



CHAMPIONS OF FAITH

Educational Materials for the 2005 OCAY/ Holy Synod Theme
Lesson Outline – Teacher Guide



Developed by the Department of Christian Education, Orthodox Church in America

GOAL

To understand that we are called to be champions of faith, and that the Church gives us both means and examples to do so.

OBJECTIVES

Listed below for the Kindergarten group, and then separately for the Primary, Intermediate, and Teens/Young Adults groups.

TO THE TEACHER/LEADER

These lessons are intended as a supplement to your regular church school curriculum. The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America encourages their use. The theme is intended to be a unifying principle for the youth in the church.

Be sure to read through the lesson outlines provided well before the class meets, to see what materials you will need. Suggestions to guide you in discussion and presentation, throughout the text, are provided in italics within parentheses (*like this*). It is suggested that you begin each session with prayer.

RESOURCES

a. Scriptural Texts

– Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

– I Corinthians 9:25-27

Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

– II Timothy 4:7-8a

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day.

– Philippians 2:16

It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

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b. Readings (provided at the end of the lesson plans)

- Life of the Apostle Peter
- Story about St. Herman and the Icon of Our Lady of Sitka
- Prayer of St. Ephrem (traditional text and notes for children)

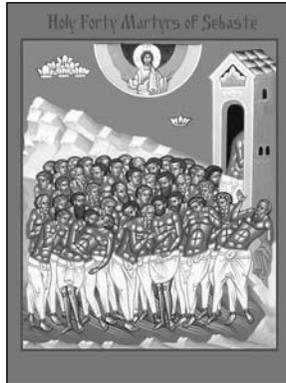
c. Icons and images (available in color on the OCA Department of Christian Education web site at: dce.oca.org)



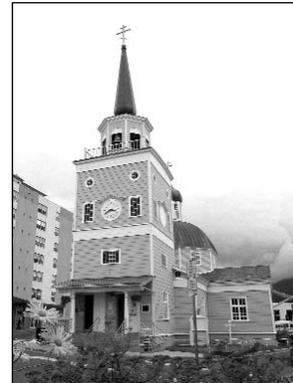
SS. Peter and Paul



Our Lady of Sitka



Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste



St. Michael Cathedral
Sitka, AK

d. Music (available on the OCA web site's downloadable music section at: www.oca.org)

- Psalm 23 so students can sing together (most parish choirs may already have this, please check with your parish's choir director.)

e. Additional publications

- The booklet *Dorcas Sews for Others* from the Arch Books series, or the account about Dorcas from a children's Bible (Acts 9:36-42) that can be read to the younger students.
- The book *Enlighteners of Ancient Kingdoms* from the Saints for All Ages series, Orthodox Church in America, Syosset, NY, 1980. The story of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste is contained in this book which can be purchased from the *Orthodox Christian Publications Center*: 216-351-1838; 216-351-1842 fax; ocpc@oca.org; or www.oca.org.

f. Instructions for Activities (provided at the end of the lesson plans)

- How to Make a Movie
- Wax Museum
- Character Cluster
- Triorama

g. About the "Champions of Faith" Lesson Outlines

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS A CHAMPION?

Kindergarten

It is suggested that you do all of numbers 1-5, which will make a complete lesson. If you do not have time for that, skip #4 and go on to #5. Be sure to give children a short break to move around at some point.

Objectives – Students will be able to

1. State that a “champion” is a person who works hard to be very good at something.
2. Identify two champions of faith: the apostle Peter, and Dorcas.
3. Describe St. Herman as a “champion” who helped others.
4. Recognize the icon of Our Lady of Sitka.

Procedure

1. Introduce the word *champion*: a person who works hard to become very good at something. Let students think of examples: sports champions, superheroes.
2. Tell the story of St. Peter the Apostle.

Peter was a fisherman who met the Lord Jesus and heard His wonderful teachings. After that, he went everywhere with Jesus and helped the Lord teach people.

But sometimes Peter was afraid. There came a time when some people did not like what Jesus was teaching. They were angry. They wanted Him to stop. Peter loved Jesus very much, but when he saw the angry people he was afraid. He did not help Jesus. He would not even say that he was Jesus' friend!

Peter asked God for strength and courage. God helped him, and he got over his fear. He was able to talk about Jesus to large crowds of people. The crowds listened to him. Because of Peter's words, many of those crowds became Christians. They followed the teachings of the Lord Jesus.

Ask students

What did Peter become very good at?

(Telling people about Jesus and getting them to follow His teachings.)

Could we call Peter a champion? *(Yes, because he got so good at doing what he did.)*

3. Say to the students, “Sometimes a champion is a person who is very good at helping others. Let's hear a story about another champion.” Then read the Arch Book *Dorcas Sews for Others* or read Acts 9:36-42 from a Bible for children.

Ask students

What did Dorcas become very good at? *(Helping others by sewing clothes for them.)*

Emphasize that the people she sewed for were poor and in need of clothing.

4. Ask students

Who is a champion in your life? Who is very good at telling others about the Lord Jesus? Who is very good at helping others? *(Students may name a parent, their priest, such heroes as firefighters or rescue workers, possibly a saint, or perhaps a fictional superhero or character. This last answer is acceptable, since children at this age are not yet distinguishing between fact and fiction.)*

Help students “Make a Movie.” *(See instructions on page 21.)* If possible, arrange later for them to show their movie to a gathering of their parents, or at coffee hour.

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5. Show students the icon of Our Lady of Sitka, and a picture of St. Michael Cathedral in Sitka, AK where the icon is located.

Tell this story of St. Herman

Long ago St. Herman came to our country. He wanted to tell the people here about the Orthodox faith. He became friends with some men who worked hard at their jobs every day. He found out that these men were being treated unkindly by the people for whom they worked.

St. Herman cared for these men. He reminded them that God loves them. He told the people they worked for to be kinder to them. The men could see God's love in the way St. Herman was. They loved him, too. The men were not paid much money for their work. But they all gave a little money, and together they were able to give this beautiful icon to the church in the picture.

Ask students

Was St. Herman a champion? *(Yes; he was very good at telling others about Jesus. He helped others, too.)*

6. Close with a prayer.

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS A CHAMPION?

Primary, Intermediate, and Teens/Young Adults

Objectives - Students will be able to

1. Define “champion” as one who is the best at, or very good at, something.
2. State a second definition: A “champion” is one who helps or stands up for others, or for a cause.
3. State that becoming a champion requires discipline.
4. Define a champion of faith as someone who becomes very good at living the way God calls us to live.
5. Name and describe some champions of faith.

Primary, Grades 1 – 3

It is suggested that you do all of numbers 1-5. You can do both #6 and #7, or only one of them, as your time permits.

Procedure

1. Write the word champion on the chalkboard/butcher paper.

Ask students

“What words or names come to mind when you hear the word “champion”?” *Put responses on the chalkboard/butcher-paper.*

Say to the students, “A champion is someone who works hard to get really good at something, or even the best at something. What kinds of champions are there?” *(Likely answers are sports figures, movie heroes, superheroes such heroic figures as firefighters and rescue workers.)*

Ask students

“What do champions have to do?” *(Likely answers are practice, exercise, eat good food, get enough sleep, etc.)*

2. Say to the students, “We try to live the way God wants us to live. That’s because we love Him and know He loves us. We call that our faith. So we could say that people who are good at living the way God wants us to live are champions of faith. What do you think a person has to do to be a champion of faith?” *(Likely answers are pray, go to church, read the Bible, listen to the priest, be kind and help others, etc. If nobody suggests “tell others about God,” add this.)*

Then read Hebrews 12:1 and point out these words tell us that both sports champions and champions of faith have to work to become what they are.

Ask students

“Do you know of any people who try to live the way God wants us to live? Who are some champions of faith – people you know, or people and saints you have heard about?” *(Students may name their parents, their priest, or saints.)*

3. Tell the story of St. Peter. *(You may want to leave out some details of his crucifixion, or to shorten the story somewhat.)*

After reading the story, ask students

- a. “Was it easy for Peter to get to be a champion?” *(No, he had to overcome his fear.)*
- b. “What did he do that makes him a champion?” *(He became very good at telling others about Jesus Christ. He cared about people, and in his caring he showed God's love.)*

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4. Read *Dorcas Sews for Others* from the Arch Books series to the class, or tell the story from a Bible for children. Tell the students, “Sometimes a champion is a person who is very good at helping others who need help, or standing up for them when they are in trouble. How was Dorcas this kind of champion?” (*She made clothes for people who needed them.*)
5. Show students the icon of Our Lady of Sitka.

Tell the story of St. Herman and the icon (*You may want to leave out some of the details of the workers' plight in Alaska.*) After reading the story, ask students:

How was St. Herman a champion? (*He told others about God, and showed God's love in the way he cared for others. He stood up for the workers when the people they worked for were not kind to them.*)

6. Have students “Make a Movie” of a champion they choose. (*See instructions on page 20.*)
7. Plan a Wax Museum activity. (*See instructions on page 21.*)

The audience for this might be invited parents, people at coffee hour, or one half of the class – the other half take their turn later.

8. Close with a prayer.

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS A CHAMPION?

Intermediate, Grades 4 - 6

It is suggested that you do numbers 1 and 2 as above for Primary level. However, you may want to have students write things on the chalkboard/butcher paper themselves in numbers 1 and 2. Also, remind them of such kinds of champions as “spelling champions,” which may not have occurred to them. Go through numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. You may choose to do numbers 8 and 9, or only one of the two if time is short. If need be (because of time constraints), you can skip them altogether and still have a complete lesson.

Special note to the Teacher/Leader

Part of this lesson makes comparisons between the experiences of athletes and those of saints. Be sure students understand that we do not see athletic champions and saints as being on the same level of holiness. But the comparison with athletes helps students see that their abilities to be excellent are given by God, and anyone’s efforts to be excellent are inspired by God. The use of athletes also helps students see that saints are real people and that many are active in the world, just as athletes are. A foremost example is St. Herman, who involved himself in the problems of the mistreated workers in Alaska, much as Jackie Robinson spoke up for blacks.

Procedure

1. As above, see page 5.
2. As above, see page 5.
3. Say to the students, “Let’s get some more guidance on this from the New Testament.” Read I Corinthians 9:24-27 together.

Ask the students, “What difference is there between those who want to be athletic champions and those who want to be champions of faith?” (*St. Paul tells us here that while athletes are seeking a “perishable crown,” those who want to be champions of faith seek an “imperishable” one—a crown that lasts forever in God’s Kingdom.*)

4. Divide students into three groups, and give each group a pencil and paper. Ask them to read the following passages, and come up with at least three attributes that Jesus says His true followers should have. These would be attributes of a champion of faith. Each group should list the attributes they came up with. The passages are: Matthew 6:2, 5, and 16; Mark 11:15 and 14:32, Luke 10:26. (*When the groups are ready, call everyone back together. Discuss: The passages show us that Jesus told people to give alms, to fast, and to pray. He Himself prayed corporately in the Temple and alone, away from others. Students probably found these easily. But we should also notice that when He asks in the passage from Luke, “How do you read?” it is clear that Jesus expected people to read and ponder the Scriptures. So we have personal prayer, acts of charity or almsgiving, fasting, corporate prayer and worship, and Scripture study as attributes.*) List these five attributes on the chalkboard/butcher paper.
5. Say to the students, “We have seen that St. Paul compares the effort to be a champion of faith with the effort to be an athletic champion. For both kinds of champions, the road can be difficult.”

Tell the class about Jackie Joyner-Kersey, the long-distance runner who has been called the greatest woman athlete of the 20th century. She had to overcome injuries and ailments. The most serious of these was her asthma, that some would have said was an impossible obstacle for almost any athlete, but particularly a runner.

Tell the story of St. Peter the Apostle (*from page 3.*)

Ask students

What did St. Peter have to overcome? (*His fear and sometime lack of faith.*)

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Why does the Church consider him to be a champion of the faith? *(He overcame his fear and his lack of faith through struggle and prayer. He won many people to become followers of Christ, and along with St. Paul helped the new Church to grow. Look at the icon of SS. Peter and Paul, and notice with students that St. Peter, on the left, “holds” the Church along with St. Paul. St. Peter is seen as a “pillar” of the Church because he offered all his strength and wisdom, and his very life, for the Gospel. He raises his hand in blessing upon those who also follow Christ. The top of the icon is a semicircle that represents the divine realm. Rays extend in the semicircle, representing the presence of God, and His blessings on the two chosen messengers of the faith.)*

6. Put these phrases on the chalkboard/butcher paper:

CHAMPION OF THE POOR

CHAMPION FOR THE CAUSE

Ask students whether these give us another meaning of the word champion. *(Make the point that a champion can be a person who stands up for the weak, or helps the weak, the poor, or the needy.)* Ask the class whether they are familiar with the sports figure Jackie Robinson. If so, let class members tell about him. If they don't know about him, tell the class that he was the first black major league baseball player, and a great athletic champion. He was also a “champion” in the second way you have just talked about.

Read these quotations from Jackie Robinson

“I won't 'have it made' until the most underprivileged Negro in Mississippi can live in equal dignity with anyone else in America. It is up to us in the North to provide aid and support to those who are actually bearing the brunt of the fight for equality down South. America has its iron curtain too.”

Ask students

“How do these words show Jackie Robinson as a ‘champion’ in the second way we talked about? What kind of experiences do you think he had as the first black major league player?” *(As the quotations show, Jackie Robinson was an advocate for poor Southern blacks. While admired for his great athletic ability and skill, he encountered severe racial prejudice and hostility, as well as the jealousy of some other players. Some people also accused him of “stirring up trouble” by advocating for blacks in the South.)*

7. Show the class the icon of Our Lady of Sitka, and the picture of St. Michael Cathedral in Sitka, where the icon is. Tell them that the icon is a very special one because it was painted by a famous iconographer named Vladimir Borovikovsky. More importantly, miracles have been attributed to this icon, and many believe that health has been restored to some of the people who have prayed before it.

Say to the students, “We can see that the icon has been very important to the people of Sitka, many of whom are poor. Orthodox Christians are a religious minority in North America, and that is not always an easy thing to be.”

Read together the story of St. Herman of Alaska.

Ask, “How was St. Herman a champion of faith?” *(He stood up to powerful bosses for the workers. Those bosses disliked and even threatened him. He also reminded the men that even in their difficult circumstances, God loved them and cared for them. St. Herman showed God's love in the way he treated the workers.)*

Ask, “How do you think St. Herman's efforts affected the workers?” *(They might have become despairing if the saint had not been a champion for them. But the beautiful gesture of giving the icon to the Cathedral shows that they kept their faith and their hope alive.)*

8. Let students choose a saint and make a triorama, showing scenes from the saint's life. *(See instructions on page 22.)*
9. Have students choose a saint and do a “Character Cluster.” *(See instructions on page 22.)*
10. Close with a prayer.

SESSION ONE: WHAT IS A CHAMPION?

Teens/Young Adults

It is suggested that you go through numbers 1-6, and 7 as above in the Intermediate level. Then you may use both, one, or neither of numbers 8 and 9 as time permits.

Here is an additional activity that you may choose to do with the Teen/Young Adult group:

11. Look together at the Prayer of St. Ephrem, which we use during Lent. This prayer is almost a kind of “handbook” for becoming a champion of faith.

Ask students how they would put the prayer in simple language for younger children. Then, look together at the “Notes for Children” provided at the end of this text. Plan a way to demonstrate this to the younger classes. Students might decide to act out parts of it, draw pictures, or create questions to ask the younger students.

If possible, plan a time to meet with the younger children and make a presentation.

12. Close with a prayer.

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SESSION TWO: WE ARE CALLED TO BE CHAMPIONS

Kindergarten

Objectives - Students will be able to

1. Retell the stories of St. Peter, St. Herman, and Dorcas.
2. List ways they can be “champions of faith” in their own lives.

Procedure

1. Review the meaning of the word champion from the previous session.
2. Assign each child one of the three champions of faith you talked about last week – St. Peter, St. Herman, Dorcas. With each child, choose a few very simple facts about what the champion did. Then plan a “Wax Museum” activity. (*See instructions on page 21.*)

The audience for the Wax Museum might be invited parents or everyone at coffee hour.

3. With the entire group, list some ways the children can be “champions of faith.” (*Examples: listen to my parents, be nice to my brothers and sisters or other family, pray, help at home, listen to my teacher, come to church, listen to the priest, etc.*) Write their ideas on the chalkboard/butcher paper.
4. Help each child draw a picture of his or her “Wax Museum” champion, and help them write the champion’s name.
5. Ask the students, “Have you ever seen the medals that champions get? We have talked about some ways that you can be a ‘champion of faith’ and now I have a medal for each of you.”
6. Give each child a medal you have prepared: a 5” circle of cardboard, covered with aluminum foil. Have 2 pieces of ribbon, 3” each, glued to the back and hanging from the medal, as real medals often have. Also glue or tape a long piece of string to the back of the cardboard so the medal can be worn or hung.
7. Ask the children to take their medals and pictures home. Tell them to think about what their ‘champion’ did, and to try to remember the ways you have talked about that they can be champions. Review the list of ways that you made together. (*Be sure to tell parents about the medals, and enlist them to remind the children at home.*)
8. Close with a prayer.

SESSION TWO: WE ARE CALLED TO BE CHAMPIONS

Primary, Grades 1 to 3

Objectives - Students will be able to

1. Choose and identify a saint or figure from the Bible as a “champion of faith.”
2. List ways they themselves can become “champions of faith.”
3. Identify “not giving up” as one of the ways we become champions of faith.
4. Recognize St. Paul as one who did not give up.

Procedure

1. Review the meaning of the word “champion” from the previous session.
2. Say, “One thing a champion can never do is to give up. When you are trying to become really good at something, you have to work at it. And sometimes it's hard to do that. Let's talk first about a sports champion who faced some hard times.”

Tell the class about Kerri Strug (*pronounced “stroog”*)

Kerri Strug is a young woman gymnast from the state of Arizona. You may have seen the gymnasts on TV during the Olympic Games. One year at the Olympics, the women's team for the United States was close to winning its first gold medal ever. It was Kerri's turn to perform, and she was such a good gymnast that everybody was sure she could get enough points for the team to win the gold.

But in her first try, she fell and hurt her ankle badly. The pain was so great that she could hardly walk. The team, her coach, the other gymnasts, the people watching in the stands, and all the people seeing her on their TV screens around the world were waiting. What would she do?

Kerri made her second try. She did a nearly perfect vault, and the United States Women's Team won the gold.

Ask students

Do you think some people would have given up if they had been Kerri? How do you think the other people felt when they saw Kerri do such a good job on her second try? (*Let students give their opinions. There are no right or wrong answers.*)

3. Say to the students “Now let's talk about a wonderful saint who also faced very hard times – much harder and for a much longer time than Kerri. He had very important work to do. This was St. Paul, who traveled and preached in many countries about Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. We will read about some of the difficulties he faced.”

Read together II Corinthians 11: 25-28. Say: “These are some of the things that happened to St. Paul as he traveled and preached. Why do you think he did not give up?” (*Let students answer. Bring out the point that Paul depended on God, and believed in the work he was doing for the Lord. He never stopped praying and asking God to guide him.*)

4. Ask each student to choose a “champion” from among the saints or Bible figures you have talked about, or another St. whose story means something to them. (*You may suggest saints to them.*) Give each student a 2” circle of heavy paper, and help them write the champion’s name on it.

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5. Say to the students “Champions get medals. And we all want to be champions of faith. So I have a medal for each of you.”

Give each child a medal (*instructions for making them are in #6 above, in the Kindergarten procedure.*)

Help students glue their champion's name in the center of the medal. Also give each child 10 colored adhesive-backed stars.

6. Ask students to help you make a list of ways they can be champions of faith. (*See the list of suggestions in #3 of the Kindergarten procedure above. Students will probably come up with some of these same items. But they will also want to add to items on that list with age-appropriate suggestions, reflecting their increased abilities.*)
7. Say to the students “Try to think about this list during the week. Each time you do a good job of training to be a champion of faith, put a star on one of the ribbons on your medal. Let the champion on your medal remind you of your own effort to be a champion. And remember St. Paul – he didn't give up, even when things were difficult!”
8. Close with a prayer.

SESSION TWO: WE ARE CALLED TO BE CHAMPIONS

Intermediate (Grades 4 - 6) and Teens/Young Adults

Objectives - Students will be able to

1. Describe “staying the course” as an example of something a champion must do.
2. Identify St. Paul as one who “stayed the course.”
3. Describe the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste as examples of co-operation in the struggle to become champions of faith.
4. Identify some of their own gifts as they strive to become champions of faith.

Intermediate - Grades 4 - 6

Procedure

1. Review the definition of a “champion” as both a person who is very good at or best at something, and someone who stands up for other people or a cause.
2. Read together the passages from Ephesians and II Timothy (*listed on page 1*).

Ask the students

“What do these passages tell us about what it takes to be a champion?” (*Let students give their own answers. Bring out the point that we must “stay the course” which means not giving up. We should expect obstacles and difficulties along the way, but must not be deterred by them.*)

3. Remind the class that St. Paul often compared the effort to be a champion of the faith to that of trying to be a champion athlete. Tell the class about gymnast Kerri Strug (*information is in #2 of Primary procedure above.*) Touch briefly on the point that she overcame difficulties and didn’t give up - she “stayed the course.”
4. To show what it means for a champion of the faith to “stay the course” in a graphic way, do the following exercise:
 - a. Stretch a length of bright ribbon on the floor from one end of the room to the other, to make a “narrow path.” Tape the ribbon to the floor. At one end, have students make a sign with the words from II Timothy. Tape it to the wall above the ribbon.
 - b. Assign students to stand on either side of the path, spacing themselves out from the beginning to near the end. On one side, students will stand and hold pieces of paper you have prepared beforehand, each with one of the following “negative” phrases (*in this order*):

- *You hated the Church and tried to get Christians put in prison.*
- *While preaching about Jesus Christ, you were stoned and dragged out of the city of Lystra.*
- *You and your helper Barnabas disagreed. Barnabas stopped traveling and preaching with you.*
- *Felix, a Roman governor, put you in jail for a long time.*
- *You were shipwrecked on the isle of Malta.*
- *Your life ended with prison and execution in Rome.*

On the other side of the path, opposite the first group, assign other students to stand with pieces of paper containing “positive” phrases, in this order:

- *Jesus called you to be His disciple, and healed your heart full of hate.*
- *The other disciples surrounded you, and saved your life.*
- *Later you and Barnabas patched up your quarrel.*

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- You convinced King Agrippa that Felix was wrong to imprison you (though the king did not free you, either.)
- You healed many people on the island, and later you set sail again with gifts and good wishes from them all.
- You wrote from prison, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.”

- c. Choose a student to be “Paul” and to start down the path at the opposite end from the sign. Before Paul begins, another student is assigned to read the following from a paper: “We are called to follow the path of Jesus Christ to the Kingdom. It is a bright path, as we see from the ribbon on the floor. But sometimes we get pulled off the path, either by our own sin or by things that happen to us. One example of this is the great St. Paul.”

As Paul goes along, the first person with a “negative” phrase reads it and pulls Paul off the path. The person with the opposite “positive” phrase reads it and pulls Paul back on. When Paul reaches the end of the path and is under the sign, all students should read it aloud together.

Depending on how much time you have, let students take various roles. Afterwards, discuss for a few minutes: How is this like our experiences in life? How can we try to get back on the path when we are pulled off or go off? (Various things can pull us off the path. We can pray for God’s help, receive Holy Communion for strength, talk with family members, read Scripture and saints’ lives for inspiration, talk to spiritually strong people, etc.)

5. Read the passage from Philippians above. How do you think Paul felt when he wrote this? (*He clearly felt that his sufferings and huge efforts were worthwhile. He addresses these words to those he had taught – “you” – and says that if they hold to the faith, all that he did will have been for a worthy goal.*)

6. Look together at the icon of Saints Peter and Paul.

Say to the students, “Though these two men were very different, they found ways to serve God. The Church calls them both champions of the faith. We are different from each other, too. But we can find our own ways to serve God and work to become champions.”

Give each student a paper or small notebook, and a pen or pencil. Have them write down some of the gifts God has given them, and what they will need to do to develop these so that they can be champions of faith.

7. Remind students that we have said that obstacles will come into our path as we strive to become champions. But God is always with us, and will always help us.

8. As a closing prayer, sing the 23rd Psalm together, which beautifully expresses these truths.

SESSION TWO: WE ARE CALLED TO BE CHAMPIONS

Teens/Young Adults

It is suggested that you do numbers 1-6 with the group. Following are two additional activities that can be inserted in the lesson, and either used in addition to or in place of those suggested above.

7. Take the life of a saint or Bible character, and create a “path” with negative and positive events. *You might want to base this on the one provided for St. Paul in #4 of the Intermediate procedure above, and plan to present it in the future to a younger class, or to the parish. If you do this, you will need to have the class write an introduction.*
8. Tell the class that one of the teachings of our Church is that reaching the Kingdom is something we do together, not individually. It is a “team effort.” Read together the story of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste in the book *Enlighteners of Ancient Kingdoms*.

Discuss

How does this story reflect a team effort? How did the youths help each other?

Look at the icon of the Forty Martyrs together. Notice how it shows them close to each other, some of them turned toward each other and showing concern for one another. This is a visual reminder that salvation comes as a team effort.

9. As a closing prayer, sing the 23rd Psalm together, which beautifully expresses these truths.

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READING RESOURCES

St. Peter the Apostle

This great man of the Church was born in Bethsaida, in Galilee. He and his brother Andrew were fishermen, as their father Jonah was too. They were poor, and did not have much schooling.

Named Simon when he was born, he was called Simon by everyone as he was growing up. But one wonderful day, our Lord Jesus Christ looked at this strong, active man. Jesus said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah; you shall be called Cephas.” Cephas is the same name as Peter, and from that day the fisherman was called Peter by everyone.

Peter became the Lord's faithful follower. He saw many wonders, including the Transfiguration of Our Lord. He often proclaimed his loyalty to Christ, though at times his faith faltered.

But at one important moment, Peter completely lost his courage. As Jesus faced angry and dangerous enemies, Peter denied even knowing Him. Later the disciple wept bitter tears as he remembered how he had let the Lord down.

But joy came again. With love and understanding, Christ forgave Peter completely. Peter became a strong and convincing witness to the Good News that Jesus is the Savior of the world. On the day of Pentecost, Peter's words made many people become followers of Christ. After Pentecost, Peter preached in Judea, Antioch, and some parts of Asia.

Peter finally came to Rome. There, after working with the churches in the city he was crucified upside down (*not believing himself worthy to be crucified in the same way as the Lord*) by the Emperor Nero. That happened in about the year 66. He left two catholic (*meaning general*) epistles, or letters, to the Church of Christ.

Reading (adapted) courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA

St. Herman of Alaska and the Icon of Our Lady of Sitka

St. Herman came to Kodiak, Alaska in 1794 with seven other monks. They were bringing the Orthodox faith to the American continent. They worked very hard over the years, and many of the native Alaskan people were converted.

St. Herman was a gentle, quiet man. But he did not sit by and let other people be mistreated. He and the other monks found that workers for the Russian-American Company, which made its money in furs, was harsh and unfair toward its workers.

St. Herman and his brother monks protested strongly to the company's bosses. For this they were persecuted and threatened. In the year 1800, the head of the company told the monks they could no longer have any contact with the workers. The monks did not give up, and the workers always knew how much St. Herman and the others cared for them.

Of course, the workers were not well paid. But they collected money little by little, and they were able to give a beautiful gift to the cathedral in Sitka: the Icon of Our Lady of Sitka.

St. Herman helped those workers remember that God loved them, even in their difficult times. He showed them what God's love is like in his own concern and care for them. St. Herman was their “champion.”

We can remember how much God's love means when we look at the icon those workers gave to the cathedral, with their little bits of money and their great faith.

To read more about St. Herman of Alaska, log onto the web site of the Orthodox Church in America at www.oca.org

CHAMPIONS OF FAITH

Educational Materials for the 2005 OCAY/Holy Synod Theme

RESOURCES

The Prayer of St. Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Your servant.

Yes, O Lord, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed are You unto ages of ages.
Amen.

Notes for Children

Fasting without prayer is like trying to drive a car without gasoline. A special prayer we say almost every day of Great Lent is called the Prayer of St. Ephrem, or sometimes St. Ephrem's Prayer. It is a good prayer that tells us all the important things. Here it is, explained in different words:

First, we ask God to take away from us the will to be lazy and to be sad, the desire to get ahead of other people and to boast or brag about ourselves.

In the second part of the prayer, we ask God to give us a pure and humble spirit, so that we don't lie or try to fool people, we ask Him for the will to be patient with other people and to love them.

Finally, we ask God to help us see our own mistakes and wrong actions. We ask Him to help us from judging other people for the things they do.

Adapted from Little Falcons, "Fasts," Ed. Fr. Thomas Kazich, Box 371, Grayslake, IL 60030.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

MAKE A MOVIE

Materials Needed

- Narrow butcher paper (on roll) approximately 14 inches wide, cut into 7 foot strips (*one per student*)
- Markers, Crayons, Black markers
- Coloring pictures of saints
- Empty paper towel tubes

Procedure

This is done with each session as lessons are given about saints and heroes/champions:

Draw 9 – 8 ½ x 11 squares on each strip of paper. Space between each should be about 6 inches.

1. Title, “Champions of Faith” and child’s name (write if child is unable)
2. St. _____
3. My Hero (in my life)
4. St. _____
5. St. _____
6. My Olympic/Sports Hero
7. Theotokos
8. My Everyday Hero
9. I am a Champion of Faith

As each session is completed, following the lesson and story, child will draw, color an icon, and label each film frame. Between each frame, draw small black squares around the frame, to simulate film sprocket holes. Roll the ends of the paper around two empty paper towel tubes.

To display students roll out each frame and explain the picture.

CHAMPIONS OF FAITH

Educational Materials for the 2005 OCAY/Holy Synod Theme

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

WAX MUSEUM

Materials Needed

- Stories of saints
- Period costumes
- Chairs (one per student)
- 8½ x 11 heavy paper
- Art materials
- Masking tape
- Church audio CD's with troparions of saints

Procedure

Students will listen to stories of saints, choose a champion, and memorize a few facts about that person. In addition, and definitely if they are too young to memorize, they can draw a picture or write a few phrases about the person, coloring a picture of their favorite part of their saint's story or write with the teacher a favorite part of saint's story.

Teacher will explain wax museums and how they are set up for display. Students will dress in outfit of saint's life period. Teacher will tape drawings and writings of students' chosen saint to chairs, placed around classroom, coffee hour room, auditorium in a order conducive to walking and observing each student and his/her display. Students will stand next to chair, and for 5 minutes, strike a pose (*become a wax figure*).

A red "on" button should be on one arm of the chair. Students can strike a pose that is indicative of what kind of person the champion was. (*They can also stand rather than sit.*) Parents, visitors will mingle around students, as if in a museum looking at the displays, and bring the wax figure to life by pressing the "on" button. Then the student will tell the facts he or she has memorized.

They can also use simple costumes or props. If desired, a CD of church music or troparion of saints can play softly in the background.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

CHARACTER CLUSTER

Materials Needed

- 11 x 14 Paper
- Picture of person, icon of saint
- Markers
- Crayons
- Pens, pencils

Procedure

1. Have each student select a person or saint they would like to write about
2. Have students draw or place a picture of their chosen saint or person in the middle of their paper, and draw four straight lines around it on the sides of the paper. *(Note: If students choose a saint or person of whom your church has a paper icon, picture, or photo, this may be used instead of a drawing.)*
3. Ask students to write four words (*adjectives*) describing their person on the four lines
4. Beneath each descriptive word students can write about examples or incidents from the person's life that reflect the word.
5. At the bottom of the page students can write a short statement or poem, or draw a picture, that shows why they chose the person they did.

A "Gallery of Champions" (*the students' papers*) can be displayed in the classroom, a hallway in the parish building, or the parish hall. Students can make a heading for the exhibit.

CHAMPIONS OF FAITH

Educational Materials for the 2005 OCAY/Holy Synod Theme

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

TRIORAMA

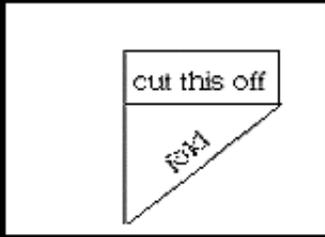
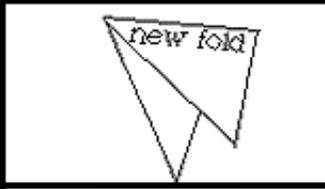
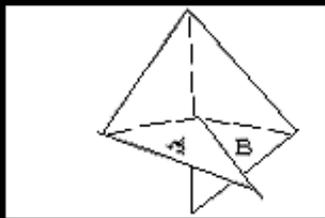
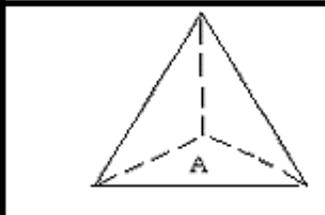
Materials Needed

- 11 x 14 paper, cut into squares, 4 or 8 per child
- Arts and crafts materials
- Markers
- Glitter glue
- Construction paper
- Scrap material
- Scissors
- Crayons
- Molding clay

Procedure

Each section is done with each session as saint and hero/champion is presented.

1. Fold each square diagonally, then open
2. Fold in opposite diagonal direction, then open
3. Cut $\frac{1}{4}$ of diagonal fold to middle of square
4. Fold 2 diagonals under each other until you form an inverted triangle. This is the triangular “stage” for a scene from the story of saint/champion
5. Can color, decorate as you would a diorama
6. When four scenes are completed, you can tape them together to form an inverted triorama pyramid with all four scenes.
7. Can do one triorama for your saint and one for “Champions of Faith” or both in one triorama.

	1) Fold and cut
	2) Fold again
	3) Cut solid line
	4) Overlap A over B and glue or staple
	5) Finished Triorama

For a comprehensive resource on the lives of the saints visit the OCA web site at www.oca.org, and follow the link to the Lives of the Saints section.

ABOUT THE *CHAMPIONS OF FAITH* LESSON OUTLINES

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For more information about supporting efforts such as these go to www.oca.org and click on the FOS link.



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