

Let Your Light So Shine

Session 1: You Are the Light of the World

Objectives

By the end of this session students should be able to:

- Relate the following biblical passage to their daily lives.
- Describe ways and actions to live the Beatitudes so that “your light [may] shine.”
- Connect the Beatitudes to “letting your light shine” as a means of salvation.
- Retell the life of Saint Herman of Alaska as an example of one whose light so shone before men that all could see his good works and his glorification of God.

Resources

Scriptural References: Matthew 5: 14 – 16

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5: 3 – 11 [Beatitudes] Saint’s Life: St Herman of Alaska (Aug. 9) Troparion of St. Herman of Alaska - “O Blessed Father Herman of Alaska, North Star of Christ’s Holy Church, the light of your holy life and great deeds guides those who follow the Orthodox way. Together we lift high the Holy Cross you planted firmly in America. Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ, singing His holy Resurrection.”

Text and music of the Troparion can be located at www.oca.org under the “Music .PDF Downloads” section. Recommended Readings

Portraits of American Saints, compiled and edited by Fr. George Gray and Jan V. Bear.

The Orthodox Faith (often called the Rainbow series), Volume IV, Spirituality by Fr. Thomas Hopko for background and explanations of each Beatitude. The text can be located at www.oca.org under “Orthodox Christianity” on the left menu. Then click on “The Orthodox Faith” and then the green volume.

Icon: St. Herman of Alaska (Aug. 9): To access an image of the icon of St. Herman, go to www.oca.org and click on “Orthodox Christianity” on the left menu. Then click on “Lives of the Saints” and “Search for a Saint.” Lesson/ Activity Ideas:

Pre-school/ Kindergarten/ Primary Grades

1. Light a candle for a child and use it as a metaphor for action. Explain that when the flame flickers, the wax melts, and the smoke rises, this is action. Unlit, the candle is useless and inactive.

2. Have the children make a paper candle with construction paper and toilet paper rolls OR make a candle using Crayola Clay. With the child's name on this candle, it could be a yearlong visual reminder of letting one's light shine.
3. Discuss the question, "How can you let your light shine in your family, at school, with your friends, with your neighbors, and at church?"
4. Discuss the Little Falcons series text called Candles by Fr. Thomas Kazich. P.O. Box 371, Grayslake, IL 60030.
5. Read North Star – St. Herman of Alaska by Dorrie Papademetriou and discuss the life of St. Herman of Alaska as someone whose light shines on the world.

Intermediate Grades

1. Discuss the question, "How can you let your light shine in your family, at school, with your friends, with your neighbors, and at church?"
2. Restate the Beatitudes in your own words. Give examples of how to live each Beatitude in your everyday life.
3. Describe the details in the icon of St. Herman that illustrate "letting your light shine" as a means of salvation.
4. Read an account of the life of St. Herman and discuss the example he set for the world.
5. Children could bake cookies to give to members of the parish in the spirit of St. Herman, who did so for the orphan children in Alaska.
6. Make a candle with the Troparion of St. Herman printed on card stock embedded in the wax of the pillar candle. Coat a wide candle with clear wax and fix the Troparion to the candle. Then, cover the rest of the candle with clear wax beaten with an eggbeater until it is frothy and white. This makes a decorative gift candle, perhaps for godparents.

Teens and Young Adults

1. Discuss the question, "How can you let your light shine in your family, at school, with your friends, with your neighbors, and at church?"
2. Restate the Beatitudes in your own words. Give examples of how to live each Beatitude in your everyday life.
3. Create a chart using each Beatitude as a guide for personal salvation and for a method of self-examination before the sacrament of confession.
4. Read an account of the lives of St. Herman and Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Moscow [Resources and details of her life are in the accompanying unit.] Compare the life of St. Herman to the life of St. Elizabeth and discuss the examples each sets for the world.
5. Read North Star – St. Herman of Alaska by Dorrie Papademetriou to the younger classes in church school and discuss with the children the life of St. Herman of Alaska as someone whose light shines on the world.

Session 2: That They May See Your Good Works and Glorify Your Father in Heaven

Purpose

The goal of this session is to involve the youth in doing tangible good works and to instill a sense of accomplishment by creating and implementing a service project.

Objectives

By the end of this session students should be able to:

1. Relate the following biblical passage to their daily lives.
2. Retell the details of the life of Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and discuss the meaning of both her quotation and the Troparion dedicated to her.
3. Engage in a service project, off site if possible.
4. Reflect, discuss and celebrate the service experience.

Resources

Scriptural Reference:

Matthew 11: 28 - 30

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Saint’s Life: Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Moscow “I am leaving a glittering world where I had a glittering position, but with all of you I am descending into a greater world - the world of the poor and the suffering.”

Troparion in tone 4

*Emulating the Lord's self-abasement on the earth,
You gave up royal mansions to serve the poor and disdained,
Overflowing with compassion for the suffering.
And taking up a martyr's cross,
In your meekness
You perfected the Saviour's image within yourself;
Therefore, with Barbara, entreat
Him to save us all, O wise Elizabeth.*

Recommended Readings and Resources

- [Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Moscow](#)
- [A Sacrificing Love](#)
- [Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Moscow](#)
- [OCA Youth Guidelines for Service Projects](#)
- [20-Something Ideas to Involve Youth in Christ-like Service to Others](#)
- [Romanov Memories](#)

Lesson/ Activity Ideas

Pre-school/ Kindergarten/ Primary Grades

1. Discuss the following questions which explore ways to lighten the burdens for others:
 - a. "What can you do at home to help your mom and dad?"
 - b. "What can you do at church to help an old person?"
 - c. "What can you do at school to help your teacher?"
2. Tell the story of Grand Duchess Elizabeth to the children, using the web site sources above. What did she do to help other people?
3. Look at the picture book of the Martha and Mary Convent in Moscow and identify two ways by which St. Elizabeth helped the poor.
4. Plan a simple service project for the elderly of the parish, their godparents or grandparents. This could include coupon books of good deeds, cards which could be sent out weekly to the infirm with the church bulletins, etc.
5. After the completion of the project, discuss how it made the children feel to help others and celebrate the success of the project.

Intermediate Grades

1. List ways that each of the students can lighten burdens for others at home, at school, or at church.
2. Tell the story of Grand Duchess Elizabeth to the children, using the web site sources above. Have the students look at pictures of her before she became Orthodox, i.e. of her "glittering position," and contrast that with the icon of St. Elizabeth and her position in the "greater world" of the suffering and the poor.
3. List ways that St. Elizabeth helped the poor and the suffering.
4. Discuss ways that these students can help the "poor and disdained." Decide on a service project which will address these needs. Plan and implement the project, such as working at a soup kitchen or singing carols at a retirement home.
5. After the project, discuss how the students showed "compassion for the suffering" in the manner of St. Elizabeth. Reflect upon and celebrate the completion of the service project.
6. Present their service project to the parish at coffee hour.

Teens and Young Adults

1. Using the biblical reference, identify types of people who "labor and are heavy laden" and discuss ways that they might find rest in Jesus Christ.
2. After reading selections of Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia: New Martyr of the Communist Yoke by Lubov Millar, particularly the passage on her serving tea to the poor working women of Moscow, write or role play an interview from the point of view of one of these poor women, answering such questions as "How did it make you feel to be served tea by a grand duchess?" or "How did it feel to attend a concert at a grand palace given just for you?"
3. Paraphrase and interpret the first line of the Troparion for St. Elizabeth: "Emulating the Lord's self-abasement on the earth...." How is emulation different from admiration?

4. What is “self-abasement” and how did St. Elizabeth show extreme humility in the manner of Jesus Christ? Compare and contrast the icon of St. Elizabeth with the Icon of the Extreme Humility, looking at the expressions communicated.
5. Brainstorm things each teen or young adult would most like to do as good works and things they would be most afraid to do. Discuss this brainstorm list with the whole group, and compile a list of concerns.
6. Using the brainstorm list above, decide on an issue or problem that can be realistically addressed in the community in which the church exists. Design and implement a service project.
7. After the completion of the service project, reflect on the following questions:
What was most challenging, most surprising, or inspiring about the project?
What did you learn about yourself and others while doing the project?
How can we take this work into our regular lives and keep the light shining?
What other projects can be done later in the year?
8. Celebrate the completion of the service project. Ideas for celebration include a pizza party with all participants, presenting to the parish at coffee hour, writing an article for the church bulletin or church newspapers, sharing photos of the event, etc.
9. The work of the OCA's Department of Christian Education is funded through the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards (FOS).