

My Orthodox Family

Introduction



" For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother, and sister and mother. " - Matthew 12:50

My Orthodox Family , a parish-wide, self-study program, is designed to help us discover and develop ways we can continue to become living examples of Christ in our lives, while we help to build up society (i.e. "the world"). We are responsible for our behavior in all the communities and "families" in which we live: home, church, school, neighborhood, government, the environment, etc. Our coming together as a community in Christ is the essence of our faith. "The word church, as we remember, means a gathering or assembly of people specifically chosen and called apart to perform a particular task." (Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith II, Worship*). No matter what our background, this is what binds us as Christians, and family members of His Holy Church.

The journey begins when Christians leave their homes and beds. They leave, indeed, their life in this present and concrete world, and whether they have to drive fifteen miles, or walk a few blocks, a sacramental act is already taking place, an act which is the very condition of everything else that is to happen. For they are now on their way to constitute the Church, or to be more exact, to be transformed into the Church of God.
- Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*

As Orthodox Christians in America, we are a diverse mixture of peoples from throughout the world. Looking back on four or five generations, many of us can trace our families to immigrants from Greece, the Middle East, Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, Siberia and the Far East. Traveling long distances, our ancestors established new families and communities on the North American continent. They discovered here the same Orthodox faith that Native Alaskans had adopted in 1794 from Russian Missionaries to America. In a little over 200 years, Orthodox parishes have populated North America with more than 4-5 million people!

Our parish communities today include many new people who have found their home in the Orthodox Church. They or their ancestors have come from a multitude of nations—Irish, Italian, English, Scandinavian and German cultures from Western and Northern Europe, as well as a mixture of traditional cultures from Africa, Asia, Mexico, and South America. We not only live in multicultural societies, but in multicultural parishes in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. As Orthodox Christians in America, spending time finding out who we are and where we want to go as an Orthodox community will help us see ourselves as a part of our local, regional, national, and world communities. Along with those roles comes responsibility. Every person within the parish community has a role to play; from the newly baptized, to the oldest. How we see ourselves and our role as a Family of God is critical to the survival of the parish, as well as the entire Church in this world.

As God's children we are called to witness our faith. We are called to understand who we are as Orthodox Christians, and to bear witness to God with our families and friends by being good neighbors, reaching out to help others, and standing up and protecting those who are being mistreated, or are victims of discrimination or

prejudice. We are also called to know and live our faith; to correct misconceptions and wrong information about our beliefs, as well as to respect people of other faiths.

Overall Objectives of the Unit

Throughout the duration of this FOCUS Unit, teachers will find it helpful to keep two main overarching objectives in mind:

- Identify ourselves as Orthodox people, bound together as a family in Christian Love.
- Understand that, as faithful Orthodox Christians, we must commit ourselves to His Commandment to love one another through acts of compassion and charity to all of God's people.

Objectives are things which the students should be able to do as a result of the session. Keeping the two main objectives in mind can help us, as teachers, focus on the important fact that our parishes were established for the purposes of worship, community, mission, and good works for each other, and for those in the world around us.

God made us His People through the sacraments of the Church. We became God's Children in Baptism. He anointed us with the Holy Oil of Chrism and called us to be His People; to hear, understand, and proclaim His Word as God's prophets; to protect and care for the world as His anointed Kings—clothed in the white garment of Holiness; and to offer up to Him everything we are and do as a holy gift and service, as gifts offered by priests. God calls us to restore the world as the Paradise He created for His people in the Garden. He calls us to everlasting life in His Kingdom. It is through life in the Church that we become His holy people who are called to do His work in this world!

How the Unit is Arranged

The unit is comprised of six sessions of about 45 minutes each. The first five deal with identity, self-study, and involvement within our parish; while the last focuses on our involvement within our communities. The suggested prayers are just that. Singing the Troparion of the parish is certainly appropriate as an opening prayer, with the closing being whatever hymn or prayer is your parish tradition for gatherings. Students at the youngest level should probably keep the same prayers throughout the sessions for consistency.

The lessons have been developed based on five age levels: ages 4-6, ages 7-9, ages 10-12, ages 13-17, and 18-older. Every age level has its own individual lesson plan. All the lesson plans contain the following parts:

- **FOCUS Unit Title, Lesson Title & Age Level**
- **Lesson Objectives**

The lesson objectives are the things measurable by the teacher. Through questions, discussion and activity participation teachers can measure whether students were able to fulfill these objectives. If they cannot, teachers will know that review or repetition may be necessary.

- **Materials**

Materials are the various items required to teach the lesson. These include items such as craft

materials and classroom Bibles.

- **Resources**

Resources are items the DCE has provided for use while teaching the lesson. These include printable icons, line drawings, handouts, liturgical texts, Bible stories, planning worksheets and many other kinds of professionally developed teacher resources to aide in teaching the lesson. The resources have been categorized into two groups: Required Resources and Supplemental Resources. Required resources are specifically referred to within the lesson plan. Supplemental resources are generally useful in gathering background information. Often, the supplemental resources will be links to external web sites and suggested books for the teacher to read.

- **Lesson Procedure**

This is a step-by step outline of how the session should go. Please be aware that some lessons require advance preparation--read lessons, prepare for them, and think prayerfully about them well before you meet students in the classroom.

Every Family Has a Story *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

Family Is Love - Every family's story is different and each generation tells a different story about its ways of life, its joys, and its hardships.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Hear stories about families and their lives together
- Compare stories with their own family lives
- Identify family members from pictures
- Draw/paste pictures of family members on a page as the beginning step to a unit scrapbook
- Begin to paste copied pictures of themselves, family members, and Godparents on a parish family tree
- Recall and orally share family/ancestor/Godparent story with class
- Write and add brief anecdotes about family/Godparents for scrapbook
- Be able to describe how they fit in as part of their family tree
- Give examples of how their family loves them
- Connect God's love with the people who love us

Materials

- 2-3 pieces of construction paper per student with holes punched with 3-hole punch
- 1 piece of white lined paper (8½" x 11") per student with holes punched with 3-hole punch
- Large (12"x18") sheets of green construction paper (2-3 sheets per child)
- Red construction paper
- Large (12"x18") sheets of brown construction paper to make into a tree trunk
- rounded scissors (if necessary to fit photos)
- Plastic round tops from smaller containers, plastic glasses, or any item that can be used to trace circles (1½" -2" in diameter, graduated sizes)
- Sheets of 1"-1½" wide self-sticking labels
- Glue stick
- Crayons, pencils, washable markers
- Paper hole punch
- Yarn cut into 6 inch strips, three per student
- Icon for prayer
- Resources *Sent in earlier by parents/family--see Family Letter in Resource Section*
 - Copies of pictures of family members, Godparents, and photos of special occasions, holidays, vacations, baptism

- Written ancestor story, family story, special occasion/holiday

Resources

Required Resources

[Saints, Literature and Children's Stories](#) (PDF)

[Saints, Literature and Children's Stories](#) (PDF)

[My Orthodox Family - Family Letter](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

[A Picnic in October](#) (Image)

[Christina Goes to Church](#)(Book)

[Love You Forever](#) (Image)

[Rechenka's Eggs](#) (Image)

[Something to Remember Me By](#) (Image)

[Something to Remember Me By](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *Who lives with you in your house?* Allow time for each student to answer. *What do you love the most about your family?* Answers should reflect student's awareness of ways their families express their love. As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God's love for us. *Can anyone tell me how God shows us He loves us?* Answers should reflect God's love.

3 Story

Share one of the suggested stories listed, or one of your choice. You may also read portions of one or two stories to build upon background discussion. Ask students if they can recall the persons in the families described in the story.

Note: You may skip this step, if your time is limited.

4 Family Memories Scrapbook

This is an ongoing activity designed to carry through the entire unit of study and be part of the “Roots” Coffee Hour project. The project would be mounted on a large wall area.

This activity can also be going on simultaneously with the Family Tree activity, with half of the students working on the scrapbook, and half on the parish family tree. Younger students may need assistance.

See *Teacher Resources*:

“Roots” Coffee Hour (Parish Event)

Family Stories and Family Memories Album

Note: While working on this activity, you may choose to begin work on the Extra Activity, **Life-Sized Figures** , at the end of this session. Assistance will be required to work on both projects simultaneously. Younger students may need assistance.

- Have students open their envelopes brought from home.
- Placing materials in front of each student, instruct them to place their family photos on the construction paper. Try to give students enough room to write captions. Provide additional paper, if necessary.
- When students have arranged photos, assist in gluing these to construction paper.
- Ask students to identify family members in photo and write names under photos.
- Have students share family stories brought in with photos. Students may need assistance with prompts like, *What was your favorite time with your [family member in photo]?* , or if accounts were written by parents or not explained to them.
- Mount written accounts on construction paper. If stories are being recalled orally, write them down on the white-lined paper and mount it on construction paper. Add these accounts to their scrapbook.
- You can also have students expand their scrapbook. They may want to collect and bring in favorite family photos that tell a story about something family members like to remember: vacation trips, visits to grandma’s house, cousins, special events, funny things that happened, etc.
- Take 3 sections of yarn and string through holes. Tie into bows. Do NOT knot together, as pages will be added in subsequent sessions.
- You can also record family stories or class discussion on audio or videotape to display at end of sessions. [See *Teacher Resources*: Family Stories]
- Distribute another piece of construction paper to each student, and, if possible, have them write their name on it. The teacher can then write the title, “Family Memories Scrapbook.” If student isn’t able, the teacher may write their name along with title.
- If time, or if students were not able to bring in photos they can also draw pictures of their families or individual member. They may also wish to add captions identifying family members and to add drawings of special times together.

5 Family Tree

This is an ongoing activity designed to carry through the entire unit of study and be part of the “Roots” Coffee Hour project. The project would be mounted on a large wall area.

This activity can also be going on simultaneously with the scrapbook activity, with half of the students working on the scrapbook, and half on the parish family tree. Younger students may need assistance. See *Teacher Resources: “Roots” Coffee Hour (Parish Event) and Family Tree*

- Have students gather materials to make bushes of family tree (large green construction paper, plastic rounds, self-stick labels, markers, scissors, pencils, glue sticks, copied pictures)
- Students may follow a precut outline of a wide bushy shape to trace and cut out of the green construction paper.
- Using the rounds shapes, students will trace around family pictures, cutting them into round shapes. Students may also cut apples out of red construction paper and mount pictures on these.
- Students will mount pictures onto their bushes. This is the beginning step to be continued in the next session.

6 Wrap up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- *What do we love most about our families?* (Allow student responses)
- *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should reflect reinforcement of student understanding of God’s love and the parallels with the love of families.)

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

8 Extra Activity - Life-Sized Figures

Note: With younger children, you will need assistance to keep them busy while figures are measured, cut, and outlined. At least one other person will be needed to assist in these tasks while another is working on another activity (see above)

Life –Sized Figures

These life-sized, self-portrait figures can be hung in the classroom throughout the year, in the parish center as a display, or with the church-wide projects of Our Orthodox Family.

Materials:

- Roll of wide butcher paper
- Crayons
- Washable markers

- Rounded scissors
- Washable paints, fabric pieces, trim (or other materials for decoration), glue (optional)

Procedure:

1. Measure and cut a piece of butcher paper, the height of the tallest student. Use this as a sample to cut enough for each student.
2. Have one student lie on the paper and draw a complete figure outline. If space is a problem, trace a half-figure or head profile.
3. Students can color, paint, and glue fabric or other materials to desired results.

Life Together as a Family *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

Family Means Belonging - Families share everything; love, joy, good times and bad. They help and support one another, both physically and spiritually. These times together become a source of many memories as we grow together in love, sharing joys and sorrows. Family members need to work together on rules, daily tasks, good habits, and relationships to make them work together as a family unit. The Church blesses families and helps them to live and grow as God's children and members of God's family. Note: Although sessions in this unit were written using general terms for family, teachers should be sensitive to family situations which are unique or dysfunctional, and adjust your approach to this session accordingly. Note: The week before doing this lesson, be sure students have brought in one to three small personal items, or pictures of items, to place in a personal memory box.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify families as cooperative, supportive, sharing
- Write a descriptive paragraph or short story, using their senses where possible, about their family, and how they participate in the life of their family, to be part of their family scrapbook
- List what they do at home to help other members of their families
- Describe/explore, elaborate on what it means to belong to a family
- List some rules, good habits, daily tasks, and favorite things in the everyday life of their families
- Connect belonging to a family with belonging to different groups (parish, church school, activities, sports, school)
- Explain the personal items or pictures of them, and why they are important to them
- Place their lists in a memory box to be shared with their classmates and families
- Begin planning their projects as part of a parish-wide "Roots Coffee Hour"

Materials

- Sheet colored construction paper (9x12") with holes punched
- Sheets of white-lined paper
- Small gift boxes, shoe boxes, or 9"x12"x2" gift box box to hold small personal items for Memory Box
- 9 ½"x13" pieces of construction paper
- 24"x16" pieces of fabric, construction paper, or wallpaper
- 12"x2" strips of white construction paper
- Copies of title, "My Memories Box" on sturdy paper, or sturdy paper for children to write title
- Newspapers to cover tables
- Sequins, trim
- Copies of photos showing family members doing things together
- Scissors, paste/glue, markers/ crayons
- Board, dryboard, butcher paper
- Chalk, dry markers, markers, pencils

Resources

Required Resources

[Family Tree \(PDF\)](#)

[Memory Box \(PDF\)](#)

[My Story \(Writing Outline #1\) \(PDF\)](#)

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by reviewing last week's session. Activate prior knowledge by having them look at their Family Tree display and Family Memories Album. Ask students, *Who can tell me what they love about their family?* (Allow time for students to share.) Ask students, *What did we learn about God's love for us?* (Allow time for students to think before answering. May need to prompt with key words-love, creating families, recall the story read last week) Building upon prior knowledge, ask students, *Where else do we feel loved and like we belong? How about school? Church? Church School?* (Allow students to elaborate)

3 Story

Share one of the stories listed, or one of your choice. You may also read portions of one or two stories to build upon background discussion. Ask students if they can recall the persons in the families described in the story.

Note: You may skip this step, if your time is limited.

4 Short Story

- Begin with a discussion on families (2-5 minutes); things they like to do together, anecdotes on what they like to talk about when they are remembering events with their families, etc. Ask, *What does it mean to belong to a family?* (Answers should reflect sharing and cooperation.) Ask, *What can we do at home to help other members of our family?* (List students answers on board, dry board, or butcher paper)
- Hand out **My Story** worksheets. Have students fill in the sections.
- Ask students to think about how they would like to write a story about their family. Say, *Today we are going to think of the things we do with our families. Let's share some ideas and see what we find. When we finish our worksheets, let's think of a family story. It can be about things you like to do together in the house, your chores, favorite time of day at home, a favorite trip. You can also list all the rules and chores, or responsibilities shared in your family. What do you see and hear in your house? Describe the smells of your favorite foods. Do you have a favorite chair or place to sit and relax? How does it feel? We can choose whatever we like, write about it, add any pictures we may have, and glue them to our paper to add to our **Family Memories Scrapbook**.*
- Distribute a sheet of white lined paper, and construction paper, also any pictures they may wish to add. Younger students may need assistance in gluing.
Note: It is best to begin by allowing students to arrange pictures they wish to use in groups of things that go together, and then glue down their final arrangement.

5 Memory Box

- Have students decorate their boxes. You may follow the directions listed on the page **A Personal (or Family) Memory Box**, or have students decorate in their own styles. Items they have brought should fit in the box.
- As students are working, explain about the Roots Coffee hour, and that all projects they complete will be part of their display.
- Students may wish to add items to their memory boxes as they progress through the unit.

6 Wrap-up

Roots Coffee Hour

After completing their projects, have students share with the class the most important things in their stories and memory boxes that tell about their family.

Ask: *How can we show we belong to our family?* (Answers should reflect understanding of cooperation.) Ask, *What does it mean to belong to our church? Our church school? Our soccer team?* (Again, a connection should be made about the need for sharing and cooperation in belonging.)

Note: Time may be needed to continue work on the Family Tree project. Use your discretion in choosing the above activities to meet with your class timetable.

Family Tree

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God's Story and God's People

(Ages 7-9)

Overview

God's faithful family became God's people. - When God created people, He created family. Some of God's people were faithful; others turned away from God. God sent His Own Son, Jesus Christ, to bring His people back to Him. Jesus taught us to repent, turn away from evil, and change our lives. Jesus also shows us how to care, to love, and to help one another.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify families from the Bible
- Recall a specific fact or incident that happened in a Bible story
- Share stories of faithfulness and love in families
- Discuss the meaning of turning away from God and why this is hurtful to us as people of God
- Compare families from the Bible with their own families
- Illustrate a story about Biblical families
- Design a mural of family Bible stories to be ongoing throughout unit

Materials

- Plain white drawing/construction paper (9 x 12"), one per student, with holes punched
- Crayons, washable markers
- Large foam board for Bible family stories
- Glue
- Colored construction paper
- Plain white drawing paper without holes

Resources

Required Resources

- [A Shepherd Boy Becomes a King \(PDF\)](#)
- [Adam and Eve disobey God \(PDF\)](#)
- [God blesses Hannah with a son \(PDF\)](#)
- [God calls Moses to help His people \(PDF\)](#)
- [God makes a promise to Abraham \(PDF\)](#)
- [How Noah Obeyed God \(PDF\)](#)
- [Samuel Hears God's Call \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[God Loves Us, Take Home, Numbers 10, 16](#)

[The Children's Illustrated Bible \(Image\)](#)

[What the Bible Is All about for Young Explorers \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Ask students, *Who can tell me about what we learned about families and belonging last week?* (Allow students to share, prompting them with key words like **sharing, cooperation, working together**).
- Ask, *Where else do we feel like we belong?* (Answers should activate prior knowledge of community, ie. parish, church school, school, sports team, or activities).
- Preview lesson by explaining how families in the Bible are the same as families we have talked about. Say: *God created people and families. His faithful families became God's people. Some of God's people turned away from God. They sinned against Him, separating themselves from God and each other. God called numerous leaders and prophets to help them turn away from their evil ways and return to Him, but many did not listen. Then God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to us to bring His people back to God. Jesus taught us to repent of our sins. Does anyone know what repent means?* (Allow for responses.)
- Then say, *Repent is when we do something wrong and we are sorry. We try to make up for it by being better and not making that mistake again. Can anyone think of things you have done wrong and are sorry for?* (Allow for students to give their reactions by citing examples: not listening to our parents, fighting with people in our family, our friends, choosing to not tell the truth.)
- Continue by saying, *So now we know that if we are sorry when we do something wrong and try to change, we are pleasing God. His Son, Jesus, taught us this. He also taught us how to care for, to love, and to help one another. God's Son, Jesus, gave His own life for us, so that we might turn back to God, to do His will, and again become His faithful people.*

3 Bible Stories

- Share stories about families from the Bible, using texts previously mentioned.
- As you read about 2-3 families, ask students to:
 - Identify the persons in the stories.
 - Recall a specific fact or incident from the story.
 - Relate what they have heard to what was previously discussed about families and turning to God.

4 Family Memories Scrapbook and Class Mural

- Using white construction paper with holes, ask students to draw a picture of what happened in one of the stories.
- You may have to review them to assist in recalling persons and events
- When they have finished, identify the story by writing a title and place illustrations in their Family Memories Scrapbooks
- Using white paper without holes, ask students to draw another picture of one of their favorite stories to mount on the class mural. If this proves too tiresome, forego the mural for a future activity.
- As students are working, you can give a synopsis of the previously read stories or ask them to share a special family time or activity shared during the past week.
 - Using white construction paper with holes, ask students to draw a picture of what happened in one of the stories.
 - You may have to review them to assist in recalling persons and events
 - When they have finished, identify the story by writing a title and place illustrations in their Family Memories Scrapbooks
 - Using white paper without holes, ask students to draw another picture of one of their favorite stories to mount on the class mural. If this proves too tiresome, forego the mural for a future activity.
 - As students are working, you can give a synopsis of the previously read stories or ask them to share a special family time or activity shared during the past week.
 - **Note:** If time, finish any previous activities from Sessions 1 and 2, or play “Whose is This?” from Session 2.

5 Wrap up

Ask students to recall who their favorite Bible person was and why. Ask if they thought the families in the Bible stories were part of God’s faithful people. Have student apply what they have learned by asking, *How are our families like the ones we talked about from the Bible?* (Allow students to elaborate)

6 Optional-Take Home

God Loves Us, Take Home Numbers 10,16 [OCEC, 1.800.464.2744]

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Members of God's Family *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

We become members of God's family when we are baptized - We are made clean in the waters of baptism. The white robe is a sign of new life. We are sealed with the gift of God's Holy Spirit and become "living temples" of God, as members of His family. Just as our families have stories, our church family also has its own story of how it began, where people came from, and how it grew. Keeping a record of our own family as well as that of our parish family keeps us together as a community.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify major actions in the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation
- Make a mural showing the parts of the services of Baptism and Chrismation, labeling each part
- Use photos of their own baptisms to further illustrate their knowledge of these sacraments, as well as personal commitment to Christ as members of His family
- Relate names and photos of the leaders and groups in their local church family to "roots" of a Family Tree that provide strength and support to the church school and parish as a true community in Christ
- Use photos and materials to add to Family Tree consisting of their immediate families, parish and church school family, and Baptism as part of the parish family
- Relate those in their immediate families with their church family through the roots and branches of the Family Tree
- Continue work on projects from Sessions 1-3 for Roots Coffee Hour

Note: Although the sessions in this unit were written using general terms for family, teachers should be sensitive to family situations which are unique or dysfunctional, and adjust your approach to this session accordingly.

Note: Prior to this lesson, be sure to have copies of parish pictures, whether from archives or have them taken at previous coffee hour. Be sure to include group pictures and pictures of priest, deacon, choir, church school teachers and students, as well as council members and individuals. You may wish to confer with the students and teacher(s) in the Intermediate and Senior levels, who may be working on their parish interviews, to help you.

Materials

- Large (12" x 18") sheets of green construction paper, pre-cut into large, wide, bushy shapes 1-2 per student to add to the tree top
- Several large (12' x 18") sheets of brown construction paper for tree trunk and roots
- Strips of brown and black crepe paper
- Copies of family baptism pictures (several per child)

- Plastic round tops from small containers, plastic glasses, or any item which can be used to trace circles (1 ½ - 2" in diameter, graduated size)
- Large white poster paper
- Pencils
- Markers
- Scissors
- Paste, glue, or glue sticks
- Sheet of small 1-1 ½" wide white stickers
- Copies of parish photos, parishioners, old and new
- I am a CHRISTian! Worksheets (optional)

Resources

Required Resources

[I am a CHRISTian! \(Writing Outline #2\) \(PDF\)](#)

["Roots"-The Diversity Game \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by asking students what they remember about their Bible families.
- Point to mural/collage to assist with recall. Say, *Who can tell me who this person in the Bible was? What did he (she) do? How did they show their love for God and their families?* (Allow time for students to share.)
- Ask students to recall how Bible families are like theirs. Allow students to reflect and share their comparisons.
- Say: *How many of us have seen pictures of our Baptism?* Allow students to answer. Answers should reflect the sacraments as those bringing us into God's family. *Let's take a look at them.*
- Say: *We will now begin to see who is in our church family.*

3 Teaching Pics, Parish Photos, Lesson on Baptism

- Have students look at various pictures in **Teaching Pics** (OCEC). Show them pictures of the priest, deacon, altar boys, children in processions.
- Ask students to identify who is in the pictures (i.e. priest, deacon, altar boys, children in procession, choir, etc.).
- Using parish photos, repeat the process in the same manner. Have students locate pictures of Baptism and Chrismation as well. (S #1-4)
- Students may look over ***New Life in the Church***, Lessons 2 and 3 or ***New Life in Jesus***, Lesson 2 on Baptism and Chrismation. Have students fill in those sheets to display in their notebooks or use as a take-home activity.
- Students may fill in attached I am a CHRISTian sheets, and add to album or use as a take-home activity.

4 Family Tree

- Have students examine pictures of parish members, identifying those they know.
- Help students identify those they don't know, explaining who they are.
- Students may also speak with those in the Intermediate and Senior classes who are interviewing parish members.
- Have students add their baptismal and parish pictures to the roots and/or branches of their family tree, following directions. They may use some of the questions from the attached **Roots Diversity Game** to add to the parish pictures.
- This project can be used as a display in the church school room, parish hall, or designated area for unit project displays. [See **Roots Coffee Hour** in **Activities**]

5 Wrap-up

- As students are finishing their project and cleaning up, ask them to point out various parts of the family tree.
- Student should be asked, *Can you see how the roots and trunk of the tree hold us up as a family?* (Allow them to explain what they see and elaborate their observations)

6 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Being an Orthodox Christian in a Parish Family *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

Every Parish Has a Story - God calls us to love all people. Being Christian and being Orthodox should tell us who we are as right believers who celebrate our faith, and respond to those in our parish family, our community, and to those around us. Just as our own families have many stories, our Church family has stories about how it began and grew. Keeping a record of memories of a parish helps us to understand the history of our parish family, and also how to plan for the future. Note: Although the sessions in this unit were written using general terms for family, teachers should be sensitive to family situations which are unique or dysfunctional, and adjust your approach to this session accordingly. Note: Ahead of time, gather the names and pictures (when possible) of: pastor, deacon, choir director and members, church school leaders and members, parish leaders, parishioners, members of the parish who are ill, in nursing homes, etc. Gather names of those who are in need of clothing, food, etc., as well as names of local charities and agencies, such as local soup kitchens, etc.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Learn the name of their parish, and the feast or saint for whom it was named
- Draw and explain what parish members do together in church (pray, sing, light candles, listen to the Gospel, receive Holy Communion, take part in processions, etc.)
- Describe favorite family holidays and/or celebrations
- Explain the connection between home celebrations and church feasts
- Compare family and church celebrations with those of their friends and neighbors
- create a Caring Tree using pictures of the pastor, parish leaders, parishioners and special parish occasions to be continued in the next session
- Add pictures of pastor, parish leaders, parishioners, special parish occasions to the Parish Family Tree
- Finish projects for Roots Coffee Hour (see Sessions 1-4)

Materials

- Cardboard, butcher paper or foam poster board for backing
- Several large pieces of brown and green colored construction paper
- Drawing paper (8 ½" x 11")
- Crayons, washable markers, pencils
- Scissors
- Copies of parish pictures

Resources

Required Resources

[The Tree of Life "Caring Tree" \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[God, My Friends and Me \(Image\)](#)

[Little Falcons\(Book\)](#)

[Teaching Pics\(Book\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by pointing to the Family Tree and asking, *Who can tell me what this is?* (Allow time for students to recall.)
- Point to the various parts of the tree and ask students to identify them and their uses. Ask why people were placed in those parts of the tree.
- Ask students if they know the name of their parish. If they answer correctly, ask which Feast Day, or saint for whom the church was named.
- Ask: *What are some of the things we do in church as a parish family? What do you like to do the most when you are in church? What are some of the special occasions you celebrate in school, with your friends?* (Answers should reflect understanding of how we come together as a parish family and God's children--pray, sing, light candles, etc., as well as how special occasions in general bring us together in a special way.)

3 Lesson

- Show a selection of **Teaching Pics**, and have students point out examples of their answers.
- Select various issues of **Little Falcons** to point out actions of parish family members in church and in the parish community.
- Show some of the students' Baptism pictures and ask students to describe what is going on in the pictures. Then say: *When you were baptized, you became part of God's family and the parish family.*

- Ask students to talk about their favorite times in church; Holy Days, special occasions, family times.
- Ask if they have a special time they celebrate with their friends, neighbors, or at school. Do they feel that these times are special as well? They can be, because they help us grow as Christians to appreciate all of God's people. Explain that their church family helps them grow to be good people of God and to love and show kindness to others around them.
- Show pictures of parish, priest, deacon, choir director, church school, parish leaders, etc. Say: *We are now going to make a Caring Tree of some of the people we know in our church family, as well as our favorite things we do together in church.*

4 Caring Tree

- Note: You may need several adults to assist in this project.
- Gather and distribute materials. This can be done in the cooperative learning style, with each student responsible for distributing certain materials.
- Have students recall what was discussed about their favorite activity in church.
- Have students examine pictures and identify names of: parish (along with background of that name), priest, deacon, choir director, parish leaders, familiar parishioners, special occasions.
- According to directions for Caring Tree, have students cut out leaves, branches, tree trunk, and paste parish pictures to them. Save enough branches and leaves for items in next session.
- Older students can draw name tags, identifying pictures as well as an explanation of the name of their parish.
- As students are working, sing some of the parish and special occasion tropars or hymns to keep them focused.
- Have students mount tree trunk, branches, and leaves on butcher paper, cardboard, or poster board.
- Extra pictures can be added to Family Tree trunk, roots, etc.
- Work on remaining tasks for Roots Coffee Hour projects (See previous sessions.).
- As students finish, ask the name of their parish, their priest, their teachers, friends, some of the parishioners they know and with whom they are familiar.

5 Wrap-up

Ask: *What do we like best about being in church? Why? What things can we do to help make our parish even better?* (Answers should reflect what they've learned about belonging to a family; clean up after ourselves, be kind to others, help other people who need assistance, cooperate, share, etc.) Say: *Next week we will finish our Caring Tree by adding some of the things we can do to make our parish better.*

6 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Work of God's People (Ages 7-9)

Overview

We are accountable to God for our lives and the lives of those around us - As Orthodox Christians, we reveal our commitment to God through our steadfastness, integrity, compassion, and responsibility for all of God's people. Building community in our local neighborhoods, and in the neighborhood where our church is located, is an important form of witness, mission and outreach, and is the result of our love for each other as family and children of God. Note: Although the sessions in this unit were written using general terms for family, teachers should be sensitive to family situations which are unique or dysfunctional, and adjust your approach to this session accordingly. Note: Ahead of time, gather the names and pictures (when possible) of: members of the parish who are ill, in nursing homes, etc. Gather names of those who are in need of clothing, food, etc., as well as names of local charities and agencies, such as local soup kitchens, etc.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify the love of family, parish family and those around us as a part of God's plan
- Respond to God's call as caring, Orthodox Christians
- Name and practice ways to show kindness and be helpful to family, neighborhood, parish and school
- Choose to do something nice for a family member, classmate, neighbor, parishioner
- Choose to assist a person in need by repairing gifts, bringing flowers, sharing a favorite dessert, or take a nice card or homemade item to a neighbor who lives alone
- Finish projects for Roots Coffee Hour

Materials

- Large roll of brown butcher paper or bulletin board paper (teacher supply/art supply)
- Colored construction paper pre-cut into 5"-6" tall by 3"-4" wide leaves (green, orange, yellow, red, brown). If students are able, make several patterns from cardboard for them to trace and cut out themselves
- Rounded/blunt scissors
- Black crayons, washable markers
- Scotch Tape

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

- Begin by pointing to the Caring Tree from last session. Ask: *Can anyone tell me what this is?* (Allow time for students to recall and respond.) Ask students to step up, one or two at a time, point out, and identify some of the pictures.
- Say: *Each of us is a member of a family. Each family has a story:*
- *Who are the different people in your family?*
- *Who are the people in your parish family?*
- *What can we do at home to be helpful to our family?*
- *What can we do to make our parish family better?*
- Answers should reflect helping when possible, especially those in need.

3 Story

- Share a story from one of the above resource choices, or one you have chosen with the theme of helping and giving to others.
- As you read, ask students if they know of anyone in their family or parish family like the characters in the story.
- Ask, *Do you know of anyone we could help as a family or parish family?* (Allow for students to ponder; prompt with people of whom you are aware need help—i.e. an elderly person living alone, someone who is ill or in the hospital or nursing home).
- How do you think we can help them? (Allow students to explore ideas. Answers should include: visit, give a card, flowers, or a small homemade gift, call and say hello.)
- Say: *Let's see if we can find ways to help those in need.*

4 Caring Tree

Note: This was begun in previous session. You may simply add to this.

- Make an outline of a tree on a large wall, with a trunk and empty branches. You can use sturdy brown butcher paper or packing wrap (a large roll is best). Have students from several middle-junior high classes cut out leaves to be taped on the branches (it is easier if you make several "patterns" of leaves, approx. 5-6" tall by 3-4" wide. These should be cut out of a sturdy card stock, with enough for one pattern per student.)
- Distribute a pattern to each student, together with several 12" x 18" sheets of green, yellow, orange and/or red construction paper. Have them trace the outlines of the leaves on the paper and cut them out.

- Collect in advance names of parish members and those from other Orthodox parishes, as well as neighbors and friends who are ill, and names of people in nursing homes located in different areas of the city where parishioners live. Be sure to get addresses and phone numbers of their homes, group home, nursing home or hospital where they are located. (Check with nursing homes and children's hospitals in advance to check their policies on visitors. You can also check to see if they have a person who can give a "briefing" or "orientation" to groups that are interested in making visitations.)
- Collect also names of persons or organizations that need clothing, shoes, toys, etc. for children, teens or adults. Check with community organizations or state or county offices about community projects or clean-up workgroups in which parish members can participate (find out whether there is a minimum age for children or teen participation).
- Write on each leaf the name of a person, group home or institution that needs a visitor, phone call, greeting card, clothing, shoes, boots, etc. (especially for winter).
- Have students tape the leaves to the tree with small pieces of tape.
- Have students ask parish members or family to "adopt" a person or group by taking a leaf off the tree and pledging to fulfill the commitment on it consistently.

5 Wrap-up

- Ask students to point out some of their leaves and describe what some of them say.
- Review with students the importance of helping others as a sign of being a faithful Orthodox Christian
- Say: *What would you like to do to help make our Caring Tree bloom?* (Allow students to contemplate and share their ideas. Guide them with key words: clothing, shoes, boots, mittens, hospital, nursing home, cards, flowers, homemade gifts, phone calls. Answers should reflect session objectives of Christian love and charity.)

6 Optional-Take Home

God Loves Us, Take Home #21 [OCEC, 1.800.464.274]

7 Closing Prayer

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries;

And by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Every Family Has a Story *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

Family Is Love - Every family's story is different and each generation tells a different story about their ways of life, their joys, and their hardships.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Hear stories about families and their lives together
- Compare stories with their own family lives
- Identify family members from pictures
- Draw/paste pictures of family members on a page as the beginning step to a unit scrapbook
- Recall and orally share family/ancestor story with class
- See themselves as part of the family
- Give examples of how their family loves them
- Connect God's love with the people who love us

Materials

- 9x12 construction paper (3 per student)
- 8.5x11 white lined paper (1 per student)
- 6' Yarn strips (3 per student)
- Rounded Scissors (optional to fit photos)
- Glue Sticks
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Washable Markers
- Paper Hole Punch
- Icon for prayer
- Family Pictures
Family Members, Special Occasions, Holidays, Vacations, Baptism
- Written Ancestor Story

Resources

Required Resources

[Family Scrapbook\(HTML\)](#)

[My Orthodox Family - Family Letter\(HTML\)](#)

Optional Resources

[A Picnic in October](#) (Image)

[Love You Forever](#) (Image)

[Something to Remember Me By](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Begin by asking the following questions, allowing time for each student to answer:

- **Who lives with us?** (Family)
- **What do you love the most about your family?**
Answers should reflect student's awareness of ways their families express their love.
- **Can anyone tell me how God shows us He loves us?**
Answers should reflect God's love. As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God's love for us.

3 Story

Share one of the suggested stories listed, or one of your choice. You could also read portions of one or two stories to build upon background discussion. Ask students if they can recall the persons in the families described in the story.

Note: You may skip this step, if your time is limited.

4 Family Scrapbook

An activity that will enable the students to create a Family Scrapbook.

5 Wrap-Up

- **What do we love most about our families?** (Allow student responses)

- **How does God show us He loves us?** (Answers should reflect reinforcement of student understanding of God's love and the parallels with the love of families.)

6 Closing Prayer

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless thine inheritance.
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversarie;
And by virtue of Thy cross, preserve Thy habitation.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

7 Extra Activity - Life-Sized Figures

Extra Activity (for use with extra/extended sessions)

Note: With younger children, you will need assistance to keep them busy while figures are measured, cut, and outlined. At least one other person will be needed to assist in these tasks while another is working on another activity (see above)

- **Life –Sized Figures**

These life-sized, self-portrait figures can be hung in the classroom throughout the year, in the parish center as a display, or with the church-wide projects of My Orthodox Family.

Materials:

- Roll of wide butcher paper
- Crayons
- Washable markers
- Rounded scissors
- Washable paints, fabric pieces, trim (or other materials for decoration), glue (optional)

Procedure:

1. Measure and cut a piece of butcher paper, the height of the tallest student.
Use this as a sample to cut enough for each student.
2. Have one student lie on the paper and draw a complete figure outline. If space is a problem, trace a half-figure or head profile.
3. Students can color, paint, and glue fabric or other materials to desired results.

Life Together as a Family *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

Family Means Belonging - Families share everything; love, joy, good times and bad. They help and support one another, both physically and spiritually.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify families as cooperative, supportive, sharing.
- List what we do at home to help other members of our family.
- Describe/explore, elaborate on what it means to belong to a family.
- Connect belonging to a family with belonging to different groups (parish, church school, activities, sports, school)

Materials

- Sheets of white or colored construction paper (9x12") with holes punched (1 per student)
- Pictures cut from magazines/catalogs/newspapers showing families, activities (swimming, playing games, reading books, board-games, toys, schools/schoolwork, laundry, cleaning and garden tools, ...)
- Copies of photos showing family members doing things together
- Scissors, paste/glue, markers/ crayons
- Board, dryboard, butcher paper
- Chalk, dry markers, markers
- Copies of family pictures depicting activities
- 3 small personal items
- Stories for children about families and cooperation (see in Teacher Resources-Tools: Saints, Literature and Children's Stories, for summaries), choose one you feel reflect families, relationships, and interaction.
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

[Saints, Literature and Children's Stories](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

[Bravo, Maurice!](#) (Image)

[Families are Different](#) (Image)

[The Keeping Quilt](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by reviewing last week's session. Activate prior knowledge by asking students, *Who can tell me what they love about their family?* (Allow time for students to share.)

- **Ask students**, *What did we learn about God's love for us?* (Allow time for students to think before answering. May need to prompt with key words--love, creating families)
- **Building upon prior knowledge**, ask students, *Where else do we feel loved and like we belong? How about school? Church? Church School?* (Allow students to elaborate)

3 Story

Share one of the stories listed, or one of your choice. You may also read portions of one or two stories to build upon background discussion. Ask students if they can recall the persons in the families described in the story.

Note: You may skip this step, if your time is limited.

4 Family Memories Scrapbook

In Advance: Place materials close by for easy distribution to students.

- Begin with a discussion on families (2-5 minutes); things they like to do together, anecdotes about what they like to talk about when they are remembering events with their families, etc. Ask, *What does it mean to belong to a family?* (Answers should reflect sharing and cooperation.) Ask, *What can we do at home to help other members of our family?* (List students' answers on board, dry board, or butcher paper)
- Ask students to think about how they would like to make a picture of these kinds of things to illustrate their family. Say, *Today we are going to look at pictures that might remind us of the things we do with our families. Let's share these pictures and see what we can find. We can choose the pictures we like, and glue them to our paper to add to our "Family Memories Scrapbook."*
- Distribute a sheet of construction paper, and pictures (children can exchange pictures that they have examined as they are finished with them). Students may need assistance in

gluing.

Note: It is best to begin by allowing students to arrange pictures they wish to use in groups of things that go together, and then glue down their final arrangement.

5 Game: "Whose Is This?"

Have students' 3 small items placed around the room (Note: In advance, keep track of items by writing child's initials on small labels and sticking them to an inconspicuous spot on items.). Have children walk around the room, hold up an item and each make one guess as to who owns it. The owner cannot say it belongs to him or her until the class is stumped.

6 Wrap up

- After completing their collages, have students share with the class the most important things in their collage that tell about their family.
- Ask: *How can we show we belong to our family?* (Answers should reflect understanding of cooperation.)
- Ask, *What does it mean to belong to our church? Our church school? Our soccer team?* (Again, a connection should be made about the need for sharing and cooperation in belonging.)

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God's Story and God's People

(Ages 4-6)

Overview

When God Created People, He Created Family - Some were faithful, and others were not. God sent leaders and prophets and, finally, His Son, Jesus, to show us how to love and help one another.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify families from the Bible
- Recall a specific fact or incident that happened in a Bible story
- Share stories of faithfulness and love in families
- Discuss the meaning of turning away from God and why this is hurtful to us as people of God
- Compare families from the Bible with their own families
- Illustrate a story about Biblical families
- Design a mural of family Bible stories to be ongoing throughout unit

Materials

- Plain white drawing/construction paper (9 x 12") , one per student, with holes punched
- Crayons, washable markers
- Large foam board for Bible family stories
- Colored construction paper
- Plain white drawing paper without holes
- Glue

Resources

Required Resources

- [Adam and Eve disobey God \(PDF\)](#)
- [God blesses Hannah with a son \(PDF\)](#)
- [God makes a promise to Abraham \(PDF\)](#)
- [God takes care of a baby \(PDF\)](#)
- [King Solomon builds the temple \(PDF\)](#)
- [Two Brothers: Cain and Abel \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Ask students, *Who can tell me about what we learned about families and belonging last week?* (Allow students to share, prompting them with key words like **sharing, cooperation, working together**).
- Ask, *Where else do we feel like we belong?* (Answers should activate prior knowledge of community, i.e. parish, church school, school, sports team, or activities).
- Preview lesson by explaining how families in the Bible are the same as families we have talked about. Say: *God created people and families. His faithful families became God's people. Some of God's people turned away from God. They sinned against Him, separating themselves from God and each other. God called many leaders and prophets to help them give up their evil ways and return to Him, but many did not listen. Then God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to bring His people back to God. Jesus taught us to repent from our sins. Does anyone know what repent means?* (Allow for responses.)
- Then say, *Repent is when we do something wrong and we are sorry. We try to make up for it by being better and not making that mistake again. Can anyone think of things you have done wrong and are sorry for?* (Allow for students to give their reactions by citing examples: not listening to our parents, fighting with people in our family or our friends, choosing not to tell the truth.)
- Continue by saying, *So now we know that if we are sorry when we do something wrong and try to change, we are pleasing God. His Son, Jesus, taught us this. He also taught us how to care, to love, and to help one another. God's Son, Jesus, gave His own life for us, so that we might turn back to God, to do His will, and again become His faithful people.*

3 Bible Stories

- Share stories about families from the Bible, using texts previously mentioned.

- As you read about 2-3 families, ask students to:
 - + Identify the persons in the stories.
 - + Recall a specific fact or incident from the story.
 - + Relate what they have heard to what was previously discussed about families and turning to God.

4 Family Memories Scrapbook and Class Mural

- Using white construction paper with holes, ask students to draw a picture of what happened in one of the stories.
- You may have to review them to assist in recalling persons and events
- When they have finished, identify the story by writing a title and place illustrations in their "Family Memories Scrapbooks"
- Using white paper without holes, ask students to draw another picture of one of their favorite stories to mount on the class mural. If this proves too tiresome, forego the mural for a future activity.
- As students are working, you can give a synopsis of the previously read stories or ask them to tell about a special family time or activity shared during the past week.

Note: If there is time, finish any previous activities from Sessions 1 and 2, or play "Whose is This?" from Session 2

5 Wrap up

Ask students to recall who their favorite Bible person was and why. Ask if they thought the families in the Bible stories were part of God's faithful people. Have student apply what they have learned by asking, *How are our families like the ones we talked about from the Bible?* (Allow students to elaborate)

6 Optional-Take Home

God Loves Us, Take Home Numbers 10,16 [OCEC, 1.800.464.2744]

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Members of God's Family *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

We Become Members of God's Family When We Are Baptized - Just as our families have stories, our church family has stories about how it began, where its people came from, how it grew, and important events and special times.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify and name members of their parish (priest, deacon, church school teachers, classmates, choir members, and others they may know)
- Relate names and photos of the leaders and groups in their local church family to roots of a Family Tree that provide strength and support to the church school and parish as a true community in Christ
- Use photos to construct a Family Tree consisting of their immediate families, parish and church school family
- Relate those in their immediate families with their church family through the roots and branches of the Family Tree

Materials

- Large (12" x 18") sheets of green construction paper, pre-cut into large, wide, bushy shapes. 1-2 per student, for the tree top
- Several large (12" x 18") sheets of brown construction paper for tree trunk and roots
- Strips of brown and black crepe paper
- Copies of family pictures (several per child)
- Plastic round tops from small containers, plastic glasses, or any item which can be used to trace circles (1 ½ - 2" in diameter, graduated sizes)
- Pencils
- Rounded or blunt scissors
- Paste, glue, or glue sticks
- Sheet of small 1-1 ½" wide white stickers
- Copies of parish photos of parishioners from past generations

Resources

Required Resources

[Adam and Eve disobey God \(PDF\)](#)

[God makes a promise to Abraham \(PDF\)](#)

[How Noah Obeyed God \(PDF\)](#)

[King Solomon builds the temple \(PDF\)](#)

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by asking students what they remember about their Bible families. Point to mural to assist with recall. Say, *Who can tell me who this person in the Bible was? What did he (she) do? How did they show their love for God and their families?* (Allow time for students to share)
- Ask students to recall how Bible families are like theirs. Allow students to reflect and share their comparisons
- Say: *We will now begin to see who is in our church family*

3 Teaching Pics, Parish Photos

Have students look at various pictures in **Teaching Pics** (OCEC). Show them pictures of the priest, deacon, altar boys, children in processions. Ask students to identify who is in the pictures (i.e. priest, deacon, altar boys, children in procession, choir, etc.). Using parish photos, repeat the process in the same manner.

4 Family Tree

Print out Family Tree Activity from *Teacher Resources-Activities*. This project can be used as a display in the church school room, parish hall, or designated area for unit project displays. [See *Teacher Resources-Activities: Roots Coffee Hour*]

5 Wrap up

- As students are finishing their project and cleaning up, ask them to point out various parts of the family tree
- Student should be asked, *Can you see how the roots and trunk of the tree hold us up as a family?* (Allow them to explain what they see and elaborate on their observations)

6 Optional Take Home

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God Calls Us To Love All People

(Ages 4-6)

Overview

Being an Orthodox Christian in a Parish Family - Being Christian and being Orthodox should tell us who we are as right believers who celebrate our faith, and respond to those in our parish family, our community, and to those around us.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe how they become members of the parish and larger church through Baptism
- Learn the name of their parish, and the feast or saint for whom it was named
- Draw and explain what parish members do together in church (pray, sing, light candles, listen to the Gospel, receive Holy Communion, take part in processions, etc.)
- Describe favorite family holidays and/or celebrations
- Explain the connection between home celebrations and church feasts
- Compare family and church celebrations with those of their friends and neighbors

Materials

- Cardboard or foam poster board for backing
- Several large pieces of colored poster board to cut out as frames
- Several large pieces of colored construction paper
- Drawing paper (8 ½" x 11")
- Crayons, washable markers, pencils
- Rounded/blunt scissors
- Copies of students' Baptism pictures
- Copies of student family celebration pictures

Resources

Optional Resources

[Little Falcons](#)(Book)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by pointing to the Family Tree and asking, *Who can tell me what this is?* (Allow time for students to recall.)

- Point to the various parts of the tree and ask students to identify them and their uses. Ask why people were placed in those parts of the tree.
- Ask students if they know the name of their parish. If they answer correctly, ask which Feast Day, or saint the church was named for.
- Ask: *What are some of the things we do in church as a parish family? What do you like to do the most when you are in church?* (Answers should reflect understanding of how we come together as a parish family and God's children--pray, sing, light candles, share special feasts, etc.)
- Show a selection of **Teaching Pics**, and have students point out examples of their answers.
- Select various issues of **Little Falcons** to point out actions of parish family members in church and in the parish community.
- Show some of the students' Baptism pictures and ask students to describe what is going on in the pictures. Then say: *When you were Baptized, you became part of God's family and the parish family.*
- Ask students to talk about their favorite times in church; Holy Days, special occasions, family times.
- Ask if they have times they celebrate with their friends, neighbors, or at school. Ask whether they feel that these times are special as well. (Yes, because it helps us grow as Christians to appreciate all of God's people.) Explain that their church family helps them grow to be good people of God and to love and show kindness to others around them.
- Say: *We are now going to draw some pictures of some of our favorite things we do together in church.*

3 Church Family Collage

Note: You may need several adults to assist in this project.

- Gather materials and distribute drawing paper and art supplies to have students draw and color pictures of themselves and others in church.
- Have students recall what was discussed about their favorite activity in church.
- Recall their Baptism pictures and assist them in mounting the pictures on construction or poster board to put on collage.
- Ask students to pick a favorite time in church and draw a picture of it. They can look at resources previously presented, if they need an idea.
- As students are drawing, sing some familiar Tropars or hymns to keep them focused.
- As students finish, ask the name of their parish, their priest, their teachers, their friends, some of the parishioners they know and with whom they are familiar.

4 Wrap up

Ask: *What do we like best about being in church? Why? What things can we do help make our parish even better?* (Answers should reflect what they've learned about belonging to a family; clean up after ourselves, be kind to others, help other people who need assistance, cooperate, share, etc.)

5 Optional-Take Home

New Life in Jesus, Take Home Numbers 2,4 (OCEC, 1.800.464.2744)

6 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Work of God's People *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

We Are Accountable To God For Our Lives And Those Around Us - As Orthodox Christians, we reveal our commitment to God through our steadfastness, integrity, compassion, and responsibility for all of God's people.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify the love of family, parish family and those around us as a part of Gods plan
- Describe ways we respond to Gods call as caring Orthodox Christians
- Name and practice ways to show kindness and be helpful to family, neighborhood, parish and school
- Plan to do something nice for a family member, classmate, neighbor, parishioner
- Plan to assist a person in need by preparing gifts, bringing flowers, sharing a favorite dessert, or take a nice card or homemade item to a neighbor who lives alone

Materials

- Large roll of of brown butcher paper, brown packing wrap, or bulletin board paper (get this at teacher supply or art supply store)
- Colored construction paper pre-cut into 5"-6" tall by 3"-4" wide leaves (green, orange, yellow, red, brown). If students are able, make several patterns from cardboard for then to trace and cut out themselves
- Rounded/blunt scissors
- Black crayons, washable markers
- Scotch Tape

Resources

Optional Resources

[The Resource Handbook](#)(Link)

[God Loves Us, Take Home #21](#)(Book)

[Little Falcons](#)(Book)

[Small Acts of Kindness](#) (Image)

[The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by pointing to the Church Family Collage Poster. Ask: *Can anyone tell me what this is?* (Allow time for students to recall and respond.) Ask students to step up, one or two at a time, point out, and identify some of the pictures and drawings.

- Say: *Each of us is a member of a family. Each family has a story:*
- *Who are the different people in your family?*
- *Who are the people in your parish family?*
- *What can we do at home to be helpful to our family?*

3 Story

Share a story from one of the above choices, or one you have chosen with the theme of helping and giving to others.

- As you read, ask students if they know of anyone in their family or parish family like the characters in the story.
- Ask, *Do you know of anyone we could help as a family or parish family?* (Allow for students to ponder; prompt with people of who you are aware need help—i.e. an elderly person living alone, someone who is ill or in the hospital or nursing home).
- How do you think we can help them? (Allow students to explore ideas. Answers should include: visit, give a card, flowers, or a small homemade gift, call and say hello.)
- Say: *Let's see if we can find ways to help those in need.*

4 Caring Tree

Make an outline of a tree on a large wall, with a trunk and empty branches.

- Using sturdy brown paper, have students from several middle-junior high classes cut out leaves to be taped on the branches (it is easier if you make several "patterns" of leaves, approx. 5-6" tall by 3-4" wide. These should be cut out of a sturdy card stock, with enough for one pattern per student.)
- Distribute a pattern to each student, together with several 12" x 18" sheets of green, yellow, orange and/or red construction paper. Have them trace the outlines of the leaves on the paper and cut them out.
- Collect in advance names of parish members and those from other Orthodox parishes, as well as neighbors and friends who are ill, and names of people in nursing homes located

in different areas of the city where parishioners live. Be sure to get addresses and phone numbers of their homes, group home, nursing home or hospital where they are located. (Check with nursing homes and children's hospitals in advance to check their policies on visitors. You can also check to see if they have a person who can give a "briefing" or "orientation" to groups that are interested in making visitations.)

- Collect also names of persons or organizations that need clothing, shoes, toys, etc. for children, teens or adults. Check also with community organizations or state or county offices about community projects or clean-up workgroups in which parish members can participate (check if there is a minimum age for children or teen participation).
- Write on each leaf, the name of the person, group home or institution that needs a visitor, phone call, greeting card, clothing, shoes, boots, etc. (especially for winter).
- Have students tape the leaves to the tree with a small piece of tape.
- Have students ask parish members or family "adopt" a person or group by taking a leaf off the tree and pledging to fulfill their commitment on a regular basis

5 Wrap up

Ask students to point out some of their leaves and describe what some of them say.

- Review with students the importance of helping others as a sign of being a faithful Orthodox Christian.
- Say: *What would you like to do to help make our Caring Tree bloom?* (Allow students to contemplate and share their ideas. Guide them with key words: clothing, shoes, boots, mittens, hospital, nursing home, cards, flowers, homemade gifts, phone calls. Answers should reflect session objectives of Christian Love and Charity.

6 Optional-Take Home

God Loves Us, Take Home #21 [OCEC, 1.800.464.274]

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Every Family Has a Story (Ages 18+)

Overview

Family is Love - Every family's story is different. Families are composed of different members and numbers of members, and they relate to each other in different ways.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify various relationships in families, and in particular the relationships between parents and siblings
- Describe some of these relationships as they exist between Biblical figures
- Relate their own experiences of these relationships, not only those based on blood ties but also those based on Christian love

Materials

- Tape
- Bibles
- Markers
- Scissors
- Pens & paper
- Pipe cleaners
- Modeling clay or Play Doh

Resources

Required Resources

[My Orthodox Family - Family Letter\(HTML\)](#)

[My Orthodox Family: General Teacher Lesson Notes\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Tell the group that in this six-session unit you are going to look at some of the relationships in families. Say: The Bible, and the lives of our saints, give us many stories of relationships. Some of these relationships were healthy and good for the people in them, and some were not. We, in our own lives, also have a variety of family relationships. There are brothers with brothers, sisters with sisters, brothers with sisters, These sibling relationships are the ones we are going to look at today.

Continue by saying: Those of you who had siblings, either sisters or brothers, were given a special gift. Think for a moment about those sibling relationships, and share any special memories you would like to that involve a brother or sister. I'm going to put some words on the chalkboard that may bring some memories to mind.

Write on the chalkboard: rivalry, unique closeness, shared secrets, practical jokes, nicknames, family events. Wait a few minutes, and let people share their memories.

Go on to say: Some of us are fortunate enough to have someone who is not a blood brother or blood sister, but who is as close to us as a sibling. This may be a cousin or other relative, or it may be someone who is not part of our own biological family.

Ask participants to share any memories they have of such a relationship.

3 Bible Studies

1. Divide the class into two groups of 4-5, or into several groups if you have a good many participants.

Assign each group the A or B Bible study below, and ask groups to be ready to report on their conclusions.

Bible Study A

Read together the story of Joseph and his brothers in **Genesis 37: 1-28** and then **Genesis 45: 1-15**.

This second reading tells of Joseph's success in Egypt after his years of slavery. Talk about the following questions, and let participants give their own opinions. Some suggested answers are offered in italics:

2. How was Joseph able to heal the wound his brothers had inflicted on him? (One answer could be that he was able to see God's purpose in what happened.) How might his example help us do the same?

- Parents often have a strong effect on their children’s sibling relationships. How do you think Joseph’s relationship with his brothers was affected by their father’s behavior? (Making Joseph such an obvious favorite was bound to stir up resentment in the others.) How would you advise parents to avoid the same mistake?

1. Bible Study B

Read together the story of *Jacob and Esau* in **Genesis 25: 28-34 & 27: 1-29**.

After Jacob so disgracefully cheated his brother, many years went by. Jacob had an unusual experience, and then had another encounter with Esau.

Read **Genesis 32: 22-33:11** and then talk about these questions:

2. What experience did Jacob have that made him willing to humble himself before Esau? (His encounter with the angel had changed him, and made him a more godly person.)
- What does the encounter between the brothers tell us about Esau’s character? (The encounter between the brothers shows that Esau was basically a good, forgiving person. He may have been foolish in letting himself be duped into giving up his birthright for a bowl of food, but he was not a hard person who held a grudge after all the years of Jacob’s absence.)
 - Parents often strongly influence the relationships between their children. How do you think Rebekah’s treatment of Jacob influenced his relationship with Esau? (Her obvious favoritism was not healthy for either brother, especially when she encouraged Jacob to follow his worst instincts and cheat Esau.) How would you advise parents to avoid the same mistake?

Give the groups time to finish their studies, and then let them report.

4 Wrap up

Read together the words of *Jesus Christ* in **Matthew 18: 35**. This is the end of the parable about the unforgiving servant.

Talk together about this question:

- Why does Jesus use the word “brother” here, rather than “friend” or “neighbor” or some other word?

Let each participant choose materials from those you have brought, and then use what they have chosen to fashion something that shows the meaning of the word “brother” as Jesus uses it. This can be a drawing, a clay figure, a paper or stick figure, a poem, etc. When everyone has finished, those who wish to can tell the rest about the thing they have created.

5 Closing Prayer

O Lord, grant our brothers and sisters health, peace, love, long life and Thy holy grace so that they may follow Thy holy paths and do all that pleases Thee. Grant that we may spend our days in peace and love, for what is better or more beautiful than for all to live together as brothers and sisters? Hear our prayer, and have mercy on us, for Thou art merciful and lovest mankind, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. (*Adapted from Orthodox Prayer Book, published by Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery, Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1990.*)

Life Together as a Family *(Ages 18+)*

Overview

Family Equals Cooperation

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Name cooperation as an important element of family life
- Give some examples of family cooperation
- Identify cooperation with God as another element of family life
- Describe ways God can use our cooperation to make us do new or unexpected things that may alter our family life

Materials

- Bibles
- Paper
- Pencils

Resources

Required Resources

[My Orthodox Family: General Teacher Lesson Notes\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Planning Time

Evaluate the results and materials from sessions for other age groups, which you collected last week at the end of the session. Plan ways they can be part of a parish archive.

3 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Say: If we think about how a family “works” best, we’d have to say that co-operation between the family members is an important factor. (Let participants give examples of situations that require family co-operation for a good outcome.)

Read together the story of Noah and his family in Genesis 6:11 to 7: 16. Say: We can assume that the building and preparation of the ark was a co-operative effort of the family members, just as they all co-operated in joining Noah in the ark once it was completed. So we could say that Noah and his family co-operated with each other, but they also co-operated with God.

Discuss this question:

What problems might Noah’s family have faced in their effort to co-operate with God and with each other? (They might have been daunted by the immensity of the job, and perhaps they were considered eccentric or crazy by their neighbors. There is also the human tendency to be uneasy about any big change in the future.)

4 Bible Studies

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4, and assign each group Bible Study A or Bible Study B. Ask groups to be ready to report on their conclusions.

Bible Study A

Read together 2 Timothy 1:5 and 3: 15. Talk together about these questions:

- In what way did Timothy’s mother co-operate with God?
- What co-operation do you see among the members of Timothy’s family? (Obviously both mother and grandmother taught him the faith, and taught him to take responsibility for it)
- Do you see any ways in which Eunice and Lois’ co-operation with God might have affected their family life in a costly way? (They would miss Timothy’s company after he went to work with Paul, and might worry about his safety in the new and sometimes hostile places he was going to visit. Yet they must have been proud that Paul thought so highly of their beloved boy.)

Bible Study B

Read together Mark 5: 35-43. Talk together about these questions:

- In what way did Jairus co-operate with God?
- What difficulties might he have faced in doing so? (Others were clearly discouraging him from calling on Jesus Christ, and their unbelief even reached the point of laughing at Christ.)
- How did God use Jairus’ co-operation to bring about something unexpected? (Obviously, the raising of the little girl was a new and unexpected experience for those who were so cynical as to laugh.)
- How did God’s action affect Jairus’ family? (Feeling that they had lost their little daughter they of course were delighted to have her back. Jairus’ faith and his willingness to co-operate with God by entrusting his daughter to Jesus saved her life.)

When the groups have reported and discussed their conclusions, say: We see how these two families were affected by their co-operation with God. In Timothy's family, someone was taken away, at least for a time. In Jairus' family, someone was restored. Yet both were blessed by God. Both families were affected in ways they might not have expected.

When Jesus called fishermen to be His disciples by saying, "I will make you fishers of men" He meant that He would use their abilities in new ways; perhaps unexpected things would happen to them too. The same goes for us. When we co-operate with God, we may be called to use our abilities in new ways, and new things may happen in our families and in our lives.

5 Closing Prayer

O Lord, grant our brothers and sisters health, peace, love, long life and Thy holy grace so that they may follow Thy holy paths and do all that pleases Thee. Grant that we may spend our days in peace and love, for what is better or more beautiful than for all to live together as brothers and sisters? Hear our prayer, and have mercy on us, for Thou art merciful and lovest mankind, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Adapted from Orthodox Prayer Book, published by Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery, Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1990.)*

God's Story and God's People

(Ages 18+)

Overview

Some Were Faithful to God; Some Were Not

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Contrast the unfaithful family of the Herods with the faithful family of Sts. Basil, Macrina and Gregory of Nyssa
- List various elements of faithfulness in order of importance
- Enumerate ways we can build faithfulness in our families and parishes
- Choose a Biblical phrase that reflects the idea of family faithfulness to God

Materials

- Bibles
- colored markers
- decorative materials (*assorted stickers & stick-on stars*)
- construction paper
- scissors
- glue
- tape
- pieces of 8 ½ by 11" cardstock (*one for each participant*)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Planning Time

As in the previous session, discuss the materials you have collected from the sessions being conducted with other age groups, and plan ways they can be incorporated into a parish archive.

3 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Say: In the Bible, and in the history of the Church, we see people who reacted very differently to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. Some were faithful to His teachings and achieved extraordinary things; some were unfaithful and did spectacular harm. Today we'll look at two examples, one of each kind.

4 Bible and Saints Study

Read the following stories together, in whatever way you wish—aloud with readers taking turns, or with people reading silently and then talking about what they read. Have Bibles on hand so you can look up the passages referred to.

The Herods: Generations of Enemies of the Faith

The generations of rulers we call the Herods or Herodians didn't lack intellectual ability. They were smart and able people, in fact. There were many generations in the family, but the three that we will look at are those who played a notable part in New Testament history.

The first of these three Herods was called "the Great." He would destroy anyone he considered to be a threat to his power, which is why he is remembered for the "murder of the innocents" described in Matthew 2: 16-18. He also killed some of his own sons. Yet the possibilities of real greatness were there: he was a builder of great vision, his crowning achievement being the Temple in Jerusalem. He was also a statesman of sufficient diplomacy to impress Mark Anthony, Augustus, and many others.

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. There must have been a longing for God deep inside the man: Saint Mark tells us that when Herod heard John the Forerunner speak, "he was much perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly." Saint Mark says also that though Herodias had a grudge against John and wanted him killed, Herod "feared John, knowing he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe" (Mark 6: 19-20.)

Herod Antipas' lust had been stronger than he was, and he had taken his brother Philip's wife Herodias, a fact which John could not ignore and against which he bravely spoke out. Perhaps if Herod had been a stronger man in many ways, things would have been different. But Herodias' "grudge" against John only grew, and in the famous scene of her daughter dancing before Herod, the king's lust and weakness combined with her cunning to overwhelm him. She extracted a promise from him, knowing that he had at least enough integrity to keep a promise made to her. Then she demanded John's death, to which Herod reluctantly agreed.

Herod Antipas also interrogated Jesus Christ when He was arrested. On that occasion, too, he showed at least a superficial interest in the faith. Luke's Gospel says that Herod "had long desired to see [Jesus], because he had heard about him, and was hoping to see some sign done by him"

(Luke 23: 8.) But without a “good show” on Jesus’ part, Herod’s interest waned. He reverted to mockery and contempt in questioning Jesus, and soon sent him back to Pilate.

The third Herod, known as Herod Agrippa, was the grandson of Herod the Great. The family failing of pride really overcame this man, and no doubt gaining the favor of the self-worshipping emperor Caligula only increased his dangerous tendencies. He actually allowed people to hail him as a god.

We read that when he did this, an angel of the Lord immediately smote him because he did not “give God the glory” and he died a gruesome death (Acts 12: 21-23.) Like the other Herodian rulers before him, he ignored or suppressed his knowledge of the Jewish faith, and paid the price for forgetting his place as one of God’s created beings.

Herod Agrippa’s youngest daughter carried on the unfortunate traditions of her family. Drusilla left her Jewish husband to marry Felix, the Roman governor. This was illegal both because her first husband was still alive, and also because Felix did not profess the faith of the Jews.

But Felix and Drusilla’s great sin was caused by the same fear that Herod and Herodias had felt in the presence of John the Forerunner. For Drusilla and Felix, Saint Paul’s words about the Christ, and the judgment to come, were conscience-searing. They did nothing to spare the great apostle his unjust trial and death. Like her older male relatives, Drusilla cast aside the faith she had been born to, and silenced her own conscience as well as any person who dared to question her way of life.

A Large and Saintly Family

The emperor Diocletian was one of the fiercest persecutors of Christians ever to sit on the Roman throne. During the time of his power, the grandparents of St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil the great, and their sister St. Macrina fled to the mountainous regions of Pontus. They lived a rugged life full of hardship, and when they returned to their home, their money was gone and their health was undermined. The husband died during this time, but his wife Macrina was to live a long life. Later her married son Basil also died fairly young, leaving ten children to the care of their grandmother and their mother, Emilia. These ten children would form an extraordinary group of saints.

The eldest child, also named Macrina, was the great model and teacher for her younger brother Gregory, who wrote about her life. He says that from her earliest years she taught the psalms, so that “when she awoke from sleep, or was about to commence any work, or when she went to sleep, the words of David were on her lips, as a good companion.”

Some years later, Macrina was espoused to a man who died early. After that, she considered herself to be married and would never consider another man. She took care of her mother, the household full of younger children, and all the concerns of taxes, maintenance, and business. But little by little, Macrina brought the rest of the family into a simple, monastic way of living. Her mother was gradually influenced by her daughter’s example, and the household evolved into a place where the family and their former servants lived on a completely equal footing, eating the same simple food, wearing plain clothing, and praying together.

When younger brother Basil came home from school, quite full of himself and his acquired knowledge and worldly ways, his family's example led him also to change. He began working with his hands and living in poverty, still pursuing knowledge but with far less pride and far more dependence on God as the source of all true knowledge.

Navcratios, another brother, decided to give up everything he owned and went into the thick forest near the River Iris with a companion. The two young men devoted themselves to prayer, vigil, and fasting. They fed themselves by fishing in the river, and took care of some old, sick men who lived nearby. Navcratios died suddenly after only five years of his life in the forest. But though the family grieved deeply for their beloved son and brother, they were not overcome by grief because of their faith. Gregory writes that their mother did not "wail, rend her clothing, or lament with funeral dirges."

Peter, another brother, became adept at work with his hands and well-versed in science. But he, too, sought the life of an ascetic and he, too, helped others. When a severe famine struck the land, Peter was able to supply food to crowds of people.

In the next several years, both Emilia and Basil died. Gregory writes admiringly of how his sister Macrina took these terrible blows:

Just as gold is tested in different furnaces, so that if any impurity is not purged in the first furnace, it may be removed in the second, and again in the last furnace of all admixture. In like manner was Macrina tried with various applications of sorrow: First, there was the death of Navcratios, second, of her mother, and third, the departure from this life of the universal glory of our family, I mean, the great Basil. However, she prevailed as an undefeated athlete who was in no way tripped up by any attack of misfortune."

Macrina herself would die a few years later. But she and her brothers, guided by the example of their parents and grandparents, left the Church a wonderful legacy of holiness and scholarship. They were a family that continually blessed God, and were blessed by Him.

-- *The information in this story is adapted from The Lives of the Spiritual Mothers, Holy Apostles Convent, 1991.*

After reading these stories together, talk about this question:

- What do you think were some of the differences in "atmosphere" and "attitude" in the homes of the Herodians and that of the saints in the second story?
Probably the teaching of simple humility before God had much to do with the difference, since other things were similar in the households—members of both families were intelligent and educated, and knew or had known worldly prosperity.

5 Discussion

Say: We know that prayer, worship, and reading Scripture will help to build our faith. Let's think for a moment about how to build faith in a family. I'll put some things on the chalkboard. These are

things that parents might model for their children. Let's decide which would be most effective in building children's, and the family's, faith. Of course, we can add other elements that you think are important.

Put on the chalkboard: Perseverance in difficulties, knowing the teachings of the faith well, willingness to forgive wrongs, sense of awe before God.

Have participants put these in order from least to most important or effective. They can add any other elements they choose.

6 Activity

Give participants each a sheet of card stock. Invite them to make and decorate (with the decorative materials you have provided) placards for their homes. These should be verses from the Bible that express their feelings about pledging that their families will be faithful to God. Four possible verses are listed below, or participants can choose their own. They can then write the words on the placard, and decorate it.

- As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24: 15.)
- Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your dwelling. (Psalm 91: 9-10.)
- In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:6.)
- Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. (Proverbs 16: 3.)

7 Closing Prayer

O Lord, grant our brothers and sisters health, peace, love, long life and Thy holy grace so that they may follow Thy holy paths and do all that pleases Thee. Grant that we may spend our days in peace and love, for what is better or more beautiful than for all to live together as brothers and sisters? Hear our prayer, and have mercy on us, for Thou art merciful and lovest mankind, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. (*Adapted from Orthodox Prayer Book, published by Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery, Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1990.*)

Members of God's Family *(Ages 18+)*

Overview

Early Christianity; New Life in Our Parishes

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Retell what St. Paul writes about the life in Christ in the Letter to the Romans.
- Give examples of people who welcomed new people to the Church.
- List ways that we can welcome new people to our parishes.

Materials

- Bibles
- paper
- pencils
- story of the life of St. Innocent of Alaska from the OCA website.

Resources

Optional Resources

[St. Innocent\(Link\)](#)

[St. Innocent: Evangelizer, Teacher, Visionary\(Link\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Planning Time

Continue as in earlier sessions to evaluate materials for a parish archive.

3 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Read together Romans 12: 9-21. Ask participants:

- If we are thinking of how to bring new life to our parish by attracting, inviting, and welcoming new people, how could these words help us? How would a parish in which Paul's words were put into practice be attractive to people searching for a church home?

Tell participants: We sometimes worry that our long services might deter people from joining our Orthodox parishes. But a survey done with people who left Christian churches shows that hypocrisy of church members is the main reason they left—"length of services" is way down the list. So if hypocrisy is the biggest problem, how could St. Paul's words help us not to be hypocritical?

Have participants, on their own or in pairs, rewrite St. Paul's words and (if they wish) add examples of what he means. After everyone has finished, let people share their rewrites, and let them tell how doing what Paul writes about could keep us from being hypocritical in our church lives.

4 Bible Studies

Read together the description of Lydia in Acts 16: 15 and 16: 40. Then read together the story of St. Innocent of Alaska. Ask: What are some things that Lydia and St. Innocent did that could attract people to the faith? (Lydia practiced hospitality. She also received Paul without worrying about his "bad reputation" among certain people. St. Innocent really "reached out" to people by learning their own languages, and by doing things to help them in daily life. He also traveled long distances to reach people, showing how much he cared about them.)

Encourage participants to think of ways in which hospitality, reaching out to people, and accepting people as they are could help in making your parish a home for seekers and newcomers. Make a list of specific practices and activities that could attract and welcome these people.

5 Closing Prayer

O Lord, grant our brothers and sisters health, peace, love, long life and Thy holy grace so that they may follow Thy holy paths and do all that pleases Thee. Grant that we may spend our days in peace and love, for what is better or more beautiful than for all to live together as brothers and sisters? Hear our prayer, and have mercy on us, for Thou art merciful and lovest mankind, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. (*Adapted from Orthodox Prayer Book, published by Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery, Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1990.*)

Being an Orthodox Christian

(Ages 18+)

Overview

Loving All, Because All Are Our Neighbors

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell what Jesus Christ said about who our neighbors and family are.
- Identify Bible figures and saints loved by Christ though disdained by the world
- Relate the experience of seeing a person encounter Jesus Christ, in a letter to a friend

Materials

- Bibles
- Paper
- Pencils
- Handout: St. Euprosynos the Cook (September 11)

Resources

Optional Resources

[St. Euphrosenius the Cook](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Planning Time

Proceed with your evaluation of materials for a parish archive, as in previous sessions.

3 Bible Studies

Say to the group: We know that Jesus Christ calls us to love our neighbor. But it's up to us to make sure we understand who our neighbor is. Let's look at the Lord's words.

Read together Luke 10: 29, in which Christ answers the question "Who is my neighbor?" by telling the crowd the parable of the Good Samaritan. Then read Matthew 12: 46-50, in which Our Lord tells us what it truly means to be one of His family.

Talk about these questions: How would you say Jesus defines "neighbor"? What kind of person does Jesus welcome as His brother, mother, sister? (Special note: Some people consider this passage to be a rebuke to the Theotokos. But Orthodox belief is that He is pointing out His Mother as the great example of one who "does the will of my Father in heaven.")

Say: When we say that we will love all our neighbors and family, as Christ calls us to do, we are saying a lot. Looking through Scripture, we see that Jesus included some people in His circle of family and neighbors that many people might not welcome, or might not think "worthy."

Read together: Mark 2: 13-14, John 4: 7, and Luke 19: 1-10. Discuss: Why might each of these people been hard for others to accept as a "neighbor" or "member of Christ's family"? (Tax collectors like Matthew were hated; a Jew would never normally drink from the cup of a Samaritan and more specifically a Samaritan woman because the Samaritans were not pure; Zacchaeus was a known cheater.)

Jesus calls us always to broaden our love, to include more people in it, and to expand our personal definitions of "neighbor" and "family."

4

1. Read together the story of St. Euphrosynos the Cook. Discuss:
2. Why might the other monks have been surprised to learn that St. Euphrosynos held such a prominent place in the Lord's "family?" (To them he was an unimportant menial worker, not articulate or well-educated.)

- What does this tell us about how we are called to treat our neighbor? (It's easy to forget that Jesus Christ often gave special attention to "unimportant" people. He wants us to love them as He did.)

Next, read together the following story of **St. Vitalis**:

In the time of Patriarch John the Merciful, a young monk arrived in the city of Alexandria. He immediately made a list of all the prostitutes in the city. He spent his days practicing a peculiar kind of asceticism, hiring himself out for the most backbreaking labor.

At night he would visit a brothel, give the money he had earned during the day to one of the prostitutes, and then shut himself in with her. As soon as the door closed behind them, Vitalis would beg the young woman to lie down and have a good night's sleep, while he spent the entire night in a corner of the room, praying to God for her. He visited a different prostitute every night, till he had gone through the whole list, and then he started over again with the first woman whose

name he had written down.

His counsel and loving concern caused many of the women to give up their way of life. Some married, some went to monasteries, and some found an honorable means of making a living. But all of them were forbidden by Vitalis to tell anyone what he did when he visited them.

Soon the young monk, therefore, became a scandal to the whole city of Alexandria. He was spat on, hit, and called names in the street. But he bore it all with patience.

When Vitalis died, his deeds became known. Miraculous healings took place over his grave, and many people brought their sick to be healed.

-- Information taken from *The Prologue from Ochrid, Vol. 2*

Discuss:

- How would most of us feel toward Vitalis if we saw him in the streets of Alexandria, not knowing what he really did at night? Would he be someone we would welcome as a neighbor or as part of our Christian family?
- How might Vitalis' actions have affected the attitude of the prostitutes toward Jesus Christ?

5 Wrap up

Have participants take the role of someone looking on when Jesus encountered Matthew the tax collector, or the Samaritan woman, or Zacchaeus. (They can choose any one of the three.) Give everyone pencil and paper, and ask them to write a letter to a friend, telling about what they saw. They can write about what they thought of the person before Jesus came on the scene, what they expected Jesus to do when He encountered the person, and what they thought after they had witnessed the encounter. Those who wish to may share their finished letters with the rest of the group.

6 Closing Prayer

O Lord, grant our brothers and sisters health, peace, love, long life and Thy holy grace so that they may follow Thy holy paths and do all that pleases Thee. Grant that we may spend our days in peace and love, for what is better or more beautiful than for all to live together as brothers and sisters? Hear our prayer, and have mercy on us, for Thou art merciful and lovest mankind, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. (*Adapted from Orthodox Prayer Book, published by Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery, Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1990.*)

The Work of God's People (Ages

18+)

Overview

We are Accountable to God for Our Lives and the Lives of Those Around Us

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Name various ways in which saints were accountable to God for themselves and for others
- Choose one way of pledging to be accountable to God for another person
- Make concrete plans for a parish archive, using the materials and items collected by other age-level groups using this unit of study

Materials

- Bibles
- Paper
- Pencils
- Handout:

***Note:** Information on several of these saints can also be found in the series *Saints for All Ages*, available from OCPC, and in various books containing lives of saints.*

Resources

Optional Resources

[St. Elizabeth the New Martyr](#)(Link)

[St. Juliana Lazarevna](#)(Link)

[St. Nino of Georgia](#)(Link)

[St. Romanus the Melodist](#)(Link)

[St. Simeon the Stylite](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Saints' Study

Say to the group:

In an earlier session we talked about Jesus Christ's use of the word "brother." And as far back as Genesis the question was raised, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis:9).

- **So what does it mean to be accountable to God for our own lives, and also for the lives of those around us?**

- **What does it mean to be our brothers' keeper?**

Let's look at the lives of five saints who took responsibility for their own lives, and the lives of those around them, in very different ways.

Read the lives of the five saints included in the lesson's resources listed above. Discuss the following questions about each saint. Suggested answers follow, but the group may come up with others:

- **St. Juliana:** What did she have to give up to do God's will?

She gave up her own desire to enter a monastery. She was accountable to God for what He had called her to do, and for the welfare of her family as well as many needy neighbors.

- **St. Nina**

How was she accountable to God, and for the lives of others?

When she knew that the Georgian people did not have the Christian faith, she felt responsible for showing it to them so that they could achieve salvation. She gave up her own homeland to do so.

- **St. Elizabeth the New Martyr**

What did she give up to be accountable to God?

She gave up her high rank, and finally her very life, which she knew was in danger in the revolutionary years in Russia. Through her charitable works she took responsibility for the lives around her. She also took responsibility specifically for the man who assassinated her husband by forgiving him and encouraging him to seek God's forgiveness.

- **St. Simeon the Stylite**

What did he give up to be accountable to God, and for the lives of others?

We might say that he gave up "normal" life by sitting on a pillar. This is certainly true, but having separated himself so dramatically from normal life, he also became a counselor and advisor to many. This obliged him to give up much of the time of solitary prayer that he loved so much. In doing so, he took responsibility for the lives of those who needed his counsel and spiritual advice.

- **St. Romanus the Melodist**

How did this saint take responsibility for the lives of others?

St. Romanus may not have known how his music would affect others in later centuries.

But the fact is that many people who were imprisoned or suffered for their faith were comforted by singing Romanus' music from memory when they could not worship openly.

He therefore is responsible for helping many, and not only those who heard his beautiful hymns when he wrote them.

3 Wrap up

Say: We have seen some different ways the saints had of being accountable before God for their own lives and for the lives of others. I'm sure you could name many other ways. Let's each of us, privately, think about a way that we could be accountable for another person's well-being before God. In that way we will be accepting some accountability for our own lives, too.

Give each person paper and pencil, and let them think about some responsibility they might take: praying for one or more people regularly, perhaps giving someone a weekly ride to church, shopping for someone who needs help, calling or emailing someone regularly, and so on.

4 Closing Prayer

O Lord, grant our brothers and sisters health, peace, love, long life and Thy holy grace so that they may follow Thy holy paths and do all that pleases Thee. Grant that we may spend our days in peace and love, for what is better or more beautiful than for all to live together as brothers and sisters? Hear our prayer, and have mercy on us, for Thou art merciful and lovest mankind, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Adapted from Orthodox Prayer Book, published by Holy Protection Orthodox Monastery, Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1990.)*

Every Family Has a Story (Ages 13-

17)

Overview

Family is Love - Every family's story is different and each generation tells a different story about its ways of life, its joys, and its hardships.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recall and orally share their own family ancestry with stories, music, and traditions
- Draw/paste pictures of family members on a page in a unit scrapbook
- Write shared oral family stories and add to scrapbook
- Interview older parishioners to discover how they celebrated feasts in earlier times, what their church was like when they were children (either in North America or abroad), and how the parish interacted with the larger community
- Record these interviews by journal, audio, or video
- Begin a "Roots" Coffee Hour Project incorporating all above projects

Materials

- Handouts from Resource Section:
 - *Family Letter: My Orthodox Family*
 - *"Roots" Oral History*
 - *"Roots" Ancestor Map*
 - *"Roots" Project and Coffee Hour*
 - *Teaching Devices: Journaling*
 - *Teaching Devices: Personal Value Inventory*
 - Interview forms for parish member interviews
- Construction paper (9" x 12") with holes punched with 3-hole puncher
- White lined paper (8 ½" x 11") with holes punched
- Glue sticks
- Pencils, pens, markers
- Paper hole punch
- Yarn cut into 6' inch strips, three per student
- Large world map for "Roots" Ancestors Map
- Large foam board on which to mount world map
- Scissors
- Rulers

- Thin yarn or string in varying colors
- Thumbtacks
- Sewn-in notebooks for journals
- Video camera
- Audio tape recorder, if video not available
- Labels for names and captions in scrapbook and on journals
- Dates and times prearranged with and announced by pastor or placed in parish bulletin for students to interview parish members about Feast Day traditions.
- List of parishioners given by pastor
- Icon for prayer
- *Materials sent in earlier by parents* (see Resource Handout: *Family Letter*)
 - Pictures of family members and photos of special occasions, holidays, vacations, baptism
 - Ancestor story, family story, special occasion/holiday story

Resources

Required Resources

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event](#) (PDF)

[Ancestor Roots Map](#) (PDF)

[My Orthodox Family - Family Letter](#)(HTML)

[Oral History](#)(HTML)

[Teaching Devices: Journaling](#)(HTML)

[Teaching Devices: Personal Value Inventory](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by asking the following: *What do you love the most about your family?* (Answers should reflect students' awareness of ways their families express their love.) As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God's love for us.

- Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should reflect God’s love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the Light of God’s love.)
- Ask: *How is our parish like a family?* (Answers should reflect the family of God coming together each week in communion with Him. Also the care others show for each other.)
- Continue by stating the following: *Our families have ancestors who came from different parts of the world. What did you bring in today to share about your family history?* (Allow students to share their stories and pictures.)
- After students have shared their stories, continue by saying: *Today we are going to begin the parish “Roots” Project we were asked to bring in materials for. Each of us is going to have a part in this project. We are first going to begin our own **Family Memories Scrapbook** with the pictures and stories we have shared today. Then, in the coming weeks, we will talk to people in our parish and ask them about their traditions. We want to record what we will learn about some of the past traditions of our parishioners. We will do this by interviewing, recording, and displaying. This will be part of a Parish Roots Project which we will present at coffee hour on _____.*

Let’s get started!

3 Family Memories Scrapbook

- Have students open their envelopes brought from home.
- Have students place their family photos on the construction paper.
- Write captions/labels identifying family members.
- When students have arranged photos and captions, glue these to construction paper.
- Have students write family stories on white lined paper.
- Mount written accounts on construction paper and add to their scrapbook.
- You can also have students expand their scrapbook. They may want to collect and bring in favorite family photos that tell a story about something family members like to remember: vacation trips, visits to grandma’s house, cousins, special events (baptisms, weddings), etc. This can be an ongoing activity throughout the duration of the unit.
- Distribute another piece of construction paper to each student and have them write their name and title, “Family Memories Scrapbook.”
- Take 3 sections of yarn and string through holes. Tie into bows.

4 Oral History Project

- Begin this project by stating the following: *Today we are going to begin this project by planning to interview people in our parish about their past traditions. We would like to find out how they celebrated Feast Days and what some of their special traditions were, and maybe still are.* Continue by stating that they may look at the parish list and choose whom they would like to interview. The remaining parishioners are to be assigned.

- Interview questions are to be handed out to them (see attached form). They are to use one form per parishioner. They will have three weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time. If this is not possible, try to arrange for them to conduct the interviews by phone, or place the interview sheets in a parish bulletin and ask that they be completed and returned to the senior class by a pre-arranged date. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge!**

5 Journals

Students may spend the last 5-10 minutes of each session writing their thoughts about what they have learned. For this study unit on our family and parish history and life, students may wish to use journaling as a way of recording things they want to remember about their history and church life. Students can decide if they want to share their journal entries or keep them confidential. Have the class set rules for these decisions and procedures and go over them so there is no mistake or misunderstanding. Review the Resource Handouts: *Teaching Devices: Journalling* and *Teaching Devices: Personal Value Inventory*

6 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- *What do we love most about our families?* (Allow student responses)
- *How do our families reflect God's love for us?* (Answers should reflect student understanding of God's love and the parallels with the love of families.)
- *What do we plan to do over the coming weeks?* (Answers should recall elements of "Roots" project—mapping parishioners' countries of origin and finding out about their ancestors.)

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Life Together as a Family *(Ages 13-*

17)

Overview

Family Means Cooperation - Family members need to work together on rules, daily tasks, good habits, and relationships to “make families work” as a unit.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- List and reflect upon the influences or people, both positive and negative, that provoke changes in our values, ethics and practices
- Explain why some of our behaviors become stronger and others weaker
- Relate the need for supportive relationships with persons holding like values to assist in the complex task of choosing directions and making the right choices
- Make connections between family and parish family by tracing the history of families who were the foundation of Orthodoxy in America
- Begin to research and construct a timeline of major events, families, and personalities important in the settlement and establishment of missions, churches, and monasteries of the Orthodox people in America
- Continue to interview older parishioners to discover how they celebrated feasts in earlier times, what their church was like when they were children (either in North America or abroad), and how the parish interacted with the larger community
- Record these interviews by journal, audio, or video
- Continue work on “Roots” Coffee Hour Project incorporating all above projects

Materials

- Sewn-in notebooks for journals
- Video camera
- Audio tape recorder, if video not available
- Labels for names and captions in scrapbook and on journals
- Interview forms for parish member interviews
- Butcher paper on a roll for time line.
- Markers with large tips
- Yardstick
- Copies of family pictures and churches to decorate time line
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event \(PDF\)](#)

[Ancestor Roots Map \(PDF\)](#)

[Ancestor Roots Oral History Interviews \(PDF\)](#)

[Teaching Devices: Journaling\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

- Begin by asking the following: *Who can remember what we said we love the most about our families?* (Answers should reflect students' awareness of ways their families express their love.) As students answer, reiterate statements made in last session comparing family love with God's love for us. Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should reflect God's love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the light of God's love.)
- Continue by asking the following: *How do our families help us?* (Allow students to reflect and share their ideas, reflecting the emotional support parents and family members have for each other) Ask: *How do our family members help us when we need it?* (They listen when we need to talk about issues and problems we are facing. They offer guidance and support to help us through our difficult times.)
- Ask: *Are there times when people in our lives let us down? When has this happened to you?* (Allow students time to reflect and share. You may have to begin the discussion by sharing your own life experiences with disappointments in those you have looked to for help or advice—a teacher, coach, leader who did not help when you asked, or offered advice you were not comfortable with.)
- Ask: *How did it make you feel?*(Allow time for answers and discussion.)
- Say: *There are times when we feel those whom we turn to are not the best people to help us. Our teachers, coaches, leaders do not always share our love for God and His Church. Their advice may be contrary to our beliefs. How do we handle this?* (Allow time for discussion.) *How can we make sure that we are not influenced by this?* (Our families or those whom we trust to hold the same beliefs should be those to whom we take our

problems.) Ask: *In our parish family, are there those who have helped us in any way?* (Allow time for responses).

Continue by saying: *Do you think there are many in parishes who influenced others to become better members of Christ's Holy Church? How about down through history?* (Allow students to reflect on this as an outcome of the last question.)

3 American Orthodox Timeline

Materials:

- Butcher paper on a roll, about 12-14" wide
- Pencils
- Markers
- Yardstick

Resources:

- Tarasar, Ericson, ***Orthodox America, 1794-1976***. Orthodox Church in America, 1975
- Stokoe, Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America, 1794-1994*
- Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America, Religion in American Life Series*

Note to the Teacher: Students may look up the events and use this as an ongoing project, or look at the time-line example given at the end of the session and discuss, add to or elaborate upon it. In the cooperative learning style, you may also divide students into several groups, each working on the "Roots" project and this activity. Again, this activity will probably take several sessions and can be an on-going project.

Activity Procedure:

- Have all materials and resources ready, or have designated students get materials.
- In the cooperative learning style, have students take the following roles in this activity:
 - Gofer (See first bullet)
 - Researcher(s)
 - Designer
 - Writer(s) of information
 - Decorator
- Begin by saying: *Today we are going to look at the history of Orthodoxy in America and how many sacrifices were made to lead us to where we are today. As we begin this project, I would like you to look at some of the books and an example of a time line. We can use this timeline as a guide, and also look up additional information in our sources to add to it. This, along with our other projects, will take a few sessions to complete. As we*

work on this, let us take time to discuss some of the people and events which influenced our Orthodox family in America.

- Have students break assume their roles and begin work.

4 Oral History Project

They will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time. If this is not possible, try to arrange for them to conduct the interviews by phone, or place the interview sheets in a parish bulletin and ask that they be returned to the senior class by a pre-arranged date. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge!**

5 Journals

Using notebook paper, if there is time answer some of the wrap-up questions as journal questions. Also see See Activity Handout: *Journaling and Personal Value Inventory (Grades 9-10 only)*

6 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following (Students may also journal responses, if time):

- Do you think our families help us in our everyday lives? How? (Answers should reflect support families provides in helping us make the right choices.)
- Do you always agree with what your parents wish for you or expect from you? How can you remedy any disagreements you may have with them? (Answers should reflect the need for open communication, prayer and meditation, as well as understanding of differences, and how cooperation provides for harmony.)
 - - What do we plan to do over the coming weeks? (Answers should recall elements of "Roots" project—mapping parishioners' countries of origin and finding out about their ancestors.)

7 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God's Story and God's People

(Ages 13-17)

Overview

God's faithful family became God's people - When God created people, He created family. Some of God's people were faithful; others turned away from God. God sent His Own Son, Jesus Christ, to bring His people back to Him. Jesus taught us to repent, turn away from evil, and change our lives. Jesus also shows us how to care, to love, and to help one another.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Research in the Bible, events of Gods people from the New Testament, the story of Pentecost
- Prepare scripts for a breaking-news report
- Role-play events as an evening t.v. news report of a breaking-news event
- Videotape the news story for parish viewing during Roots Coffee Hour (optional)
- Determine that these events marked the beginning of the Christian Church and our new lives as the family of Jesus Christ.
- Connect the interviews and time lines researched with the lives changed by conversion during Pentecost.
- Recognize the importance of our love for each other as God's people, and recognize that the diversity of peoples who were gathered when the Holy Spirit came down upon them is similar to our parish experience
- Remaining Objectives--See Session 1 Collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Continue recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors. (RootsOral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map from interviews
- Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- FlashPaper: "Roots" Ancestor Map and Family Memories Album
- FlashPaper: "Roots" Coffee Hour (Parish Event)
- Paper
- Bibles
- Pencils
- Glue stick
- Construction paper
- Copy machine
- Overhead projector

- Icon of Pentecost copied onto a transparency
- Thumb tacks/tape
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- “Roots” Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals (See Session 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by asking the following: *What did we discuss last week about families and those who have influenced us?* (Answers should recall ways their families express their love, and how there are those who have influenced us, both positively and negatively.) As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God’s love for us.
- Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should recall God’s love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the light of God’s love.) Continue by asking students to recall discussion about those in our parish family who have helped or influenced us.
- Ask: *What do you know about the community of the early Church--what it was like?* (Allow time for students to think and answer.) *Does anyone know what we call the event when the Church began?* (Pentecost). *Let’s explore Pentecost and how it changed so many different peoples’ lives.*

3 T.V. News Report

In the *Cooperative Learning Style*, each student will be designated a position/task and will execute it in an organized and “cooperative” manner, working together with others as a unit. As each person is assigned, he or she should set about a plan and work it to completion.

- Have one or two students get supplies (Bibles, pencils, paper to write information and sketch, scissors)

- Some students should then act as the researchers and begin to look up assigned Bible passages (Acts 2:1-47). Working in pairs, one should read aloud the events, while another acts as secretary and writes
- When information is gathered, students should begin to put events in chronological order on their paper
- A student who enjoys drawing can draw sketches to accompany the news story
- While coordinating proper sequence of events and sketches, another one or two students can write out a news report script of the events surrounding Pentecost. They should imitate a news story, making it as real as possible
- Students may want to conduct mock interviews with the Apostles and those who were present to get different points of view, such as: Peter, John, the Virgin Mary, those in the crowd who thought the Apostles were drunk when they began to speak in tongues
- When researchers are finished they can begin to set up a studio with the icon of Pentecost on the transparency for the background
- Roles of anchor, on-the-scene reporters, those being interviewed and the rest of the class as the crowd can be assigned/decided
- Copies of the script can be made on the copier, if necessary
- Have a practice run of the news broadcast and then the news report
- Video tape to show at "Roots" Coffee Hour (optional)

4 "Roots" Ancestors Map

- Continue mapping students' ancestors' countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Begin mapping parishioners' ancestors' countries of origin

5 Oral History Project

Continue Interview of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress. They will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time, or by phone. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge!**

6 Journals

Have students label date and write about their reactions to their activities today.

7 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

Students may also write responses in their journals (See above)

- Ask: *Discuss what happened at Pentecost.* (Answers should reflect student understanding of the Holy Spirit bringing to the Apostles the wisdom to begin their work of spreading Christ's Holy Church to all. The family of Jesus Christ was to bring love, cooperation, harmony, and God's love for us as His People) *How did the events we researched today compare to those of people in our parish family?* (Answers should reflect insight into how people become part of God's family in the membership of His Holy Church, loving and caring for each other, as families do, thus becoming His faithful people.)

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Members of God's Family (Ages 13-

17)

Overview

God's Holy Spirit Lives In Us - After Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, He sent God's Holy Spirit to live in us. We receive the Holy Spirit and become members of God's family when we are baptized. As God's children, we are called to live together as God's own people. How did the early Christians become "living temples" of God? How do we celebrate the new life in Christ in our parishes today?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Reflect upon events of Pentecost, and the actions of God's people following the descent of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:41-47)
- Discuss how St. Paul's words (Romans 12:1-21) relate to our interactions with people in our parish and community
- Choose one section of St. Paul's letter and respond to it
- Draw a poster, or create a mobile, an acrostic poem, and/or journal
- Compare St. Paul's words in Romans 12 with Acts 2:41-17
- Describe how St. Paul understands our life as Christians, both in the church and in our responsibilities to others in society
- Continue American Orthodox Timeline (See Session 2)
- Remaining objectives--See Session 1 and collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Continue recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors (Roots Oral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map from interviews
- Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- FlashPaper: "Roots" Ancestor Map and Family Memories Album
- FlashPaper: "Roots" Coffee Hour (Parish Event)
- Paper
- Bibles
- Pencils
- Glue stick
- Construction paper
- Copy machine
- Overhead projector
- Icon of Pentecost copied onto a transparency

- Thumb tacks/tape
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- “Roots” Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals (See Session 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by asking the following: *What did we discuss last week about families and those who have influenced us?* (Answers should recall ways students' families express their love, and how there are those who have influenced us, both positively and negatively.) As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God's love for us. Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should recall God's love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the Light of God's love.) Continue by asking students to recall discussion about those in our parish family who have helped or influenced us.
- Ask: *How do you think it was when the Church first started?* (Allow time for students to think and answer.) *Does anyone know what event this is called?* (Pentecost).
- Say: *Let's explore what happened on Pentecost and how it changed so many different peoples' lives.*

3 T.V. News Report

In the *Cooperative Learning Style*, each student will be designated a position/task and will execute in an organized and “cooperative” manner, working together as a unit. As each person is assigned, he or she should set about a plan and work it to completion.

- Have one or two students get supplies (Bibles, pencils, paper to write information and sketch, scissors)

- Some students should then act as the researchers and begin to look up assigned Bible passages (Acts 2:1-47). Working in pairs, one should read aloud the events, while another acts as secretary and writes
- When information is gathered, students should begin to put events in chronological order on their paper
- A student who enjoys drawing can draw sketches to accompany the news story
- While coordinating proper sequence of events and sketches, another one or two students can write out a news report script of the events surrounding Pentecost. They should imitate a news story, making it as real as possible
- Students may want to conduct mock interviews with the Apostles and those who were present to get different points of view, such as: Peter, John, the Virgin Mary, those in the crowd who thought the Apostles were drunk when they began to speak in tongues
- When researchers are finished they can begin to set up a studio with the icon of Pentecost on the transparency for the background
- Roles of anchor, on-the-scene reporters, those being interviewed and the rest of the class as the crowd can be assigned/decided
- Copies of the script can be made on the copier, if necessary
- Have a practice run of the news broadcast and then the news report
- Video tape to show at "Roots" Coffee Hour (optional)

4

- Continue mapping students' ancestors' countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Begin mapping parishioners' ancestors' countries of origin.

5 Oral History Project

Continue Interview of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress. Students will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time, or by phone. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge!**

6 Journals

Have students label with the date and write about their reactions to their activities today.

7 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following: Students may also write responses in their journals (See above)

- Ask: *Discuss what happened at Pentecost.* (Answers should reflect student understanding of the Holy Spirit bringing to the Apostles the wisdom to begin their work of spreading Christ's Holy Church to all. The family of Jesus Christ was to bring love, cooperation, harmony, and God's love for us as His People) *How did the events we researched today compare to those of people in our parish family?* (Answers should reflect insight into how people become part of God's family in the membership of His Holy Church, loving and caring for each other, as families do, thus becoming His faithful people.)

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Being an Orthodox Christian

(Ages 13-17)

Overview

God Calls Us To Love All People - Our “neighbor” is any person who stands before us at any given moment. How we are known, recognized, or accepted as Orthodox Christians is tempered by how we approach or respond to other people. The very word “Orthodox” tells us what or who we are as people: a truly (and/or) correctly believing, acting, and worshipping people of God.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Discuss and recognize that being Christians and being Orthodox should not isolate us from neighbors or strangers who are not
- Describe what it means to be an Orthodox Christian in today's world and distinguish to what extent the Orthodox faith and practice shape identity
- Name problems that people might face and tell how their faith helps them deal with them
- Select one person from the parish interviews, or from the timeline study, and write about his or her life and contributions to the Orthodox faith, and Christianity
- From research, compose a news report and add to the news video, or compose as a journal entry
- Continue American Orthodox Timeline (See Session 2)
- Remaining objectives--See Session 1 Collect and finish interviews of parish members for Roots Project Finish recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors
- (RootsOral History) Finish work on Roots Map from interviews Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- “Roots” Ancestor Map and Family Memories
- Album
- “Roots” Coffee Hour (Parish Event)
- Large butcher/chart paper
- Bibles
- Markers
- Pencils
- Tape
- Lined paper
- Worksheets with research questions
- Video worksheet
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- “Roots” Ancestors Map (See Session 1)

- Journals
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Video interviews with parishioners for “Roots” Project
- Video camera (if needed)
- Worksheets for research, Good Samaritan Parishioner, Video
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event \(PDF\)](#)

[Family Scrapbook\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

- Begin by asking the following: *Who can tell us about the events of Pentecost we researched and discussed over the last two weeks? How did it all present itself in our posters? (Point to posters.) How about our news report video? What were some of the things the Apostles taught the people to do? (Show reporter script. Answers should recall the coming of the Holy Spirit and the reactions of those present. Students should recall Acts 2:41-47 and Romans 12:1-21, where those who were baptized became as one body in Christ, selling their possessions and giving to those in need, sharing and caring for each other, providing hospitality, thinking humbly and not putting themselves above others.) As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God’s love for us.*
- Ask: *How does God show us He loves us? (Answers should recall God’s love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the Light of God’s love.)*

- Continue by asking students to recall what has been discussed, pointing to the reporter scripts and notes. (Allow students to recall what they know, or ask what they would like to know.)
- Ask: *What do you think this means for us? What should we do to follow in the right path of Christ?* (Allow time for students to react and give their predictions.) *How is this difficult for us?* (Allow time for students to elaborate. Answers should reflect the difficulties of being a caring person in today's world; how, through peer pressure, it is difficult to be the one to take the initiative when someone needs help. Ask prompting and open-ended questions to continue the discussion like: *When did this happen to you? Have you ever been in a situation (like seeing someone alone in the cafeteria, or someone being made fun of) and you were afraid to speak up?*
- Then, say: *Today we are going to look up some of the sections in the Bible which tell us what we should do as well as look at some of the people we have researched for our "Roots" project to find those who are examples of what Christ want us to do. Let us recall the commandment Christ gave us, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:40). Let's get our materials together and begin.*

3 Research

The research and activities can be done in the *Cooperative Learning Style*. Each student will be designated a position/task and will execute it in an organized and "cooperative" manner, working together as a unit. As each person is assigned, they should set about a plan and work it to completion.

- One student places chart paper on table or tape to wall for discussion notes.
- One or two students get supplies (Bibles, books, markers, pencils, paper to write information and sketch, scissors, etc.--See above, Materials).
- Two students should then act as the researchers and begin to look up assigned Bible passages (**Luke 10:25-37 [The Good Samaritan], Matthew 25:14-30 [Parable of the Talents], Matthew 25:31-46 [Last Judgment]**). Working in pairs, students will be ready to read aloud when called upon. Students should also look over the footnotes at the bottom of *Orthodox Study Bible*, pp. 167, 66-67, which offer further explanation, and help in answering the guideline questions below.
- One or two students, or the teacher can have *The Way, the Truth, and the Life* opened to pp. 35-36 for oral reading.
- **Homilies, Vol. I, St. Nicholas of Zicha**, p. 120 (optional)
- Students will take turns reading for the selections above, answering the following guideline questions, while one or two other students write questions and answers on butcher/chart paper.
 - *In Matthew 25: 14-30, what are the talents Jesus speaks of in this parable?*
 - Gifts given to us by God.
 - *What happened to the servant who did not use these talents?*
 - The servant lost his talent to the servant who invested/used his

- *What will happen to those who do not use their gifts from God?*
 - They will be cast “into utter darkness”
- *What is Christ trying to explain to us as Christians?*
 - We are given gifts/talents by God to be used for good to multiply during the course of our lives. If we are lazy, ignore our talents, don’t see what we are given and fail to use them for good, they will never be used. This will cause us to be accountable to God, who will look at our work “after a long time” (meaning at our judgment)
- *In Luke 10:25-37 ,The Good Samaritan, what happened when the first and second men saw the beaten man lying by the road?*
 - They passed him by.
- *Who finally stopped and helped the man? Was he showing the Commandment Jesus gave us in Matthew 22:40 “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”? How?*
 - The Samaritan. He was fulfilling the commandment because he took the time to help a stranger, and to be sure his needs were met.
- *Why do you think Jesus had two righteous men pass by the injured man, and a social outcast (Samaritan) be the one to rescue him?*
 - Jesus was trying to show us that it is sometimes the mighty who claim to be righteous, but are “blind” and do not use the talents they have for good; and the least of mankind who “see” and live the law by using the talents given by God for good (“Love your neighbor as yourself.”)
- *What is the meaning of this parable for us? What is our role as Christians?*
 - We must recognize those in need, and be ready to help them. We must not pass by, pretending not to see.
- ○ *In Matthew 25:31-45, known as the Last Judgment, what did the King say to those on his right?*
 - ‘I was hungry and you gave me food; thirsty and you gave me drink; a stranger and you took me in; naked and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to me.’
- *What did those who were on the King’s right ask? What was the King’s answer?*
 - ‘When did we do this?’ ‘When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it to me.’
- *What happened to those on the King’s right? On the left?*
 - They inherited the kingdom, eternal life. They were sent to everlasting punishment.

- *What is Christ telling us? Look at p.69 (footnote)*
 - This is not merely a parable but Christ's account of the last judgment. He is about to be crucified, buried, and risen from the dead, but this is the account of the Second Coming, the universal judgment of all. It is the opening of our hearts before God, the accounting of our inner selves. If we do not live His Gospel, love those who are in need, and minister to them, we will be judged severely, as the King judged.
- *In St. Nicholas of Zicha's Meatfare Sunday homily, he states: "The whole of this explanation that the King gave the sinners also has two meanings—an outward and inward" (p. 122). What do you think he meant by that?*
- ○ Allow for students to elaborate. Some suggested answers: The outward is what we did in our lives to help those in need, and this shows what was really in our hearts. Our actions show our Christian love. We live the law, we 'walk the walk'.
- *St. Nicholas of Zicha further states: "And so being unmerciful to Christ in their brethren, they were unmerciful to Christ in themselves." We are to remember that our actions speak about ourselves, and that we will be judged according to our actions, for they tell 'who we are'. In our next activity we will take a look at some of those we have been interviewing to see if they have shown us an example of those righteous who live their lives according to Christ's commandment to 'love one another'. Are there people you have spoken with who have inspired you?*
 - Answers should reflect the above, and lead into one of the following activities (report or journal)

4

- Students will examine the video interviews and discuss those who have made an impression on them with their outpouring of love and caring for others.
- Students will fill in the report worksheet on the person they have chosen. They may all work on the same person, or work individually on their own choice.
- Students can further use the video worksheet and add a report on person(s)

As a follow-up to their Video or for Journaling

- Students may choose to journal answers to the questions above
- Can also write on chart paper
 - Students may choose to make display on wall and also at "Roots" Coffee Hour

5 Roots Ancestors Map

- Some students will finish mapping students' ancestors' countries of origin, 2 countries each.

- Some students will continue mapping parishioners' ancestors' countries of origin. This should be finished by next session (5)

6 Oral History Project

- Some students will finish up interviews of parishioners by collecting last of completed interviews and updating those in progress. These should be placed in a designated area, ready to display for "Roots" Coffee Hour.
- **American Orthodox Time Line** (10 minutes) Some students will continue work on time line, following set guidelines, and using sources listed from Session 2

7 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

(Have chart/butcher paper with questions and answers tacked to a wall or bulletin board.)

What did today's Gospel accounts show us? (Answers should reflect student understanding of love, call to use our talents, judgment) How do the writings we researched today and the Good Samaritan parishioners we talked about help us to overcome the difficulties of taking that first step? (Answers should reflect insight into how people should strive to live as the early Christians did, showing that oneness of mind and fullness of heart, loving and helping one another. We should not be afraid to stand up for what is right, and side and align ourselves with those who are shown to be righteous. We should begin to look around us and help those in need when we come in contact with them, as this is what we are called to do as Orthodox Christians, if we are to live the life we have been taught.)

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Work of God's People *(Ages 13-*

17)

Overview

Following God in Our Lives - We are accountable to God for our lives and the lives of those around us. This determines the manner in which we govern ourselves and relate to others in society. As faithful Orthodox Christians, we reveal our commitment to God through our steadfastness, integrity, compassion, and responsibility for and to all God's people. Community involvement is an important part of witness, mission, and outreach.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify community involvement as the primary means of evangelization and true Christian spirit, as preached by Our Lord, Jesus Christ
- Discuss our accountability as Orthodox Christians to this community involvement
- Assess how many peers regularly participate in parish and community activities: i.e. choir, church school, service in the altar, outreach activities, food bank, church and community social or sporting events, visitations with the elderly, sick, etc.
- Plan and organize an ongoing community service program (for at least several weeks or for several visits) to help senior citizens in the parish or neighborhood, in ways that would make life easier for them
- Within the parish family volunteer to help: serve coffee, assist those with physical handicaps, watch children during parish events, or volunteer a few hours a week at an existing social service agency, local Council of Churches, or charity
- Work in a cooperative manner, sharing tasks and information
- Utilize the internet (optional) for ideas
- Remaining objectives--See Session 1 Finish planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- Large butcher/chart paper
- Bibles
- Markers
- Pencils
- Tape
- Lined paper
- Worksheets with research questions
- Computer and internet access (optional)
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- "Roots" Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals
- Marker

- Materials to finish projects for “Roots Coffee Hour” (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
 Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
 Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
 Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
 And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *Who can tell about one of the Gospel readings we researched last week? Let's review from our notes and video from last week:*

- - *In Matthew 25: 14-30, what are the talents Jesus speaks of in this parable?*
 - Gifts given to us by God.
 - *What is Christ trying to explain to us as Christians?*
 - We are given gifts/talents by God to be used for good to multiply during the course of our lives. If we are lazy, ignore our talents, don't see what we are given and fail to use them for good, they will never be used. This will cause us to be accountable to God, who will look at our work “after a long time” (meaning at our judgment)
- - *In Luke 10:25-37, The Good Samaritan, what is the meaning of this parable for us? What is our role as Christians?*
 - We must recognize those in need, and be ready to help them. We must not pass by, pretending not to see.
- - *In Matthew 25:31-45, known as the Last Judgment, what is Christ telling us? Look at p.69 (footnote)*
 - This is not merely a parable but Christ's account of the last judgment. He is about to be crucified, buried, and risen from the dead, but this is the account of the Second Coming, the universal judgment of all. It is the opening of our hearts before God, the accounting of our inner selves. If

we do not live His Gospel, love those who are in need, and minister to them, we will be judged severely, as the King judged.

Ask: *What do you think this means for us? What should we do to follow in the right path of Christ?* (Allow time for students to react and give their predictions.) *How is this difficult for us?* (Allow time for students to elaborate. Answers should reflect the difficulties of being a caring person in today's world; how, through peer pressure, it is difficult to be the one to take the initiative when someone needs help. Ask prompting and open-ended questions to continue the discussion like: *When did this happen to you? Have you ever been in a situation (like seeing someone alone in school, or someone being made fun of) and you were afraid to speak up?* Ask: *Have you ever participated in a community service program through your school, or with your family? What was it, and what was it like?* (Allow students time to answer and reflect upon their experiences.) Say: *Today we are going to review the Gospel of Matthew on the Last Judgement, which tells us what we should do to be true Christians. We will also examine specific ways we can accomplish this, as well as finish planning and setting up our "Roots" project.*

Let's get our materials together and begin.

3 Research

The research and activities can be done in the *Cooperative Learning Style*. Each student will be designated a position/task and will execute them in an organized and "cooperative" manner, working together as a unit. As each person is assigned, they should set about a plan and work it to completion.

- One or two students place chart paper on table or tape to wall for discussion, and gather supplies (Bibles, books, markers, pencils, paper to write information and sketch, scissors, etc.--See above, Materials).
- One or two students act as researchers (**Matthew 25:31-46 [Last Judgment]**) from last week and be ready to read aloud when called upon. Students should also look over the footnotes at the bottom of *Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 69, which offer further explanation, and help in answering the questions on attached worksheet.
- One or two students, or the teacher can have *The Way, the Truth, and the Life* opened to pp. 35-36 for oral reading and review.
- One or two students may choose to either read over the material from OCMC and IOCC, or to use the computer and go on line to research the information. (See above for web site addresses)
- One or two other students may work together on researching community charities provided by the teacher, or those possibly suggested by students.
- One or two students will also work together to list ways students can help those within the parish community, along with the teacher.
- As students complete their tasks, they will gather together to report their findings.
- After each students or group of students has reported their findings, the class as a whole will do the following:
- Answer the questions on the attached worksheet.

- Decide what they 5 things would like to do as a group to help those in their parish community who are in need
- Decide which charity/local community organization they would like to help
- Choose what services to IOCC and/or OCMC they would like to offer

4 Journals

- Students may choose to journal answers to the questions above

5 "Roots"

Students spend time finishing up all aspects of their Roots Coffee Hour Project:

1. Roots Map
2. Orthodox Time Line
3. Oral History
4. Video

The Roots Coffee Hour should take place within the coming weeks. Extra sessions for planning should take place accordingly.

6 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

(Have chart/butcher paper with questions and answers tacked to a wall or bulletin board.)

- *In Matthew 25:31-45, known as the Last Judgment, what did the King say to those on his right?*
 - 'I was hungry and you gave me food; thirsty and you gave me drink; a stranger and you took me in; naked and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to me.'
 - *What did those who were on the King's right ask? What was the King's answer?*
 - 'When did we do this?' 'When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it to me.'
 - *What happened to those on the King's right? On the left?*
 - They inherited the kingdom, eternal life. They were sent to everlasting punishment.
 - *What is Christ telling us? Look at p.69 (footnote)*
 - This is not merely a parable but Christ's account of the last judgment. He is about to be crucified, buried, and risen from the dead, but this is the account of the Second Coming, the universal judgment of all. It is the opening of our hearts before God, the accounting of our inner selves. If

we do not live His Gospel, love those who are in need, and minister to them, we will be judged harshly, as the King did.

- *What have we learned today about how we can commit ourselves to this task as Orthodox Christians?*

We can get involved in our parish and help those in need. We can become involved in our community by helping local charities in their work. We can help those fellow Orthodox Christians as well as others by supporting Orthodox charities worldwide.

7 Closing Prayer

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance.

Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries;

And by virtue of Thy cross, preserve Thy habitation.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Every Family Has a Story (Ages 10-

12)

Overview

Family is Love - Every family's story is different, and each generation tells a different story about their traditions, music, culture, ways-of-life, joys, and hardships.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recall and orally share their own family ancestry with stories, music, and traditions
- Draw/paste pictures of family members on a page in a unit scrapbook
- Write shared oral family stories and add to scrapbook
- Interview parish families about their ancestors
- Record and report parish family stories of ancestors. (Roots Oral History)
- Identify on a world map places where their family and parish family members live or lived as part of a unit project (Roots Map)
- Begin a Roots Coffee Hour Project incorporating all above projects.

Materials

- Construction paper (9" x 12") with holes punched with 3-hole punch
- White lined paper (8½" x 11") with holes punched
- Scissors (if necessary to fit photos)
- Glue sticks
- Pencils, pens, markers
- Paper hole punch
- Yarn cut into 6 inch strips, three per student
- Large world map for "Roots" Ancestors Map
- Large foam board on which to mount world map
- Scissors
- Rulers
- Thin yarn or string in varying colors
- Thumb tacks
- Sewn-in notebooks for journals
- Labels for names and captions in scrapbook and on journals
- Interview forms for parish member interviews
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event \(PDF\)](#)

[Ancestor Roots Map \(PDF\)](#)

[Ancestor Roots Oral History Interviews \(PDF\)](#)

[My Orthodox Family - Family Letter\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Begin by asking the following: *What do you love the most about your family?* (Answers should reflect student's awareness of ways their families express their love.) As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God's love for us.

- Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should reflect God's love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the Light of God's love.)
- Continue by stating the following: *Our families have ancestors who came from different parts of the world. What did you bring in to share about your family history?* (Allow students to share their stories and pictures.)
- After students have shared their stories, continue by saying: *Today we are going to begin a parish "Roots" Project. Each of us is going to have a part in this project. We are first going to begin our own **Family Memories Scrapbook** with the pictures and stories we have shared today. Then, in the coming weeks, we will talk to people in our parish and ask them about their ancestors. We want to record what we will learn by locating where our parishoners' ancestors came from. We will do this on a large, "**Roots**" **Ancestors Map**. This will be part of a Parish Roots Project which we will present at coffee hour on _____(give the date.)*

Let's get started!

3 Family Memories Scrapbook

- Have students open their envelopes brought from home.
- Have students place their family photos on the construction paper.
- Write captions/labels identifying family members.
- When students have arranged photos and captions, glue these to construction paper.
- Have students write family stories on white lined paper
- Mount written accounts on construction paper and add to their scrapbook.
- You can also have students expand their scrapbook. They may want to collect and bring in favorite family photos that tell a story about something family members like to remember: vacation trips, visits to grandma's house, cousins, special events (baptisms, weddings), etc. This can be an ongoing activity throughout the duration of the unit.
- Distribute another piece of construction paper to each student and have them write their name and title, "Family Memories Scrapbook."
- Take 3 sections of yarn and string through holes. Tie into bows.

4 Roots Ancestors Map

- Print instructions from Teacher Resources-Activities: "Roots" Ancestors Map
- Begin this activity by mapping students' ancestors' roots.
- Have students use yarn to trace from city where their parish is located to the country of their origin. They may choose 2 countries each.

5 Oral History Project

- Begin this project by stating the following: *Today we are going to begin this project by planning to interview people in our parish about their ancestors. We would like to add their countries of origin to our "Roots" Ancestors map.* Continue by stating that they may look at the parish list and choose whom they would like to interview. The remaining parishioners are to be assigned.
- Hand out interview questions to the students (see attached form). They are to use one form per parishioner. They will have three weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time. If this is not possible, try to arrange for them to conduct the interviews by phone. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge!**

6 Optional-Extra Activity

Teacher Resources: Journals

7 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- *What do we love most about our families?* (Allow student responses)

- *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should reflect student understanding of God's love and the parallels with the love of families.)
- *What do we plan to do over the coming weeks?* (Answers should recall elements of "Roots" project—mapping parishioners' countries of origin and finding out about their ancestors.)

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Life Together as a Family *(Ages 10-*

12)

Overview

Family Means Cooperation - Family members need to work together on rules, daily tasks, good habits, and relationships to “make families work” as a unit.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Give examples of rules or responsibilities they must abide by at home, school, etc.
- Discuss from where rules, values and traditions come (home, church, Bible, school, society, workplace, etc.)
- Identify who creates rules/responsibilities, and who changes them
- Discuss church school rules and why they are important
- Remaining Objectives from Lesson 1 and collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Record and report parish family stories of ancestors. (Roots Oral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map
- Plan Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- Large butcher chart paper
- Examples of rules (See Procedure #3 for this lesson)
- Markers and/or tape
- Thumb tacks
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Lesson 1)
- “Roots” Ancestors Map (See Lesson 1)
- Journals (See Lesson 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Lesson 1)
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

[Ancestor Roots Map](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *What did we discuss last week about our families?* (Answers should recall ways students' families express love, and what they love most about their families.)

- As students answer, interject statements making comparison of family love with God's love for us. Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should recall God's love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the Light of God's love.)
- Continue by asking the following: *What did you bring in to share about your family history?* (Allow students to recall their stories) After students have shared their stories, continue by asking: *How many of you have chores to do at home?* (Allow students to elaborate) *Do any of you have rules for: bedtimes, homework, TV, computer? Can you think of any other rules in your house?* (Give students time to elaborate, suggesting areas previously mentioned to springboard comparison and discussion.)
- As rules are discussed, begin writing them on the chart/butcher paper for all to see.

3 How To Generate Rules

- Have rules from chart/butcher paper tacked to a wall or bulletin board.
- Have rules collected from various institutions placed around those on the wall/bulletin board, or in a designated area
- Ask students (working in pairs) to pick one set of rules
- Give student pairs 5 minutes to read over rules together
- After 5 minutes, call students together.
- Ask them to compare rules they have read with those on the wall/bulletin board.
- Have 1 student act as secretary and write comments on separate chart paper or on original paper.
- Take Bible and open to Exodus30:24-10 Commandments; John 13:34; Colossians3:15; 1 Timothy3:4; 1 Timothy 3:13, 2 Timothy 2:5)
- Discuss God's Commandments as compared to those discussed. How do they compare? Do rules consistently show us how to live in cooperation?
- Discuss: How are rules able to teach us responsibility?

- Discuss: Who creates rules? Why are they important in our lives?
- Ask students to begin writing church school class rules and responsibilities for tasks, routines, etc. Try to come up with 5-8 everyone is in agreement with.
- Discuss why establishing class rules together is important.
- Have students conclude why rules and responsibilities are important in maintaining loving relationships; show God's love for us by giving us rules to love by.

4 Roots Ancestors Map

- Finish mapping students' ancestors' countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Begin mapping parishioners' ancestors' countries of origin

5 Oral History Project

Continue interviewing of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress.

- Tell students they will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time, or by phone, bulletin insert.
- **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge!**

6 Journals

Journals (for use with extra/extended sessions)

Materials:

- Sewn-in notebooks
- Pencils, markers,
- Labels for names

Procedure:

Have students label date and write about their reactions to rules and responsibilities.

7 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- *Why are rules and responsibilities important to our families?* (Answers should reflect student understanding of love, cooperation, harmony.)
- *How do God's laws show us He loves us?* (Answers should reflect student understanding of God's love and the parallels with the love of families.)
- *What do we plan to do over the coming weeks?* (Answers should recall elements of "Roots" project—mapping parishioners' countries of origin and finding out about their ancestors.)

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God's Story and God's People

(Ages 10-12)

Overview

God's faithful family became God's people - When God created people, He created family. Some of God's people were faithful; others turned away from God. They sinned against Him, doing evil and separating themselves from God and each other. God appointed many leaders and prophets from among His people to call them away from their evil ways and return to God, but still some did not listen or change. God sent His Own Son, Jesus Christ, to bring His people back to Him. Jesus taught us to repent, turn away from evil, and change our lives.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Research in the Bible the following Old Testament events in the life of Gods people: Passover
- Crossing the Red Sea
- Moses and the Israelites wandering through the desert to the Promised Land of Canaan
- The giving of the Law or Commandments
- Illustrate, in a Picture Time Line, events researched in the Bible.
- Determine that these events and giving of the Laws and Commandments helped the Hebrew people to understand they were God's people, chosen to do His will and follow His ways
- Report and illustrate by mapping, dioramas, or murals, some of the journeys made by people in the New Testament: Mary, Joseph, and the child, Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt and Nazareth
- Jesus and His parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem
- Christs Journey to the Cross
- Connect the laws researched with the rules discussed last week as being important to us in our daily lives.
- Recognize the importance of our obedience to Gods laws, as His People
- Remaining Objectives--See Session 1 Collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Continue recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors. (RootsOral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map from interviews
- Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- Large butcher chart paper
- Bibles
- Markers
- Old and New Testament Maps

- Can enlarge to poster size by putting on an overhead and tracing on chart/butcher paper. (See Resources.)
- Rulers, yardsticks
- Colored yarn (3-4 colors)
- Glue stick
- Shoeboxes
- Construction paper
- Transparencies for copy machine
- Copy machine
- Overhead projector
- Pencils
- Thumb tacks/tape
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- "Roots" Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals (See Session 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

[New Testament Holy Land Map \(PDF\)](#)

["Roots" Coffee Hour Parish Event \(PDF\)](#)

[Ancestor Roots Map \(PDF\)](#)

[Family Memories Scrapbook\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *What did we discuss last week about families and rules?* (Answers should recall ways their families express their love, and how rules bring harmony and cooperation within families and groups working together.) As students answer, interject statements making

comparison of family love with God's love for us. Ask: *How does God show us He loves us?* (Answers should recall God's love for us as His people—His giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to live in the Light of God's love.) Continue by asking students to recall rules discussed, showing the chart/butcher paper from Session 2. Ask students: *How many of you know the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments? Passover? Journey to the Promised Land?* (Allow students to recall what they know, or ask what they would like to know.)

3 Illustrated Timeline

These projects can be done in the *Cooperative Learning Style*. Each student will be designated a position/task and will execute it in an organized and "cooperative" manner, working together with other students as a unit. As each person is assigned a task from the list below, he or she should set about a plan and work it to completion.

Illustrated Timeline

- Have one student place chart paper on table or tape to wall.
- Have another student get supplies (Bibles, markers, pencils, paper to write information and sketch, scissors).
- Students should then act as the researchers and begin to look up assigned Bible passages (Ex. 12-15, Deut. 6, 11). Working in pairs, one should read aloud the events, while another acts as secretary and writes.
- When information is gathered, students should begin to put events in time order on their paper.
- A student who enjoys drawing can make/plan sketches.
- While coordinating proper sequence of events and sketches, a student measures out the number of lines needed for the timeline. Draw lines across for date and event.
- Write dates and events on their timeline. Save space for any illustrations
- Display on wall and also at "Roots" Coffee Hour

4 Mapping

Earlier: Photocopy map from Bible or *New Testament Maps and Charts* (OCEC) onto a transparency for copiers. Place transparency on overhead projector, hang chart paper on wall. Focus map transparency on chart paper and trace map. Label countries, areas, cities, etc.

- Using *cooperative learning*, have one student look up passages in New Testament (Matt. 2:13-15, 19-23, Luke 2:22-24,39-50, 24:1-56) which tell of the following Journeys of Christ:
 - Mary, Joseph, and the child Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt and Nazareth
 - Jesus and His parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem
 - Christ's Journey to the Cross.

- Have another student trace journeys by using colored yarn and glue stick to hold in place (1 color for each different journey).
- Display on wall and use as part of “Roots” Coffee Hour display.

5 Roots Ancestors Map

- Continue mapping students’ ancestors’ countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Begin mapping parishioners’ ancestors’ countries of origin.

6 Oral History Project

- Continue interview of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress. Students will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain to students that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time, or by phone, or using bulletin insert. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent’s and your knowledge!**

7 Extra Activities

Dioramas:

- Shoebox with a scene depicted inside. (Students can take any of the above events they researched.) Can be colored, figures can be cut from construction paper; yarn, and/or other materials may be used. Cut a narrow rectangular opening in the top of the box to let in light.

Murals:

- Students can take any of the above events they researched and draw a mural of one or more of those events for display.

Journals:

Materials:

- Sewn-in notebooks
- Pencils, markers,
- Labels for names

Procedures:

- Have students label date and write about their reactions to their activities today. Use Wrap-Up questions (#5) as writing prompt.

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Members of God's Family (Ages 10-

12)

Overview

Every Parish Has a Story - We become members of God's family when we are baptized. We are made clean in the waters of baptism. The white robe is a sign of a new life in Christ. We are sealed with the gift of God's Holy Spirit when we are anointed with the oil of Holy Chrism. We become "living temples" of God.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Research and outline the main actions in the Service of Baptism and Chrismation
- Describe what each Sacrament says about us as members of the church
- Using the 1st Ode of the Paschal Canon, tell how our baptism and Chrismation is related to the meaning of Pascha
- Reflect in journals on how to become members of Christ's Holy Church by recalling our Baptism and Chrismation as our death, Resurrection (Pascha), and Pentecost
- Remaining Objectives--See Session 1 and collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Continue recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors (RootsOral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map from interviews
- Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- Large butcher chart paper
- Bibles
- Markers
- Rulers, yardsticks
- Pencils
- Tape
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- Ode 1 of Paschal Canon written on Chart Paper
- "Roots" Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals (See Session 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Resources

Required Resources

[Ancestor Roots Map \(PDF\)](#)

[Family Memories Scrapbook\(HTML\)](#)

[My Orthodox Family: General Teacher Lesson Notes\(HTML\)](#)

[Oral History\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

Who art everywhere and fillest all things.

Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *What were some of the journeys of God's People we researched last week?* (Point to the maps and Time Line for prompts. Answers should recall Moses, Passover, Ten Commandments and Journey to the Promised Land. As students answer, interject statements making a comparison of family love with God's love for us.) Ask: *How did God show His love for the People of Israel?* (Answers should reflect an understanding of His protecting them during the Passover, their escape from bondage in Egypt, the fulfillment of the Promised Land.) Ask: *Do you know why Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead is called the "New Pascha" or "Passover"?* Explain that Pascha is Greek for Passover and that Christ's Resurrection gave us the new Passover from death to life. After this explain to students: *Today we are going to examine our Baptism and its impact on our lives as God's family. We will see how our Baptism and Chrismation are related to the meaning of Pascha.*

3 Outline

This project can be done in the *Cooperative Learning Style*. Each student will be designated a position/task and will execute it in an organized and "cooperative" manner, working together with the others as a unit. As each person is assigned, he or she should set about a plan and work it to completion.

- Have one student place chart paper on table or tape to wall.
- Have another student get supplies (copies of Service of Baptism, markers, pencils, paper to write information).
- Students should then act as the researchers and begin to look up and outline the following parts of the Baptism and Chrismation service on chart paper:

Our Holy Baptism and Chrismation into God's Holy Church and Parish Family

I. Reception into the Catechumenate:

- Exorcism prayers
- Expelling of evil spirits

- Renouncing of Satan
- Symbol of Faith (Nicene Creed)—resurrection, movement towards God’s Kingdom.

II. Order of Holy Baptism:

A. Candles (Light of Christ)

- Anointing with oil
- Blessing of water
- Baptism—immersion; death to life
- White Robe—purity

III. Order of Chrismation

A. Chrismation—anoointing with Holy Chrism

- Procession around Baptismal font (“As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”)
- Epistle (Romans 6:3-11)
- Gospel (Matthew 28:16-20)

IV. Tonsuring

- **Churching**

A. Prayer of St. Simeon

Note: It is better to have students look things up for themselves in the service books than to simply read off the parts of the service. This hands-on learning keeps their interest as they are doing the research.

- As students are researching, have one student read from portions of the introductory pages explaining the symbolism of each action in both sacraments. You may want to highlight these ahead of time.
- Take pictures of students while they are working. Use these for an additional display, or to enhance charts and displays for “Roots” Coffee Hour.
- When students have finished, ask: *What does Baptism say about us as members of the church?* (In Baptism we are brought from death to life. In Chrismation we are made members of Christ’s Holy Church.)
- Students may add their own baptism picture to decorate the outline.
- As students are finishing, have them look at Ode 1 of the Paschal Canon which is on chart paper:

The Canon of Pascha

Ode 1

*This is the day of Resurrection. Let us be illumined,
O people. Pascha, the Pascha of the Lord. For from
death to life and from earth to heaven has Christ our
God led us, as we sing a song of victory.*

- Ask students, *How are our baptism and Chrismation related to the meaning of*

Pascha? (Answers should reflect our passing from death to life. Our going into the baptismal water is the death and our immersion and rising is the resurrection. Our Chrismation is the bestowing of the Seal and the gift of the Holy Spirit.) You can go on to quote from p.12, “Easter and Pentecost are inseparably related in the whole of the Christian message. Baptism is the personal Easter and Pentecost.”

4 Journals

- Have students label date and write about their reactions to their activities and above discussion today. Use Wrap-Up questions also as writing prompt.

5 Roots Ancestors Map

- Insert “Roots” Ancestors Map from Activities as FlashPaper
- Continue mapping students’ ancestors’ countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Begin mapping parishioners’ ancestors’ countries of origin

6 Oral History Project

- Continue interview of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress. They will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time, or by phone, or using bulletin insert. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent’s and your knowledge.**

7 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:
(Have Baptism Service outline from chart/butcher paper tacked to a wall or bulletin board.) *What did we learn about our Baptism today?* (Answers should reflect our personal Pascha and membership into Christ’s Holy Church) *How does our Baptism and Chrismation make us a family?* (Answers should reflect the love we have for each other is part of our membership in His Holy Church.)

8 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Being an Orthodox Christian

(Ages 10-12)

Overview

Members of God's Family Together - We become members of God's family when we are baptized. God calls us to love all people. Our "neighbor" is any person who stands before us at any given moment. A personal inventory helps us become more aware of who we are, what strengths we need to build upon, and what weaknesses we need to correct.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Discuss how St. Paul's words (in Romans 12:3, 9, 14-18) relate to our interactions with people in our daily lives (family, school, activities, mall, etc.)
- Work together in cooperative effort to solve a problem
- Reflect that, when working in groups, we each have a role to play
- List ways we can better know our classmates who come from different backgrounds or schools
- Reflect in journals on how to become more understanding and accepting of other's differences
- Remaining Objectives--See Session 1 and collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Continue recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors (RootsOral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map from interviews
- Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- Large butcher chart paper
- Bibles
- Markers
- Peace Group Puzzle Piece statements (See Activity Resource at end of session)
- Pencils
- paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- Disposable camera
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)
- "Roots" Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals (See Session 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *What did we learn about baptism last week in relation to Pascha? Becoming God's People?* (Point to the Baptism outline for prompts. Answers should recall Baptism as death to Resurrection, Pascha, Pentecost) As students answer, interject statements making a comparison of family love with God's love for us. Ask: *How does God show His love for us as members of His Church?* (Answers should reflect an understanding of His love by giving us a place in His Kingdom through our Baptism and Chrismation.) Ask: *Do you know why Jesus asked us to live in peace? Why is this important for us as God's people?*

3 Cooperation Puzzle

This project is a group dynamics and cooperation exercise, and is an excellent activity for enhancement of the *Cooperative Learning Style*. Students must work together to, first, find the problem, then try to solve it by examining all the information.

The problem is: *Who will go to Vespers and the concert at church next Saturday?*

Each student will be given several cards, each with a written statement. There are 18 "puzzle pieces" in all. They are as follows: (These are not numbered on the cards)

- John doesn't like to go to church concerts, but he likes hanging with Alex and will go if Alex goes.
- Sarah will be going to Vespers and the concert as long as Mrs. Allen doesn't need a babysitter. Sarah's regular job is to baby-sit, so that comes first.
- Vespers and the concert are scheduled Saturday, from 7:00-9:00pm.
- Anna rarely misses Vespers.
- Alex did not do well on his last science quiz and has to study every night for an upcoming test, unless someone can help him understand photosynthesis.
- Elizabeth had an argument with Anna, and Anna stomped off without working it out. Now Elizabeth will not go to Vespers and the concert unless Anna apologizes and resolves the argument.
- Tom wants Alex to be able to go to Vespers and the concert, since Alex likes liturgical music. Tom will help out by explaining photosynthesis to Alex. Also, Tom knows the choral director and might be able to introduce Alex.

- Who will go to Vespers and the Concert?
- Tom loves liturgical music, but his parents have a rule that he can only be out three nights a week. They rarely allow exceptions. He has three basketball games to play this week, because he has a make-up game.
- Anna feels badly about walking out on the argument with Elizabeth. She has decided to call to apologize and to settle the argument, once and for all.
- Mary is new to the parish and only knows one person, Elizabeth. Mary will go if Elizabeth goes.
- Mrs. Allen would like to go to the concert, and will need a babysitter.
- Tom and his parents never miss a service, unless he has a basketball game.
- One of the Allen children has come down with a fever, and Mrs. Allen has decided not to go.
- Paul would like to go to the concert, but he will need a ride, since his parents are out-of-town, and his grandmother is watching his baby sister.
- The church school teacher, Mrs. Miller, has offered to pick up anyone who needs a ride to Vespers and the concert Saturday night.
- George is grounded because he was late coming home from last week's soccer match. He can't be out past 9:00 pm on week nights.
- Tom's parents are attending Vespers and singing in the concert.

Shuffle and hand out the cards face down, instructing the students they are not to look at them until you say so. How many cards each student receives depends on the size of your class. Give the following instructions: *This is a problem-solving exercise. Everyone has information. There is a question to be answered. You will have to figure out what the question is, before you can answer it. You may read the cards aloud, but you cannot show them to each other, or trade them. Be ready to explain your answers. Use pencil and paper to help answer the questions, if you wish. You will be given 15 minutes to complete the exercise. You may turn over your cards and begin.* Students will find this awkward at first. They may just sit there for a while. They may argue, even get upset. Try not to interfere unless they get out-of-hand, or need some assistance. Offer suggestions like: *Who do you think is having a hard time going? Why?* Students should locate and recite the following:

Problem: Who will go to Vespers and the concert at church next Saturday?

Answers: John Tom
 Alex Paul
 Sarah Mary
 Elizabeth Mrs. Miller
 Anna Tom's parents
 George

- John will go because Alex can go.
- Alex will go because Tom will help him with photosynthesis.
- Sarah will go because Mrs. Allen can't. Her child is sick and Sarah doesn't have to babysit.
- Elizabeth will go because Anna will apologize.
- Anna is going because she regularly attends Vespers, and will work things out with Elizabeth.
- George is going because he is only grounded on weeknights, and Vespers and the concert are on Saturday.

- Tom is going because his parents are singing. His parents have made exceptions for their rule about nights out, and, since they all love liturgical music, this would be an exception.
 - Paul can go because Mrs. Miller will give him a ride.
 - Mary will go because Elizabeth will go.
 - Mrs. Miller is going, and she is driving Paul.
 - Tom's parents are going and singing in the concert.
 - Have one student place chart paper with Group Roles on table or tape to wall.
-
- Ask students to identify who played what role; have another student list names next to roles

4 Discussion and Listening

- Ask students to look up St. Paul's words in the Romans 12:3, 9, 14-18. Have one student read each verse. As they read, stop and ask, *How does this affect us in our daily lives?* (Give examples as prompts for discussion: Verse 3—not putting ourselves above others; Verse 9—doing what is good, choosing friends wisely, staying away from people who are a bad influence; Verses 14-18—pray for those who bully you, don't fight back or try to harm those who are trying to harm you, feel empathy toward those around you, do not think yourself above other, treat all those around you with kindness, don't take revenge on anyone, live in peace.) Ask, *When do you think you might have a hard time doing these things?* Allow time for responses. *How can you accomplish this?* (Give students a chance to respond.)
- Have students list responses on chart paper as they are given. Take a class picture and display with list.

5 Journals

- Have students label date and write about their reactions to their activities and above discussion today. Use **Wrap-Up** questions (#8) as writing prompt.

6 Roots Ancestors Map

- Continue mapping students' ancestors' countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Begin mapping parishioners' ancestors' countries of origin

7 Oral History Project

Continue interview of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress. They will have two weeks to finish their interviews. Explain to students that interviews are to be conducted at an arranged time and place and they are to be present to carry out their interviews at that time, or by phone, or using bulletin insert. **Tell students they may NOT make arrangements to meet anyone outside of the parish setting without their parent's and your knowledge.**

8 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:
(Have Baptism Service outline from chart/butcher paper tacked to a wall or bulletin board.) Ask:
What did we learn about our Baptism today? (Answers should reflect our personal Pascha and membership into Christ's Holy Church) *How can we incorporate what St. Paul said about living with others?* (Give time for student response) *How can we use what St. Paul said to help us find out more about each of us here? What can we do to make help us get to know and respect each other?* (Give time to reflect. Answers should include talking to one another, getting to know differences and similarities, looking toward the positives in each other, treating each other with respect, perhaps getting to know each other by seeing each other outside of the classroom.) *Let's keep the words of St. Paul with us this coming week as we grow together in God's love for us.*

9 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Work of God's People (Ages 10-

12)

Overview

Following God in Our Lives - Building community in our local and in the neighborhood where our church is located is an important form of witness, mission, and outreach. As Orthodox Christians we need to: bring new life in Christ to others outside our parish community, support and assist in up-building, and address critical needs of community as we reveal our commitment to God through steadfast integrity, compassion, and responsibility to all of God's people.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Compare the description of the first Church in Acts 2:41-47 with the life of our parish today and describe how the members of this first community influenced the people around them, and how our parish community continues this witness
- Give one or two examples of a way that we have helped someone by being faithful, responsible, or trustworthy
- Describe how you felt about what we did, or why faithfulness, responsibility, and trust are important in society
- List ways we can make a difference in our local communities as Orthodox Christians and contributing members of society
- Reflect in our journals how we can continue to help those within our parish and our surrounding communities by doing deeds which bring out our compassion, integrity and responsibility as Gods people.
- Remaining Objectives--See Session 1 and collect and update interviews of parish members for Roots Project
- Continue recording and reporting parish family stories of ancestors. (Roots Oral History)
- Continue work on Roots Map from interviews
- Continue planning the Roots Coffee Hour Project

Materials

- Large butcher chart paper
- Bibles
- Markers
- Pencils
- paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- Family Memories scrapbook and materials (See Session 1)

- “Roots” Ancestors Map (See Session 1)
- Journals (See Session 1)
- Interview forms for parish member interviews (See Session 1)
- Icon for prayer

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth
 Who art everywhere and fillest all things.
 Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life:
 Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
 And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter-Bridge

Begin by asking the following: *What did we learn about baptism last week in relation to becoming God's People?* (Point to the Baptism outline and class list and picture from last week for prompts. Answers should recall Baptism as our personal Pascha, Pentecost, life together as God's people.) Ask: *How do the words of St. Paul show us how to live together as members of His Church? How do we now know and respect each other?* (Answers should reflect the love and respect St. Paul prescribed to us as children of God.) Ask Students, *How can we put in action some of the things we have learned in our parish? Our neighborhoods? Our communities?*

3 Beginning Parish Communities

In the *Cooperative Learning Style*, have students use Bibles to look up and read Acts 2:41-47. Have another students list the actions newly baptized Christians took (i.e. breaking of bread, sold, divided possessions, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, braking bread from house to house, with simplicity of heart.). Ask students how they as a class can mirror the actions of those early Christians. Have a student list suggestions. Suggest activities to help in: parish, neighborhood, deanery, diocese, national church.

4 Parish Model

- Begin by showing **Venn Diagram**
- Explain how parish, community and liturgy tie in together as one.
- Pass around the information you have collected about various parish organizations. Discuss what they are, how they operate, who they serve, and how to become involved.
- Ask students what they can do to help. As you discuss this, have a student list ways discussed, and start those all agree would be feasible to work on.
- Ask for a student volunteer to oversee the implementation of the actions students wish to take. For example, students could decide to be on the grass-cutting rotation, sign up to run coffee hours several Sundays per year, or for upcoming special events run off bulletins in the office or clean the church or hall, offer to have someone who needs a ride picked up for church or special occasions.

- Please note that it is vital students stick to their commitment, so be realistic in what they can handle. One project is probably best. This can be worked on with the senior group as well.
- Do the same with Deanery/Diocesan program, national church program, and local community program. Be realistic in choosing, as students could feel overwhelmed and react negatively. If they are excited about one church, and one community project, it would be an excellent start.
- Have students list their choices on chart paper and appoint themselves to their tasks. You can keep track of these as the times for action progress.

5 Journals

- Have students label date and write about their reactions to their activities and above discussion today. Use **Wrap-Up** questions (#8) as writing prompt.

6 Roots Ancestors Map

- Finish mapping students' ancestors' countries of origin, 2 countries each.
- Finish mapping parishioners' ancestors' countries of origin. They should be ready for display for Roots Coffee Hour.

7 Oral History Project

- Finish recording interviews of parishioners by collecting finished interviews and updating those in progress. They should be ready for final display for Roots Coffee Hour

8 Wrap-up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following: (Have Baptism Service outline from chart/butcher paper tacked to a wall or bulletin board.) Ask: *What did we learn about our tasks as Orthodox Christians and members of God's family today?* (Answers should reflect our personal commitments to those around us as membership into Christ's Holy Church) *How can we incorporate what the Book of Acts said about parish community?* (Give time for student response) *What are we going to try to do to show our faithfulness, responsibility, and trustworthiness?* (Give time to reflect. Answers should include list of what they have committed to.) *Let's keep the words of St. Paul and the Acts of the Holy Apostles with us this coming week as we grow together in God's love for us.*

9 Closing Prayer

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

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

