

Summer Activities about “Seeing”

(Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America)

Point of View

For this activity you will need Bibles for students to share, a square of cardboard or heavy paper one foot long on each of the four sides, and a pencil. (You can have a square for each student, or a single one for students to take turns using. You’ll only need one pencil.)

1. Have students punch a hole the size of the pencil in the middle of the square.
2. Go outside to a place where you have an unobstructed view of a tree, or a house or small building.
3. Have students hold the hole close to one eye, and stand far enough away from the tree or building so that they can see the whole thing through the hole.
4. Next, have one student hold the square close to the tree or object. Another student stands in the same place as they did before when looking through the hole. Ask that student, “What do you see through the hole now?” The answer is that they can see very little—only a tiny speck of the tree or building, if any of it at all. (Students can take turns doing this.)
5. Discuss together: What has changed? The only thing that has changed is our reference point. What we were looking at was the same, but our reference point was different.
6. Read together 2 Corinthians 5: 15-17. What does Saint Paul say here about a reference point? He says that our reference point is always that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior. We may once have seen Him from a human reference point or point of view, as a good man who was crucified. But now our reference point is to know Him as the Son of God who died for us. Our reference point is different from that of people who see Him only as a wonderful teacher or as a prophet.
(With thanks to Father Michael Zahirsky)

What Do You Think You’ll See?

For this activity you will need Bibles, paper towels, plastic cups, and a tub of water.

1. Ask students, “If we put a paper towel into this tub of water, what do you think you will see? What will happen?” Students will probably answer that the paper towel will get wet.
2. Form pairs of students, and give each pair a paper towel and an empty plastic cup. One student can wad up the paper towel and wedge it into the bottom of the cup. Then the other student can push it, open end down, straight into the tub of water, and then pull it out again.
3. Explain that the cup seemed empty, but it was really full of air that kept the towel from getting wet. Make the point that this probably was not what students expected to see.
4. Read Jonah 3: 1-4:5. Ask students, “Verse 4:5 tells us that Jonah waited to see ‘what would become of the city.’ What do you think Jonah expected to see?” Jonah clearly expected to see God punish or destroy the evil city. God’s mercy was not what Jonah expected.
5. Go outside and let students sit in the shade of a tree. Read together Jonah 4:6. Let students describe Jonah as happy with the shade God provided. Have students move into the sun, and read 4:7-11. When God takes away the shading plant, he asks Jonah to understand that He is being merciful to Ninevah just as Jonah wanted Him to offer the “mercy” of the comfortable shade. Let students move back into the shade and think of ways to offer “mercy” to others, and to thank God for His mercy.

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