Blessed is the Kingdom: An Orthodox Church School Curriculum

Lesson 14 Preschool

Scripture: The New Testament

Objective: Students will understand that the New Testament fulfills the law and looks back to Christ.

Lesson Introduction 5 min

Start by **listening** to the Liturgy Link of the Epistle**:**

> *The reading of the Scripture at Liturgy is essential. There is an unbreakable link between the word (Scripture) and the sacrament (Eucharist). By reading the Scripture at the Liturgy it prepares us for and leads up to the chalice. Just like receiving the Eucharist helps us become Christ like, so does reading the Scriptures.*

Hold up the Orthodox Study Bible and **say**:

> *When listening to the Bible it is important that we listen, if we try to hear in a place with a lot of noise and distractions it may be challenging. Let's play The Noisy Circle Game.*

Have students **sit** in a circle. **Choose** a topic such as, "your favorite movie", "what did you do yesterday", or "your favorite animal". **Set** a timer for 10 seconds. **Explain** that when you say go, everyone in the circle begins talking about the topic at the same time. When the timer goes off, **ask** each student about someone else's answer. Then **say**:

> *It's impossible to listen while talking ourselves and in such a loud noisy environment. Let's try one more time, but this time only one person talks at a time, and the rest listen quietly.*

Try this, and then **say**:

> *See how much easier it is? When we read or listen to the Bible, we should pray first, and then treat it as a letter written especially for us by God. It takes time to read it and have it seep into our head, our hearts, and let it transform our lives.*

Opening Prayer

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.

Liturgy Links

https://www.oca.org/media/video/20th-aac-thursday-morning-divine-liturgy

The Epistle

Skip to 44:55-46:10 for this portion

Supplies Needed

- Audio of the Epistle

Lesson—25 min

Supplies Needed

- New Testament Book Shelf Printable
- New Testament Book Printable
- Scissors (one per student)
- Crayons or Markers
- Orthodox Study Bible

Teacher Resources

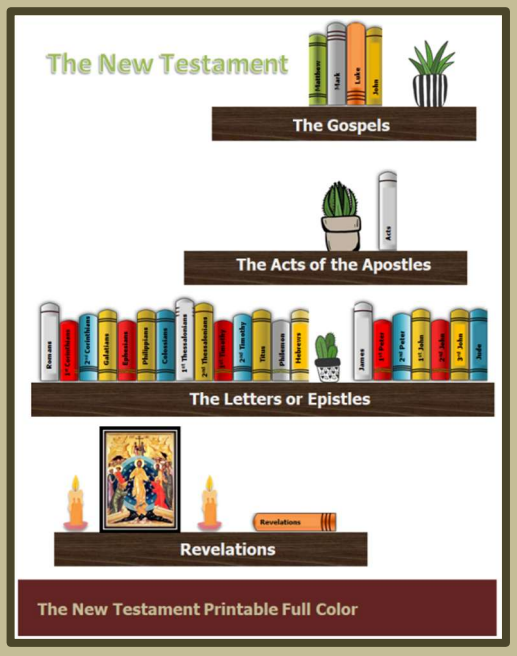
OCA Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs: A Manual for Adult Instruction

https://www.oca.org/cdn/PDFs/2023-0609-EOCB.pdf

Chapter 7 The Scriptures in the Orthodox Church

The New Testament

https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/new-testament



During the Liturgy we read from the New Testament. As we talked about, it is important that we are attentive. You will even hear the priest remind us by saying, "Let us attend". Like the Old Testament, the New Testament is divided into categories and there are many books in each of these categories.

> *The Orthodox Study Bible New Testament has 27 books in it. These can be organized into four categories:*

- ***The Gospels****-recall the life of Jesus Christ*
- ***Acts****-goes through the Acts of the Apostles, mainly Peter and Paul's lives starting at Pentecost*
- ***The Epistles****-letters written by Paul instructing churches and communities;* ***The General Epistles****- letters written by the name of each book to instruct communities. The Epistles are read during the Liturgy.*
- ***Revelation****-speaks prophetically about current events, events to come, and looks forward to God's Kingdom*

Hand out the New Testament Book Shelf printable. Decide based on the amount of time you have and the ability of your class if you'd like them to each have a Full Color Book Shelf, a Coloring Page Book Shelf, or a Build Your Own Book shelf. The Build Your Own requires cutting and gluing (the cutting could be done prior to class), the black and white coloring page requires them just to color a premade page, and the full color just requires pointing and looking.

Start by pointing out, coloring, or gluing The New Testament words to the page. Then **say**:

> *This is the book shelf library for the New Testament. Why do you think we have four book shelves?* (There are 4 categories of books in the New Testament. Let's review them.)

As you go over each book shelf have students, **point** to, **color**, or **glue** their shelves and the books on them. **Review** the purpose of each category of books.

- ***The Gospels****-recall the life of Jesus Christ*
- ***Acts****-goes through the Acts of the Apostles, mainly Peter and Paul's lives starting with Pentecost*
- ***The Epistles****-letters written by Paul instructing churches and communities;* ***The General Epistles****- letters written by the name of each book to instruct communities*
- ***Revelation****-speaks prophetically about current events, events to come and looks forward to God's Kingdom*

Lesson Continued

5 Minute Bonus

Bishop Icon Walk

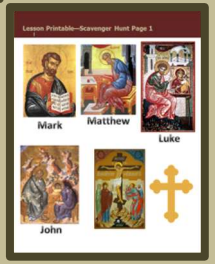
Bishops are tasked with teaching the scriptures, so icons show them holding a book—The Gospel book. This is because they preach from it. See if you can find icons of Bishops in your church holding the Gospel.

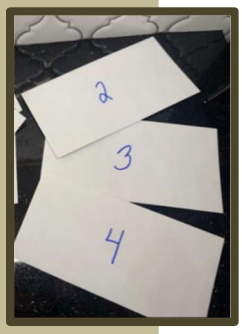
You could also point out the writers of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; if they are on the iconostasis doors. If not, you could show students a picture of iconostatsis doors with them featured.

Supplemental Ideas

Jenga Full Bible Version

Add the New Testament pictures on to the Old Testament Jenga set. This gives you a game that can be pulled out any time as a quick and fun review of the both the Old and New Testament books of the Bible.





Once all of the books and shelves are completed, students may **color** or **glue** the plants, candles, and icon onto their shelves. As you look at the icon, **ask**:

What is this an icon of? (The Resurrection)

*Who is Christ reaching out to? (*Adam and Eve*)*

*What are Adam and Eve standing in? (*Their coffins*)*

Christ is raising them to Paradise with Him. Christ destroyed the power of death, and this is shown in Christ resurrecting Adam and Eve. Just like we hear in St. John Chrysostom's sermon that is read at Pascha "O death where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory? Christ is Risen and thou art overthrown."

Turn to the first page of Matthew. Have students **look** at the top of the page and read the word "Matthew", and then **say:**

Today we are going to have a New Testament Scavenger Hunt. I have hidden four envelopes around the classroom. See if you can find number 1.

Have students **search** for the envelope, **open** it, and then **say**:

The first four books of the New Testament are the Gospels. Let's review who wrote each one. (Review Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John's icons.) *Who do the Gospels talk about?* (Christ)

Go over the images in the envelope, and then have students **search** for the 2nd envelope and **open** it.

The envelope about Acts has an icon of the Apostles in it. Acts talks about all the things that the Apostles did. They went out to tell the world about Christ. Can you name any of the Apostles?

Go over the images in the envelope, and then continue by **searching** for envelope 3 and then envelope 4:

Let's look in envelope 3. It has an icon of St. Paul. Why would he be in an envelope about the epistles? (Because he wrote a lot of them.) *But what was an epistle?* (A letter) *That must be why there are pictures of letters in this envelope too.*

Can we find envelope 4? This shows Christ enthroned or sitting on a throne. Revelations talks about the world to come and Christ returning. Why would St. John's icon be in here again? (He wrote Revelations).

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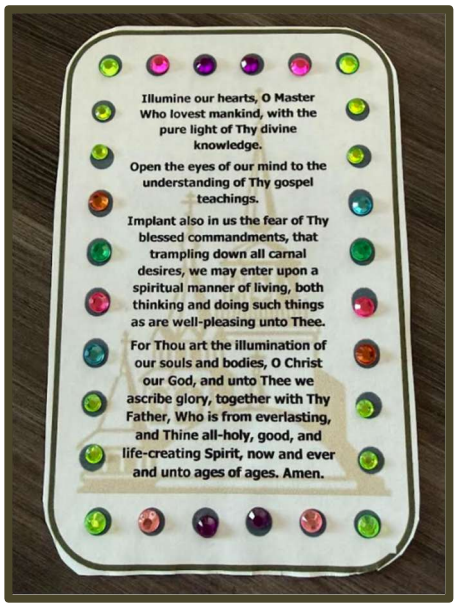
Lesson Activities

Jeweled Prayer Card—10 min

Supplies needed: printable prayer card (one per student), sticker jewels, scissors

Prior to class print the prayer card printable and cut out the prayer card, one per student. Students place a sticker jewel on each of the circles bordering the prayer card.

Read through the prayer, and explain that this is a good prayer to say prior to reading the Bible. They could keep it in their icon corner at home, in their Bible, or in their Bible tote bag they made last week.

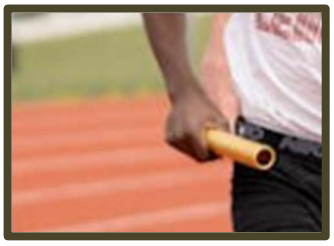


Baton Relay Race—10 min

Supplies needed: paper towel tubes (2), cones or items to run around, room to run

Split the class into two teams. Teams line up behind a line. The first person in line receives a paper towel tube "Baton". Then explain:

When we read scripture it must be read with tradition. Christ and His apostles have passed the teaching of the scriptures down. They are handed from one to another like you hand off a baton in a relay. To run this relay, the first person runs up and around the cone, and then hands the "baton" to the next person in line. Just like the apostles passed down the understanding of the scriptures. The second person runs up and around the cone, and then hands off the "baton". This continues until everyone has had a turn. The team who finishes first wins.



Closing Thoughts– 5 min

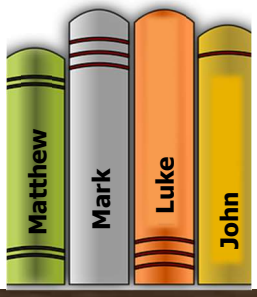
Remind them that the Old Testament gives us the Law, and looks forward to Christ. Then ask: *what does the New Testament do?*

It fulfills the Law and looks back to Christ.

Closing Prayer

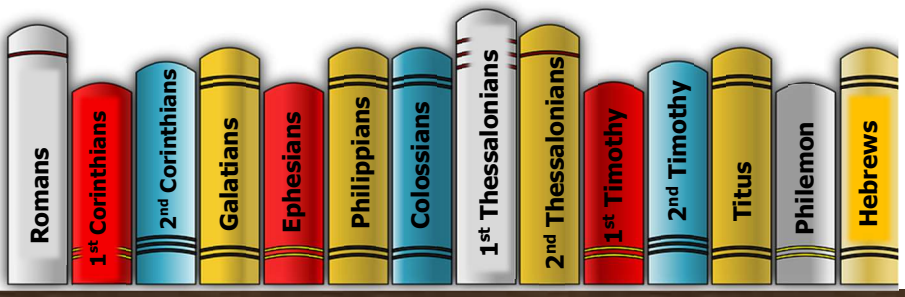
It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you!

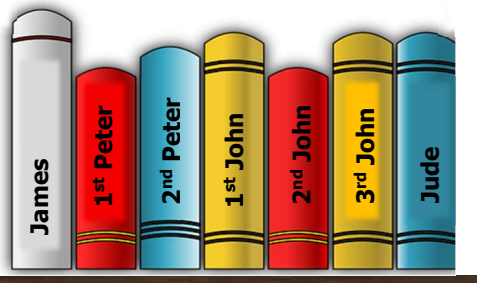
The New Testament



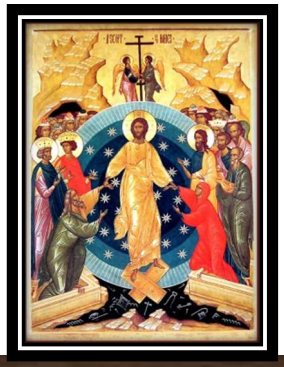
The Gospels

The Acts of the Apostles





The Letters or Epistles



Revelations

The New Testament Printable Full Color

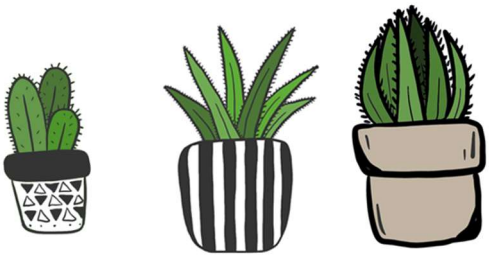
The New Testament

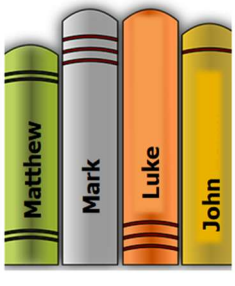
The Gospels

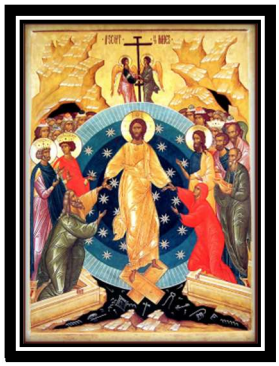
The Acts of the Apostles

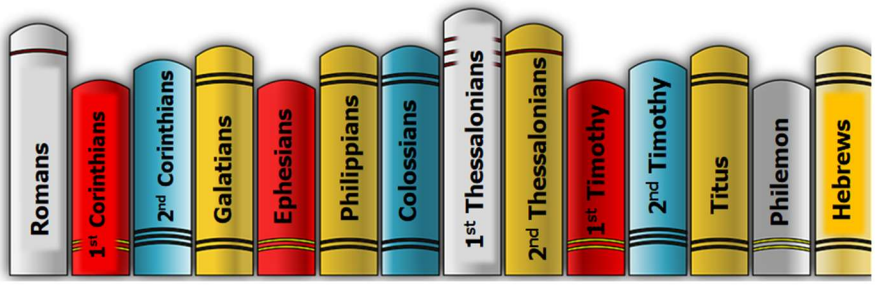
The Letters or Epistles

Revelations



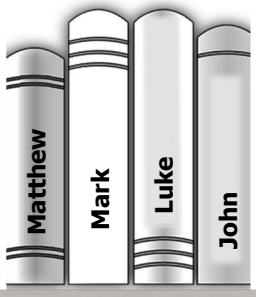






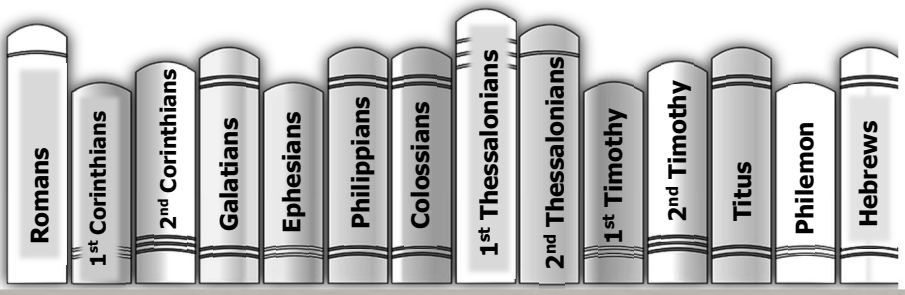
The New Testament Printable Build Your Own

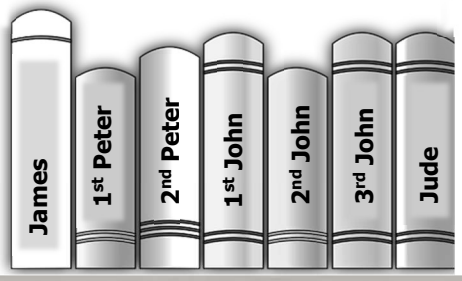
The New Testament



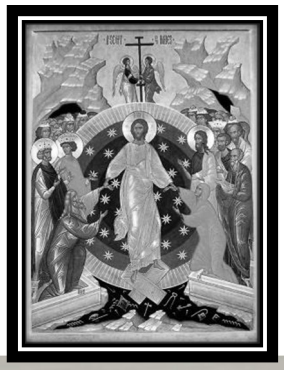
The Gospels

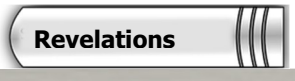
The Acts of the Apostles





The Letters or Epistles





Revelations

The New Testament Coloring Page

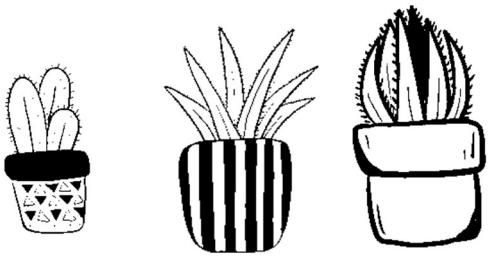
The New Testament

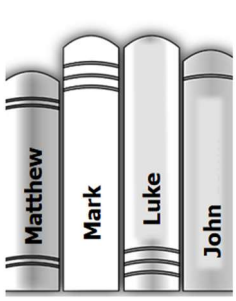
The Gospels

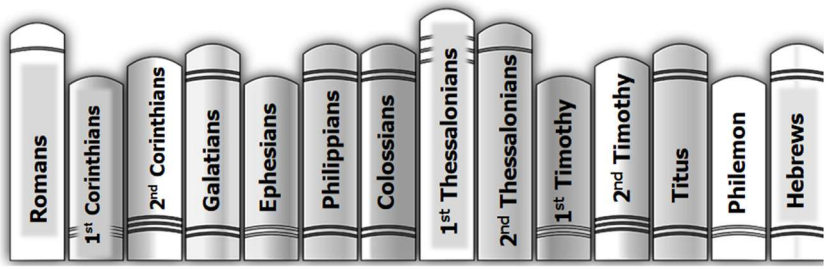
The Acts of the Apostles

The Letters or Epistles

Revelations

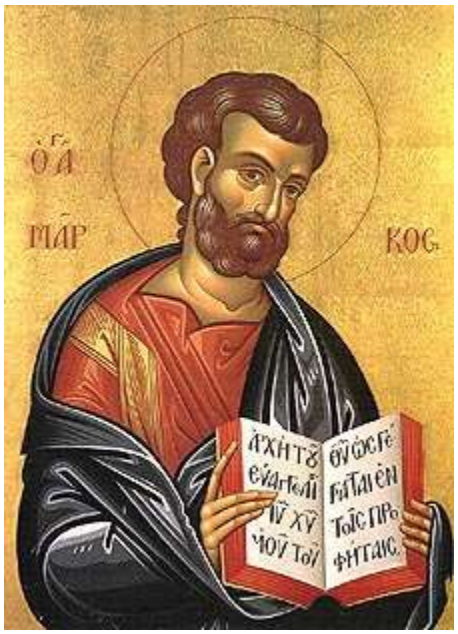






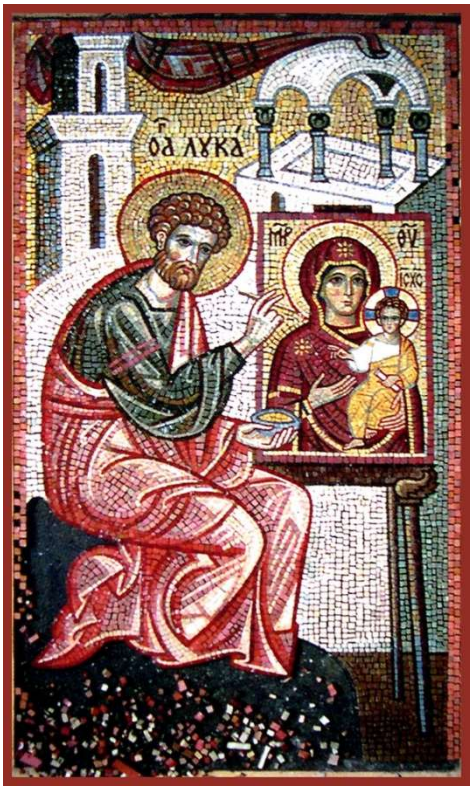
The New Testament Build Your Own Coloring Page

Lesson Printable—Scavenger Hunt Page 1



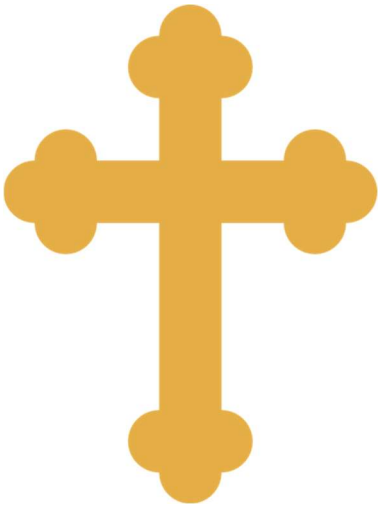
Mark

Matthew



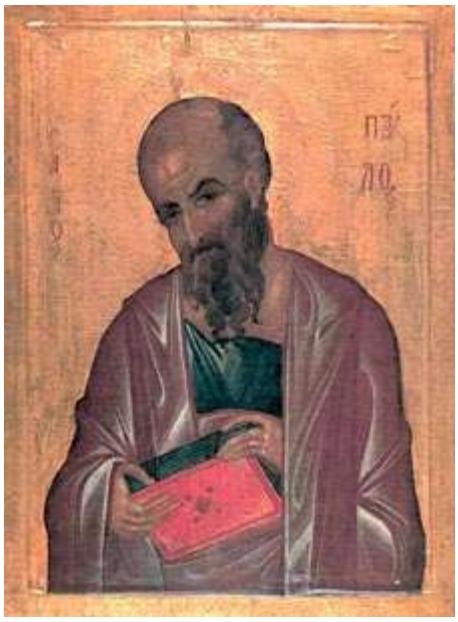
Luke

John



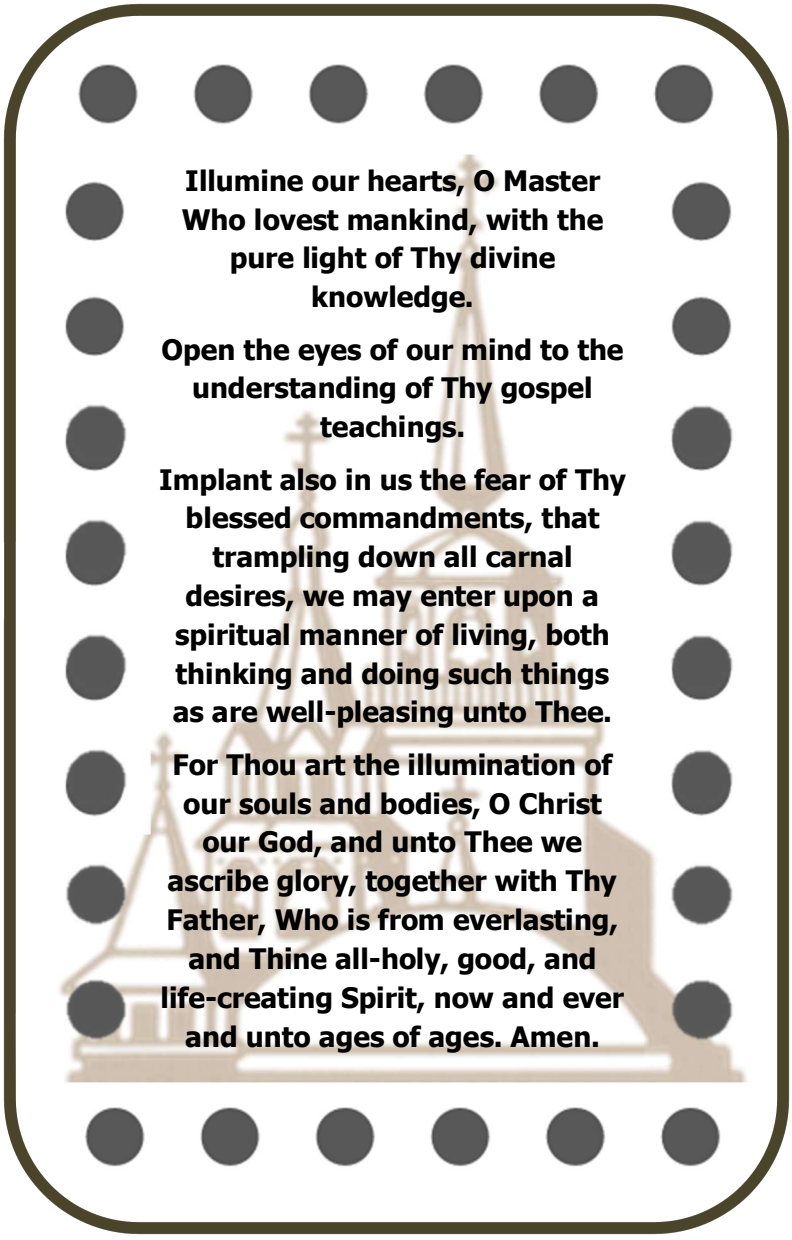
Lesson Printable—Scavenger Hunt Page 2

Lesson Printable—Scavenger Hunt Page 3



Lesson Printable—Scavenger Hunt Page 4

Craft Printable—Laced Prayer Card



Lesson Printable—Jenga Images