

“Think and Write” Prompts

- **Prompts for Reflective Writing may be used in different ways:**

1. They can be passed out to the participants at the beginning of their journal writing, and they may choose which one(s) they would like to address, based on their own individual experiences with the material they have just studied.
2. They may be given directions to choose one or two prompts, and choose to write to them, or they may be directed by the teacher to very specific questions for a specific response that the teacher wants to elicit from them: i.e., What made you "wonder" in this session? (could be from a reading, discussion, project, etc.) Why? What confused you about the session? Why?
3. Most participants love to choose their own questions, because they are not being asked to respond to something they have not experienced, but are responding to thoughts, emotions, feelings, actions that they have experienced. It also is a private communication that should remain private. This is not meant as a time for whole group sharing, but a time for personal reflection. These should, however, be responded to by the teacher before the Family Stories:

(See: Primary / Middlers, Juniors / Teens / Young Adults / Adults & Seniors)

Levels: Most levels from Primary and above. See also **Journaling**.

Teachers Note: This activity requires that students will be able to read and print (or write). You may also want to have a few helpers in class for the younger students. The project can be started in class and finished at home with parental help.

This is an activity that can be worked on over several class periods as a Journaling project.

Materials Needed:

1. Pencils or pens, erasers, (can add colored pencils or markers for illustrating)
2. Inexpensive paper for drafts of stories, or story outlines to fill in.
3. Journaling books or inexpensive lined notebooks for their final copies. (optional)
4. **Older Students:** Sewn-in notebooks, one per student; pencils, pens, markers

- **Writing Outlines**

The following outlines may be helpful to children, teens and adults to help them to understand what kinds of things to write about and to structure their stories. They may also be used as the basis for review and class discussion

Primary,

My Story

Primary, Middlers

I Am a CHRISTian

Middlers, Juniors

The Exodus

Middlers, Juniors to Adults

Life in the Church

Juniors, Sr. High, Adults:

The Apostles of Christ

- **Student/Family Portrait (Introductory Information-All Ages)**

[Note: Distribute questionnaire with the accompanying letter to parents/family members in advance, *to complete with their children*. Ask each parent to include *copies (do not send originals)* of a small photo of the child and photos of family: parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, wedding pictures, things the family likes to do together, etc. Enclose in an envelope for the child to bring to class.]

For alternative for younger children, see "My Story" (below)"

Student's Name _____ Age _____

Birthdate _____ Baptism/Chrismation Date _____

Parents' Names _____ and _____

Brothers/Sisters _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____

Grandparents' Names _____

From what countries did your ancestors come? _____

When and where were you baptized? _____

Name your godparents. _____

What is the name and location of your Church? _____

What is the name of your priest? _____

What do you like best about going to Church? _____

● Questions to Direct Journal Writing

Use the following questions to help you write in your journals. This list is not meant to cover all of the issues that might concern you as you write, and it is meant to be used when you need a starting point for a journal entry. Your own thoughts and feelings are always the best source for your writing.

Note: If you have trouble developing your ideas in your journal, try writing some of your entries nonstop. Nonstop writing (at least five minutes) will help you unlock some of your best ideas.

1. What were your feelings after reading (hearing) the story? Did it make you want to cry? smile? laugh? cringe? Explain your reason.
2. What connections are there between what you learned today and your own life? Explain your thinking.
3. What was the best part of something you heard about today? Why? What was the worst part? Why?
4. What did you learn today about life, and living through the material you read or heard? Explain.
5. What did you learn about today that seemed the most believable in relation to your life? What was the most unbelievable? Explain your thinking.
6. What do you think was the most important word you heard today? The most important passage? Why is it important to you?
7. In what ways are you like a person or character that you heard about today? Explain. How are you unlike, or like this person? Explain.
8. Do any of the people or characters you heard (read) about today remind you of anyone you know? Friends? Family members? Classmates? Tell about them.
9. What person or character that you heard (read) about today would you most like to be like? What personality traits would you like to acquire? (have for yourself) Why?
10. What would you and your favorite person or character talk about in your first conversation? Begin the conversation.
11. What makes you "wonder" in this lesson? Why? What confuses you about this lesson? Why?
12. What came to you as a surprise today in anything that you read or heard? Why?
13. Has what you learned today helped you in any way? Explain how it has helped.
14. How have you changed after today's lessons? Did anything you read, heard, or learned help that change? Explain.
15. What questions would you like to have answered after today's lessons?
16. Who else do you know who could benefit from learning this information? Why? Do you think you know someone who shouldn't? Why?
17. Compare two people or characters you have learned about in the lesson(s). How are they alike? How are they unlike?

- **Reading Response Logs**

Children and adults who are engaged in reading projects, whether short or long-term, can benefit by keeping a brief record of their reading. The logs can be helpful in group discussions and individual reflection. The following form may be adjusted to particular group levels.

Reading Reflections

Name _____

The book I have been reading is entitled: _____

by _____. This week I read pages _____ to _____

An interesting detail about the book is: _____

Another interesting/exciting thing was: _____

This particular chapter(selection) is about _____

What interested me, so far, is _____

What I didn't appreciate was _____

The book reminds me of _____

It has led me to think about _____

I am interested now in reading more about _____

• Writing Outlines

The following outlines may be helpful to children, youth and adults to help them understand and plan the kinds of things to write about and to structure their stories or essays. Older students and adults can use the questions more flexibly, and consider them simply a general guideline for their ideas.

1. **My Story**
2. **I Am a CHRISTian**
3. **The Exodus**
4. **Life in the Church**
5. **Apostles and Witnesses**

Primary: Outline 1: **My Story** (Click on title for 3 printable pages, 8 ½ x 11 paper)

1. (Worksheet Outlines for students). Click on title to print one or more copies (2-3 pages each set). If you have a large class you may prefer to photocopy additional sets needed, plus a few extra. Distribute to class and discuss what they are to write about in each section. Give them time to suggest a few ideas from their own experience. Each week they may add to their story, or use the stories to initiate discussion on related themes. The stories may be put into personal scrapbooks or writing books for students to keep (and to display at the end of the study unit).

Primary and Middlers: Outline 2: **I Am A CHRISTian!** (Click for 2 printable pages)

2. Teachers Note: This activity may be used in conjunction with a study of the Sacraments, in particular, Baptism, Chrismation, Confession and Communion. Students can interview relatives and gather stories about their baptism and their participation in Church Life, keep a journal, add photos, etc. for a book entitled "My Life in the Church" or "I Am an Orthodox Christian!" A good resource for teachers and parents is Our Life in the Church, published by the Orthodox Christian Education Commission (OCEC).

Middlers, Juniors: Outline 3: **The Exodus** (Click for 2 printable pages)

3. This activity may be used to review the story of the Exodus (the first passover/pascha remembering the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, from slavery in Egypt to freedom in a new land). The story is a prelude to the death and resurrection of Christ (who is the New Passover/New Pascha) and our own pascha/passage to new life through the waters of Baptism.

Middlers, Juniors to Adults: Outline 4: **Life in the Church** (Click for 2 printable pages)

4. This activity is built upon the story of the sending of God's Holy Spirit to us and the establishment of the Church in the Book of Acts: 2:42-47. It is centered in the life of the first church, as described in Acts and related to our life today and what we are called to do as members of the Church.

Juniors, Sr. High, Adults: Outline 5: **Apostles and Witnesses** (Click for 2 printable pages)

5. This is a continuation of the activity begun in Outline 4. It asks the question of each person, as a Christian and member of the Church: "What does Jesus Christ ask of me as an Apostle, to carry out the mission of His Church?" How are we called to be witnesses and servants of God to others?

My Story

Place photocopy
of picture here.

My Name is: _____

My story begins when I was born.

The date is _____.

Here is a picture of me when I was little. ⇨

I was born in the town of _____

I live now in _____

My parents names are _____

and _____

My grandparents names are: _____

My ancestors came from the towns and countries of: _____

The name of my Church is: _____

It is in the town of: _____

When I was little, I used to like to: _____

Here is a picture of my ancestors:

The story I like to hear about them is _____

The thing I like best about church is: _____

My favorite icon is the one that shows _____

Here is a picture of my family :

I am a CHRISTian!

I was baptized on _____ in the city of _____

My godparents are _____ and

At my baptism, I wore _____

When I came out of the water, everyone said _____

I go to Confession every _____ and I receive Holy

Communion every _____

Here are the things the priest uses
to serve the Holy Communion:

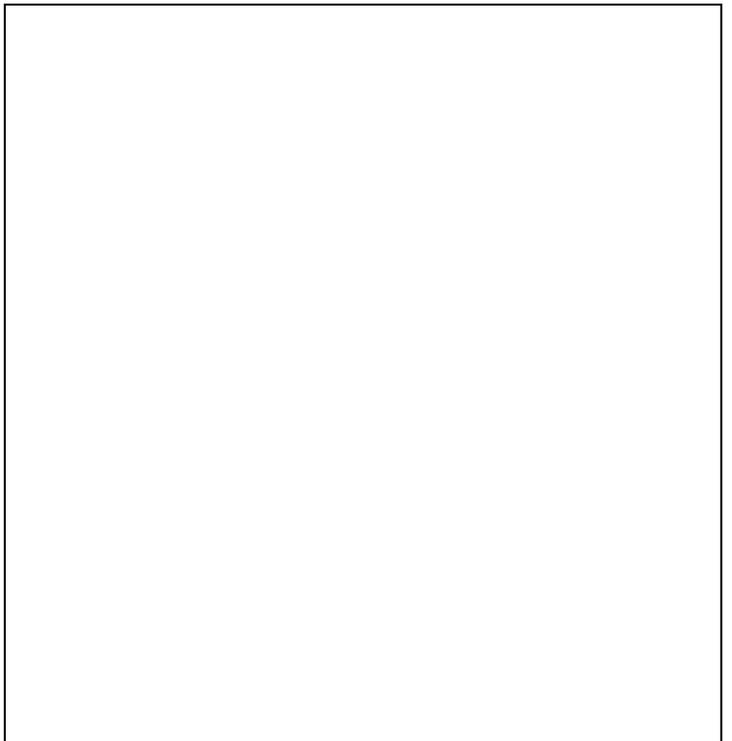
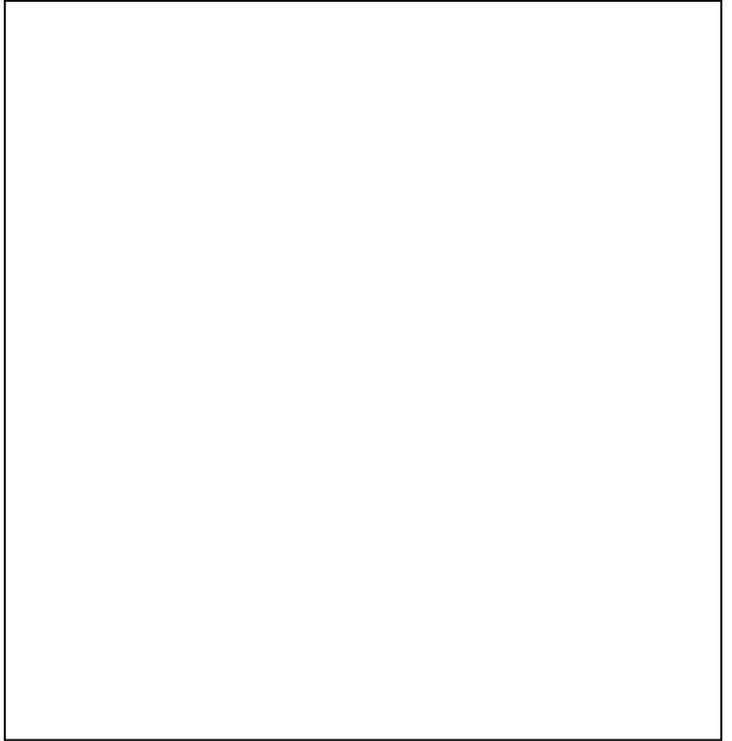
When I go to Communion, I know I am receiving _____

I try to act like a CHRISTian at school when I _____

I try to act like a CHRISTian at sports events when I _____

I try to act like a CHRISTian at home when I _____

Here are pictures of me acting like Christ would like me to act. Write captions under each picture, telling what is happening.



The Exodus

The word Exodus means _____

The Exodus took place in the country of _____

The main characters in this Bible story are _____ and his brother _____

who helped God and God's chosen people, the Israelites. The other main character was the powerful _____, the ruler of the people in Egypt. He made the Israelites slaves and when they wanted to return to their own land of _____, he treated them badly and would not let them leave.

God did many things to try to convince the Pharaoh he was real and powerful. Some of the things he did was to: _____

Finally, God told the Israelites how He would save them and take them out of Egypt. But first, He told them to prepare a meal in a special way. He told them to: _____

What happened after they had carried out God's instructions? _____

The people fled quickly and left their homes in Egypt, but soon the Pharaoh sent his horsemen and his chariots out to stop them. Tell what happened when they came to the big sea: _____

Why do you think God parted the sea for some people and yet allowed others to drown in the sea? ____

What did the people do when they realized God had saved them? _____

What is the name of the Jewish Feast that celebrates this important event?

Find the beginning of the song the Israelites sang (Exodus 15:1-2, 19-21) and draw a picture of what happened.

New Life in Christ

Do you remember the name of the feast that the Jewish people celebrate when they remember how God saved them? (see Exodus 12:1-14, 21-32; 13:17-15:2,19-21). Write it here in the line on the left below: On the right, insert the words: Christ the New Passover!

In the Orthodox Church, we remember that Jesus Himself celebrated the feast of Passover with His disciples before His death on the Cross (see Mark 14:12-25). After Jesus celebrated that feast, He was arrested and put to death. But three days later, Jesus arose from the dead and His friends and followers celebrated with great joy. They knew that Jesus had truly crushed the power of death and has the power to give new life to us — life everlasting in His Kingdom.

We celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead on Pascha. (Pascha means Passover or passage.) Read the following verse and underline the two sets of key words that explain what kinds of passage Jesus Christ made possible for us by His death and resurrection.

On this day of resurrection, be illumined, O people!
Pascha (passover), the Pascha of the Lord.
For from death to life and from earth to heaven
has Christ our God led us, as we sing the song of victory!
Christ is Risen from the dead! (Ode 1 Paschal Kanon)

Write them here: _____ and _____

When we are baptized, the priest prays these words:

Wherefore, O Lord, manifest thyself in this water, and grant that he/she who is baptized... may be transformed; that he may put away from him the old man... and...may be clothed upon with the new man... that being buried, after the pattern of thy death, in baptism, he may, in like manner, be a partaker of thy Resurrection; and... having preserved the gift of thy Holy Spirit, he may... be numbered with the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, in thee, our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

How does Baptism put away the "old man" (person) in us? What does the "old man" in us mean?

In our baptism, we say that we "die" to sin, and "arise" to new life in Christ in the baptismal waters. How can we explain this death and new birth in water?

The baptismal hymn says: "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." What does it mean to "put on Christ"?

At our Baptism, we were given a white robe or garment, as the priest said:

"The servant of God (name) _____

is clothed in the Robe of Righteousness, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Then the baptismal Troparion was sung:

**Grant unto me the robe of light, O Most Merciful Christ our God,
Who dost clothe thyself with light as with a garment.**

What does the word "righteous" mean? _____

What does it mean for us to clothe ourselves with LIGHT? _____

Does being a "new person in Christ" change our behavior? How?

When we receive the Holy Chrism, we are anointed with the Sign of the Cross on our forehead, eyes, nostrils, lips, ears, chest, hands and feet, and are **"sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."** What does this say to you about how we are to treat our bodies and live as Christ wants us to live? Note one or two ways you might do God's will with each part of your body:

Forehead (mind) _____

Eyes _____

Nostrils _____

Lips _____

Ears _____

Hands _____

Feet _____

New Life in the Church

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages. All the people from many countries who came to Jerusalem for the feast were amazed, for everyone understood, in their own native language, what they were saying! Peter then spoke to them and told them all that God had done to save them. (See Acts 2:22-36). The people were moved and asked what they should do. Peter said this to them: (write in Acts 2:38-39)

That day, about 3,000 people who heard Peter's words were baptized. The following passage (Acts 2:42-47) provides us with a description of how the Church was established and how the members of the Church ordered their lives. Write here the things they did:

How does our life today, as persons and as members of the Church, compare with the life of these first Christians? What do we do or not do well?

Teaching and Fellowship _____

Prayers and the Breaking of Bread (Eucharist) _____

Hold all things in common. _____

Wonders and Signs _____

Help those in need with money, food, clothing, etc. _____

What are some of the needs that you see as you drive through the streets of your city, or notice as you enter a local school, or are concerned about as you read your local newspaper? How can you and your parish become involved to improve situations of poverty, homelessness, the environment, etc.?

St. Paul comments on "spiritual gifts" (I Cor. 12:4-26)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ...But God has so composed the body... that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Discuss what this passage is saying about us? (or illustrate in a picture, poem, song or play). You can do this individually or in small groups.

Find 2 examples in the Books of Acts where the apostles gave an effective witness to Christ and 2 examples when they were not able to get their message across. Give reasons for each.

Effective witness _____

Unable to convey their message _____

What are the challenges to us today as we try to bring the message of new life in Christ to others?

What do you think are our most effective ways of witnessing to Christ today? As persons? As the Church?

