of the month of Kiahk  
(December)

## The Parable of the Talents: Our Talents and How to Use Them

**Bible reference:** Matthew 25:14-30

**Lesson purpose:** To learn that God gave us talents and we should use them effectively. We must use our talents to grow spiritually as well as in our daily lives.

**Bible verse:** *“Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21)*



## Background information to servant

### **SERIOUS WORK**

**By H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

- The Bible says, *"Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully."*(Jer. 48:10)...  
The one who works for the Lord must, *"Be faithful until death. "* (Rev 2:10). Faithfulness is a principal condition for service...
- With this seriousness, the Apostles witnessed for the name of Christ, and they were, *"Preaching the Kingdom of God... with all confidence, no one forbidding them. "* (Acts 28:31)  
*"And with great power, the Apostles gave witness... and great grace was upon them all. "* (Acts 4:33)
- As a result of this serious, honest and faithful work, the kingdom of God spread. Listen to what God said to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus. *"I know your works, your labour, your patience... and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for my name's sake and have not become weary."* (Rev 2:2-3)
- **Serious work is built on faith...**  
The more your faith in the weight and importance of your work is true and complete, the more seriousness of your work will be. Leniency in work is an evidence of lack of faith and its importance...
- **Serious work indicates a sense of responsibility:**  
Just as what Joseph, the faithful did, stockpiling wheat, fully aware that the life of many depends on his honesty.
- So it is with the spiritual service: the life of many depends on the honesty of the servant. If he neglects his service they are lost.
- **Serious work is controlled from one's inner self...**  
It is controlled by one's own conscience and the voice of God inside him.  
This control is due to his live feelings and holy zeal...
- He works seriously because *"Time is short"* and every minute counts, with any delay or negligence having its dangers...
- **Serious work is always successful...**

It is a perfect work because seriousness brings work to perfection...

- Perfect work is a successful work. It was said about the righteous man, "*And whatever he does shall prosper*" (Ps 1:3)
- **Serious work does not slow down till completed...**  
It does not believe in fatigue and does not seek rest...
- Its performer does not rest until the work is finished and he tastes its fruits... Like Lazarus of Damascus who would not rest till he took Rebecca's wife for his master's son. And when they asked him to rest, he answered "*Do not hinder me.*" (Gen 24:56)

## The Lesson

### PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- We have many talents, right? (Yes)  
What are some of your talents? (Ask each child, if possible, to name one talent he/she has).  
Who gave us these talents? (God)  
Today, we are going to talk about a story the Lord Jesus once told about three servants who received talents from their Master, what they did with these talents, and what happened to them after.
- First read the Gospel according to St. Matthew 25:14-30 with the students and discuss its contents.
- In this parable, the Master gave his servants his endowments; to the first he gave five talents, to the second he gave two talents and to the third he gave one talent. He gave "to each according to his own ability" (Matthew 25:15). This means that the Master was not biased toward any of them, but he gave the endowments according to his knowledge of their own abilities. This teaches us not to be proud when we encounter the less talented because all talents are given from one source, "God". St. Paul said "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all" (I Corinthians 12:4-6).

- God does not look at the profits, but He looks at the honesty of his servants in using their talents. The problem of the man who had one talent was that he was lazy and lived his life inactively.
- Profit brings profit, loss brings loss and sin brings sin. The man who had five talents, as he made a profit (5 more talents), His Master told him, “I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21). Similarly there was also the man who received the two talents. The man who was endowed with the one talent, however, neglected his talent and lived his life in a lazy manner and lost the talent which he had from God. Not only that, but he fell in the sin of insulting his Master by saying, “Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed” (Matthew 25:24). The life of laziness led him to commit a sin against His Master.
- The reward for those who used their talents was “Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21) and the punishment for the lazy servant was to “cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30).
- God gave us talents: knowledge, health, intelligence, time, mind and body. How are we using them? Are we wasting time watching TV? Are we wasting time on computer games or internet?
- Ask what everyone is most talented in.
- We have to try our best and God will help us to achieve high goals. We must use our talents to achieve spiritual depth and an actual friendly relationship with God.  
How?
- If we are lazy like the one who was endowed with the one talent, we will not only lose eternal life, but we will also be punished.
- We should give one tenth of all that we have to God. No matter how small it is, we must give back to the church (and to the poor) part of what God gave us.

## Application



### Exercise...

(1) We must do our best at school. Let us learn from the present moment to use at least part of our energy or talents to serve our Lord Jesus. If we give to the poor and needy, we are actually giving Jesus Himself.

(2) We must also do our best at home and participate in doing house work with the rest of the family members. We can help in cooking, cleaning, tidying things up and helping our younger sisters and brothers.

(3) Most importantly we have to use our talents to grow spiritually and have a place in heaven. How? By "Serious Work." Take praying (in concentration) seriously, read the bible (in respect and concentration) and come regularly to church. In all of these spiritual practices, one has to fully utilize his or her talent. Also in serving the church, one has to utilize his or her full ability



The third week of the month of Kiahk  
(December)

## The New Year, How Do I Start?

**Lesson purpose:** How can I make a good start in the New Year?

**Bible verse:** *“And the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37)*



## **Background information to servant**

### ***THE NEW YEAR PRAYER*** ***By H.H. Pope Shenouda III***

**Lord, make it a blessed year... A pure year to please You...  
A year in which Your Spirit prevails... And joins in working with us...  
Hold our hands and guide our thoughts from the beginning of the year till its end...  
Let this year be Yours, to please You...**

**It is a New Year, spotless; let us not tarnish it with our sins or impurities...  
Lord, be with us in every work we intend to do this year...  
Silent we will be and you will do everything...  
Let us rejoice in all Your deeds, and say with John the Evangelist:  
*"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."* (Jn  
1:3)**

**Let this year, O Lord, be a happy year...  
Put a' smile on each face and gladden every heart...  
Let Your grace emerge in our trials and help those who are tempted...  
Grant us peace and quietness of mind...  
Give those who are in need, cure the sick and console the grieved...**

We do not ask You, God, only for ourselves...  
But we ask for the whole, because they are Yours...  
You created them to rejoice in You. Then make them happy with You...  
We ask You for the Church, for Your mission, that your word may reach every heart...  
We ask you for our Country, for the world's peace that Your Kingdom may come everywhere.

Let it be a fruitful year, full of goodness...  
Every day and every hour has its own work...  
Do not allow a futile moment...  
Fill our life with activity, work, and production...  
Grant us the blessing of a productive and holy toil.  
Let the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with us in all our deeds...  
We thank you, God, for you have kept us till this hour and granted us this year, that we may  
bless you...

# The Lesson

## PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- Have you ever done something wrong, and wished you could go back and erase it? Have you ever written a test and wished you had more time to study for it to do better than you did?

Time is something that when it passes, you cannot ever get it back. But every new minute, hour, day, month or year you get is a chance to do better and be better than you were before. It is time God gives us to grow.

Many people make New Year's resolution. What are some of your resolutions? (Ask children to tell you).

Let us explore what resolutions we can make so that we grow spiritually this year.

- No doubt everyone asks himself the following important questions:
  - How can I start on the spiritual road in the new year?
  - Who takes the first step? My Lord Jesus or I?
  - Are there some wrong starts and right ones?

These are the questions that we are going to answer.

- **Who makes the start?**

The start is made by God. Christ came for us and gave us new life —as we were dead in our sins; Christ died for us. Therefore, Jesus made the start and He is still working. He said: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20). When we were baptized we gained the new birth in the new life with the Lord Jesus. Hence, this gift was given to us. We only have to open the door now for our Lord Jesus to enter and stay in our life. We have to answer our Lord Jesus who is knocking at our door. We have to listen to His voice in the Bible and comply with what He tells us. We have to regularly attend the Divine Liturgy.

- **Let us rise and go back to Jesus:**

If we have left the Lord and His commandments, we should do as the prodigal son did. Let us rise and go back to the father. Let us be determined to leave our sins, repent and confess. When we walk towards Jesus, He will welcome us back and will take away the old cloth (the sin) and give us the cloth of righteousness. **"Today, if you will hear His voice do not harden your hearts."** (Hebrews 3:15).

Let us pray and repent whole-heartedly, let us have a frank and merciless honesty with ourselves, let us admit all the wrong in ourselves, let us confess our sins in our private prayers to God and openly to the priest to receive the “absolution” and let us start a new chapter in our life with the start of the new year.

- **What might hinder us from starting now?**

- We are probably delaying our repentance because we do not want to give up a “favorable sin”. Let us hold on to Jesus as our personal Savior and ask Him to help us.
- We may be afraid of what other people will say about us if we changed our ways and followed Christ. Moses preferred to even suffer affliction and follow the Lord rather than to enjoy himself in the palace of the king. (Please tell the story.).

- **A good way to start:**

Sit alone. Think of God’s bountiful mercies and blessings to you. Meditate on Jesus’ love to you personally, shown continuously in multiple ways. Then you will find yourself saying: I love Jesus and I whole-heartedly submit myself completely to Him and take Him as my Lord, my Savior and my king. I give Him my heart and my life. This is a good way to start the new year.

## Application



### Exercise...

- (1) As we say good-bye to a year that is gone without return, let us consider the factors that made us stumble at times. Let us put these factors in the hands of God and pray to Him to help us overcome any deficiencies in our life.
- (2) Let us commit ourselves to God. Let us pray a lot and ask God to work with us in everything.