

# Blessed is the Kingdom: An Orthodox Church School Curriculum



## Lesson 6

## Preschool

### The Beatitudes

Objective: Through the Beatitudes, students will learn about the blessings God bestows on us and what is asked of us in return.

#### Lesson Introduction

5 min

Begin by **saying**:

*Last week we learned about who God is. Do you remember the three ALL's we used to describe him? (All powerful, all knowing, and fills all things)*

**Review** the motions you paired with the three ALL's, and then **say**:

*We helped learn about God through listening to the first Antiphon in the Liturgy. Today we are going to listen to the next part of the service: The Beatitudes. We hear these in each Liturgy, but Jesus first said them when He was preaching to His disciples. It's part of His Sermon on the Mount or when He taught His disciples on the mountain.*

**Listen** to the Liturgy Link of The Beatitudes. Then **say**:

*The Beatitudes help to guide us on how to act, think, and speak. They are to help us be Christ like and renew our connection with God. Do you remember how we talked about Adam and Eve and how they lost that connection with God?*

**Take** answers to help review the story of Adam and Eve. Then **continue**:

*The Beatitudes are almost like a set of directions on how to reconnect with God or how to be His disciples. They show us a blessed way to live, and the rewards that await us. They help tell us how to "be".*

### 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 Link

#### The Beatitudes

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

Skip to 27:00-29:00 for this portion

### Teacher Resource

#### OCA Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs: A Manual for Adult Instruction

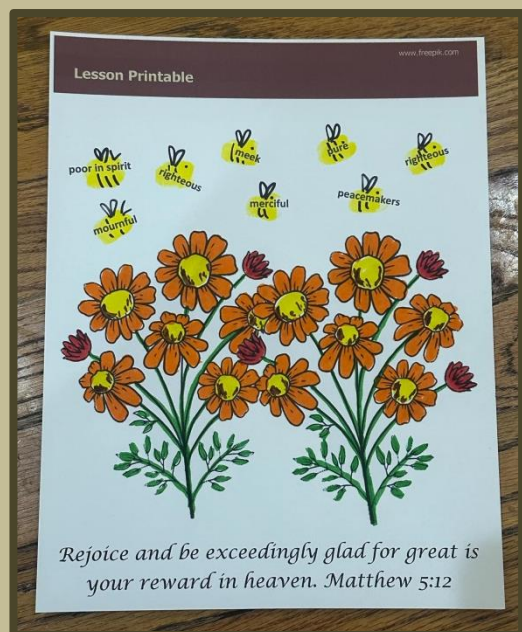
<https://www.oca.org/cdn/PDFs/2023-0609-EOCB.pdf>

Chapter 3 God, Jesus, and the Christian Life

# Lesson—25 min

## Supplies Needed

- Lesson 6 printable flower coloring sheet (one for classroom)
- Lesson 6 printable flower coloring sheet (one per student)
- Yellow ink pads or yellow washable marker
- Crayons or markers
- Hand or baby wipes



**Hold up** the Lesson 6 Printable page and have a yellow ink pads or yellow washable marker with you. If using the washable markers, you will color on their thumb before each thumb print. **Say:**

*This paper has flowers on it. What is attracted to flowers? (Bees) Just as bees are attracted to flowers, we are attracted to God or a connection with Him. As we talk about each Beatitude, we are going to add a thumbprint "bee" on top of the word. This will remind us to BE like Christ by doing these things. We will start with a class paper that we can hang in our classroom, as we need to work together to become Christ like, but then you will complete your own to take home.*

**Complete** an example thumbprint on your paper, so students understand how. Then **say:**

*Listening to the Beatitudes there are a lot of big words, so let's go through each one and simplify them. **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.** What does poor mean? (Expect poor in money or not having a lot of things) While poor can mean that you don't have a lot of things or money, poor in spirit means more. It means you are humble and seeking God for all things. You don't rely on earthly things but are dependent on God.*

**Help** a student **stamp** a thumbprint over the words "poor in spirit" on your picture. Then **continue:**

*Let's read the next one. **Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.** Mourn can be another word for sad or tearful. What is something that makes you sad? (Expect answers about missing someone or something or a pet or person dying) Life can be sad, but this tells us that God has the power to comfort us, and we are promised this.*

**Help** a student **stamp** a thumbprint over the word "mourn" on your picture. Continue this after each of the verses.

*Next we have **Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.** Another word for meek would be tame or content. It might be easier to understand what meek means by looking at the opposite. What do you do when you get really angry? (Expect answers like yell, stamp their feet, cry, and name call) Anger is the opposite of being tame or meek. Being meek is having control of these emotions. You may feel upset, but you are able to control how you act and what you say. God can help us control these emotions.*

# Lesson Continued

## 5 Minute Bonus

Find the icon of the Resurrection of Christ. It is generally in the eastern end of the church building. Explain that it is placed there to help us focus while praying. It helps remind us what is to come.

## Supplemental Ideas

- **Video of the Sermon on the Mount Bible story**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze7w3-BL3OM>

- **Missing the Mark Activity**

Talk more about trying to not miss the mark or sin. Grab stickers and a piece of paper. Draw a flower on the piece of paper. Blindfold each student and have them try to stick their sticker on the flower. Do it a second time while guiding them. Talk about how having help from others or God makes this easier to do.



***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.*** What happens when you get really hungry? What do you feel and do? (Stomach growls, drool when smell food, get grumpy, repeatedly ask parents for food) *This level of hungry and craving is what we are supposed to feel toward God and His kingdom. We should what to seek that before anything else. It should be the most important thing in life. This makes us righteous.*

***Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*** Showing mercy means forgiving or being kind. Give me an example of when you were kind or forgave someone.

***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*** Another way to explain this would be to say "clean of heart". What does it mean when something is clean? (Not dirty) How do you clean things at home? (Wipe them, scrub them, soap) God wants us to desire Him only and have only love in our hearts. When we mix in other things like anger or jealousy, then our hearts are no longer pure. What are some ways we can help "clean" our heart? (Prayer, attend church, ask for forgiveness, help others)

***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*** Have you ever been in a fight? What did you do that made the fight worse? (Argue, name call, yell) What could you do to stop a fight? (Apologize, speak softly, say kind things) God wants us to only have love in our hearts, and use this love to make peace with others, not fight.

***Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*** Persecuted is a big word for being treated badly. It could be being picked on or called names or made fun of. God wants us to do what is right because it is right, not because people are telling us good job. If someone told you that going to church was dumb, would you still go? God wants us to want to go to church, pray, or try to be like Christ because it is the right thing to do. He wants us to seek Him and renew that connection with Him. And if we do we will be rewarded in heaven.

If you look at the bottom of the picture, you'll see a Bible verse that ends the Beatitudes. It says ***Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.*** This is from the book of Matthew, where Matthew writes down what Jesus said during His Sermon on the Mount.

**Hand out** papers to each student and ink pads or makers. Have them **stamp** their bees all at once. **Add** wings, an eye, and a stripe or two to each bee with a black marker or crayon. **Color** the flowers, and encourage students to take them home to hang up.



# Lesson Activities

## Coffee Filter Flower—10 min

**Supplies needed:** 3 coffee filters per student, 1 green pipe cleaner per student, washable markers, spray bottle with water, paper towels or hair dryer, tape, printable “Rejoice and Be Glad” leaves

**Say:** *To help remind us to be all of the Beatitudes today, we are going to make a flower to take home. Each time we see it hopefully we will remember to be each of the things we talked about today.*

Have students color all over their 3 coffee filters, with washable markers and then spray them with water so that the colors run together. Allow the coffee filters to dry (maybe try the game or the 5 minute bonus activity here). If too wet, you can blot with paper towels or use a hair dryer. Once dry, stack the coffee filters on top of each other, and then fold them in half, then in half again. Take the pipe cleaner and fold it over the folded tip tightly, so that it remains as a stem. Then open the coffee filter to look like flower petals. Finally tape one of the printed leaves that say “Rejoice and Be Glad” to the pipe cleaner stem.



## Feats of Strength—10 min

**Supplies needed:** ball, clean trashcan or similar container

Start by **saying:**

*We learned about what we should do to become closer to God. We also talked a lot about what we shouldn't do. We want to be peacemakers, not start fights. We want to be meek, not angry. Our goal is to be pure of heart which means only having love in our hearts. When we are angry or mean, we are sinning or missing the mark for what God wants us to do. So let's practice hitting the mark today.*

Set up the trashcan a bit of a distance away. Have students take turns making a shot with the ball to try to get it into the trashcan. After everyone has tried, move it closer.

**Ask:** *What helps us get closer to God?* (Prayer, attending church)

Try shooting again and see if it is easier when closer to the trashcan. Keep moving the trashcan to harder or easier places as time allows.



## Closing Thoughts— 5 min

Review their coloring page with their thumbprint bees. Have them yell “Bee” before you read each beatitude: such as “Bee” poor in spirit; “Bee” mournful.

## 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!