



Our Church and the Future

Educational Materials for the 2006 OCAY/ Holy Synod Theme
Lesson Outline – Teacher Guide



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

General Introduction to the Lessons

Theme

The OCAY theme for this year is “Our Church and the Future.” The following lessons, based on this theme, are intended as supplements to regular Church School sessions, and may be used at any time that is convenient for your particular parish situation and schedule.

Levels of Lessons

The lessons have been written on four levels:

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten – 2 lessons, approximately 30 minutes each;

Ages 7-9 – 2 lessons, approximately 40 minutes each;

Ages 10-12 – 2 lessons, approximately 40 minutes each; and

Resources for Teens will be included in the Winter 2006 resources to be distributed by the Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries.

Lesson Content and Sections

Each lesson provides the teacher with a theme, objectives to be accomplished in the class session, activities designed to meet those objectives, and a list of materials needed. In addition, the teacher is given background information, so as to be able to teach the lesson with confidence.

Resources (provided at the end of the lesson plans)

a. Music

Words for “A New Commandment” and words and music for “O Lord, Save Your People.”

Special note: “A New Commandment” has been recorded on several tapes and CDs. If you have access to one, playing it for the students is one way of teaching the hymn. Or you may choose to sing it with the class, using the words provided in this unit. Music for “A New Commandment” was composed by His Eminence, Archbishop Job. It can be downloaded for a small fee through the liturgical music resource on the web site of PSALM, at www.orthodoxpsalm.org.

b. Educational Activities

Templates for shapes of a **human being** and a **shamrock** to be traced (for Pre-K and K lessons).

The blank grid, clues, and a filled-in grid for a **crossword puzzle** (for Intermediate lesson).

c. Readings

Stories of the lives of **St. Patrick**, **St. Genevieve of Paris**, and **St. Moses the Black** (for Junior and Intermediate lessons).

d. Icons

Icons of the Annunciation, Nativity of Our Lord, Transfiguration, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, St. Patrick of Ireland, St. Genevieve of Paris, St. Moses the Black (for Junior and Intermediate lessons).

Feedback

If you have any comments or suggestions, please visit <http://dce.oca.org> or send an email to: christianeducation@oca.org.

Session One: God Is Our Loving Maker

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten

Theme

God made us and loves us. God gave us His Church.

Objectives

1. To **describe** God as the One who made us and loves us.
2. To **tell** very simply how the Church began on Pentecost.

Materials

- ◆ Bible
- ◆ Cardboard or heavy stock cutouts of a human shape (see template in the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit), one for each child
- ◆ Crayons
- ◆ Small pieces of colored ribbon and of colored construction paper (enough for children to share, and have several to choose from)
- ◆ Paste or glue
- ◆ Cupcakes for each child (be aware of special dietary needs of any children, and plan to provide an alternate treat for them if necessary; you may want to consult with parents)
- ◆ Cleanup materials

Background Information for the Teacher

In teaching young children about God, we stress that God is the One who made everything, including each of us. We also want to stress that each of us is a child of God – we have that in common. Yet each of us is unlike any other person. God made each of us unique and distinctive. These two important words are beyond the comprehension of young children, so this lesson expresses them in simpler ways.

The lesson also includes a simple explanation of the Feast of Pentecost. This is the day when the Church began – the Church to which we all belong. The Church is a place where we learn to love each other, as Jesus Christ loves us. That love is expressed in a hymn we sing often in church: “[A New Commandment](#).” This hymn is a very direct “message” from Jesus Christ to us – “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Procedure

1. Begin with “O Heavenly King” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words and music).

Give each child a cardboard cutout. Say, “These cardboard people I have given you all look the same. All of us are real people, not cardboard people. But we are all the same in one way, too. God made all of us. God loves all of us. We are God’s children. In that way we are all the same.”

Give the children the decorative materials (crayons, paper and ribbon pieces, paste or glue) and invite them to decorate their cardboard people.

When they finish, say, “Remember how our little cardboard people all looked the same before? Now they don’t. They all are different. We are all God’s children. He made us all, and He loves us all. But He loves us so much that He made each of us different from every other person. There is no other person in the world who is just like you, or just like me. God loves each one of us, just as we are.”

Help the children put their names on their cardboard people, and to clean up.

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2. Say to the children, “When we go to church to be with God, we are doing something that people have done for a long, long time. Let’s listen to the story of how the Church started. As you listen, find some things the people in the story did that we also do in church.”

Have the Bible in your hands to read the following story, even if you read it from this text, based on Acts 2:

Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, came to share our life and show us how to live. He taught many people, especially the group of men called His apostles. Jesus Christ told them that He was going to go back to heaven to be with His Father. But He promised them that He would send the Holy Spirit to help them in their work. That work was to teach everyone, in all parts of the world, how to come closer to God, and live in God’s good way.

Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came to the twelve apostles. Here is how it happened: Many people were gathered in the city of Jerusalem for a big holiday. The apostles and Mary, Jesus Christ’s mother, were gathered in the upstairs room of a house. Suddenly a sound came from heaven like a rushing wind. Then a flame of fire, shaped like a tongue, appeared over the head of each apostle. They all felt filled with the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

A large crowd of people gathered in front of the house where the apostles were. The Apostle Peter began to tell them about the wonderful things Jesus Christ had done. He told the people to try hard to love other people, and not to hurt them or make them feel bad. He told the people to come and be baptized.

Many, many people – men, women, and children – were baptized that day, and joined the Church. That’s why we sometimes call that day, Pentecost, the birthday of the Church.

After that day, the people lived like a family. They ate together and prayed together. They listened to the teaching of the apostles together. They received Holy Communion often. They shared everything they had. They lived together in happiness and joy.

After you finish the story, have the children stand and stretch.

Ask students

What things did the people in the story do that we do in church? (*they ate together, prayed together, listened to teaching together, shared things, and most important received Holy Communion.*)

3. Have the children stand in a circle and say to them, “The most important thing that Jesus Christ taught us is to love each other as He loves us. Let’s sing a Church song about that. The words tell us that Jesus gives us a commandment, which means that He tells us to do something. In the song, Jesus says to us: ‘Love one another the way I love you.’”

Teach the first verse of the liturgical hymn “A New Commandment.” (see the [Resources Section](#) at the end of the unit for the words). Have the children sing it a few times as they hold hands and walk slowly in a circle.

4. Say to the children, “Remember that we said Pentecost was the day when the Holy Spirit came to help the apostles teach everyone about Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit helped them teach people how much God loves them. And we said that Pentecost is the birthday of the Church, because on that day the Church really started, with lots of people coming together to pray and share Holy Communion and learn about Jesus Christ.” (*Note: Don’t worry about having the children pronounce “Pentecost.” Letting them hear the word is enough for now.*)

Ask students

“What do we eat on a birthday? Cake, of course.” (*Add the words “and other yummy things” if any children cannot have cake.*)

Share cupcakes/treats and clean up together.

5. Close with the prayer “O Lord, Save Your People.”

Session Two: We Belong to God’s Church

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten

Theme

As people in the Church, we try to spread God’s love as the apostles did.

Objectives

1. To **describe** some ways that people who love Jesus Christ show love to others.
2. To **identify** St. Patrick as someone who showed God’s love.
3. To **name** ways in which they can be “growing” in their love of others.

Materials

- ◆ Icon of St. Patrick (commemorated on March 17)
This can be a good opportunity to teach children how to handle an icon with reverence and love. If you have or can borrow an actual icon, use it. A sample of the icon available at www.oca.org is found on page 40. If you print out that icon, it would be a good idea to back it with stiff card stock, so that it can stand up and the children can see it easily.
- ◆ Pictures/photos of people doing various kinds of service in church (*servicing at the altar, cleaning or doing maintenance, cooking, singing, teaching church school, talking with visitors, etc.*) Collect these to have them ready for class.
- ◆ For each child: sponge cut in a shamrock pattern (*see template on page 33*), grass seed, a paper cup for watering the grass seed, heavy-duty paper plate for the sponge to sit in and to catch the extra water, toothpick, small piece of paper.
- ◆ Scotch tape.

Background Information for the Teacher

In this lesson, we want to emphasize to our young children that as members of the Church and followers of Christ they have a special duty to show love and care to others, as Our Lord did.

Because these children are so young, there are really no “ministries” they can take on as yet. But they can understand that Jesus Christ’s love and outreach to people is our example. He is our leader; we follow what He has done. The story of St. Patrick is an appealing one for children. He is an example of cheerful service to God. It is also a good idea for our young students to realize that this saint is “ours” as much as he is a saint of the Western Church.

St. Patrick’s association with the shamrock is useful for young children. As they watch the grass on their shamrock-shaped sponge grow, they can remember St. Patrick, and they can also think about the way their own love and service to others can grow as they get older.

Procedure

1. Begin with “O Heavenly King” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words and music).

Review the meaning of, and sing together, the hymn “A New Commandment,” and emphasize the word “commandment.” Remind the children that this is the main thing our Lord has told us to do: to love one another as He loves each and every one of us.

2. Spread the pictures of people doing various kinds of service on a low table or on the floor. Ask the children to walk around the table or floor and look at them.

Ask some questions: *What is/are the person/people in the picture doing? Where is/are the person/people doing it? (Help children understand that the pictures are of people doing things in church.) Have the older people in your family ever done any of these things? Do you help them? What are some of these things that you would especially like to*

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do, either now or when you are older?

3. Say to the children, "Let's remember some of the things that the people were doing together a long time ago, when the Church had its 'birthday.'" (*Praying together, eating together, receiving Holy Communion, sharing what they had with others.*)

Say to the children, "These are some things we still do today, because we want to do what Jesus Christ did, just like those people a long time ago. And there have been some people who really did a good job of being kind to others, as Jesus Christ did. These people are called saints. Let's talk about one of them. His name is Saint Patrick."

Look at the icon together. Ask the children to listen to find out why St. Patrick is holding the green three-leafed plant in the icon.

Tell this story of St. Patrick

Saint Patrick was born near a river. Sometimes pirates came to the river on ships. They would take children away to sell them as slaves. This is what happened to Patrick when he was young. The pirates took him to the country of Ireland. There he was put to work taking care of pigs on a mountainside.

Patrick prayed when he was alone on the mountain. He loved to feel close to God. For a long time there in Ireland, he learned to pray very often during the day and night. He also learned to speak the language of the Irish people.

One night, Patrick had a special kind of dream. He dreamed that he would soon go home on a boat. Because of this dream, he started walking a long, long way to the place where ships were sitting in the water at the edge of the land. And there he was able to get on a ship that took him to his home and his parents.

Later, Patrick became a bishop. He decided to go back to Ireland to teach the people about Jesus Christ. He treated everyone kindly. He helped those who were poor or unhappy. The people loved to listen to Patrick, because he could speak their own language.

There were some people who did not want to hear about Jesus Christ. They did not want to be told that they should love other people more. They were very mean to Patrick. They tried to tell others not to listen to him.

But Patrick's long years of praying on the mountain had made him strong. He didn't give up, and he didn't hate the people who were mean to him. He kept loving people. He kept telling them about Jesus Christ.

Saint Patrick wanted people to know about Jesus Christ's Father and the Holy Spirit, too. He showed people the shamrock, a plant that grows in the fields of Ireland. With its three beautiful green leaves together, it reminded the people of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

After you finish the story, let the children tell you why the shamrock is in the icon: because St. Patrick used this to talk about God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Do not try to explain about the Trinity, or use that word. The concept of the Trinity is too complicated for children at this young age.

After reading the story, ask students

What are some things St. Patrick did that you can do now? What will you be able to do when you get older? (*Teach people, be kind to them, pray often. Some children may say they want to take care of pigs someday!*)

4. Give each child a sponge shamrock, water in a cup, grass seed, and a paper plate to work on. Ask them what shape the sponge is, and let them identify the shamrock. Have the children soak their sponges well with water, and then sprinkle a generous amount of grass seed on one side.

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Explain that you will put the shamrocks in a sunny place, and the grass will grow. Tell the children that just as they themselves will grow and be able to do more and more things to show love for other people, the grass will grow more green, soft, and pretty.

Clean up together.

5. Close with the prayer “O Lord, Save Your People.”

Helpful Tip

To identify each child’s shamrock, write the child’s name on a piece of paper, attach it to a toothpick with tape like a little flag, and stick the toothpick into the side of the sponge.

Be sure to keep the sponges damp. Perhaps you will want to take them home with you so that you can do so. Plan to show the children, in about a week, how their shamrock grass has grown.

Session One: *I Am Growing in Many Ways*

Junior Level (Ages 7-9)

Theme

All people need to grow in faith and ability in order to serve God’s Church.

Objectives

1. To **describe** ways in which they are growing in ability.
2. To **recognize** that the apostles had to grow in faith and ability.
3. To **enumerate** ways in which they can grow in faith.
4. To **state** that we must be well-nourished in order to serve God’s Church.

Materials

- ♦ Bibles for students to share in groups.
- ♦ Pencils and paper.
- ♦ A copy of the “Growth Chart” (*on the last page of the lesson*) for each student.
- ♦ Flip chart with large pyramid drawn freehand and with 5 horizontal sections (*like the Food Pyramid often used to show food groups*). Label the pyramid “Spiritual Food Pyramid.” Label the sections – from bottom to top – Fellowship, Prayer, Study, Service, Holy Communion. Note: The pyramid can also be put on a chalkboard.
- ♦ Various colors of thin markers for flip chart, or colored chalk for chalkboard.
- ♦ Small foil sticky stars.
- ♦ Trail mix ingredients (*enough to make a serving for each student*): nuts, dried cranberries or another berry, small pretzels, yogurt-covered raisins, M&M’s.
- ♦ Large bowl and spoon with which to make trail mix.
- ♦ Paper cups for servings of trail mix.

Background Information for the Teacher

During the period from ages 7 to 9, children grow out of childhood, and their world expands greatly beyond home and family. They become more aware of their developing abilities, and also of the things they want to become able to do.

This lesson contains a “growth chart” to encourage children to see that they have grown in ability. Also, the lesson helps them see that the apostles still needed to grow in faith and ability even after they had been with Jesus and had been taught by Him for some time. In doing these parts of the lesson, children will be both heartened about their own increasing abilities, and will realize that everyone, including adults, needs to and can continue to grow.

Since so many of our children are conscious of health and nutrition, the lesson makes a comparison between bodily nutrition and spiritual nutrition. This age is a good time to start children on the realization that the Church offers us ways to come closer to God by nurturing our souls and our spiritual life, just as the world around them offers many ways to “pump up” the body.

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Procedure

1. Begin with “O Heavenly King” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words and music).

Talk with students about ways in which they are growing up, changing, and learning to do new things.

Ask students

What is something you are learning this year, either at home or at school, that you are glad to be learning?

Give each student a copy of the “*Growth Chart*” and let them choose some foil stars in a color or colors they like. Have them fill in the chart and apply one star if they feel they have achieved the item, or two stars if they feel they have had special success. They should not write about or put stars in next to any item they feel they have not yet achieved.

(If students feel there are some things on the chart they haven’t achieved yet, have them take the chart and stars home to fill in as time goes on.)

Talk together about the charts, and what students have put down on them.

2. Say to the students, “Christians, followers of Jesus Christ, are always growing and learning to be more like Him. Let’s read about one of Jesus’ closest followers. This follower was a grownup and knew Jesus well, but he still had to ‘grow’ more.”

Read Mark 14:66-71 together.

Tell students that Peter was afraid to say he knew Jesus or that he was Jesus’ friend, when Jesus was in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

Next, read Acts 2:14, 22-24.

Ask students

How did Peter grow and change? *(He was no longer afraid to be known as Jesus’ friend. In fact, on this day of Pentecost he told a huge crowd that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of the world.)* Point out that all of us can grow, and change, and share the message that Jesus Christ loves us and that He came to the world to give us life forever in the Kingdom of God.

3. Ask, “How many of you have seen ads and commercials for food that is good for you, and for exercise equipment or gyms?” *(All or most students will say that they have.)* Continue, “There are lots of ways to keep our bodies healthy, and lots of foods we are told are good for us – foods that make up a balanced diet. What are some ways to keep our bodies healthy? One is exercise. Let’s do a few.” *(Do a short series of simple exercises such as arm stretches and touching toes with the class.)*

Say to the students, “Let’s make up a healthy snack right now. What kinds of things do we need?” *(Let students answer.)*

Have students pour in, and mix together in the large bowl, grains (pretzels), fruit (dried cranberries), protein (nuts), milk (yogurt raisins) and – just to make it more tempting – some chocolate (M&M’s). Make up servings of trail mix to enjoy at the end of the session.

4. Say to the students, “Well, we know a lot about helping our bodies grow in a healthy way. The Church also provides some wonderful ways for us to help our spiritual growth – things that will help us come closer to God, and learn to love others the way He loves us.”

Point out the pyramid you have put up, and ask students to fill in the various areas with “ingredients.” If need be, start them off with some examples. Write their suggestions at the appropriate places on the pyramid.

Suggested answers

- ♦ *Fellowship*: coffee hour, greeting visitors, church school activities, inviting friends to church.
- ♦ *Prayer*: our Church services, our own daily prayers at home, learning prayers.
- ♦ *Study*: reading the Bible, learning about saints, listening to sermons and guest speakers.
- ♦ *Service*: helping others, fasting, giving money to the Church, community service, giving money to charities.

Holy Communion stands alone at the top, because it is the great privilege we have, and we prepare for it by doing all the other things. These things help us to grow spiritually, just as good food helps us grow physically.

5. Say to the class, “Let’s notice something about our pyramid. Everything on it has to do with love. We have fellowship with others because we care about them and love them. We pray because we love God. We read the Bible and learn about the saints because we love to hear what God has done. We fast because we love God and want to make room for Him in our life. We help people by giving money or service because we care about them and love them. The most important thing Jesus Christ told us to do, the most important thing Christians do, is to love others. But we can only do that by following His example. It takes time and effort to grow into being a really loving person.”

Invite students to sing a song that we often sing at Liturgy, “A New Commandment” which tells us of Jesus Christ’s commandment to us to love others as He loves us. Sing together (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words).

6. Enjoy the trail mix snack together. Before you begin, say a prayer thanking God for food, and asking Him to help students grow in faith and ability as they grow physically.

Clean up together.

7. Close with the prayer “O Lord, Save Your People.”

MY GROWTH CHART

Here's something I can do now that I could not do last year:

A person I know now whom I didn't know last year is:

Here's one thing I can do myself that my parents used to have to do for me:

Here's a new word I have learned this year:

Here is something nice someone said to me that shows I'm growing up:

Here's something that is still hard for me to do:

Here's one way I show my love for Jesus Christ:

Here's one new thing I have learned at church or church school:

Session Two: Getting Ready for the Church's Future

Junior Level (Ages 7-9)

Theme

We have many examples of people who have grown and developed their talents for the Church.

Objectives

1. To **describe** God's "recipe" for being a loving person in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
2. To **identify** some saints and missionaries as people who "grew" and developed their talents to serve the Church.
3. To **name** gifts the children themselves can develop.

Materials

- ♦ Bible
- ♦ **Icon of St. Patrick** (commemorated on March 17)
- ♦ **Icon of St. Genevieve of Paris** (commemorated on January 3)
- ♦ Icon of St. Moses the Black (commemorated on August 28)
If you have or can borrow actual icons, use them. If you do use the icons available at www.oca.org, it would be a good idea to back them with stiff card stock, so they can stand up and the children can see it easily them.
- ♦ One copy each of the stories of the lives of **St. Patrick**, **St. Genevieve**, and **St. Moses**. (See the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit.) Your class will be divided into three groups, each studying the life of one saint. If you have a large class and want to have more than one group studying each saint, or want each student rather than each group to have a copy, make as many copies as you need.
- ♦ Pencils and paper for groups and for individual students to use.
- ♦ World map showing France, Ireland, Romania, Albania, Argentina, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Uganda. This can be as small as a page in an atlas borrowed from the public library, or something as large as a wall map. A larger map will be more effective, but in any case be sure your map shows all the countries listed.
- ♦ Small, soft ball that can easily (and painlessly) be tossed from one person to another.
- ♦ An unlined white 3x5 card for each student.
- ♦ Markers, crayons, and colored pencils for students to share.

Background Information for the Teacher

The previous lesson ended by telling students that Jesus Christ's most important commandment to us that we love one another as He loves us. St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 are like a kind of "recipe" for being a loving person.

So this lesson asks students to take a close look at those important words. Then they go on to study the lives of three saints who grew into being loving Christians. Three Orthodox saints, two from Western Europe and one from Africa, were deliberately chosen to help students realize that the saints of the Church come from many backgrounds and many places.

Next, the students read briefly about a few Orthodox missionaries, also in far-flung parts of the world. This will help students see that the saints' work is carried on today.

Learning about these saints and modern missionaries should give students some ideas about what they might do to the serve the Church in the future, and that is the final part of the lesson.

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Procedure

1. Begin with “O Heavenly King” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words and music).

Then sing “A New Commandment” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words) and remind the class that at the previous session you spoke about helping our bodies grow with nutritious food, and about things that help our spiritual life grow. You also spoke about loving one another as the most important thing Jesus told us to do.

2. Tell the class that St. Paul provides some words that are almost a “recipe” for being a loving person. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 together.

Ask students

“What are some ways in which we might do the things St. Paul talks about?” (*Suggested answers: We can try to show patience and kindness and politeness to others. We can let others have their own way sometimes. We can try always to be glad when good things happen, and not hope for bad things to happen to people we don’t like, or people who have made us feel bad. We can try to tell the truth always. We can try to be cheerful when things happen that we don’t like, and remember that God always loves us no matter what happens.*)

You may want to put students’ answers on the board, so that they can be reminded of them during class.

3. Tell the students that they are going to learn about the lives of three saints. Divide the class into three groups. Give each a copy of one of the saints’ lives, a copy of that saint’s icon, and pencils and paper. Ask them to read about the saint together, and be ready to report on the saint’s life to the rest of the class. They should be ready to answer these questions, which you can put on the board:
 - a. What country did the saint live in?
 - b. What was one special thing the saint did?
 - c. What is one way the saint did what St. Paul talked about?
 - d. What did the saint do that we might do, too? (*Tell students this can be something they are able to do now, or something they might do when they get older.*)
 - e. What is one thing you can tell about the saint’s icon?
4. Have the groups give their reports, and make sure class members have a good look at the icons. *This can be a good opportunity to remind the students how to handle an icon, even a paper copy – with reverence and love.*
5. As students give their reports, point out the countries the saints came from on the map. Then, review the saints’ lives in the following way.

Have students stand in a big circle and count off by two’s, so that each student is either a ONE or a TWO. Toss the ball to a student who’s a ONE, and ask a review question.

If that student gets it right, the ONES get a point, and the student holding the ball tosses it to another student, a TWO, who gets a new question.

But if the ONE student misses the question, that student tosses the ball to a TWO, who gets a chance to answer the same question. Students continue alternating ONE and TWO till a student answers correctly. That student’s team gets a point, and the student then tosses to a member of the other-number team.

Keep score, and review any questions that students are not able to answer.

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Review Questions

Answers

- a. I was taken away from my home by pirates. Who am I? (Patrick)
 - b. My best friends and I were thieves who sometimes even killed people. Who am I? (Moses)
 - c. Sometimes my icon shows a loaf of bread. Who am I? (Genevieve)
 - d. Why is there sometimes a loaf of bread in my icon? *This is a follow-up to the previous question.*
(Because I saved Paris from starvation)
 - e. I was a slave and watched over pigs. Who am I? (Patrick)
 - f. My home city is Paris, France. Who am I? (Genevieve)
 - g. I was known for being very strong. Some people thought I was almost a giant. Who am I? (Moses)
 - h. I lived and worked in Ireland. Who am I? (Patrick)
 - i. Shamrocks grow in Ireland. But there is another reason why my icon shows a shamrock. Why is the shamrock there? *This is a follow-up to the previous question.* (Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity)
 - j. Ethiopia is the country where I was born. Who am I? (Moses)
6. Say to the students, “In our Orthodox Church, there are saints from many countries. And they did many different kinds of things. And today, right now, there are people who are trying to carry on the work of the saints. They are doing this in many different countries, too. We call these people ‘missionaries.’ Let me tell you about a few of them.”

Read the following to the students. As you do so, ask for volunteers to find, on the map, the countries in which these missionaries are working.

Cynthia Baldwin-Thanos serves in Argentina. She works in an office that helps people who are poor and need help. The office also helps small churches, or churches that are just starting.

Floyd and Ancuta Frantz serve in Romania. Floyd started one of the first programs in that whole country that helps people who have drug problems.

Peter and Sharon Georges are a married couple who serve in Uganda. Sharon is a nurse, and also teaches men who are studying to become priests. Peter is now in the United States. He hopes to join his wife in Uganda soon, and plans to work with Archbishop Jonah (who is the Metropolitan in Uganda, as Metropolitan Herman is in our country) in the many kinds of ministry and service done by the Orthodox Church in Uganda. Mr. and Mrs. Georges are grandparents.

Dr. Charles and Maria Linderman are married and serve in Albania. Dr. Charles runs a clinic where he practices medicine for the people there. He and Maria also watch over 25 orphaned children as well as their own five children at the Children’s Home of Hope.

7. Say to the students, “You have heard about many kinds of service that saints did long ago. You have also heard about service that missionaries are doing today. Are there any kinds of service that you would like to do someday?” (*Let students answer.*) Then say, “Think about some things you are good at. Think about things you think you will be good at when you get older. These things we are good at are some of the gifts God has given us. Let’s take a few quiet minutes to thank Him for those gifts. Then let’s silently ask God to show us how to use our gifts to serve Him, as the saints and missionaries do.”

Allow a few minutes for silent reflection and prayer. Put the icons where students can see them and pray before them.

8. Give each student a 3x5 card. Ask the students to write down gifts they have been given by God on the card, or things they plan to do to serve God in His Church. Let them decorate the cards with markers, crayons, and colored pencils. Have students take their cards home, and encourage them to look at the cards from time to time, to remember their plans to serve God.
9. Close with the prayer “O Lord, Save Your People.”

Session One: We Have a Place in God’s Plan for the World

Intermediate Level (Ages 10-12)

Theme

God’s plan for His people extends from the time of creation to today and into the future.

Objectives

1. To **review** the plan for our salvation as laid out in the Old and New Testaments.
2. To **state** that each of us has a place in this plan.
3. To **describe** Bartimaeus as having, like all the poor and “unimportant,” a place in God’s plan.

Materials

- ◆ Bible
- ◆ Several sheets of 8½” x 11” paper.
- ◆ Markers and crayons in various colors.
- ◆ Scissors for students to share.
- ◆ A copy for each student of the crossword puzzle grid, with clues (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit).
- ◆ Pencils with erasers for students to work on the crossword puzzle.
- ◆ Copy of the script of “Salvation Comes to the World” (below) for each student.
- ◆ **Icons:** Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Resurrection, the Annunciation, the Transfiguration of Our Lord, and the Ascension. *If you have or can borrow actual icons, use them. If you do use the icons available at www.oca.org, it would be a good idea to back them with stiff card stock, so they can stand up and the children can see it easily them.*

Background Information for the Teacher

In this lesson students will read and pantomime the rudiments of the story of our salvation, based on Bible texts. This story, of course, begins with the delightful Garden of Eden that God prepared for us, and our disobedience to His will, which resulted in our being put out of His Garden.

The reading text makes reference to the Old Testament prophets – and Isaiah in particular, because his prophecies of a Savior are very clear. The story moves on to the New Testament account of Jesus Christ’s birth, ministry, death, and resurrection. The story shows how Jesus Christ fulfilled all the prophecies, and all the promises God made to us.

All these elements are part of God’s plan for the salvation of us, His disobedient people, whom He loves despite all the times they disappoint and insult Him. As you go through the exercise with students, keep this skeletal outline in mind.

The lesson also includes a role-playing exercise based on the story of the blind beggar Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52. The point of this improvisation is to remind students that God’s plan of salvation is for everyone, including those people we might consider to be less important than others. That’s a significant insight for young people in our culture, a culture that seems more and more inclined to differentiate between those who are “worthy” of life and those who are not.

Orthodox Christians need to have as a foundational belief the fact that all human beings are God’s creatures, and as such are worthy of life and of salvation. Reinforcing this belief in our students will help them be solid Church members in the future.

Our Church and the Future

Educational Materials for the 2006 OCAY/Holy Synod Theme

Procedure

1. Begin with “O Heavenly King” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words and music).

Ask students

“When God wants us to understand something, what does He do? (*Let students answer, but be prepared for the fact that they may not have any answers for the question. Some may make joking answers.*) Say to them, “The most important thing God wanted us to understand was that He loves us and wants us to have life forever with Him. And the way He did it was to prepare people for a long time, so that they would have plenty of time to realize it. He promised a Savior, and gave us lots of information about what the Savior would be like, and what He would do.”

Tell students that you are going to do a reading from the Old and New Testaments. This will help them see God’s plan for our salvation.

Assign the following roles

Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, Adam, Eve, Archangel Gabriel, Mary the Mother of God, Apostle, Mary Magdalene. (*Note: Make sure the narrators are people who enjoy reading aloud and are good at it. Class members who really do not enjoy reading aloud can be assigned to hold up icons of the Annunciation, the Nativity of Christ, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and Pentecost at the appropriate times in the reading.*)

Be sure to read through the script before students present it, so that everyone knows where to perform certain actions, and knows when the icons should be held up. Explain that Mary refers to herself as a maidservant. This means that Mary understands that she is a female servant of God.

Salvation Comes to the World

1. **Narrator One:** Then God said, “Let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness.” (*Adam and Eve step forward.*)
2. **Narrator Two:** Then the Lord God took man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (*Adam and Eve make motions of digging and raking.*)
3. **Narrator Three:** Adam and Eve lived in the garden in closeness to God. But they chose not to show God their love by obeying Him. Therefore God sent them out of the garden. (*Adam and Eve sit down on the ground.*)
4. **Narrator One:** But God continued to love His creatures. He sent prophets and great leaders to them over many centuries.
5. **Narrator Two:** The prophets told the people that God would send them a Savior, so that they could again be close to God.
6. **Narrator Three:** The prophet Isaiah said that the Savior would be “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”
7. **Narrator One:** Isaiah also said that the Savior would be called Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace.
8. **Narrator Two:** The prophet Micah said that the birth would take place in the small and not very important town of Bethlehem. (*Gabriel and Mary step forward.*)
9. **Narrator Three:** Many, many years later a young woman named Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel. (*Student holds up icon of Annunciation from speeches 9 to 13.*)

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

10. **Gabriel:** Greetings, Favored One! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You shall bear a son, and shall name Him Jesus. Of His Kingdom there will be no end.
11. **Mary:** How can this be, since I am not married and have never been with a man?
12. **Gabriel:** The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.
(Student holds up icon of the Nativity of the Lord till the end of speech 14.)
13. **Mary:** Here I am, the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word – as you have said.
14. **Narrator One:** So Jesus was born, just as Isaiah and Micah and all the prophets said He would be.
15. **Narrator Two:** He grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.
16. **Narrator Three:** He healed people and taught them about God’s love. He gave hope and joy to men, women and children.
17. **Apostle:** Twelve of us men were His special followers. We are called His apostles. He taught us, and even revealed His glory to some of us. *(Student holds up Transfiguration icon till the end of speech 18.)*
18. **Apostle:** On that day, we saw the whole Old Testament revealed. We saw Moses and Abraham with Our Lord Jesus – as the Savior who had been promised.
19. **Narrator One:** But not everyone was pleased with the message of Jesus Christ. Some were disappointed that He didn’t tell the people to rise up against the hated Roman government.
20. **Narrator Two:** Others were shocked at His claim to be the Son of God. They expected a Savior, but they didn’t expect that God would send His own divine Son!
21. **Narrator Three:** And so Jesus Christ was put to death. And for a while afterward, the apostles were really sad, and thought they might have been fools to follow Him.
22. **Apostle:** Yes, we apostles ran away and left Him alone at the worst time of His life. We were afraid, and we did not act bravely. But the women certainly did!
23. **Mary Magdalene:** Very early in the morning of the first day of the week, I and some other women brought spices to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body. That is our custom. When we got to the tomb, we were amazed to see that the heavy stone in front of it had been rolled away. *(Student holds up Resurrection icon till the end of speech 27.)*
24. **Narrator One:** Yes, Mary Magdalene and the other women were brave! But when they looked in the tomb, the body of the Lord was not there.
25. **Narrator Two:** They went inside the tomb, and a young man dressed in white told them that Jesus had risen from the dead.
26. **Narrator Three:** So Mary Magdalene became the first person to know the good news that Christ is Risen. As John the Gospel writer later wrote, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not die but will have everlasting life.”
27. **Mary Magdalene:** I went back and told the news to the apostles. That is why I am called the apostle to the apostles.

Our Church and the Future

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28. **Narrator One:** Jesus appeared to His apostles again after His Resurrection. But on the fortieth day, He ascended to heaven to be with His Father. *(Student holds up icon of the Ascension.)*
29. **Mary the Theotokos:** I was there, along with the apostles. He promised all of us that He was going to prepare a place for us in the Kingdom.
30. **ALL:** The message He gave that day is for all of us and you, too.
He said: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” *(Student holds up icon of Pentecost – the Descent of the Holy Spirit.)*

End of “Salvation Comes to the World”

2. Say to students, “We’ve seen how God prepared His people for a long time to receive His Son, the Savior. Let’s think for a moment about what happened when Jesus came. What kinds of people did the Lord care about? *(Let students answer. Bring out the point that Jesus cared for every kind of person, including those whom some did not think were important.)*

Read together the story of the blind beggar Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52. Ask for volunteers from the students to role play the members of the crowd following Jesus.

Ask them to consider that the crowd must have felt happy—they were walking briskly along, following the Lord, and feeling they were going somewhere with Him. Suddenly, the Lord abruptly stopped, and probably they did too. Perhaps they wondered why. Who was the Lord stopping for? Some important person? Surely not a bothersome beggar whom everyone was telling to be quiet!

Give the students a few minutes to create and then present their role play. Talk about it for a few minutes, “What were the emotions of the people in the crowd? How would we have felt if we had been walking along behind Jesus Christ that day? Would we be glad that Our Lord had compassion and stopped for an “unimportant” beggar? Or would we have been annoyed because our progress was slowed down? Would we have been thinking that stopping for this beggar was just a waste of our precious time?” *(Let students think about these questions, and draw their own conclusions.)*

3. Give each student a copy of the crossword puzzle grid with the clues. This will be a brief review of points made in the reading, earlier in the lesson.

Give the students time to finish the puzzle, and then go over the answers together.

4. Remind students that Jesus Christ called us to love each other, and gave us the greatest example of love. As a closing prayer, sing the hymn *A New Commandment* together. (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words).

Session Two: Getting Ready for the Future

Intermediate Level (Ages 10-12)

Theme

We will carry on God’s plan by our own life in the Church.

Objectives

1. To **identify** SS. Patrick, Genevieve of Paris, and Moses the Black as examples of various ways to serve God.
2. To **describe** the work of some modern missionaries.
3. To **enumerate** some ways in which the students themselves might serve the Church now and in the future, based partly on the examples of saints and missionaries.

Materials

- ♦ Bible
- ♦ [Icon of St. Patrick](#) (commemorated on March 17)
- ♦ [Icon of St. Genevieve of Paris](#) (commemorated on January 3)
- ♦ [Icon of St. Moses the Black](#) (commemorated on August 28)
If you have or can borrow actual icons, use them. If you do use the icons available at www.oca.org, it would be a good idea to back them with stiff card stock, so they can stand up and the children can see it easily them.
- ♦ One copy each of the stories of the lives of [St. Patrick](#), [St. Genevieve](#), and [St. Moses](#) (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit). Your class will be divided into three groups, each studying the life of one saint. If you have a large class and want to have more than one group studying each saint, or want each student rather than each group to have a copy, make as many copies as you need.
- ♦ Pencils and paper for groups and for individual students to use.
- ♦ World map showing France, Ireland, Romania, Albania, Argentina, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Uganda. This can be as small as a page in an atlas borrowed from the public library, or something as large as a wall map. A larger map will be more effective, but in any case be sure your map shows all the countries listed.
- ♦ For each student, a bottle 4” to 6” with a secure top (the bottles don’t have to be identical), and a flat pan to work on.
- ♦ Fine sand (for craft project) and newspaper for working with sand, funnel(s), various colors of chalk, straight stick(s) for mixing sand. *(Calculate the amount or number of these materials you will need according to your class size. Provide enough sand to fill all the bottles to the very top, and enough colored chalk for each student to be able to choose and use a color.)*
- ♦ Thin-tipped black or colored markers.
- ♦ Scissors for students to share.
- ♦ Tape or glue for attaching labels to bottles. *(Students will use scissors, paper, and markers to make labels.)*
- ♦ French bread, knife to cut bread, spread for bread (your choice), small plates and napkins for snack.

Background for the Teacher

In this lesson students will learn about three saints whose backgrounds are very different. These saints may not be familiar to students (except for St. Patrick) and they come from two Western European and one African country. We want our students to know how diverse the saints of the Church are in every way. Realizing this, students have a good chance to find a “compatible” saint and to be inspired by that saint’s example.

The students will also look briefly at the work of some contemporary Orthodox missionaries – people who are carrying on the work of the saints. The point is for students to see that the work of God’s Church goes on from the early days of Christianity to the present day. That work is one important aspect of God’s plan, which you spoke about in the previous session. Our hope is that students will want to be part of the work, and part of the plan, now and for the rest of their lives.

Our Church and the Future

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Procedure

1. Begin with “O Heavenly King” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words and music).

Then sing “A New Commandment” (see the *Resources Section* at the end of the unit for the words) and remind the class that as this hymn tells us, Jesus Christ wants us, above all, to love others as He loves us.

Then read Matthew 28:19-20.

Remind the students that this text, which is the conclusion of Matthew’s Gospel, illustrates part of God’s plan of salvation for all His people. One of the most important ways we show love for others is by telling them the good news of Jesus Christ, who offers them salvation and eternal life because He loves them.

2. Tell students that you are going to look at the lives of three saints who followed the command of Jesus Christ to love others. They accepted their part in God’s plan of salvation.

Divide the class into three groups, and give each group a copy of the life of one saint, the saint’s icon, and pencil and paper. Each group should consider their saint’s life carefully, and be ready to tell the class three important things about the saint. (*They should also give a few biographical facts, such as the saint’s birthplace and one or two details about his or her early life. Be sure they point out the birthplace, or the country in which the saint mostly worked, on the map you have provided.*)

Give the groups time to prepare and then present their reports. When all the groups have done so, talk for a few minutes about what you have heard. *Which saints did students find especially appealing? What if anything surprised them about any of the saints? Are there ways in which they see any of these three saints as examples for their own lives?*

3. As a way of remembering St. Moses’ story about his sins and the grains of sand, help students complete a craft project:
 - a. Spread out plenty of newspaper to work on.
 - b. Give each student a bottle, and have each one choose one or two pieces of colored chalk.
 - c. Have each student place some sand on a board or pan, and roll the chalk in the sand until the sand turns a pleasing shade.
 - d. Placing the funnel in the bottle, have students empty enough colored sand into the bottle to fill it $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ full, then make a few “bumps” in the sand with the stick.
 - e. Students can share their colored sand, or color new sand, so that they have three or four colors with which to fill their bottles to the very top. To obtain each color, they should follow steps c and d.
 - f. Tell students to be careful not to move the bottles around too much; you don’t want the sand to mix so much that the individual colors are lost.
 - g. When students are finished, have them secure the tops of the bottles tightly, making sure the sand is as close to the top as possible. This will keep the colors from mixing too much.
 - h. Have students make and decorate the following label to put on their bottles: **GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN OUR SINS ARE AS MANY AS THE SANDS.**
4. After the students clean up, tell them that there are Orthodox missionaries today in many countries, carrying on the kind of work the saints did. Have them read about the following people, and have volunteers find the countries where they are working on the map.

Cynthia Baldwin-Thanos serves in Argentina. She works in an office that helps people who are poor and need help. The office also helps small churches, or churches that are just starting.

Floyd and Ancuta Frantz serve in Romania. Floyd started one of the first programs in that whole country that helps

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people who have drug problems.

Peter and Sharon Georges are a married couple who serve in Uganda. Sharon is a nurse, and also teaches men who are studying to become priests. Peter is now in the United States. He hopes to join his wife in Uganda soon, and plans to work with Archbishop Jonah (who is the Metropolitan of Uganda, as Metropolitan Herman is in our country) in the many kinds of ministry and service done by the Orthodox Church in Uganda. Mr. and Mrs. Georges are grandparents.

Dr. Charles and Maria Linderman are married and serve in Albania. Dr. Charles runs a clinic where he practices medicine for the people there. He and Maria also watch over 25 orphaned children as well as their own five children at the Children's Home of Hope.

5. Show students the loaf of French bread, and ask which saint it will help them remember (St. Genevieve of Paris.) Say a blessing, and share a snack of French bread and spreads.
6. Say to the students: "We have heard a lot today about how different people use their gifts and abilities to serve God and His Church. When you go home, think about the things you can do now to serve the Church. Think about the things you can do in the future, when you are older. Pray and ask God to help you do what He wants you to do."
7. Close the session with the prayer "O Lord, Save Your People" for the work done by the early saints and the missionaries today, and ask God to help all of you do His will and His work.

MUSIC RESOURCES

A New Commandment

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you,
A new commandment I give to you,
That you love one another
That you love one another
Even as I have loved you.

By this all men will know,
By this all men will know,
That you are My disciples,
That you are My disciples,
If you have love one for each other.

Special note: “A New Commandment” has been recorded on several tapes and CDs. If you have access to one, playing it for the students is one way of teaching the hymn. Or you may choose to sing it with the class. Music for “A New Commandment” was composed by His Eminence, Archbishop Job. It can be downloaded for a small fee through the liturgical music resource on the web site of PSALM, at www.orthodoxpsalm.org.

Troparion of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of Our Lord

In Tone 1

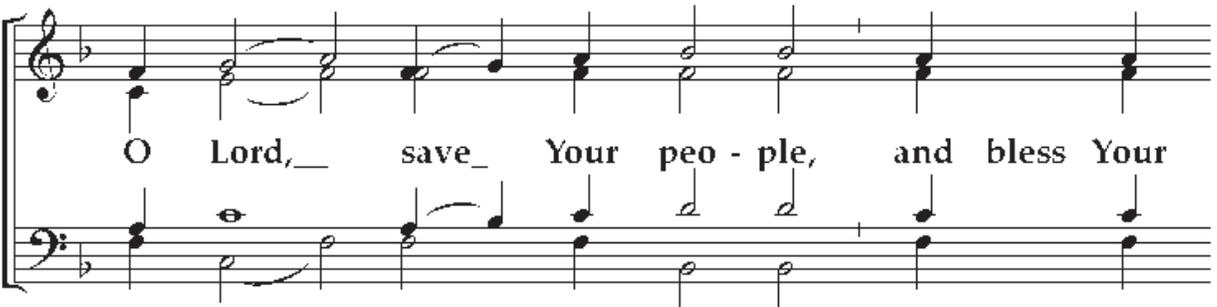
O Lord, save Your people,
and bless Your inheritance.
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Your Cross,
preserve Your habitation.

ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

Troparion - Tone 1

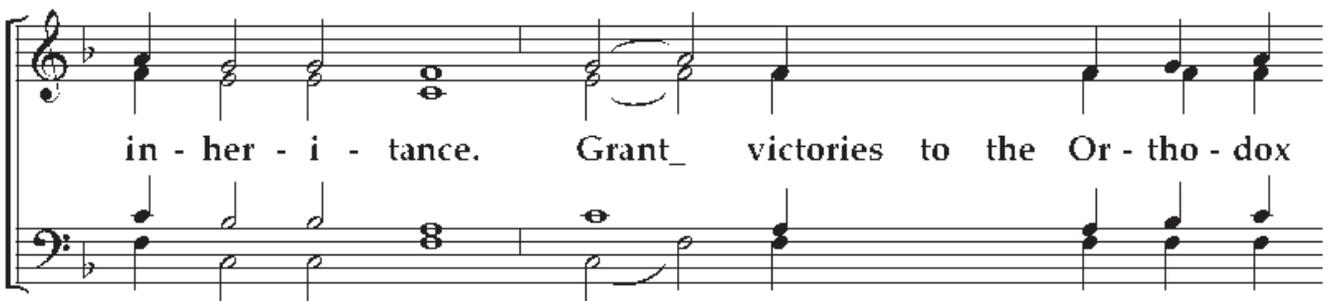
Russian Imperial Court Chant
arr. from L'vov/Bakhmetev

Soprano
Alto



O Lord, save Your peo - ple, and bless Your

Tenor
Bass



in - her - i - tance. Grant victories to the Or - tho - dox



Chris - tians over their ad - ver - sar - ies; and by



vir - tue of Your Cross, preserve Your habi - ta - tion.

O Heavenly King

Tone 6

Common Chant
arr. from Lvov-Bakhmetev

Soprano
Alto

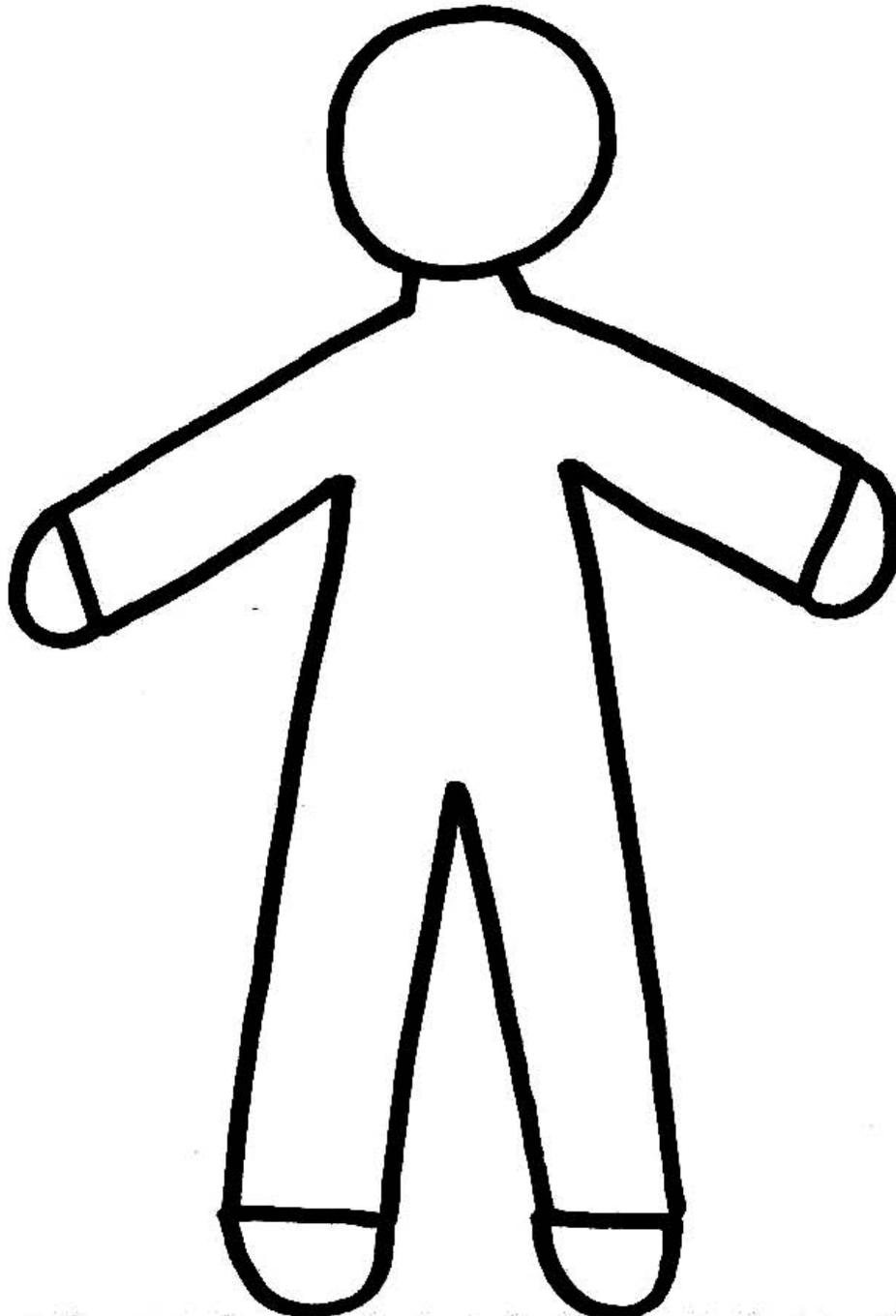
Tenor
Bass

O Heav - en - ly King, the Comforter the Spi - rit
of Truth, who art everywhere and fill - est all things;
Treasury of bless - ings and Gi - ver of Life:
Come and a - bide in us, and cleanse us from every
im - pur - i - ty, and save our souls, O Good - One!

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Template for the shape of a human being to be traced.

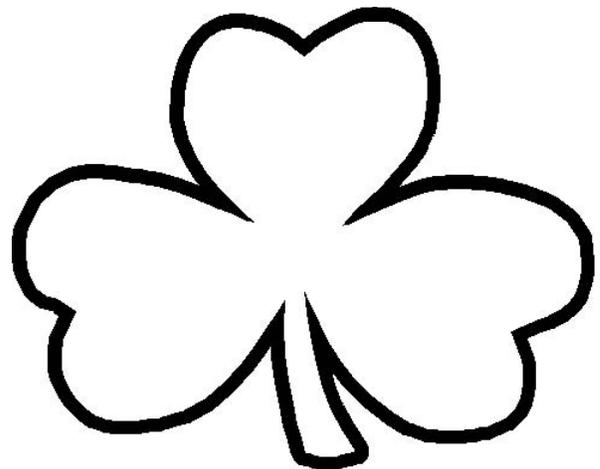
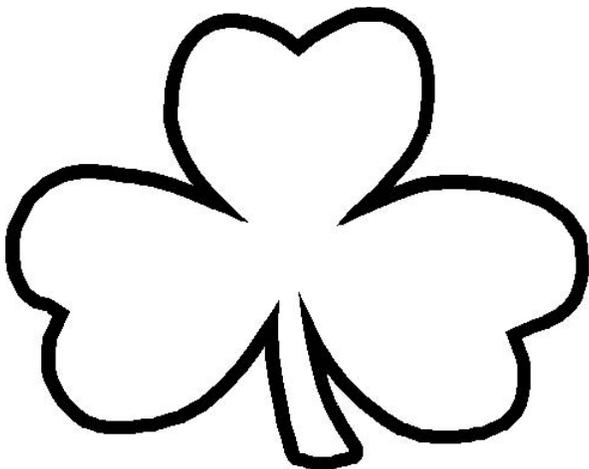
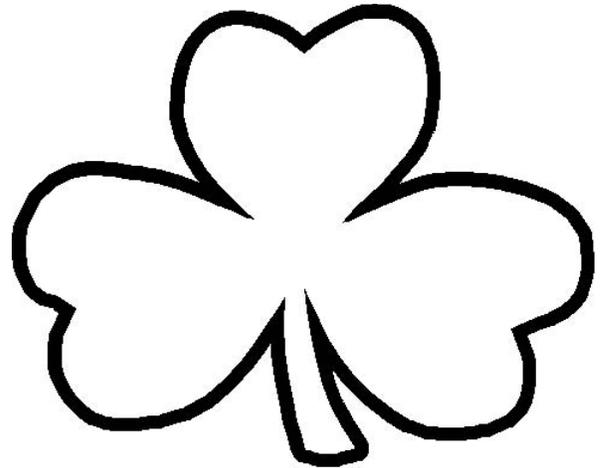
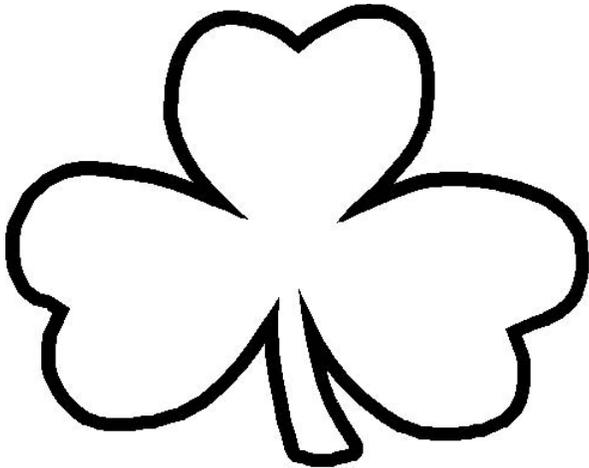
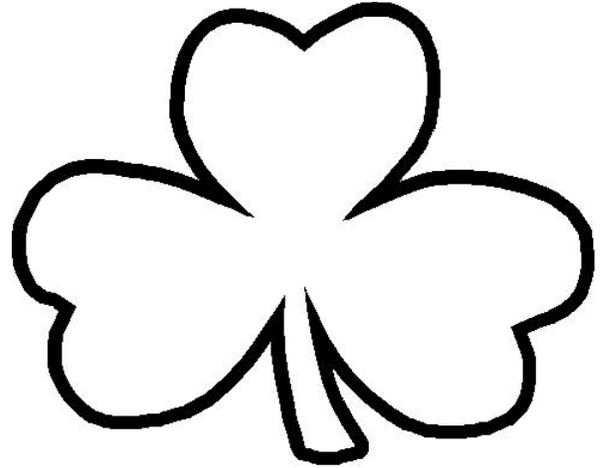
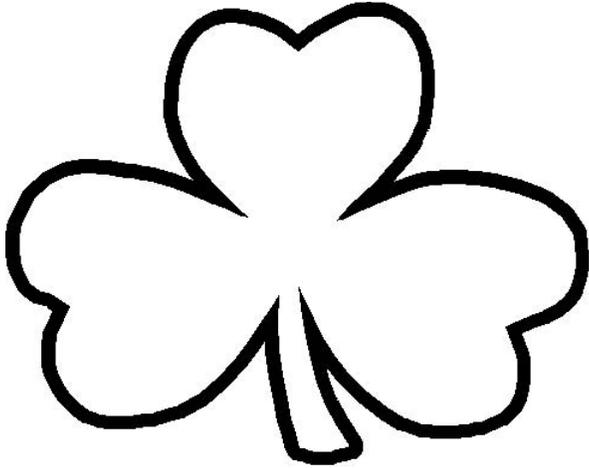
(for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Level Session One: *God Is Our Loving Maker*).



EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Template for the shape of a shamrock to be traced.

(for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Level Session Two: *We Belong to God's Church*).



EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Crossword puzzle with clues (for Intermediate Level Session One: *We Have a Place in God’s Plan for the World*).

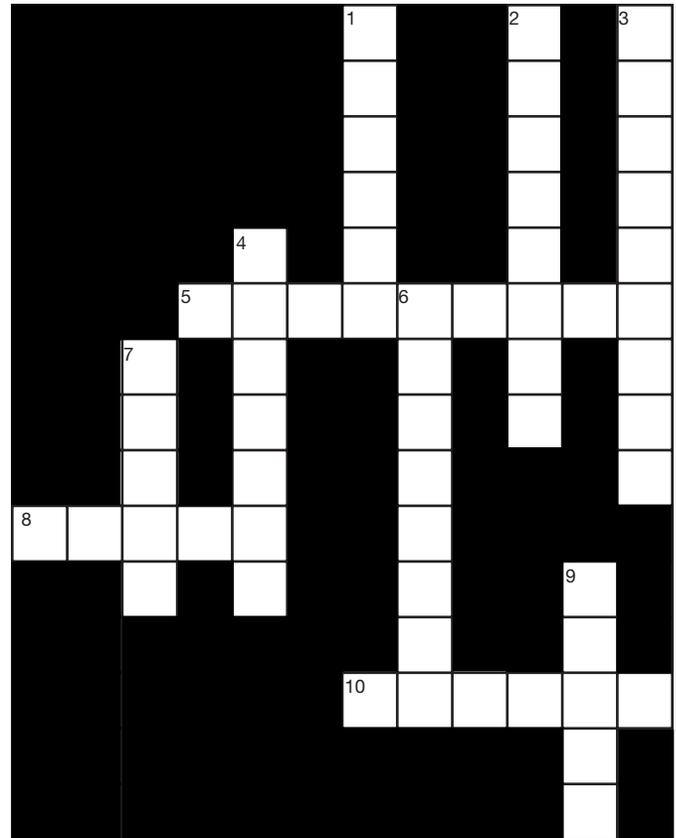
Clues

DOWN

1. The women at the tomb were surprised to see the stone _____ away.
2. These men wrote in the Old Testament about the coming of the Savior.
3. This is the town of Jesus’ birth.
4. This angel told Mary how her divine Son would be born.
6. These twelve men were the closest followers of Jesus Christ.
7. This man named the town where Jesus would be born.
9. One Old Testament writer said the Savior would be called the Prince of _____.

ACROSS

5. The “apostle to the apostles” is Mary _____.
8. As Jesus grew up, the _____ of God was upon Him.
10. This Old Testament writer said the Savior would be a “man of sorrows” but also “wonderful counselor.”



Lesson Outline – Teacher Guide

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



Our Church and the Future

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READING RESOURCES

Saint Patrick of Ireland

Saint Patrick was born near a river, in England or Wales. Sometimes pirates came to raid the villages near the river. They would take children away to sell them as slaves, and this is what happened to Patrick when he was young. Patrick was taken to Ireland. There he was put to work taking care of pigs on a mountainside.

Patrick missed his family and his home, of course. But he prayed when he was alone on the mountain. He learned to feel close to God, and loved the feeling of closeness. During the six years he was in Ireland, he learned to pray constantly during the day and night. He also learned to speak the language of the Irish people.

One night, Patrick had a special kind of dream. He dreamed that he would soon go home on a boat. Because of this dream, he started walking the long miles to the harbor, where ships were sitting in the water at the edge of the land. And there he saw a ship bound for his home. He was able to get on board, and the ship took him home to his family.

Many years later, Patrick became a monk and then a bishop. He wanted to serve God in an active way. And even though he had suffered slavery and hardship in Ireland, he felt called to go back there. He would teach the people about Jesus Christ, in their own language.

So Patrick went to Ireland, and not only taught but helped the poor and cheered those who were discouraged. The people loved him, and were glad to hear about Jesus Christ in words they could understand.

There were some people who did not want to hear about Jesus Christ. They did not want to be told that they should change their way of living. They tried to make things difficult for Patrick, and told people not to listen to him.

But Patrick's long years of praying on the mountain had made him strong. He didn't give up, and he didn't hate the people who were unkind to him. He kept loving all the people he met. He kept telling them about Jesus Christ.

Patrick wanted people to know about Jesus Christ's Father and the Holy Spirit, too. He showed people the shamrock, a plant that grows everywhere in the fields of Ireland. With its three beautiful green leaves together, it reminded the people of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Until this very day, the shamrock and Saint Patrick have a closeness in people's minds and hearts. Patrick, the saint of Ireland, and the shamrock, the plant of Ireland — both showed people how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love them.

To read more about St. Patrick of Ireland, visit the "Feasts & Saints" section at www.oca.org.

Saint Genevieve of Paris

Genevieve was born in a small town in France, near Paris. One day as she was standing with her parents, Bishop Germanus went by. He noticed the little girl, and said to her parents, “Someday this child will lead many people to salvation.” He gave her a brass medal on a chain, with a cross on one side and an image of Jesus Christ on the other. Genevieve wore the medal around her neck for the rest of her life.

When Genevieve was a young woman, the city of Paris faced a terrible problem. Attila the Hun, a fierce warrior, had conquered many cities and wanted to do the same to Paris. Many of the people in Paris wanted to run away from the city to escape Attila. Genevieve and some Church leaders urged people not to flee, assuring them that God would protect the city.

Some people were very angry with Genevieve for telling people to remain. They said, “Are you crazy? Do you want to have us all get murdered by the swords of Attila and his men?”

But Genevieve and those with her stayed near the edge of the city and prayed that Paris would be spared. People were amazed when Attila turned away from Paris in another direction, and was defeated at the French city of Chalons.

Some years later, there was trouble again. Paris was surrounded by the soldiers of the Frankish king. No ships were allowed to come in with food, and the people were starving. Genevieve was able to arrange for ships full of grain to come into the port of Paris so that the city’s bakers could make bread for the people to eat. She had saved Paris again. This is why in some icons (not all of them) she is shown holding a loaf of bread.

In her later years, Genevieve became a nun. One stormy night as she and her sisters were walking to church, their only candle was blown out by the wind. It was impossible for the sisters to go on, for the road was completely dark. It was also rough and muddy. The sisters stopped, not sure of what to do next. But Genevieve made the sign of the cross over the candle, and it blazed out with a light strong enough to light their way to church. Most icons show Genevieve holding a candle.

She had saved the city of Paris twice. Those were big miracles. To relight a candle seemed a smaller miracle. But to Saint Genevieve, getting to church to worship God was the most important thing in the world – it was worth a miracle!

To read more about St. Genevieve of Paris, visit the “Feasts & Saints” section at www.oca.org.

Our Church and the Future

Educational Materials for the 2006 OCAY/Holy Synod Theme

Saint Moses the Black

Born in Ethiopia, Moses spent most of his life in Egypt. In his early years he was a slave, but after he killed a man his master sent him away, and he joined a band of fierce robbers. He was so strong that some people thought of him as a giant. He was also so willing to do evil things that the robbers made him their leader. Moses was truly the “baddest of the bad!”

After many years of killing and robbing, Moses was so well-known that the very mention of his name made people shiver. And his great strength made him even more feared. That is why the thing that happened next was very surprising.

By God’s grace, Moses began to turn to God. He was sorry for all the things he had done. He found a monastery in the Egyptian desert, and begged the brothers to take him in. But even the monks, in their quiet monastery far from the cities, had heard of Moses. It was hard for them to believe that this man had really changed his ways. So it took many years of patient waiting by Moses before they accepted him.

But when they did, they came to respect him as much as his band of robbers had. Moses earned the love of his brother monks, and used his great physical strength to do God’s work. Once, robbers who had known Moses came to rob the monastery. Moses was so powerful that he was able to gather them up in a bag and bring them before the other monks.

“What shall we do with these thieves?” Moses asked them. When the monks replied that he should let them go free, the robbers were so surprised by the love and forgiveness of the monks that they turned away from their sins, and later became members of the monastery themselves.

Another time, the monks asked Moses to judge a brother monk who had done something wrong. As the accused man and the other monks waited for Moses, they heard the sound of something heavy being dragged along. It was Moses, dragging a bag of sand into the place where they sat waiting. The other monks said, “Moses, what is this? What are you doing?”

Moses answered, “God has forgiven me as many sins as the grains of sand in this bag. How can I judge another man when I have sinned so much?” And he made no judgment on his brother monk.

When Moses was 75 years old, he told the other brothers that fierce robbers would soon be coming again to steal from the monastery. These robbers, Moses said, were not afraid to kill the people they stole from. Many of the brothers planned to flee, and they wanted Moses to come with them. But he said, “I have used weapons against others many times. It may be God’s will that I shall be killed by weapons now. For he who lives by the sword will die by the sword.” So when the robbers came, Moses and the few brothers who stayed with him did not fight back. They were killed.

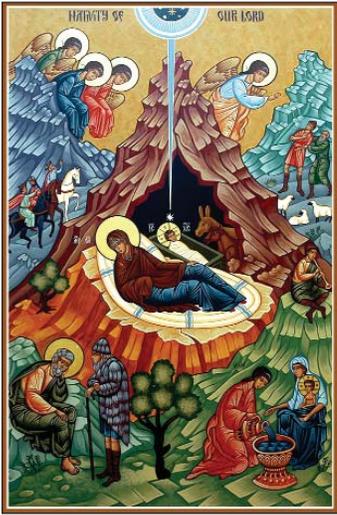
Saint Moses lived a terrible early life. But he turned away from his sins, and used his gifts of physical strength and leadership to do God’s work. The Church honors Saint Moses for these things, and looks to him as a great example of a changed life, a life given to God.

To read more about St. Moses the Black, visit the “Feasts & Saints” section at www.oca.org.

Lesson Outline – Teacher Guide

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

ICON RESOURCES (larger format versions are available at www.oca.org)



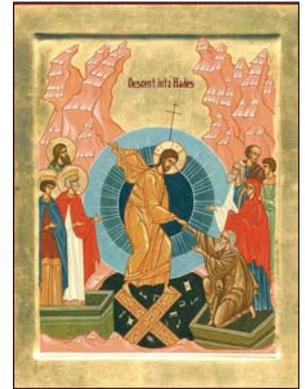
The Nativity of Our Lord



The Transfiguration of Our Lord



The Annunciation



*Descent into Hades
(The Resurrection of Our Lord)*



St. Genevieve of Paris



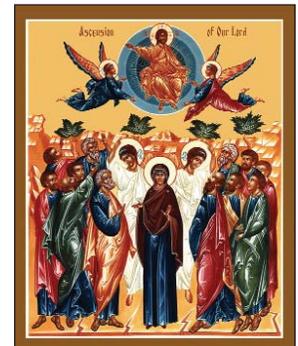
St. Patrick of Ireland



St. Moses the Black



*Pentecost
(Descent of the Holy Spirit)*



The Ascension

About the “Our Church and the Future” Lesson Outlines

This curriculum was developed by Valerie Zahirsky, Co-chair of The Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Christian Education. Contributors include Fr. Thomas Kazich, Bambi Howard and Tammy Gidus. Some of the material was originally written for the 14th All-American Council and submitted by the Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries.

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