

Sunday School Syllabus

Year 2



COPTIC ORTHODOX DIOCESE *of* LONDON

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The Lord Jesus Obeyed His Parents

Bible References: Luke 2:41-52

Lesson Aim:

To learn that we should obey our parents as the Lord did.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: Our parents love us and whatever they ask us to do is for our benefit.

Feel: Respect and love for our parents.

Practice: Listening to our parents.

Memory Verse:

"And [He] was subject to them." (Luke 2:51)
(Luke 2:51)



Jesus talks with the pharisees in the temple of Jerusalem

Lesson Content

St Mary, St Joseph and the Lord Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. It is the greatest feast for the Jews. Jesus was left behind among a crowd of people. After three days His worried parents found Him in the temple, discussing with some Pharisees. Jesus obediently left the temple and followed His parents to Nazareth.

Jesus is God, yet He wants to teach us a lesson by example. We must obey our parents.

Why Should We Obey Our Parents?

- Our parents love us. Whatever they ask us to do is for our benefit, even if we do not understand it at first.
- God told us to obey and honour our parents.
- When we obey our parents, we receive God's blessings. Isaac obeyed Abraham when he told him to carry wood for the offering. Isaac did not know where they were going or what the offering was for, but he obeyed. Hence, he deserved to get the blessing of his father Abraham.

Ask the children if any one of them has disobeyed their parents, even once. If they say they have always obeyed and never disobeyed their parents, verify if indeed they are telling the truth. If one of them admits to disobeying their parents sometimes, the teacher should praise that student for being truthful.

The consequence of disobedience is that we lose hope in God's help.

Application



Exercise

- We must take the Lord Jesus as our example in everything that we do. As He was obedient to His parents, so we should be to ours.



The House of God Is to Be Revered

The Church: Meeting with God

Bible References: 1 Kings 6-8, 2 Chronicles 2-7, Matthew 21:12-16, John 2:12-22

Lesson Aim:

To understand the holiness of the House of God, and how we should behave in His house.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: God is zealous over the holiness of His house.

Feel: The importance of venerating God's house, and to feel awe on entering His house.

Practice: Respecting the House of God.

Memory Verse:

"Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever."
(Psalms 93:5)



Lesson Content

Our story today is about a boy called Abraham who lived in the city of Jerusalem. He lived a very long time ago in the days when our Lord Jesus Christ was still on earth.

Abraham's mum said to him, "get yourself ready, Abraham, because tomorrow we are going to the Temple. You need to have a bath and get your clothes ready; and we have to sleep early, so that we can get up early and go to the Temple to pray."

Abraham was very happy that he was going to the Temple, because that is the place where he prays and talks with God. He loves God, and tells Him everything that makes him happy and sad. He also asks Him for anything that he needs. Sure enough, Abraham prepared himself before going to bed for going to the Temple in the morning.

He woke up early with great enthusiasm, because he is going where? Correct! He is going to the Temple. And while he was walking with his mum, he asked her a question:

Abraham: Mum, why do we call the Temple the 'Temple of Solomon'? Isn't it the Temple of God?

Mum: Of course, my dear, it is Temple of God, but we call it the Temple of Solomon because Solomon is the one who built it.

Abraham: So before Solomon, there was no Temple?

Mum: In the beginning, our fathers used to build altars from stone and offer on them sacrifices to God, for example cattle and sheep. During the time of Moses the Prophet, the Lord said to him: I want to live in the midst of the people that they may meet with Me. That is why I want you to build for Me a big tent, that will be like the Temple; and I want you to call it the Tent of Meeting. And divide it inside into different areas: The Holy Place and The Holy of Holies (like the nave and the sanctuary in the church). Not anyone can go inside it, but there are rules and conditions for going in: My house must be quiet, and tidy, and holy, and you must consecrate people for my service from the tribe of Levi to be priests and to serve me in the Tent of Meeting.

Abraham: But mum, why did God ask for a tent to be made rather than a house?

Mum: At that time, the people of Israel moved a lot from place to place and they could take the tent with them on their journey. But when the people settled in this place, which God had prepared for them, there was a king called David who loved God very much and desired to build a house for God. But God said to him: no David, I want your son to build My temple. David said to Him: as You wish Lord. He prepared all the materials for his son, Solomon, and commanded him to build a temple. As soon as Solomon became king of Jerusalem, he built the great Temple of God and used stones and wood and a lot of gold and it was a very large and magnificent building. When he had finished building the temple, Solomon prayed a long and beautiful prayer in which he said to God "that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day", which means that God is present in His house and His eyes are upon it all day and night. He gets upset when we don't respect the House of God because that means that we don't respect God Himself, who is the owner of this house. In order for God to show that He will dwell in this house, His glory filled the Temple and a cloud filled it.

Abraham: Wow! So that means that the Temple is very old, right?

Mum: That's true, my dear. This temple was built by Solomon a long time ago and it stood there for a long time. But the king from Babylon, called Nebuchadnezzar, came and fought against Jerusalem and took the people who were in it as captives and plundered all the treasures in the Temple. After 70 years, when the Jews returned from captivity, they began to build the temple in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra and Zerubbabel. A long time after that, King Herod renovated the Temple, which means he made repairs to the buildings that had become ruined. Do you know Abraham, I've heard that the Lord Jesus is here in Jerusalem, which means He'll definitely come to the Temple.

Abraham: If the Lord Jesus is in Jerusalem, then He will definitely come to the Temple. I really want to see Him!

Mum: It is important that, when we get to the Temple, you stay by my side because the Temple is very crowded.

Abraham: *(Abraham and his mum arrive at the Temple. Abraham saw the people selling and buying in the Temple and found the Temple was dirty, because the people there selling animals, birds, cattle and doves to the people who wanted to offer sacrifices. There was a very bad smell. There were also people there arguing with each other, inside the Temple, because of money. There were even people hitting each other. It was a bad sight.)*

Why is the temple so crowded? What's all this noise? I want to go into the Temple to pray. I don't like to see this bad sight. I am worried that the Lord Jesus will come and see what is happening in the Temple. He will definitely be very upset.

Sure enough, my friends, Abraham saw Jesus coming from afar. The Temple looked very bad with the people who were selling and buying and fighting each other. Surely, my friends, the Lord Jesus arrived at the Temple and looked around at the people while they were counting the money and at the animals which were in the Temple. How do you think He felt?

Abraham saw the Lord Jesus after a while being very upset and saying to the people: Take these things out of My house. My house is for prayer, not for buying and selling. It is not a market; it is the House of God. My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves!

The Lord Jesus overturned the tables so that they would leave. Sure enough, my friends, all the people collected their things and left and the disciples cleaned the Temple where the people were selling and buying. Abraham was also helping them because the House of God must be clean and should be respected.

We also, my friends, must respect the House of God which is our church. We must walk quietly and respectfully in the church. Our voices inside church must be low. We must think before we do anything in church, whether that thing would please God or not. Do you think it is right, while we are in church and while the liturgy is being prayed, that we eat or talk or play for example? Definitely not. Let's remember the Psalm that says: "Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever." (Psalms 93:5).



The Church is the Gate of Heaven

Jacob's Ladder

Bible References: Genesis 28

Lesson Aim:

To see that the Church is the gate of heaven.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The story of the ladder of Jacob and what it symbolises.
- Feel:** The reverence of God's presence in the church.
- Practice:** Concentrating in prayer while in church as you are meeting with God.

Memory Verse:

"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"
(Genesis 28:17)



Background Information for the Servant

Jacob

The story of Jacob gives hope to the sinner who is drowning in his sins. Jacob began his life with various weaknesses and sins, and if it was not for the grace of God which sustained him, it would have been impossible for him to become a son of the promise and of the blessing. The life of Jacob is given entirely in the book of Genesis.

The Angels

Angels are spiritual beings, and they are rational and powerful. The ability and power of angels surpasses the power of man, but they are not all-powerful like God (2 Peter 2:11). Angels move at the speed of a flash of lightning (Ezekiel 1:14), and have the power to appear and disappear. It is not possible to count them as they are innumerable (Hebrews 12:22). They continually praise and worship God; and they obey what He commands, for they are ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14). At the end of time, they will gather the people for judgement (Matthew 13:39).

The Ladder of Bethel

In a vision at night, Jacob saw a ladder fixed upon the earth and its top reached to heaven. He saw this vision on his way from the house of his father to the house of his mother's brother, Laban, having fled from the face of Esau. In the vision, he saw angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder. This vision was a revelation of God's special care to Jacob. The ladder was a connection between heaven and earth upon which the angels came down; and God himself was at the head of the ladder. Jacob's ladder is considered as a symbol of the Mother of God, the Virgin St Mary, from whom came the Lord Jesus Christ incarnate.

The Presence of God

The ladder of Jacob represents the presence of God in that place. This is what made our father Jacob cry out saying, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (Genesis 28:17).

The ladder of Jacob also represents the church, since the church is the place where God and the angels are present. The church is the house of God and the gate of heaven.

The servant in this lesson should place great emphasis on the awesomeness of the church, being the place in which God is present in its midst. Talk to the children how God through the ages has loved to dwell in the midst of his people. For example, in the Old Testament he commanded Moses to make the Tent of Meeting, He was pleased with the Temple which Solomon built and His glory filled the Temple on the day of its consecration. The visions of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel reveal to us the awesomeness of God's temple and the throne of God in the temple, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. In the New Testament, the church became the dwelling place of God with His people. The church was established on Covenant Thursday and was openly declared on the day of Pentecost in great reverence with the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Truly, how awesome is this place and how beautiful it is.

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Present to the children some images of different types of ladders and ask them some questions:

- What a ladder is used for?
- Is there a ladder that reaches up to heaven?
- Where is this ladder?
- Where is it mentioned?

Listen to the answers of the children and reply saying that there is a ladder which extends between heaven and earth, but this ladder is found only in the Holy Bible in one of its early books, Genesis, written by Moses the Prophet; in Genesis, he also recorded the lives of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This ladder was seen by our father Jacob in a dream while he was travelling from the house of his father to his uncle, his mother's brother. Let us see what his story is.

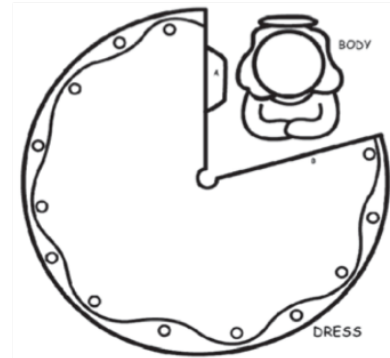


Paper Activity

Tools: Cardboard box, colouring pencils (including blue), paper and toothpicks.

Method of Presentation: prepare these tools and give the children the following instructions:

- Prepare the box out of card and colour it in blue to symbolise heaven.
- Fix a leaning ladder made out of the toothpicks to the cardboard box, then create cardboard angels using the template shown and attach them to the ladder. (You can make copies according to the number of children you are serving).
- Use pieces of card which have been rolled up to represent the rock which Jacob slept on.
- Below the ladder stick an image of Jacob sleeping on the cardboard rocks you have made, and at the top of the ladder stick a picture of the Lord Christ.



Lesson Content

Jacob wanted to take the blessing from his father, Isaac, so his mother, Rebekah, helped him by making a plot to deceive his father. As Isaac had poor eyesight, she told Jacob to go to his father Isaac and pretend that he was Esau, his firstborn, and that way he could receive the blessing from his father. It turned out that this plot was successful and Jacob took the blessing, but when Esau found out about it, he was determined to kill Jacob. Therefore Rebekah convinced Isaac to let Jacob flee to his uncle, Laban. Isaac called his son Jacob and blessed him and commanded him not to marry from the girls of Canaan but to marry one of the daughters of his uncle Laban (as mentioned in the book of Genesis of Moses the Prophet).

Rebekah stood outside the tent to say farewell to her son Jacob and said to him: God be with you my son; do not fear, for I will send to you shortly when the danger has passed, that you may return to me. So Jacob began his long journey to his uncle. He walked a great distance in the wilderness. While walking, he thought about how he would find food and how he would deal with the beasts in the wilderness, but Jacob knew that God loved him despite all his sins. When he was a long way from the tent of his father, the sun began to set and Jacob was all alone in the darkness of the harsh and empty wilderness. He knew that the difficulty he was experiencing was because of his sin.

He felt in need of God's protection, so he lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed. Being tired from the journey, he came to a rock and placed it under his head to sleep. No doubt many things went through his mind as he lay down in that place: he was thinking about his elderly father, and his mother who was worried and sad, and his angry brother, and the wild beasts in the wilderness. He also wondered whether God is with him, and whether He will forgive him for his sins. While he was thinking he was overcome by sleep and, as he slept, he saw a vision of a ladder, shiny and bright, extending from earth to heaven, and he saw upon it angels ascending and descending, and the Lord himself standing up at the head of the ladder. The whole place was bright. God spoke with Jacob saying: I am the Lord God of your fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and the land on which you are now resting I will give to you and your descendants, and through you and your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed. And I will be with you and preserve you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done with you what I have promised.

After seeing this vision, Jacob felt comforted for he had been fearful and lonely and had felt that God was far from him. But he now discovered that God was present and had sent his angel to look after him, even though he had sinned... Therefore Jacob acknowledged that God is present and said: This is the house of God and this is the gate of heaven!

Many times we think that God does not love us anymore, especially when we sin. Many times we do not feel His presence with us because of our sins. But God does not leave us, the same way He did not leave Jacob. He is always with us, even though we do not see Him with our physical eyes. He is very near to us and is with us at all times.

When Jacob awoke from the silence of the night, he wanted there to be a memorial in that place to remind him of God's mercy, love and care. So he took the stone that was underneath his head and made it upright as a pillar; and he poured oil over the stone, and stood in reverence before God and made three promises:

1. That he would take the Lord as his God.
2. That he would build a house to the Lord in that place.
3. That he will offer a tenth to God.

Jacob continued in his journey feeling comforted and strengthened, for he saw God with him. He continued on his way until he found Laban his uncle.

Notice that Jacob said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Truly the place where God is present is an awesome and reverent place. The church is the place where God is present. The church is a place of awe and reverence, for it is where we meet with God Himself, for this reason we should show awe and reverence in Church and concentrate on the prayers. In the church we meet and talk with God Himself, as if we have been transported to heaven.

Application



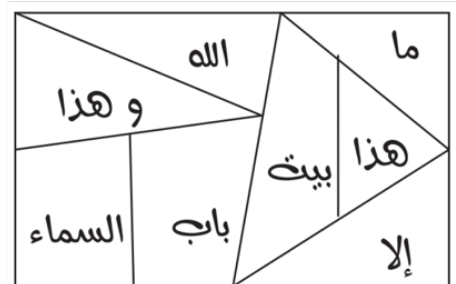
Bible Verse Memorisation

Memory Verse

"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

Method of Memorisation

Write the words of the verse in the form of a jigsaw and cut out every word by itself. In the lesson give the pieces to the children and ask them to put the pieces together.



Game

Role Play Game

Ask some of the children to act out the events of the story, playing Jacob, Isaac, Rebekah, Angels etc...

Do not give them a written script, but leave them to act out the event from their own imagination, as it will allow them to express themselves more freely.



Comprehension Questions

- Where was Jacob travelling to?
- What was Jacob feelings during his journey?
- What did Jacob see in his sleep?
- Was God with Jacob? How do you know?
- How should we behave in church? Why?



Exercise

- Train the children in the correct behaviour in the house of God, such as bowing before the altar, memorising the psalms prayers which are recited on the way to church and having reverence in prayer.
- Train them also to concentrate on the prayers in the church, as prayer is being in dialogue with God



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

I thank You God for your love and care for us in spite of our sins. Lord I thank You and praise You and ask You to be with me as You are with Jacob and gave him joy at seeing You when You gave him a promise of blessing. For this reason, I bow down between Your hands and ask for Your mercy and protection for ever. Allow me to feel Your presence in the church, that I may meet you as if I have been raised up to heaven. You are the loving God, You are with me and everyone of us at all times. Amen.



God Invites Me to His House

The Rite for the Church Building

Bible References: Exodus 25

Lesson Aim:

To remember that God invites me to His house and to learn the rite of building churches.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The sections of the church.

Feel: Joy in being in the church, the house of angels.

Practice: Having reverence for the house of God, and preserving its quietness.

Memory Verse:

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' "
(Psalms 122:10)



Background Information for the Servant

The "Church" is the name given to the congregation of the faithful and those who shepherd the congregation (the clergy), it is also the name of the building dedicated for worship.

A new church can only be built with permission from the bishop.

In olden times, the churches were built with three divisions divided by wooden screens or a built construction of medium height.

The first division is for the deacons and cantors. This is directly adjacent to the sanctuary.

The second division (called the Nave) is where the faithful stand (those who are baptised and repentant). This is the middle division in the church.

The third division is for the catechumens (those not yet baptised). This is the rear division in the church, where those who are nominated for entering the Faith would stand until they received the sacrament of Baptism. They were permitted to attend the Liturgy of the Word (the readings) and the sermon. At the end of the sermon they had to leave the church, as the Liturgy of the Faithful could only be attended by the Faithful.

It is God Himself who decreed the building of churches. He gave the original design of the church to Moses, as represented by the Tabernacle of meeting (Exodus 25, Hebrews 8:5). Likewise, Solomon made the Temple according to the design which God gave to David, his father, in the spirit. For this reason, there are special rules for building of churches which were handed down by our fathers the apostles and the early church fathers.

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Group Workshop

- Take your children on a tour inside a church and stand at various points like the icon stand, the ostrich egg, the doors, the lectern (Mangaleya) etc...
- Discuss what they know about these things, and the names of these things, and the reason for the respect given to them.
- Using ice cream sticks, get the children to make a picture of Noah's Ark.
- Discuss the likenesses between Noah's Ark and the church. See if they can notice that the churches are built in the likeness of Noah's Ark?

Lesson Content

The lesson may be presented in the form of a puppet pantomime, as a dialogue between two puppets, "Kooky and Mandy":

Kooky: Mandy, Mandy, what are you doing?

Mandy: I'm drawing a church!

Kooky: Wow! I love drawing. Can I help you? Are you drawing the church on the inside or the outside?

Mandy: I'm drawing the outside first, and after that I will draw the inside.

Kooky: I'm really curious to know in which shape you will draw the church?

Mandy: What do you mean in which shape?

Kooky: Well, we had a lesson in Sunday School to tell us that the church can be built in the shape of either a Cross, a Circle or a Ship/Ark.

Mandy: What is the meaning behind these shapes?

Kooky: These shapes remind us that the church is a symbol of salvation: The Cross is the sign of our salvation, the Ship is like Noah's Ark which saved Noah and his children from the flood, likewise the church saves us from the sins of the world. The Circle reminds us of our Lord having no beginning and no end. The Rectangular shape shows us that God reaches every corner of the world.

- Mandy:** Wow, I think I am going to draw it in the shape of a ship!
- Kooky:** Great! Don't forget that the church has three doors, the main door is in the western side, and above it are domes which remind us of heaven.
- Mandy:** Oh and let's also draw the church tower which contains the bell of the church.
- Kooky:** Yes, truly the church towers are very important, for the lights at the top of the towers remind us that the Church is a light to the world and the bells would call people to church. Of course we must not forget the crosses on top of the towers and dome.
- Mandy:** Definitely.
- Kooky:** Wow! The church looks very beautiful from outside, it looks amazing!
- Mandy:** Do you like it?
- Kooky:** Yes I love it! I'm really happy that I'm helping you. By the way, we need to go over how the church is divided on the inside so we don't forget anything while we are drawing it.
- Mandy:** Yes we can't forget the Sanctuary and the Nave of the church.
- Kooky:** That's correct. The Sanctuary is the holy place that symbolises heaven and inside it is the Altar
- Mandy:** Yes, the Altar is where the priest offers up the Body and Blood of our Lord.
- Kooky:** Yes that's right. By the way, the Altar used to be built above the relics of the martyrs (that is their bodies).
- Mandy:** Also, on top of the Altar is an Ark (box) called the throne (or pi totcs in Coptic), which represents the Lord's presence with us at all times on the Altar. On the eastern side there is a recess/apse in which there is a picture of Christ the Pantocrator (Almighty), and around Him around the Cherubim and the Seraphim.
- Kooky:** We should draw what is inside the Sanctuary, and also draw our father, the priest, and the deacons, who alone serve in the Sanctuary.
- Mandy:** Yes, of course, you know the Sanctuary is a holy place and we must enter and exit in an orderly way when we go to church.
- Kooky:** Outside the Sanctuary we should think about the iconostasis!
- Mandy:** We should draw the icons of the Apostles and the Martyrs and Saints according to their order on the iconostasis.
- Kooky:** Let's also draw three doors in the iconostasis, to symbolise the Holy Trinity. The central door is called the Royal Door, because the sanctuary represents heaven, and the Altar is the Throne of God, and the Royal Door is the door of heaven.
- Mandy:** And don't forget the Ostrich Egg which is placed before the iconostasis!
- Kooky:** Of course, it's a symbol of hope in the resurrection: the egg appears to have no life in it, but the chick comes out of it alive as the Lord rose from the tomb after His death.
- Mandy:** Let's start thinking about the nave of the church now.
- Kooky:** Yes, the church is arranged into sections.
- Mandy:** Yes in sections. How many sections should we draw?
- Kooky:** Well, it depends...
- Mandy:** What do you mean, Kooky?
- Kooky:** A long time ago, they divided the church into three sections, but now there are only two.
- Mandy:** Let's keep it to how it was in olden times.
- Kooky:** The section for the deacons is raised three steps above the rest of the church. The deacons stand there for prayer; and of course it has the Mangaleya (the lectern).
- Mandy:** The Section for the Faithful is the place which the people stand to pray, the ladies on the right and the men on the left (as Psalm 45 says the Queen stands at the right side of the King. There are 12 columns in the nave, which symbolise the 12 disciples.

- Kooky:** The Section for the Catechumens used to be there a long time ago, and in there stood the people who were waiting to be baptised so that they may become among the faithful. They used to attend until the sermon and after that they left.
- Mandy:** Wow! How beautiful is the church and the way it is divided into sections.
- Kooky:** That's why they call the church the House of God or the House of Angels or the Bride of Christ.
- Mandy:** Don't forget that they also name churches after the martyrs and the saints and the apostles of Christ.
- Kooky:** Come let us go and draw it exactly as it should be!
- Mandy:** Let's go!

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What is the Church?
- What are the shapes in which the church is built?
- How many doors does the church have?
- How many sections is the church divided into?



Exercise

- The first thing we do when we enter the church is to kiss the threshold, and bow before the sanctuary.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

We thank You O Lord Jesus, that You open Your house to us so that we can meet with You there. In Your house we enjoy getting to know Your children the saints and the angels. Please Lord, teach us how to respect Your house, and keep it open to us at all times. Amen.



God Gave Me a Mind

Abigail and David

Bible References: 1 Samuel 25:1-24

Lesson Aim:

To understand that God set me above the rest of creation: He gave me a mind.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: Abigail's wisdom and calm thinking prevented evil from taking place.

Feel: That he is distinguished from the rest of creation: God gave him a mind which he ought to use for doing good.

Practice: Thinking calmly before taking any action and asking God in prayer to grant him wisdom and right conduct.

Memory Verse:

"A soft answer turns away wrath."
(Proverbs 15:1)



Background Information for the Servant

The lesson is divided into three sections (drama, story and felt board).

God rejected Saul the King because of his many sins, and sent Samuel the Prophet to anoint David, the son of Jesse, a shepherd of sheep and the cantor of Israel, as King instead of Saul.

Saul knew that God had rejected him and that David would become King instead of him. So he was determined to get rid of him. When David, accompanied by his men, escaped from Saul he was pursued by him with an army of soldiers in order to destroy him.

One time, when Saul was pursuing David, he fell into the hands of David; when his men advised him to get rid of him, David refused, saying his well-known quote: "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." (1 Samuel 24:6). What is strange is that David, whose heart was so pure towards Saul and was not overcome by feelings of wrath and the desire for revenge, would have fallen into the horrid sin of revenge, if it had not been for the wisdom of Abigail, the hero of this story.

Read 1 Samuel 25 carefully and note the following:

- Nabal was A wealthy man who owned a great inheritance: 3000 sheep and 1000 goats. The name Nabal means foolish. He lived up to his name for he was foolish in his conduct.
- As for his wife Abigail, her name means "my Father is joy". She was the complete opposite to Nabal, the Bible describing her as being of "good understanding and beautiful appearance."
- David was being hunted for by Saul. He moved from wilderness to wilderness and from place to place with his men. For a while he dwelt in the wilderness besides Nabal's shepherds. There was a good relation between the shepherds of Nabal and the men of David, because David and his men were a source of protection to the shepherds and their flock.
- After the death of Samuel the Prophet, David moved to the wilderness of Paran. There he heard that Nabal's shepherds were sheep. The occasion of shearing the flocks is one of joy and celebration, in which the shepherds offers sacrifices and hold feasts.
- So David, who was hunted for in the wilderness with the men that accompanied him, sent 10 of his men to Nabal that he might receive food from him. His men reminded Nabal of the good that David and his men had shown to his shepherds, protecting them and his possessions while they dwelt alongside them in the wilderness. They asked of a blessing of some of the food that had been prepared for this festive occasion.
- But Nabal did not answer them kindly. He replied "Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?"
- When he heard of Nabal's response, David became very angry and was determined to go to attack Nabal and his household and everything that he had.
- When Abigail heard about the situation, with great wisdom and in haste she arose and prepared a gift of food from the feast (or maybe that she had prepared specially), and she went speedily to meet David before he reached them.
- She met David, who was angry and on his way to fight against Nabal. In humility she bowed down to the ground and confessed the sin, attributing it to herself. Her words of wisdom had a great effect in calming David and making him come to his senses and regret what he was intending to do. You can read for yourself some of the golden words which this wise woman uttered.

Nabal is a foolish man.

Abigail reminded David of God ("as the Lord lives and as your soul lives") who had sent her to David to prevent him from avenging for himself and shedding innocent blood.

She was surprised how the man who did not seek to end the life of the person who exiled him (Saul), would today seek revenge for himself in such a way.

Is it possible that the man whom God chose to be king to uphold justice among his people would commit such a sin like this? It would be a black spot against him which would not be forgotten because he avenged for himself.

As a result of Abigail's words, David's wrath subsided, and he came to his senses. He blessed God saying, "blessed is the Lord God of Israel who sent you blessed is your advice and blessed are you."

(You can write the verse number before every sentence to make clear its meaning).

My Dear Servant:

- Wisdom is a gift from God. The apostle James taught us in his Epistle to ask wisdom from God: **“if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”** (James 1:5).
- Remember that the one who acts hastily in his wrath will fall into many evils.
- **“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”** (Proverbs 25:11).
- The mind is a gift from God. He granted it to man to use it for good: for himself, his family, his church, and his community, and all humanity.
- Do not return evil for evil but good for evil.
- God allowed us to see the weaknesses of the prophets, and even the apostles, to show that all are in need of salvation, and perfection belongs only to the Lord Jesus.

Therefore whenever you stand before those you serve, keep it in your heart always to learn from them and hear from their mouths the voice of God to you. And the Lord be with you.

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:

**Discussion**

In a discussion with the children the servant can bring up some situations which the children could face. The servant asks: What do you think of this conduct? Why is it wrong? What should they have done?

Examples of situations include:

- Lola plays with her toys by herself; she does not allow her sister to play with her and if her sister comes near she will hit her.
- Alex spends a lot of his time in front of the computer. He does not talk with anyone at home and does not obey what his mum asks of him. Furthermore, he neglects his homework.

Through discussion, the servant can convey to the children correct behaviour.

Explain why such behaviour is wrong, what is the right behaviour, and what you would do.

**Story**

The managers of one of the banks in a certain country were shocked to hear that some of the bank accounts of wealthy people were stolen from.

The theft took place by a very clever idea. The thief broke into the computer system in an unknown way. He obtained secret passwords, and used them to withdraw money from the accounts. No one knew how he was able to do this. He was certainly a very clever thief.

He was arrested, but refused to disclose the secret. They did not know what to do. It was important to arrest the thief but also to know how he stole the money. They wanted to make changes to the computer system so that it would never happen again, but the only one who could help them was the thief.

So they decided to release him, and persuaded him to work with them in the operations centre of the bank. They gave him the offer of a high position, a large salary and car and he would become a good citizen. They left him to decide whether he wanted to escape and return to a life of stealing or to accept their offer of a new job.

After thinking about it a lot, he decided to accept the offer and at the allocated time, he began working for the bank. He sat at his desk and began to work, making complex changes to the computer system so that such thefts may never happen again. He became a scientist and an inventor.

God gave us a mind and many gifts. We should use them in doing good.

Lesson Content**Part 1: Story**

The servant uses a felt board (or a large board that can be drawn on) which can be used to present the lesson.

Paper Character: The shepherds of sheep, some sheep on the ground with grass vegetation, David's men and David.

David's men meet with the shepherds, and the following dialogue takes place between them:

- Shepherd 1:** Who are those men? They've been in the wilderness here for several days. I wonder what brought them here!
- Shepherd 2:** They look like nice people. Let's go and introduce ourselves to them and ask who they are, and what brought them here. Come on.
- Shepherd 1:** *(Shepherds meet David's men).*
Hello, who are you? What brought you here in this wilderness. We don't see you shepherding any sheep.
- David's Men 1:** hello, why don't you tell us who your master is first, whose sheep you are shepherding?
- Shepherd 2:** Our master is very wealthy. He has 3000 sheep and 1000 goats and we are the shepherds.
- David's Men 2:** That many! He's a very wealthy man. What is his name?
- Shepherd 1:** His name is Nabal.
- David's Men 1:** *(The servant asks if anyone knows what Nabal means, and explains that it means foolish.)*
That's a very strange name!
- Shepherd 2:** We told you about ourselves; now tell us who you are.
- David's Men 2:** Our master is called David; we are living with him here.
- Shepherds:** *(At the same time.)*
David! Did you say David?
- David's Men 1:** Have you heard about David?
- Shepherd 1:** Of course! We know that the Lord chose him to be King instead of Saul, and that Saul is looking for David to kill him, that's why David is fleeing from him. Ah, so that's why you are here in the wilderness with David; you're in the wilderness here fleeing from Saul.
- David's Men 2:** Yes that's right. David is a very nice man and God loves him and chose. He says the Psalms and praises with them.
- Shepherd 2:** Yes, we actually heard someone yesterday praising with Psalms on a harp; but we did know who it was.
- Shepherd 1:** *(After a while David decided to move with his men to the wilderness of Paran. This dialogue then took place between David's men and Nabal's shepherds).*
Are you really going away from here?
- David's Men 1:** Yes, we are going with David to another place.
- Shepherd 2:** What a shame, we really loved you to stay, and we were so happy that you were with us here because from the day you came we have lived in safety: No thief has been able to come near us and not a single sheep has been stolen from us while you were with us. I guess it's good-bye now. Give our regards to David the Prophet and ask him to pray for us. Goodbye!

Part 2: Story

The servant should tell the children about the following:

- The shearing of sheep and the feast that is held on the occasion of shearing the sheep.
- That David heard about the celebration of the shearing of the sheep of Nabal and he sent 10 men to him.
- What David commanded his men to say to Nabal, since the men were in need of food.
- Nabal's response to David.
- David's anger and his determination to attack Nabal and all his household.
- One of the servants told Abigail what happened.

Part 3: Felt Board

Present a picture of Abigail as a beautiful woman, draw a donkey and the types of food she took with her.

Present the following points to the children:

- When the lady called Abigail heard what happened, she took all these nice things and the food and went in a hurry to meet David and give them to him (show the food in the drawing).
- Abigail, who was riding on a donkey, went to meet David who was on his way to them. When she met him, she bowed down.
- Abigail spoke to David saying: Forgive me. Consider that I am the one who has done wrong. I didn't hear that you had sent your men. If I had heard I would have done something. Please accept these things which I have brought for your men. Don't upset God... You forgave Saul who wanted to kill you and now you want to commit this wrong.
- David replied to Abigail saying: Blessed be God who sent you to me. If you had not come, I would have committed a great sin. Blessed is your mind, and blessed are you. Today you made me aware of this great sin, that would have upset God.
- Abigail went home and David returned. He was thanking God and saying: if it was not for this thoughtful and wise lady, I would have upset God by killing this man and everyone with him.
- After a while, Nabal died and David married Abigail.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Why were David and his men living in the wilderness?
- What good things and benefits did the shepherds of Nabal receive from David's presence with them?
- What was the reason of the great celebration that Nabal held?
- What did David do when he heard about the celebration? What did he ask?
- How did Nabal reply to David's men?
- What was David's response? What did he decide to do?
- What did Abigail do? What did she say to David?
- How would you describe Abigail and her actions?
- What did you learn from this story?



Exercise

- In every prayer, thank God for giving me a mind, and I ask for wisdom before any action I take, and I train myself not to act hastily in replying and in thinking, and I use nice words instead of swearing or bad words.
- Draw the gifts that Abigail prepared to give to David.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

I thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You gave me a mind and You made me different from all other creatures: for I am in Your image and likeness. O Lord give me wisdom and sanctify my thoughts and make me like Abigail in her wisdom, always saying what may give you joy. Amen

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the names Nabal and Abigail and their meanings. • Describe what happened when David sent his men and how Nabal replied. • Explain what Abigail did, and what gift she prepared for David. • Give reasons why David changed his mind about what he was going to do. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of calmness and politeness. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think and choose your words carefully, trying not to upset anyone. • Thank God for giving you a mind, and to ask for wisdom in your prayer. 	



Using My Mind

Balaam's Donkey

Bible References: Numbers 22

Lesson Aim:

To understand that God gave me a mind and distinguished me from all other creatures, but it is my duty use my mind and show compassion towards animals.)

Lesson Objectives:

Know: He has a mind, which distinguishes him from the animal.

Feel: That he has the ability to think in a right way.

Practice: To have compassion on animals.

Memory Verse:

"Let not mercy and truth forsake you."
(Proverbs 3:3)



Background Information for the Servant

Read the book of Numbers chapter 22 and familiarise yourself with the story of Balaam.

Who is Balaam, the son of Beor?

Balaam is a Hebrew name which probably means “devourer”. He is the son of Beor from Pethor, a village in Mesopotamia.

He is not of the people of God, but from Pethor which is in Mesopotamia (Deuteronomy 23:4). In Numbers 23:7 he said: **“Balak, the King of Moab has brought me from Aram.”** Also, in Numbers 22:5 it says **“Pethor, which is near the River”**. Aram is named after Aram, the son of Shem, who first dwelt there (Genesis 10:22-23). It later extended to Syria and Lebanon. Aram is located between two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. When the Bible mentions “two rivers”, it is a reference to the Euphrates and the Tigris; while mention of “the river” refers to the Euphrates only. So Pethor is near the Euphrates River in modern day Iraq.

Balaam was famed for performing supernatural acts over nature. News of him reached Moab so the king called for him. The early church fathers saw Balaam as a sorcerer, and a psychic (someone who has telepathic powers), whom God used to fulfil a divine mission. It should not surprise us that God used someone such as Balaam, for He is able to bring from the eater something to eat and from the strong something sweet. Origen, the Bible scholar, wrote Balaam was a sorcerer who wanted to practice divination against the people of God, by command of the King. But God intervened, not on account of the worthiness of the people, but to reveal his care for His people. Balak, King of Moab perceived that the victories of God’s people came about due to an supernatural power... and a special blessing which accompanied them, since they did not use weapons to escape from their bondage in Egypt under Pharaoh... but were victorious through the power of prayer to God. For this reason Balak did not resort to human armies to fight them, but used to divination and sorcery to confront the blessing of God. He resorted to Balaam for he had heard that whoever he blesses is blessed and whoever he curses is cursed. Balaam was pressured by Balak the King and the elders of Midian, whom the king sent to him, to go and curse the people of God. But God said to him: “you shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.” So the king’s elders returned to the king without Balaam.

But they returned to Balaam a second time and promised to offer him money if he went with them to curse the people. So this time, Balaam rose up to go with them. As a result God’s wrath was aroused, and an Angel of the Lord stood in his way to oppose him while he rode a donkey, his two servants being with him. The donkey which he rode on saw the Angel of the Lord standing in its way, so it turned aside; therefore Balaam struck the donkey. This was repeated three times. The mouth of the donkey was opened to put to shame the one who considered himself to be a prophet and a wise person. And the Angel which was seen by the donkey but could not be seen by Balaam until the Lord opened his eyes.

By the command of the Lord, Balaam spoke 5 prophecies in praise of the children of Israel. The prophecies focused on the vision of the new Israel (the Israel of the New Testament). The first prophecy did this through the incarnation. The second did this through the crucifixion and the resurrection. The third prophecy did this through the day of the Pentecost (the descent of the Holy Spirit). The fourth and fifth did this through the missionary role of the church.

Prayer: Grant me, O Lord, to always hear Your voice, while I say: speak O Lord, for Your servant hears; and to distinguish Your voice as the sheep distinguish the voice of their shepherd, and not to listen to the voice of the world once more. Train my ears to hear Your voice that is pure, soft, gentle and compassionate. Amen.

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Preparation: create pictures or masks of animals such as a monkey, elephant, donkey and ant. The servant then gives each child one of these pictures or masks and then begins the discussion by asking the following questions:

If you were, for example, a monkey, elephant, or donkey would you be happy?

I wonder why? How are you better than the animal? Do any of these animals know how to read, write or invent?

You are distinguished by your mind that God created for you, with which you think and invent and innovate. That's why you are distinguished from animals.



Story

It happened that there was an eagle's nest on top of a high mountain. One day a strong wind blew the nest off the mountain, and its egg fell into the chicken's nest.

When the egg hatched, the little chickens (chicks) lived with the little eagle (eaglet) and they were brought up together. The little eagle thought that he was a chicken even when he had grown up.

One day an eagle was flying above the chicken's nest, and he caught sight of the eagle among the chickens. So he went down to the nest and began to ask the eagle the reason why he was in the chicken's nest. So he answered him saying, "Well, because I'm a chicken."

The eagle was amazed to hear that, so he said to him, "You are not a chicken, you are an eagle; this is not your place, your place is there flying in the sky. The Lord created you to fly through the air. You are a different to a chicken."

So the eagle tried to fly until he succeeded, and he thanked the Lord that He created him as an eagle.

Lesson Content

Present the lesson as a pantomime.

Balak: I am King Balak. I must be the strongest king, and my people the strongest people, I can't have the people of Israel (the people of God) being stronger than us. I must do something to make that people weak, then I will be the strongest... Guards, go and bring to me Balaam, son of Beor, and tell him to go and curse the people of the Lord.

Guard 1: *(The guards go to Balaam.)*

O Balaam, King Balak says to you: come and curse the people of the Lord, that it may become weak, so that the people of Balak may be stronger.

Balaam: I must pray first to the Lord before I do anything. Stay with me this night and tomorrow I will reply to you.

(Balaam prays to God:)

O Lord, what shall I do? Shall I go with them or not? Guide me, O Lord.

Guard 2: Come on Balaam, come with us to Balak!

Balaam: No, I'm not going with you. God has refused that I curse the people.

(The guards return to Balak.)

Balak: Why have you come back by yourselves without Balaam? Did he not come with you?

Guard 1: Balaam refused to come with us, Your Majesty.

Balak: Refused?! You must go and say to him that the King will give him a lot of money if he accepts to come and curse the people.

(The guards return to Balaam.)

Balaam: Please don't force me; I'm not going with you... Actually, wait for a while, I will pray again, and see what God wants me to do.

(Balaam prays to God.)

Okay Lord, I will go with them, and I will only do what you tell me to do.

(Balaam, the Donkey and the Angel.)

Go, go donkey! Why doesn't the donkey want to move? Okay come and go along here... And you still don't want to go here either! Go... Go...

Donkey: *(Balaam then hits the donkey, and tries to change its direction 3 times, and hits the donkey 3 times.)*

What did I do to you so that you hit me? I'm the donkey that you ride on and I take you to any place that you want to go. Can't you see the Angel who is standing before us now.

Balaam: An angel!

(An angel appears.)

Wow, there really is an Angel! An Angel standing before the donkey preventing him from walking. I'm so sorry I didn't see you. I didn't understand why the donkey did not want to go. If the Lord does not want me to go to the King I'm not going, I will obey what he tells me.

Angel: No, go to the King, but don't say any bad things about the people of the Lord (don't curse them). The King wants you to curse the people of the Lord, but the Lord says to you to go and bless them. What did you do to the donkey?! Why did you hit her? The donkey didn't want to walk because I was standing before her in the way. So the donkey saw me but you didn't. And the Lord has distinguished you from any animal by giving you a mind. You could have thought about it and asked yourself why is the donkey refusing to walk? There must be something stopping her from walking.

Balaam: Yes it was wrong of me to hit the donkey. I should have thought about it before hitting her. Hitting her will not make her walk... I'm so sorry.
(*Balaam obeyed the word of the Angel and went and blessed the people of the Lord.*)

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What did God give us that makes us different to animals?
- What did Balak want from Balaam?
- What did God order him to do? To curse or to bless?
- Why didn't the donkey walk? What did he see? What did Balaam do to her?
- Did Balaam act in the right way?
- What did the angel say to Balaam?



Exercise

- Use my mind to think through any problem I face.
- Thank the Lord for giving me a mind and that I am distinguished from all other creatures.
- To deal with the rest of God's creation, whether it be an animal or plant, with care and compassion.
- Draw a picture of how we would imagine Balaam looked when the Angel appeared to him.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for Your great love to me. I thank You because I know that You made me special from the rest of creation, and I have many good things. Lord Jesus, You created a mind for me to think with, by which I am different from the animals and plants. Help me, Lord, to know Your words and live it. Hold me Lord to learn from You how to deal with animals, to be compassionate with them, and not do like Balaam did with his donkey. Help me, O Lord to obey Your Commandments, and be an obedient son/daughter to You. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the name of the King who called for Balaam. • Describe the appearance of Balaam on the donkey when the Angel appeared to him. • Remember what Balaam said to the messengers who came from Balak. • Explain why the donkey refused to walk. • Recite the verse of the lesson: "Let not mercy and truth forsake you" (Proverbs 3:3). 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine how the donkey felt while talking with Balaam. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray before doing anything. • Agree with friends to be compassionate towards animals and treat them nicely. 	



I Am Organised

The Five Loaves and Two Fish

Bible References: Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14

Lesson Aim:

To understand Christ's authority over creation and learn how to be organised.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: Importance of being organised.

Feel: God loves us to be organised and to be tidy.

Practice: Tidying everything and maintaining organisation (in places such as the Church and home).

Memory Verse:

"Let all things be done decently and in order."
(1 Corinthians 14:40)



Background Information for the Servant

It is the only miracle mentioned in all four Gospels: Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14; which indicates the importance of this miracle.

The Lord Jesus Satisfies Us

"When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick." (Matthew 14:13,14).

When they came to Him, He went out to them. When He saw them carrying their sick, He had compassion upon them and healed them, and then offered them the bread of blessing. So healing came first, before the bread of blessing. In the same manner healing of our spiritual illness, through repentance and leaving of sin, should precede entering the sanctuary to receive from the hand of the Lord, not the bread of blessing, but his Holy Body.

The multitude spent the whole day with the Lord Jesus Christ, hearing His voice and receiving His care and love.

"When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.' " (Matthew 14:15).

According to their limited human thinking, they saw that the best solution was to send the multitude away. Many times we arrange the matters of the service and spiritual matters according to our human intellect, and forget that the Lord, who is present in our midst, is able to grant us above the limits of nature. Although the place was deserted, the One who provides for the world was present. Although it was evening, the light of the world was shining. Although the hour was late, the One who does not submit to time was in their midst. He said to them, " 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'We have here only five loaves and two fish.' "

His command to them that they give them something was intended to reveal what resources they had available, and that they might present to Him what they had, however little it may be, even though it could not satisfy. When we place the little we have in the hands of God, it becomes great. We must participate with God, offering our energy, our gifts, and our spiritual efforts. And however feeble or little we have to start with, God looks to what we have as being important, that he may bless it with His grace and satisfy our life and the life of others.

Then Jesus asked that the crowds were seated orderly on the grass in groups of fifty; they sat together on the grass in simplicity, and in love and harmony.

Since the aim of the lesson is about being organised, emphasise what the state of the people would have been like and what would have happened if the food had been offered to them when they were not seated orderly. If they had been disorderly, not everyone would have been able to eat: some would take a lot and some little; there would be havoc and they would not know where the food was coming from. Furthermore, through being orderly they were able to see Jesus while he blessed the food and gave it to His disciples.

Do you think the Lord would have performed the miracle if the people were in a state of disorder? Does the Lord's blessing reach us when we are in a state of havoc?

Why did he seat them in an orderly way?

1. He is the creator who loves orderliness and created and arranged everything in order.
2. To teach us that everything we do should be done decently and in order, according to the commandment in 1 Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order."
3. To help the disciples distribute the food in a calm manner: The people were seated in rows in groups of fifty, and each disciple was allocated a certain number of rows.
4. If there was no order, those who were physically stronger would have grabbed the food first, depriving many of a share.
5. To prevent the remaining fragments from being trodden upon, had the people been disorderly.
6. The church learnt many things from this miracle. The church has a system and order in its worship, which it received from the apostles, who in turn received it from the Lord Jesus Christ.

"There was much grass in the place"

The presence of grass tells us that the Passover was near, and it was the end of the spring months. St John's attention to such precise details shows that he was an eyewitness to this miracle. The sight of grass is reminder

of the simplicity which Adam enjoyed in paradise before sin entered. The sight of green vegetation was a cause for Adam's happiness.

"So the men sat down, in number about five thousand"

The counting of men only, not including the women and children, does not imply that women and children were despised; rather it is a sign of God's desire for every believer to be strong in spiritual maturity and spiritual toil, and rejecting the soul that seeks to be pampered or lacking spiritual maturity. Nonetheless, he still permitted that the children and women also eat.

Those who have not yet reached spiritual maturity eat spiritual food, by which they may grow in spirit; those whose souls are pampered eat spiritual food, so that their souls may be sanctified.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave thanks despite being God, who was not in need of giving thanks. He did so in order to teach us to give thanks.

It is mentioned in the Gospel of St Mark that Jesus Christ "had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves" (Mark 6:41). He "blessed"; for this reason this gospel reading is called the 'Gospel of Blessing', it is read on the fifth Sunday of a Coptic month, if a fifth Sunday occurs, since it is regarded that God has blessed the month with an extra Sunday.

He also "broke" so that we may be reminded of what the Lord did when he instituted the Sacrament of Eucharist: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' " (Mark 14:22).

The 5 loaves and two fish symbolise the 5 books of Moses, or the 5 sacrifices offered in the Old Testament. It also represents man in his 5 senses: what man offers of his resources and faculties is weak and limited. The two fish are a symbol of the teachings of the Old and New Testaments.

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Equipment: travel bag containing a sandwich, juice, crisps, water, biscuits and other related items.

Begin a discussion by having this dialogue:

- Do you love to go on trips?
- What do you take with you when you go on trips? (Expect answers such as food items).
- Let's see what this travel bag has in it...
- Imagine there is a nice trip to the Monastery, and all the church are going on the trip, but only Mina has prepared himself with a travel bag (the servant gives the bag to one person).
- We are all going on a trip, but no one has any food but Mina?!
- Things like this actually did happen during the time of Jesus, let's find out what He did.



Story

Alex and Peter were friends, who were also in year two at school! But they were very naughty: they ran around in church, they talk during the Sunday School lesson, and they never pay good attention to the lesson either. Do any of you behave like them? Of course not!

One day when the Divine Liturgy had finished, Abouna gave the Holy Communion, and sprinkled the water saying, and said go in peace, and the people went out. Alex and Peter entered the church, and saw that it was empty. They got up to their usual mischief like playing with everything in the church: the books on the Mangaleya, the napkins, the Agpeyas and the Liturgy books; Alex played with the cymbals, and Peter ran to the candles and lit them and blew them out; and both of them kept fighting about who would speak into the microphone.

At that point one of the Deacons entered the church. As soon as Alex and Peter saw him they were afraid and ran but he said to them: "Don't be afraid, come here."

They went to him, trembling in fear. He said to them: "Are you afraid because you did something wrong to upset the Lord? Our God is a God of order. God created the world in order: the heavens above and the Earth below for us to walk upon; a time for the sun to shine and a time for the night.

"A long time ago when God spoke to Moses and asked him to make the Tabernacle to be house for God, He said to him to make everything in an orderly way and place it in its place. The church is also a house of God, and the house of Angels. Jesus loves it to be organised and tidy, having its rites (its order).

"Now come with me to tidy the church and put everything in its place."

They began to put the reading books of the church on the Mangaleya, and the Agpeyas and Liturgy books in the cupboard, and they folded the napkins and placed them neatly away. They also put the cymbals in its place, and the basket for the Lamb offering, they blew out the candles... What else can they do to tidy the church?

When they finished and the church was now tidy and beautiful the deacon said to them: "Would you like to tidy the church again or not?"

Alex and Peter replied saying, "Of course we will come to tidy it. After every liturgy, we will help you in tidying the church!"

Lesson Content

Equipment: felt board and pen.

Method of Presentation: The main servant explains and uses drawings on the felt board, and another servant or another person discusses with the children, while sitting in their midst. The servants allows the children to enter and sit where they like. The servant then makes them stand up and sit down in a different seating plan, the children will probably disagree because they would like to sit next to their closest friends.

Servant 1: What is wrong? Why are you looking upset?

Servant 2: Why are we seated in this way? We always sit in any places we like!

Servant 1: We have to be tidy and organised in everything in our lives. At home, whenever we use something we put it back in its place. We should be organised at school and at church as well. The Lord taught us to be organised.

Servant 2: I know a story in the Bible where our Lord taught us to be organised. Shall I tell you the story?

Servant 1: Wait! Actually, let's ask our friends first. Do we know the story?
(*The servants asks the children*).

Servant 2: A long time ago, the Lord Jesus was teaching the people in the place that was very far from the city. The words of the Lord were so lovely, the people sat attentively listening and learning from Him until it was night time. Then, the disciples went to the Lord Jesus and told Him to let the people go home because there have been without food all day. But the Lord said to them, "You give them something to eat." (Matthew 14:16).

I wonder my friends what the disciples replied?

(*Listen to the children's responses*).

Servant 1: They replied asking where they can get enough food to feed all these people. There is only one boy here who has a bag containing five loaves and two fish. So the Lord Jesus asked them to bring them here; and when they brought the five loaves and the two fish to the Lord Jesus told them to organise the people, seat them on the grass and divide them into groups of fifty.

The disciples did as the Lord Jesus said to them. The people were divided into groups of fifty, and each group sat together. They were very organised. But the number of people was very great and there was only five loaves and two fish. Let's see what happened...

The Lord Jesus took the five loaves the two fish, lifted his eyes up to heaven, and prayed and blessed the food. And gave to the disciples. And when the Lord Jesus and prayed over the food, the food increased very greatly. There was a lot of bread and a lot of fish, which was enough to feed all the people. In all the people ate and were filled. Do you know how many they were? 5000 men! That's not counting the women and children!

After the people had eaten, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples: "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost", and it came to 12 baskets. That, my friends, teaches us to tidy after we eat. We shouldn't just eat and leave everything in a mess, and we shouldn't let the food fall on the floor. What is left over from what we eat can be given to someone else.

Now do you see how great the Lord's blessing is: how the little food became a lot, and how it happened, and also when the Lord Jesus said to His disciples to organise the people, they ate and were filled and how there were also 12 baskets full of fragments that were left over.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Why did the crowds of people go to the Lord Jesus?
- What did the disciples say to the Lord Jesus when it was nighttime?
- What did the Lord say to them?
- What did the Lord Jesus ask of His disciples before He blessed the food?
- How did they organise the people? Do you know the importance of being organised?
- What did the Lord Jesus do when they offered Him the little amount of food?
- What request did the Lord Jesus make to His disciples after the crowds had eaten and were filled?
- What was the number of people who ate and were filled?



Exercise

- To be organised and tidy at home, school and church for our God is a organised God.
- Thank the Lord always before eating and pray the following little prayer: "Bless O Lord this food, as you bless the five loaves and two fish, and give to everyone who is in need. Amen.)



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

Lord Jesus, our loving God, we thank You for Your love to us and Your gifts to us at all times. We thank You, O Lord Jesus, for Your love for us and Your care for us. You always teach us lovely virtues, like being organised. We thank You, O Lord Jesus, that You bless everything in our hands however small it is, as You blessed the five loaves and the two fish. Be with us, O Lord Jesus, and bless our lives. Amen.



My Mind is Occupied with Heaven: Heaven is My Goal

St Mina the Wonder Worker

Bible References: Matthew 19:21

Lesson Aim:

To have my mind occupied with heaven.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The story of St Mina, and how his goal throughout his life was eternal life.

Feel: Love for the eternal life, for in it we will live with our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.

Practice: To ask God in prayers to grant eternal life; to change behaviour which is not appropriate for the children of God; and to ask the intercession of St Mina.

Memory Verse:

"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

(Matthew 13:43)



Background Information for the Servant

To my dear servant:

Our aim in this lesson is to get the children to become used to thinking about heaven, and to become occupied with it, with its angels and saints and to love heaven. For in heaven we will live forever with the Lord Jesus. One of the church fathers said: "when you remember the kingdom of God, the desire for it will be stirred up in your heart."

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

If we want to achieve a desired goal, we must keep that goal before our eyes at all time and think continually how we can achieve that goal. In order to clarify to the children this principle to the children, present to them the following example:

- Mark is a boy in year 2. We want to help him to become top of his class. What can we do to help him achieve this goal? (We can say to him that if he becomes top of his class he will feel very happy; we can draw a picture for him which shows him receiving the prize for being top of the class, and hang the picture above his desk in his room as motivation; and we can come up with other suggestions as well).
- If Mark forgets his goal, what can we say to him?
- What will Mark need to have to help him become top of his class?



Story

Discovery of the Body of St Mina

There was a man, who was a shepherd of sheep, and he was in the desert in a place called Marriot, because sheep like to run around and play in a wide open place where there is grass to eat. Now this Shepherd had a sheep which was sick and he was very upset for his sick sheep.

One day, that sheep strayed from the rest of the sheep and it got to a place where there was a pool of water. It dipped itself in the water, then rolled around in the sand. Suddenly the shepherd found the sheep had been completely healed. The shepherd was very happy and thanked God for the healing. When another of his sheep became sick, he took it to the same place and the same thing happened; the sheep was completely healed!

The story of how the sheep were healed spread everywhere, and anyone who was sick who came to that place was healed. Now the King of the city of Constantinople had a daughter who was very sick. Some people told the King about the miracles of healing that happened in the desert. They said to him, "If your daughter goes to the desert of Marriot and lays in the dust in the same place, she will be healed."

When the king heard it he marvelled and said, "I will take her there and hopefully God will heal her."

The Princess went there and they made for her a tent in that place, and the Shepherd of the sheep said to her, "Dip your body in that pool of water and lay there in the sand and you will be healed"

She did as he said to her. That same night the martyr St Mina appeared to her and said to her, "My body is in this place. If you dig there, you will find it."

It happened that the soldiers who had come with her dug in the sand and found the relics of St Mina. Everyone came to know that the cause of miraculous healing was the body of the martyr St Mina the Wonderworker. The King greatly rejoiced because of the healing of his daughter, and wished to honour the great martyr St Mina. So he built for him a crypt in the same place where his body had been buried, and placed his body was placed it in the crypt. All the people began to visit his crypt to ask his intercession.

How would you feel if St Mina came to us now and told us about his story?

Lesson Content

A servant dressed as St Mina enters Sunday School wearing the clothes of a soldier, and begins to tell the children about St Mina:

My name is Mina and my dad's name is Eudoxius. He was a governor, and he loved the people very much, and all the people also loved him very much. My mum's name was Euphemia. She told me how she couldn't have any children, and she prayed and fasted and gave to the poor so that God would listen to her prayer and give her children. One day, while she was praying in the church of the Virgin Mary, she lifted up her heart before the icon of the Virgin Mary carrying the Lord Jesus and asked for her intercessions. She heard a voice saying to her, "Amen". That's why when I was born she called me Mina which means "Amen". She loved the church very much and taught me how to go to church and pray in church, and also how to read the Holy Bible. My dad also encouraged me to learn the Christian teachings well. Every day my relation with the Lord Jesus Christ grew stronger; and the more I knew Him, the more I loved Him. My desire to live with Him in heaven increased day by day.

When I was 11 years old my dad became ill and died, and went to heaven. After three years my mum also passed away and went to heaven. When I was 15 years old I became a soldier in the Roman army, wearing the clothes that you now see me wearing. I had a very high position in the army because my dad was a governor and all the people respected me very much. I learnt in the army how to defend with a sword and I was a very good soldier. I was loved by all the other soldiers. However, all of that did not make me forget my beloved Jesus: I used to pray more, and my love for Him grew more and more to the extent that I wanted to spend all my time with my beloved Lord Jesus. I wanted to spend all my life with Him and didn't want anything to occupy me from Him. So I decided to sell everything I had and all the money which my dad and mum left me, I gave it to the poor, so that I can go and live with the Lord Jesus, and spend the rest of my life in prayer, fasting and reading the Bible.

When Diocletian had reneged Christianity and issued his orders to worship idols, many were martyred for the Name of the Lord Christ. I went and sold everything I had and I gave away all my money to the poor, and I went to the desert to live with my beloved Lord Jesus. Do you know which place I went to? Who of you have been to St Mina monastery? I lived very close to that place, and every day I used to pray and read the Bible. I spent a lot of time in the desert and I was really happy. The more I prayed, the more I felt the Lord Jesus next to me, which made me very happy. I had never had greater happiness.

One day, while I was standing praying I saw the angels taking up the spirits of the saints to heaven and they were full of glory. I wished that I was with them, and I heard a beautiful voice saying to me "Blessed are you O Abba Mina, for you were called to righteousness since your youth. So you will receive three crowns which will not fade away: one for your life of virginity, one for your ascetic life, and the third for your martyrdom. And your name will be famous among the martyrs, for I will make people from every tribe and tongue come and worship me in your church, which will be built in your name. And above all that you will receive glory which cannot be expressed in my everlasting kingdom."

So I went quickly towards the city, and there was a celebration of the idols. All the people were celebrating. When I saw that, I was very upset, and I stood in the middle of the celebration and said in a loud voice that I am Christian. The governor was really astonished that this was happening during the feast of the idol gods. He was very angry and commanded the soldiers to torture me; but I was really happy and felt that the Lord was with me, and at all the sufferings were nothing compared to the beautiful heaven that people will live in with the Lord Jesus. The governor kept torturing me, but the Lord healed me more than once. So the governor sent me to another governor who also kept torturing me. The Lord Jesus healed me and strengthened me. When that governor got tired of torturing me, he asked the soldier to cut off my head. I stood to pray and thanked the Lord. The sword bearer cut off my head and I went to heaven with the Lord Jesus. I was full of joy, because I had reached the place I had of dreamt of going to all my life. After that the king tried to burn my body and put it in fire for three days; but my body did not burn. My sister came to collect my body and the Christians took my body with great honour and buried it.

Many miracles happened from my body. For example, there was a general in the army and he was going to fight a war against the Barbarians, and he said to himself I will take the body of St Mina with me. When he opened my tomb, a great light shone from the tomb. So the general and his soldiers took my body with them to Marriot and they fought the Barbarians there and won. When they wanted to return again after winning the war, they put my body on a camel, but the camel did not move. They tried every way to get the camel to move, and they tried another camel, but it did not want to move either. So they understood that the Lord wanted me to be buried in the same place. They buried me in that place, and that's the place of my monastery which is still there now.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- How much do you think the Lord Jesus loves us?
- Who of us would love to live with the Lord Jesus?
- What you think is the nicest thing in heaven? (The Lord Jesus).
- What do you think made St Mina sell everything he had and give away all his money to the poor?
- What made St Mina give up his job and his high position in the army and go to the desert, and then go to confess the name of the Lord Jesus before the governor?
- What is St Mina's father and mother called
- Why was St Mina called by that name?



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my Lord Jesus, my beloved, I know that You love me very, very much, more than I can imagine. You created me and gave me a lovely family and a lovely life. You also promised me that you would give me a place in Your heaven. Grant me O Lord Jesus that I may always see eternal life before me, and the beauty of the life with You, and give me strength always so that I may move towards that goal, which is to live with You in eternal life, and that all my actions may bring me nearer to you. Amen.



Hear and Live God's Words

The Good Soil (Parable of the Sower)

Bible References: Matthew 13:1-32, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15.

Lesson Aim:

To hear and live God's word.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The parable of the sower teaches us to live by God's word.

Feel: The importance of reading God's word and living by it.

Practice: To read God's word regularly and to try to live by what it commands.

Memory Verse:

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
(Matthew 13:9)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Scatter some seeds of wheat on the ground and ask your children to collect as many seeds as they can in a given time. At the blowing of the whistle gather your children to see who collected the greatest number of seeds. Then ask them what are these seeds? and what do we do with them?

Prepare empty pots (for example, using yogurt pots), cotton wool and some water, and give them out to your children and ask everyone of them to plant the seeds he has at home, water them and to look after them at home until the seeds have sprouted and grown.

Show your children four pots: one containing cotton wool, the second containing wax or some solidified substance, and the third containing stones (rocks) and the fourth containing thorns. Ask your children which type of soil would be most suitable for planting seeds. Ask them why? Now I will tell you about a story which our Lord Jesus Christ told about a sower who went out to sow.



Story

(You can narrate the story or use silhouette figures).

There were two fishermen, a father and son, who were in a boat in the middle of the Nile. They were catching fish to eat and to sell.

The father gave his son advice on how to catch fish including how to put the bait (the food) on the hook, the type of bait to use, how to cast his fishing rod, how to choose the place to fish and when to pull on the fishing line; but the son did not listen to any of the advice of his father.

One day, while they were fishing, the son was sitting incorrectly in the boat even though his father warned the son that it was unsafe and he could fall if he sat that way. As usual, the son did not listen and suddenly he fell in the water.

He would have drowned if his father had not, himself, gone into the water for the sake of his son and raised him up on his shoulders until he brought him up to the boat again.

The father rebuked his son saying, "my son, why did you not hear my voice when I called you, that you may not fall into the water?"

So his son answered, "I was occupied with what I was doing and I forgot what you said to me; and because of this I was going to die."

- I wonder, do we listen to the word of God, or are we like this young man? What is its importance in our life?
- Where do we find the word of God?
- Do we just listen to it? What else should we do?
- Today I will tell you about a parable (story) which our Lord Jesus said to us about those who hear the word of God and live by it.

Lesson Content

Preparation:

Prepare four transparent cups:

1. The first cup is empty.
2. The second cup contains a third water.
3. The third cup contains a mixture of water and vinegar.
4. The fourth cup contains vinegar only.

Bring some baking powder with you.

Begin to present the lesson.

The lesson:

Prepare four pictures (they can be found at the end of this lesson). On the back of each picture write the following:

1. The one who does not hear the words of God.
2. The one who hears the words of God, but does not live by them.
3. The one who hears the words of God, but his mind is busy with other things.
4. The one who hears the words of God, and lives by them.

Present the pictures during the presentation of the lesson.

Today we are going to tell you about a story which our Lord Jesus said a long time ago to the people, so that we may learn the story. It is about a sower who, one day, went out to plant some seeds.

While he was walking, some of the seeds fell on the path that he was walking on and the birds saw the seeds and ate them all.

As he continued walking, the sower dropped some seeds among the rocks; the seeds grew a little but the sun killed the seeds because they had no roots in the ground.

The third time, my friends, some seeds fell among the thorns and the seeds began to grow and grow, but the thorns overshadowed them and strangled them, and the plant died.

Finally, some seeds fell on the good soil, and these seeds grew and grew and produced a lot of fruit.

Experiment:

I wonder what our Lord Jesus is trying to tell us? The sower is like our Lord Jesus, and the seeds are the word of God. The seeds that fell on the way: **here we place some baking powder in the first cup (the empty cup) and we notice that there is no effect.**

This is like anyone who hears the word of God but does not understand it, and does not care about it. That is why anybody can trick him and that is why anyone can snatch the beautiful words of God from his heart.

The seeds that fell on the rock: **here we place some baking powder in the second cup (the cup that has a third water) here we notice that there is no effect.**

It is like the one who hears the word of God and rejoices in it greatly and he attends the liturgy and has Holy Communion and is very happy and joyful. However, as soon as a problem happens, he forgets all these lovely things, also someone can trick him and make him swear and do wrong things, and he upsets the Lord who loved him and saved him.

The seeds that were thrown among the thorns: **here we place some baking powder inside the third cup (the cup that has a mixture of vinegar and water) here we notice a small effect but it quickly disappears.**

It's like the one who hears the word of God, but Satan tricks him by the beautiful things that are in the world. For example, like the one who wants to go to the liturgy, but he begins to play on the computer until it's late and goes to bed, and cannot wake up the next morning to go to the liturgy. In that way Satan has deceived him.

The seeds that fell on the good soil which is suitable for planting: **here we place some of the baking powder in the fourth cup (the cup that contains vinegar), and we notice a great reaction.**

That's like the one who hears the word of God, understands it, and lives by it. He does not hear anything that deceives him. That's why he is like the good tree that bears good fruits.

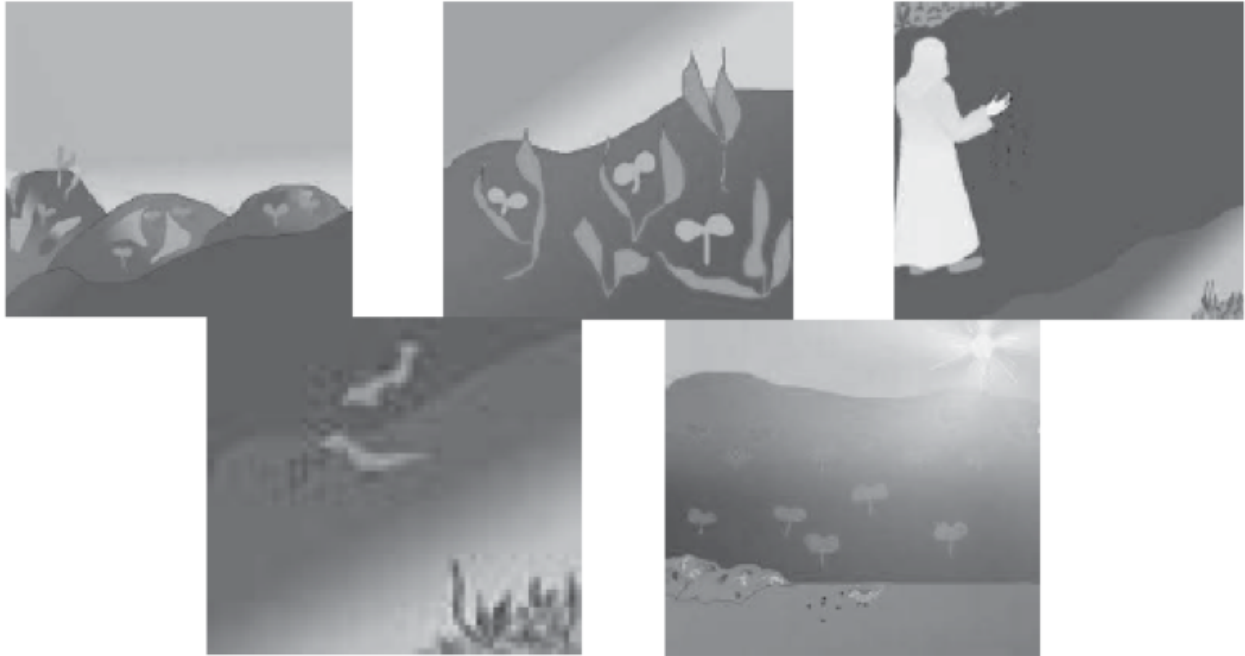
I wonder my children what type of soil are we like?

Here the servant turns over the pictures and reads the words that are written on the back, and leaves children to ponder what was said. Every child thinks to himself what type of soil he is like.

An important question to ask is where can we find the words of God?

In the Holy Bible of course, which we must read every day regularly and which we listen to in the Divine Liturgy or in the Sunday School lesson or we can read them on a computer.

It is important is that we do by God's words, which means to practice it in our life. We must get used to reading the Holy Bible every day so that we can be guided





Christ is My God

Christ's Authority Over Nature (Jesus Christ Walks on Water)

Bible References: Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-56, John 6:15-21

Lesson Aim:

To learn about and witness Christ's authority over nature.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: God's power over nature.

Feel: He is in the care of God the Creator, who can do all things.

Practice: To trust in God's power.

Memory Verse:

"Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears."
(1 Samuel 3:9)



Background Information for the Servant

The Lord Jesus Walks on Water

Read the miracle in Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-56 and John 6:15-21.

Let's contemplate on it together...

"Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat"

When the Lord Jesus Christ performed this miracle, all those in the boat worshipped Him seeing that He had authority over nature and they said, "Truly You are the Son of God." The miracle began with the Lord Jesus commanding His disciples to enter the boat and to go before Him to the other side, despite his foreknowledge of the harsh conditions that they would be exposed to.

The Lord willed that they pass through the strong winds and the high waves in order to increase their faith. God allows us to pass through afflictions and trials, but he does not leave us to wrestle through them by ourselves. He comes to us and does wonders with us, that we may kneel down and worship Him.

"And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray"

I wonder if the Lord Jesus was praying for His disciples that they may remain firm in their trial and that their faith may be strengthened? At a later time he prayed for Peter that he may endure the trial that he would be exposed to during Jesus' arrest when he was accused of being with Jesus. The Lord had informed him beforehand of his trial when He said to Peter, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22:31).

"But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary"

As soon as they had rowed some distance from the Lord Jesus and had reached the "middle of the sea", they were caught by surprise by the strong wind and the high waves crashing against their small boat causing it to rock from right and left with the aim of sinking it. The strong and contrary wind pushed them to the back of the boat trying to weaken their determination to get towards the shore. They tried with all their strength to row and to move forward, while being tossed by the waves; but it was no use. They were not able to return back to shore or go forwards towards the harbour.

Is this not what happens with us when we love ourselves, thus exposing ourselves to the contrary winds of this world. The waves of afflictions and trials of life crash against us, and the lusts try to drown us in its waters, and sin pushes us back, trying to prevent us from moving forward towards our Christ. Sometimes we feel that there are no solutions.

Moses and his people, long ago, experienced a similar situation when he led them to the edge of the Red Sea and were caught by surprise by Pharaoh and his powers coming behind them. So Moses calmed the people who were fearful saying to them, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord".

The only solution is for God to interfere. The God of impossibilities will certainly come to us, even if He delays Himself to the fourth watch of the night. He will come shining forth his light that casts out the pitch black darkness of the night.

"Darkness precedes light. Likewise we must endure through trials until the knowledge of truth shines forth its light in our souls." (John Saba).

"Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea"

Jesus came to them walking on the sea. The storm tossed the sea which threatened to drown them but afflictions, problems and trials, and likewise evil and sin, all have their place under the feet of our Christ. He comes walking above them, submitting them under His feet to confirm that they are all under His power.

"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

These words of encouragement will endure through the ages, resonating in the ears of the Church which crosses the sea of this world. They are words of peace and joy that stand before all the fears of the world.

Jesus called to Peter saying, "Come". Peter came down out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus, but when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid. The Lord Jesus gave Peter power to walk on water and

to tread underfoot the stormy waves, but when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was still afraid, because he took his eyes off the Lord Jesus who had given him power, and who was standing before him, and who stretched out His hands to him and called him to come,

O beloved servant, learn to fix your eyes on the Lord Jesus and on Him only, even if you are surrounded by trials and temptations which try to make you afraid. Be confident that you will pass through them filled with peace.

Our prayers do not mean that the Lord will take away trials, but that Christ will come to us and pass with us through them so that we may cross over filled with peace (Hegomen Bishoy Kamel).

We should place our trust in Him who stands before us in our trials, and even if we do take our eyes off Him and look around us, and begin to sink, we should cry out with Peter saying, "Lord, save me." Immediately the Lord Jesus will stretch out His hand and catch us. And when He got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Walking on a Rope

Equipment: a rope, a plank of wood and a bench.

Method:

- Who can walk on a rope?
 - After hearing the responses of the children, tell them that the only one who can walk on a rope is Albert the Clown.
- Who can walk on a plank of wood?
 - After hearing the responses of the children and the attempts of someone to walk on the plank of wood, continue with the dialogue.
- Who can walk on the sofa?
 - All of us can.
- Who can walk on water?
 - The children answer and we begin to tell the story.



Exploration

Some float and some drown and sink, which type are you?

Equipment: A bowl containing water; different objects, some which float and some which sink, for example: wood, metal spoon and foam.

Begin by placing the bowl of water in front of the children, and place the objects which float and sink beside the bowl. Then say to the children: Here you see a bowl full of water and the things placed beside it. If we place these things in the water, some of them will float and some will sink. When I point to one of these objects, you have to tell me whether it will float or sink. We will then place it in the water and see if your answer is right or wrong.

The servant begins to present to the children the objects and hear their responses, and place them in the water, one by one.

The servant then makes the following comments: Now are you of the type that floats or sinks? Don't worry, I won't throw you in the water, but you will see the answer to my question in the Holy Bible.



Story

George went to visit his granddad in the village during his school holiday. George was very happy because he would enjoy spending time playing at his grandfather's house, and especially with his relatives, the children of his age.

One day during the holiday, while George was playing with his cousin, they were running here and there in the house and a very large and beautiful statue fell down and, unfortunately, a bit of it broke off...

George ran to his grandfather to inform him that the statue had broken, but he was very afraid because the statue was very precious to him, but George was still determined to tell his granddad that he had broken the statue by accident.

When George told his granddad, he was quiet for a second and then said, "Don't worry about it, I'm not upset." They sat down together to think of how to repair it, but they did not know how to. They continued to think about many ways to repair the statue. Finally, they remembered that the only one who can repair the statue is the one who sculpted it. The grandfather phoned his son who had sculpted the statue many years ago because he is the only one who knows the statue and is able to repair it. He was able to repair the statue and they all rejoiced greatly because he did so.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe; the wind, the seas and all nature, and He the only one who has authority over His creation. He commands and it obeys Him.

Lesson Content

Equipment: a boat made of cork, a fishing (nylon) line, a glass basin, water, a full body cardboard cut-out of Christ fixed to a piece of cork, a full body cardboard cut-out of Peter fixed to a cork which has holes in it (so that it may sink) and a cardboard cut-out of the disciples.

Method: Connect a boat made of cork to a fishing line (a nylon line); fill a glass basin with water; set up a full body cardboard cut-out of Christ fixed to a piece of cork floating above the water, a full body cardboard cut-out of Peter fixed to a cork which has holes in it so that it may sink in the water and a cardboard cut-out of the disciples.

One day the Lord Jesus was sitting with many people and His disciples were with Him. He asked the disciples to go before Him and get on the boat, and to go to a town called Bethsaida. What is it called? **(Attach the cut-out model of the disciples to the boat).**

After the disciples had gone a long distance from the shore in the boat and it was night-time, there was a storm and many high waves and the boat was about to sink. The disciples were very very very afraid. **(Move the boat by the fishing line which is tied to the boat, making it sway from left to right, as to create waves in the water basin).**

Suddenly, something strange happened. Can anyone think of what happened? While the disciples were going through this great difficulty, they saw a person walking on the water coming towards them. They could not believe what they were seeing and became more afraid, but He comforted them saying, "Be of good cheer. It is I; do not be afraid." **(Place the cut-out of the Lord Jesus Christ on the surface of the water while continuing to move the boat).**

Allow the children to work out that it must be Jesus.

So Peter answered him saying, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." The Lord Jesus replied: "Come". Peter came down out of the boat in the midst of the high waves and he had his eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus while walking on the water. **(Put the cutout of Peter on the water).**

But he became afraid and began to drown and kept crying out to the Lord of saying, "Lord, save me!" Straightaway Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Then they went into the boat, and the wind stopped and the sea became quiet. The disciples worshipped the Lord Jesus saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

He is God the Creator, the one we must worship, and He is the one who has authority over nature, so it obeys Him. He has power over nature which is why the water supported Him and He came walking on the water.

Application



Game

Connect each yellow rectangle (on the left) to the correct green rectangle (on the right):

The Lord Jesus heals a leper.

The Lord Jesus' authority over the wind.

The five loaves and two fish.

The Lord Jesus' authority over illness.

Raising up Jairus' daughter and Lazarus.

The Lord Jesus' authority over nature.

The Lord Jesus walks on the water.

The Lord Jesus' authority over the water.

The Lord Jesus walks on the water.

He stills the storm.



Comprehension Questions

- What was the problem that the disciples faced when they were in the midst of the sea?
- Describe what they saw. Who is it that has the power to come walking on the water?
- Do you know why the Lord Jesus was the only one was able to walk on the water, and to command Peter also to walk on the water?
- What did the Lord Jesus say to them when they were afraid?
- Why did St Peter drown after he was able to walk on the water?
- What happened when the Lord Jesus entered the boat?
- Did the faith of the disciples increase when they saw all of this? What do they do and what did they say?



Exercise

- Always have faith and trust in God's power over all things.
- To turn to God in prayer when I face any problem or trial, for He has the power to solve it.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

I thank You, O Lord Jesus, because You keep us safe. I thank You, O Lord Jesus, because You are my God who created all the world, and You have power over all things. O Lord Jesus, give me a strong faith which I may live by. Take care of me, O Lord Jesus, and strengthen my faith in You and in Your power, for You are my strong God who is able to do anything to keep me safe and protect me. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe what happened to the disciples while they were in the boat. ● Describe how the disciples felt when they saw the Lord Jesus coming to them walking on the water. ● Remember what the Lord Jesus said to the disciples to comfort them. ● Remember what the Lord Jesus said to Peter while He was saving him from drowning. ● Remember that the Lord Jesus is the only one who can walk on water. ● Recite the verse: "Truly You are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:33). 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Imagine how the disciples felt when they saw the Lord Jesus walking on the water. ● Imagine how Peter felt while he was drowning and the Lord Jesus was saving him. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practise not to be afraid of anything because the Lord is with us. ● Agree with friends to live by faith. 	



My Gifts are for You

The Book of Psalms and the Midnight Praise

Lesson Aim:

To learn that God has blessed us with many gifts.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The order of the Midnight Praise.

Feel: Joy in praising God.

Practice: To use His gifts in praise.

Memory Verse:

"Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God."
(Psalms 147:1)



Background Information for the Servant

The Midnight Praise

Praise is the most elevated type of prayer, for through it the believer expresses his feelings to the work of God, in particular His work of salvation. While praising, he feels his closeness to God. Praise makes man to be like the angels, for praise is the work and the food of the heavenly beings.

The History of Compiling the Church Hymns and Praises

There are manuscripts and sayings of the early Fathers that show that the Church hymns and praises were used in the early church, for example:

- In a letter by Pliny the Younger, a governor, addressed to the Roman Emperor Trajan, he wrote about the Christians saying, "they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god."
- Tertullian (160-220 AD) says that the holy books are read to the people, followed by a short sermon regarding the Christian obligations. The people then sing hymns and partake of the Lord's Supper. Finally they come together for the Agape feasts offered by the people.
- St Cyprian Bishop of Carthage (200-285AD) in one of his discourses on prayer wrote that the Christians of the early church used to sing hymns and spiritual praises when they gathered together, praising with distinct, audible voices.
- The Church history tells us that St Athanasius the Apostolic (297 - 373 AD) made changes to the way hymns are chanted, and produced a way of praising which involved as little tune as possible. He commanded the readers of the Psalms (the deacons) to utter the words with minimal dramatisation, without changing the plate that it may be heard clearly.

Terms Used the Church Psalmody

Hos: is a Coptic word meaning **Praise**.

Lobsh: is a Coptic word meaning **commentary** or **exposition** of a praise in the Psalmody. The literal meaning of this word is: **crown**, **completion** or **fulfilment**. There is a Lobsh after the first, second and third Hos, and at the end of Theotokia for each day, except for Sunday.

The Doxologies: are glorification to the saints. The word doxology is made up from two words: **Doxa**, which means glory, and **Logia**, which means "word". Thus the word doxology means that we take the blessing of the glory which the saints attained. There are doxologies for the Lady virgin, the Angels, the Heavenly Beings etc. There are also doxologies on the festive occasions point to the blessing which we received on these occasions. These include the Feast of the Lords, both major and minor, the Feast of the Glorious Cross, the Month of Kiahk, the Great Fast etc. The doxologies are said in the same way as is said in the Commemoration and the Lobshes on the Watos days of the Psalmody.

Psalia: comes from the Greek word Psali which means **hymn**. It is a glorification to the Lord Jesus Christ. There are separate Psalis for the Adam days (Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday) which are called Psali Adam, and they have a short tune; and for the Watos days (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday) which are called Psali Watos, and have a somewhat longer tune.

Theotokia: is a glorification to our Lady the Virgin from whom the divine incarnation was fulfilled. Each day of the week has its own Theotokia.

The Benefits of the Church Hymns and Praises

It serves an important function in strengthening the unity of the church, and dissolving any contentions between the believers. It has a marvellous power in turning any bad inclinations into good ones; the profound effect of the hymns of holy week on the believers is particularly felt. Regular attendance of the praises and hymns raises us up above the world into the spiritual realm, and is able to change us, even if little, from our worldly image into a new spiritual one.

Praise sanctifies our mouths, minds, and time, and connects us with the heavenly beings and with eternity. It is a very effective way of handing down the Christian doctrine and Orthodox faith from one generation to the next

St Basil summarises the benefits of hymns and praises of the church in this beautiful saying the chanting of hymns gives quietness to the soul, and rest for the spirit and grants peace to reign over our hearts and to stills the storms within our hearts.

St John Chrysostom says there is nothing which gives the soul wings, and raises it above the earth, and saves it from the bonds of the flesh, and teaches it to despise temporal things, like praise.

To you servants, who love literature, reading and thought, we advise that you have as your first reference the liturgies of praise in all its areas. For praise, by its nature, purifies the heart from all worldly emotions, with its emaciation and weakness, and purifies the thought from everything which does not please the goodness of God and his Lordship, so that we may ascend and soar in the heavens.

“Who gave to those on earth the praise of the Seraphim, accept from us also our voices with the invisible.”
(The Gregorian liturgy).

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Present cards to the children you serve, on which are written: Happy Birthday, Consolations, Congratulations on your Success, Wishing you a Speedy Recovery, May God Heal You, Happy Anniversary and Happy New Year.

Ask them what are the occasions on which these expressions are said? The purpose of this is to let the child know that every occasion has an expression specially for it, and that likewise, every praise in the Midnight Praise is chanted for a reason, and on a particular occasion. Let us now go together to know what is the occasion for every part chanted in the Praise.



Story

There was a musician who was very talented in creating different pieces of music. One day that musician was sitting feeling anxious and sad. He tried many times to drive out this sadness by playing one of his old musical pieces, but he could not. So he tried to drive it out by composing a new musical piece, but nothing of which he composed and played made him happy. He continued feeling anxious and sad, and sat down by himself in silence. While he sat, he heard a beautiful hymn which took away his anxiety and sadness. He kept trying to hear the words but was not able to; he could only recall the tune which had taken away his sadness. He decided to play this hymn before a large audience. One of the people in the audience recognised the tune, and after the concert went to the musician and thanked him for playing this hymn which is taken from the church. The musician marvelled when he heard that, and after doing some research he discovered that he was playing the hymn “Aripsalin” from the Praise. So he listened to the rest of the Midnight Praise which brought him out of his sadness, and was a source of joy and a change in his life.



Drama / Pantomime

Triangle: *(The Triangle enters while placing his hands on his head).*
Ah! My head! Now the deacon is going to hold me all night while hitting me on my head. Ah! My head!

Cymbals: *(The Cymbals enter)*
What's the matter Triangle? What's wrong with your head?

Triangle: I'm going to church now, the praise is about to start. The Deacon of course will be hitting on my head all night. Ah! My head! Ah!

Cymbals: Ah! My body also is going to feel shattered all through the month of Kiahk, while the Deacon holds me and keeps hitting and clashing me. My son, the Teacher is not going to show me any mercy.

Triangle: Okay tell me Uncle Cymbals, why does the church care so much about the praise in the Vespers? Of course we are the victims in all this.

Cymbals: No, Triangle, my son, it's not just the praise! It's also in the month of Kiahk, there are prayers and praises through the night till the morning. Not just the Vespers!

Triangle: Do you mean to tell me that there is something else other than these few hours of Vespers? Ah! My head! Ah!

Cymbals: If only I knew who invented the Praise, and where they got all the words from? What is the whole point of it? Besides, nobody feels what we have to endure.

Psalmody: (*The Psalmody enters*)

Just wait a bit, I will explain to you everything. I will tell you why the Praise is important and why Abouna and the Teacher and the Deacons gather and perform the praise.

Triangle: How do you know so much about it?

Psalmody: I keep inside me all the things related to the Midnight Praise: the hymns, the Hoses, the Lobshes and everything else. Come with me, I will tell you why the praise is important, and why we give so much attention to it...

Begin to present the lesson.

Lesson Content

Method of presentation: Have a model book prepared beforehand, comprising of the following: the midnight prayer from the Agpeya ("the three watches"); the First Hos and its Lobsh; the second Hos and its Lobsh; the Third Hos and the Praise of the Three Youths and the Lobsh; the Commemoration of the Saints and the Doxologies; the fourth Hos; the Psali and Theotokia for that day; the Conclusions of the Theotokia.

We are going to begin a lovely journey. Let's see what this great book wants to talk to us about:

1. The Psalms and the Midnight Prayer: Before we begin the Praise, we always pray the Psalms and prayers of the Midnight Prayer given in the Agpeya. Of course we pray it from our hearts, and we remember David the Prophet while he was writing the beautiful Psalms, so that we may be prepared for starting the Praise and may praise the Lord who loves at all times.

(The servant turns the page).

2. After that we begin our beautiful Midnight Praise with some hymns and then the First Hos. The word Hos means praise. The First Hos reminds us of Moses the Prophet when he crossed the Red Sea with the people of Israel, and how all the people were very joyful because of this great miracle. They continued to praise the Lord and glorify him because He saved them from harm and from Pharaoh and his army. We also say the Lobsh after the Hos. The word Lobsh means explanation of the Hos itself.

(The servant turns the page).

3. After that comes the Second Hos. This is a praise from the Psalms (Psalm 135). Here we remember how much the Lord loves us, and always looks after His people, and never forgets them, and saves them from any harm. After that we say the Lobsh.

(The servant turns the page).

4. After that we say the praise of the Third Hos. It is the praise of the Three Saintly Youths while they were in the fiery furnace. We remember that the Three Youths loved the Lord so much, to the extent that they refused to obey the king's command to offer to incense to the idols. They were thrown in the fiery furnace. Amazingly they were praising the Lord while they were in the middle of the furnace, and were completely unharmed by the fire.

(The servant turns the page).

5. After that we begin the Commemoration of the Saints. Here we remember the Saints and Martyrs that we all love, and we ask them to remember us before the Lord, that the Lord may forgive us our sins. We also sing the Doxologies; these are a glorification to the Saints, like the Doxology of the Virgin Saint Mary, the Doxology of St George and other Saints.

(The servant turns the page).

6. After that comes the fourth Hos. It is the last Hos in the midnight praise, and it consists of Psalms 148, 149 and 150 from the Psalms of David the Prophet.

(The servant turns the page).

7. The last thing we sing in the Praise is the Psali and the Theotokia of that day. The Psali is a praise to the Lord Jesus, who loves us and takes care of us. The word Theotokia comes from the word Theotokos, which means the birth-giver of God (Mother of God). It is a glorification to the Virgin Saint Mary, who gave birth to our Lord Jesus Christ for our sake.

(The servant turns the page).

8. Finally we conclude the praise with "Kyrie eleyson" which means "Lord have mercy" in Greek, in which we ask the Lord to have mercy on us, hear us, deliver us from evil, and forgive us our sins.

The praise really is very beautiful and a lovely journey that takes us to heaven and makes us live in heaven while we are on earth, because when we go up to heaven we will continually stand before the Lord praising Him and glorifying Him with the saints.

Application



Bible Verse Memorisation

Test



Game

Aim of the Game: To know the order of the Midnight Praise.

Formation: Divide the children into two groups.

Equipment: White chalk, pen and white paper.

Instructions: The servant divides the ground into two sections and takes them outside, and with the white chalk draws a square grid of 25 squares (5 x 5) on the ground next to each group. He then takes 25 sheets of white paper. On 12 of the papers he writes a part of the Midnight Praise (for example, the Introduction, First Hos and so on), and on the remaining papers, he writes the letter 'X' (this represents a landmine). The servant randomly places the 25 papers on the 25 squares face down. Each group chooses one of the children to stand at the first square (the start point). He then goes from square to square, picking up a paper on each square, until he reaches the finishing point. If he stands on a square with an 'X' on it, the children shout "landmine", and the player is out of the game. But if it is a paper on which is written something in the order of the praise, he gives it to his group. The aim is to gather all the 12 papers on which are written the order of the midnight praise. Once the group collect all 12, they have to memorise it and say it in order to the servant in a loud voice.

How to Win: The children in the he first group to arrive at the finishing point with all 12 parts of the praise and recite the 12 parts in order to the servant are the winners.



Comprehension Questions

- What is the meaning of the word Hos?
- How many Hoses are there in the praise?
- What does the third Hos talk to us about?
- What is the difference between the days of Adam and the days of Watos?



Exercise

- Use the gifts given by God in joyful praise to God.
- Learning some of the parts of the praise.
- Attending the praise. Preferably, the servant should attend with the children.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

My Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You for Your great love to me. I thank You, Lord Jesus, for the many gifts that You gave me. Grant me, O Lord Jesus, to use my gifts for Your service, and to use the gift of speech in prayer and singing hymns and praises for the glory of Your holy name. Help me, O Lord, to live for You and to rejoice in You and in praising You all my life. Amen.



A Courageous Man

Prince Theodore El-Shatby

Book References:

- The Synaxarion, 20 Abib

Lesson Aim:

To learn about a courageous character and be courageous ourselves.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The courage of the Martyr St Theodore and his love for the Lord Jesus.

Feel: He is courageous because God is with him.

Practice: To turn to the Lord in every difficult situation.

Memory Verse:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
(Philippians 4:13)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Courageous Soldiers

Show the children pictures of martyrs who were soldiers and tell them their names. Even though they were soldiers in the Roman army and reached great positions and fought in battles and were victorious, they left all this behind because they loved the Lord Jesus more than anything or any position. With great courage they confessed Christ before wealthy governors and kings and were not afraid, but witnessed to Christ and despised their idols.

The martyr soldiers include: St George, St Mina, Philopateer Mercurius (who is Abu Seffein, the bearer of two swords), Prince Theodore El-Shatby, Prince Theodore Al-Mishriki, St Abaskhiroun and St Boctor. Each of them has their own well known icon, by which we can know them.



Group Workshop

Have you ever fought in a battle? Have you ever seen a soldier? Okay, but you have definitely not seen a soldier in the Roman army. Let's see what they wore and what they held using the felt board.

Stick up a soldier on the board; then place different parts of clothing on him like his helmet, the body armour and shoulder plates. For defence, he holds a sword or a javelin and a shield. The servant should prepare the clothing and the weaponry and colour them in.



Drama / Pantomime

A servant should dress up as a Roman soldier (Prince Theodore) and the children should not be told who it is.

Prince Theodore: How are you my children? Can you guess who I am?

Children: *The children will probably guess St George.*

Prince Theodore: I am not St George but I love him very much and I was actually martyred like him. I was also a soldier in the Roman army. Did you think that St George was the only Christian martyr in the Roman army? No, we are many. Ask some questions about me and I will answer you. Maybe you will work out who I am...

Children: *The children should try to guess the name of the saint.*

Lesson Content

My dear servant, inform yourself of the story of St Theodore El-Shatby. You can give it in a simplified way to the children, mentioning the following points:

- St Theodore's father's name was John and he was from the city of Shotep in Upper Egypt. He was a soldier and went with his regiment to Antioch where he married the daughter of a prince, her name was a Oussawaia and she was pagan. They had a son called Theodore.
- When Oussawaia wanted Theodore to be raised as a pagan, John refused. She became angry and drove John away, and the child remained with his mother.
- John prayed ceaselessly, and asked God to guide his son, St Theodore, to Christianity. The child grew up, and learned and read a lot. The Lord Christ illuminated his heart and St Theodore went to a righteous bishop who baptised him. When his mother heard of this she was very upset.
- St Theodore was a brave soldier in the Roman army and he was promoted to the highest rank.
- One day, St Theodore was passing through a district of a city named Eukhitos, where the people worshipped a great serpent and offered a human sacrifice every year. He saw a woman weeping: she was a widow and the people of the city took her two sons to be sacrificed, even though she was a Christian. St Theodore knew that this was wrong, so he came down from his horse, turned towards the East and prayed. God then gave him the power to defeat the serpent and save the two boys.
- After this, St Theodore came to Egypt in search of his father. Their reunion was a fruit of the prayers of his father, who rejoiced that Theodore had become Christian. St Theodore stayed with his father until he died, and then he returned to Antioch.
- St Theodore confessed his faith to the emperor and was tortured, he delivered up his soul and received the crown of martyrdom. A Christian woman then took his body (it is said it was his mother). Many churches in many cities are built in his name.



Feast of the Nativity

The Gifts of the Magi

Bible References: Matthew 2

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda III, "Inspirations from the Nativity"
- HG Bishop Moussa, "Unto us a Child is Born"

Lesson Aim:

Learn about the Feast of the Nativity

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The story of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, as a great and joyful event.
- Feel:** The importance of attracting people to Christ.
- Practice:** Asking about his/her friends in order to bring them to church (just as the star led the wise men to Christ).

Memory Verse:

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."
(Luke 2:11)



Lesson Content

The servant wears clothing that will attract the attention of the children, including large glasses, and holds a microphone... and conducts a TV interview with the Star from the East.

Servant: Welcome dear viewers to another show of "News of the Stars". We're so happy that you can be with us, and we would like to welcome today's guest on the show. Please introduce yourself to us (referring to the star).

Star: I am the star of the Nativity, and I am a famous star in the East. How are you all doing?

Servant: Welcome on the show. This is the first time we have had a star on our show. Please tell us a bit about yourself...

Star: I'll tell you my story from the beginning... I appeared a long time ago to some people from the East; Magi who study the stars and the planets, and follow their paths in the sky, and through their paths interpret events. And God chose me, a star, for them to follow, because He likes to speak to everyone in the way which He will understand. My appearance to them was a sign that a great King had been born.

Servant: And did they know who that great King was?

Star: No, they didn't know, but they really wanted to know. And they prepared gifts to offer Him when they visited Him, and to worship Him.

Servant: But how will they get to Him if they don't know the place where He is?

Star: I went before them guiding their way to the place where the great King was born. Do you know, my children: the best thing in the world, is to bring someone to Christ. You can ask about your friend in Sunday School who stopped coming to church. You can give him a call. You can talk to one of your friends about Christ, and lead him to repentance and confession.

Servant: You mean to be a guide to others like you were.

Star: Thank you, thank you! The Magi thought that Jesus was born in the palace of King Herod. They went quickly to Jerusalem and entered the palace of Herod, and asked about Him. Herod got very angry and gathered all the scribes and priests and asked them: "Tell me, where will the Christ be born?" They replied: "in Bethlehem." He said to him: "Go and find where He is, and come and tell me, so that I may go and worship Him." But he wanted to know where he is, so that he can kill him...

Servant: Does Bethlehem have another palace? For a king must be born in a palace.

Star: He is not only a king, but he is the King of kings, and the Creator of the all the world. But the Lord Jesus was not born in a palace; He was born in a manger.

Servant: Really?! The Lord Jesus, in all His glory, was born in a manger?!

Star: Yes, you see how humble he was. And I found out that His mother, the Virgin St Mary and St Joseph the Carpenter could not find a place to stay in. And no one was willing to take them into their home. And the only place they could find to stay was a manger, where the Virgin could give birth to the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus whose throne is in heaven, made His throne to be some hay on earth. The Lord Jesus who is surrounded and served by thousands and thousands of angels was surrounded in the manger by only a few sheep, and donkeys and cows. And he was later visited by a few shepherds, when the angels announced to them his birth. That's how humble he was.

Servant: How did the Magi know the way to the Bethlehem after they left you and entered the palace of Herod?

Star: I was waiting for them, and they were very happy when they saw me and I took them to the manger. And in the manger they bowed down to worship the Lord Jesus and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Servant: Why gold, frankincense and myrrh?

Star: *Gold* because it symbolises purity, and preciousness, and the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Frankincense because it symbolises priesthood, and that the Lord Jesus is the great high priest.
Myrrh symbolises suffering because of its bitter taste, like the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, but it has a sweet smell.

Servant: Wow! Those are very lovely gifts. And what happened after that?

Star: After they offered the gifts, they were supposed to return to King Herod to tell him the place of the child Jesus, but they had a dream in which they were told not to go to him. So they went another way, and returned to their city in the East. And they were very happy that they met the Lord. But Herod got very angry and killed all the children of Bethlehem. But the Lord Jesus and His mother, and Joseph, had fled to Egypt.

Servant: What would you like to say to the viewers (the children)?

Star: I would like to tell them that they can also offer to the Lord something very valuable. Do you know what that is? Our hearts. Yes the most important and precious gift you can give to the Lord is your heart. It should be a good heart, that does not hate or swear. And the Lord will love that heart, and dwell in it.

Servant: We really benefited today, and at the end of the programme I would like to thank our guest, the star of the nativity. And I would like to say to you my children, that we must be like the Star from the East, and bring all our friends to Jesus, that they may enjoy knowing him. And goodbye.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Who are the Magi? What was their job? Where did they come from?
- Can you imagine what they looked like?
- Why did Herod get angry when he heard the news about the birth of Jesus?
- Can you remember the gifts of the Magi, and what they symbolise?
- Imagine that you were the star... what would tell your friends about Christ?



Exercise

Give the children some paper and pens and ask them to draw a gift instead of the gift of the Magi, to express the things which we should offer to the Lord Jesus.



Exercise

Train your children to:

- Pray for their friends who are far from God and the church.
- Ask about and visit their friends, to bring them to church.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my Lord, what should the gift that I offer You be like? I wish to offer You my heart, that You may reign over it, O my Lord; that You may make it a manger for You to be born in every day, and to live in it every moment and to fill it with peace and joy; that my heart may sing to You praise and a hymn of peace, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and goodwill towards men" (Luke 2:14); and that it may sing to You, saying: "Truly, O Lord Jesus, you are my God, the wonderful, the mighty, the Prince of peace, and my father."

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who the Magi were, where they came from, and their job. Why God spoke to them and guided them by means of a star. What the star looked like, and did it move like the rest of the stars? The gifts that the Magi offered, and interpret what the gifts symbolised. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the Magi felt when they saw the star, and the reverence they showed when they met the Lord Jesus. How Herod got angry at the birth of Christ. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having the same role as the star. (Help the children to come up with suggestions of roles, e.g. inviting his friends to meet Christ at Church, to talk about the person of the Lord Jesus, taking part in a drama piece, to call people to repentance.) Making gifts to offer to the Lord Jesus on His birthday. (Discuss with them that God accepts their gifts through visiting their needy brothers and sisters, e.g. the poor.) 	



You Blessed my Nature in You

St John the Baptist (A Priest and Son of a Priest)

Bible References: Matthew 3:13-17

Lesson Aim:

To learn about the grace received in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The life story of St John the Baptist and the account of the baptism of the Lord Jesus.

Feel: That through baptism we are clothed with the garment of holiness which we had lost. And through holy Myron, we are confirmed in Christ, that we may walk in the life of holiness

Practice: Confessing regularly in order to renew the garment of holiness.

Memory Verse:

"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
(John 3:5)



Lesson Content

The character which we will talk about today is one of the people who received many titles, and they were great titles. For example, St Mark the Evangelist said about him in his gospel: "a voice of one crying in the wilderness." (Mark 1:3).

And Malachi the Prophet prophesied about him: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me." (Malachi 3:1) And the Lord Jesus said about him that he is "the greatest of those born among women." (Luke 7:28)

So what is the story of this great man?

There was a priest called Zechariah, and his wife was Elizabeth, and they were barren. Barren means that they cannot bring forth children. And they used to pray every day that God would give them a child.

And one day while Zechariah was praying in the Temple, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in the Temple and told him that he will have a child, and will call him John.

Zechariah did not believe the word of the Angel, and said to him, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." So the Angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. Is there anything which is too difficult for God?" And the angel also said to him that he would remain mute, and would not speak until the birth of John the Baptist. (Luke 1:18-20)

When Zechariah went out of the Temple, he was not able to speak. The people wondered why he was delayed. But they knew from his silence, that he had seen a vision in the Temple. He then went to his home.

After six months the Angel Gabriel went to announce to the Virgin Mary the birth of Jesus Christ. And she learnt from the angel that Elizabeth was six months pregnant. So she went with haste to visit her and serve her. That was where the first meeting occurred between Christ, who was in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist, who was in the womb of Elizabeth. So John leapt in the womb of Elizabeth and bowed down to the Lord Jesus who was in the womb of the virgin. When Elizabeth her baby leaping in her womb, she said to the virgin. "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."

John spent his life in the wilderness eating locusts and wild honey, and was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. And he lived in solitude for a long time praying to God.

When John the Baptist reached 30 years of age he began to baptise the people with a baptism of repentance. And the people came to him confessing their sins and being baptised by him. One day he saw the Lord Jesus coming towards him wanting to be baptised. And he saw the Holy Spirit coming down as a dove and a voice from heaven saying: "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 17:5)

John was a humble man who said about himself that he is "the friend of the bridegroom," that he must decrease and Jesus must increase. And he said about himself that he was not worthy to unloose the straps of his sandals. And he encouraged his disciples to leave him and follow the Lord Jesus.

John was also courageous, and was not afraid to say the truth. For when Herod the King wanted to marry the wife of his brother Philip, John kept telling him: it is not lawful for you to have her... it is not lawful for you. And he was not afraid of the king. And he was killed because of his courage in saying the truth.

And when Herod's birthday was being celebrated, the daughter of Herodias, Philip's wife, danced before them and pleased Herod. So he said to her, "Ask for anything you want, up to half my kingdom." So she went to her mother and asked her what she should ask for. Her mother replied, "ask for the head of John the Baptist." So she asked that request from the King. The king was sorry; "but because he had made a promise, and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother."

We also should be courageous in saying the truth. We should stick to our morals and not be influenced by friends to do wrong.

But what is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ? The baptism of John: is for repentance only; by water only. The baptism of Christ: is the second birth, by water and the Spirit

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What is the story of the birth of John the Baptist?
- Where did he live before he appeared to the people?
- Where did he live before he appeared to the people?
- What is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ?



Exercise

Repentance and confession: in baptism we were clothed with a white garment, which is completely clean. But unfortunately that garment will become stained by our sins, so that our garment is no longer completely clean. But God gave us the chance to preserve our garment always white, and that's through the sacrament of repentance and confession. This week try to think of the things in which you did wrong and confess them before the priest, and that way you will keep your garments white. And train yourself to do that on a regular basis.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

My Lord, God and saviour Jesus Christ, I thank you from the bottom of my heart because you give me a new chance every day to repent, because your mercies are new every morning. Because you love me with a great love, you gave me, O God, to keep my garment pure, and to always enjoy your forgiveness, that I may continually praise saying, "Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven. Amen."

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the story of the birth of John the Baptist. • Describe the clothes and food of John the Baptist, and his most important characteristics • Describe how John the Baptist baptised the Lord Jesus • Interpret why the baptism of John is different from the baptism of Christ • Recite the verse of the lesson 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act out the baptism • Draw a picture of the baptism of the Lord Jesus 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice regularly the sacrament of repentance and confession as a continual renewal of the purity of our lives. 	



Going to Church

Mary and Elizabeth

Lesson Aim:

To learn the good manners required in attending church.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The house of God is different from all other places in the world, e.g. schools, hospitals, etc.

Feel: The importance of honouring and respecting the house of God.

Practice: The ten golden rules every time we go to church.

Memory Verse:

"Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever."
(Psalm 93:5)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Bible Tour

Read the following five verses from your Bible, one by one, then try to place each verse in the appropriate place: Psalm 95:6, Psalm 150:6, Psalm 7:18, Habakkuk 2:20, John 6:54.

The Lord teaches us in the Holy Bible...

- ...to be silent in church.
- ...to come early to church.
- ...to participate in singing hymns.
- ...the importance of having communion regularly.
- ...to bow before the Lord.

Lesson Content

Start by asking the children, "Suppose your parents tell you tomorrow we are going to visit a king in his palace, what would you do?" Try to lead the discussion into the necessity of wearing appropriate clothing and behaving properly in the presence of the king, etc. Then develop the analogy of visiting Christ, the King of Kings, in His own house, the church.

The Ten Golden Rules of Going to Church

Discuss each of the following ten golden rules of going to church:

- Come early. Go and wake up Mum and Dad, telling them to let you and the whole family go and see the Lord Jesus early.
- Bow before the sanctuary as soon as you come in. You can do that especially if you come early.
- Never run around inside the church.
- If you enter the church and find that the Gospel is being read, stand still where you are until it is finished. Why? Because every attention and respect should be given to the Word of God.
- Do not speak to anyone else. Concentrate on praying to God.
- Do not laugh, be serious.
- When the Gospel is being read, we have to stand up because we must respect the Word of God.
- Sing with the deacons and the congregation.
- Take Holy Communion regularly to grow. Communion helps us to grow in Christ. Taking Holy Communion also requires preparation.
- Never leave before the service is finished because the Lord Jesus is there, and nothing outside is more important.

Deacon Supplement

Discuss the following pearls of wisdom for deacons. A deacon should...

- ...be an example to the people through good behaviour.
- ...be humble and obedient.
- ...come to church fasting and ready for communion.
- ...be clean in body, clothing, and heart.
- ...make peace with all before coming to church.
- ...sing hymns in a low voice, and should wait for the senior deacon to lead.
- ...never enter the Sanctuary unnecessarily, unless he is one of the altar deacons, or he is told to go there by Abouna or the senior deacons.

The deacons, especially the altar deacon, should come to church very early. They have certain duties to do. They should learn how to sing the Canticles of Praise, and be in church early to participate in them. Then continue with the prayer and hymns of the offering of incense.

Special Duties of the Altar Deacon

Those serving in the altar have the following special duties:

- Make sure that the altar and icon candles are lit. These are oil candles (not made from wax). In Arabic they are called quandil (which comes from *candle*).
- Prepare the oblation bread on a special basket: three, five or seven loaves are usually used. Each loaf has twelve crosses imprinted on its face. It also has five holes, three holes on one side and two on the other. The oblation bread should be covered with a veil.
- Fill the cruets with wine and water.
- Put coal in the censer whenever necessary.



The Church is an Image of Heaven

Candles and Lights

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda III, "The Angels"
- HG Bishop Mettaous, "The Spirituality of the Rites of the Divine Liturgy of the Coptic Orthodox Church"

Lesson Aim:

To learn how to be a light of the world.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** What candles in the church symbolise, and when they are used.
- Feel:** How we can be lights to the world, as our Lord Jesus commanded us.
- Practice:** How, as children of Christ, we should deal with people.

Memory Verse:

"I am the light of the world."
(John 8:12)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Start a discussion by telling the children the following:

There were two boys called Mina and Michael, who are brothers. One day they went to the church to attend the liturgy. As soon as they entered they wanted to light a candle before the icon of our mother St Mary. Mina lit the candle and began to pray in front of her icon, and asking for the intercessions of our mother St Mary. As for Michael he took hold of all the candles which were there and lit them all, and started playing with them. What do you think of Mina and Michael? Who of you when you enter the church does like Mina? And who does like Michael?

Okay let's get to know why we use candle in Church, and when we use them.

Lesson Content

There are many biblical proofs for the use of lights and candles in the church:

- All the church is lit during the liturgy as a sign of the presence of God who dwells in it (1 Timothy 6:16)
- The church represents heaven on earth (a heavenly Earth). That is why it is adorned with these lights like the stars in heaven (Romans 12:22,23).
- Lighting the church reminds us of the Transfiguration of Christ (Matthew 17) and as a sign of the greatness of God (Revelation 2:1) and the Transfiguration of Christ in the church (Matthew 8:28, Revelation 1:12) and as a sign of the glory of the church. Revelations 21:22 is a reminder to the people that they should be lights in the world (Philippians 2:15, Matthew 13:43).
- Lighting lamps before the sacrifice is based on the commands of God (Exodus 14:24,25) and the one who proceeds to partake of the Eucharist should remove the works of darkness and be clothed with the weapons of light (Romans 12:12,13, Hebrews 7:8,9).
- Placing candles on the cross at the time of the blessing of the people, during the service (the liturgy) is a sign that Jesus who was crucified on the cross is the light of the world (John 8:12). Christ through the cross transfers from darkness to his wondrous light (1 Peter 2:9).
- Lighting candles and oil lantern before the icons of the virgin, the apostles, the saints and the martyrs because they were lights to the world (Matthew 5:15, 13:43, Daniel 13:43).
- The church asks of the children that the lamps of their faith be filled with the oil of righteousness (Matthew 25:5, John 1:7, Matthew 5:16)
- When the deacons holding candles proceed behind the praying priest is a sign of the wise virgins (2 Peter 1:5,6).

Application



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O Lord, shine Your face upon us. Make us like the candles which give light to all people. Burn away within us all our sins by the fire of Your Holy Spirit. Make every work to be for the service of your holy name. Preserve all your children in your fear. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basis for the use of candles in church. • The importance of lights in the church. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of light in our lives. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing a candle before the icons of the Saints in the church. 	



It is Not Allowed

God Loves Me so He Gave Me my Body to Look After It

Bible References: Genesis 1:27

Book References:

- HG Bishop Youannes, "Paradise of the Spirit"

Lesson Aim:

To teach the children sexual awareness.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: That God loves him/her so He gave him a body to look after and value.

Feel: God's care for him/her (and to be assured that God protects him/her).

Practice: Taking care of his/her body and its cleanliness.

Memory Verse:

"God created man in his own image."
(Genesis 1:27)

Lesson Content

The servant begins this topic with the following sketch between two of the servants. This could be replaced by a doll pantomime.

Servant 1: How are you my children? Who attended the liturgy today? And who had Holy Communion?

: *The servant begins to take responses in order to praise him for taking Holy Communion, and says to him: "congratulations for the grace you've received." And you can give prizes to those who received Holy Communion. A short while later the other servant enters the room holding a Korbana, and sings with a loud voice this part from Institution Narrative in the liturgy, saying...*

Servant 2: He broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples, the saintly apostles saying, "Take eat of It all of you, for this is My Body which is broken for you and for many to be given for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of Me."

Servant 1: Hey, the liturgy is now finished! We are now in Sunday School.

Servant 2: Yes I know. But there are some children who have not had Holy Communion. I'm going to give them holy Communion now.

Servant 1: You can't say that! Only Abouna can give Holy Communion, and only he is allowed to touch the holy Body and Blood.

Servant 2: It's quite simple... I have a Korbana with me; I will pray over it, and give them Holy Communion.

Servant 1: What you think children? Do you think Mr so-and-so can touch the Body of the Lord?

Children: Of course not sir. Only Abouna can touch the Body of our Lord.

Servant 1: You see... even the children know that Abouna is the only one who can touch the Body of the Lord.

Servant 2: Yes... No... I know. I... was just testing them! But see, I'm holding the Korbana now. It's okay!

Servant 1: Yes but there's a big difference between any Korbana and the Lamb of the Lord which the Lord chooses by the hands of the priest, in order to be His Body. That's why anything which is set apart for the Lord should not be touched by anybody. Only the person responsible (Abouna) is allowed to touch it. One example which is very clear is our bodies. Is it right my children for anyone to touch any parts in our bodies?

: *The servant should hear the responses of the children and ask them for the reason for the response, whether yes or no.*

Servant 1: That's exactly right children. All my body is holy for the Lord. That's why it is not right for anybody to touch me, especially in the swimwear parts.

: *Explain what the swimwear parts are. You can use the shape which is present at the end of the lesson.*

Servant 2: Okay, what about mum and dad and the doctor. Are they also not allowed to touch me?

Servant 1: No, we agreed that the Lord made someone responsible for His holy things, like Abouna is responsible for touching His Body and Blood. Mum and Dad are responsible for me and for my cleanliness, and the doctor is the one who checks over me when I am sick. They are the only three who are allowed to touch me. For everyone else it is forbidden. And of course the doctor is allowed to touch me only with the permission of Mum and Dad.

Servant 2: Okay, if someone else tries to touch me in these parts, what should I do?

Servant 1: I should scream as loud as possible, so that the other people can save me.

Servant 2: So I should not be afraid of them but scream?

Servant 1: Of course. And we'll play a game to learn how to scream in the face of the person who tries to touch me in the swimwear parts.

Here, the servant turns to the game which is given after this lesson.

Application



Game

The aim of this game is to teach the children how to defend themselves against any sexual assault.

- Prepare a poster of a person to hang on the wall.
- Give the children long sticks and ask every child to aim it at a particular part of the body (e.g. at the eye, feet, etc.). Then ask the children to say how we can look after that part of the body
- Make a large board on which is written correct behaviours and bad behaviours, without separating them. Then discussed them with the children, such that the correct behaviour we place next to it a smile face/sticker, and next to the bad behaviour we place next to it a sad face/sticker
- And we can focus on who is permitted (Mum, Dad, Doctor) to deal with me and look at my body.
- Then we ask each child individually what he would do if a stranger came near his body. And we should try to direct their answers towards: distance myself, and then tell mum or dad.



After the game the servant should give a chance for discussion about the importance of the body which is consecrated to God, because it is the work of God. Therefore we have to take care of it and its cleanliness. Because it is a divine gift which God has given to us, and it is our duty to take care of it and not to expose it to any indignity or touching.



Exercise

The servant should agree with the children on attending the liturgy at the earliest opportunity on agreement that they should have personal cleanliness, that they may be able to have the body and blood of the Lord.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

My Loving Lord, I thank You for all Your gifts which You shower me with. It is enough that You created me and distinguished me from the rest of creation, so You created for me this body. Help me to glorify You with it. Sanctify it, cleanse it.

That my eyes may see that You are exceedingly beautiful, and that my hands may not cease from doing good, that my feet may continually walk to do good, in resemblance of You, and that my tongue may continually sing your praises. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of one's body and that it is God's handiwork. • That God created us in His image and likeness. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's love for us. Appreciate that God created for each person a body which is complete. • Feel grateful for God's gifts for him/her. • That s/he is distinguished because s/he is God's handiwork. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping his/her body clean. 	



My Tongue is Sweet

Refraining from Swearing

Bible References: James 3:1-12

Book References:

- HG Bishop Youannes, "Paradise of the Spirit"
- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "Commentary on the Epistle of St James"

Lesson Aim:

To teach the children that swearing is not befitting of God's children.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The value of the tongue as it is the creation of God.
- Feel:** How much my tongue can influence my relationships with others.
- Practice:** Keeping the tongue chaste.

Memory Verse:

"...Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing."
(1 Peter 3:9)



Lesson Content

Of course, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who created us, and He is the One who formed our bodies and made it in the best possible appearance, and created us in His image. And the proof of this is that when He created Adam he said "Let Us make man in Our Image." That means in the image of God in mind and free will and holiness.

The Lord Jesus does not create anything bad in us. How could He do so when we are all made in His image?! That's not possible of course. In addition, everything God created, like the heaven, the sea, the fish and the birds, He created to be very good that we may enjoy them. And God also created in us many good things which are not present in all his creatures. For example, God gave us minds that we may think about all things; we think before we study, and we think before we play, and we also think before we speak.

God also created in us a very nice thing which is the tongue. Can you imagine if we didn't have tongues, what would we be like? So God created for us tongues so that we may know how to express ourselves and talk about ourselves and also to talk with mum and dad, and when we sit with our friends we can talk with them, and also we can talk with God. So the Lord Jesus created a tongue in the nicest possible way; He created it pure and clean, and He created it to say nice words to people. He did not create it so that we may talk bad things with people, or to swear at people, or to make jokes about people.

But there is a question: how did the Lord Jesus create a tongue that people use to say bad words, even though we are in the image of the God? First, the Lord Jesus Christ gave us complete freedom to use tongues as we wish. He gave us the choice to use it suitably or not. Of course, if we use it in a nice way, God will be very happy. But we can also use it in a bad way; of course, the one who makes us to use it badly you know who he is (the devil). That person likes to play with us a lot but unfortunately he plays with us so that *he* may enjoy himself not that we may enjoy ourselves. He becomes really happy when he sees that anything in us is not clean... that person likes it when our tongues are not clean.

For example, when I am at school and its playtime he may say to me: "Do you see those boys standing over there? Go and say hello to them." And you know that those boys are speaking bad things, and keep swearing at each other. Of course we understand what he wants. However, I would refuse to go to say hello to them because I don't want to hear their bad words. However, he does not give up. He keeps trying to make us fall into sin. So he will try something else. For example he will make the people who are saying bad words to upset you, and they might swear at you. So he will say to you: "Swear at him exactly like he swore at you." So I wonder how you will respond?

I'm sure you will say to him: no I will not swear at him because Lord Jesus taught me not to swear. That person will come to you more than once to make you fall into the sin of swearing. And he will try to make unclean your sweet tongue which belongs to the Lord, and which the Lord sanctified. But you must say every time: "no." Does anyone know who that person is who wants to make me want to swear? It is the devil. But why does the devil want to make my tongue unclean, and make me swear and say bad words?

He knows very well that if I make my tongue unclean because of his words I will begin bit by bit to become distant from the Lord Jesus. The devil will continue to make me misuse my tongue; and I will say anything that comes to my mind even if it is wrong. Eventually, I will begin to get used to saying these bad words, and as well as falling in the sin of swearing, I will fall into lying and in other sins of the tongue, and so each day my tongue learns something worse than the day before. Little by little people will begin to distance themselves from me because of my bad behaviour in my words. And they might try to stay away from me because they don't want to learn from me bad words. And after my tongue had been clean and the Lord Jesus Christ was very happy with me, now it has become unclean and the devil is very happy with me.

So take care with your tongue. Never say a bad word about anyone, and never swear at anyone and therefore make unclean your tongue which the Lord Jesus created. Even if all the people around me are saying bad things or words not are not nice, I will not do like them. And even if these expressions are directed towards me I will not pay back evil for evil because I will not allow my tongue which the Lord Jesus gave me to become unclean.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What is the importance of the tongue?

- If I use my tongue in a bad way, how would that affect my relationship with other people?
- How do I keep my tongue pure?



Paper Activity

- The servant gives out a picture to the children and asks them to colour it in.
- The servant divides the children into two groups and gives the first group dark colours, (e.g. black or brown,) and the second group light colours (e.g. yellow or green.)
- The servant compares the two pictures after they have been coloured in. (The same picture can be beautiful or horrible after being coloured in, according to the colours which were used.)



Exercise

- Ask God to give me grace so that I may never swear.
- Learn some verses which show how much God gets distressed at swearing and swearing could be a cause for my separation from God. So do not take it for granted and say that it is a small sin.
- Remember always that we are children of God, temples of God, and the spirit of God dwells in us.
- Accounting for yourself at the end of each day to know how many persons on the image of God you have shamed.
- Remember the saying of the Lord: "whatever you desire men to do to you, likewise you also do to them." (Matthew 7:12) For you would not like to be sworn at by any person, so therefore do not swear at any person, for s/he is made in the image of God.
- Say sorry to any person you may have sworn at and ask for their forgiveness.
- Confession before the priest of your sin and asking for sincere repentance.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O Holy Father, who longs for the sinners to return, who promised to accept those who repent, look upon a soul that was long lost in the valleys of disobedience. I have long tasted the bitterness of misery, being away from the source of salvation. Now I come back to You to be purified; accept me and do not reject me, for when You look at me with mercy and compassion, I will be cleansed and saved but if You turn Your face away from me I will perish.

Grant me, O Lord, Your blessings to strengthen my will to come closer to You in faith and hope, to confess my sins and detest returning to them. Let Your Holy Spirit remind me not to stray. Enlighten my heart, O God, so that I can see the graveness of my sins and negligence, and have the will to obey Your commandments and live for the glory of Your holy name. Amen. (Prayer before Confession, the Agpeya)

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That we are created in the image and likeness of God. • That the tongue is a small member which has a great effect. • That people do not listen to what I <i>think</i> but listen to what I <i>say</i>. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others when s/he directs bad words at them. • The importance of the words he utters. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying sorry to people and to the Lord Jesus when they say bad words. 	



Learning from Nature

Jonah

Bible References: The Book of Jonah

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda III, "Contemplations on the book of Jonah"
- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "Commentary on the book of Jonah"

Lesson Aim:

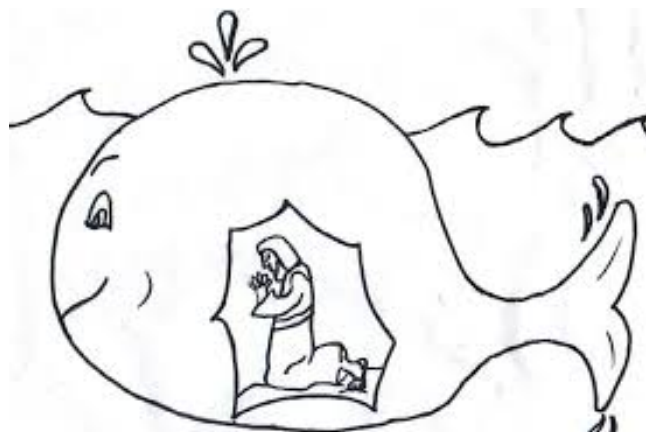
Learning the virtue of obedience from the inanimate creation (sea, wind, plants etc.)

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The power and authority of God over nature.
- Feel:** That God is present in every place, and we must obey his word in order to be saved.
- Practice:** The child should understand the concept of obedience and practice it with his parents and teachers.

Memory Verse:

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork."
(Psalm 19:1)



Lesson Content

A long time ago lived a man called Jonah. Do you know what the meaning of his name is? "Dove". And that man used to love God very much. That's why, one day the Lord called him, and said to him, "I'm going to ask of you a request, and I want you to obey it straight away." So Jonah said to him, "Okay Lord, tell me what the request is, and I will do whatever You say. Of course, I cannot say no to You. I love You very much." So the Lord said to him, "Get up quickly, and travel to the great city Nineveh, and cry out to it in a loud voice, and speak to the people who are in her, and say to her that the Lord is very upset, and that their city will be destroyed because of the evil that they are doing."

Do you think that Jonah will go to that city, and tell her people the words that God had told him to tell them?

Unfortunately, Jonah did not obey the word of the Lord. Instead, he got up quickly and said to himself: "I will run away from God, because I know that if I speak to these people, they might repent; and I know that the Lord is very merciful, and will forgive the people of Nineveh if they repent."

And he went quickly and got on a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish, and paid the fare; and he went down into the ship and slept. Do you think that God does not see Jonah, and does not know where he is? Of course not. God is present in every place, and sees the actions of Jonah, and sees that he is upset and has run away.

Do you know what God did? God commanded the sea: "I want you to be very boisterous (rough)." And He also spoke to the wind and said to him, "I want you to help the sea by blowing strongly." So the sea and the wind obeyed the word of the Lord and the waves hit against the ship until it was about to be destroyed. So the sailors threw out of the ship their bags and the heavy things that were on board, but it was no use. The sea continued to be boisterous, and the wind blew very strong against the ship, and the ship was about to sink. And all the while Jonah was sleeping. The sailors went to wake him up, and said to him, "Are you asleep while the ship is sinking? Get up and help us. Get up and pray to the Lord. Maybe he will make the sea quiet." So Jonah said to them, "I am the cause of the sea not being calm, because I did not obey the Lord, but I fled from Him." So the sailors were afraid from the words of Jonah and said, "Let us draw a lot and see whose name we will pick."

And the name of Jonah was drawn, and they asked him, "What's your story?" So he told them how he refused to go to Nineveh, but instead fled on the ship. And he said to them, "If you throw me from the ship, the sea will become calm again." So the sailors did what he said, and they threw him from the ship. Then the Lord commanded the sea to be quiet, and the wind to be calm, and they both obeyed his word.

And the Lord ordered a big fish to swallow Jonah; so the fish swallowed Jonah and obeyed the word of the Lord. And Jonah sat in the belly of the fish for three days, saying sorry to the Lord for his sin. And he asked God to forgive him; and God answered the prayer of Jonah and forgave him. And God commanded the whale to spew him out; so the whale obeyed God, and spew him out onto the shore of the city of Nineveh.

And God spoke to Jonah and asked him to speak to the people of Nineveh, and say to them that God is very sad from their sinful actions. And this time Jonah obeyed God and entered the city, and spoke to the people of Nineveh the words of God: that after 40 days the city will be overthrown because of their evil. So the people and the king were afraid, and they fasted and repented, and asked the Lord to forgive them. And they all wore sackcloth. So when the Lord saw their repentance, He forgave them because they knew their sins, and they stopped doing evil again, and He did not punish them.

But Jonah was upset that God forgave the people of Nineveh, and he said to himself, "I know that God loves His children and is compassionate." And he went and made a large shade to shelter himself from the sun, and then sat down to see what the people of the city would do, and what the Lord would do to them. So the Lord ordered a small plant to grow and give shade to Jonah, to protect him from the sun, and to make him happy. And the plant obeyed the command of the Lord and gave shade to Jonah, and he was really happy with it. Then the Lord commanded a worm to eat the plant at dawn. So the worm obeyed the word of the Lord. And the Lord said to the sun, "I want you to come out, and shine down with all your heat on the head of Jonah." And the sun obeyed God, and shone down upon the head of Jonah. So Jonah was upset because of the plant and cried out to the Lord, and said to Him "Why did You make the plant to wither. The plant was really nice, and was protecting me from the sun." So the Lord said to him, "Don't be upset, Jonah. You love the plant, and you don't want anything to happen to it. And you are upset over her, even though you don't know it, and have only seen it for one night. And yet you wanted Me to upset the people of Nineveh who are many, whom I love, by destroying Nineveh. No! no! that's not right. They are My children, and I delivered them from evil, and cannot upset them. So Jonah understood the purpose of the

Lord and he went away joyful because the people had repented.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Which city did God order Jonah the Prophet to go to?
- And to which city did Jonah try to escape to from God?
- What did God do to save Jonah? And which elements of nature obeyed God?
- God saved many people in this book. Are you able to mention them?
- What did God do when Jonah became upset at Nineveh's repentance?



Exercise

Prepare a piece of paper in the shape of a tree, with seven branches to represent the seven the days of the week. The child places a tick mark on a particular day on which he has been obedient, and a cross if he was disobedient.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

Cause me to know the way in which I should walk,
For I lift up my soul to You. May Your Holy Spirit guide me in the way of uprightness for the sake of Your Holy Name. O Lord give me life. (Psalm 143:8-10)

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the story of Jonah. • Describe what elements of nature (wind, sea ...) obeyed God and how. • Explain how Nineveh turned from doing evil to the obedience of God. • Recite the verse of the lesson: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork." (Psalm 18:1) from the Matins prayer-Agpeya. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act out the story of Jonah. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being obedient to their parents and teachers. 	



I am Heavenly

The Church is the Image of Heaven

Bible References: Ephesians 17: 4-32

Book References:

- HG Bishop Youannes of Gharbia, "Heaven"

Lesson Aim:

The child should appreciate the beauty of the church, that it is the image of heaven on earth, and that it is the bridge or the ship that connects us to heaven.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The importance and the beauty of the church, being the image of heaven on earth.
- Feel:** That on entering the church, he is present in heaven in the presence of the Lord of glory, and the saints and the angels.
- Practice:** To respect and love the church; I should stand quietly at the time of prayer, as I am standing before the Lord in the midst of the saints and angels. It is not right to eat or drink in church.

Memory Verse:

"How lovely is your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts. My soul longs, yes even faints, for the courts of the Lord."
(Psalm 83)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Have a small mirror with you, and direct the mirror towards the children so that they see themselves in the mirror, and then ask them what they see in the mirror.

Then direct the mirror towards the Bible and ask them the same question. Continue to direct the mirror towards different objects, and each time ask them what they see in the mirror.

Finally direct the mirror towards heaven (the sky) and ask them what they see in the mirror. This can be the starting point for the lesson. Ask the children if they think there is a place more beautiful than the heaven which we see?

Tell the children that there are many heavens:

The first heaven: The heaven which contains the clouds, the birds, and aeroplanes.

The second heaven: Where we find the planets, the stars, the sun, the moon.

The third heaven: This is paradise, which St Paul the apostle went up to and said: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows - such a one was caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2). And that is where the righteous spirits go to now... until the day of the resurrection, when they will be transferred to the heavenly Jerusalem.

As for the heaven of heavens, it is the place where the throne of God is, which no man has ascended to. The Lord is the only One Who has descended from it and ascended to it.

Lesson Content

Who of you when you enter the church enjoys hearing the beautiful hymns which Abouna and the deacons are chanting?

The first thing in the church which reminds us of eternal life is the hymns and praise which are chanted. In the church we pray and thank God, and rejoice in the Lord for all His gifts. And when we chant the hymns, we call on all of God's creation to join us in giving glory to the Lord. And when we enter the church, we see the icon stand, and on it pictures of the saints. And we also see on it the picture of the Lord Jesus, and at his right hand the Lady Virgin St Mary, exactly like we will see them in heaven. And around them are pictures of the disciples. And on the rest of the walls of the church, we see pictures of the saints around us while we are praying. We call these pictures "icons". These icons also remind us that we are in heaven in the midst of the saints.

Also the church has different shapes, and all the shapes remind us of our Lord Jesus. One of the shapes is a circle, which does not have a beginning or an end, like the Lord Jesus. The church can also be in the shape of the cross. And it can also be in the shape of a ship, because the church is the ship that takes us to heaven, as well as looking after us and protecting us until we reach heaven.

The church also has a very nice thing which reminds us of heaven: the candles. Candles are lit in church, and especially during the time of the liturgy. For example, during the reading of the Gospel candles are lit to remind us that the Lord Jesus is the light of the world. Candles also remind us that in heaven we will not need the light of the sun, because the Lord Jesus will light up the beautiful heaven. We also light up candles before the pictures of the saints; they are more luminous than the candles.

After we enter the church and walk in the midst of the pictures of the saints, who see us and hear us, we arrive at the Sanctuary, where we bow down and pray to the Lord Jesus, because the beautiful altar is like the throne of the Lord Jesus in heaven. On the altar is the body and blood of the Lord Jesus - can you imagine that: the great Lord who sits on a throne as a King in heaven is truly present with us on the altar. And He sees us and hears us, and looks over us while we are praying to Him, and delights in us very much when He sees us standing like the angels in heaven. And in front of the altar is a place called the bosom of the Father, and on it is a picture of the Lord Jesus sitting on His throne.

Our beautiful church is filled with angels, especially during the time of the liturgy and the various praises of the church. That's why Abouna says at the end of the liturgy, "O angel of this sacrifice ascending to the heaven with this praise, remember us before the Lord that He may forgive us our sins." That shows that the angels, who are in heaven, are present with us in the church, and take with them our prayers and requests up to the Lord Jesus. And we also pray and praise in the church like the angels do.

Do you seen then my dear children how the church is very, very, beautiful, to the extent it makes us feel that we are present in heaven in the midst of the saints and the angels?

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Is the church a normal house like our house?
- What things do you see in church, and what do they remind you of in heaven?



Exercise

As soon as we enter the church, we remember that the church is filled with the saints and the angels, and we remember that the Lord Himself is present and is seated on His throne - the altar - which is in the church. That is why I should have awe for the house of the Lord. That means I should not raise my voice, and I should not run in the church. And it is not right that I eat and drink in His holy place. And when I enter, I should pray the verse, "I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple." (Psalm 5:7)



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

I thank You, O my Lord Jesus, for You have made a house for Yourself on earth, which is our beautiful church that makes us live in heaven with You and with Your righteous saints.

O Lord Jesus, You are present in heaven and are present in the church, and are present in every place. Please, O Lord, come, and dwell in our hearts, and teach us how to love You, and to love Your house, and to have a desire for it and respect it.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is the image of heaven. • Some of the features (icons, pictures, etc.) in the church and what they symbolise in heaven. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect and awe for the house of God. • Love for the house of God. • That when s/he is in church, s/he is in heaven in the midst of the saints. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recite the memory verse on entering the church. • Not to talk in church. 	



I Love My Siblings

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

Bible References: John 11:1-44

Book References:

- HG Bishop Youannes, "Paradise of the Spirit (Part 3)"
- HH Pope Shenouda III, "Love the Summit of Virtues"

Lesson Aim:

The child should have love and care for his siblings.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The story of Mary and Martha, and Lazarus their brother.

Feel: The importance of love.

Practice: To love all people (his siblings and others).

Memory Verse:

"He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him."

(1 John 2:10)





Story

The Story of "I Wish I Could Be Like Your Brother"

Jack was one of those who excelled in his studies, and he was praised by his family and friends. His older brother promised him that if he completed his studies with top grades, he will buy for him a car. Jack did graduate with top results, and on the day of his graduation, his brother presented him with a car as a reward, and told him to look after it, because he had paid a lot of money for it from his hard work and earnings. So Jack took great care of the car, making sure it is kept clean and gleaming. Now two weeks later, a poor boy passed before the house of Jack and began to look over the car with great interest. Jack turned to the boy and said to him "do you like the car?" The poor boy answered, "yes. does the car belong to you?" Jack replied, "My brother gave it to me as a gift two weeks ago." The boy said sighingly to Jack, "it is my dream to have a car like this, I wish ..." Jack interrupted him, "come and see how comfortable and wonderful it is." And the boy was awestruck and could not utter a word. The poor boy asked him if he could wait for him while he back to his house to get something. The boy went quickly to his house and returned walking slowly. Jack looked closely to the boy from a distance, and saw him carrying his younger brother who was paralysed. He came towards Jack's new car, and there was a smile on his face. Then the poor boy said to his younger brother, "I know that you are not able to walk to see this new car. This car was bought by Jack's older brother. And I will do all I can to give you something like it, God willing." And he said to Jack "pray for me because I wish to be like your brother."

Lesson Content

Lazarus, Mary and Martha

Lazarus, Mary and Martha were siblings who lived at the time of Christ. And they knew Christ, and Christ knew them. Christ loved to visit their home to spend time with them, and eat with them and sleep at their house. And Mary and Martha loved each other and helped each other in the house work. But when Christ used to come to their home, Mary would come to Him and sit at His feet. Martha however, with all love, would do all the housework by herself. But when she got tired she would be embarrassed to ask Mary her sister to get up and help her. So she would go to Christ, since He was loved by everyone in the house, and ask Him to make Mary get up and help her in the house work. But Martha knew that Mary liked to sit at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ and listen to His teachings. But when Christ left their home, Mary would help Martha with her work. As for Lazarus, he was responsible as the breadwinner for the house. One day, Lazarus fell ill while he was working, and he went home to rest, and died. And his sisters mourned his death because of he was so close to them and greatly loved by them. So when Christ came to the visit their home four days after the death of Lazarus, He went to the tomb of Lazarus, and called out to Lazarus. And Lazarus rose from the dead. Mary and Mary were overjoyed at the raising of Lazarus and his return to them.

Christ used to love staying at the home of Lazarus, because of the great warmth of love He felt between the siblings. He loved to stay at their home more than anywhere else, because of their love towards each other, and helping each other out. For Christ loves to stay with people who love each other, and even considers their home to be His home, so that He goes in and out freely.

We also have the chance for Christ to love our homes as He loved the home of Lazarus. By the way we conduct ourselves at home, and by the love we have for our siblings, and our love for dad and mum by helping them in everything they ask of us, it is possible by one good act and by the pure love I offer my brother or my sister in all sincerity, that Christ enters my home, and lives in this home all the days of my life. And the Lord will rejoice at entering my home, because he enjoys an atmosphere which is rich in love. And as we know, God is love, and when we hear about God we hear about love. And when there is love in our home, Christ will come to it, and rejoice at sitting with His children who keep his commandments. And when we have complete love between us and the rest of our family, our homes will be like heaven, for the kingdom of heaven is filled with great love between those who abide there. But the opposite is also true. If our home is filled with unforgiving and hatred, then we can be sure that God will not be in the midst of that home.

When we deal with our siblings with complete love and complete care, then we will be able to love all people who are outside the home, like my friends in church, and my friends at school, and those I deal with in the street. For the home is like a small community, from which springs the life of the greater community. When we love our siblings at home, we are able to love all people outside the home. And when we help our siblings and family inside the home, we are able to help all people outside the home. And when we spread joy in our homes and give joy to those around us, then Christ will also rejoice in me and make me to rejoice in Him.

But when we deal with those at home in a bad way, how will our dealings be with those outside the home? And

when we start fights inside the home, what will our image be outside the home? And how can we love Christ Whom we have not seen with our eyes, while we do not love the persons whom we see with our eyes every day? And how can we say that we know Christ, while inside us there is no love for our siblings? For God is love, and he who does not know love does not know God.

So how can we rejoice the heart of Christ foremost, and secondly, give joy to people?

In your homes we should nurture great love and care for all the members, taking as an example the Lord Jesus, who when he was little used to help Joseph the Carpenter in his work, and used to help the Virgin Mary and obeyed everything she asked of Him, even though he was God. Do not let one day pass without doing one good deed for your family and your siblings. Help them in their needs, and give them joy by obeying them and doing everything they ask of you. That way you will rejoice the heart of God.

For love is God and God is love. When you practice the virtue of love, you will feel the presence of God in your life, and you will feel that God is rejoicing in you; and you will feel the joy of all those who know you, for they see in you the image of Christ which is rich in love. So do not lose the opportunity to make all people feel the presence of Christ in you. And do not lose the opportunity to have the presence of Christ felt in your home, and in your room, your school, your studies and in all your life. And when you practice love, you will know God who said: "He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10).

Method of memorisation: throw a ball to a child. The child who catches the ball says the verse of the lesson. Continue until all the children have learnt the verse.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Who are the siblings who loved the Lord Jesus who was with them in their home?
- What miracle did the Lord Jesus do with this family?
- What virtue can we learn from the siblings?



Exercise

- Pray daily for all your family and friends.
- If there is enmity between you and another person, pray more for that person.
- Ask God daily to make you love people as He loved you.
- Remember that God loved you first without you having loved Him.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

We thank You, O Lord Jesus, in any occasion, for every condition, and for all things. We thank You O Lord for you brought us to Your house today, and allowed us to enter it. O Lord, You have taught us today how beautiful it is to love one another, and not only to show love to our siblings who love us, but also to love the people who do not love us, and to pray for them. We ask You also, O Lord, to give us the spirit of love which Lazarus, Mary and Martha had. Teach us, O Lord, to love You, so that we can love all people, for "God is love". Help us, O Lord, to learn from You, for You are love. You are the one Who came down from the highest heaven, took our human flesh, and became like us, because You loved us. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember the aim of the lesson is to love one another. Describe how we should relate to our siblings. Describe the love that existed between Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine what a family which is filled with love would be like. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember in every liturgy that we should love another when we "greet one another with a holy kiss". Pray to God to make him/her) have love for all people. Pray for all people on a regular basis, especially for those people who show enmity towards him. 	



I read the Holy Bible

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Bible References: Acts 8:26-40

Book References:

- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "Commentary on the Book of Acts"

Lesson Aim:

The importance of reading the Holy Bible.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: That God sends his word to everyone who seeks Him

Feel: The importance of the Holy Bible

Practice: Reading the Holy Bible

Memory Verse:

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

(Acts 8:37)



Lesson Content

The book of Acts tells us about a very important person. This person was an Ethiopian minister who was Jewish. He loved the Lord, and every year travelled to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and then returned to his country once again. But this year was not like any other year. For it happened this year, that after he went to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, on his way back to his country God had arranged for him something very different; God had arranged for him a new life.

This Ethiopian was sitting in his chariot, and he had with him the Old Testament. So he opened it and began to read from the book of Isaiah the Prophet. He was very happy until he reached a part which he couldn't understand at all. He read verse which said: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened it not His mouth." (Isaiah 53:7).

The minister was very confused about what Isaiah the Prophet meant by this verse. What does it mean "lead as a lamb to the slaughter", and "as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth"?

He really wished that the Lord would help him to understand these words. And here we see God's plan to make the minister to know Him and to believe in Him.

God had arranged Philip the apostle to go to him and preach to him the Lord Jesus Christ. Philip the apostle travelled much, talking about our Lord, and preaching to the people about Him, and baptising those who believed in Him.

An angel of the Lord appeared to St Philip and asked him to travel to the south, to Gaza. So Philip obeyed, and went down south. And the Holy Spirit guided him to go and walk beside the chariot of the Ethiopian minister.

While he was walking beside the chariot, Philip the apostle heard the Ethiopian minister reading from the book of Isaiah the Prophet. So he asked him "Do you understand the words that you are reading?" The minister answered him: "I cannot understand these words by myself. Can you help me?" So Philip got into the chariot next to the minister and began to explain to him the words of Isaiah and to preach to him the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Ethiopian minister was very joyful at the words which he was hearing from Philip, and how beautiful were the words of Isaiah the Prophet which he could not understand before.

And after he understood and knew how much God loved him and sacrificed Himself for the salvation of mankind, when they came to some water, the minister asked Philip if he could be baptised. So Philip replied: "If you believe with all your heart, you may." So the minister replied: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

We would like to clarify that the Ethiopian Minister read the Old Testament a lot but he did not understand the meaning which God intended. That's why he wasn't happy. But when he met the apostle Philip, and he explained to him many things he could not understand, he believed in the Lord Jesus and was baptised. And he was really happy. That is why the book of Acts says: "He went on his way rejoicing."

And we do we understand the words of God in the Holy Bible, will be joyful and we will love the Lord more and will abide in Him more. And we will rejoice like the Ethiopian eunuch rejoiced in the Lord Jesus.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Where can we find God's teachings for our lives? (The Holy Bible)
- Who commanded Philip to go to Gaza? (The angel of the Lord)
- What was the job of the Ethiopian eunuch? (He was a minister in charge of the queen's treasury)
- Who commanded Philip to go near to the chariot? (The Holy Spirit)
- How did Philip help the Ethiopian eunuch? (He explained to him the Holy Bible, and how Jesus Christ is the promised Saviour, Who was written about in the book of Isaiah.)
- Who transported Philip far away? (The Spirit of the Lord)
- Why was it important that Philip obeyed the words of the Angel? (Because if he had not obeyed the Ethiopian eunuch would not have known that Christ is God)



Exercise

You can agree with the children to read a certain number of chapters from a particular book from the Holy Bible (according to the ability of the children), and give them a notebook to record in it every day the part which they read and a verse which they most liked. The child should bring the notebook with him when he comes to Sunday school, and the children can share with each other the verse which they liked each day. After four weeks give a reward to the children who were diligent in recording their readings, in order to encourage them to read the Holy Bible and learn a verse every day.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O our loving Lord, creator of the universe, You plan and direct our lives, even in the smallest details. You sent Philip the apostle on a far journey for the salvation of an Ethiopian eunuch, who sought You from his heart and wished to know You, and wished for someone to interpret to him the prophecies. And so You sent Philip to the eunuch to preach to him.

Grant us O Lord to be like that Ethiopian minister who was diligently searching for You, and was trying to know about You from Your Holy Bible. Grant us O Lord, that we may have a living relationship with Your word, Your Holy Bible, that we may hear Your words and understand them, and may find in Your word our joy and comfort, and may learn from it everything that is important for our lives. And may we live according to Your Bible, so that we may be real ambassadors to You. O Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember the events of the story. Describe how God sent Philip to the eunuch. Explain why God sent the apostle to the Ethiopian eunuch. Recite the verse of the lesson. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The events of the story. Make the model which is given in the paper activities section. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be regular in reading the Holy Bible 	



I am a servant of God, who is obedient to His word

The Feast of Annunciation

Lesson Aim:

Obeing the commandment through obedience to the angel.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The name of the angel who preached to the Virgin Saint Mary, and the reason for the Annunciation.

Feel: That all God's words to us are important, and we should obey them.

Practice: To pray that God may help them to obey His word.

Memory Verse:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

(Luke 1:35)



Lesson Content

A servant enters the class unexpectedly, wearing a tunia, and two wings, and in a loud voice says, "Jesus will be born" (the children will be startled because of the unexpected appearance of the servant and his words: "Jesus will be born this day!")

Why were you startled?

It's because you were not expecting that to happen, is that right?

(Read with your children Luke 1:26-3 and ask your children to pay attention and show respect to the word of God).

In the sixth month of St Elizabeth being pregnant with St John the Baptist, the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin **Mary** in the small town of Nazareth, and said to her: "Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" (Luke 1:28). St Mary was troubled at the angel's words, but the angel replied: "Do not be afraid, God himself is with you, and you have a special blessing among all the women in the whole world throughout all generations." What do you think was the Virgin Mary's response to that? (Give them a chance to answer). The Holy Bible says that the Lady Virgin St Mary was troubled at the words of the angel, and said within herself: I wonder what the purpose of this greeting is, and why the angel is saying these words to me?

When the angel saw that she was startled and troubled at his saying, he replied to her hastily, saying: (Read verses 30-33).

Do you know what the meaning of these words is, my children? (Give a chance for discussion).

The angel assured the Virgin Mary and said to her:

"Do not be afraid, O Mary. When God saw that you love him very much from all your heart, and that you follow his commandments, He chose you so that He may be born from you." Our Lady St Mary asked the angel and said to him: "I am not married, how can I give birth to a Son?"

The Angel Gabriel explained to her that the Lord will come upon her by His Holy Spirit, and that she will give birth to the Lord Jesus himself. And in order to prove to her that nothing is impossible with God, he said to her: "Elizabeth your cousin, who is very very very old, is pregnant." St Mary answered the Angel, saying to him: "I am the maidservant of the Lord. Whatever the Lord says, I will do."

Our Lady St Mary was very obedient to the words of the Lord, and she has very strong faith in Him. The Angel Gabriel was also a faithful servant to the Lord; he went to the Virgin and said to her everything with faithfulness, and preached to her a beautiful message. We also should be faithful servants to the word of the Lord. We should fulfil His words with all faithfulness. Sometimes the Lord asks us to do something, and we do it, and sometimes He asks us, and we don't do it, like what? (Give a chance for discussion)

God asks of us to be faithful. What does that mean? It means that when you do something, you do it very, very right, and we try as much as we can not to make any mistakes with it (for example in prayer, attending the liturgy, doing homework, at home or with friends etc). In that way I will be an obedient servant to God, like the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- In which town did the Annunciation happen?
- Who was the story of the Annunciation about?
- Who was the Angel who announced a message to the Virgin Mary?
- Is there anything which is impossible with God?



Exercise

From today, when I pray I will thank God that He was born for my sake.

Memorise the Praise of St Mary (Luke 1:46-55)



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

I thank You, O Lord, for You came down to earth for my sake. Please, O Lord, come and reign over my heart and cleanse it. And make me to be submissive and obedient to You at all times, so that I can enjoy being with You forever. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember what St Mary was doing when the Angel appeared to her. Describe how St Mary felt while she was listening to the Annunciation. Know that nothing is impossible with God. Explain why St Mary was troubled by the Annunciation. Recite the verse of the lesson. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine the humility of the Virgin when she listened to the Annunciation, and her saying that she is the maidservant of the Lord. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on attending the Liturgy of the Feast of the Annunciation with his friends and the servants. Thank God every day in his prayers for the Lord's wondrous birth. Learn the praise of St Mary. 	



Praise in Heaven

Isaiah the Prophet and the Vision of the Temple

Bible References: Isaiah 6, Revelations 3

Book References:

- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "The Book of Isaiah: A Patristic Commentary"

Lesson Aim:

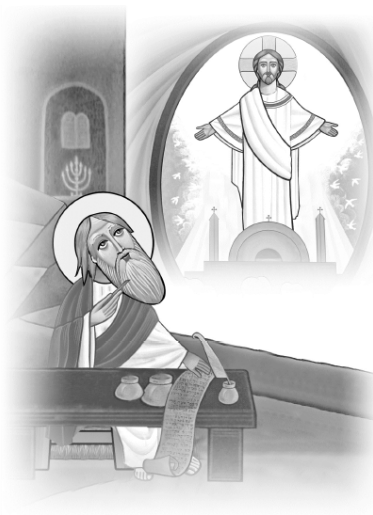
The prayer of praise makes me feel as if I am in heaven.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The importance and beauty of the prayer of praise in the Psalmody (Tasbeha).
- Feel:** A desire to pray prayers of praise.
- Practice:** Pray one of the Psalms of praise; say the hymn of "The Cherubim Worship You" before prayer; thank God in prayer

Memory Verse:

"While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being."
(Psalm 146:2)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Story

A servant went to visit one of his Sunday school boys at home. The boy welcomed him with great joy into his home. And he wanted to take him to his room to have a look at it and to show him a toy. When the servant entered the room with the boy, he saw that the room was really beautiful. So the servant asked the boy: "Who prepared this room for you?" The boy replied, "Dad." So the servant said to him: "Did you thank dad for this beautiful room?" The boy replied, "No." The servant then asked the boy: "The room is very tidy. Did you tidy it yourself?" So the boy replied "No." So the servant asked him again: "Who is the one who tidied it?" The boy replied "Mum." So the servant said to him, "Did you thank her?" The boy replied, "No." The boy then showed the servant the toys in the room. So the servant asked him: "who bought for you all these beautiful toys?" The boy replied "Dad." The servant asked him "Did you thank him?" The boy replied: "No." After that the servant asked him about his exams. The boy said to him, "There was a very difficult subject, which I did not understand it. So mum came and sat with me and helped me with it. And I got a really good mark in my exam for that subject. I was really happy." So the servant said to him: "Did you thank mum for helping you in that subject?" And the boy replied "No. I asked mum after that for a present as a reward for getting a good mark in my test." So the servant said to the boy, "But my dear how many things have you told me which mum and dad did for you, but you did not thank them for them, even though the word 'thank you' is not a difficult word? We have to learn to say thank you. The prayer of praise is also one of the most important and beautiful prayers, and which the angels pray at all times. In the prayer of praise we thank the Lord and glorify Him, because He stands beside us and supports us."

Lesson Content

There was a long time ago among the people of Israel a prophet called Isaiah. Isaiah was feeling sad, so the Lord wanted to make him happy by showing him a vision. The vision was very wonderful. He saw our beloved Lord Jesus sitting on a high throne, and he saw angels and the Cherubim and Seraphim (here the servant should describe the Cherubim and the Seraphim) praising the Lord, saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of hosts. The earth is full of his glory". Isaiah was very joyful when he saw this vision, and heard this praise. The prayer of glorifying the Lord is a prayer which rejoices man. When we praise God, we feel His love for us, and that He governs our life and plans it, and cares for us in every event and situation.

When we are in church we feel as if we are in heaven, so the church gave us prayers of praise (the Psalmody - Tasbeha), so that we may praise God like the angels. The Psalmody teaches us to thank the Lord for many things. We thank Him for all the beautiful creation which He has created for us. The Psalmody also has in it stories of the children of God, and how the Lord gave them victory in their trials and difficulties.

But how can we praise the Lord like the angels? At the end of each day we can stand before the Lord and thank Him for everything He did with us in that day. We thank Him because He looked after us while we were outside our home. We thank Him because He stands beside dad in his work and never leaves him, and helps mum and gives her strength so that she may be able to do all the work in the house. We can also thank Him for everything which He created for us, and for the beautiful nature which is around us, because God created it for us. When we thank the Lord for all these things, we will be sure that the Lord is with us in every situation in our lives and supports us. And we will have joy exactly like the angels.

Application



Game

The children sit in a circle and each child in turn thanks the Lord for something specific (a situation in his life, anything from God's creation which he loves etc). And the one who repeats something which was said before goes out of the game, and the game continues until there is a winner.



Comprehension Questions

- What is the meaning of the word Psalmody (Tasbeha)?
- How can we pray the praise of the Psalmody while we are young?
- What did Isaiah the Prophet see in a vision?
- What is the praise that is said by the Cherubim and the Seraphim?



Exercise

Pray every day the Psalm: "Praise the Lord all you nations" (Psalm 116- Sunset Prayer in the Agpeya) or chant the hymn "the Cherubim worship You" before prayer. We should practice thanking God in prayer every day. Before sleeping we should thank Him for dad and mum, and for all the beautiful creation which He created for us, and everything in our lives which gives us joy.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

Our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, I love You very much, and I know that You also love us and help us in everything in our lives. Thank You for dad and mum, and my brothers and sisters. And thank You for every situation in which You stood beside me and helped me. Teach me, O Lord Jesus, how to pray and praise like the angels, and to feel how much You love me.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance and beauty of praising. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God's love Who created everything for our sake. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To thank God in the various situations in his/her life. 	



I see in the Liturgy

Covenant Thursday

Bible References: Exodus 28

Book References:

- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "Commentary on the Gospel of St Mark"
- Fr Antonious Fekry, "Commentary on the Gospel of St Mark"

Lesson Aim:

To become familiar with the Korbana, the fruit of the vine (the wine), and the garments of the priests and deacons.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** What the priestly garments symbolise; the characteristics of the Korbana and the fruit of the vine (the wine).
- Feel:** Importance of preparation for the Liturgy.
- Practice:** Attending the Liturgy.

Memory Verse:

"Whoever eats Me will live because of Me."
(John 6:57)



Background Information for the Servant

God ordered Moses to make special garments for Aaron his brother, for the Levites, and for the priests, which were to be worn during the priestly service. "And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty." (Exodus 28:2)

The church chose the colour white for the priestly garments, preferring it to other colours for the following reasons:

- It is befitting of God Who is covered with light as with a garment (Psalm 104:2).
- It points to the holiness and purity of his people after God has purified them from their sins.
- When the Lord Jesus Christ transfigured Himself before His disciples, His form was changed before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as snow.
- It is the colour of the garments of the angels at the time of their appearance to men (like the two angels of the resurrection. Luke 24:4)

These garments are consecrated for the service, and sanctified by prayer; the priest makes the sign of the cross over them, for by the cross of the Lord came our salvation.

A note on the garments of the priests:

- **Tonya:** It is made from white cloth. It symbolises the garment of Christ for which they drew lots; therefore when the priest or deacon puts on the Tonya he says: "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty" (Psalm 93:1)
- **Patrashel:** It is worn only by the deacons. The more senior deacons wear it on the left shoulder, with the two ends reaching to the ground, one at the front, and one behind, as a sign of their bearing the cross of Christ, for whom they have consecrated themselves for His service. The younger deacons wear it in the form of a cross at the front and back, and in the form of a belt, as a sign of self-control, and readiness for the service.
- **Ephod:** Resembles the Ephod which was worn by Aaron in the Old Testament. It has an opening at the top, and is worn over the shoulder, and drapes down at the front only, to the feet. It is worn only by the priests and bishops.
- **Taylasana:** Worn on the head by the priest, it has a round conical shape. It reminds him of the importance of being spiritually vigilant and alert during the prayers, according to the verse by St Paul: "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation." (1 Thessalonians 5:8)
- **Bornos (Chasuble):** It is like a robe, which is open at the front, and without sleeves. The fathers consider it as a symbol of God's care which protects him from every direction.

The material for the Eucharist comprises two elements: the bread and wine. (Matthew 26:26-29)

The first element is the **bread**. This should have the following characteristics:

- Made from pure wheat flour, for the sanctity of the sacrament is such that everything in it should be pure.
- It should be fermented bread, because yeast is a symbol of sin, and Christ carried our sins.
- It should be dedicated bread, not normal. Therefore the church arranged that this bread should be made by special people, and the room where it is made is called Bethlehem. The dough of the sacrifice should be sanctified by prayer and Psalms, which are recited while it is being made.

The second element is the **wine (Aparche)**

- Aparche is a Greek word meaning first fruits.
- Aparche is the name given to fermented grape juice (contains no more than 5% alcohol). Water is added to the Aparche during the Liturgy, approximately, one-third the volume of the Aparche.

Lesson Content

In the last week of the life of the Lord Jesus before his crucifixion was the climax of his great love for us: "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." (John 13:1) The Church calls the Thursday of that week, "Covenant Thursday". Why? Because the Lord Jesus made a new covenant with the disciples, and established for us the sacrament of Eucharist.

When He sat with His disciples, He took bread and said to them: "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And He took the cup which had the wine in it, and said to them, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." And by this lovely covenant which the Lord instituted on Covenant Thursday, which is Holy Communion, every time we partake of the Lord's body and blood in Holy Communion, He lives in me, and I abide in the Lord and He abides in me - "He who feeds on Me will live because of Me." (John 6:57)

By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, our beautiful church and our saintly fathers arranged for us the rite of the Divine Liturgy by which we prepare ourselves for Holy Communion. Let us get to know about a few things in the preparation for the Liturgy, and the vessels which we see in church during the Liturgy.

Is there special garments for the deacons and the priests which they wear in the liturgy? Yes of course there is:

1. **Tonya**

The priests and the deacons wear their Tonyas which are specially for the Liturgy. The colour of the Tonya is white, a symbol of purity, since the altar servants resemble the angels.

2. **Patrashel**

The Patrashel worn by the deacons is a band which is red on one face and blue on the other. The blue face is worn during funerals and on great Friday. If the funeral is on a Saturday or Sunday or coincides with a Lordly feast, or during the Pentecostal period, the Patrashel is worn with the red face.

3. **Ephod**

This is worn by the priest. It is hung over the neck, and it spans across the chest. It extends down at the front, to the feet, and drops down partially at the back. It is worn by the priest when he ministers the sacraments.

4. **Taylasana**

It is worn by the upon the head, as a crown. It drops down at the back to the feet, and is adorned with crosses.

5. **Taleeg**

It is worn inside the the sanctuary instead of shoes. It symbolises the renewal of my path: "Having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." (Ephesians 6:14)

The other important thing in the Liturgy is the Korbana and the Cup of wine.

The Korbana:

The Korbana is circular. In the centre of it is a circular print, having one large cross in the centre and 12 smaller crosses surrounding it. Around the circle is written the words: "Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal" which is the praise which Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea sung during the burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are five holes inside the circular print, which symbolise the wounds of our Lord: the nails in the hands, the nail in His feet, the crown of thorns, and the spear wound in His side.

The Korbana is turned into the body of our Lord by the work of the Holy Spirit. No salt is added since the body of the Lord Jesus Christ does not corrupt (Psalm 16:10), and He does not need to be preserved by salt, for He is good and holy and perfect in Himself. He Himself is the spiritual salt which preserves our souls and keeps them from the corruption which is in the world.

No honey or sugar is added to the Korbana, since the life of our Lord Jesus Christ was exemplified by the endurance of suffering for our sake - "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). In the rite of lamb of the Passover, which is a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Israelies were commanded to eat the lamb with bitter herbs (Exodus 12:8), which symbolises the sufferings of the Lord, Who is the true lamb.

It is circular, like the sun, to remind us that Christ is the sun of righteousness - "But to you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." (Malachi 4:2) Also, a circle has no beginning and no end, a symbol of Christ Who is eternal - He Has no beginning of days, or end of life.

The room in which the Korbana is made is called Bethlehem. It contains an oven, which is dedicated for the making of the Korbana. It should not be used for making anything else.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Why is the Korbana round and not any other shape?
- On which day was the sacrament of Eucharist founded?
- How can we prepare for the liturgy?



Exercise

Train yourself to approach the sacrament of Eucharist with awe and reverence, which befits this sacrament. We shown reverence by wearing clothing which is appropriate, and by offering true repentance before holy Communion,

and by praying the prayers before and after holy Communion, in which we thank our great God for accepting to dwell within us and sanctify us.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

We thank You, O Lord, for Your great humility, in giving us Your Body and Your Blood that we may have life, and Your Blood to cover our sins and to cleanse us. O Lord, You said: "He who eats My flesh and drink my blood abides in me and I in him." Confirm us, O Lord, in You, that we may not stray far from You, or become weakened and Satan overcome us. And abide in us, O Lord, that You may give us joy and power, and that our will maybe holy in You, in every work that we do. We thank You, O Lord, that by Your dwelling in us, You gave us the opportunity to be saints. Teach us not to take for granted this great grace. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember what the Lord Jesus Christ did on Covenant Thursday. Describe the shape of the priestly garments. Explain the shape of the Korbana and what it symbolises. Understand why the church uses the colour white in the priestly garments. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel the importance and holiness of the sacrament of Eucharist. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be regular in attending the liturgy. 	

Weeks 2-3 of April:

No lessons due to Palm Sunday
and the Feast of the Resurrection.



Proclaiming the Resurrection

Mary Magdalene, the Proclaimer of the Resurrection

Bible References: John 20

Book References:

- HG Bishop Youannes of Gharbia, "Paradise of the Spirit"

Lesson Aim:

Proclaiming the Resurrection to those around us.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: How the Lord Jesus Christ was raised up, and when.

Feel: The value of the new life which God has given us through His resurrection.

Practice: To proclaim to others the good news of the resurrection, giving joy to those around them.

Memory Verse:

"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."
(Matthew 28:6)



Lesson Content

Dialogue Between the Cock and Mary Magdalene

Mary was coming out of her house at dawn on Sunday, while it was still dark. A cock was also coming out of its nest at the same time and saw Mary Magdalene coming out of her house, and going out of the town. The following conversation took place between them.

The Cock: Cock-a-doodle-doo, good morning Mary Magdalene, what woke you up at this time? I'm the only one who wakes up at this time, so that I can wake the people up.

Mary Magdalene: Good morning Cock. Actually I haven't slept for two days, because I'm waiting for Saturday to end, and for dawn of Sunday to come, because I want to go to my beloved Jesus at His tomb, and I have some ointments and spices to take with me.

The Cock: At a tomb! Why is that?

Mary Magdalene: [while weeping] Don't you know that the Jews crucified Christ on Friday, even though He did not do anything wrong. He was gentle all His life and loved the people, and loved the sinners, of whom I am first.

The Cock: I know that you have really changed after you met with Christ, and He drove out from you seven demons. You became a completely new person.

Mary Magdalene: Because of His great love for me, He changed me.

The Cock: But do you know how to get to the tomb? It ...It must be far away.

Mary Magdalene: The tomb is outside the city. And because the Jews were afraid of His power, they asked for a big stone to seal the entrance, and for soldiers to guard the tomb.

The Cock: Okay. Will you and your friends, the other Marys, be able to move the stone by yourselves?

Mary Magdalene: We don't know what we will do. But we will go anyway, and see what happens. Please excuse me now, so that we may not get there late. Bye.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, arrived at the tomb, and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb, for Jesus had risen from the dead, and had come out of the tomb. Then an angel came down and moved the stone, and there was a great earthquake. The angel looked very beautiful and joyful. And because of the sound of the earthquake and the moving of the stone, the soldiers who were standing guard were very afraid.

The Angel: Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for the crucified Jesus. I have some lovely news to tell you: Christ is risen from the dead. He rose just as He told you. And He tells you to go and tell the disciples that He is risen, to give joy. And He will meet you in Galilee just as He told you.

The Marys rejoiced exceedingly. And while they were running, being full of joy, Jesus Himself appeared to them. As soon as they saw Him they bowed down to Him. And He assured them and gave them joy, and said to them: go and give joy to the disciples and tell them the good news.

Mary Magdalene full of joy, went to the disciples, and told them the good news of the resurrection. But they did not believe her. So Peter and John went themselves to the tomb.

Because of Mary Magdalene's great love for the Lord, she went again to the tomb, for she wanted to see the Lord again.

The Angel: Why are you weeping, Mary Magdalene?

Mary Magdalene: They took my Lord and I don't know where they have placed him.

And Mary turned round and saw someone who looked very beautiful, and He asked her why she was weeping and who she was looking for.

She thought that He was the gardener because the tomb was in the middle of a garden.

Mary Magdalene: If you have taken the body of Jesus, please tell me where you have placed it, and I will go to get it.

Lord Jesus: Mary!

Mary Magdalene: Rabboni, My Lord!

Mary Magdalene recognised the voice of the Lord Jesus, and she was full of joy. And she did not want to leave the Lord Jesus. So He said to her, "do not cling to me. I am sending you to the disciples, to tell them that I have risen from the dead, and after a while I will ascend to heaven."

So Mary was very happy; and she ran to the disciples, and preached to them with all confidence, "Khristos Anesty... Christ is risen".

Mary Magdalene was the first person to preach the resurrection. Because of her great love for the Lord, she had the blessing of seeing Him.

And our beautiful church also teaches us in the Liturgy to say: "Amen, Amen, Amen. Your death, O Lord, we preach; your holy resurrection and ascension we proclaim... to the end."

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What did angel say to the Marys?
- The Lord Jesus gave Mary Magdalene a mission to carry out. What was it?
- If you were in place of Mary Magdalene, what would you do if you found the tomb empty?



Exercise

Each day try to be a cause of joy to some person, by a kind word, a smile, by giving a helping hand. The Church gives us the joys of the resurrection for fifty days, which are called the holy 50 days (Pentecost). So try to be like Mary Magdalene who carried the good news, and gave joy to those around you.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

I thank You, O Lord, that You declared to us Your joyful resurrection. You give me the power of Your resurrection, which is made new in me each day, that I may have victory over sin, and may have joy in You, and be filled with Your peace which surpasses every mind. Teach me, O Lord, to be like Mary Magdalene who could not endure to live her life without You. So she got up early at dawn to go to the tomb. And because of her love, she was worthy to be a preacher of the resurrection, and to see You, for she truly searched for You from all her heart. Fill my heart, O Lord, with Your love and confirm me in You and You in me. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the events of the resurrection. • Describe the appearance of the angel and the Marys. • Explain how Christ rose from the dead. • Explain why the guarding soldiers were afraid. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw a picture of Christ risen from the dead, and the stone on the tomb rolled away. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give joy to those around him by being a bearer of good news. • To prepare a play about the resurrection, and present it on the day of the resurrection feast. 	



Preparing for Heaven

Parable of the Lost Coin

Bible References: Luke 15:8-10

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda III, "Contemplations on the Parables of the Lord Jesus Christ"

Lesson Aim:

Repentance is the key to reaching heaven.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The parable of the lost coin.
- Feel:** To know that God loves us regardless of our wrongdoings.
- Practice:** Thanking God for His love.

Memory Verse:

"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."
(Ezekiel 33:11)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Story

There were three friends: Peter, Mark, and John, who loved going together on trips. One day they went together to the sea, and got onto a boat. Mark was eager to go into the water and swim. But the captain of the boat refused, saying to him "the waves are rougher today, and the water could draw you far from the boat. We might not be able to find you if you strayed far from the boat." But Mark was determined to go into the water, and tried to convince his friends that he is a good swimmer, and it is impossible that the waves could draw him away as the captain of the boat was claiming. So Mark put on his swimming trunks and went into the water. He kept saying to his friends "Come into the water with me; the water is really nice today. You won't get a chance like this again." But after a few minutes, Mark began to get tired from swimming, and tried to get near to the boat so that he could get out of the water. But the waves were too strong for him, and he kept shouting to his friends to help him. So his friends ran to the captain of the boat to save their friend. By the time the captain of the boat had come out, the waves had pulled him far from the boat, and no one could find him. Mark was stranded in the midst of the sea. He was afraid, and kept wondering whether they would be able to find him, or would they go and leave him behind.

After two hours, Mark began to lose hope that they would find him. He continued swimming, and came across a log of wood floating on the water. So he got onto it and slept because he was so tired. Suddenly he woke up at the voice of someone calling him. He looked up and saw the captain of the boat on his boat; he had spent several hours looking for Mark. When Mark got onto the boat, he was expecting that the captain of the boat would punish him. But the captain of the boat, in a gentle and calm voice, said to him, "are you okay?" Mark replied: "yes." So the captain brought a towel for Mark to dry himself. The captain called Mark's mum and dad, and his friends, to tell them the good news that he had found Mark. And when they came, they were very happy, and thanked God that they had found Mark. Mark asked the captain why he continued looking for him even though he had disobeyed him by going into the water. The captain replied: "We all make mistakes, and our mistakes can make us fall into big problems. But God loves us and looks for every way possible to return us to Him again. And this is the message that the Lord Jesus gave us in one of his beautiful parables. Let us get to know this parable."

Lesson Content

The Lord Jesus tells us a lovely story about a coin. Let us get to know this story.

My name is Dodo the coin, a silver metal coin, which people used a long time ago to buy and sell with. And they would put me with my brothers in one purse. Once day, I was with my 9 brothers in the same purse, but I fell out of the purse and landed under the table. It was dark there, and I was very afraid. I kept thinking to myself, will my owner come looking for me, all will she leave me and use my other nine brother coin. The owner of the silver coin entered the house, and went into the kitchen to prepare the food. After she finished, she went to see the coins, discovered that one of the coins was missing. She was very upset, and started looking for the missing coin. But she did not find it. So she began to sweep the floor. And the poor coin that was on the ground could not take a breath because of the dust that was swept up from sweeping.

After the owner of the coin had spent a long time looking for the coin without success, the coin lost all hope that it would return to its brothers. But the owner did not lose hope, for she kept looking and looking until she found the coin. So the coin rejoiced greatly, and the owner was also very joyful, and called all her friends to rejoice with her.

The Lord Jesus told us this parable to reveal to us how much he loves us. Even if we go far from him, he continues to look out for us until he finds us and returns us his bosom. And when we return to his bosom, he rejoices, and all the angels and all heaven also rejoice at our return, after we had gone far from the Lord Jesus. For the Lord Jesus and heaven rejoice when we remain close to him, and do not stray, until we reach heaven, our true country.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- How many silver coins were there in the purse?
- How did the owner of the coin look for the coin?
- What did the owner of the lost coin do when she found it?

- Who rejoices when the Lord Jesus helps us to return back from our wrongdoings?
- What do you like most about this parable?



Exercise

Every child should draw a picture of a situation in which the Lord helped him, and should stand up and describe it to the other children in the class.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O Lord Jesus, I thank You because You love me, and despite my wrongdoings, you continually try to change me and make my heart pure again. So help me, O Lord, to stop my wrongdoings which take me far from You, and make me to increase in doing the things which bring me close to You. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parable of the lost coin • God continually looks out for us whatever our wrongdoings. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That God loves us, and will continue to love us even when we do wrong. • Joy that all the angels also love him 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank God for His love. • Ask for the angels' intercessions, that they may preserve him from wrongdoings. 	



Aaron and Moses

We all Complement Each Other

Bible References: Exodus 28

Book References:

- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "Commentary on The book of Exodus, chapters 3, 4, 5 "

Lesson Aim:

Because we all are different, we all complement each other

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** God created us different that we may all complement each other.
- Feel:** To feel that the power that results when we all complement each other because of our differences.
- Practice:** Respecting the other person even if they are different in colour or race or ...

Memory Verse:

"And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do."
(Exodus 4:15)

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Exploration

We are strong when we unite together, despite our differences

Tools: Matchsticks

Method:

1. Give each child a matchstick.
2. Ask each child to break the matchstick, which he should be able to do easily.
3. Hold 10 or 20 matchsticks in a bundle and ask one of the children to try to break them all as one bundle.

The servant comments on this activity, that despite our differences, we should all complement each other. That way we will be more powerful than when we work by ourselves.



Story

While Andrew was playing with his small boat in the pool of water, the boat strayed far from the edge of the pool out of hand's reach. As he was afraid to enter the pool to get the boat, he called his older brother to get the boat. Andrew expected his brother to go into the water to bring the boat to him. But he was surprised to find his brother throwing stones into the pool near the boat. So Andrew began to cry out: "Don't throw stones at my boat." His older brother did not heed the cries of his brother, but continued to throw stones, which stirred up waves that moved the boat until it came into hand's reach of Andrew. For God created us different in mind and with different abilities and gifts.

Lesson Content

There was a family which had three children: Aaron, and his sister Miriam, and their younger brother, Moses. One day, the king made an order for the killing of all Hebrew baby boys. All the family was concerned for their new born son Moses. But his mother had an idea of how to protect him from being killed by the king's soldiers. She made an ark big enough to hold Moses, and covered it with pitch (tar) so that water would not leak into it. She then placed the ark between the plants at the edge of the river. His sister Miriam stood afar to see what would happen. A short while later the daughter of the king came to swim in the river with her servants. She saw the ark, and inside it the child Moses, who was crying. When Miriam, Moses' sister, saw the daughter of the king, she ran to her and told her that she knew the one who is nursing the child. So the daughter of the king ordered her to go and bring her.

Miriam went to her mother and told her what had happened. So they went hastily to the daughter of the king, who gave the child Moses to his mother that she may nurse him and return him to her after he had grown a little. The daughter of the king decided to call the boy, Moses, a name meaning, "the one who was drawn from the water." And when the mother returned with her child to the house, she thanked God because he returned her child to her, and saved him from death.

Moses' mother brought him up until he had grown, and then she returned him to the palace of Pharaoh. Moses grew up in the palace. When he grew up he thought about his people and what he could do to help them. One day while he was shepherding the sheep (after he had run away from Egypt) the Lord appeared to him from inside a bush (the burning Bush) which was on fire. The Lord spoke to Moses, and told him that He had seen the afflictions of his people Israel, and wanted to return them to their land. And he said to him that he must go back to Egypt and speak with Pharaoh, and say to him that he must let his people Israel go free from the land of Egypt.

But Moses answered the Lord, saying: O Lord who am I to go and speak with Pharaoh? And also the people of Israel will not listen to my words, and will not believe that you sent me. So the Lord answered and said to him, "do not worry, I will be with you when you stand before Pharaoh. As for the people of Israel, I will perform in their sight miracles that will I will tell you about, so that they may believe you and follow after you."

The first miracle: he throws his rod to the ground, and it turns into a serpent. And when he holds it by its tail, it turns into a rod again.

The second miracle: he puts his hand inside his cloak and when he brings it out it is as white as snow. And when

he puts his hand into his cloak again, it becomes normal. God then said to him that if they are not persuaded by this miracle, then take water from the Nile and while you are pouring it out, the water of the river will turn into blood.

So Moses answered again and said to the Lord, "how can I say all that when I don't know how to speak well? My tongue is heavy." So the Lord answered him saying, "do not worry. And anyway isn't Aaron your brother? He speaks very well. Take him with you as a helper. He is the one who will speak with the people of Israel and make them understand." For God knows that we must work together, since we all complement each other in our different gifts and talents. How strange it is, O Lord, that You appoint a helper to Moses, that great Prophet. It must be to teach him that we are all humans and we must help and work with each other.

So Moses agreed to this solution, and took with him his brother Aaron. And he went to the elders of Israel and made Aaron talk to them, while Moses performed the miracles. So they agreed to the words of the Lord. Aaron also went with Moses when he went to speak with Pharaoh.

After that the people of Israel experienced a hard time from the Egyptians, but God saved His people after He struck the people of Egypt with the 10 plagues by the hands of Moses and Aaron, and brought them out of the land of Egypt.

So now we see that the Lord created us different. One is tall, one is short. One is white and the other is black. One is strong, and the other is weak but intelligent . . . and so forth. It is because of these differences that we all complement each other, like a beautiful painting which is complete in all the different colours and brush strokes.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What is the name of the prophet in our story today, and the names of his brother and sister?
- Who did Moses care for after he grew up?
- How the Lord speak to Moses? And what did He ask of him?
- Who did God choose to be a helper for Moses? And what was the gift that he had which distinguished him from Moses?
- How can we complete each other ? (Have an open discussion



Exercise

The importance of helping each other in the house work and participating in activities at school and the Scouts.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who took flesh and resembled thus in all things except for sin, help me to be like You. Pour Your love into my heart, and fill me with Your Holy Spirit, that I may be a growing member in Your holy church, and witness to You in my family and my school. Make me to delight in Your love, so that I may love everyone. Grant me Your joy, so that I may give joy to everyone. Show me the way in which I should live, that I may not stray in the ways of the world.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of our prophet, and his brother and sister • Where he was brought up, and who he cared for when he grew up. • The way in which the Lord met with him, and what the Lord asked of him. • The name of the helper whom God gave to Moses, who was different to him. • That God saved his people by the hands of Moses and Aaron. • Recite the verse of the lesson 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feelings of human weakness felt by Moses the Prophet • The strength which Moses felt from having his brother as a helper for him. • The blessing which comes through working together, and complementing each other with our different gifts and abilities. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To decide to help out by using my gifts in various activities and the house work. 	



I Love Others

Dividing the Land between Abraham and Lot

Bible References: Genesis 13

Lesson Aim:

To love others by doing good.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: How to show love to everyone who he deals with.

Feel: The importance of peace and love in his life

Practice: To love others and to do good to all.

Memory Verse:

"Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren."
(Genesis 13:8)



Lesson Content

Audiovisual: Felt board

Today we are going to talk about someone who loved God very, very, much. He not only loved God, but also loved all people. He loved everyone in his house (his family), and those who were not his relatives. And the love for others, of course, comes from the love for God. This man also had a lot of money and a lot of livestock and sheep.

Does anyone know who that man is, that we are talking about? His name is Abram. And Abram had a nephew called Lot. Abram loved Lot very much. Lot also had a lot of money and livestock (sheep, lambs, cattle etc.)

The shepherds and livestock of Abram lived with the shepherds and livestock of Lot in one land. But there was a problem: both Abram and Lot had a lot of shepherds and livestock and the land could not support all of them. So one day there Abram's shepherds and Lot's shepherds began to quarrel with each other.

Abram thought about it and said to Lot, "we don't want to lose our love for each other because of our possessions. There is a lot of land before you. Choose the land that you want to live in. If you go to the left I will go to the right, and if you go to the right I will go the left. Take with you your possessions and livestock, and your servants and shepherds, so that our love for each other may remain strong, and there be no quarrelling between your shepherds and my shepherds."

Lot thought about it and said, "I must choose the good land". So he chose the land of the Jordan, and said to his uncle, Abram, that he will dwell in it with his wife and daughters, and he will take all his possessions with him.

And Lot separated from his uncle, Abram, and settled in a place called Sodom, in the land of Canaan. And God blessed Abram and everything which he had because of his love, and his desire for peace.

Do you see my children how much love Abram for Lot, in allowing him to choose the land he wanted to dwell in, despite being older than Lot, and also his possessions being more than the possessions of Lot.

After that God gave to Abram another name, Abraham, and his wife was called Sarah.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- what is the name of the son of Abraham's brother?
- what is the reason why Abraham and Lot separated from each other?
- What did Abraham do when there was a quarrel between his shepherds and Lot's shepherds?
- Where did Lot live after he separated from Abraham?
- What is the new name that God gave to Abram, and the new name he gave to his wife?



Exercise

1. Offer love to everyone, whatever differences I may have with them.
2. This week I should try to reconcile with anyone I'm upset with, or who have upset me, and pray for them.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my beloved Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You for Your great love for us. I thank You, because through Your love, You taught us to love everyone, even those who upset us. I ask You, O my Lord Jesus, to be with me, and to give me Your love, through which I may love my brothers and sisters, and my lovely friends, and even those who upset me. Be with me and with all my friends. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember the name of Abraham's nephew Describe what happened between Abraham and Lot. Remember what Abraham said to Lot when there was a quarrel between their shepherds. Remember what Abraham did to Lot in order to keep their love for each other. Explain why Abraham left it to Lot to choose the land first. Recite the verse of the lesson. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> imagine the love of Abraham for lot to draw a picture showing the conflict that happened between the servant's of Abraham and the servants of lot. to make the model which is described in the paper activities section 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To decide to love all people To agree with his friends to offer love to one another 	



Feast of Pentecost

The Holy Spirit makes me different from those of the World

Bible References: John 14, Acts 2

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda, "The Holy Spirit and His work in Us"

Lesson Aim:

The Holy Spirit makes me distinguished as a child of God in my conduct, and grants me power and victory over every evil.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: How the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples.

Feel: The secret behind the child's power and all the gifts and lovely characteristics he has is God's Spirit dwelling in him.

Practice: Having the fruit of the Spirit

Memory Verse:

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."
(Acts 1:8)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Bring a cake and place it in the middle of the room before the children and ask them at the start of the lesson:

- Why have I brought this cake today?
- Whose birthday do we celebrate today?

After taking their responses, tell them that today we celebrate a very important birthday to us. It is the Church's birthday. How? The servant begins his explanation of the lesson and at the end he gives to every child a candle and asks them to make a wish for the church and place the candle on the cake. You can give them some examples. e.g. O Lord, look after the church, the priests and the deacons, the servants, the boys and girls.

Lesson Content

The Holy Spirit makes me different from those of the world

After the resurrection of Christ from the dead, He stayed with His disciples for 40 days, appearing to them and explaining to them how to preach and serve. At the end of the 40 days, Christ gathered his disciples on the Mount of Olives and said to them: I'm going away to prepare a place for you. What does this mean? It means that Christ ascended to heaven to prepare for everyone of us a place in heaven.

The disciples had many questions going through their mind: What will they be do when Christ is no longer with them in body? Where will they go to preach? What will they say? How will they persuade people to believe in Christ? All these questions crossed the minds of the disciples. So what did the Lord Jesus Christ tell them in order to put their minds at rest?

Christ said to them: "do not depart from Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high." He was telling them not to be anxious, for after his ascension to heaven they should wait until the Holy Spirit comes upon them, who will grant them the power they need to go out and preach. And he will teach them all things and remind them of everything that he said to them.

After the ascension of Christ, when did the Holy Spirit descend upon the disciples?

The apostles were sitting in the upper room and praying together. God chose a very important day to send down upon them the Holy Spirit. That day is called the day of Pentecost, when Jews from all the countries of the world in which they lived came to Jerusalem to attend this feast. Why did God choose this day? So that every one of these people who had come from all over the world may hear about Christ, and return to their country to preach him.

So what happened at this time to the disciples?

While they were sitting in the upper room, they suddenly heard the sound of a rushing wind from heaven, and it filled all the house where they were staying. There also appeared to them divided tongues of fire which settled upon the head of every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And at that moment, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the gift of speaking in different languages. When the people who were outside the house heard these sounds they all gathered to see what was happening. There were people there from Egypt, and from a country called Cappadocia, and from Iraq, and from all the countries of the world. And each one of them heard the disciples speaking his own language, and they were amazed at how these people could speak all these languages. But some people were mocking them, saying to them that they were drunk.

St Peter the apostle stood in the midst of the people and spoke to them a wonderful sermon, and told them how the Christ who they were waiting for, had come and saved the world. When they heard the sermon they were deeply affected and asked the disciples: "men and brethren, what shall we do?" So Peter said to them: repent and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And that means when I was baptised and anointed with the oil of Myron, the Holy Spirit began to dwell in me. And the Holy Spirit whom I received makes me different in everything. For all the people who are around me do bad things, and lie, and swear. But as for me the Holy Spirit guides me to love everyone and help everyone. And by doing this I become different to those around me. The Holy Spirit is like a plant within me. He starts small but if I listen to his guidance, He grows inside me until He becomes like a tree. And when He grows I can hear the voice of God more clearly and I can distinguish his voice from the voice of Satan. And at that time I

will have the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control.

For example, God will give me peace at a time when all the people around me are afraid and worried. And my faith will be very strong at the time when all those around me are doubting.

In this way I will be different.

The feast of Pentecost is the birthday of the Church

On this day I should thank God that he made me a member in the Church, and for giving me the Church which gives me life through the Body and Blood of Christ. And I should promise God and the Church that I will be faithful to it, as the apostles and my fathers the martyrs were faithful. And I ask God to fill me with His Holy Spirit so that I may do what pleases him, and be a witness to him in the midst of this world.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What happened when the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples?
- Which one of the disciples spoke with the people to tell them what was happening?
- In what form that the Holy Spirit come down on the disciples?
- When did the Holy Spirit come down on the disciples, before or after the Ascension?



Exercise

Explain to your children the meaning of every fruit of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The servant then gives to each child an A4 sheet of paper with the pictures of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The child should choose one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit to practice in his life. If he manages to practice that fruit, he cuts it out and sticks it on a piece of card. He practices another fruit the next day, until he has practiced all the fruit. He bring the pieced of card with him to Sunday School the following week. And the one who has the greatest number of fruit on the card gets a prize.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O Lord Jesus Christ, you said to us that you will not leave us orphans. You agreed, O Lord, to dwell in the heart of every one of us by your Holy Spirit. Make, O Lord, my heart to be a place that is suitable for you to dwell in it. And cleanse my heart from any sin which I hold on to. May you alone, O Lord, reign over my heart. By your Holy Spirit I will be different to those in the world, and I will be able to love all people and forgive everyone. There is nothing on earth that can make me angry or take away my peace, for you dwell in me. You are the king of peace, and I enjoy the promise you made to your disciples: my peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. I thank you O Lord for the wonderful gift of your Holy Spirit. I thank you that you made me to be rich in you, O my God. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. • Describe the day of Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the secret of his power, and every gift and lovely characteristic that he has, comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in him. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acquire the fruit of the holy spirit 	

Six weeks kept free for
Coptic Festival programme.



An Angel in Heaven

St Peter the Apostle

Bible References: Acts 12:1-19

Book References:

- HG Bishop Youannis, "Heaven"

Lesson Aim:

God saves us from difficulty by sending to us His angels

Lesson Objectives:

Know: God sends His angels to save his beloved ones in time of difficulty.

Feel: Secure in God's care for us, as Peter felt while he was in prison.

Practice: Thanking God for sending his angels to protect us. Praying for those who are in difficulty.

Memory Verse:

"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him."
(Psalm 91:14)



Lesson Content

After the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, the disciples began to preach the Lord Jesus Christ; and the number of Christians began to increase greatly because of the lovely sermons that the disciples gave about the Lord Jesus Christ, and the miracles which the disciples did in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

However in the midst of the joy of the people in the Lord Jesus, there were some who were very annoyed; these were the chief priests and the Jews. They kept thinking to themselves what they could do to stop Christianity spreading. So they decided to go to King Herod, who was king over Judea at that time, and complained to him about the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. And because the king wanted to please the chief priests and the Jews, he decided that the disciples must be stopped from giving sermons and preaching the Lord Jesus. So he killed James the apostle. When he saw that that pleased the Jews he ordered the arrest of the disciples, and especially St Peter. So the soldiers arrested St Peter while he was preaching the Lord Jesus and they placed him in prison under guard, being chained to the guards, so that they might deliver him for judgement after the feast of the Jews (the feast of unleavened bread). The prison was a dark and fearful place, but Peter felt very secure because he trusted that the Lord is looking after him wherever he is.

When Peter was arrested, the church was praying with great eagerness to God to save St Peter. The prayers of the church shake heaven, and the Lord must reply, especially if the prayer is in faith. For the Holy Bible says, "the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16). And if God listens to the prayer of just one man, what will be the prayer of the whole Church be like?

Peter was sleeping, tied with chains between two guards, with a soldier guarding each of the prison doors. Suddenly an Angel of the Lord appeared and lit up the prison, and woke Peter up from his sleep and said to him: arise quickly. When Peter opened his eyes he saw the Angel, and thought he was dreaming. But he obeyed the angel and got up. As soon as he got up, the chains fell from his hands. The angel asked him to put on his outer garments and his shoes, and Peter obeyed.

The Angel led Peter out of the prison and Peter followed him. Peter still thought he was in a dream, that what was happening to him was not real. They got past the first and the second guard posts, while the soldiers were standing guard, and it was as if they had not seen them. When they got to the iron gate which leads to the city, it opened to them by itself. Peter and the angel went through the gate, and the angel walked with Peter a little distance along the road, and left him. Peter then realised then that the Lord had sent his angel and saved him from the hand of Herod. He continued walking towards the house of St Mark where the disciples were gathered in the Upper Room. When he got to the house he knocked at the door, while the believers were inside praying for him. One of the believers ran to answer the door and she asked who was at the door before opening. When she heard Peter's voice. Because she was so happy she did not open the door, but ran back inside and told the other believers who were in the upper room that Peter had got out of prison and was standing at the door. But they did not believe her. When they heard a knock at the door a second time they went to open the door and found Peter. So there were really happy and thanked the Lord Jesus. And Peter told them how the Lord sent his angel and broke the chains from him, and brought him out of prison. So all the church were full of joy, and prayed the prayer of Thanksgiving.

In the morning, Herod asked for Peter to be brought to him for judgement, but they did not find him. So he became very angry and ordered to soldiers to be punished. Peter continued to preach the name of Christ and many were added to the faith.

Application



Exercise

- The children should pray to the Lord to protect them and send his angel to surround them.
- Thank the Lord for His care for us in our life, and that He stands beside us in our difficulties.
- Ask the intercessions of the angels in any difficulties they encounter.
- Make a habit of attending the communal prayers in church, like the divine liturgy.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O Lord Jesus, you plan for our lives without us knowing and without us feeling. You are the one who plans every good in our lives, because you love us very much. You fill our lives with your love in our problems and in our joys, and in every moment in our life. And every situation in our life is planned by you to bring us near to you. Be with us as you were with Peter and support us so that Satan will not overcome us.



The Great Martyr St George

Book References:

- Synaxarion: 23rd Baramudah

Lesson Aim:

To be courageous as a Christian.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The life of St George of Cappadocia.

Feel: Courage because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Practice: Courage and the lack of fear.

Memory Verse:

"It is I; do not be afraid."
(Matthew 14:27)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Group Workshop

Tools: Pictures of people who are afraid in different situations: Person afraid of the dark, a person scared of dogs, a person who is afraid because he is at home alone.

Method of presentation: show each picture to the children and ask them what they would do if they were in that situation.

Lesson Content

Present pictures of: a horse, donkey, zebra, buffalo, camel Who can tell me what this is a picture of? Who of you would like to ride a horse? Has anyone tried to ride one before? or a donkey? If you rode it, I wonder whether you would be afraid? Do you know that, before cars were invented, people would ride on a donkey if they wanted to go somewhere? And anyone was able to ride on one. But not anyone could ride a horse - only soldiers and kings. That's because the horse is strong and anyone who rides on it must be strong and courageous like the horse.

Does anyone know the names of any soldiers who used to ride horses a long time ago? And can anyone tell me the names of saints in our church who were soldiers and rode on horses? Like Saint Mina and Saint Theodore, and Saint Mercurius, bearer of two swords. They were all soldiers who rode on horses, and they were not afraid of kings or being put into prison.

St George was also a soldier who rode on a horse, and he was full of courage. He was born in a town in Cappadocia, which is now Turkey. His father died when he was a child. When he grew up and was 20 years old, he was a soldier and horse rider in the Roman army. He was a Christian who loved the Lord, and so did all his family.

When Decius became emperor (and that was before the time of Diocletian, during whose reign thousands of Christians were martyred) he made a decree that no one was allowed to worship Christ, and all the Christians must worship the idols. He hung up his decree for all to see. With all courage St George went and tore down the emperor's decree and said: "I am a Christian and I will never leave my Lord Jesus." So the emperor became very angry at him, and tried several times to make him deny Christ. But St George, with all courage, refused saying: "I am a Christian and I will stay Christian until I die." So the emperor then tried to make him change his mind by offering him a lot of money, and when this failed to change St George's mind, the emperor promised that he would make him a great king if he denied the Lord Christ. But St George remained faithful to the Lord Jesus. So the emperor became even more angry and inflicted greater tortures on him.

When the emperor saw that he was unable to change the faith of St George, he brought a great magician who made him to drink poison. But St George did the sign of the cross over the drink, and it did not harm him. So they tied his hands so that he would not be able to do the sign of the cross. But St George did the sign of the cross with his head saying: "Shall I drink from this cup, or from that cup, or that cup?" He trusted that God is with him and will protect him from the poison. So he drank it and was not afraid.

And even when the king was angry with him and told him that he would kill him, he was not afraid. On the contrary he was very happy that if he died, he would go up to heaven and meet the Lord of glory and the saints in heaven.

Do you see how St George was courageous and did not fear anything? He did not fear death, but felt very joyful that if he died he would go up to heaven and meet the Lord of glory and the saints in heaven. He also stood up for his Christian faith because he did not want to leave the Lord Jesus. He preferred death to denying his Lord God Jesus Christ. I wonder what we do if someone upset us and told us to say that we are not Christians? (Listen to their responses). Well done!, we have to be courageous and not be afraid of anyone, and also stand up for our faith in the Lord Jesus, whatever happens.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What was the job of St George?

- What did St George do when the emperor made a decree that Christians should worship idols?
- What did St George do before drinking the cup containing poison?



Exercise

- Not be afraid of any situation, but do the sign of the cross.
- To be proud that I am a Christian and a son of the martyrs, and to be like the martyrs in their courage.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my beloved Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are with me all the time. Support me, O Lord, so that I may be courageous at all times, and not be afraid of anything that happens with me in my life. I trust in You, that You are with me, and will not leave me at all; and I will be Your son until I reach heaven. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what happened to St George when they gave him poison to drink. • Remember what St George did when they tied his hands. • Give a reason for St George's courage in standing up for his faith. • Recite the verse of the lesson. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act out the scene where St George stands up for his faith before Emperor Decius. • Draw a picture of St George doing the sign of the cross over the poison before drinking it. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To decide to be courageous in standing up for his faith and not to be afraid • To agree with his friends in doing the sign of the cross before doing any work. 	



Heavenly Children are Reconciled

David Forgives Saul

Bible References: 1 Samuel 26

Book References:

- Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty, "Commentary on 1 Samuel"

Lesson Aim:

The children of God are quick to forgive.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: That forgiveness of others is one of the characteristics of the children of God.

Feel: The importance of forgiveness in his life for reaching heaven.

Practice: To forgive and respect those who do evil to you.

Memory Verse:

"Forgive, and you will be forgiven."
(Luke 6:37)



Lesson Content

Today's story is about a great king, who with three thousand of his men of Israel, went searching for someone the king was annoyed with. Does anyone know who that king is?

The name of that king was Saul. When David killed the mighty Goliath, all the people in Israel were singing: Saul has killed thousands, and David ten thousands. So Saul became jealous of David, and upset from him, even though Saul had given him his daughter Michal to be his wife, and also all the people were very happy because of David. But the devil persuaded Saul that David was very bad, and that David wanted to be king instead of him. And from that time Saul tried many times to kill David, but the Lord was protecting him. One day Saul went after David to kill him, so David fled to a far place to hide from Saul and stayed there for many years. One day when Saul the King found out that David was hiding in a far place, he took with him 3000 of his soldiers in order to search for him and kill him. While Saul and his army were looking for him, they rested in a place which was near to where David was hiding. They put up their tents and stayed the night there till the morning. When David found out that Saul the King was staying nearby, he went with some of his men to the place where Saul was staying with his army that night. They found Saul and his army deep in sleep. So David's men said to David: this is a good chance to kill Saul, while he and all his army are sleeping. Do you think David listened to their advice?

Of course David refused to listen to their advice, even though Saul had come to kill him, because David forgave him. But David went to the tent where King Saul was sleeping, and took the sword which was next to Saul and the cup of water which he drank from, but he refused to harm the king or kill him.

And he walked a little distance from where King Saul was sleeping Saul and called to him in a loud voice. So King Saul and all the soldiers who were with him awoke when they heard the voice of David. And King Saul recognised it was the voice of David. David said to the soldiers of Saul: isn't this the cup of water that belongs to the king? You have failed to take care of the king. I could have killed the king, but I refused to do that because I love him, and because I have forgiven him for everything he has done to me.

Saul said to him: "my beloved son David, forgive me if I upset you. You could have killed me and taken revenge on me, but you forgave me. I thank you for your love." David replied: I refused to kill you because the Lord is the one who made you king over his people." So after that everyone returned back to their home.

Do you see how much David forgave Saul, even though Saul wanted to kill him? And we too must learn from David to forgive anyone who has tried to do bad to us, because we are the image of God. If we forgive we will be able to reach heaven to be with our Lord Jesus Christ forever.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What was the relationship between David and Saul?
- Why was Saul upset from David?
- What was Saul planning to do to David?
- Why did David refuse to kill Saul?



Exercise

- To forgive others from my heart, and to ask God to change them.
- In any situation in which somebody upsets me, I should say the part in the Lord's prayer: forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my beloved Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You for Your great love for us. Make us O Lord Jesus to be like You, in the way You forgave those who crucified You, and to be like David in the way he forgave King Saul. Make me to be like You, and to learn to forgive everyone, even those who upset me. Amen.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember the name of the King who was angry with David. Remember what David did when he had the chance to kill King Saul. Explain why David did not kill the king. Recite the verse of the lesson. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act out the scene where David loves Saul and does not wish to do him harm. Draw a picture of Saul while he was sleeping with his soldiers. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide not to upset anyone of his friends but to love them. To agree with his friends to forgive and not to be upset with each other. 	



The Martyrs and Their Love for God

The Greatest Clown

Book References:

- Synaxarion: 18th Thout

Lesson Aim:

Witnessing to Christ is a result of a love for God.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The story of the St Porphyrius and the miracle of his baptism.
- Feel:** The power of baptism in turning a person towards the love of God.
- Practice:** Holding on to our precious faith and asking for the intercession of the saints.

Memory Verse:

"For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ."
(Galatians 3:27)

Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Take your children to the place where baptism is performed and ask them if they remember the ritual of baptism of one of their relatives or their brothers, and what they saw. You can also show them some pictures of a baptism.

Lesson Content

Prepare a bowl containing water to represent baptism, and a picture of the king and the people.

Prepare a model of a clown having many colours, and another model of a person wearing white clothing, and then start to tell the story using the picture of the king and the people.

One day, a long time ago, there was a king called Julian the Infidel (show a picture of the king.) This king did not believe in the Lord Jesus. That's why he was called the infidel king. That king hated Christians very much ... and he tortured many of the saints ... and many of the saints were martyred at his hands.

And one day, it was the king's birthday, so all the people gathered to make a birthday celebration (show a picture of the people). And the king gathered all the singers, the dancers and the clowns, and all the people, and said "I must enjoy myself because today is my birthday."

And sure enough, he gathered all the people to celebrate his birthday. Among the people who performed at the king's birthday celebration is the hero of our story today (show the picture of the coloured clown). The name of our hero is "Porphyrius the clown." He worked as a clown. He did not believe in the Lord Jesus. He was a very talented actor, and was very good at making people laugh.

Because it was the king's birthday, and the king was present, Porphyrius, thought about what act he could perform to make him happy. So he thought to himself: "what thing does the king think about most? What? Christians!"

So the people were perplexed at seeing Porphyrius entering the arena, carrying a large jar, like the one used in baptism. He entered while singing hymns which are sung in church. And he began to imitate the baptism of the Christians. The King was very happy when he saw Porphyrius and especially when he began acting out a baptism.

He began to act out the baptism and did the sign of the cross, and said: "in the Name of the Father", and immersed himself the first time in the font of baptism. He then signed himself again and said: "and the Son." And the people were laughing, and the king was very happy because Porphyrius was imitating the Christian baptism exactly how it was performed. And at the third immersion, he said: "and the Holy Spirit." So the Lord Jesus opened the eyes and heart of Porphyrius, and he saw a large cross of light, and the Lord Jesus entered his heart. And the Saint Porphyrius came out of the water while proclaiming: "I'm Christian! I'm Christian!" (bring out the doll clothed in the white garment). And all the people were laughing and so was the King. Porphyrius went before the king and said to him, "I am Christian! I am Christian!" the King said replied, "the theatrical performance is now over Porphyrius, and I really enjoyed it. You acted it out very well." But he continued to say to him "I am Christian! I am Christian!"

The King was very surprised and said to him "I told you, Porphyrius, the theatrical performance is now over." But he said to him again, "I am Christian! I am Christian!" The king felt that he was talking seriously, and said to him, "do you know that I have killed a lot of Christians." St Porphyrius said to him "I am not afraid of death. I believe in Jesus Christ. I am Christian. I'm not afraid of anything because I love the Lord Jesus." The King was very angry and said to the guards, "take him and cut off his head." And the saint was martyred in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ on 18th of Thout. And he received the Crown of martyrdom in heaven, and became St Porphyrius the jester.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What was the job of St Porphyrius?
- What was the name of the king?
- What did St Porphyrius do to make the king happy?
- What happened when St Porphyrius went into the baptismal font?



Exercise

Ask your children to choose an intercessor for themselves and to practise reading the Synaxarion and knowing the saints stories who are not well-known.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

Thank You my Lord Jesus because You made known to me the story of Your great saint Porphyrius. I ask You my Lord Jesus, as You showed Yourself to the great St Porphyrius, please show Yourself to me as well and allow me to see Your grace and Your love for me, through the intercessions of the great St Porphyrius. Amen.



One of the Lord's Feasts

The Feast of Transfiguration

Bible References: Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9: 2-8; Luke 9:28-36

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda, "The Feast of Transfiguration"

Lesson Aim:

The Feast of Transfiguration is one of the minor Lord's feasts in which the Lord's glory was revealed.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The account of the Transfiguration.
- Feel:** The love of God in emptying Himself in order to redeem us.
- Practice:** On having reverence in the presence of God in prayer, including the Divine Liturgy.

Memory Verse:

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear him!"
(Matthew 17:5)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

Show a picture of a silk worm, and mention how it transforms into a beautiful butterfly. Likewise God transforms us into His image and likeness that we may be the salt of the earth, for this is the purpose of our life here.

Lesson Content

One day the Lord Jesus Christ asked three of His disciples, Peter, James and John, to go with Him on a very important and special journey. They were wondering to themselves what this important journey was. Where are we going? And who will we see? Maybe the Lord Jesus is going to do a great miracle and He wants us to be with Him? Or maybe He will visit someone very important?

The disciples went with the Lord Jesus; they did not know anything about where they were going until they reached a high mountain called Mount Tabor. And the Lord asked them to go up the mountain with Him. Going up the mountain was very tiring of course, but the disciples could not say no to our Lord Jesus, or even question Him about it, because they trusted Him; and they knew that as long as they walked with Him, they will see many miracles and listen to His teachings. They didn't feel the time pass as they went up the mountain, and they did not care about being tired. When they reached the top of the mountain, the disciples rested under a shelter. But Jesus started to pray. When they saw Jesus praying, they thought to themselves "we could have prayed at the bottom of the mountain, or in one of the gardens that the Lord loved. Did we have to walk this long journey up this mountain?" They did not know what the Lord had prepared for them to see.

Suddenly they felt a great light in their eyes which woke them from sleep. What's happening? Has the sun fallen on us? No! No! Jesus is standing there! But what is all that light? It's a wonderful sight which we have never seen before! Is there someone standing next to Him? There are two people, not one? Who are they? It's Moses the Prophet! and also Elijah the Prophet! And Jesus is standing in between them talking with them.

What a wonderful sight! Peter was full of joy at this wonderful sight, so he said to the Lord Jesus: "it is good for us to be here." He also said to Jesus, "let us make three tabernacles, one for You, one for Elijah, and one for Moses the Prophet." But a cloud then appeared and overshadowed them; and they heard a voice from heaven saying: "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him."

The disciples did not tell anyone about the Transfiguration until after the resurrection, in order to confirm the glory of Christ, and how He has existed since eternity in glory and majesty.

If the disciples had refused to go up the mountain with the Lord Jesus, do you think they would have seen the wonderful sight of the Transfiguration. No, they would have missed it. It's the same with us. If we make the effort in praying and fasting, and waking up early to go to the Divine Liturgy, we will receive many blessings, and the Lord will give us joy, and support us in our lives and our studies.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What is the name of the mountain which the Lord Jesus went up with three of His disciples?
- Which of the disciples went up with the Lord Jesus?
- Who appeared with the Lord Jesus on the mountain?
- What did Peter say to Jesus?
- What did the disciples hear?



Exercise

The child should practise standing with awe and reverence in God's presence during the Divine Liturgy. For God is present in His glory on the altar, as He appeared in glory in His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

My Lord, it is good for me to talk with You about all my concerns. For You are closer to me than a brother. For a brother may not listen to everything I say to him; but You, O Lord, are listening to me at all times. And You care for everything that concerns me, both the things that are hidden and that are visible. You know what is of benefit for my life, and what is harmful, for You are the true physician of our souls, bodies and spirits.

O my Lord, may I continually taste the sweetness of life with You.

O my Lord, teach me how to raise up my heart to You in prayer at all times.

And grant me to feel in prayer that You are present and are listening to my voice.



The use of Incense in the Church

The Censer is a Symbol of the Virgin Saint Mary

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda, "Comparative Theology"

Lesson Aim:

To understand the symbolism of the censer.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** Why we use the censer in church, and what the censer symbolises.
- Feel:** Joy at the sweet aroma of incense rising from the censer.
- Practice:** Regular attendance of the Divine Liturgies.

Memory Verse:

"Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."
(Psalm 141:2)



Lesson Content

The servant starts by making the following statements about the censer, and then asks the children to think about which object the servant is referring to.

- It is found in the church
- We see it in all the church prayers
- It is used during the Liturgy
- Abouna goes round the church with it

The servant should have a censer in the lesson and mention the following the symbolisms:

- The bowl of the censer which carries the coal is a symbol of St Mary who carried our Lord Jesus Christ in her tummy.
- The lit coal is a symbol of the nature of our Lord Jesus: the coal symbolises his human nature and the fire his Divine nature, and the two are united in one nature.
- The dome above the bowl symbolises heaven.
- The three chains symbolise the Holy Trinity.
- Abouna goes round the church with it.

The censer teaches us the following spiritual lessons:

1. When the cloud of incense ascends up from the censer, our eyes are drawn upwards, which reminds us that we should be looking towards heaven.
2. The cloud of incense also reminds us of the prayers of the saints which rise up to heaven.
3. When incense is placed in the censer it burns and makes a very nice aroma. Likewise when we love God and people, and do good things to others - our parents our brothers and sisters, and our friends and anyone we meet, our good works are a fragrant aroma to God.
4. When Abouna is censuring with the censer, we should be standing, because the incense symbolises God's presence among us. And when Abouna passes by us with the censer we should make the sign of the Cross, and bow our heads.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- Why do we use the censer in church?
- What does the bowl of the censer and the coal symbolise?
- What do the three chains on the censer symbolise?
- What should we do when Abouna is censuring with the censer, and when he passes by?



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O my beloved Lord Jesus, we thank You for our beautiful church with all its lovely teachings and the symbols which help us to learn those teachings. We thank you for giving us the beautiful censer to remind us that you came down into the womb of St Mary because of your great love for us. May our prayers ascend to heaven before you, like the prayers of the saints. Amen.



I Help Others

The Lucky Brother

Lesson Aim:

We should be ready to help anyone in need if we can.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The importance of helping others.

Feel: Happiness in helping others.

Practice: Ways of helping others.

Memory Verse:

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

(John 15:12)



Lesson Content

John and Simon were two brothers in the flesh who were close in age as well as in appearance and height, as if they were twins. Yet there was a great difference in their characters. Simon was short-tempered, moody, complained a lot, and was very self-centred. John, however, was calm-natured and loved to offer service to anyone in need.

John also excelled in his studies more than his brother, and regularly won prizes at school because of his hard work and his activities. Because of this, Simon would be jealous of his brother John and call him the lucky one. At the same time he complained to everyone who saw him of his lack of good luck.

One day the two brothers came out of the school at the end of the day and passed by the house of a respectable old lady, who had poor sight and who lived alone. She used to call Simon or John, or both of them, whenever they passed by the house to come and help her with some of her household tasks. When Simon came near her house he said to his brother, "let us walk faster, before the old lady sees and calls us to help her."

Simon did not wait for the reply of his brother, but started walking more quickly away from her house. But the lady saw John and called him saying, "John, John, come. I need your help."

John heard her calling him and stopped walking, and replied, "Good evening Miss, what would you like me to help you with?"

"I can smell a strange smell in the house, and I don't know where it's coming from. Can you help me to find out where it is coming from? In case it is..." she replied.

So John entered the house to try to find the cause of the smell. When he came into the kitchen he found it filled with smoke, he could barely see in front of him. He began to look for the source of the smoke until he found that it was coming from some lit coals, which had fallen in a corner of the kitchen. The heat from the coals reached the damp wooden floor and began to burn it, and the fire was spreading, and the smoke becoming more dense. So John rushed to the kitchen tap, and filled a jug of water and poured it out over the fire. The old lady came in to help him until he was able to put out the fire.

The old lady then held the hand of John and said to him while weeping, "I thank you my son, for had you not come in to help me the fire would have spread to the whole house and burnt it down before I had known the cause of it, for I have poor sight and can hardly see." And the old lady said while holding the hand of John, "My son, Alex, is a pilot in the air force and will visit me today, as he is always does when he has time off from his work. I was cooking his favourite meal, which I prepare myself when he visits me. But I did not see that coal which fell onto the floor, which would have nearly burnt down the house."

John said to her, "Do not worry, Madam, the fire has been put out, and only a small piece of the wooden floor was burnt. Have a seat and relax while I make you a cup of tea."

After a few minutes, John presented to the old lady a cup of tea and kept her company until she had calmed down and had been assured that all was okay, and so he said goodbye to her and returned to his house.

Simon had just finished his meal when John entered the house. He wanted to tell his mum what had happened, so he asked his brother where his mum was and he told him that she had gone to visit their grandmother. Simon then asked John to play with him in the garden. John was so occupied with playing that he forgot about the old lady and what had happened to her, and did not mention anything to his mum about it when she returned home while he was playing. When evening came, he ate his supper and went to his room.

The following day, while the two brothers were playing in the garden, a young man came to their house holding a small box. He rang the doorbell and the parents of Simon and John knew who he was and welcomed him into their house. The young man sat down and talked to the parents about what John did, while they listened in wonder at what the young man was telling them about their son. The young man then opened the small box that he had brought with him, took out a lovely toy and placed it on the table in front of the parents and said, "this is a small present from me for John, in appreciation of his kind act in saving my mum and her house from being burnt down." That young man was the son of the old lady.

When the two brothers had finished playing, they came into the house where their parents were sitting. Simon caught sight of the toy, and took hold of it and asked, "is this toy for me?" The mother said that it was for John. So he

took the toy and broke it and said "everything is for John. He gets everything. Why did you buy this toy only for John?"

The mother replied saying, "we did not buy this toy; it is a present. The old lady, Alex's mother, was in need of help yesterday. So your brother John offered to help, and saved her from a fire in her house. You were with him on your way from school; so why didn't you join him in helping her, instead of quickly walking past to get home and leaving him by himself to save her?"

Simon went quiet, not uttering a single word. His face began to go red from feeling ashamed. Since that day, Simon never said about his brother: he never called him the lucky one, for he had learnt from this incident that the lucky one is always the one who does kind acts.

At our age, can we help others? Open a discussion on the abilities we have with which we can help others and the different types of help that we can offer to our community, such as: cleaning, planting trees, helping others...



The Cross is a Sign of God's Love for the People

The Cross is a Sign of Healing

Bible References: Numbers 21:4-9

Lesson Aim:

To understand the power of the Cross.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The story of the bronze serpent in the Old Testament as a symbol of the Cross.

Feel: That the Cross is the source of our strength.

Practice: Taking pride in the Cross.

Memory Verse:

"God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."
(Galatians 6:14)



Lesson Content

The Bronze Serpent

After the people of Israel went out of Egypt and journeyed through the wilderness, following Moses on the way to the promised land, they continued in their grumbling and did not trust in God. When they reached the border of the promised land, they sent people to survey the land. The land was very good, but there were dangers there. So they had to trust in God. But the people were afraid to enter into the land and refused God's gifts to them. So God was sad and upset from His people because they did not trust in Him. But Moses prayed to the Lord and interceded for the people, and God heard his prayer. God told Moses to say to the people that they will wander through the wilderness for 40 years. God also said that everyone who refused to enter the promised land will never enter it.

While the people of Israel wandered through the wilderness, they grumbled more and more against God and rebelled against Him. So God allowed for serpents to go in among the people while they were camped, and to bite the people. Many of the people were bitten by the serpents. Moses prayed to God again, and God heard his prayer. So God, who is great and merciful and compassionate, and does not wish for His people to perish, commanded Moses to make a serpent from bronze and to place it on a pillar so that everyone who was bitten by the serpent may be healed when they looked at it. If they did not look at the serpent they would die. So Moses took the bronze serpent and placed it in the midst of the people.

Those of the people who looked were saved, and the others, who refused to look at it, died. What does the bronze serpent symbolise? It symbolises the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the death of Christ on the cross granted us life. This is what he means by his saying: "whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

The cross is a sign of healing, for it is the power of God. There are many stories that prove that the cross is the power of God.

The Power of Changing the Nature of Water

The people used to travel to Jerusalem to receive the blessing of the Holy Cross. One time, while a group of people were travelling to Jerusalem, a man who was also travelling with them, called Isaac the Samaritan, was criticising the people for taking such trouble to go to Jerusalem to worship a piece of wood and he mocked the cross.

Also travelling with that group of people was a priest called Euchydus. While they were travelling on the way, they got thirsty; but they did not find water. When they came to a well, they found its water was dirty and bitter. So the people were very frustrated. Isaac the Samaritan began to mock them saying, "If I witness a miracle done in the name of the Cross, I will believe in Christ." So the priest Euchydus was full of zeal, and prayed over the polluted water and did the sign of the cross over it. The water became sweet and all the people and their livestock drank from it.

As for Isaac, when he took some of the water to drink from it he found it was polluted and bitter. So he went to St Euchydus and fell down at his feet and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. When he drank of the water, it tasted sweet. The water of that well had power to be sweet to the believers, and bitter to others. A cross of light also appeared over that well, and they built a church on that spot.

St Barsoum El Erian (The Naked) and the Snake

St Barsoum El Erian locked himself up in a cave inside the church of St Philopateer Mercurius (Abu-Sefein, bearer of two swords) for twenty years, fasting and praying continuously, night and day. In that cave was a very large snake. When he entered that cave he cried out saying, "O my Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, You are the one who has given us authority to trample upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. You are the one who gave healing to the people of Israel who were bitten by snakes, when they looked to the bronze serpent. So now I look to you, O You who were hung on a cross, that you may give me power by which I can overcome this large snake."

So he did the sign of the cross over himself, and walked towards the snake, while saying the verse from the Psalm, "The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot... The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

He then said to the snake, "O blessed one, stay in your place." He did the sign of the cross, and asked of God to take away from the snake its venomous nature. He did not stop praying until God changed the snake to become gentle in nature.

Weeks 3-4 of September:

Two weeks kept free for
Coptic Festival revision and exam.



Lessons Benefited from the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Bible References: Matthew 1:18-33, Luke 2:4-20

Lesson Aim:

To understand that the Lord Jesus has come because He loves us and wants to be with us in our daily lives. We benefit a lot when we let the Lord Jesus be with us in everything we do

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** That the Lord Jesus loves us and wants to be with us in our daily lives.
- Feel:** The benefit when we let the Lord Jesus be with us in everything we do.
- Practice:** Asking the Lord Jesus to be with us in everything we do.

Memory Verse:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
(Luke 2:14)



The shepherds visit Jesus after He was born in a manger

Lesson Content

Begin by reading from St. Matthew chapter 1:18-33.

The name Jesus means 'to save' or 'Saviour'; He saved His people from their sins.

The name Emmanuel means 'God is with us'.

From these two names for our Lord, we can learn that:

1. He loves us and has come for our salvation.
2. He is with us in our daily lives.

The Lord loves us, and because of His love for us, He came in the form of a servant and was born in a manger.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

This verse tells us that, because of God's love, He came for us.

Sing the song: "He came for us... with His tender love."

When Jesus came to our world, He wanted to stay with us, live in our hearts and give us peace and love in our lives.

Tell the story of the shepherds and the visit to Jesus. They were very happy when they heard the news from the angel.

The teacher may ask the children to act out what happened by the Jordan River, including the conversation between the Lord Jesus and John the Baptist and the Baptism of our Lord Jesus.

Application



Exercise

- If someone loves you as much as Jesus does, what do you have to do? You must love Him in return.
- We must live our daily lives with God because He is with us. Let God study with us, bless our food, heal us when we are sick and lead all our actions in our daily life.
- God has not created us with the intention to leave us in isolation from Him. He wants to develop an intimate relationship with us as a Father, and a friend.



The Feast of the Cross

Isaac the Samaritan

Book References:

- The Synaxarion: 9th Baramuda

Lesson Aim:

The blessings of the Cross in our lives.

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The power and greatness of the cross in our lives.
- Feel:** The blessing and power of the cross within us.
- Practice:** Making the sign of the cross before starting any work.

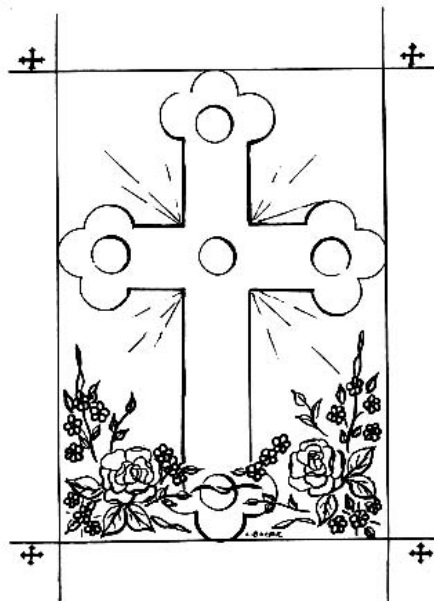
Memory Verses:

"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

(Matthew 10:38)

God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Galatians 6:14)



Lesson Content

Visual Aids: use a felt board and cards on which are drawn the events of the story. Alternatively the story can be acted out.

A group of pilgrims were journeying through the wilderness towards Jerusalem. They were full of joy, because they were going to the place where the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer is kept, in order to take its great blessings. And the group were singing the most beautiful hymns and praises. But there was one person in the group who was not pleased. His name was Isaac the Samaritan. That man was ridiculing them saying: "O you silly people. You leave your country and your home, and you take a break from your jobs, and you endure this very difficult journey in order to see a wooden cross! You endure all this trouble for a piece of wood! What are you are going to benefit from it?" But the travellers did not pay any attention to his words.

Accompanying the group was a priest called Euchidus. While on their journey the group were suddenly faced with a very dangerous situation: the pilgrims started to become short of water, and were about to run out, but they still had a long way to go to get to Jerusalem. So they became very afraid, and started to pray with great fervour. And God heard their prayer and showed them a well of water. But unfortunately the water was bitter, and no one could bear to drink from it, and the travellers were very upset. Isaac the Samaritan then began to mock them saying: "Save us, O you who believe in the cross. Has the cross been able to save you? If the cross is able to save us, I will believe in it, and in the Christ who was crucified upon it." And the people, together with the priest, Euchidus, prayed at the well of the water. And Euchidus made the sign of the cross over it, and the water became sweet. And the people began to drink from it. They then began to praise and glorify God. But when Isaac went to drink from the water there was a surprise: he found the water was bitter and had worms in it. And Isaac remained thirsty, and he cried out saying: "Now I believe in the cross and in its power. And I believe in the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory. He is Lord and God." When he went to the well again, after believing in Christ, this time the water was very sweet in his mouth. And when Isaac arrived in Jerusalem, he went to the bishop there, and was baptised together with his family.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- To which place were the group of Christian pilgrims going?
- What were the feelings of the pilgrims while they were on the way to see the Holy Cross?
- Why did Isaac the Samaritan not feel happy in this journey?
- What was the name of the priest who was travelling with the group?
- What happened with Isaac the Samaritan?
- How did Isaac the Samaritan believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?



Exercise

1. The cross is a source of strength and power for us in every situation. We take pride in the cross.
2. Memorise and recite the verse in the doxology of the cross: "The cross is our weapon, the cross is our hope, the cross is our anchor in all our troubles and difficulties."



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

My Lord Jesus, Who saved us by Your cross, I thank You O Lord Jesus for Your cross. I thank You because Your cross is a help to us in all our troubles, and our hope in all our difficulties. Be with us by the power of Your cross. As You made Isaac the Samaritan to believe in You, make us, Your children, to see Your power and Your glory, through the intercession of the power of the life-giving cross.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember where the group of Christian pilgrims were going. Describe how they felt while they were going on the way to see the Holy Cross. Remember why Isaac the Samaritan did not feel happy in the journey. Remember the name of the priest who was travelling with the pilgrims. How Isaac the Samaritan believed in the power of the cross and in the Lord Jesus Christ. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine the repentance of Isaac the Samaritan and his faith in the cross. Draw a picture to illustrate the danger which the group of pilgrims were exposed to during their travel. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing the sign of the cross before doing any work. Agree with his friends to learn one of the hymns which are chanted on the Feast of the Cross. 	



The Children of God are Honest

Anba Abraam, Bishop of Fayoum and Giza

Bible References: John 3

Book References:

- The Synaxarium (3 Paoni)
- HG Bishop Yoannes of Gharbia, "Paradise of the Spirit"

Lesson Aim:

To practise being honest

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** The importance of honesty for edification and to the community.
- Feel:** Happy that he is an honest person, and that honesty will save him from danger.
- Practice:** Saying the truth.

Memory Verse:

"Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight."
(Proverbs 12:22)



Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Story

There was once an emperor who lived in the Far East. When he grew old he considered that the time had come to choose someone to succeed him. Instead of choosing one of his assistants, or one of his sons, or the leader of the army, he decided to do something different: he called all the young men in his kingdom to his palace on a particular day, and said to them: "O young men, the time has come to decide who will succeed me as emperor, so I have decided to choose someone from among you. In order for me to decide who to choose, I will give each one of you today one seed, one which is very unique. When you return to your homes, I want you to plant that seed and water it, and then come back to me here after one year, carrying with you what has sprouted and grown from that seed. I will examine what you bring, and the person I choose to be the new emperor of the kingdom will depend on what you have brought."

One of the young men who was there was called Ling, who received a seed like everyone else. When he returned to his home, he told his mother with joy everything that had happened. So his mother helped him to prepare a pot and some soil. Ling planted the seed and watered it with great care. After watering it every day he watched whether or not the seed had grown.

After three weeks he began to hear the other young men talking about their seeds and how it sprouted and grown. As for Ling, he would go home every day and look at his pot to see whether the seed had sprouted. Week after week passed but the seed would not still sprout. He began to feel that he was a failure. But he still would not tell his companions, but continued to watch and wait for his seed to sprout.

When one year had passed, the time came for the young men of the kingdom to bring their pots to the Emperor to examine. Ling told his mother that he would not go carrying an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go carrying his pot, even if it was empty, and to be honest and faithful in saying what had happened. Ling felt great sorrow, but he knew that his mother was always right. So he carried his empty pot and went to the palace.

When Ling arrived at the palace, he was amazed by the different types of plants which the other young men had grown. They were very beautiful in appearance and size. When Ling put his empty pot on the ground, many of the young men laughed at him; but a few of the youth were sympathetic with him and said, "he has tried."

When the emperor arrived, he walked across the hall and welcomed all the youth. Ling tried to hide himself, so he withdrew himself to the end of the hall. The Emperor proclaimed: "How wonderful are all these plants and trees and flowers which you have grown. Today one of you will be chosen to be the next emperor."

Suddenly the emperor caught sight of Ling at the end of the hall with his empty pot. So he ordered his soldiers to bring him to the front. Ling was greatly afraid, and said to himself: the emperor knows that I have failed, and has ordered that I be killed because I have spoilt his seed.

When Ling got to the front, the emperor asked him his name. He answered "my name is Ling", and all the youths began to laugh at him and ridicule him. The emperor ordered everyone to be quiet, and then looked at Ling, and made a declaration: "look, this is the new emperor! His name is Ling."

Ling was shocked at the news; he wondered why he had been chosen since he had not been able to get the seed to sprout and grow. The emperor continued "today one year has passed since I gave you all a seed and asked you to plant it, and to bring it back to me this day. But I gave you seeds which had then boiled, and so could not grow. But when you saw that the seed I gave you did not grow, you replaced it with another seed instead of the one I gave you. But Ling was the only one who had the courage and honesty to bring his pot with my seed in it, and so he will be the one who will be the new emperor."

Lesson Content

Servant 1: How are you children ...? And how is school? He begins to take the children's responses until he hears the voice of a second servant coming with a lit candle and chanting:

Servant 2: "Axios .. Axios .. Axios .. Peniot Ethowab Ava Abraam" chanting it in its known tune.

Servant 1: How are you Mr () . That's a very beautiful hymn that you're chanting. But why Anba Abraam?

Servant 1: Because he is the saint who loves poor people like me. That's why I have come to tell you about him today.

Servant 1: Please tell us the story

Servant 2: His name at birth was born Paul Gabriel. He was born in upper Egypt. His parents were very dedicated Christians. After a while he decided to join a monastery to spend all his time with God, praying to him and praising him. So he joined the monastery of St Mary in Al Muharraq. When the people saw that he was a good man who loved God very much, they made him the Abbot of the monastery. After a while there was a problem with the other monks in the monastery, because he was giving a lot of money to the poor people, even from the money of the monastery. So he left that monastery and went to the Baramus monastery in Wadi El Natrun. One day he was surprised to hear the news that St Cyril the Fifth had chosen him to be bishop of Faiyoun. He was ordained Bishop of Faiyoun, and he was loved by all the people of Faiyoun, both Christians and non-Christians, because he used to have compassion on the poor and needy, and give them whatever they needed.

But one day something very strange happened: three friends agreed to lie to Anba Abraam in order to take from him some money. Two of the three friends said to the third one: you stay here and we will go to Anba Abraam and tell him that you have died, so that we can fool him into giving us money. When the two friends went to Anba Abraam, they were pretending to be crying for their friend and saying to him that they have no money to bury him. So Anba Abraam asked them: "Has your friend died?" They replied "yes". So he said to them: "okay take this money to bury him." But something strange then happened. After they took the money, they went out very happy and ran to their friend, who was pretending to be dead, and found that he really had died.

Servant 1: Do you think it is right that as children of God we should lie? (leave the children to answer. If you wish you can direct the dialogue to talking about the importance of honesty in building a strong community.

Application



Comprehension Questions

- What is the name of our saint of today?
- What are the most important virtues he had?
- What did the three friends do to take money from Anba Abraam?
- What was God's punishment for their lie?
- What are the blessings of telling the truth for myself and for the community?
- What is the verse of today's lesson?



Prayer

Meditate on the following prayer, live it, and pray it at the level of the children.

O Lord Jesus, You are my refuge at all times. I trust in You in everything. I come to You whenever I have any troubles and my place these troubles in Your hands. For You are the captain of the ship of my life. I know that You will do with me many wonders.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember the name of the saint Anba Abraam before becoming a monk. Remember the most important virtues of the great saint Anba Abraam. Remember what the three friends planned to do to take money from Anba Abraam. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember how the Lord deals with lies and liars. Remember how honesty benefit and builds a strong community. The good feelings felt by the person who is honest. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saying the truth and living a life of honesty. 	



My Family Cares for my Eternal Life

St Augustine and his Mother

Bible References: Joshua 24:15

Book References:

- HH Pope Shenouda III, "The Spiritual Means"

Lesson Aim:

My family cares for my eternity

Lesson Objectives:

- Know:** That he has a family who loves him and cares for him, and ensures that he has a close relationship with the church.
- Feel:** The love that his Sunday School family has for him.
- Practice:** To love every member of his family and his church family.

Memory Verse:

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
(Joshua 24:15)



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Activities to Introduce the Lesson

You can use one of the following ways to introduce the lesson:



Discussion

What do you think if I got a string and I said to you: can anyone of you break that string with his hands. Would you be able to do that? Most probably you would be able to break it, because the string is very weak. Okay what if I hold two pieces of string together, and I ask of you to break them using your hands, would you be able to? It would be more difficult right? Someone who is strong may be able to break them, but most of you will not be able to. Okay, if I got a third piece of string, and hold it with the other two, and ask one of you to break them with your hands, it will be even more difficult right? (The servant can ask the children to try it for themselves). This shows us that whenever we have people around us to teach us and encourage us, we are stronger. That is why everyone of us is born into a family who loves us and cares for us and encourages us in our spiritual life and brings us close to the church. Today I will tell you a story about a saint whose family had a big role in his spiritual life. (Start telling the life of St Augustine.)



Group Workshop

There was a girl who had a brother who was very naughty and disobedient. Whenever the girl tried to study, her brother would annoy her and stop her from studying. If you were in the place of that girl, I wonder what you would do? I want you to think of solutions to this problem. (Discuss with the kids what they might do). Okay I will tell you a story of a mother who had a son who was disobedient to her, and will see how she dealt with the situation. (Begin the story of St Augustine.)

Lesson Content

St Augustine is one of the well-known saints in the Church. His mother was a very spiritual person who had great trust and faith in God, and she brought up St Augustine up in the fear of God. But when he grew older, he started to become lax in reading the Bible and prayer and attending the weekly liturgies, until he became distant from the church. When he travelled to faraway places to pursue his studies, he befriended many people who were non-Christian. Because of his love for learning and knowledge, he worked as a teacher in one of the universities. He became more distant from God, and lived in a life of sin. He was like the prodigal son, who asked for the inheritance from his father and went out to a far country where he spent all his money. St Augustine spent a long time away from God; but his virtuous mother who loved Christ, sought diligently for the salvation of her son, and prayed to God for him for a very long time. She spent 20 years of her life praying with much tears for her son who was far from the embrace of Christ. We learn from life of this saint, that we should obey our mum and dad in attending the Liturgy and Sunday School, because God has given us a family to care for our relationship with Christ.

God heard the prayers of his mother St Monica, and the life of sin Augustine was changed as a result of many situations in his life which God arranged for him. One of the persons who had great influence on him was a saint called St Ambrose, who used to give sermons in the city in which Augustine dwelt. Augustine had great love for Ambrose, and felt his fatherly embrace for him, which made him come closer to God. St Augustine was also affected by the life story of St Anthony, which was told to him by one of the soldiers who guarded the king's palace.

One day, Augustine heard a voice saying to him: "take and read". He felt that that voice he heard was the voice of God calling him to read the Holy Bible. And he obeyed His voice and opened the Holy Bible, and began to read from the epistles of St Paul the apostle, which had a great effect on him. And Augustine repented and was baptised. When his mother knew about his repentance, she rejoiced greatly that God had answered her prayers. After Augustine was baptised, he consecrated his life to God, and became a priest and wrote many books. He also has many sermons and many sayings. He later became a bishop. He reposed in peace on 28th August of the year 430 AD.

Application



Game

The servant prepares a board containing numbers, similar to the one used in the board game snakes and ladders. If a child lands on a square with a ladder, he has to tell the servant one of the situations which had a positive effect on St Augustine. And if he lands on a snake, he has to mention a situation which had a negative effect on him.



Comprehension Questions

- What is the name of the mother of St Augustine?
- What is the name of the saint who had a great effect on St Augustine?
- How did St Augustine hear about St Anthony?
- How long did St Monica pray for her son St Augustine to repent?



Exercise

- To practice showing love for the members of his family by praying for them.
- To practice thanking God for his family.
- To show his love for his family by helping out in whatever they need.

Evaluation

Did the children get the aim of the lesson?

Objective	Can the children...	Notes
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story of St Augustine. 	
Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's love for us by giving us a family who loves us. • God's love for us by giving us a Sunday school class we can be part of. 	
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To love the members of his family. • To love the members of his class in Sunday School. • To love people in his community. 	



God is Present in the Midst of Tribulations

Calming the Storm

Bible References: Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25

Lesson Aim:

To always remember that God is present in the midst of tribulations.

Lesson Objectives:

Know: The Lord Jesus Christ has authority over nature.

Feel: The presence of God in the midst of tribulation.

Practice: Turning to God in time of tribulation.

Memory Verse:

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."
(Psalms 50:15)



Lesson Content

One day, during the night, the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples. How many disciples are there? 12. That is the right answer, well done!

Jesus said to them: it is now nighttime, let's go to the other side. But first I will send the people, that they may go home.

So the disciples answered Him saying: Sure, Lord, we're not going to leave the boat. We will stay sitting in the boat while You finish sending the people away.

After He sent the people away, He entered the boat, and it left the shore. The Lord said to them: I'm going to sleep for a while. And the Lord went to the back of the ship and slept on a pillow. But something very, very strange happened.

What do you think happened? (listen to their responses).

The sea became very stormy and the boat was filling with water! The disciples were very afraid and said: What is happening? Quick! Let's go and wake up the Lord Jesus to save us from what's happening. We're about to die. So they kept calling the Lord Jesus to wake up. O Lord Jesus! O Lord Jesus! O Lord Jesus!

So He answered them: What's wrong?

They said: The sea is stormy, and the wind is strong, and the boat is about to sink. Save us! We're very afraid.

So the Lord Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea: Be quiet. The sea immediately obeyed the Lord Jesus and became calm again.

He said to the disciples: Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?

The disciples were amazed that the sea and the wind obeyed the Lord Jesus and became calm again. Of course we know that the sea obeyed the Lord, because the Lord is the one who created the sea and Has authority over it.

Do you see now how the Lord is with us at all times and in every place, and especially in times of trouble? That's why anyone who has a problem, or is afraid of anything, should call on the Lord Jesus as the disciples did. He will come to you straight away because He loves us; and He is the one who said to us: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." (Psalms 50:15). What that means is that when you are in any trouble, say "Lord" and He will save you straightaway.