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*First Section*  
*Preparation Materials*



## Introduction to the series

Although Sunday school is relatively a recent vocabulary in our Church, its existence is very old. The school of Alexandria is the most ancient of all the Christian seminaries. According to church history, the school of Alexandria was established by St. Mark to teach the new converts the faith before it became the famous theological institute.

### **The Rite of Baptism is the Model**

From the rite of Baptism in the Coptic Church, we can identify three stages of “transformation” that must happen to the new converts before they are fully inaugurated as members of the body of Christ. The first is educational, where they get to know the Gospel and get “the Story” as told by the eyewitnesses, the story of Salvation as given to us in both the Old and the New Testament. St Luke writes: *“In as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.”* The Gospel then is the right information, the good news. Whenever the Gospel is told, some would be moved to repentance to be “cut to the heart.” Some would be filled with joy and wonder and speak in tongues. Some would be filled with fear and trembling. Others would be mocking. No one who hears the Gospel can be indifferent.

In this first stage, the Church anoints the “catechumens” with the sermon’s oil to guard the mind against all the work of the enemy. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in breaking down all high walls and fortified strongholds that keeps humans away from the light of the Gospel of Christ.

The second stage is the stage of the movement of the heart, marked by the oil of Joy, “to be planted in the fruitful olive tree that is the Holy church of God.” The joy of Christ is what carries on with the Christians all their lives. No one can take that joy away from them. It is the joy of Knowing Christ and being in Him. The Joy that fills the heart more than oil and fat can satisfy the body. Our Lord becomes to -the believer in him- the food and the drink of the spirit in the journey through the earthly life. Before the anointment with the oil of joy, the catechumen is asked to make the oath. The oath is renouncing Satan and accepting Christ. The baptized here is a spouse of Christ, pledging fidelity. It is verbalizing what he or she feels in the heart and knows in the mind. Here the Spirit brings life to the heart and satisfaction that no other can bring.

The third stage is the consecration. It starts with the immersion in the water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. In doing this, the believer is born again to God and becomes united with Christ. He or

she is now a new creation, a clean vessel ready to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who should never leave, as long as, he or she lives. The next step would for the Holy Spirit to indwell in the Holy Christ.

### **Sunday School as a support and continuation of the mother's work**

When a baby is going through the rite of Baptism, the mother takes the vows for the baby. In doing this, the church recognizes the mother as the first and most important catechetical school. When the mother renounces Satan for the baby, she pledges to stand against evil work from manifesting itself in her children's life. Even more importantly, she pledges to cultivate in her children a strong hate toward sin. When she accepts Christ, she pledges to bring her children to the love of Christ and all his teachings through the church. The mother does not do this alone. The divine plan had already included the help of the Comforter in achieving this goal.

Seen from this perspective, the Sunday school work is complementary to the mother's work and a continuation of it.

### **The Curriculum should be Trinity-centered**

The curriculum henceforth, is a catechetical process. It starts with the Gospel as a foundation. Then a process of building continues through all the grades. The Sunday school program is fundamentally Christ centered. The religious educational process should be both by words and example, reaching mind and heart. It is also both a divine and human labor. In teaching Sunday school, as well as in the mother's early work with children, we should acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit inside the children's heart and trust it.

### **The Religious Education is a Revolving Process**

Many of the concepts that are given earlier in the curriculum are revisited later in the higher grades, at a higher level adding more depth and more consequence to the first message. That puts a lot of emphasis on the foundation, because in any building the foundation would shape the whole building.

In this work, the education is taken from the point of concepts. All the stories of the Gospel and of the saints are means to serve this goal. So stories are grouped according to the concept they serve. Later on, the same stories are revisited to further develop the same concept. We can envision this as a mountain with a circular road that goes around it in a spiral fashion until you reach the top. But there is no "top" to this endeavor.

The first five years in this curriculum are the most fundamental in the formation of the child dogmatically, liturgically, morally and spiritually. *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."* Proverbs 22:6

This work is not meant to replace the work of the servants, but to augment it and support it by giving them a clearer, overall view of their task and of all the side points that can distract that work. The main ingredients in our spiritual life are Christ and the Holy Spirit, the two arms of God the Father by which He gathers all humanity to Himself. Likewise in this curriculum, the love of Christ through the Church and the work of the Holy Spirit inside the human heart and in the Church as the body of Christ are heavily highlighted. By doing this we can understand that every single letter and word written in these years has one goal in mind: the salvation of the souls of the students and the teachers. Since there is no salvation possible outside the Church as the “Ark of Noah,” this work is seen and written from the perspective of the Church. This work is not meant to be a system of beliefs nor a detailed description of our life of orthodoxy, rather, it is an attempt to organize and put in order scattered themes and ideas. It is not meant to be the only way of teaching Sunday school, but a guide on how to undertake that enormous task *“And who is sufficient for these things?”* The subjects chosen for the curriculum are the most common and much needed for our times.

It should be noted that in this series, the education and spiritual advancement of the teachers themselves are kept as a primary target. The Sunday school head servant should make every effort to educate the class servants on the purpose and goal of the curriculum in each step, a task that can be broken into a meeting before they start each of the units. The parents of the students should also be involved in the process. Servants should solicit their cooperation and understanding of their role in the spiritual, moral and faith formation of their children.

### **How to Use this Book**

The book has three sections. The first section deals with the overall picture and contains information related to the whole process. The second section contains the material of the grade that the book serves. The third section contains helpful material that would be useful to the teachers during their work through the lessons.

The second section includes lessons that are grouped into units. All the units fall under one subject, which is explained in an introduction and which ties all the units together.

The units are each made up of several lessons. Each lesson brings out the unit topic from a different perspective. When teaching the lessons, the servant should bear in mind that the lesson and the story are told from the perspective of the purpose of the unit. For example, the story of the flood can be told from many different angles. If it is told from the perspective of God’s power, the storyteller would stress the size of the event. But if the storyteller tells the story from the point of Noah’s faith, the emphasis would be on the size of the ark and how long it took him to build it as showing obedience to God. When the story of the flood is told to younger children, all care should be taken not to convey an image of an angry, destructive and vindictive God, rather, a loving Father who cared so much about Noah’s both spiritual and physical survival.

### **Lesson Structure**

Each lesson is made up of three major sections. The first deals with preparing the servants, the second deals with preparing the lesson, and the third section are suggested readings for the rest of the week. In preparing the servants, the biblical reference or the actual passage is presented, followed by other references usually from the church fathers, followed by a simple reflection on the text and is concluded a prayer from the church liturgies. The second section begins with an introduction to the lesson, usually a review of the previous lesson and a preparation for the current one, a suggested song taken from the hymns of the Coptic Church liturgies and psalmody. The lesson body begins with the plan and the material that is involved in executing the story followed by the actual story in the language of the first graders. This section is concluded with a review questions and a verse to remember.

We ask the intercessions of St. Mary the Holy Theotokos, St. Mark the Evangelist, and all the saints to make this work useful and profitable to both the teachers and the children who are involved in the great process of religious education and spiritual formation.

# Classroom Setup and Rules

## Classroom Setup

The classroom should be uncluttered, well ventilated and well lit. Colors should be bright and cheering. Since the first grade children are more interested in doing things with their hands more than listening or watching ( it is also known that children retain most by doing, less by watching and least by listening), it is better to have their classroom organized as work stations. Each station is made of a circular or a square table with children sitting around. It should have closets and craft boxes. The classroom should have a white dry eraser board and if possible a projector and screen at one end of the room.

## Classroom rules

The rules should be clear, simple, and easy to remember:

- **Raise your hand** if you need to talk, move, or use the restrooms.
- **Close your eyes, stand and don not move** During prayers,.
- **Share** materials with your brothers and sisters during the lesson.
- **Help** in keeping the class neat and clean ( keep five minutes at the end, for colleting and storing)
- **Do your homework.**

## Progress Charts

Make behavioral charts in class with stickers to encourage the children desirable behaviors. Attendance charts also should be posted on “progress wall”. Reward children’s good behaviors at the end of each unit.

## Discipline

Discipline the children after a one-time warning. It is like a traffic light. As long as they are in their “good behavior”, the teacher is encouraging by words and gestures (green). On the first sign of disruptive or inappropriate behavior, the teacher should sound a stern warning (yellow).



If the behavior is continued (red), an action should be taken. The first action would be removal of the behavior sticker from the behavior chart. If it continues or repeated in the same class, the child gets five minutes time out with another servant. There should be a minimum number of stickers per unit to receive the behavior reward. The rewards for behavior should be simple and not expensive. For that reason, each class should have more than one teacher.

### **Hyperactive Children**

If we have a hyperactive child or a child with a special need, there is a need to assign a dedicated servant. The servants of a class with a hyperactive child should have some education about hyperactive children, and they should have a plan of action at the beginning of the class year.

## Themes and subjects of Grades 1-5

|                             | <u>Theme</u>  | <u>Faith</u>          | <u>Scriptures</u>          | <u>Church</u>                   | <u>Virtues</u>                                | <u>Spiritual Life</u>                |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <u>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</u> | <i>God Reveals Himself to Us</i>                              | The Trinity           | <b>Gospel</b>              | Baptism                         | Obedience<br>& Sharing                        | Prayer &<br>The Word of God          |
| <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</u> | <i>We are the Children of God</i>                             | Christ                | The Patriarchs:<br>Abraham | Eucharist                       | <b>The 10 Commandments</b>                    | Offering                             |
| <u>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</u> | <i>God Gave us Reconciliation and Eternal life in His Son</i> | Salvation             | The Patriarchs:<br>Jacob   | <b>Confession &amp; Liturgy</b> | forgiveness<br>Social Justice                 | Repentance<br>Introduction to Agpeya |
| <u>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</u> | <i>God in our midst</i>                                       | The Church            | The Patriarchs:<br>Joseph  | <b>The visible Church</b>       | Relations with Others                         | The Agpeya                           |
| <u>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</u> | <i>God called us to be Holy</i>                               | <b>Sanctification</b> | Moses and Exodus           |                                 | Christian way of life<br>Sanctity of the body | Fasting and Giving                   |



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## DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THIRD GRADERS

Every child's development is unique. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of milestones, we cannot say exactly when a child will reach each and every stage. Every child has his or her own timetable. The characteristics below are offered only as a reference to give you a better understanding of your child. Feel free to contact your pediatrician and/or your child's school if you have any questions.

### THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- High energy
- Enjoy rough and tumble games, as well as team sports
- May be physically daring
- Fine motor skills showing increased speed and smoothness
- Some write with tiny letters and artwork becomes more detailed
- Large muscles in arms and legs are more developed than small muscles
- Seven to nine-year olds are learning to use their small muscles skills (printing with a pencil; using scissors and small tools) and their large muscle skills (throwing and catching a ball)
- Large differences in size and abilities of children; may affect the way they get along with others, how they feel about themselves, and what physical activities they do
- Enjoy testing muscle strength and skills
- Good sense of balance

#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Begin to define self based on certain attributes or achievements, such as "I wear glasses," etc
- Can become self-conscious based on how they believe they look in the eyes of others
- Establishing friendships is very important, although they may lack skills to do so
- Emergence of a sense of humor--telling jokes
- Less dependent on adults and more dependent on peers
- Begins to question authority and test limits
- Often overestimate abilities; "they bite off more than can chew"

- Interested in rules and rituals
- Generally girls tend to play more with girls; boys with boys
- May have a best friend
- Strong desire to perform well, do things right
- Find criticism and failure difficult to handle
- View things as right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with little middle ground
- Need a sense of security in groups, organized play and clubs; friendship groups may be larger
- Generally enjoy caring for and playing with younger children

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## INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Concrete Operations Stage of Thinking is solidifying for most children. They can reason logically about actual objects and organize thoughts coherently. They cannot handle abstract reasoning very well unless it relates to real experiences.
- Learn best through active, concrete experiences, but are learning to see books as sources of information; reading may become a major interest
- Developing a longer attention span
- Enjoy collecting, organizing, and classifying objects and information
- Imaginative play in the form of skits, plays, and puppet shows
- Likes groups and group activities
- May reverse printed letter (b/d) (until mid-third grade)
- Enjoy planning and building
- Speaking and listening vocabularies are expanding rapidly; talkative
- Increased problem-solving ability
- Interested in magic and tricks
- Learning to plan ahead and evaluate what they do
- When something is suggested, they may say, "That's dumb" or "I don't want to do that."
- Beginning to see and understand the perspectives of others.
- Listen well, but they are so full of ideas that they cannot always recall what has been said
- Like to explain ideas--may exaggerate
- Engrossed in activity at hand; love to socialize at the same time
- Industrious; often work quickly
- Basic skills begin to be mastered; begin to feel a sense of competence with skills

## THE NINE-YEAR-OLD

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### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Girls generally ahead of boys in physical maturity
- Improve coordination and reaction time

- May have poor posture; lots of physical habitual movements; fingers in hair, slouching, picking at nails
- Stomachaches, headaches, leg pains common
- High energy, often playing to the point of fatigue
- Inconsistent appetite and sleep patterns

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#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Enjoy being a member of a club
- Increased interest in competitive sports
- Learning to take responsibility for his/her own actions
- Begin to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings; sees adult inconsistencies and imperfections
- Peer conformity in dressing is important
- May begin to be interested in the opposite sex
- Self-aware
- Concerned about being right or wrong, being fair; may complain about fairness issues
- Have great need to be in a group, but are also individualistic
- Need to be in control of some choices
- May become deeply attached to a best friend
- Can be sullen and moody

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#### INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Concrete Operations Stage of Thinking is solidified for most children, they can reason logically and organize thoughts coherently. However, most thinking is done about actual physical objects. They cannot handle abstract thinking very well unless abstractions are related to something they have directly experienced. Even if they can make abstractions, they still learn best through active, concrete experiences
- Showing signs of being more responsible, inner directed, an independent worker
- Appreciate being trusted
- Interested in many different types of reading: fictional stories, magazines, how-to project books, and non-fiction informational books
- May develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- Better able to understand concepts
- Are becoming much less egocentric and are able to understand the perspectives of others
- Better understanding the concept of “audience” when writing
- Less interested in fantasy; more involved in the real world
- May have problems with increased homework demands
- Age of negatives: “I can’t,” “boring”
- Maybe less imaginative than at earlier grades

### Yearly Calendar

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for Parent's Meeting</li> <li>• Feast of Nayrouz</li> <li>• Feast of the Cross</li> </ul> | <p>March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Lent</li> </ul>  |
| <p>October:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Saints Day</li> </ul>   | <p>April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holy Week and Holy Resurrection (could come in May)</li> </ul>   |
| <p>November:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for Unit II</li> <li>• Advent</li> <li>• Thanksgiving</li> </ul>                           | <p>May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feast of St. Mark</li> <li>• Prepare for Unit VI</li> </ul>  |
| <p>December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiahk</li> <li>• Prepare for Unit III</li> <li>• Prepare for the Feast of Holy Nativity</li> </ul> | <p>June:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holy Ascension</li> <li>• Apostles' Fast</li> <li>• Pentecost</li> <li>• Prepare for Unit VI</li> </ul> |
| <p>January:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holy Nativity</li> </ul>  | <p>July:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feast of the Apostles</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holy Theophany</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p>February:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jonah's Fast</li> <li>• Prepare for Unit II</li> </ul> | <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Mary's Fast and Feast</li> <li>• Prepare for Unit I</li> </ul> |

### Schedule of Servants and Lessons



| # | Date              | Lesson      | Servant |
|---|-------------------|-------------|---------|
|   | <b>SEPTEMBER/</b> | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | SEPTEMBER /       | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | SEPTEMBER /       | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | SEPTEMBER /       | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | <b>OCTOBER /</b>  | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | OCTOBER/          | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | OCTOBER /         | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | OCTOBER /         | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | <b>NOVEMBER /</b> | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | NOVEMBER /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | NOVEMBER/         | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | NOVEMBER /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | <b>DECEMBER /</b> | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | DECEMBER /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | DECEMBER /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | DECEMBER /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | <b>JANUARY /</b>  | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | JANUARY /         | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | JANUARY /         | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | JANUARY /         | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | <b>FEBRUARY /</b> | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | FEBRUARY /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | FEBRUARY /        | Unit Lesson |         |
|   | FEBRUARY /        | Unit Lesson |         |
| # | Date              | Lesson      | Servant |
|   | <b>MARCH/</b>     | Unit Lesson |         |

|  |                 |             |  |
|--|-----------------|-------------|--|
|  | MARCH/          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | MARCH/          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | MARCH/          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | <b>APRIL/</b>   | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | APRIL/          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | APRIL/          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | APRIL/          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | <b>MAY/</b>     | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | MAY/            | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | MAY/            | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | MAY/            | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | <b>JUNE /</b>   | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | JUNE /          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | JUNE /          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | JUNE /          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | <b>JULY /</b>   | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | JULY /          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | JULY /          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | JULY /          | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | <b>AUGUST /</b> | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | AUGUST /        | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | AUGUST /        | Unit Lesson |  |
|  | AUGUST /        | Unit Lesson |  |

## Theological and Spiritual Background

**ABBA MOSES**

*Moses, called the Robber or the Black, was a released slave who lived as a robber in Nitria; late in life he became a monk and was trained by Isidore the Priest. He was ordained priest and became one of the great fathers of Scetis. On the advice of Macarius he retired to Petra; he was martyred with seven others barbarian invaders.*

1. It happened that Abba Moses was struggling with the temptation of fornication. Unable to stay any longer in the cell, he went and told Abba *Isidore*. The old man exhorted him to return to his cell. But he refused, saying, 'Abba, I cannot.' Then Abba *Isidore* took Moses out onto the terrace and said to him, 'Look towards the west.' He looked and saw hordes of demons flying about and making a noise before launching an attack. Then Abba *Isidore* said to him, 'Look towards the east.' He turned and saw an innumerable multitude of holy angels shining with glory. Abba *Isidore* said, 'See, these are sent by the Lord to the saints to bring them help, while those in the west fight against them. Those who are with us are more in number than they are.' Then Abba Moses, gave thanks to God, plucked up courage and returned to his cell.

2. A brother at Scetis committed a fault. A council was called to which Abba Moses was invited, but he refused to go to it. Then the priest sent someone to say to him, 'Come, for everyone is waiting' for you. 'So he got up and went. He took a leaking jug, filled it with water and carried it with him. The others came out to meet him and said to him, 'What is this, Father?' The old man said to them, (my sins ran out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I am coming to judge the errors of another.' When they heard that they said no more to the brother but forgave him.

3. Another day when a council was being held in Scetis, the Fathers treated Moses with contempt in order to test him, saying, 'Why does this black man come among us?' When he heard this he kept silence. When the council was dismissed, they said to him, 'Abba, did that not grieve you at all?' He said to them, 'I was grieved, but I kept silence.'

4. It was said of Abba Moses that he was ordained and the ephod was placed upon him. The archbishop said to him, 'See, Abba Moses, now you are entirely white.' The old man said to him, 'It is true of the outside, lord and father, but what about Him who sees the inside?' Wishing to test him the archbishop said to the priests, 'When Abba Moses comes into the sanctuary, drive him out, and go with him to hear what he says.' So the old man came in and they covered him with abuse, and drove him out, saying, 'Outside, black man!' Going out, he said to himself, 'They have acted rightly concerning you, for your skin is as black as ashes. You are not a man so why should you be allowed to meet men?'

5. Once the order was given at Scetis, 'Fast the week.' Now it happened that some brothers came from Egypt to visit Abba Moses and he cooked something for them. Seeing some smoke,

the neighbors said to the ministers, 'Look, Moses has broken the commandment and has cooked something in his cell.' The ministers said, 'When he comes, we will speak to him ourselves.' When the Saturday came, since they knew Abba Moses' remarkable way of life, the ministers said to him in front of everyone, 'O Abba Moses, you did not keep the commandment of men, but it was so that you might keep the commandment of God.'

6. A brother came to Scetis to visit Abba Moses and asked him for a word. The old man said to him, 'Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.'

7. Abba Moses said, 'The man who flees and lives in solitude is like a bunch of grapes ripened by the sun, but he who remains amongst men is like an unripe grape.'

8. The magistrate heard about Abba Moses one day and he went to Scetis to see him. They told the old man. He got up and fled to the marsh. Some people met him and said to him, 'Old man, tell us where the cell of Abba Moses is.' He said to them, 'What do you want with him? He is a fool.' So the magistrate went back to the church and said to the ministers, 'I heard people talk about Abba Moses and I went to see him, but there was an old man going into Egypt who crossed our path and we asked him where Abba Moses' cell is, and he said to us, "What do you want with him? He is a fool."' When they heard this, the clergy were offended and said, 'What kind of an old man was it who spoke like that about the holy man to you?' He said, 'An old man wearing old clothes, a big black man.' They said, 'It was Abba Moses himself and it was in order not to meet you that he said that.' The magistrate went away greatly edified.

9. At Scetis Abba Moses used to say, 'If we keep the commandments of our Fathers, I will answer for it on God's behalf that the barbarians will not come here. But if we do not keep the commandments of God, this place will be devastated.'

10. One day, when the brethren were sitting beside him, he said to them, 'Look, the barbarians are coming to Scetis today; get up and flee.' They said to him, 'Abba, won't you flee too?' He said to them, 'As for me, I have been waiting for this day for many years, that the word of the Lord Christ may be fulfilled which says, "All who take the sword will perish by the sword."' (Matt. 26.52) They said to him, 'We will not flee either, but we will die with you.' He said to them: 'That is nothing to do with me; let everyone decide for himself whether he stops or not.' Now there were seven brothers there and he said to them, 'Look, the barbarians are drawing near to the door.' They came in and slew them. But one fled and hid under the cover of a pile of rope and he saw seven crowns descending and crowning them.

11. A brother questioned Abba Moses saying, 'I see something in front of me and I am not able to grasp it.' The- 'old man said to him, 'If you do not become dead like those who are in the tomb, you will not be able to grasp it.'

12. Abba *Poemen* said that a brother asked Abba Moses how someone could consider himself as dead towards his neighbor. The old man said to him, 'If a man does not think in his heart that he is already three days dead and in the tomb, he cannot attain this saying.'

## 2. St. Ambrose: TWO BOOKS CONCERNING REPENTANCE

### INTRODUCTION

THESE two books were written against the Novatian heresy, which took its name, and to a considerable extent its form, from Novatus, a priest of the Church of Carthage, and Novatian, schismatically consecrated bishop of Rome. It was the outcome of a struggle which had long existed in the Church upon the question of the restitution to Church privileges of those who had fallen into grievous sin, and the possibility of their repentance.

The severest ground was taken by the Novatians, who were condemned successively by many councils, which maintained the power of the Church to admit those guilty of any sin whatsoever to repentance, and prescribed various rules and penalties applicable to different cases. The heresy, however, lasted for some time, becoming weaker in the fifth century, and gradually fading away as a separate body with a distinctive name.

“Novatianism, in the tests which it used, its efforts after a perfectly pure communion, its crotchety interpretations of Scripture, and many other features, presents a striking parallel to many modern sects.” [See *Dict. Chr. Biog.*, Blunt, Sects and heresies, Ceillier, II.]

St. Ambrose, in writing against the Novatians, seems to have had some recent publication of their in his mind, which is now unknown. He begins by commending gentleness, a quality singularly wanting in the sect; speaks of the power committed to the Church of forgiving the greatest sins, and points out how God is more inclined to mercy than to severity, and refutes the arguments of the Novatians based on certain passages of repentance, and the necessity of confessing one's sins, St. Ambrose meets the Novatian arguments based on Hebrews 6:4-6, from which they inferred the impossibility of restoration; and on St. Matthew 12:31, 32, our Lord's words concerning sin against the Holy Spirit. As regards the date of this treatise, it must have been somewhat before the exposition of Psalm 37, which refers to it, but there is nothing else which can be taken as a certain guide. Possibly the Benedictine Editors are right in assigning it to about A.D. 384. Some few persons, probably on doctrinal grounds, have been led to question the authorship of this treatise, but it is quoted by St. Augustine, and there has never been any real doubt on the subject.

### TWO BOOKS OF ST. AMBROSE, BISHOP OF MILAN,

### CONCERNING REPENTANCE

#### BOOK 1

#### CHAPTER 1

*St. Ambrose writes in praise of gentleness, pointing out how needful that grace is for the rulers of the Church, and commended to them by the meekness of Christ. As the Novatians have fallen away from this, they cannot be considered disciples of Christ. Their pride and harshness are inveighed against.*

**1.** IF the highest end of virtue is that which aims at the advancement of most, gentleness is the most lovely of all, which does not hurt even those whom it condemns, and usually renders those whom it condemns worthy of absolution. Moreover, it is the only virtue which has led to the increase of the Church which the Lord sought at the price of His own Blood, imitating the loving-kindness' of heaven, and aiming at the redemption of all, seeks this end with a gentleness which the ears of men can endure, in presence of which their hearts do not sink, nor their spirits quail.

**2.** For he who endeavors to amend the faults of human weakness ought to bear this very weakness on his own shoulders, let it weigh upon himself, not cast it off. For we read that the Shepherd in the Gospel carried the weary sheep, and did not cast it off. And Solomon says: "Be not overmuch righteous;" for restraint should temper righteousness. For how shall he offer himself to you for healing whom you despise, who thinks that he will be an object of contempt, not of compassion, to his physician?

**3.** Therefore had the Lord Jesus compassion upon us in order to call us to Himself, not frighten us away. He came in meekness, He came in humility, and so He said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." So, then, the Lord Jesus refreshes, and does not shut out nor cast off, and fitly chose such disciples as should be interpreters of the Lord's will, as should gather together and not drive away the people of God. Whence it is clear that they are not to be counted amongst the disciples of Christ, who think that harsh and proud opinions should be followed rather than such as are gentle and meek; persons who, while they themselves seek God's mercy, deny it to others, such as are the teachers of the Novatians, who call themselves pure.

**4.** What can show more pride than this, since the Scripture says: "No one is free from sin, not even an infant of a day old;" and David cries out: "Cleanse me from my sin." Are they more holy than David, of whose family Christ vouchsafed to be born in the mystery of the Incarnation, whose descendant is that heavenly Hall which received the world's Redeemer in her virgin womb? For what is more harsh than to inflict a penance which they do not relax, and by refusing pardon to take away the incentive to penance and repentance? Now no one can repent to good purpose unless he hopes for mercy.

## CHAPTER 2

*The assertion of the Novatians that they refuse communion only to the lapsed agrees neither with the teaching of holy Scripture nor with their own. And whereas they allege as a pretext their reverence for the divine power, they really are contemning it, inasmuch as it is a sign of low estimation not to use the whole of a power entrusted to one. But the Church rightly claims the power of binding and loosing, which heretics have not, inasmuch as she has received it from the Holy Spirit, against Whom they act presumptuously.*

**5.** BUT they say that those should not be restored to communion who have fallen into denial of the faith. If they made the crime of sacrilege the only exception to receiving forgiveness, they would be acting harshly indeed, and, as it would seem, would be in opposition to the divine utterances only, while consistent with their own assertions. For when the Lord forgave all sins, He made an exception of none. But since, as it were after the fashion of the Stoics, they think that all sins are equal in gravity, and assert that he who has stolen a common fowl, as they say, no less than he who has smothered his father, should be forever excluded from the divine mysteries, how can they select those guilty of one special offense, since even they themselves cannot deny that it is most unjust that the penalty of one should extend to many?

**6.** They affirm that they are showing great reverence for God, to Whom alone they reserve the power of forgiving sins. But in truth none do Him greater injury than they who choose to prune His commandments and reject the office entrusted to them. For inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Himself

said in the Gospel: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit whosoever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," Who is it that honors Him most, he who obeys His bidding or he who rejects it?

**7.** The Church holds fast its obedience on either side, by both retaining and remitting sin; heresy is on the one side cruel, and on the other disobedient; wishes to bind what it will not loosen, and will not loosen what it has bound, whereby it condemns itself by its own sentence. For the Lord willed that the power of binding and of loosing should be alike, and sanctioned each by a similar condition. So he who has not the power to loose has not the power to bind. For as, according to the Lord's word, he who has the power to bind has also the power to loose, their teaching destroys itself, inasmuch as they who deny that they have the power of loosing ought also to deny that of binding. For how can the one be allowed and the other disallowed? It is plain and evident that either each is allowed or each is disallowed in the case of those to whom each has been given. Each is allowed to the Church, neither to heresy, for this power has been entrusted to priests alone. Rightly, therefore, does the Church claim it, which has true priests; heresy, which has not the priests of God, cannot claim it. And by not claiming this power heresy pronounces its own sentence, that not possessing priests it cannot claim priestly power. And so in their shameless obstinacy a shamefaced acknowledgment meets our view.

**8.** Consider, too, the point that he who has received the Holy Ghost has also received the power of forgiving and of retaining sin. For thus it is written: "Receive the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are



retained.” So, then, he who has not received power to forgive sins has not received the Holy Spirit. The office of the priest is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and His right it is specially to forgive and to retain sins. How, then, can they claim His gift who distrust His power and His right?

**9.** And what is to be said of their excessive arrogance? For although the Spirit of God is more inclined to mercy than to severity, their will is opposed to that which He wills, and they do that which He wills not;

whereas it is the office of a judge to punish, but of mercy to forgive. It would be more endurable, Novatian, that you should forgive than that you should bind. In the one case you would assume the right as one who rarely offended; in the other you would forgive as one who had fellow-feeling with the misery of sin.

### CHAPTER 3

*To the argument of the Novatians, that they only deny forgiveness in the case of greater sins, St. Ambrose replies, that this is also an offense against God, Who gave the power to forgive all sins, but that of course a more severe penance must follow in case of graver sins. He points out likewise that this distinction as to the gravity of sins assigns, as it were, severity to God, Whose mercy in the Incarnation is overlooked by the Novatians.*

**10.** BUT they say that, with the exception of graver sins, they grant forgiveness to those of less weight. This is not the teaching of your father, Novatian, who thought that no one should be admitted to penance, considering that what he was unable to loose he would not bind, lest by binding he should inspire the hope that he would loose. So that your father is condemned by your own sentence, you who make a distinction between sins, some of which you consider that you can loose, and others which you consider to be without remedy. But God does not make a distinction, Who has promised His mercy to all, and granted to His priests the power of loosing without any exception. But he who has heaped up sin must also increase his penitence. For greater sins are washed away by greater weeping. So neither is Novatian justified, who excluded all from pardon; nor are you, who imitate and, at the same time, condemn him, for you diminish zeal for penance where it ought to be increased, since the mercy of Christ has taught us that graver sins must be made good by greater efforts.

**11.** And what perversity it is to claim for yourselves what can be forgiven, and, as you say, to reserve to God what cannot be forgiven. This would be to reserve to oneself the cases for mercy, to God those for severity. And what as to that saying: “Let God be true but every man a liar, as it is written, That You might be justified in Your words, and overcome when You are judged”? In order, then, that we may recognize that the God of mercy is rather prone to indulgence than to severity, it is said: “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice.” How, then, can your sacrifice, who refuse mercy, be acceptable to God, since He says that He wills not the death of a sinner, but his correction?

**12.** Interpreting which truth, the Apostle says: “For God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us.” He does not say “in the likeness of flesh,” for Christ took on Himself the reality not the likeness of flesh; nor does He say in the likeness of sin, for He did no sin, but was made sin for us. Yet He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh;” that is, He took on Him the likeness of sinful flesh, the likeness, because it is written: “He is man, and who shall know Him?” He was man in the flesh, according to His human nature, that He might be recognized, but in power was above man, that He might not be recognized, so He has our flesh, but has not the failings of this flesh.

**13.** For He was not begotten, as is every man, by intercourse between male and female, but born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin; He received a stainless body, which not only no sins polluted, but which neither the generation nor the conception had been stained by any admixture of defilement. For we men are all born under sin, and our very origin is in evil, as we read in the words of David: “For lo, I was conceived in wickedness, and in sin did my mother bring me forth.” Therefore the flesh of Paul was a body of death, as he himself says: “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But the flesh of Christ condemned sin, which He felt not at His birth, and crucified by His death, so that in our flesh there might be justification through grace, in which before there had been pollution by guilt.

**14.** What, then, shall we say to this, except that which the Apostle said: “If God is for us, who is against us? He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how has He not with Him also given us all things? Who shall lay a charge against the elect? It is God Who justifies, who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Who died, yea, Who also rose again, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also makes intercession for us.” Novatian then brings charges against those for whom Christ intercedes. Those whom Christ has redeemed unto salvation Novatian condemns to death. Those to whom Christ says: “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am gentle,” Novatian says, I am not gentle. On those to whom Christ says: “You shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is pleasant and My burden is light,” Novatian lays a heavy burden and a hard yoke.

## CHAPTER 4

*St. Ambrose proceeds with the proof of the divine mercy, and shows by the testimony of the Gospels that it prevails over severity, and he adduces the instance of athletes to show that of those who have denied Christ before men, all are not to be esteemed alike.*

**15.** ALTHOUGH what has been said sufficiently shows how inclined the Lord Jesus is to mercy, let Him further instruct us with His own words, when He would arm us against the assaults of persecution. “Fear not,” He says, “those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear Him Who can cast both body and soul into hell.” And farther on: “Every one, therefore, who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father, Who is in heaven,

but he who shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father, Who is in heaven.”

**16.** Where He says that He will confess, He will confess “every one.” Where He speaks of denying, He does not speak of denying “every one.” For, whereas in the former clause He says, “Everyone who shall confess Me, him will I confess,” we should expect that in the following clause He would also say, “Everyone who shall deny Me.” But in order that He might not appear to deny every one, He concludes: “But he who shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny.” He promises favor to everyone, but He does not threaten the penalty to everyone. He makes more of that which is merciful. He makes less of what is penal.

**17.** And this is written not only in that book of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, which is written according to Matthew, but it is also to be read in that which we have according to Luke, that we might know that neither had thus related the saying by chance.

**18.** We have said that it is thus written. Let us now consider the meaning. “Everyone,” He says, “who shall confess Me,” that is to say, of whatever age, of whatever condition he may be, who shall confess Me, he shall have Me as the Rewarder of his confession. Whereas the expression is, “everyone,” no one who shall confess is excluded from the reward. But it is not said in like manner, “Everyone who shall deny shall be denied,” for it is possible that a man overcome by torture may deny God in word, and yet worship Him in his heart.

**19.** Is the case the same with him who denies voluntarily, and with him whom torture, not his own will, has led to denial? How unfit were it, since with men credit is given for endurance in a struggle, that one should assert that it had no value with God! For often in this world’s athletic contests the public crown together with the victors even the vanquished whose conduct has been approved, especially if perchance they have seen that they lost the victory by some trick or fraud. And shall Christ suffer His athletes, whom He has seen to yield for a moment to severe torments, to remain without forgiveness?

**20.** Shall not He take account of their toil, Who will not cast off for ever even those whom He casts off? For David says: “God will not cast off forever,” and in opposition to this shall we listen to heresy asserting, “He does cast off forever”? David says: “God will not forever cut off His mercy from generation to generation, nor will He forget to be merciful.” This is the prophet’s declaration, and there are those who would maintain a forgetfulness of mercy on God’s part.

## CHAPTER 5

*The objection from the unchangeableness of God is answered from several passages of Scripture, wherein God promises forgiveness to sinners on their repentance. St. Ambrose also shows that mercy will be more readily accorded to such as have sinned, as it were, against their will, which he illustrates by the case of prisoners taken in war, and by language put into the mouth of the devil.*

**21.** BUT they say that they make these assertions in order not to seem to make God liable to change, as He would be if He forgave those with whom He was angry. What then? Shall we reject the utterances of God and follow their opinions? But God is not to be judged by the statements of others, but by His own words. What mark of His mercy have we more ready at hand than that He Himself, through the prophet Hoses, is at once merciful as though reconciled to those whom in His anger He had threatened? For He says: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto you, or what shall I do unto you, O Judah? Your kindness," etc. And further on: "How shall I establish you? I will make you as Admah, and as Zeboim." In the midst of His indignation He hesitates, as it were, with fatherly love, doubting how He can give over the wanderer to punishment; for although the Jew deserves it, God yet takes counsel with Himself. For immediately after having said, "I will make you as Admah and as Zeboim," which cities, owing to their nearness to Sodom, suffered together in like destruction, He adds, "My heart is turned against Me, My compassion is aroused, I will not do according to the fierceness of Mine anger."

**22.** Is it not evident that the Lord Jesus is angry with us when we sin in order that He may convert us through fear of His indignation? His indignation, then, is not the carrying out of vengeance, but rather the working out of forgiveness, for these are His words: "If you shall turn and lament, you shall be saved." He waits for our lamentations here, that is, in time, that He may spare us those which shall be eternal. He waits for our tears, that He may pour forth His goodness. So in the Gospel, having pity on the tears of the widow, He raised her son. He waits for our conversion, that He may Himself restore us to grace, which would have continued with us had no fall overtaken us. But He is angry because we have by our sins incurred guilt, in order that we may be humbled; we are humbled, in order that we may be found worthy rather of pity than of punishment.

**23.** Jeremiah, too, may certainly teach when he says: "For the Lord will not cast off for ever; for after He has humbled, He will have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies, Who has not humbled from His whole heart nor cast off the children of men." This passage we certainly find in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and from it, and from what follows, we note that the Lord humbles all the prisoners of the earth under His feet, in order that we may escape His judgment. But He does not bring down the sinner even to the earth with His whole heart Who raises the poor even from the dust and the needy from the dunghill. For He brings not down with His whole heart Who reserves the intention of forgiving.

**24.** But if He brings not down every sinner with His whole heart, how much less does He bring down him with His whole heart who has not sinned with his whole heart! For as He said of the Jews: "This people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me," so perhaps He may say of some of the fallen: "They denied Me with their lips, but in heart they are with Me. It was pain which overcame them, not unfaithfulness which turned them aside." But some without cause refuse pardon to those whose faith the persecutor himself confessed up to the point of striving to overcome it by torture. They denied the Lord once, but confess Him daily; they denied Him in word, but confess Him with groans, with cries, and with tears; they confess Him with willing words, not under compulsion. They yielded, indeed, for a moment to the

temptation of the devil, but even the devil afterwards departed from those whom he was unable to claim as his own. He yielded to their weeping, he yielded to their repentance, and after making them his own lost those whom he attached when they belonged to Another.

**25.** Is not the case such as when any one carries away captive the people of a conquered city? The captive is led away, but against his will. He must of necessity go to foreign lands, does not willingly make the journey; he takes his native land with him in his heart, and seeks an opportunity to return. What then? When any such return, does anyone urge that they should not be received; with less honor indeed, but with readier will, that the enemy may have nothing with which to reproach them? If you pardon an armed man who was able to fight, do you not pardon him in whom faith alone waged the battle?

**26.** If we were to enquire what is the opinion of the devil concerning those who have fallen after this sort, would he not probably reply: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me? For how can he be with me who does not depart from Christ? Without any cause do they appear to honor me who keep the doctrine of Jesus, and I thought that they would teach mine. They condemn me all the more when they forsake me after trial. Indeed Jesus is more glorified in these, when He receives them on their return to Him. All the angels rejoice, for in heaven there is greater joy over one sinner that repents, than over ninety and nine just persons who need not repentance. I am triumphed over in heaven and on earth. Christ loses nothing when they who came to me with weeping return with longing to the Church, and I am in danger even as regards my own, who will learn that in reality there is nothing here where men are led on by present rewards, but that there must be very much there where groans and tears and fasts are preferred to my feasts."

## CHAPTER 6

*The Novatians, by excluding such from the banquet of Christ, imitate not indeed the good Samaritan, but the proud lawyer, the priest, and the Levite who are blamed in the Gospel, and are indeed worse than these.*

**27.** DO you then, O Novatians, shut out these? For what is it When you refuse the hope of forgiveness but to shut out? But the Samaritan did not pass by the man who had been left half dead by the robbers; he dressed his wounds with oil and wine, first pouring in oil in order to comfort them; he set the wounded man on his own beast, on which he bore all his sins; nor did the Shepherd despise His wandering sheep.

**28.** But you say: "Touch me not." You who wish to justify yourselves say, "He is not our neighbor," being more proud than that lawyer who wished to tempt Christ, for he said "Who is my neighbor?" He asked, you deny, going on like that priest, like that Levite passing by him whom you ought to have taken and tended, and not receiving them into the inn for whom Christ paid the two pence, whose neighbor Christ bids you to become that you might show

mercy to him. For he is our neighbor whom not only a similar condition has joined, but whom mercy has bound to us. You make yourself strange to him through pride, in vain puffing up yourself in your carnal mind, and not holding the Head. For if you held the Head you would consider that you must not forsake him for whom Christ died. If you held the Head you would consider that the whole body, by joining together rather than by separating, grows unto the increase of God by the bond of charity and the rescue of a sinner.

**29.** When, then, you take away all the fruits of repentance, what do you say but this: Let no one who is wounded enter our inn, let no one be healed in our Church? With us the sick are not cared for, we are whole, we have no need of a physician, for He Himself says: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"

## CHAPTER 7

*St. Ambrose, addressing Christ, complains of the Novatians, and shows that they have no part with Christ, Who wishes all men to be saved.*

**30.** SO, then, Lord Jesus, come wholly to Your Church, since Novatian makes excuse. Novatian says, "I have bought a yoke of oxen," and he puts not on the light yoke of Christ, but lays upon his shoulders a heavy burden which he is not able to bear. Novatian held back Your servants by whom he was invited, treated them contemptuously and slew them, polluting them with the stain of a reiterated baptism. Send forth, therefore, into the highways, and gather together good and bad, bring the weak, the blind, and the lame into Your Church. Command that Your house be filled, bring in all unto Your supper, for You will make him whom You shall call worthy, if he follow You. He indeed is rejected who has not the wedding garment, that is, the vestment of charity, the veil of grace. Send forth I pray You to all.

**31.** Your Church does not excuse herself from Your supper, Novatian makes excuse. Your family says not, "I am whole, I need not the physician," but it says: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved." The likeness of Your Church is that woman who went behind and touched the hem of Your garment, saying within herself: "If I do but touch His garment I shall be whole." So the Church confesses her wounds, but desires to be healed.

**32.** And You indeed, O Lord, desire that all should be healed, but all do not wish to be healed. Novatian wishes not, who thinks that he is whole. You, O Lord, says that You are sick, and feel our infirmity in the

least of us, saying: "I was sick and you visited Me." Novatian does not visit that least one in whom You desire to be visited. You said to Peter when he excused himself from having his feet washed by Thee: "If I wash not your feet, you will have no part with Me." What fellowship, then, can they have with You, who receive not the keys of the kingdom of heaven, saying that they ought not to remit sins?

**33.** And this confession is indeed rightly made by them, for they have not the succession of Peter, who hold not the chair of Peter, which they rend by wicked schism; and this, too, they do, wickedly denying that sins can be forgiven even in the Church, whereas it was said to Peter: "I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven." And the vessel of divine election himself said: "If ye have forgiven anything to anyone, I forgive also, for what I have forgiven I have done it for your sakes in the person of Christ." Why, then, do they read Paul's writings, if they think that he has erred so wickedly as to claim for himself the right of his Lord? But he claimed what he had received, he did not usurp that which was not due to him.

## CHAPTER 8

*It was the Lord's will to confer great gifts on His disciples. Further, the Novatians confute themselves by the practices of laying on of hands and of baptism, since it is by the same power that sins are remitted in penance and in baptism. Their conduct is then contrasted with that of our Lord.*

**34.** IT is the will of the Lord that His disciples should possess great powers; it is His will that the same things which He did when on earth should be done in His Name by His servants. For He said: "Ye shall do

greater things than these." He gave them power to raise the dead. And whereas He could Himself have restored to Saul the use of his sight, He nevertheless sent him to His disciple Ananias, that by his blessing Saul's eyes might be restored, the sight of which he had lost. Peter also He bade walk with Himself on the sea, and because he faltered He blamed him for lessening the grace given him by the weakness of his faith. He Who Himself was the light of the world granted to His disciples to be the light of the world through grace. And because He purposed to descend from heaven and to ascend thither again, He took up Elijah into heaven to restore him again to earth at the time which should please Him. And being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, He foreshadowed the Sacrament of Baptism at the hands of John.

**35.** And in fine He gave all gifts to His disciples, of whom He said: "In My Name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall do well." So, then, He gave them all things, but there is no power of man exercised in these things, in which the grace of the divine gift operates.

**36.** Why, then, do you lay on hands, and believe it to be the effect of the blessing, if perchance some sick person recovers? Why do you assume that any can be cleansed by you from the pollution of the devil? Why do you baptize if sins cannot be remitted by man? If baptism is



certainly the remission of all sins, what difference does it make whether priests claim that this power is given to them in penance or at the font? In each the mystery is one.

**37.** But you say that the grace of the mysteries works in the font. What works, then, in penance? Does not the Name of God do the work? What then? Do you, when you choose, claim for yourselves the grace of God, and when you choose reject it? But this is a mark of insolent presumption, not of holy fear, when those who wish to do penance are despised by you. You cannot, forsooth, endure the tears of the weepers; your eyes cannot bear the coarse clothing, the filth of the squalid; with proud eyes and puffed-up hearts you delicate ones say with angry tones, "Touch me not, for I am pure.

**38.** The Lord said indeed to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not," but He Who was pure did not say, "because I am pure." Do you, Novatian, dare to call yourself pure, whilst, even if you were pure as regards your acts, you would be made impure by this saying alone? Isaiah says: "O wretched that I am, and pricked to the heart; for that being a man, and having unclean lips, I dwell also in the midst of a people having unclean lips," and do you say, "I am clean," when, as it is written, not even an infant of a day old is pure? David says, "And cleanse me from my sin," whom for his tender heart the grace of God often cleansed; are you pure who are so unrighteous as to have no tenderness, as to see the mote in your brother's eye, but not to consider the beam which is in your own eye? For with God no one who is unjust is pure. And what is more unjust than to desire to have your sins forgiven you, and yet yourself to think that he who entreats you ought not to be forgiven? What is more unjust than to justify yourself in that wherein you condemn another, whilst you yourself are committing worse offenses?

**39.** Then, too, the Lord Jesus when about to consecrate forgiveness of our sins replied to John, who said: "I ought to be baptized of Thee, and You comes to me? Suffer it now, for thus it becomes us to fulfill all

righteousness." And the Lord indeed came to a sinner, though indeed He had no sin, and desired to be baptized, having no need of cleansing; who, then, can tolerate you, who think there is no need for you to be cleansed by penance, because you say you are cleansed by grace, as though it were now impossible for you to sin?

## CHAPTER 9

*By collating similar passages with 1 Samuel 3:25, St. Ambrose shows that the meaning is not that no one shall intercede, but that the intercessor must be worthy as were Moses and Jeremiah, at whose prayers we read that God spared Israel.*

**40.** BUT you say, It is written: "If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" First of all, as I already said before, I might allow you to make that objection if you refused penance to those only who denied the faith. But what difficulty does that question produce? For it is not



written, "No one shall entreat for him;" but, "Who shall entreat?" that is to say, the question is, Who in such a case can entreat? The entreaty is not excluded.

**41.** Then you have in the fifteenth Psalm "Lord, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle, or who shall rest upon Your holy hill?" It is not that no one, but that he who is approved shall dwell there, nor does it say that no one shall rest, but he who is chosen shall rest. And that you may know that this is true, it is said not much later in the twenty-fourth Psalm: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?" The writer implies, not any ordinary person, or one of the common sort, but only a man of excellent life and of singular merit. And that we may understand that when the question is asked, Who? it does not imply no one, but some special one is meant, after having said "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" the Psalmist adds: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his mind unto vanity." And elsewhere it is said: "Who is wise and he shall understand these things?" And in the Gospel: "Who is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord shall set over His household to give them their measure of wheat in due season?" And that we may understand that He speaks of such as really exist, the Lord added: "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." And I am of opinion that where it is said, "Lord, who is like unto You?" it is not meant that none is like, for the Son is the image of the Father.

**42.** We must then understand in the same manner, "Who shall entreat for him?" as implying: It must be some one of excellent life who shall entreat for him who has sinned against the Lord. The greater the sin, the more worthy must be the prayers that are sought. For it was not any one of the common people who prayed for the Jewish people, but Moses, when forgetful of their covenant they worshipped the head of the calf. Was Moses wrong? Certainly he was not wrong in praying, who both merited and obtained that for which he asked. For what should such love not obtain as that of his when he offered himself for the people and said: "And now, if You will forgive their sin, forgive; but if not, blot me out of the book of life." We see that he does not think of himself, like a man full of fancies and scruples, whether he may incur the risk of some offense, as Novatian says he dreads that he might, but rather, thinking of all and forgetful of himself, he was not afraid lest he should offend, so that he might rescue and free the people from danger of offense.

**43.** Rightly, then, is it said: "Who shall entreat for him?" It implies that it must be such an one as Moses to offer himself for those who sin, or such as Jeremiah, who, though the Lord said to him, "Do not Pray for this people," and yet he prayed and obtained their forgiveness. For at the intercession of the prophet, and the entreaty of so great a seer, the Lord was moved and said to Jerusalem, which had meanwhile repented for its sins, and had said: "O Almighty Lord God of Israel, the soul in anguish, and the troubled spirit cries unto You, hear, O Lord, and have mercy." And the Lord bids them lay aside the garments of mourning, and to cease the groanings of repentance, saying: "Put off, O Jerusalem, the garment of your mourning and affliction and clothe yourself in beauty, the glory which God has given you forever."

## CHAPTER 10

*St. John did not absolutely forbid that prayer should be made for those who “sin unto death,” since he knew that Moses, Jeremiah, and Stephen had so prayed, and he himself implies that forgiveness is not to be denied them.*

**44.** SUCH intercessors, then, must be sought for after very grievous sins, for if any ordinary persons pray they are not heard.

**45.** So that point of yours will have no weight, which you take from the Epistle of John, where he says: “He who knows that his brother sins a sin not unto death, let him ask, and God will give him life, because he sinned not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning it do I say, let him ask.” He was not speaking to Moses and Jeremiah, but to the people, who must seek another intercessor for their sins; the people, for whom it is sufficient they entreat God for their lighter faults, and consider that pardon for weightier sins must be reserved for the prayers of the just. For how could John say that graver sins should not be prayed for, when he had read that Moses prayed and obtained his request, where there had been willful casting off of faith, and knew that Jeremiah also had entreated?

**46.** How could John say that we should not pray for the sin unto death, who himself in the Apocalypse wrote the message to the angel of the Church of Pergamos? “You have there those that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So do you also have them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. Repent likewise, or else I will come to you quickly.” Do you see that the same God Who requires repentance promises forgiveness? And then He says: “He that has ears let him hear what the Spirit said to the churches: To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna.”

**47.** Did not John himself know that Stephen prayed for his persecutors, who had not been able even to listen to the Name of Christ, when he said of those very men by whom he was being stoned: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”? And we see the result of this prayer in the case of the Apostle, for Paul, who kept the garments of those who were stoning Stephen, not long after became an apostle by the grace of God, having before been a persecutor.

## CHAPTER 11

*The passage quoted from St. John’s Epistle is confirmed by another in which salvation is promised to those who believe in Christ, which refutes the Novatians who try to induce the lapsed to believe, although denying them pardon. Furthermore, many who had lapsed have received the grace of martyrdom, whilst the example of the good Samaritan shows that we must not abandon those in whom even the faintest amount of faith is still alive.*

**48.** SINCE, then, we have spoken of the general Epistle of St. John, let us enquire whether the writings of John in the Gospel agree with your interpretation. For he writes that the Lord said: "God so loved this world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that every one that believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." If, then, you wish to reclaim any one of the lapsed, do you exhort him to believe, or not to believe? Undoubtedly you exhort him to believe. But, according to the Lord's words, he who believes shall have everlasting life. How, then, will you forbid to pray for him, who has a claim to everlasting life? since faith is of divine grace, as the Apostle teaches where he speaks of the differences of gifts, for "to another is given faith by the same Spirit." And the disciples say to the Lord: "Increase our faith." He then who has faith has life, and he who has life is certainly not shut out from pardon; "that everyone," it is said, "that believes on Him should not perish." Since it is said, Every one, no one is shut out, no one is excepted, for He does not except him who has lapsed, if only afterwards he believes effectually.

**49.** We find that many have at length recovered themselves after a fall, and have suffered for the Name of God. Can we deny fellowship with the martyrs to these to whom the Lord Jesus has not denied it? Do we dare to say that life is not restored to those to whom Christ has given a crown? As, then, a crown is given to many after they have lapsed, so, too, if they believe, their faith is restored, which faith is the gift of God, as you read: "Because unto you it has been granted by God not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer in His behalf." Is it possible that he who has the gift of God should not have His forgiveness?

**50.** Now it is not a single but a twofold grace that everyone who believes should also suffer for the Lord Jesus. He, then, who believes receives his grace, but he receives a second, if his faith be crowned by suffering. For neither was Peter without grace before he suffered, but when he suffered he received a second gift. And many who have not had the grace to suffer for Christ have nevertheless had the grace of believing on Him.

**51.** Therefore it is said: "That everyone that believes in Him should not perish." Let no one, that is, of whatever condition, after whatever fall, fear that he will perish. For it may come to pass that the good Samaritan of the Gospel may find someone going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, that is, falling back from the martyr's conflict to the pleasures of this life and the comforts of the world; wounded by robbers, that is, by persecutors, and left half dead; that good Samaritan, Who is the Guardian of our souls (for the word Samaritan means Guardian), may, I say, not pass by him but tend and heal him.

**52.** Perchance He therefore passes him not by, because He sees in him some signs of life, so that there is hope that he may recover. Does it not seem to you that he who has fallen is half alive if faith sustains any breath of life? For he is dead who wholly casts God out of his heart. He, then, who does not wholly cast Him out, but under pressure of torments has denied Him for a time, is half dead. Or if he be dead, why do you bid him repent, seeing he cannot now be healed? If he be half dead, pour in oil and wine, not wine without oil, that may be the comfort and the smart. Place him upon your beast, give hint over to the host, lay out two pence for his

cure, be to him a neighbor. But you cannot be a neighbor unless you have compassion on him; for no one can be called a neighbor unless he have healed, not killed, another. But if you wish to be called a neighbor, Christ says to you: "Go and do likewise."

## CHAPTER 12

*Another passage of St. John is considered. The necessity of keeping the commandments of God may be complied with by those who, having fallen, repent, as well as by those who have not fallen, as is shown in the case of David.*

**53.** LET us consider another similar passage: "He that believes on the Son has eternal life, but he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." That which abides has certainly had a beginning, and that from some offense, viz., that first he not believe. When, then, any one believes, the wrath of God departs and life comes. To believe, then, in Christ is to gain life, for "he that believes in Him is not judged."

**54.** But with reference to this passage they allege that he who believes in Christ ought to keep His sayings, and say that it is written in the Lord's own words: "I am come a light into this world, that whosoever believes in Me may not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My word and keep it, I judge him not." He judges not, and do you judge? He says, "that whosoever believes on Me may not abide in darkness," that is, that if he be in darkness he may not remain therein, but may amend his error, correct

his fault, and keep My commandments, for I have said, "I will not the death of the wicked, but the correction." I said above that he that believes on Me is not judged, and I keep to this: "For I am not come to judge the world, but that the world may be saved through Me." I pardon willingly, I quickly forgive, "I will have mercy rather than sacrifice," because by sacrifice the just is rendered more acceptable, by mercy the sinner is redeemed. "I come not to call the righteous but sinners." Sacrifice was under the Law, in the Gospel is mercy. "The Law was given by Moses, grace by Me."

**55.** And again further on He says: "He that despises Me, and receives not My words, has one that judges him." Does he seem to you to have received Christ's words who has not corrected himself? Undoubtedly not. He, then, who corrects himself receives His word, for this is His word, that everyone should turn back from sin. So, then, of necessity you must either reject this saying of His, or if you cannot deny it you must accept it.

**56.** It is also necessary that he who leaves off sinning must keep the commandments of God and renounce his sins. We ought not, then, to interpret this saying of him who has always kept the commandments, for if this had been His meaning He would have added the word always, but by not adding it He shows that He was speaking of him who has kept what he has heard, and what he heard has led him to correct his faults; he has then kept what he has heard.

**57.** But how hard it is to condemn to penance for life one who even afterwards keeps the commandments of the Lord, let Him teach us Himself Who has not refused forgiveness. Even to those who do not keep His commandments, as you read in the Psalm: "If they profane My statutes and keep not My commandments, I will visit their offenses with the rod and their sins with scourges, but My mercy will I not take from them." So, then, He promises mercy to all.

**58.** Yet that we may not think that this mercy is without judgment, there is a distinction made between those who have paid continual obedience to God's commandments, and those who at some time, either by error or by compulsion, have fallen. And that you may not think that it is only our arguments which press you, consider the decision of Christ, Who said: "If the servant knew his Lord's will and did it not, he shall be beaten with many stripes, but if he knew it not, he shall be beaten with few stripes." Each, then, if he believes, is received, for God "chastens every son whom He receives," and him whom He chastens He does not give over unto death, for it is written: "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He has not given me over unto death."

## CHAPTER 13

*They who have committed a "sin unto death" are not to be abandoned, but subjected to penance, according to St. Paul. Explanation of the phrase "Deliver unto Satan." Satan can afflict the body, but these afflictions bring spiritual profit, showing the power of God, Who thus turns Satan's devices against himself.*

**59.** LASTLY, Paul teaches us that we must not abandon those who have committed a sin unto death, but that we must rather coerce them with the bread of tears and tears to drink, yet so that their sorrow itself be moderated. For this is the meaning of the passage: "You have given them to drink in large measure," that their sorrow itself should have its measure, lest perchance he who is doing penance should be consumed by overmuch sorrow, as was said to the Corinthians: "What do you will? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness?" But even the rod is not severe, since he had read: "You shall beat him indeed with the rod, but shall deliver his soul from death."

**60.** What the Apostle means by the rod is shown by his invective against fornication, his denunciation of incest, his reprehension of pride, because they were puffed up who ought rather to be mourning, and lastly, his sentence on the guilty person, that he should be excluded from communion, and delivered to the adversary, not for the destruction of the soul but of the flesh. For as the Lord did not give power to Satan over the soul of holy Job, but allowed him to afflict his body, so here, too, the sinner is delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the serpent might lick the dust of his flesh, but not hurt his soul.

**61.** Let, then, our flesh die to lusts, let it be captive, let it be subdued, and not war against the law of our mind, but die in subjection to a good service, as in Paul, who buffeted his body that he might bring it into subjection, in order that his preaching might become more approved, if

the law of his flesh agreed and was consonant with the law of his flesh. For the flesh dies when its wisdom passes over into the spirit, so that it no longer has a taste for the things of the flesh, but for the things of the spirit. Would that I might see my flesh growing weak, would that I were not dragged captive into the law of sin, would that I lived not in the flesh, but in the faith of Christ! And so there is greater grace in the infirmity of the body than in its soundness.

**62.** Having explained Paul's meaning, let us now consider the words themselves, in what sense he said that he had delivered him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, for the devil it is who tries us. For he brings ailments on each of our limbs, and sickness on our whole bodies. And then, too, he smote holy Job with evil sores from the feet to the head, because he had received the power of destroying his flesh, when God said: "Behold, I give him up unto you, only preserve his life." This the Apostle took up in the same words, giving up this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**63.** Great is the power, great is the gift, which commands the devil to destroy himself. For he destroys himself when he makes the man whom he is seeking to overthrow by temptation stronger instead of weak, because whilst he is weakening the body he is strengthening his soul. For sickness of the body restrains sin, but luxury sets on fire the sin of the flesh.

**64.** The devil is then deceived so as to wound himself with his own bite, and to arm against himself him whom he thought to weaken. So he armed holy Job the more after he wounded him, who, with his whole body covered with sores, endured indeed the bite of the devil, but felt not his poison. And so it is well said of him, "You shall draw out the dragon with an hook, you will play with him as with a bird, you shall bind him as a boy does a sparrow, You shall lay hand upon him."

**65.** You see how he is mocked by Paul, so that, like the child in prophecy, he lays his hand on the hole of the asp, and the serpent injures him not; he draws him out of his hiding-places, and makes of his venom a spiritual antidote, so that what is venom becomes a medicine, the venom serves to the destruction of the flesh, it becomes medicine to the healing of the spirit. For that which hurts the body benefits the spirit.

**66.** Let, then, the serpent bite the earthy part of me, let him drive his tooth into my flesh, and bruise my body; and may the Lord say of me: "I give him up unto you, only preserve his life." How great is the power of Christ, that the guardianship of man is made a charge even to the devil himself, who always desires to injure him. Let us then make the Lord Jesus favorable to ourselves. At the command of Christ the devil himself becomes the guardian of his prey. Even unwillingly he carries out the commands of heaven, and, though cruel, obeys the commands of gentleness.

**67.** But why do I commend his obedience? Let him be ever evil that God may be ever good, Who converts his ill-will into grace for us. He wishes to injure us, but cannot if Christ resist him. He wounds the flesh but preserves the life. And then it is written: "Then shall the wolves and the lambs feed together, the lion and the ox shall eat straw, and they shall not hurt nor destroy

in My holy mountain, said the Lord.” For this is the sentence of condemnation on the serpent: “Dust shall be your food.” What dust? Surely that of which it is said: “Dust you art, and into dust shall you return.

## CHAPTER 14

*St. Ambrose explains that the flesh given to Satan for destruction is eaten by the serpent when the soul is set free from carnal desires. He gives, therefore, various rules for guarding the senses, points out the snares laid for us by means of pleasures, and exhorts his hearers not to fear the destruction of the flesh by the serpent.*

**68.** THE serpent eats this dust, if the Lord Jesus is favorable to us, that our spirit may not sympathize with the weakness of the flesh, nor be set on fire by the vapors of the flesh and the heat of our members. “It is better to marry than to burn,” for there is a flame which burns within. Let us not then suffer this fire to approach the bosom of our minds and the depths of our hearts, lest we burn up the covering of our inmost hearts, and lest the devouring fire of lust consume this outward garment of the soul and its fleshy veil, but let us pass through the fire. And should any one fall into the fire of love let him leap over it and pass forth; let him not bind to himself adulterous lust with the bands of thoughts, let him not tie knots around himself by the fastenings of continual reflection, let him not too often turn his attention to the form of a harlot, and let not a maiden lift her eyes to the countenance of a youth. And if by chance she has looked and is caught, how much more will she be entangled if she gazes with curiosity.

**69.** Let custom itself teach us. A woman covers her face with a veil for this reason, that in public her modesty may be safe, That her face may not easily meet the gaze of a youth, let her be covered with the nuptial veil, so that not even in chance meetings she might be exposed to the wounding of another or of herself, though the wound of either were indeed hers. But if she cover her head with a veil that she may not accidentally see or be seen(for when the head is veiled the face is hidden), how much more ought she to cover herself with the veil of modesty, so as even in public to have her own secret place.

**70.** But granted that the eye has fallen upon another, at least let not the inward affection follow. For to have seen is no sin, but one must be careful that it be not the source of sin. The bodily eye sees, but let the eye of the heart be closed; let modesty of mind remain. We have a Lord Who is both strict and indulgent. The prophet indeed said: “Look not upon the beauty of a woman that is all harlot.” But the Lord said: “Whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” He does not say, “Whosoever shall look has committed adultery,” but “Whosoever shall look on her to lust after her.” He condemned not the look but sought out the inward affection. But that modesty is praiseworthy which has so accustomed itself to close the bodily eyes as often not to see what we really behold. For we seem to behold with the bodily sight whatever meets us; but if there be not joined to this any



attention of the mind, the sight also, according to what is usual in the body, fades away, so that in reality we see rather with the mind than with the body.

**71.** And if the flesh has seen the flame, let us not cherish that flame in our bosoms, that is, in the depths of the heart and the inward part of the mind. Let us not instill this fire into our bones, let us not bind bonds upon ourselves, let us not join in conversation with such as may be the cause to us of unholy fires. The speech of a maiden is a snare to a youth, the words of a youth are the bonds of love.

**72.** Joseph saw the fire when the woman eager for adultery spoke to him. She wished to catch him with her words. She set the snares of her lips, but was not able to capture the chaste man. For the voice of modesty, the voice of gravity, the rein of caution, the care for integrity, the discipline of chastity, loosed the woman's chains. So that unchaste person could not entangle him in her meshes. She laid her hand upon him; she caught his garment, that she might tighten the noose around him. The words of a lascivious woman are the snares of lust, and her hands the bonds of love; but the chaste mind could not be taken either by snares or by bonds. The garment was cast off, the bonds were loosed, and because he did not admit the fire into the bosom of his mind, his body was not burnt.

**73.** You see, then, that our mind is the cause of our guilt. And so the flesh is innocent, but is often the minister of sin. Let not, then, desire of beauty overcome you. Many nets and many snares are spread by the devil. The look of a harlot is the snare of him who loves her. Our own eyes are nets to us, wherefore it is written: "Be not taken with your eyes." So, then, we spread nets for ourselves in which we are entangled and hampered. We bind chains on ourselves, as we read: "For everyone is bound with the chains of his own sins."

**74.** Let us then pass through the fires of youth and the glow of early years; let us pass through the waters, let us not remain therein, lest the deep floods shut us in. Let us rather pass over, that we too may say: "Our soul has passed over the stream," for he who has passed over is safe. And lastly, the Lord speaks thus: "If you pass through the water, I am with you, the rivers shall not overflow you." And the prophet says: "I have seen the wicked exalted above the cedars of Lebanon, and I passed by, and lo, he was not." Pass by things of this world, and you will see that the high places of the wicked have fallen. Moses, too, passing by things of this world, saw a great sight and said: "I will turn aside and see this great sight," for had he been held by the fleeting pleasures of this world he would not have seen so great a mystery.

**75.** Let us also pass over this fire of lust, fearing which Paul — but fearing for us, inasmuch as by buffeting his body he had come no longer to fear for himself — says to us: "Flee fornication." Let us then flee it as though following us, though indeed it follows not behind us, but within our very selves. Let us then diligently take heed lest while we are fleeing from it we carry it with ourselves. For we wish for the most part to flee, but if we do not wholly cast it out of our mind, we rather take it up than forsake it. Let us then spring over it, lest it be said to us: "Walk you in the flame of your fire, which ye have kindled for yourselves." For as he who "takes fire into his



bosom burns his clothes,” so he who walks upon fiery coals must of necessity burn his feet, as it is written: “Can one walk upon coals of fire and not burn his feet?”

**76.** This fire is dangerous, let us then not feed it with the fuel of luxury. Lust is fed by feasting, nourished by delicacies, kindled by wine, and inflamed by drunkenness. Still more dangerous than these are the incentives of words, which intoxicate the mind as it were with a kind of wine of the vine of Sodome. Let us be on our guard against abundance of this wine, for when the flesh is intoxicated the mind totters, the heart wavers, the heart is carried to and fro. And so with regard to each that precept is useful wherein Timothy is warned: “Drink a little wine because of your frequent infirmities.” When the body is heated, it excites the glow of the mind; when the flesh is chilled with the cold of disease the spirit is chilled; when the body is in pain, the mind is sad, but the sadness shall become joy.

**77.** Do not then fear if your flesh be eaten away, the soul is not consumed. And so David says that he does not fear, because the enemy were eating up his flesh but not his soul, as we read: “When evil-doers come near upon me to eat up my flesh, my foes who trouble me, they were weakened and fell.” So the serpent works overthrow for himself alone, therefore is he who has been injured by the serpent given over to the serpent that he may raise up again him whom he cast down, and the overthrow of the serpent may be the raising again of the man. And Scripture testifies that Satan is the author of this bodily suffering and weakness of the flesh, where Paul says: “There was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted.” So Paul learned to heal even as he himself had been made whole.

## CHAPTER 15

*Returning from this digression, St. Ambrose explains what is the meaning of St. Paul where he speaks of coming “with a rod or in the spirit of meekness.” One who has grievously fallen is to be separated, but to be again restored to religious privileges when he has sufficiently repented. The old leaven is purged out when the hardness of the letter is tempered by the meal of a milder interpretation. All should be sprinkled with the Church’s meal and fed with the food of charity, lest they become like that envious elder brother, whose example is followed by the Novatians.*

**78.** THAT faithful teacher, having promised one of two things, gave each. He came with a rod, for he separated the guilty man from the holy fellowship. And well is he said to be delivered to Satan who is separated from the body of Christ. But he came in love and with the spirit of meekness, whether because he so delivered him up as to save his soul, or because he afterwards restored to the sacraments him whom he had before separated.

**79.** For it is needful to separate one who has grievously fallen, lest a little leaven corrupt the whole lump. And the old leaven must be purged out, or the old man in each person; that is, the outward man and his deeds, he who among the people has grown old in sin and hardened in

vices. And well did he say purged, not cast forth, for what is purged is not considered wholly valueless, for to this end is it purged, that what is of value be separated from the worthless, but that which is cast forth is considered to have in itself nothing of value.

**80.** The Apostle then judged that the sinner should then at once be restored to the heavenly sacraments if he himself wished to be cleansed. And well is it said “Purge,” for he is purged as by certain things done by the whole people, and is washed in the tears of the multitude, and redeemed from sin by the weeping of the multitude, and is purged in the inner man. For Christ granted to His Church that one should be redeemed by means of all, as she herself was found worthy of the coming of the Lord Jesus, in order that through One all might be redeemed.

**81.** This is Paul’s meaning which the words make more obscure. Let us consider the exact words of the Apostle: “Purge out,” says he, “the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened.” Either that the whole Church takes up the burden of the sinner, with whom she has to suffer in weeping and prayer and pain, and, as it were, covers herself with his leaven, in order that by means of all that which is to be done away in the individual doing penance may be purged by a kind of contribution and commixture of compassion and mercy offered with manly vigor. Or one may understand it as that woman in the Gospel teaches us, who is a type of the Church, when she hid the leaven in her meal, till all was leavened, and the whole could be used as pure.

**82.** The Lord taught me in the Gospel what leaven is when He said: “Do ye not understand that I said not concerning bread, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?” Then, it is said, they understood that He spoke not of bread, but that they should beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. This leaven, then — that is, the doctrine of the Pharisees and the contentiousness of the Sadducees — the Church hides in her meal, when she softened the hard letter of the Law by a spiritual interpretation, and ground it as it were in the mill of her explanations, bringing out as it were from the husks of the letter the inner secrets of the mysteries, and setting forth the belief in the Resurrection, wherein the mercy of God is proclaimed, and wherein it is believed that the life of those who are dead is restored.

**83.** Now this comparison seems to be not unfitly brought forward in this place, since the kingdom of heaven is redemption from sin, and therefore we all, both bad and good, are mingled with the meal of the Church that we all may be a new lump. But that no one may be afraid that an admixture of evil leaven might injure the lump, the Apostle said: “That ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened;” that is to say, This mixture will render you again such, as in the pure integrity of your innocence. If we thus have compassion, we are not stained with the sins of others, but we gain the restoration of another to the increase of our own grace, so that our integrity remains as it was. And therefore he adds: “For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;” that is, the Passion of the Lord profited all, and gave redemption to sinners who repented of the sins they had committed.

**84.** Let us then keep the feast on good food, doing penance yet joyful in our redemption, for no food is sweeter than kindness and gentleness. Let no envy towards the sinner who is saved be

mingled with our feasts and joy, lest that envious brother, as is set forth in the Gospel, exclude himself from the house of his Father, because he grieved at the reception of his brother, at whose lasting exile he was wont to rejoice.

**85.** And you Novatians cannot deny that you are like him, who, as you say, do not come together to the Church because by penance a hope of return had been given to those who had lapsed. But this is only a pretense, for Novatian contrived his schism through grief at his loss of the episcopal office.

**86.** But do you not understand that the Apostle also prophesied of you and says to you: “And ye are puffed up and did not rather mourn, that he who did this deed might be taken away from among you”? He is, then, wholly taken away when his sin is done away, but the Apostle does not say that the sinner is to be shut out of the Church who counsels his cleansing.

## CHAPTER 16

*Comparison between the apostles and Novatians. The fitness of the words, “Ye know not what spirit ye are of,” when applied to them. The desire of penance is extinguished by them when they take away its fruit. And thus are sinners deprived of the promises of Christ, though, indeed, they ought not to be too soon admitted to the mysteries. Some examples of repentance.*

**87.** INASMUCH, then, as the Apostle forgave sins, by what authority do you say that they are not to be forgiven? Who has the most reverence for Christ, Paul or Novatian? But Paul knew that the Lord was merciful. He knew that the Lord Jesus was offended more by the harshness of the disciples than by their pitifulness.

**88.** Furthermore, Jesus rebuked James and John when they spoke of bringing down fire from heaven to consume those who refused to receive the Lord, and said to them: “You know not whose spirit you are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” To them, indeed, He said, “You know not whose spirit you are of,” who were of His spirit; but to you He says, “Ye are not of My spirit, who hold not fast My clemency, who reject My mercy, who refuse repentance which I willed to be preached by the apostles in My Name.”

**89.** For it is in vain that you say that you preach repentance who remove the fruits of repentance. For men are led to the pursuit of anything either by rewards or results, and every pursuit grows slack by delay. And for this reason the Lord, in order that the devotion of His disciples might be increased, said that everyone who had left all that was his, and followed God, should receive sevenfold more both here and hereafter. First of all He promised the reward here, to do away with the tedium of delay, and again hereafter, that we might learn to believe that rewards will also be given to us hereafter. Present rewards are then an earnest of those hereafter.

**90.** If, then, any one, having committed hidden sins, shall nevertheless diligently do penance, how shall he receive those rewards if not restored to the communion of the Church? I am willing, indeed, that the guilty man should hope for pardon, should seek it with tears and groans, should seek it with the aid of the tears of all the people, should implore forgiveness; and if communion be postponed two or three times, that he should believe that his entreaties have not been urgent enough, that he must increase his tears, must come again even in greater trouble, clasp the feet of the faithful with his arms, kiss them, wash them with tears, and not let them go, so that the Lord Jesus may say of him too: "His sins which are many are forgiven, for he loved much."

**91.** I have known penitents whose countenance was furrowed with tears, their cheeks worn with constant weeping, who offered their body to be trodden under foot by all, who with faces ever pale and worn with fasting bore about in a yet living body the likeness of death.

## CHAPTER 17

*That gentleness must be added to severity, as is shown in the case of St. Paul at Corinth. The man had been baptized, though the Novatians argue against it. And by the word "destruction" is not meant annihilation but severe chastening.*

**92.** WHY do we postpone the time of pardon for those who have mortified themselves, who during life have done themselves to death? "Sufficient," says St. Paul, "to such a one is this punishment which is inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise, ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." If the punishment which is inflicted by the many is sufficient for condemnation, the intercession which is made by many is also sufficient for the remission of sin. The Master of morals, Who both knows our weakness and is the interpreter of the will of God, wills that comfort should be given, lest sorrow through the weariness of long delay should swallow up the penitent.

**93.** The Apostle then forgave him, and not only forgave him, but desired that love to him should again grow strong. He who is loved receives not harshness but mercy. And not only did he himself forgive him only, but willed that all should forgive him, and says that he forgave for the sake of others, lest many should be longer saddened on account of one. "To whom," says he, "you have forgiven anything, I forgive also, for I also have forgiven for your sakes in the person of Christ, for we are not ignorant of his devices." Rightly can he be on his guard against the serpent who is not ignorant of his devices, of which there are so many to our detriment. He is always desirous to do harm, always desirous to circumvent us, that he may cause death; but we ought to take heed lest our remedy become an occasion of triumph for him; for we are circumvented by him, if any one perish through overmuch sorrow, who might be set free by pitifulness.

**94.** And that we may know that this person was baptized, he added: "I wrote to you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators, not altogether with fornicators of this world." And farther on he adds: "But now I write unto you not to keep company if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater." Those whom he has joined together under one penalty, he willed to attain together to forgiveness. "If any be such," he says, "with him not to eat." How severe he is with the obstinate, how indulgent to those who seek. Against those rises up in arms the injury done to Christ, whilst the calling upon Christ aids these.

**95.** But lest anyone be perplexed because it is written: "I have delivered such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and should say: How can he attain forgiveness whose whole flesh has perished, seeing that it is evident that man was redeemed both in body and soul, and is saved in both and that neither the soul without the body, nor yet the body without the soul, since both are united by their fellowship in the deeds that have been done, can be without fellowship either in punishment or in reward? Let this suffice for an answer to him. That "destruction" does not mean the complete annihilation of the flesh, but its chastening. For as he who is dead to sin lives to God, so the allurements of the flesh perish, and the flesh dies to its lusts, in order that it may live again to purity and to other good works.

**96.** And what more suitable example can we take than one from our common mother? For the earth itself, from which we are all taken, when it is not worked and cultivated, seems to be desert; and the field dies to the vines or olive-trees with which it was planted, and yet it does not lose its own nutritive power, which is, as it were, its life. And then later, when cultivation begins once more, and the seed is sown for which the land seems suitable, it breaks forth again more fruitful than before with its products. It is not, then, anything so strange if our flesh is said to die, and yet is understood to be subdued rather than annihilated.

## St Ambrose Bishop of Milan on Repentance

### BOOK 2

#### CHAPTER 1

*St. Ambrose gives additional rules concerning repentance, and shows that it must not be delayed.*

**1.** ALTHOUGH in the former book we have written many things which may tend to the more perfect practice of repentance, yet inasmuch as a great deal more may be added, we will continue the repast so as not to seem to have relinquished the provisions of our teaching only half consumed.

**2.** For repentance must be taken in hand not only anxiously, but also quickly, lest perchance that father of the house in the Gospel who planted a fig-tree in his vineyard should come and seek fruit on it, and finding none, say to the vine-dresser: "Cut it down, why doth it cumber the ground?" And unless the vine-dresser should intercede and say: "Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it, and if it bear fruit — well; but if not let it be cut down."

**3.** Let us then dung this field which we possess, and imitate those hard-working farmers, who are not ashamed to satiate the land with rich dung and to scatter the grimy ashes over the field, that they may gather more abundant crops.

**4.** And the Apostle teaches us how to dung it, saying: "I count all things but dung, that I may gain Christ," and he, through evil report and good report, attained to pleasing Christ. For he had read that Abraham, when confessing himself to be but dust and ashes, in his deep humility found favor with God. He had read how Job, sitting among the ashes, regained all that he had lost. He had heard in the utterance of David, how God "raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill."

**5.** Let us then not be ashamed to confess our sins unto the Lord. Shame indeed there is when each makes known his sins, but that shame, as it were, ploughs his land, removes the ever-recurring brambles, prunes the thorns, and gives life to the fruits which he believed were dead. Follow him who, by diligently plowing his field, sought for eternal fruit: "Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we endure, being defamed we entreat, we are made as the off-scouring of the world." If you plough after this fashion you will sow spiritual seed. Plough that you may get rid of sin and gain fruit. He ploughed so as to destroy in himself the last tendency to persecution. What more could Christ give to lead us on to the pursuit of perfection, than to convert and then give us for a teacher one who was a persecutor?

## CHAPTER 2

*A passage quoted by the heretics against repentance is explained in two ways, the first being that Hebrews 6:4 refers to the impossibility of being baptized again; the second, that what is impossible with man is possible with God.*

**6.** BEING then refuted by the clear example of the Apostle and by his writings, the heretics yet endeavor to resist further, and say that their opinion is supported by apostolic authority, bringing forward the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "For it is impossible that those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, should if they fall away be again renewed unto repentance, crucifying again the Son of God, and put Him to open shame."

**7.** Could Paul teach in opposition to his own act? He had at Corinth forgiven sin through penance, how could he himself speak against his own decision? Since, then, he could not destroy what he had built, we must assume that what he says was different from, but not contrary to, what had gone before. For what is contrary is opposed to itself, what is different has ordinarily another meaning. Things which are contrary are not such that one can support the other. Inasmuch, then, as the Apostle spoke of remitting penance, he could not be silent as to those who thought that baptism was to be repeated. And it was right first of all to remove our anxiety, and to let us know that even after baptism, if any sinned their sins could be forgiven them, lest a false belief in a reiterated baptism should lead astray those who were destitute of all hope of forgiveness. And secondly, it was right to set forth in a well-reasoned argument that baptism is not to be repeated.

**8.** And that the writer was speaking of baptism is evident from the very words in which it is stated that it is impossible to renew unto repentance those who were fallen, inasmuch as we are renewed by means of the layer of baptism, whereby we are born again, as Paul says himself: "For we are buried with Him through baptism into death, that, like as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we, too, should walk in newness of life." And in another place: "Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which is created after God." And elsewhere again: "Your youth shall be renewed like the eagle," because the eagle after death is born again from its ashes, as we being dead in sin are through the Sacrament of Baptism born again to God, and created anew. So, then, here as elsewhere, he teaches one baptism. "One faith," he says, "one baptism."

**9.** This, too, is plain, that in him who is baptized the Son of God is crucified, for our flesh could not do away sin unless it were crucified in Jesus Christ. And then it is written that: "All we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death." And farther on: "If we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing that our old man was fastened with Him to His cross." And to the Colossians he says: "Buried with Him by baptism, wherein you also rose again with Him." Which was written to the intent that we should believe that He is crucified in us, that our sins may be purged through Him, that

He, Who alone can forgive sins, may nail to His cross the handwriting which was against us. In us He triumphs over principalities and powers, as it is written of Him: "He made a show of principalities and powers, triumphing over them in Himself."

**10.** So, then, that which he says in this Epistle to the Hebrews, that it is impossible for those who have fallen to be "renewed unto repentance, crucifying again the Son of God, and putting Him to open shame," must be considered as having reference to baptism, wherein we crucify the Son of God in ourselves, that the world may be by Him crucified for us, who triumph, as it were, when we take to ourselves the likeness of His death, who put to open shame upon His cross principalities and powers, and triumphed over them, that in the likeness of His death we, too, might triumph over the principalities whose yoke we throw off. But Christ was crucified once, and died to sin once, and so there is but one, not several baptisms.

**11.** But what of the passage wherein the doctrine of baptisms is spoken of? Because under the Law there were many baptisms or washings, he rightly rebukes those who forsake what is perfect and seek again the first principles of the word. He teaches us that the whole of the washings under the Law are done away with, and that there is one baptism in the sacraments of the Church. But he exhorts us that leaving the first principles of the word we should go on to perfection. "And this," he says, "we will do, if God permits," for no one can be perfect without the grace of God.

**12.** And indeed I might also say to anyone who thought that this passage spoke of repentance, that things which are impossible with men are possible with God; and God is able whensoever's He wills to forgive us our sins, even those which we think cannot be forgiven. And so it is possible for God to give us that which it seems to us impossible to obtain. For it seemed impossible that water should wash away sin, and Naaman the Syrian thought that his leprosy could not be cleansed by water. But that which was impossible God made to be possible, Who gave us so great grace. In like manner it seemed impossible that sins should be forgiven through repentance, but Christ gave this power to His apostles, which has

been transmitted to the priestly office. That, then, has become possible which was impossible. But, by a true reasoning, he convinces us that the reiteration by any one of the Sacrament of Baptism is not permitted.

### CHAPTER 3

*Explanation of the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which St. Ambrose applies it to refute the teaching of the Novatians, proving that reconciliation ought not to be refused to the greatest offender upon suitable proof of repentance.*

**13.** AND the Apostle does not contradict the plain teaching of Christ, Who set forth, as a comparison of a repentant sinner, one going to a foreign country after receiving all his substance from his father, wasted it in riotous living, and later, when feeding upon husks,



longed for his father's bread and then gained the robe, the ring, the shoes, and the slaying of the calf, which is a likeness of the Passion of the Lord, whereby we receive forgiveness.

**14.** Well is it said that he went into a foreign country who is cut off from the sacred altar, for this is to be separated from that Jerusalem which is in heaven, from the citizenship and home of the saints. For which reason the Apostle says: "Therefore now ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."

**15.** "And," it is said, "wasted his substance." Rightly, for he whose faith halts in bringing forth good works does consume it. For, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And faith is a good substance, the inheritance of our hope.

**16.** And no wonder if he was perishing for hunger, who lacked the divine nourishment, impelled by the want of which he says: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." Do you not see it plainly declared to us, that we are urged to prayer for the sake of gaining the sacrament? and do you wish to take away that for the sake of which penance is undertaken? Deprive the pilot of the hope of reaching port, and he will wander uncertainly here and there on the waves. Take away the crown from the athlete, and he will fail and lie on the course. Take from the fisher the power of catching his booty, and he will cease to cast the nets. How, then, can he, who suffers hunger in his soul, pray more earnestly to God, if he has no hope of the heavenly food?

**17.** "I have sinned," he says, "against heaven, and before thee." He confesses what is clearly a sin unto death, that you may not think that anyone doing penance is rightly shut out from pardon. For he who has sinned against heaven has sinned either against the kingdom of heaven, or against his own soul, which is a sin unto death, and against God, to Whom alone is said: "Against You only have I sinned, and done evil before You."

**18.** So quickly does he gain forgiveness, that, as he is coming, and is still a great way off, his father meets him, gives him a kiss, which is the sign of sacred peace; orders the robe to be brought forth, which is the marriage garment, which if anyone have not, he is shut out from the marriage feast; places the ring on his hand, which is the pledge of faith and the seal of the Holy Spirit; orders the shoes to be brought out, for he who is about to celebrate the Lord's Passover, about to feast on the Lamb, ought to have his feet protected against all attacks of spiritual wild beasts and the bite of the serpent; bids the calf to be slain, for "Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed." For as often as we receive the Blood of the Lord, we proclaim the death of the Lord. As, then, He was once slain for all, so whensoever's forgiveness of sins is granted, we receive the Sacrament of His Body, that through His Blood there may be remission of sins.

**19.** Therefore most evidently are we bidden by the teaching of the Lord to confer again the grace of the heavenly sacrament on those guilty even of the greatest sins, if they with open confession bear the penance due to their sin.

## CHAPTER 4

*St. Ambrose turns against the Novatians themselves another objection concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, showing that it consists in an erroneous belief, proving this by St. Peter's words against Simon Magus, and other passages, exhorting the Novatians to return to the Church, affirming that such is our Lord's mercy that even Judas would have found forgiveness had he repented.*

**20.** BUT we have heard that you are accustomed to bring forward as an objection that which is written: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemies against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." By which quotation the whole of your assertion is destroyed and done away, for it is written: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Why, then, do you not remit them? Why do you bind chains which you do not lose? Why do you tie knots which you do not unfasten? Forgive the others, and deal with those who you think are bound for ever by the authority of the Gospel for sinning against the Holy Spirit.

**21.** But let us consider the case of those whom the Lord so binds, going back to the words before the passage quoted, that we may understand it more clearly: The Jews were saying: "This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, prince of the devils." Jesus replied: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be destroyed, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; for if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom stand? But if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?"

**22.** Now we see plainly here that the words are expressly used of those who were saying that the Lord Jesus cast out devils through Beelzebub, to whom the Lord gave that answer, because they were of the heritage of Satan, who compared the Savior of all to Satan, and attributed the grace of Christ to the kingdom of the devil. And that we might know that He was speaking of this blasphemy, He added: "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good, being yourselves evil?" He says, then, that those who thus speak attain not to forgiveness.

**23.** Then, when Simon, depraved by long practice of magic, had thought he could gain by money the power of conferring the grace of Christ and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, Peter said: "You have neither part nor lot in this faith, for your heart is not right with God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray the Lord, if per-chance this thought of your heart may be forgiven you, for I see that you are in the bond of iniquity and in the bitterness of gall." We see that Peter by his apostolic authority condemns him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit through magic vanity, and all the more because he had not the clear consciousness of faith. And yet he did not exclude him from the hope of forgiveness, for he called him to repentance.

**24.** The Lord then replies to the blasphemy of the Pharisees, and refuses to them the grace of His power, which consists in the remission of sins, because they asserted that His heavenly power rested on the help of the devil. And He affirms that they act with satanic spirit who divide the Church of God, so that He includes the heretics and schismatic's of all times, to whom He denies forgiveness, for every other sin is concerned with single persons, this is a sin against all. For they alone wish to destroy the grace of Christ who rend asunder the members of the Church for which the Lord Jesus suffered, and the Holy Spirit was given us.

**25.** Lastly, that we may know that He is speaking of those who destroy the unity of the Church, we find it written: "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathered not with Me, scatters." And that we

might know that He is speaking of these, He at once added: "Therefore I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemies against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men." When He says, "Therefore say I unto you," is it not evident that He intended the words following to be laid to heart by us beyond the others? And He rightly added: "A good tree brings forth good fruits, but a bad tree brings forth bad fruits," for an evil association cannot produce good fruits. The tree, then, is the association; the fruits of the good tree are the children of the Church.

**26.** Return, then, to the Church, those of you who have wickedly separated yourselves. For He promises forgiveness to all who are converted, since it is written: "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved." And lastly, the Jewish people who said of the Lord Jesus, "He hath a devil," and "He casts out devils through Beelzebub," and who crucified the Lord Jesus, are, by the preaching of] Peter, called to baptism, that they may put away the guilt of so great a wickedness.

**27.** But what wonder is it if you should deny salvation to others, who reject your own, though they lose nothing who seek for penance from you? For I suppose that even Judas might through the exceeding mercy of God not have been shut out from forgiveness, if he had expressed his sorrow not before the Jews but before Christ. "I have sinned," he said, "in that I have betrayed righteous blood." Their answer was: "What is that to us? You see to it!" What other reply do you give, when one guilty of a smaller sin confesses his deed to you? What do you answer but this: "What is that to us? You see to it!"? The halter followed on those words, but the punishment is all the more severe, the smaller the sin is.

**28.** But if they be not converted, do you at least repent, who by many a slip have fallen from the lofty pinnacle of innocence and faith. We have a good Lord, Whose will it is to forgive all, Who called you by the prophet, and said: "I, even I, am He that blots out transgressions, and I will not remember, but do you remember, and let us plead together. "

## CHAPTER 5

*As to the words of St. Peter to Simon Magus, from which the Novatians infer that there was no forgiveness for the latter, it is pointed out that St. Peter, knowing his evil heart, might well use words of doubt, and then by some Old Testament instances it is pointed out that "perchance" does not exclude forgiveness. The apostles transmitted to us that penitence, the fruits of which are shown in the case of David. St. Ambrose then adduces the example of the Ephraimites, whose penitence must be followed in order to gain the divine mercy and the sacraments.*

**29.** THE Novatians bring up a question from the words of the Apostle Peter. Because he said, "if perchance," they think that he did not imply that forgiveness would be granted on repentance. But let them consider concerning whom the words were spoken: of Simon, who did not believe through faith, but was meditating trickery. So too the Lord to him who said, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go," replied, "Foxes have holes." For He knew that the man's sincerity was not wholly perfect. If, then, the Lord refused to him who was not baptized permission to follow Him, because He saw that he was not sincere, do you wonder that the Apostle did not absolve him who after baptism was guilty of deceit, and whom he declared to be still in the bond of iniquity?

**30.** But let this be my answer to them. As to myself, I say that Peter did not doubt, and I do not think that so great a question can be bucked by the questionable interpretation of a single word. For if they think that Peter doubted, did God doubt, Who said to the prophet Jeremiah: "Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and you shall give an answer to all Judah, to those who come to worship in the Lord's house, even all the words which I have appointed for thee to answer them. Keep not back a word, perchance they will hearken and be converted." Let them say, then, that God also knew not what would happen.

**31.** But ignorance is not implied in that word, but the common custom of holy Scripture is observed, in order to simplicity of utterance. Inasmuch as the Lord says also to Ezekiel: "Son of man, I will send you unto the house of Israel, to those who have angered Me, both themselves and their fathers, unto this day, and you shall say unto them, Thus says the Lord, if perchance they will hear and be afraid." Did He not know that they could or could not be converted? So, then, that expression is not always a proof of doubt.

**32.** Lastly, the wise men of this world, who stake all their reputation on expressions and words, do not everywhere use the Latin word *forte*, "perchance," or its Greek equivalent, as an expression of doubt. And so they say that their earliest poet used the words, which is, "I shall soon be a widow;" and the passage goes on: But he had no doubt that when all were joining in the attack one might well be laid low by all.

**33.** But let us use our own instances rather than foreign ones. You find in the Gospel that the Son Himself says of the Father (when He had sent His servants to His vineyard, and they had been slain), that the Father said, "I will send My well-beloved Son, perchance they will reverence Him." And in another place the Son says of Himself: "You know neither Me nor My Father; for if you knew Me, you would perchance know My Father also."

**34.** If, then, Peter used those words which were used by God without any prejudice to His knowledge, why should we not assume that Peter also used them without prejudice to his belief? For he could not doubt concerning the gift of Christ, Who had given him the power of forgiving sins; especially since he was bound not to leave any place for the craftiness of heretics who desire to deprive men of hope, in order the more easily to insinuate into the despairing their opinion as to the reiteration of baptism.

**35.** But the apostles, having this baptism according to the direction of Christ, taught repentance, promised forgiveness, and remitted guilt, as David taught when he said: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin." He calls each blessed both him whose sins are remitted by the font, and him whose sin is covered by good works. For he who repents ought not only to wash away his sin by his tears, but also to cover and hide his former transgressions by amended deeds, that sin may not be imputed to him.

**36.** Let us, then, cover our falls by our subsequent acts; let us purify ourselves by tears, that the Lord our God may hear us when we lament, as He heard Ephraim when weeping, as it is written: "I have surely heard Ephraim weeping." And He expressly repeats the very words of Ephraim: "You have chastised me and I was chastised, like a calf I was not trained." For a calf disports itself, and leaves its stall, and so Ephraim was untrained like a calf far away from the stall; because he had forsaken the stall of the Lord, followed Jeroboam, and worshipped the calves, which future event was prophetically indicated through Aaron, namely, that the people of the Jews would fall after this manner. And so repenting, Ephraim says: "Turn You me, and I shall be turned, for You are the Lord my God. Surely in the end of my captivity I repented, and after I learned I mourned over the days of confusion, and subjected myself to You because I received reproach and made You known."

**37.** We see how to repent, with what words and with what acts, that the days of sin are called "days of confusion;" for there is confusion when Christ is denied.

**38.** Let us, then, submit ourselves to God, and not be subject to sin, and when we ponder the remembrance of our offenses, let us blush as though at some disgrace, and not speak of them as a glory to us, as some boast of overcoming modesty, or putting down the feeling of justice. Let our conversion be such, that we who did not know God may now ourselves declare Him to others, that the Lord, moved by such a conversion on our part, may answer to us: "Ephraim is from youth a dear son, a pleasant child, for since My words are concerning him, I will verily remember him, therefore have I hastened to be over him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord."

**39.** And what mercy He promises us, the Lord also shows, when He says further on: "I have satiated every thirsty soul, and have satisfied every hungry soul. Therefore, I awaked and beheld, and My sleep was sweet unto Me." We observe that the Lord promises His sacraments to those who sin. Let us, then, all be converted to the Lord.

## CHAPTER 6

*St. Ambrose teaches out of the prophet Isaiah what they must do who have fallen. Then referring to our Lord's proverbial expression respecting piping and dancing, he condemns dances. Next by the example of Jeremiah he sets forth the necessary accompaniments of repentance. And lastly, in order to show the efficacy of this medicine of penance, he enumerates the names of many who have used it for themselves or for others.*

**40.** BUT if they be not converted, do you at least repent, who by many a slip have fallen from the lofty pinnacle of innocence and faith. We have a good Lord, Whose will it is to forgive all, Who called you by the prophet and said: "I, even I, am He that blots out you transgressions, and I will not remember, but do you remember that we may plead together." "I," He says, "will not remember, but do you remember," that is to say, "I do not recall those transgressions which I have forgiven you, which are covered, as it were, with oblivion, but do you remember them. I will not remember them because of My grace, do you remember them in order to correction; remember, you may know that the sin is forgiven, boast not as though innocent, that you aggravate not the sin, but you will be justified, confess your sin." For a shamefaced confession of sins looses the bands of transgression.

**41.** You see what God requires of you, that you remember that grace which you have received, and boast not as though you had not received it. You see by how complete a promise of remission He draws you to confession. Take heed, lest by resisting the commandments of God you fall into the offense of the Jews, to whom the Lord Jesus said: "We piped to you and you danced not; we wailed and you wept not."

**42.** The words are ordinary words, but the mystery is not ordinary. And so one must be on one's guard, lest, deceived by any common interpretation of this saying, one should suppose that the movements of

wanton dances and the madness of the stage were commended; for these are full of evil in youthful age. But the dancing is commended which David practiced before the ark of God. For everything is seemly which is done for religion, so that we need be ashamed of no service which tends to the worship and honoring of Christ.

**43.** Dancing, then, which is an accompaniment of pleasures and luxury, is not spoken of, but spiritually such as that wherewith one raises the eager body, and suffers not the limbs to lie slothfully on the ground, nor to grow stiff in their accustomed tracks. Paul danced spiritually, when for us he stretched forward, and forgetting the things which were behind, and aiming at those which were before, he pressed on to the prize of Christ. And you, too, when you come to baptism, are warned to raise the hands, and to cause your feet wherewith you ascend to things eternal to be swifter. This dancing accompanies faith, and is the companion of grace.

**44.** This, then, is the mystery. “We piped to you,” singing in truth the song of the New Testament, “and you danced not.” That is, did not raise your souls to the spiritual grace. “We wailed, and you wept not.” That is, you did not repent. And therefore was the Jewish people forsaken, because it did not repent, and rejected grace. Repentance came by John, grace by Christ. He, as the Lord, gives the one; the other is proclaimed, as it were, by the servant. The Church, then, keeps both that it may both attain to grace and not cast away repentance, for grace is the gift of One Who confers it; repentance is the remedy of the sinner.

**45.** Jeremiah knew that penitence was a great remedy, which he in his Lamentations took up for Jerusalem, and brings forward Jerusalem itself as repenting, when he says: “She wept sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks, nor is there one to comfort her of all who love her. The ways of Zion do mourn.” And he says further: “For these things I weep, my eyes have grown dim with weeping, because he who used to comfort me is gone far from me.” We notice that he thought this the bitterest addition to his woes, that he who used to comfort the mourner was gone far from him. How, then, can you take away the very comfort by refusing to repentance the hope of forgiveness?

**46.** But let those who repent learn how they ought to carry it out, with what zeal, with what affection, with what intention of mind, with what shaking of the inmost bowels, with what conversion of heart: “Behold,” he says, “O Lord, that I am in distress, my bowels are troubled by my weeping, my heart is turned within me.”

**47.** Here you recognize the intention of the soul, the faithfulness of the mind, the disposition of the body: “The elders of the daughters of Zion sat,” he says, “upon the ground, they put dust upon their heads, they girded themselves with haircloth, the princes hung their heads to the ground, the virgins of Jerusalem fainted with weeping, my eyes grew dim, my bowels were troubled, my glory was poured on the earth.”

**48.** So, too, did the people of Nineveh mourn, and escaped the destruction of their city. Such is the remedial power of repentance, that God seems because of it to change His intention. To escape is, then, in your own power; the Lord wills to be entreated, He wills that men should hope in Him, He wills that supplication should be made to Him. You are a man, and wills to be asked to forgive, and do you think that God will pardon you without asking Him?

**49.** The Lord Himself wept over Jerusalem, that, inasmuch as it would not weep itself, it might obtain forgiveness through the tears of the Lord. He wills that we should weep in order that we may escape, as you find it in the Gospel: “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves.”

**50.** David wept, and obtained of the divine mercy the removal of the death of the people who were perishing, when of the three things proposed for his choice he selected that in which he might have the most experience of the divine mercy. Why do you blush to weep for your sins, when God commanded even the prophets to weep for the people?



**51.** And, lastly, Ezekiel was bidden to weep for Jerusalem, and he took the book, at the beginning of which was written “Lamentation, and melody, and woe,” two things sad and one pleasant, for he shall be saved in the future who has wept most in this age. “For the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, and the heart of fools in the house of feasting.” And the Lord Himself said: “Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.”

## CHAPTER 7

*An exhortation to mourning and confession of sins for Christ is moved by these and the tears of the Church. Illustration from the story of Lazarus. After showing that the Novatians are the successors of those who planned to kill Lazarus, St. Ambrose argues that the full forgiveness of every sin is signified by the odor of the ointment poured by Mary on the feet of Christ; and further, that the Novatian heretics find their likeness in Judas, who grudged and envied when others rejoiced.*

**52.** LET us, then, mourn for a time, that we may rejoice for eternity. Let us fear the Lord, let us anticipate Him with the confession of our sins, let us correct our backslidings and amend our faults, lest of us too it be said: “Woe is me, my soul, for the godly man is perished from the earth, and there is none among men to correct them.”

**53.** Why do you fear to confess your sins to our good Lord? “Set them forth,” He says, “that you may be justified.” The rewards of justification are set before him who is still guilty of sin, for he is justified who voluntarily confesses his own sin; and lastly, “the just man is his own accuser in the beginning of his speaking.” The Lord knows all things, but He waits for your words, not that He may punish, but that He may pardon. It is not His will that the devil should triumph over you and accuse you when you conceal your sins. Be beforehand with your accuser: if you accuse yourself, you will fear no accuser; if you report yourself, though you were dead you shall live.

**54.** Christ will come to your grave, and if He finds there weeping for you Martha the woman of good service, and Mary who carefully heard the Word of God, like holy Church which has chosen the best part, He will be moved with compassion, when at your death He shall see the tears of many and will say: “Where have you laid him?” that is to say, in what condition of guilt is he? In which rank of penitents? I would see him for whom you weep, that he himself may move Me with his tears. I will see if he is already dead to that sin for which forgiveness is entreated.

**55.** The people will say to Him, “Come and see.” What is the meaning of “Come”? It means, Let forgiveness of sins come, let the life of the departed come, the resurrection of the dead, let Your kingdom come to this sinner also.

**56.** He will come and will command that the stone be taken away which his fall has laid on the shoulders of the sinner. He could have removed the stone by a word of command, for even inanimate nature is wont to obey the bidding of Christ. He could by the silent power of His



working have removed the stone of the sepulcher, at Whose Passion the stones being suddenly removed many sepulchers of the dead were opened, but He bade men remove the stone, in very truth indeed, that the unbelieving might believe what they saw, and see the dead rising again, but in a type that He might give us the power of lightening the burden of sins, the heavy pressure as it were upon the guilty. Ours it is to remove the burdens, His to raise again, His to bring forth from the tombs those set free from their bands.

**57.** So the Lord Jesus, seeing the heavy burden of the sinner, weeps, for the Church alone He suffers not to weep. He has compassion with His beloved, and says to him that is dead, "Come forth," that is, "You who lie in darkness of conscience, and in the squalor of your sins, as in the prison-house of the guilty, come forth, declare your sins that you may be justified. "For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

**58.** If you have confessed at the call of Christ the bars will be broken, and every chain loosed, even the stench of the bodily corruption be grievous. For he had been dead four days and his flesh stank in the tomb; but He Whose flesh saw no corruption was three days in the sepulcher, for He knew no evils of the flesh, which consists of the substances of the four elements. However great, then, the stench of the dead body may be, it is all done away so soon as the sacred ointment has shed its odor; and the dead rises again, and the command is given to loose his hands who till now was in sin; the covering is taken from his face which veiled the truth of the grace which he had received. But since he has received forgiveness, the command is given to uncover his face, to lay bare his features. For he whose sin is forgiven has nothing whereof to be ashamed.

**59.** But in the presence of such grace given by the Lord, of such a miracle of divine bounty, when all ought to have rejoiced, the wicked were stirred up and gathered a council against Christ, and wished moreover to kill Lazarus also. Do you not recognize that you are the successors of those whose hardness you inherit? For you too are angry and gather a council against the Church, because you see the dead come to life again in the Church, and to be raised again by receiving forgiveness of their sins. And thus, so far as in you, you desire to slay again through envy those who are raised to life.

**60.** But Jesus does not revoke His benefits, nay, rather He amplifies them by additions of His liberality, He anxiously revisits him who was raised again, and rejoicing in the gift of the restored life, He comes to the feast which His Church has prepared for Him, at which he who had been dead is found as one amongst those sitting down with Christ.

**61.** Then all wonder who look upon him with the pure gaze of the mind, who are free from envy, for such children the Church has. They wonder, as I said, how he who yesterday and the day before lay in the tomb is one of those sitting with the Lord Jesus.

**62.** Mary herself pours ointment on the feet of the Lord Jesus. Perchance for this reason on His feet, because one of the lowliest has been snatched from death, for we are all the body of Christ, but others perchance are the more honorable members. The Apostle was the mouth of

Christ, for he said," You seek a proof of Christ that speaks in me." The prophets through whom He spoke of things to come were His mouth, would that I might be found worthy to be His foot, and may Mary pour on me her precious ointment, and anoint me and wipe away my sin.

**63.** What, then, we read concerning Lazarus we ought to believe of every sinner who is converted, who, though he may have been stinking, nevertheless is cleansed by the precious ointment of faith. For faith has such grace that there where the dead stank the day before, now the whole house is filled with good odor.

**64.** The house of Corinth stank, when it was written concerning it: "It is reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles." There was a stench, for a little leaven had corrupted the whole lump. A good odor began when it was said: "If you forgive anything to anyone I forgive also. For what I also have forgiven, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ." And so, the sinner being set free, there was great joy in that place, and the whole house was filled with the odor of the sweetness of grace. Wherefore the Apostle, knowing well that he had shed upon all the ointment of apostolic forgiveness, says: "We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God in them that are saved."

**65.** At the pouring forth, then, of this ointment all rejoice; Judas alone speaks against it. So, too, now he who is a sinner speaks against it, he who is a traitor blames it, but he is himself blamed by Christ, as he knows not the remedy of the Lord's death, and understands not the mystery of that so great burial. For the Lord both suffered and died that He might redeem us from death. This is manifest from the most excellent value from His death, which is sufficient for the absolution of the sinner, and his restoration to fresh grace; so that all may come and wonder at his sitting at table with Christ, and may praise God, saying: "Let us eat and feast, for he was dead and is alive again, had perished and is found." But any one devoid of faith objects: "Why does He eat with publicans and sinners?" This is his answer: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."

## CHAPTER 8

*In urging repentance St. Ambrose turns to his own case, expressing the wish that he could wash our Lord's feet like the woman in the Gospel, which is a great pattern of penitence, though such as cannot attain to it find acceptance. He prays for himself, especially that he may sorrow with sinners, who are better than himself. Those for whom Christ died are not to be condemned.*

**66.** SHOW, then, your wound to the Physician that He may heal it. Though you show it not, He knows it, but waits to hear your voice. Do away your scars by tears. Thus did that woman in the Gospel, and wiped out the stench of her sin; thus did she wash away her fault, when washing the feet of Jesus with her tears.

**67.** Would that You, Lord Jesus, might reserve for me the washing off from Your feet of the stains contracted since You walked in me! O that You might offer to me to cleanse the pollution

which I by my deeds have caused on Your steps! But whence can I obtain living water, wherewith I may wash Your feet? If I have no water I have tears, and while with them I wash Your feet I trust to cleanse myself. Whence is it that You should say to me: "His sins which are many are forgiven, because he loved much"? I confess that I owe more, and that more has been forgiven me who have been called to the priesthood from the tumult and strife of the law courts and the dread of public administration; and therefore I fear that I may be found ungrateful, if I, to whom more has been forgiven, love less.

**68.** But all are not able to equal that woman, who was deservedly preferred even to Simon, who was giving the feast to the Lord; who gave a lesson to all who desire to gain forgiveness, by kissing the feet of Christ, washing them with her tears, wiping them with her hair, and anointing them with ointment.

**69.** In a kiss is the sign of love, and therefore the Lord Jesus says: "Let her kiss Me with the kisses of her mouth." What is the meaning of the hair, but that you may learn that, having laid aside all the pomp of worldly trappings, you must implore pardon, throw yourself on the earth with tears, and prostrate on the ground move pity. In the ointment, too, is set forth the savor of a good conversation. David was a king, yet he said: "Every night will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with tears." And therefore he obtained such a favor, as that of his house the Virgin should be chosen, who by her child-bearing should bring forth Christ for us. Therefore is this woman also praised in the Gospel.

**70.** Nevertheless if we are unable to equal her, the Lord Jesus knows also how to aid the weak, when there is no one who can prepare the feast, or bring the ointment, or carry with her a spring of living water. He comes Himself to the sepulcher.

**71.** Would that You would vouchsafe to come to this sepulcher of mine, O Lord Jesus, that You would wash me with Your tears, since in my hardened eyes I possess not such tears as to be able to wash away my offense. If You shall weep for me I shall be saved; if I am worthy of Your tears I shall cleanse the stench of all my offenses; if I am worthy that You weep but a little, You will call me out of the tomb of this body and will say: "Come forth," that my meditations may not be kept pent up in the narrow limits of this body, but may go forth to Christ, and move in the light, that I may think no more on works of darkness but on works of light. For he who thinks on sins endeavors to shut himself up within his own consciousness.

**72.** Call forth, then, Your servant. Although bound with the chain of my sins I have my feet fastened and my hands tied; being now buried in dead thoughts and works, yet at Your call I shall go forth free, and shall be found one of those sitting at Your feast, and Your house shall be filled with precious ointment. If You have vouchsafed to redeem any one, You will preserve him. For it shall be said, "See, he was not brought up in the bosom of the Church, nor trained from childhood, but hurried from the judgment-seat, brought away from the vanities of this world, growing accustomed to the singing of the choir instead of the shout of the crier, but he continues in the priesthood not by his own strength, but by the grace of Christ, and sits among the guests at the heavenly table.

**73.** Preserve, O Lord, Your work, guard the gift which You have given even to him who shrank from it. For I knew that I was not worthy to be called a bishop, because I had devoted myself to this world, but by Your grace I am what I am. And I am indeed the least of all bishops, and the lowest in merit; yet since I too have undertaken some labor for Your holy Church, watch over this fruit, and let not him whom when lost You did call to the priesthood, to be lost when a priest. And first grant that I may know how with inmost affection to mourn with those who sin; for this is a very great virtue, since it is written: "And you shall not rejoice over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction, and speak not proudly in

the day of their trouble." Grant that so often as the sin of anyone who has fallen is made known to me I may suffer with him, and not chide him proudly, but mourn and weep, so that weeping over another I may mourn for myself, saying, "Tamar has been more righteous than I."

**74.** Perchance a maiden may have fallen, deceived and hurried away by those occasions which are the sources of sins. Well, we who are older sin too. In us, too, the law of this flesh wars against the law of our mind, and makes us captives of sin, so that we do what we would not. Her youth is an excuse for her, I now have none, for she ought to learn, we ought to teach. So that "Tamar hath been more righteous than I."

**75.** We inveigh [*to protest or complain bitterly or vehemently*] against some one's covetousness, let us call to mind whether we ourselves have never done anything covetously; and if we have, since covetousness is the root of all evils, and is working in our bodies like a serpent secretly under the earth, let each of us say: "Tamar hath been more righteous than I."

**76.** If we have been seriously moved against any one, a layman may act hastily for a smaller matter than a bishop. Let us ponder that with ourselves and say, He who is reprov'd for quick temper is more righteous than I. For if we thus speak, we guard ourselves against this, that the Lord Jesus or one of His disciples should say to us: "You behold the speck in your brother's eye, but do not behold the beam which is in your own eye. You hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of your own eye, and then shall you see to cast out the speck out of your brother's eye."

**77.** Let us, then, not be ashamed to say that our fault is more serious than that of him whom we think we must reprove, for this is what Judah did who reprimanded Tamar, and remembering his own fault said: "Tamar is more righteous than I." In which saying there is a deep mystery and a moral precept; and therefore is his offense not reckoned to him, because he accused himself before he was accused by others.

**78.** Let us, then, not rejoice over the sin of any one, but rather let us mourn, for it is written: "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, because I have fallen, for I shall arise; for if I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He maintain my cause, and execute judgment for me, and bring me forth to the light. and I shall behold His righteousness. My enemy, too, shall see it and shall be covered with confusion, which said unto me, Where is the Lord your God? My eyes shall behold her, and she shall be for treading down as the mire in the streets," And this not unreservedly,

for he who rejoices at the fall of another rejoices at the victory of the devil. Let us, then, rather mourn when we hear that one has perished for whom Christ died, Who despises not even the straw in time of harvest.

**79.** O that He may not cast away this straw at His harvest, the empty stalks of my produce; but may He gather it in, as is said by someone: “Woe is me, for I am become as one that gathers straw in harvest, and grape gleanings in the vintage,” that He may eat of the firstfruits at least of His grace in me, though He approve not the later fruit.

## CHAPTER 9

*In what way faith is necessary for repentance. Means for paying our debts, in which work, prayer, tears, and fasting are of more value than money. Some instances are adduced, and St. Ambrose declares that generosity is profitable, but only when joined with faith; it is, moreover, liable to certain defects. He goes on to speak of some defects in repentance, such as too great haste in seeking reconciliation, considering abstinence from sacraments all that is needed, of committing sin in hope of repenting later.*

**80.** SO, then, it is fitting for us to believe both that sinners must repent and that forgiveness is to be given on repentance, yet still as hoping for forgiveness as granted upon faith, not as a debt, for it is one thing to earn, and another presumptuously to claim a right. Faith asks for forgiveness, as it were, by covenant, but presumption is more akin to demand than to request. Pay first that which you owe, that you may be in a position to ask for what you have hoped. Come with the disposition of an honest debtor, that you may not contract a fresh liability, but may pay that which is due of the existing debt with the possessions of your faith.

**81.** He who owes a debt to God has more help towards payment than he whets indebted to man. Man requires money for money, and this is not always at the debtor’s command. God demands the affection of the heart, which is in our own power. No one who owes a debt to God is poor, except one who has made himself poor. And even if he have nothing to sell, yet has he wherewith to pay. Prayer, fasting, and tears are the resources of an honest debtor, and much more abundant than if one from the price of his estate offered money without faith.

**82.** Ananias was poor, when after selling his land he brought the money to the apostles, and was not able with it to pay his debt, but involved himself the more. That widow was rich who cast her two small pieces into the treasury, of whom Christ said: “This poor widow has cast in more than they all.” For God requires not money but faith.

**83.** And I do not deny that sins may be diminished by liberal gifts to the poor, but only if faith commend what is spent. For what would the giving of one’s whole property benefit without charity?

**84.** There are some who aim at the credit of generosity for pride alone, because they wish thereby to gain the good opinion of the multitude for leaving nothing to themselves; but while they are seeking rewards in this life, they are laying up none for the life to come, and having received their reward here they cannot hope for it there.

**85.** Some again, having, through impulsive excitement and not after long consideration, given their possessions to the Church, think that they can claim them back. These gain neither the first nor the second reward, for the gift was made thoughtlessly, its recall sacrilegiously.

**86.** Some repent of having distributed their property to the poor. But they who are doing penance must not repent of this, lest they repent of their own repentance. For many seek for penance through fear of future punishment, being conscious of their sins, and having received their penance are held back by fear of the public entreaties. These persons seem to have sought for repentance for their evil deeds, but to exercise it for their good ones.

**87.** Some seek penance because they wish to be at once restored to communion. These wish not so much to loose themselves as to bind the priest, for they do not put off the guilt from their own conscience, but lay it on that of the priest, to whom the command is given: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine;" that is to say, that partaking of the holy Communion is not to be allowed to those polluted with impurity.

**88.** And so one may see those walking in other attire, who ought to be weeping and groaning because they had defiled the robe of sanctification and grace; and women loading their ears with pearls, and weighing down their necks, who had better have bent to Christ than to gold, and who ought to be weeping for themselves, because they have lost the pearl from heaven.

**89.** There are, again, some who think that it is penitence to abstain from the heavenly sacraments. These are too cruel judges of themselves, who prescribe a penalty for themselves but refuse the remedy, who ought to be mourning over their self-imposed penalty, because it deprives them of heavenly grace.

**90.** Others think that license is granted them to sin, because the hope of penitence is before them, whereas penitence is the remedy, not an incentive to sin. For the salve is necessary for the wound, not the wound for the salve, since a salve is sought because of the wound, the wound is not wished for on account of the salve. The hope which is put off to a future season is but feeble, for every season is uncertain, and hope does not outlive all time.

## CHAPTER 10

*In order to do away with the feeling of shame which holds back the guilty from public penance, St. Ambrose points out the advantage of prayers offered by the whole Church, and sets forth the example of saints who have sorrowed. Then, after reproving those who imagine that penance may be often repeated, he points on the difficulty of repentance, and how it is to be carried out.*

**91.** CAN anyone endure that you should blush to entreat God, when you do not blush to entreat a man? That you should be ashamed to entreat Him Who knows you fully, when you are not ashamed to confess your sins to a man who knows you not? Do you shrink from witnesses and sympathizers in your prayers, when, if you have to satisfy a man, you must visit many and entreat them to be kind enough to intervene; when you throw yourself at a man's knees, kiss his feet, bring your children, still unconscious of guilt, to entreat also for their father's pardon? And you disdain to do this in the Church in order to entreat God, in order to gain for yourself the support of the holy congregation; where there is no cause for shame, except indeed not to confess, since we are all sinners, amongst whom he is the most praiseworthy who is the most humble; he is the most just who feels himself the lowest.

**92.** Let the Church, our Mother, weep for you, and wash away your guilt with her tears; let Christ see you mourning and say, "Blessed are you that are sad, for you shall rejoice." It pleases Him that many should entreat for one. In the Gospel, too, moved by the widow's tears, because many were weeping for her, He raised her son. He heard Peter more quickly when He raised Dorcas, because the poor were mourning over the death of the woman. He also forthwith forgave Peter, for he wept most bitterly. And if you weep bitterly Christ will look upon you and your guilt shall leave you. For the application of pain does away with the enjoyment of the wickedness and the delight of the sin. And so while mourning over our past sins we shut the door against fresh ones, and from the condemnation of our guilt there arises as it were a training in innocence.

**93.** Let, then, nothing call you away from penitence, for this you have in common with the saints, and would that such sorrowing for sin as that of the saints were copied by you. David, as it were, "ate ashes for bread, and mingled his drink with weeping," and therefore now rejoices the more because he wept the more: "Mine eyes ran down," he said, "with rivers of water."

**94.** John wept sore, and, as he tells us, the mysteries of Christ were revealed to him. But that woman who, when she was in sin and ought to have wept, nevertheless rejoiced, and covered herself with a robe of purple and scarlet, and adorned herself with much gold and precious stones, now mourns the misery of eternal weeping.

**95.** Deservedly are they blamed who think that they often do penance, for they are wanton against Christ. For if they went through their penance in truth, they would not think that it could be repeated again; for as there is but one baptism, so there is but one course of penance, so far as the outward practice goes, for we must repent of our daily faults, but this latter has to do with lighter faults, the former with such as are graver.

**96.** But I have more easily found such as had preserved their innocence than such as had fittingly repented. Does anyone think that that is penitence where there still exists the striving after earthly honors, where wine flows, and even conjugal connection takes place? The world must be renounced; less sleep must be indulged in than nature demands; it must be broken by groans, interrupted by sighs, put aside by prayers; the mode of life must be such that we die to the usual habits of life. Let the man deny himself and be wholly changed, as in the fable they



relate of a certain youth, who left his home because of his love for a harlot, and, having subdued his love, returned; then one day meeting his old favorite and not speaking to her, she, being surprised and supposing that he had not recognized her, said, when they met again, "It is I." "But," was his answer, "I am not the former I."

**97.** Well then did the Lord say: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." For they who are dead and buried in Christ ought not again to make their conclusions as though living in the world. "Touch not," it is said, nor attend to those things which tend to corruption by their very use, for the very customs of this life corrupt integrity."

## CHAPTER 11

*The possibility of repentance is a reason why baptism should not be deferred to old age, a practice which is against the will of God in holy Scripture. But it is of no use to practice penance whilst still serving lusts. These must be first subdued.*

**98.** GOOD, then, is penitence, and if there were no place for it, everyone would defer the grace of cleansing by baptism to old age. And a sufficient reason is that it is better, to have a robe to mend, than none to put on; but as that which has been repaired once is restored, so that which is frequently mended is destroyed.

**99.** And the Lord has given a sufficient warning to those who put off repentance, when He says: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We know not at what hour the thief will come, we know not whether our soul may be required of us this next night. God cast Adam out of Paradise immediately after his fault; there was no delay. At once the fallen were severed from all their enjoyments that they might do penance; at once God clothed them with garments of skins, not of silk.

**100.** And what reason is there for putting off? Is it that you may sin yet more? Then because God is good you are evil, and "despise the riches of His goodness and long-suffering." But the goodness of the Lord ought rather to draw you to repentance. Wherefore holy David says to all: "Come, let us worship and fall down before Him, and mourn before our Lord Who made us." But for a sinner who has died without repentance, because nothing remains but to mourn grievously and to weep, you find him groaning and saying: "O my son Absalom, O my son Absalom!" For him who is wholly dead mourning is without alleviation.

**101.** But of those who as exiles and banished from their ancestral homes, which the holy law of Moses had assigned them, will be entangled in the errors of the world, you hear him saying: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion." He sets forth the wailings of those who have fallen, and shows that they who are living in this condition of passing time and changing circumstances ought to repent, after the example of those who, as a reward for sin, had been led into miserable captivity.



**102.** But nothing causes such exceeding grief as when any one, lying under the captivity of sin, calls to mind whence he has fallen, because he turned aside to carnal and earthly things, instead of directing his mind in the beautiful ways of the knowledge of God.

**103.** So you find Adam concealing himself, when he knew that God was present, and wishing to be hidden when called by God with that voice which wounded the soul of him who was hiding: "Adam, where are you?" That is to say, Why have you hidden yourself? Why are you concealed?

Why do you avoid Him, Whom you did once long to see? A guilty conscience is so burdensome that it punishes itself without a judge, and wishes for covering, and yet is bare before God.

**104.** And so no one in a state of sin ought to claim a right to or the use of the sacraments, for it is written: "You have sinned, be still." As David says in the Psalm lately quoted: "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof;" and again: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" For if the flesh wars against the mind, and is not subject to the guidance of the Spirit, that is a strange land which is not subdued by the toil of the cultivator, and so cannot produce the fruits of charity, patience, and peace. It is better, then, to be still when you cannot practice the works of repentance, lest in the very acts of repentance there be that which afterward will need further repentance. For if it be once entered upon and not rightly carried out, it obtains not the result of a first repentance and takes away the use of a later one.

**105.** When, then, the flesh resists, the soul must be intent upon God, and if results do not follow, let not faith fail. And if the enticements of the flesh come upon us, or the powers of the enemy attack us, let the soul keep in submission to God. For we are then specially oppressed when the flesh yields. And some there are who trouble heavily the wretched soul, seeking to deprive it of all protection. To which case the words apply: "Ruse it, ruse it, even to the foundations."

**106.** And David, pitying her, says: "O wretched daughter of Babylon." Wretched indeed, as being the daughter of Babylon, when she ceased to be the daughter of Jerusalem. And yet he calls for a healer for her, and says: "Blessed is he who shall take your little ones and dash them against the rock." That is to say, shall dash all corrupt and filthy thoughts against Christ, Who by His fear and His rebuke will break down all motions against reason, so as, if anyone is seized by an adulterous love, to extinguish the fire, that he may by his zeal put away the love of a harlot, and deny himself that he may gain Christ.

**107.** We have then learned that we must do penance, and this at a time when the heat of luxury and sin is giving way; and that we, when under the dominion of sin, must show ourselves God fearing by refraining, rather than allowing ourselves in evil practices. For if it is said to Moses when he was desiring to draw nearer: "Put your shoes from off your feet," how much more must we free the feet of our soul from the bonds of the body, and clear our steps from all connection with this world.

## NOTE ON THE PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

It was always believed in the Church that the power of binding and loosing had been entrusted by our Lord to His apostles, and by them handed on to their successors in the ministry. The earlier practice would seem to have been short and simple: exclusion from Communion, some outward discipline, not always continued for a long period, and reconciliation on true repentance, these matters being decided by the bishop at his discretion. Gradually the practice became more systematized, various periods of discipline were prescribed for various sins, and the time for this discipline was lengthened.

There were three parts in the discipline of Penitence as a whole:

1. Confession, a term used frequently of the whole course.
2. Penance, properly so called, i.e. the mortifications, fasting, etc., prescribed.
3. Reconciliation, performed solemnly by the bishop, often at Easter.

The confession was probably in private to the bishop, who determined whether any public confession should be made or not. But as only great sins — at first, idolatry, adultery, and murder (peccata mortalia) — were punished by outward penance, it was clear that the sin must have been very grievous.

The Montanists taught that the Church had not power to forgive great sins, and this led to clearing the doctrine, and from the middle of the third century, even those who had lapsed into idolatry were admitted to penance.

Hermas already says: iv. 1. And this rule seems to have been maintained as regards the formal penance and reconciliation, not as implying doubt of possible forgiveness, but as a matter of discipline, and this rule deprived those who fell a second

time from communion at least till their deathbed. For this public penance the Greek words are **ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑ** and **ΕΞΟΜΟΛΟΓΗΣΙΣ**; the Latin, penitentia and frequently exomologesis. As the word penitentia includes not merely sorrow for sin and change of heart, but also penance, or the penalty inflicted by authority, and is used in such phrases as penitentiam agere or facere, it has been necessary in the translation of the De Penitentia to vary the English terms, and to use sometimes repentance, sometimes penance. For further information on this subject, the reader is referred specially to the Articles, Buss-Disciplin, in the Freiburg Kirchen-Lexikon, by Wetzer and Welte; and to those on Exomologesis, Penitence, and Reconciliation, in the Dict. of Christian Antiquities, where other authorities and references will be found.

## *Second Section*

### *Core Materials*



# *We are Children of God*

## Lesson List (46 Lessons)

In this year, the second graders will explore their calling as the children of God. With the revelation of God as Trinity, we as Christians find the revelation of our sonship to God. We picked our sonship in Baptism. The Eucharist is the main source of the grace of sonship that maintains and builds us in our calling. Children of God are those who know His will that is in His Word. They are lead by His Spirit (Roman 8:14). Faith, as trusting our lives to Christ, is the first sign of our Christian confession as the children of God (John 1:12). These Ingredients: The Holy Spirit, Baptism, Eucharist, Commandments, and Faith make the recipe for this years' curriculum.

### UNIT I: CHRIST GIVES US THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD (9 LESSONS)

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**Purpose:** The Eucharist is where we receive Christ and find our sonship in Him, the only begotten Son of the Father. In this unit, the focus is on the main themes of the liturgy, *the offering, the receiving and the remembering*. We offer ourselves with the bread and the wine, we receive Christ and the Holy Spirit and we remember God's salvation. The Eucharist ends with the breaking of the body of Christ and the prayer of the children; "Our Father who art in heaven..."

*"12But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "14And the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. " "16And of His fullness we have all **received**, and grace for grace. 17For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." John 1:12, 13, 14, 16*

1. Theophany- In Baptism we become the children of God
2. The Bread from Heaven
3. Our Lord Feeds the Multitude with Five Loaves and Two Fish
4. The First Eucharist
5. The Eucharist, what we receive
6. The Eucharist, what we offer
7. The Eucharist, what we remember

8. The Eucharist, how to prepare
9. Unit Review

## UNIT II: OUR FATHER'S COMMANDMENTS (8 LESSONS)

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**Purpose:** God the Father gave us commandments to live by. In the old covenant the commandments were focused on actions. In the new covenant, the commandments are given to the hearts as God send His Spirit to our hearts to teach us from within. We show our love to our heavenly Father by keeping the commandments as His only begotten Son had taught them to us.

10. Introduction: Moses receives the 10 commandments
11. Commandments 1 and 2
12. Commandments 3 and 4
13. Commandment 5
14. Commandment 6
15. Commandment 7
16. Commandments 8, 9, 10
17. Unit Review

## UNIT III: THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP (8 LESSONS)

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**Purpose:** God sent His Spirit to our hearts. We experience the fruits of the Spirit.

18. Introduction
19. Love
20. Peace & Joy
21. Patience, Kindness and Goodness
22. Faithfulness
23. Meekness
24. Self control
25. Unit Review

## UNIT IV: ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF FAITH (8 LESSONS)

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**Purpose:** Faith in Christ is a life of trust and commitment to Him. The life of Abraham the first Patriarch is a great example of a living faith that grows from a simple follow me, all the way to

offer your only son. Not only that but by willing to sacrifice his only begotten son, he gave an antitype of what the ultimate sacrifice of the heavenly Father of His only begotten would be for us.

*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name"<sup>1</sup>, 4For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith."<sup>2</sup>*

- 26. Abraham is called
- 27. Abraham and Lot
- 28. Abraham and the promises
- 29. Abraham and the visitors
- 30. Isaac is born, Ishmael and Hagar
- 31. Isaac is sacrificed – the Covenant
- 32. Unit Review

#### UNIT V: SEASONAL AND ACTIVITY LESSONS. (14 LESSONS)

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- 33. The feast of Nyrouz: (Help the students celebrate the feast processional with colored icons of Martyrs)
- 34. The feast of the Holy Cross: (Help the students celebrate the vespers processional with Wooden crosses and color coded ribbons)
- 35. The Month of Kiahk
- 36. The Holy Nativity
- 37. The Flight to Egypt
- 38. The Holy Theophany
- 39. The Lent
- 40. The Holy week of Pascha
- 41. The Holy Resurrection
- 42. The Holy Ascension and The Holy Pentecost
- 43. Visiting the Temple at 12
- 44. The fast and feast of the holy apostles
- 45. The feast of the Holy Theotokos (How to make an Icon of the Theotokos
- 46. The feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:12

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 5:4-5



## THE THIRD GRADE CURRICULUM

God Gives Us Reconciliation and Eternal Life In His Son

# *Third Grade Curriculum*

## Theme and Objectives

### **Unit 1: Repentance and Confession**

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

1. Who is the sinner 1: Review the Ten Commandments & the Fruit of the Spirit
2. Who is the sinner 2: Our Lord loves the sinners.
  - i. Children should perceive a sinner to be someone who says no to God. The one who refuses to love God (the first 4 commandments) and their neighbor (the last six commandments)
  - ii. Our Lord Jesus Christ loves the sinners – story of Zacchaeus, emphasize on Zacchaeus’ love of money (the first commandment) more than God and how our Lord, through loving him, brought Zacchaeus to give up love of money.
  - iii. We need to emphasize worship: it is prayer, fasting, and giving. We give worship to the one of highest respect. Obedience is to: come when you are told, do exactly as you are told and do well in school.

- iv. The verse should be: “love your lord God with all your mind, all your heart, all your might”
- 3. Who is the sinner 3: Our Lord loves the sinners.
  - i. How God is pleased when we come and say sorry to Him. Because we love God and we know that God loves us very much, we feel sad when we are separated from Him by sin.
  - ii. The Pharisee and the tax collector.
  - iii. Contemporary story that highlights one sin (disobedience) & the consequences (Adam and eve), and highlights the greatness of repentance.
- 4. Our Lord, Jesus Christ loves all sinners, no matter how bad they are
  - i. He came not for the righteous, but for the sinners. More rejoicing over one sinner who repents than 99 righteous (Luke 15:7), the lost sheep. Those who are not sick have no need for a physician, Mt 9:12: We all need God because we are all sick.
  - ii. Temptation is to feel like doing something wrong, while sin is to act upon the feeling. It is not always easy to be a loving person.
- 5. Stories of saints that became friends of our Lord, Jesus Christ
  - i. Reconciliation = making up. It is never too late to repent. Know your sin and return to the Lord.
  - ii. St. Moses the Black
    - 1. Emphasize on how bad he was, and then how hard he tried to change; he used prayer, the help of his Abouna and confession. Even though you do bad things, our Lord is still waiting for you to ask for Him
    - 2. Our Lord, Jesus Christ will help us to become like Him.
- 6. Although God loves us, we do not enjoy His love until we come back
  - i. The story of the prodigal son
  - ii. The emphasis is on
    - 1. The time the son spent with himself thinking and feeling sorry
    - 2. The confession he made “I have sinned.”
    - 3. That he could not eat – although the father continued to love him, and is willing to give him everything - except when he came back.
    - 4. How do we feel God’s love in our hearts: the work of the Holy Spirit



5. Father and mother don't stop loving us when we do something wrong, they just don't like the thing that we did.
7. The Mystery of repentance and confession 1 – the work of the Holy Spirit
  - i. Stories of how our Lord forgave sinners and that forgiveness gave peace and joy (for example, the Samaritan woman) The Samaritan woman is being brought to Christ so that he can uncover her sins gently.
  - ii. The result of sin is sadness, no peace; we do not feel good about ourselves.
  - iii. We receive the Holy Spirit in Chrismation. The Holy Spirit helps us to love God and others. (you can show the picture of the baby who received the light during Chrismation)
  - iv. The Holy Spirit is present inside of us. I can feel his presence when I feel peace, love, and Joy. The Holy Spirit will help me to find what I have done wrong. We can rely on the work of the Holy Spirit. We should take time everyday to listen to the Holy Spirit (teach the kids self examination).
  - v. How He told His disciples (His helpers) to do the same (John 20:21). They in turn gave that to their disciples, through all the generations until even our Pope (...) today, who gave Abouna (...) to do that for us today.
8. The Mystery of repentance and confession 2: the confession (in steps)
  - i. When we go to confession we meet our Lord Jesus to say sorry and be forgiven.
  - ii. how to make a good confession:
    1. prepare with a prayer, (offer a prayer to recite or read) asking the Holy Spirit to help you finding what you have done wrong
    2. when I go to the priest, he prays the "our Father" with me
    3. I tell my sins to the priest
    4. The priest sometimes gives us advice and sometimes reads with us something from the Bible
    5. The priest gives us an Absolution = a prayer that the priest prays to God on our behalf to ask forgiveness from God in our Lord Jesus name. Then he would make the sign of the cross as he anoints us with oil.
    6. We come out feeling Peace and Joy and that we are able to start over loving God and others.
  - iii. Make a list of regular confession every month to check on students to establish them in the mystery. Parents should be involved.
9. Unit Review

## **Unit 2: The Divine Liturgy**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this unit is to lead the children to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as a way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

Note: Use hands-on liturgy kit, the liturgy pictures and a white board, this unit would be appropriate to act out and show pictures. Kids should be able to recite the main events in Our Lord's life on earth that we would act out in the Liturgy

### 10. Introduction to the Liturgy

- i. Holy Space: the church is a special place:
  - 1. The Holy or Sanctuary where the Altar is.
  - 2. The Nave: where the deacons and the people are
  - 3. The Narthex: western part of the church
- ii. The preparatory: we prepare ourselves and the altar– **Bethlehem**.

How do we prepare ourselves?

- **body**: fasting 9 hours ( to be hungry for Him), clean, appropriate clothing
- **heart**: confessed my sin, have no hate
- **mind**: shut all other interesting thoughts and ideas as with a key

Girls and boys should be properly dressed. Girls should cover their heads (the head of a woman is a beautiful thing, and it is glorious, and it takes the attention from the glory of Christ)

### 11. The Preparatory

- 12. The Offertory: we offer bread and wine as representative of ourselves as well as material gifts and prayers. We give our offering to the priest to offer them to God with the rest of the offerings of everyone. During the offertory we remember the baptism of our Lord in **The Jordan River** and the burial **in the tomb**

- i. We offer bread and wine with prayers (thanksgiving). Tell the kids that it is a good idea to give abouna prayers (on a piece of paper) or to confess (before taking Communion)

13. The Liturgy of the Word: (We listen carefully) We receive the **Word of God**. Tell stories of how Jesus traveled around and many people would follow Him because they were attracted to His teachings and they felt they needed it.

***Galilee, Judea and Samaria***

- i. We receive the instructions of God the Father through the words of the Bible. We should pay attention, be still and quiet, and try to understand what is said. If we listen carefully, we will hear God speak to us in a personal way.
- ii. Options: the story of St. Antony or the story of Samuel listening to God in the night
- iii. What do we read?
  - 1. Part from the letters of St. Paul – Pauline epistle (teaching)
  - 2. Part from other apostles' letters – Catholic epistle (teaching)
  - 3. Part from the book of Acts – Epraxis (story of first church)
  - 4. Story of the saint or martyr of the day – Synaxarium (story)
  - 5. Read a piece from the psalms (a prayer)
  - 6. Read a piece from the Gospels (the good news) - story and teaching of Our Lord Jesus
    - a- We sing Alleluia (praise God) with the reading of the psalm to show our happiness of receiving God's word.
    - b- We give God respect and honor by saying "Doxasi kyrie" which means (Glory to You O Lord) as He is about to talk to us. At the end we say "Glory to God forever. Amen"
  - 7. The sermon when Abouna explains to us the readings of the gospel of the day.
  - 8. We respond to the readings from the Liturgy of the Word saying to Him, "we trust You and are willing to obey You" in the *Creed*.

Activity for the Lesson: Put the Readings on separate pieces of paper and ask the kids to organize it

14. Liturgy of the Faithful: The Reconciliation and Anaphora

Reconciliation prayer: (forgive us as we forgive) a request for peace through cleansing of sins – the kiss of peace: we forgive one another by the resurrection.

**by the tomb of Christ**

The Anaphora and the Trisagion (worthy and Holy), Heavenly praise. **Heaven**

The Remembrance and the Consecration prayers- Institution (“He broke” and “He mixed”) **the upper room**

15. Liturgy of the Faithful: Anamnesis and Epiclesis

16. Liturgy of the Faithful: The Litanies, The commemoration of the saints, and the departed

- i. Litanies: prayer for everything and everyone (to be one body and have a share with all saints part 1) **upper room**
- ii. commemoration of the saints and the departed solidarity with the church in heaven (to be one body and to have a share with all saints part 2)  
**heaven**

17. Liturgy of the Faithful: The Fraction and the Pledge

- i. Fraction: breaking the body- offering Our Lord’s body and blood to the Father with everything we offered up till now (ourselves, our confessions, our prayers and material offerings, requests for others, our heavenly family) (The broken Holy Body and the spilled precious Blood)  
**Golgotha**
- ii. Confession: pledge of faith and partaking to receive (forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as well as unity with everyone in the church). (I believe, I confess, so I partake)

18. Liturgy of the Faithful: How to Prepare for Communion

- i. No talking, no looking around. We should recite the “Prayer Before Communion.”
- ii. When we come to communion we should keep our eyes focused straight ahead. Use the corporal on your hand to receive any pieces of the Body (Jewels) that fall during communion, give enough space for Abouna’s hand. We open our mouths widely to receive the Body. When we receive the Blood, make sure you do not have chopstick on, or anything else on your lips.

- iii. We fast 9 hours before Communion. We fast because we are invited to eat at the Table of the Lord. If someone you like invites you to eat at their house, would you eat before you go? Or would you prepare yourself by being hungry, so you would have an appetite to eat?
- iv. We come out ready to do the work of God:
  - 1. Pray and thank God for the gift of Communion. (Read the prayer after Communion)
  - 2. Enjoy time with family and friends
  - 3. Serving others.

### **Unit 3: The Old Testament fathers of God's family**

The patriarchs Isaac (who consecrates the family) and Jacob (who protects the family).  
 "obedience and honor to parents"

- 1. Review of Abraham's life as God chosen to father his earthly family from last year.
- 2. God renew His covenant with Isaac to continue to lead the family of God. Genesis: 26.
  - i. God appears to Isaac and renews His covenant with him, "I will make of you a great nation for my servant Abraham's sake...Walk before me and be perfect". This teaches us to have the fear of God in us, because God tells Isaac to walk before Him...God is watching. Abraham sends his eldest servant to find a wife for Isaac (Rebekah).
  - ii. How Esau is displeasing to his parents: Genesis 26: 24-25. Esau was profane; he had no fear of God. *"lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears"* (Hebrews 12: 16-17). Talk about prophanity with the five senses. Esau did not value anything. Even in trying to please his parents, he is late, and does not try to understand what they really want from him, he thinks that his parents want their children to marry from their relatives so without taking their advice he went and took a daughter of Ishmael, whom the Lord had cast out. Genesis 6-9. The blessing of those who carefully follows the intension of their parents, and the difficulties that will meet those who follow their own ways. Esau for there on had disappeared from the line of fatherhood of the church.

-----SEPARATE LESSON IF NEEDED TO BE-----  
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- iii. Isaac blesses Jacob. How all the senses are engaged? Jacob is keen to receive the blessing of his father. He is appointed the next patriarch. He waits on his father to dismiss him. He in his obedience to his parents leaves to go to his uncle's land to take a wife from his daughters. Genesis 27 and 28: 1-9. Jacob was very submissive to his parents and would not leave on his own unless he was told to by his parents.
- 3. God renew the covenant with Jacob. The ladder to heaven Genesis 28:10-22.
  - i. Make reference to the church about how the patriarchs in the church pour oil to consecrate the altar, vessels...etc.
  - ii. Jacob meets Rachel and loves her.
  - iii. Jacob marries Leah and Rachel not by his own choice.
  - iv. Jacob had eleven children before leaving his uncle. Laban continuously cheats Jacob, as Jacob works for him in Shepherding. How the patriarch work is always accompanied with hardship and tribulation. From within and without. Genesis 30.
- 4. Jacob leaves Laban.
  - i. How Jacob was not afraid of Laban because Jacob was innocent and had done nothing wrong to his uncle. And how we feel strong when we are on the right side. And also God supported him. Compare this situation to his fear when he is going to meet his brother. Genesis 31 and 32.
  - ii. Jacob struggles with God (Genesis 32) and people (Genesis 33). Talk about how he is afraid of his brother. He is not sure of himself because he cheated his brother of his blessing and birthright. A blessing by omission; Jacob's dislocated hip was the reason for Esau to let him go without harm. Highlight the insistence of Jacob on receiving the blessing from God. (Hosea 12: 3-4). Jacob then receives the blessing from the angel. Not for himself but for his children. This is the real rule of the patriarch or the bishop or even of our physical fathers or fathers in intercession Genesis 32 and 33.

#### **Unit 4: Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation**

**Purpose:** To introduce the students to the initiation mysteries (things a newcomer to the church must do) which are baptism, chrismation, confession and the Eucharist; how each of the mysteries would give us a gift from God that we cannot get on our own. **Briefly introduce all**

**mysteries (sacraments of healing: confession, unction of the sick. Sacraments that cannot be repeated: priesthood, baptism, chrismation).** In the baptism we become the children of God and we are one with Christ, we are born again from heaven. In the mystery of chrismation we become the temple of the Holy Spirit; it is our anointing from God to become “anointed”.

**Themes of Baptism:** dying with Christ, becoming part of Christ, having new life.

1. All mysteries – talk about all the mysteries in general, do not go into too much detail (Galatians 3:27)
  - Summary of all mysteries and how they pertain to our life
  - When can we get each of the sacraments (if all)
  - Baptism and chrismation are Seal sacraments (may only be done once)
  - Confession, unction of the sick, and communion are healing sacraments
  - Marriage and priesthood are service sacraments
  - Unction of the sick we may get after confession (healing)

The flood- in this lesson we will bring the flood as a baptism for Noah and his family

- i. Highlight the evil that was spread in the world and how Noah and his family were the only people who loved and obeyed God.
- ii. Noah and his family had peer pressure to be like the rest. Ex: they were mocked for following God and not following the people in their wrong practice
- iii. God decided to give Noah a chance by wiping out everybody by water.
- iv. The arc saved Noah and his family from dying physically, the water saved them from dying spiritually. 1 Peter 3: 20-22
- v. The baptism of Noah and his family saved them from corruption in the world, our baptism saves us from the corruption of our time.
- vi. The arc saved Noah and his family from physical death, Christ saved us from both physical and spiritual death when we are in the church.

**The church is the arc of Noah...some are even built in the shape of an arc.**

Note to servants: after His resurrection, Christ only really revealed himself in the upper room (only there everyone was sure He was Christ...just like Thomas when he doubted because he was not in the upper room to witness Christ).

2. The crossing of the red sea- as a baptism for the Israelites and how that united them to Moses forever. The crossing was a preparation for the Israelites to receive the commandments. This is like the baptism for us being a preparation for chrismation (receiving the Holy Spirit). We know we have the Holy Spirit because we love God, we love Christ and we love goodness. "A highway shall be there and the road it shall be called a highway of goodness....." (Isaiah 35:8)
  - i. The water of the red sea and the cloud that was above their head saved them from the Egyptian army, like our baptism that saved us from the army of sin in the world that are the devils and the evil company.
  - ii. In the water of the red sea, the Israelites believed in God and in Moses and they realized from that time on, they belong to Moses. In our baptism we began to belong to Christ, so our body member would become Christ's, I cannot do anything bad with them that Christ would not agree to do. Verse: St. Paul, "to live not I but Christ lives in me"
  - iii. The reason why the red sea split is a wind which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit in our baptism. 1 cor. 10: 1-2
  - iv. From now on whatever happens to Moses will also happen to the Israelites, same way in baptism we are buried with Christ in the same way he was buried in the tomb: whatever happens to Christ will happen to us. If Christ is resurrected, we will be resurrected and because Christ is in heaven, we will go to heaven to be with him.
3. Naaman the Syrian ( 2 kings 5) "He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5)
  - i. Tell the story as it is detailed in 2 kings 5, introduce Elisha and stress the fact that Naaman was not an Israelite, he was a foreigner but his faith in the God of Israel brought him to the prophet.



- ii. Stress that Naaman was furious about why he had to go all the way to the Jordan River when there is a river right near him. What is so special about the Jordan River?
  - iii. The point that he had to be immersed in the Jordan, not in any other river because the Jordan river was blessed by God going through it in the past and that made the river special. Likewise, when Abouna prays over the water of baptism and pours the Holy Mayroon in it, the water becomes very special and Holy that no one can touch except Abouna and the person to be baptized. If you look at the water, it looks like any other water....this is why Naaman was angry.
  - iv. Naaman was a leper (explain: a sickness that leads to pieces falling off of the face and the limbs ex: nose, ears, lips, eyelids, fingers and toes etc...). in the Jordan, Naaman's "flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy" (2 kings 5:14) likewise in our baptism, our human nature was cleansed of the sin that we inherited from Adam and was restored to the purity of Christ, this is why the church looks at a new baptized person as a very pure body.
4. The baptism of Christ and our baptism-Chrismation - "unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" John 3:5 (Romans 6: 5 or 8)
- Jesus did not need Baptism, he does it only as a model for us
  - In the baptism of Christ, he is immersed in water with the hand of John the Baptist on his head. Immediately when Christ comes out of water, he receives the Holy Spirit just as we do. This is the first time we see God as the Trinity in history, never before had He revealed this.
  - TELL THE KIDS THAT GOD IS THREE PERSONS NOT ONLY ONE PERSON.
  - Note: Jesus had the Holy Spirit for Him to serve us, so we receive the Holy Spirit to serve HIM.
  - Talk about the renouncing of Satan in our baptism and the Acceptance of Christ. Have them do the pledge of renouncing Satan, give the kids notecards with the pledge on it and have them all stand up and recite it together.
  - We then go into the Water and link this to all the stories we spoke about. This is a free sacrament; we do not have to pay anything.
  - Chrismation is when we receive the Holy Spirit.

## 5. Review



## *God in our Midst*

In this grade, the focus is on the Church, the mystery of priesthood. What it means to father God's people. The apostolic succession and the roots of the church in Old Testament are explored. Few examples from the lives of the Coptic Patriarchs are examined.

### UNIT 1: GOD FATHERS HIS FAMILY ON EARTH – THROUGH HIS SON (4 LESSONS)

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1. Our Lord cared for His disciples:
2. Our lord Jesus Christ called disciples to help him in caring for his people.
3. Our lord Jesus Christ offer forgiveness. Our Lord Jesus Christ has the power to forgive sins

### UNIT 2: OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CONTINUES HIS WORK THROUGH THE CHURCH, IN THE MYSTERY OF PRIESTHOOD:

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The purpose of this unit: is to teach the role of the priests and bishops in the New Testament. The meaning of forgiveness of sins, and the link to the Eucharist are highlighted. (5 lessons)

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls some of us to father his children.
5. Priests are stewards and shepherds
6. Our Lord Jesus Christ continues to give new disciples the power to forgive through the mysteries of Confession and the Eucharist.
7. The clothing of the bishop the priest and the deacons
8. Review Lesson

### UNIT3: THE OLD TESTAMENT FATHERS OF GOD'S FAMILY - JOSEPH (5 LESSONS)

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9. Joseph and Jacob
10. Joseph is called to Egypt
11. Joseph interprets dreams in prison
12. Joseph receives his brothers 2 times
13. Review

#### UNIT 4: WE LOVE OUR CHURCH, THE HOUSE OF GOD: (2 LESSONS)

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- 14. The Church building 1: God is our Savior
- 15. The Church building and contents 2
- 16. Review

#### UNIT 5: STORIES OF SOME OF THE COPTIC PATRIARCHS AND BISHOPS (6 LESSONS)

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- 17. Story of St. Mark initiated the church our family of faith (the first patriarch – “our Abraham”)
- 18. Story of St. Peter the Seal of Martyrs sacrificed for the faith - “Isaac”
- 19. Story of St. Athanasius. Fought for the faith “Jacob”
- 20. Story of St. pope Kyrilloss the sixth: Life of Prayer
- 21. Story of St Abram bishop of Fayome.

#### UNIT 6: GOD SAVES HIS PEOPLE THROUGH CHRIST IN THE MYSTERIES OF THE CHURCH: SALVATION (3 LESSONS)

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How in the mysteries we turn our faith into actions.

Purpose: How we encounter Christ through the mysteries of the church. In Baptism: we are buried with Him and rise with Him we are one with Him. We become children of God. In Chrismation we become a temple of the Holy Spirit. In confession, Christ gives us His forgiveness. In the Eucharist He gave us eternal life. In unction of the sick, we receive the healing touch of Christ. In Marriage we receive His power of unity and strength of service. In priesthood a person receives the power to love and care as our Lord, we – through the priest- receive His fatherly love.

- 22. Baptism and Chrismation:
- 23. Confession and communion and unction of the sick
- 24. Priesthood and marriage

#### UNIT 7: WE LOVE THE CHURCH (4 LESSONS)

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In this unit, the children learn to view their role in the church in both receiving and responding to the mysteries. The church celebrations and seasons:

- 25. We celebrate the Lords day and keep it Holy
- 26. We have seasons in the church:
- 27. We have feasts

28. We have the Holy week of Pascha

#### UNIT 8: WE HAVE PRAYERS AND PRAISES:

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**“Seven times** a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments” Psalm 119:164  
Note for Servants: It is a good time to reflect on the book of Psalms and on the wisdom of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, in putting this assortment of Psalms in each of the hours. Notice that all apostolic traditional churches have more or less the same order of psalms. It is a good time to get the kids started on praying with the Agpeya and have their own Agpeyas and follow up with them on prayer every week. It is good to give them a spiritual log. Included in the spiritual log is self examination- to sit with ourselves every day at sunset and examine if what we did that day was pleasing to God or not

- 29. The hours of Prayer 1
- 30. The hours of prayer 2
- 31. Psalmody and praises:

#### UNIT 9: THE TITLES OF THE CHURCH

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- 32. One and only
- 33. Holy
- 34. Universal
- 35. Apostolic
- 36. Review

#### UNIT 10: SEASONAL LESSONS (13 LESSONS):

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- 37. Nyrouz
- 38. Holy Cross
- 39. Kiahk
- 40. Holy Nativity
- 41. Holy Theophany
- 42. Jonah's fast
- 43. Holy Lent
- 44. Holy Week

- 45. Holy Resurrection
- 46. Holy Ascension
- 47. Holy Pentecost
- 48. Fast and feast of the Holy Apostles
- 49. Fast and Feast of St Mary

## *God Gives us Reconciliation and Eternal Life*

### *In His Son*

#### UNIT I: REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION

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**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, adjusted to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacraments of repentance, confession and the Eucharist. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession.

1. Who Is the Sinner I: Review the Ten Commandments & the Fruit of the Spirit
2. Who Is the Sinner II: Our Lord Loves the Sinners
3. Who Is the Sinner III: Our Lord Loves the Sinners
4. Our Lord Jesus Christ Loves All Sinners, No Matter How Bad They Are
5. Stories of Saints That Became Friends of Our Lord, Jesus Christ
6. Although God loves us, we do not enjoy His love until we come back
7. The Mystery of Repentance and Confession 1 – the Work of the Holy Spirit
8. The Mystery of Repentance and Confession 2 – the Confession (in steps) unit review is included in this lesson)
9. Unit Review

## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 1. WHO IS THE SINNER? REVIEW THE TEN COMMANDMENTS & THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

CHURCH FATHERS:

REFLECTION:

PRAYER:

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:



VOCABULARY:

INTRODUCTION:

LESSON BODY:

Review the Ten Commandments and the Fruit of the Spirit

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

Q:?

A:

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 2. WHO IS THE SINNER? OUR LORD LOVES THE SINNER (I)

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 19:1-10

*"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. 5And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." 8Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." 9And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

#### CHURCH FATHERS:

#### SERMON CXXVII.

19:1-10. [The first half of this Sermon has not survived in the Syriac. The following fragments are from Mai, p. 385. and Cramer, p. 137.]

19:2. Behold a man named Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was chief of the publicans, a man entirely abandoned to covetousness, and whose sole object was the increase of his gains: for such was the practice of the publicans, though Paul calls it "idolatry," possibly as being fit only for those who have no knowledge of God. And as they shamelessly made open profession of this vice, the Lord very justly joined them with the harlots, thus saying to the chiefs of the Jews, "The harlots and the publicans go before you into the kingdom of God." But Zacchaeus did not continue among their number, but was counted worthy of mercy at Christ's hands: for He it is Who calls near those who are afar off, and gives light to those who are in darkness.

But come then, and let us see what was the manner of Zacchaeus' conversion. He desired to see Jesus, and climbed therefore into a sycamore tree, and so a seed of salvation sprang up within him. And Christ saw this with the eyes of Deity: and therefore looking up, He saw him also with the eyes of the manhood, and as it was His purpose for all men to be saved, He extends His gentleness to him, and encouraging him, says, "Come down quickly." For he had sought to see Him, but the multitude prevented him, not so much that of the people, as of his sins; and he was little of stature, not merely in a bodily point of view, but also spiritually: and in no other way could he see Him, unless he were raised up from the earth, and climbed into the sycamore, by which Christ was about to pass. Now the story contains in it an enigma: for in no other way can a man see Christ and believe in Him, except by mounting up into the sycamore, by rendering foolish his members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. And Christ, it says, was about to pass by the sycamore: for having taken for His path the conversation which is by the law, that is, the fig tree, He chose the foolish things of the world, that is, the cross and death. And every one who takes up his cross, and follows Christ's conversation, is saved, performing the law with understanding, which so becomes a fig tree not bearing figs but follies; for the secret conduct of the faithful seems to the Jews to be folly, consisting as it does in circumcision from vice, and idleness from bad practice, though they be not circumcised in the flesh, nor keep the Sabbath. He knew therefore that he was prepared for obedience; and fervent for faith, and ready to change from vice to virtue; wherefore also He calls him, and he will leave (the fig tree) to gain Him. And with haste he came down, and received Him joyfully, not only because he saw Him as he wished, but because he had also been called by Him, and because he received Him (to lodge with him), which he never could have expected.

*19:5. Zacchaeus, come down quickly: for to-day I must abide at your house.*

This was an act of divine foreknowledge; for He well knew what would happen. He saw the man's soul prepared most readily to choose a holy life, and converted him therefore to piety. [*The Syriac recommences*] The man therefore received Jesus joyfully: and this was the commencement of his turning himself to good, of his departure from his former faults, and of his manfully betaking himself to a better course.

But perchance someone possibly may say to our common Savior Christ, 'What do You, O Lord? Go You to lodge with Zacchaeus? and deign You to abide with the chief of the publicans? He has not yet washed away the stain of his greedy love of lucre: he is still sick with covetousness, the mother of all crimes: still full of the blame of rapine and extortion.' But yes, He says, I indeed know this, in that I am God by nature, and see the ways of every individual upon earth. And more than this, I know also things to come. I have called him to repentance, because he is ready thereto: and though men murmur, and blame My gentleness, facts themselves shall prove that they are wrong. "For Zacchaeus, it says, stood up, and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of whatever I possess I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded any man, I make fourfold restoration."

You behold his repentance; his rapid change to a better course; his haste to piety; the bountifulness of his love for the poor. He who lately was a publican, or rather the chief of the publicans, given up to covetousness, and set upon gain, at once becomes merciful, and devoted to charity. He promises that he will distribute his wealth to those who are in need, that he will make restoration to those who have been defrauded: and he who was the slave of greed, makes himself poor, and ceases to care for gains.

Let not the Jewish multitudes therefore murmur when Christ saves sinners; but let them answer us this. Would they have physicians succeed in effecting cures when they visit the sick? Do they praise them when they are able to deliver men from cruel ulcers, or do they blame them, and praise those who are unskillful in their art? But, as I suppose, they will give the sentence of superiority in favor of those who are skilful in benefiting such as suffer from diseases. Why therefore do they blame Christ, if when Zacchaeus was, so to say, fallen and buried in spiritual maladies, He raised him from the pitfalls of destruction?

And to teach them this He says, "To-day there is salvation for this house, in that he also is a son of Abraham:" for where Christ enters, there necessarily is also salvation. May He therefore also be in us: and He is in us when we believe: for He dwells in our hearts by faith, and we are His abode. It would have been better, then for the Jews to have rejoiced because Zacchaeus was wonderfully saved, for he too was counted among the sons of Abraham, to whom God promised salvation in Christ by the holy prophets, saying, "There shall come a Savior from Zion, and He shall take away iniquities from Jacob, and this is my covenant with them, when I will bear their sins."

Christ therefore arose, to deliver the inhabitants of the earth from their sins, and to seek them that were lost, and to save them that had perished. For this is His office, and, so to say, the fruit of His godlike gentleness. Of this will he also count all those worthy who have believed in Him: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit forever and ever, Amen.

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**REFLECTION:**

The love of Christ loosens the bond of sin

*"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19*

Today Salvation has come to this house: **Salvation = Forgiveness of Sins + Eternal Life**

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**PRAYER:**

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**LESSON PREPARATION:**

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**SONG:**

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**VOCABULARY:**

**Scriptures,**

**Sinner – someone who says “no” to God,**

**Taxes,**

**Worshipping God- prayer, fasting, giving**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Explain to the students that we are starting a unit on repentance and confession, and that the first few weeks will be about understanding who is a sinner and how our Lord Jesus Christ feels towards sinners.

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**LESSON BODY:**

A long time ago there lived a little boy whose name was Zacchaeus. He used to go to church with his parents and listen to the Word of God being read and see all the people around him praying. Sometimes he would pray also. Sometimes he would look around at his friends and see what they were doing. Sometimes he would watch the older people and wish he knew what they were talking about because they looked so very important. He would hear the priest

reading from the **Scriptures**: “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,*” and “*you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” He was told over and over again that those were the most important commandments. He would listen when the priest would read from the 10 commandments and he paid very careful attention to the first four, which he knew were about God:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image (false god) to worship
3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
4. "Remember the Lord's day, to keep it holy

He would also pay careful attention to the last six, which were about how to love his neighbor:

5. "Honor your father and your mother
6. "You shall not murder.
7. "You shall not commit adultery. (not respecting your body and dressing in modesty)
8. "You shall not steal.
9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (lie)
10. "You shall not covet" (want what your neighbor has)

Zacchaeus thought those commandments sounded nice, but he also thought that it would be very hard to do them and, to be perfectly honest, sometimes he felt like he didn't even *want* to do them. This is because Zacchaeus had a small problem. It was small now, because he was still a little person, but it kept growing in him so that by the time he was big, it had become a *big* problem: Zacchaeus loved money. And whenever he heard that commandment that he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind, something in him would say, “no” [emphasize this part in the story] and he would start thinking about other things he loved: buying new toys, getting his allowance and saving up money until he felt very rich, or getting his allowance and buying whatever in the world he wanted. He would spend a lot of his time thinking about ways to get more money.

We are not finished with the story of Zacchaeus yet, but we need to leave the story for a moment and discuss Zacchaeus. There is a word that we can use to describe Zacchaeus. And that word is **sinner**. Zacchaeus is a sinner. BUT we must find out why. *Why* is he, at this point in the story of his life, considered a sinner? Who is a sinner? There is one very important reason. Let us go back and try to remember the story a little bit. What would Zacchaeus say to himself whenever he would hear the commandment: *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind?* [Give the students a moment to think and keep trying to probe them]. He would say, “no. No, I am not going to do that. I love other things and want to spend my time thinking about other things also.” So what do we learn from this? *A sinner is someone who says, “no” to God, someone who hears the Word of God and His commandments and refuses to love God and love his or her neighbor.* Because of course it would be very difficult to love someone else if we didn't love God first. Do

you think Zacchaeus had an easy time loving those around him? No, of course he couldn't. And we will see what he did to people around him as he got older and started working.

When Zacchaeus grew up, he became a **tax collector** – someone who collected **taxes** (taxes are money that people pay to the government and the government uses that money to do things for the country, like build roads, build schools, etc...). But the problem was that he was not an honest tax collector. When he was collecting taxes from people, he would lie to people and tell them that they were supposed to pay *more* money than what the government was asking for and then he would keep that extra money for himself. And in this way he became rich.

Is Zacchaeus showing love to his neighbors? Not at all; he was actually stealing from them. He was saying "no" to God about the two most important commandments (loving God and loving one's neighbor). This is what it means to be a sinner: to say "no" to God and to refuse to love Him and to love others.

So let me ask you a question. Who could help Zacchaeus now? He seems to be stuck in his life, the way it is going, and cannot do anything good. Who can save him and change his heart so that he can say "yes" to God? The only One who can save him is our Lord and Savior (this is why we call Him Savior, because He saves and He *heals*) Jesus Christ. Listen to how this happened:

One day Christ was passing through Zacchaeus' town. Now Zacchaeus, as well as everyone else in the town, had heard all about Christ and how good He is, and about all the miracles that He did and how all the people loved Him and followed Him. Zacchaeus wanted very much to see who this holy and righteous Man was. But because he was short and there were a lot of people gathered to see Christ, he couldn't see from where he was standing. So he did something that probably seemed very silly to the other grown-ups around him: he climbed up a tree to see Him as He passed! Can you picture a grown man in nice professional looking clothes, climbing into a tree? But he didn't care what the other people thought at all. He wanted to see Jesus and nothing would stop him.

Now listen very carefully to this next part because this tells about how Christ changed Zacchaeus' heart: When Jesus came to the place where the tree was, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." Zacchaeus must have been surprised. Jesus Christ wanted to stay at his house?! He loved him! And He was such a holy Man! Zacchaeus hurried and came down, and received Him joyfully. He was so happy that Christ would take the time to come to *his* house, who was he? He felt he was no one important and he knew that all the religious people thought he was a worthless sinner. But here was Jesus Christ, a Man sent by God, and He wanted to come to his own house. He felt the love of Jesus Christ fill him like he had never been full before. Because of the love Christ gave him, he changed. Look at how much he changed; he told Jesus, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." He meant that whatever he had taken dishonestly from each person, he would give it back to that person, but not just give back the money. He would multiply what he had taken by 4 and give that amount back to the person. So for example, if he



had stolen \$10 from someone, he would give \$40 back to that person. And on top of this, he would give half of his goods to the poor! He gave up the one thing that was keeping him from being able to love God. In one meeting, Christ was able to change the heart of this man, and help him be able to love God with all his heart and to love his neighbor as himself. He completely gave up his love of money and didn't want to keep it all for himself anymore. He learned how to share, how to give, and how to love. This is amazing. Christ loves the sinners and came to save them.

Zacchaeus then went on to give his life to God and to **worship** God with all his heart.

So what do we learn from this story? When I have a sin in my heart – and we all do – and I am not able to say yes to loving God with all of my heart and loving others, I need Christ with His infinite love to save me and to change me. Christ loves the sinners, and came for them. He didn't run away from Zacchaeus or think badly about him, like other people did; He loved him, and very gently helped him. He never put him down or told him anything mean, because our Lord Jesus Christ is the most gentle and the most loving. So we should never be afraid to go to Him in prayer and ask Him, beg Him to come and save us. Then we will be able to worship God and love Him with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength.

**Worshipping** God is very important. Worshiping God means 3 things: prayer, fasting, and giving. We give worship to the one that has the highest respect in our eyes. Prayer, fasting, giving: we need to remember these 3 things and do them.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

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#### CONCLUSION

1. The sinner is someone who says “no” to God.
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ loves the sinners – the story of Zacchaeus, emphasize Zacchaeus loved money more than God (going against the first commandment) and how our Lord, through loving him, brought Zacchaeus to give up love of money (Luke 19).
3. Worship is prayer, fasting, and giving.
4. Verse to remember: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.”

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#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Who is a sinner?

*A: Someone who says “no” to God*

Q: Who is the only one who can save Zacchaeus and help him say “yes” to God?

*A: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*

Q: What did Christ tell Zacchaeus when he was in the tree?

*A: That He wanted to go to his house*

Q: Did Zaccheus’s heart change? Who changed it?

*A: Yes; Christ*

**VERSE TO REMEMBER:**

O Lord Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me a sinner. *The Jesus Prayer*

## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 3. WHO IS THE SINNER? OUR LORD LOVES THE SINNER (II)

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 18:9-14

*"9Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortionist, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." 13And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" 14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

#### CHURCH FATHERS:

### St Cyril commentary on St Luke's 18:9-14

#### SERMON CXX.

You who love instruction, and are eager to listen, receive once again the sacred words: delight yourselves in the honey of wisdom; for so it is written, "Good words are honeycombs, and their sweetness is the healing of the soul." For the labor of the bees is very sweet, and benefits in many ways the soul of man: but the divine and saving (honey) makes those in whom it dwells skilful in every good work, and teaches them the ways of (spiritual) improvement. Let us therefore, as I said, receive again in mind and heart the Savior's words. For He teaches us in

what manner we ought to make our requests unto Him, in order that the act may not prove unrewarded to them who practice it; and that no one may anger God, the Bestower of gifts from on high, by means of those very things by which he imagines that he shall gain some benefit. For it is written. "There is a righteous man, who perishes in his righteousness."

For see, I pray, an instance of this clearly painted, so to speak, in the parable set before us. One who prayed is condemned because he did not offer his prayer wisely. "For two men, it says, went up unto the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican." And here we must admire the wise arrangement of Christ our common Savior, in all things whatsoever He does and says. For by the parable previously read to us, He called us to diligence, and to the duty of offering prayer constantly: for the Evangelist said, "And He spoke unto them also a parable, to the intent that men ought always to pray, and must not grow weary." Having then urged them to diligence in constant prayer, yet, as I said, lest by doing so sedulously but without discretion, we should enrage Him Whom we supplicate, He very excellently shows us in what way we ought to be diligent in prayer. "Two men then, He says, went up unto the temple to pray." Observe here, I pray, the impartiality and entire fairness of the unerring Nature: for He calls those who were praying men, since He looks not so much at wealth or power; but regarding their natural equality, He considers all those who dwell upon earth as men, and as in no respect different from one another.

And what then was the manner of their prayer? "The Pharisee, it says, prayed thus to himself. God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of mankind, extortionist, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican." Many at once are the faults of the Pharisee: for first of all he is boastful, and without sense; for he praises himself, although the sacred Scripture cries aloud, "Let a neighbor praise you, and not your own mouth: a stranger and not your own lips." But, O excellent sir, one may well say to him, Behold, those who live in the practice of good and holy actions, as any one may see, are not very ready to listen to the words of flatterers: yes, and even if men extol them, they often are covered with shame, and drop their eyes to the ground, and beg silence of those that praise them. But this shameless Pharisee praises and extols himself because he is better than extortionist, and the unjust, and adulterers. But how did it escape your notice, that a man's being better than the bad does not necessarily and of course prove him to be worthy of admiration: but that to compete with those who habitually excel, is a noble and honorable thing, and admits a man into the number of those who are justly praised.

Our virtue therefore must not be contaminated with fault, but must be single-minded and blameless, and free from all that can bring reproach. For what profit is there in fasting twice in the week, if your so doing serve only as a pretext for ignorance and vanity, and make you supercilious and haughty, and selfish? You tithe your possessions, and make a boast thereof: but you in another way provoke God's anger, by condemning men generally on this account, and accusing others; and you are yourself puffed up, though not crowned by the divine decree for righteousness, but heap, on the contrary, praises upon yourself. "For I am not, he says, as the rest of mankind." Moderate yourself, O Pharisee: "put a door to your tongue, and a lock."

You speak to God Who knows all things. Await the decree of the Judge. None of those skilled in the practice of wrestling ever crowns himself: nor does any man receive the crown of himself, but awaits the summons of the arbiter. Lower your pride: for arrogance is both accursed and hated by God. Although therefore you fast with puffed up mind, your so doing will not avail you: your labor will be unrewarded; for you have mingled dung with your perfume. Even according to the law of Moses a sacrifice that had a blemish was not capable of being offered to God: for it was said unto him, "Of sheep, and ox, that is offered for sacrifice, there must be no blemish therein." Since therefore your fasting is accompanied by pride, you must expect to hear God saying, "This is not the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord." You offer tithes: but you wrong in another way Him Who is honored by you, in that you condemn men generally. This is an act foreign to the mind that fears God: for Christ even said, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned." And one also of His disciples said, "There is one Lawgiver, and Judge: why then do you judge your neighbor?" No man because he is in health ridicules one who is sick for being laid up and bedridden: rather he is afraid, lest perchance he become himself the victim of similar sufferings. Nor does any man in battle, because another has fallen, praise himself for having escaped from misfortune. For the infirmity of others is not a fit subject for praise for those who are in health: nay, even if anyone be found of more than usually vigorous health, even then scarcely does he gain glory thereby. Such then was the state of the self-loving Pharisee.

But what of the publican? He stood, it says, "afar off," not even venturing, so to speak, to raise up his eyes on high. You see him abstaining from all boldness of speech, as having no right thereto, and smitten by the reproaches of conscience: for he was afraid of being even seen by God, as one who had been careless of His laws, and had led an unchaste and dissolute life. You see also that by his external manner, he accuses his own depravity. For the foolish Pharisee stood there bold and broad, lifting up his eyes without scruple, bearing witness of himself, and boastful. But the other feels shame at his conduct: he is afraid of his Judge, he smites upon his breast, he confesses his offences, he shows his malady as to the Physician, he prays that he may have mercy. And what is the result? Let us hear what the Judge says, "This man, He says, went down to his house justified rather than the other."

Let us therefore "pray without ceasing," according to the expression of the blessed Paul: but let us be careful to do so aright. The love of self is displeasing to God, and He rejects empty haughtiness and a proud look, puffed up often on account of that which is by no means excellent. And even if a man be good and sober, let him not on this account suffer himself to fall away into shameful pride: but rather let him remember Christ, Who says to the holy apostles, "When you have done all those things, those namely which have been commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." For we owe unto God over all, as from the yoke of necessity, the service of slaves, and ready obedience in all things. Yes, though you lead an excellent and elect life, don't exact wages from the Lord; but rather ask of Him a gift. As being good, He will promise it you: as a loving Father, He will aid you. Restrain not yourself then from saying, "God be merciful to me the sinner." Remember

Him Who says by the voice of Isaiah, "Declare you your sins first, that you may be justified:" remember too that He rebukes those who will not do so, and says, "Behold, I have a judgment against you, because you say 'I have not sinned'." Examine the words of the saints: for one says, "The righteous is the accuser of himself in the beginning of his words." And another again, "I said, I will confess against myself my transgression unto the Lord: and you forgave the iniquity of my heart."

What answer then will those make to this, who embrace the new tenets of Novatus, and say of themselves that they are pure? Whose prayer do they praise? That of the Pharisee, who acquitted himself, or that of the Publican, who accused himself? If they say that of the Pharisee, they resist the divine sentence; for he was condemned as being boastful: but if that of the Publican, why do they refuse to acknowledge their own impurity? Certainly God justifies those who know well their transgressions, and are willing to confess them: but these men will have the portion of the Pharisee.

We then say, that in many things we "all of us offend," and that no man is pure from uncleanness, even though his life upon earth be but one day. Let us ask then of God mercy; which if we do, Christ will justify us: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen.

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

LESSON PREPARATION:

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SONG:

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## VOCABULARY:

**Temple, Scripture, Pharisee, Tax collector, Tithes, Humility, Justification**

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## INTRODUCTION:

Review definition of “sinner” – someone who says ‘no’ to God

Review how Christ loves the sinner, even and especially when other people think badly about him/her

Review why Christ is called “Savior” – because He loves and saves all of us sinners with His infinite love that never ends and never runs out and never leaves us alone. Christ saves us by loving us and leading us to repent, upon which we receive the forgiveness of our sins then He grants us Eternal life.

Explain how today we are going to look at how the family of God, His children, speak with Him in prayer and how they know themselves as His children – that they themselves are sinners, and how they need Him.

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## LESSON BODY:

One day, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ told this story to the people who were listening to Him: two men went up to the **temple** to pray. One was a great teacher of **Scriptures** and very well respected by everyone – he was called a **Pharisee**. The other one had a very lowly job and was looked down on by everyone. No one respected him; he was a **tax collector** and because tax collectors had a bad reputation (remember how Zacchaeus used to cheat people before Christ met him), everyone thought he was a horrible sinner. The Pharisee stood up to pray and this is how he prayed, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men— unjust, doing illegal things, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give **tithes** of all that I possess.” The tax collector did not even think he was worthy to stand close to the altar – he knew his sins – but stood afar off and he would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!”

[Pause and let the students take in both prayers]. Which one of these two men do you think God will hear his prayer? The tax collector, because he knew his sins and knew that he was in great need of God, and that God would be the One to save him. He was not acting, not pretending to pray this way in the church in front of people, but he really from his heart, knew

that there many things he did that were not pleasing to God and that he needed God's forgiveness. What is the difference between the ways these two people prayed? [Let the kids give their answers and prompt them, and ask the following questions as a test to see if they understood]. Why do you think the tax collector prayed in the way that he did? How did he feel standing before God? What do you think about his attitude? Why did he feel that he was a sinner?

**\*\*Points to mention:** the tax collector felt he was a sinner and that he was not even worthy to raise his eyes and look to heaven. Everyone sins; no one is perfect. The people of God's family run to Him for forgiveness and know that they need Him to help them become good. The tax collector knew that he had done things that separated him from God. He did not try to hide from God, as the Pharisee tried to hide behind his good deeds, but he came and stood in His house and admitted to God his sins and begged Him to heal him, believing in his heart that God would answer his prayer and come and heal him. No one can hide from God; it is the honorable thing to do to admit our faults before Him.

Act out the way the tax collector was standing before God and praying, and ask the kids how do you think he felt, knowing that he had done wrong things that separated him from God. How does he look? Very sad. Why? Because he knew that God loved him very much and he loved God very much and he didn't want to ever be away from Him.

It is the same with us. God loves us very much, much more than we could ever imagine. And we love Him back and we want to always be with Him. Because of this, we feel sad when we do something wrong that separates us from Him. And God is very pleased when we come and say sorry to Him. He takes us up in His arms and hugs us and kisses us. He is overjoyed when we come back to Him and it is what He is always waiting for.

This is what we want to remember – that God loves us very much and it makes Him very sad when we are away from Him. He would be waiting for us every moment of the day to come back to Him and He is very pleased when we come and say sorry and feel sad before Him. And as soon as we come back to Him, He helps us right away and answers us right away and we feel His love right away. He very gently, as a very loving and caring God, changes our hearts and gently nudges us back on the right track.

What are some things that we do wrong that separate us from God? [Have the kids brainstorm a list together as a class. The servants should also add things that the kids do not think of].

**Possible activity at the end of class:** Pass index cards and have the students write down the prayer *"My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Son of God, forgive me and have mercy on me, a sinner and help me to always stay with You. Keep me close to You"* for themselves on an index card to



take home with them, and have them write down their own personal prayer on the back of the card. Remind the students about how much God loves them and how much He wants us always to stay with Him. Tell them that He loves us more than our parents, more than our brothers and sisters, more than anyone, more than anyone and more than all of these peoples' love combined! and the end of class prayer, instruct them to close their eyes and pray to God inside themselves saying the following: and then to add some of their own words. For example, they could ask Him to help them not to sin again, or to be with them always and help them, or to help them always stay with Him and never leave Him. Tell them that they should do this every night by themselves before they sleep – to think of things they have done during the day and to ask God's forgiveness. They should do this in addition to their other prayers.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** acting the Pharisee and the tax collector. The whole class takes turn in acting (students like this activity)
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

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#### CONCLUSION

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q: How do the people of God feel that they need God?

*A: God's family says to God that they are sinners who are in need of His infinite love. They do not try to hide their faults and sins from Him, as the Pharisee did, but come to Him with their sins and ask Him to heal them, knowing that He will.*

Q: How did the tax collector pray?

*A: He was very sad that his sins separated him from God and he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"*

Q: How does it make God feel when we are away from Him?

*A: Very sad, because He loves us very much and wants us always to be with Him.*

Q: What is God waiting for when we have done something wrong that separates us from Him?

*A: He is waiting for us to run back to Him and say sorry before Him and He will answer us right away and we will feel His love again right away.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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"O Lord Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me a sinner" - Jesus Prayer

## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 4. OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST LOVES ALL SINNERS, NO MATTER HOW BAD THEY ARE

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 7: 36-50

<sup>36</sup>Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup>And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, <sup>38</sup>and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. <sup>39</sup>Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." <sup>40</sup>And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." <sup>41</sup>"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup>Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." <sup>44</sup>Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. <sup>45</sup>You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. <sup>46</sup>You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. <sup>47</sup>Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven,

*the same loves little."* <sup>48</sup>Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>49</sup>And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup>Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Another option

*"<sup>11</sup>Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup>And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. <sup>13</sup>And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. <sup>14</sup>But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup>Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup>And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup>and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"<sup>20</sup>And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup>for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."*

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#### CHURCH FATHERS:

#### SERMON XL.

"ALL ye people, clap your hands, and praise God with the voice of thanksgiving." And what is the cause of the festival? It is that the Savior hath newly constructed for us a way of salvation, untrodden by them of old time. For the law, which the all-wise Moses ordained, was for the reproof of sin, and the condemnation of offences: but it justified absolutely no one. For the very wise Paul writes, "Whosoever rejected the law of Moses, was put to death without mercy at the mouth of two or three witnesses." But our Lord Jesus Christ, having removed the curse of the law, and proved the commandment which condemns to be powerless and inoperative, became our merciful High Priest, according to the words of the blessed Paul. For He justifies the wicked by faith, and sets free those held captive by their sins. And this He proclaimed to us by one of the holy prophets, saying, "In those days, and at that time, said the Lord, they shall seek for the sin of Israel, and there shall be none: and for the sin of Judah, and you shall not find it: for I will be merciful to those that have been left in the land, said the Lord." But lo! the fulfillment of the promise came to pass for us at the time of His Incarnation, as we are assured by the claim of the holy Gospels. For he was invited by one of the Pharisees, and being kind and loving unto man, and "willing that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," He consented, and granted the favor to him who requested it. And having entered, He

reclined at table: and immediately there entered a woman defiled with filthy lewdness: who, like one scarcely roused from wine and intoxication, and made sensible of the guilt of her transgressions, offered supplication unto Christ, as able to cleanse her, and deliver her from all fault, and free her from her former sins, as "not remembering iniquities." And this she did, washing His feet with tears, and anointing them with ointment, and wiping them with her hair. Thus a woman, who beforetime had been lewd, and guilty of sensuality, a sin difficult to wash away, missed not the path of salvation; for she fled for refuge to Him Who knows how to save, and is able to raise from the depths of impurity.

She then failed not in her purpose. But the foolish Pharisee, the blessed Evangelist tells us, was offended, and said within himself, "If this were a prophet, He would have known who and of what sort the woman is that touches Him, that she is a sinner." The Pharisee therefore was boastful, and utterly without understanding. For it was his duty rather to regulate his own life, and earnestly adorn it by all virtuous pursuits; and not to pass sentence upon the infirm, and condemn others. But we affirm of him, that having been brought up in the customs of the law, he gave too wide an influence to its institutions, and required the Legislator Himself to be subject to the commandments of Moses. For the law commanded the holy to keep apart from the impure: and God also blamed those whose lot it was to be the chiefs of the congregation of the Jews, for their unwillingness in this respect. For He thus spoke by one of the holy prophets: "they make no distinction between the holy and the profane." But Christ arose for us, not to subject our state to the curses that are by the law, but to redeem those subject to sin by a mercy superior to the law. For the law was instituted "because of transgressions," as Scripture declares, "that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God, because by the works of the law no flesh is justified." For there was no one so far advanced in virtue, spiritual virtue I mean, as to be able to fulfill all that had been commanded, and that blamelessly. But the grace that is by Christ justifies, because, doing away with the condemnation of the law, it frees us by means of faith.

That proud and foolish Pharisee therefore did not even deem Jesus to have attained to the measure of a prophet: but He made the woman's tears an opportunity for clearly instructing him in the mystery. For He taught the Pharisee, and all who were assembled there, that the Word being God, "came into the world in our likeness, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved by Him." He came that He might forgive the debtors much and little, and show mercy upon small and great, that there might be no one whatsoever who did not participate in His goodness. And as a pledge and plain example of His grace, He freed that unchaste woman from her many iniquities by saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Worthy indeed of God is a declaration such as this! It is a word joined with supreme authority. For since the law condemned those that were in sin, who, I ask, was able to declare things above the law, except Him only Who ordained it? Immediately therefore He both set the woman free, and directed the attention of that Pharisee, and those who were dining with him, to more excellent things: for they learned that the Word being God, was not as one of the prophets, but rather far beyond the measure of humanity, even though He became man. And one may say to him who

invited Him, Thou was trained up, O Pharisee, in the sacred Scriptures; thou know I suppose of course the commands given by most wise Moses: thou hast examined the words of the holy prophets: Who then is This That walking in a path contrary to the sacred commands, hath delivered from guilt? Who That hath pronounced them free who have boldly broken the things ordained? Recognize therefore by the facts themselves One superior to the prophets and the law: remember that one of the holy prophets proclaimed these things in old time of Him, and said, "They shall be in wonder at our God, and shall be afraid of Thee. Who is a God like unto Thee, That forgive the transgressions, and pass over the iniquities of the remnant of His inheritance, nor retains His anger unto the end, because He wills mercy?"

Those therefore who were at meat with the Pharisee, were astonished and wondered at seeing Christ the Savior of all possessed of such godlike supremacy, and using expressions above the right of man. For they said, "Who is This That forgive sins also?" Dost thou wish me to tell thee Who He is? He Who is in the bosom of God the Father, and was begotten of Him by nature: by Whom everything was brought into being: Who possesses supreme sovereignty, and is worshipped by everything in heaven and in earth. He submitted Himself to our estate, and became our High Priest, in order that He might present us unto God, pure and clean, having put off the ill savor of sin, and having Him instead in us as a sweet savor. For, as most wise Paul writes, "We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God." This is He Who spoke by the voice of the prophet Ezekiel, "And I will be to you a God, and I will save you from all your uncleanness's." See therefore, that the actual accomplishment agreed with what had before been promised by the holy prophets. Acknowledge Him as God----Him so gentle and loving unto men. Seize upon the way of salvation: flee from the law that kills: accept the faith which is above the law. For it is written, "That which is written kills," even the law: "but the spirit gives life," even the spiritual purification that is in Christ. Satan had bound the inhabitants of earth with the cords of sin: Christ has loosed them; He has made us free, has abolished the tyranny of sin, has driven away the accuser of our infirmities; and the Scripture is fulfilled, that "all iniquity shall stop its mouth;" "for it is God That justifies: 'Who is he that condemns?'" This, the divine Psalmist also prayed might be accomplished, when thus addressing Christ the Savior of all. "Let sinners perish from off the earth: and the wicked, so that they may not be found." For verily we must not say of one clothed with the Spirit, that he curses those who are infirm and sinful:----for it is not fitting for the saints to curse any:---but rather that he prays this of God. For before the coming of the Savior we all were in sin: there was no one who acknowledged Him Who by nature and verily is God. "There was no one doing good, no not one; but they all had turned aside together, and become reprobate." But because the Only-begotten submitted Himself to emptiness, and became flesh, and was made man, sinners have perished, and exist no longer. For the dwellers upon earth have been justified by faith, have washed away the pollution of sin by holy baptism, have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have sprung out of the hand of the enemy; and having bidden as it were the hosts of devils to depart, dwell under the yoke of Christ.

Christ's gifts therefore raise men to a hope long looked for, and to a most dear joy. The woman who was guilty of many impurities, and deserving of blame for most disgraceful deeds, was

justified, that we also may have confidence that Christ certainly will have mercy upon us, when He sees us hastening to Him, and endeavoring to escape from the pitfalls of wickedness. Let us too stand before Him: let us shed the tears of repentance: let us anoint Him with ointment: for the tears of him that repents are a sweet savor to God. Call him to mind who said, "Awake, they who are drunken with wine: weep and howl all they who drink wine to drunkenness." For Satan intoxicates the heart, and agitates the mind by wicked pleasure, leading men clown to the pollutions of sensuality. But while there is time, let us awake; and as most wise Paul says, "Let us not be constantly engaged in carousing and drunkenness, nor in chambering and immorality; but rather let us work what is good: for we are not of the night, nor of darkness, but children of light and of the day. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and clothe ourselves with the works of light." Be not troubled when you meditates upon the greatness of thy former sins: but rather know, that still greater is the grace that justifies the sinner, and absolves the wicked.

Faith then in Christ is found to be the pledge to us of these great blessings: for it is the way that leads unto life: that bids us go to the mansions that are above: that raises us to the inheritance of the saints: that makes us members of the kingdom of Christ: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Ghost, forever and ever, Amen.

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

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LESSON PREPARATION:

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SONG:

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VOCABULARY:

**Shepherd**  
**Physician**  
**Sin**

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#### INTRODUCTION:

Bring in pictures of a shepherd with his sheep (Google images; search 'shepherd and sheep').

Start the class by showing the students picture(s) of a shepherd and his sheep. Explain what a **shepherd** does and what his responsibilities are and how the sheep are completely helpless and rely on him completely to protect them. Sheep without a shepherd would very easily be picked off one by one by a wolf, because sheep have no way of protecting themselves. And they have many enemies who want to hurt them.

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#### LESSON BODY:

Ask the students to imagine they are shepherds who love their sheep very much and are always very alert for any enemy coming to attack them. Tell them to imagine one of their sheep got lost and wandered away from the group. Ask them what they would do. [Let the students give their answers].

Every true shepherd in that situation would only do one thing – leave the rest of the sheep behind, even if there are 99 of them, and go after the one that is lost *until* he finds it. He would not give up after a few hours, or even one day. Maybe the sheep has wandered to the edge of a cliff and is stuck and in a very scary situation. Maybe the sheep is being followed by wolves and cannot hide from them. The shepherd knows all the dangers that the sheep could fall into and would keep searching. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!"

Do you know that our Lord Jesus Christ is called the True Shepherd? And if He is the shepherd, who are His sheep? We are His sheep. Just like the sheep in the story we just told, we completely depend on Him to protect us and save us, because we are weak sinners and have many dangers that we could fall into, many things that can take us away from Him. As The True Shepherd, if one of His sheep, one of us, gets lost away from the church, away from Him, He goes after him/her, seeking him/her day and night until he/she returns. When we are away from Him, we get very frightened and get easily confused and do many things that we would not do if we were safely with Him. But it does not matter how many wrong, awful things we have done and how far away we have been from Him; when He finds us, He and all Heaven with



Him will be overjoyed that we are found. Do you think the shepherd in the story we said at the beginning would yell and scream and get angry at his sheep for getting lost? Not at all; he would very gently look the sheep over and dress all his wounds and nurse him back to health. It is the same with our Lord Jesus Christ - all He cares about is for us to come back to Him and He will heal us and keep us safe. And He has great power to be able to save us from whatever trouble, whatever problem, we have landed ourselves in as a result of being away from Him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is also called the **Physician** (doctor). When do people go to the doctor? [when they are sick]. Would you go to the doctor if you were perfectly healthy and you knew there was nothing wrong with you? No! Our Lord is not a regular doctor who sees patients when they have something wrong with their bodies. He heals the sickness of sin, that goes much deeper inside us than a cold or a even a broken bone. He heals people on the inside, where no one else can see. And since our Lord is the Physician, it means that those who are sick – this means sick with sin, spiritually sick – are the ones who go to Him. Not people who think they never do anything wrong and are completely perfect. He said, *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick... For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance”* (Mt 9:12). What does He mean? [make sure the kids understand this verse, and that it is a summary of what was just explained].

Now, we all need God because we are all sick. There is no one who does not sin. So He is for all of us. Some people, when they get much older than you, they think that there is no way that our Lord Jesus Christ would accept them because they have done very many things wrong. But what do we say to that? He didn't come for those who have no sin – He came *for* the sinner! He is especially for those who need Him very much, and that is all of us.

We have been talking a lot about **sin**. What exactly is sin? There is another word you need to know before we can explain sin, and that word is **temptation**. Temptation is to *feel* like doing something wrong (something that goes against what God wants). It is the feeling. Sin is to act on the feeling. [example: I get a thought to say something very hurtful to my sister. The thought is the temptation. If I actually say something very mean to her, that is the sin. Go through other examples with the students and ask them to come up with examples to make sure they understand]. Mention that it is not always easy to be a loving person and that we will find ourselves in situations when we are very tempted.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**

- *Scrap book building*

- *Coloring:*

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## CONCLUSION

### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q: Who is the True Shepherd?

*A: Our Lord Jesus Christ*

Q: What does Jesus Christ, the True Shepherd, do if one of His sheep gets lost?

*A: He goes after him/her*

Q: What is temptation?

*A: To feel like doing something wrong*

Q: What is sin?

*A: To act on the feeling of temptation*

### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 5. SAINTS THAT BECAME FRIENDS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

#### **The Twenty Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah**

##### *The Martyrdom of the Great Saint Anba Moses the Black*

On this day, St. Moses the Black, whose life story is remarkable, was martyred. This saint took the Kingdom of Heaven by force, exactly as our Lord Jesus Christ said: "The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matthew 11:12).

In his early life, St. Moses was a slave to people who worshiped the sun. He was a mighty man who loved to eat and drink excessively. He killed, robbed and committed all evil. No one could stand up before him, or challenge him.

On many occasions, he lifted up his eyes to look to the sun and to talk to it saying, "O Sun!! if you are God, let me know it." Then he said, "And you O God whom I do not know, let me know you."

One day, he heard someone saying to him, "The monks of Wadi El-Natroun know the real God. Go to them and they will tell you." Instantly, he rose up, girded his sword and went to the wilderness of Shiheat. He met St. Esidorous (Isidore) the priest, who was frightened when he saw him, because of his appearance. St. Moses comforted him by saying that he came to the monks so that they might let him know the real God. St. Esidorous took him to St. Macarius the Great, who preached to him, taught him the faith and baptized him. He accepted St. Moses as a

monk and taught him to live in the wilderness. St. Moses dashed in many worships, and fought a spiritual fight which was greater than that fought by many saints.

However, the devil fought him intensively with his old habits of excessive eating, drinking, and fornication. He informed St. Esidorous about everything which came upon him in his fight with the Enemy. He comforted him and taught him how to overcome the snares of the devil.

It was told about him, that when the elders of the Monastery slept, he used to go round to their cells and take their water pots and fill them with water which he brought from a well at a far distance from the monastery. After many years in spiritual struggle, the devil envied him, and struck him with a sore on his foot which made him sick and bed-ridden. When he knew that this was from the devil, he increased in his asceticism and worship, until his body became as a burnt wood. God looked to his patience, healed his illness, and removed all his pains. The blessing of the Lord came upon him.

After a while, he became the Father and the spiritual guide of 500 brothers, who elected him to be ordained a priest. When he came before the Patriarch to be ordained, the patriarch wanted to test him by asking the elders, "Who brought this black here? Cast him out." He obeyed, and left saying to himself, "It is good what they have done to you, O black colored one." The Patriarch, however, called him back and ordained him a priest, and said to him, "Moses, all of you now has become white."

One day, he went with some elders to St. Macarius the Great, who said to them, "I see among you one to whom belong the crown of martyrdom." St. Moses answered him, "Probably it is me, for it is written: 'For all they that take with the sword, shall perish with the sword.'" (Matt. 26:25)

After they returned to the monastery, it did not take long until the Barbarians attacked the monastery. He told the brethren, "Whoever wants to escape, let him escape." They asked him, "And you O father, why do you not also escape?" He replied that he had waited for this day for long time. The Barbarians entered the monastery and killed him with seven other brothers. One of the brethren was hiding, and saw the angel of the Lord, with a crown in his hand standing by and waiting for him. He went out from his hiding place to the Barbarians and he was also martyred.

Beloved Ones, contemplate in the power of repentance, and what it did. It transformed an infidel slave who was a murderer, adulterer and robber into a great Father, teacher, comforter, and priest who wrote rules for the monks, and saint whose name is mentioned on the altar in our prayers.

His Body is located now in the Monastery of El-Baramouse.

*May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God for ever. Amen.*

CHURCH FATHERS:

REFLECTION:

PRAYER:

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

VOCABULARY:

**Wadi El-Natroun/Shiheat**

**St. Isidore**

**St. Macarius the Great**

**Repentance**

**Reconciliation- making up**

INTRODUCTION:

Tell the story of Saint Anba Moses the Black with the emphasis being on how bad he was.

Points to mention:

- He grew up not knowing the true God
- He had been a slave, but because of his evil actions, his master kicked him out of the house. He became the leader of a band of thieves and did all kinds of wickedness: stealing, murdering, having relationships, eating very much food (he used to eat an entire lamb every day). He was famous for seeking vengeance and spreading violence.
- Even though he was living very freely and doing anything and everything he wanted, and not having regard for anyone, he was searching for God. But he didn't know where to look. Many times, he lifted up his eyes to look to the sun and to talk to it saying, "O

Sun!! If you are God, let me know it." Then he said, "And you O God whom I do not know, let me know you."

One day, he heard a voice saying to him, "The monks of **Wadi El-Natroun** know the real God. Go to them and they will tell you." *Instantly*, he rose up and went to the desert of **Shiheat** to search for the monks.

- When he arrived there, he met **St. Isidore** who at first was scared of him because of the way he looked. But St. Moses comforted him and told him that he was there to learn how to know God from the monks. St. Isidore took him to **St. Macarius the Great** who preached to him and taught him the faith.
- After some time of learning, St. Moses wanted to confess his sins; with many tears and a broken heart, he confessed his sins to the priest. While he was confessing, the monks saw a vision of a board with the list of all his sins on it. As he confessed each one, an angel wiped it off the board until it was completely clean and white at the end. St. Moses was baptized and accepted as a monk.

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#### LESSON BODY:

After St. Moses became a monk, his struggle began. Yes, he had **repented** – turned *from* his sins to God – but his life would not be easy. In his **repentance** he struggled continuously and for many years. He prayed and fasted and served the other monks in secret. He caused himself to suffer very much so that he would not remember his old life and so that the only thing within his heart would be the love of God. His abouna helped him every step of the way (St. Isidore) and he used to run to him and confess all the time, sometimes even in the middle of the night.

Eventually, after many years, and because of prayer, confession, and the help of his abouna, he found peace. He became ordained a priest and the peace and grace of our Lord rested on him. He became father to a group of monks. At the very end of his life, he was martyred and gained crowns in Heaven.

St. Moses the Black is now regarded as a saint in our church and honored by Coptic Orthodox people everywhere. We love his story because it shows us how that even though we do bad things, our Lord is still waiting for us to ask Him to heal us and forgive us.

Our Lord Jesus Christ will help us to become like Him. No matter how many bad things we have done. If we are patient and we continue to trust that He will save us, He will never leave us. We must cling to Him, because He is the only One who can give us peace.

The word '**reconciliation**' means to "make up." We need to reconcile with God whenever we have done something that goes against Him. How do we reconcile? In prayer, with the help of our abouna, and in confession. It is never too late to repent. We need to know our sins, identify them and not try to make excuses for them, and return to the Lord.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

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#### CONCLUSION

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q: Who are the two monks whom St. Moses learned from?

A: *St. Isidore, St. Macarius the Great*

Q: What happened to St. Moses sins as the confessed them?

A: *an angel wiped each sin off the board until it was completely clean and white*

Q: What does it mean to repent?

A: *To turn from sins to God*

Q: What must we do when we do something that goes against God?

A: *We must reconcile with Him*

#### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 6. ALTHOUGH GOD LOVES US, WE DO NOT ENJOY HIS LOVE UNTIL WE COME BACK

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Luke 15:11-32

*11Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. 13And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 17"But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."" 20"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 22"But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry. 25"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and*



*dancing. 26So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf." 28"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him." 31"And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."*

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#### CHURCH FATHERS:

### **St Cyril commentary on St Luke 15:32**

#### **SERMON CVII.**

I HEAR one of the holy prophets trying to win unto repentance those who are far from God, and saying, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God: for you have become weak in your iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the Lord our God." What sort of words then did he, under the influence of the Spirit, command them to take with them? Or were they not such as become those who wish to repent; such namely, as would appease God, Who is gentle, and loves mercy. For He even said by one of the holy prophets, "Return you returning children, and I will heal your breaches." And yet again by the voice of Ezekiel, "Return you altogether from your wickedness's, O house of Israel. Cast away from you all your iniquities which you have committed, that they be not to you for a punishment of iniquity. For I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, as that he should turn from his evil way and live." And the same truth Christ here also teaches us, by this most beautifully composed parable, which I will now to the best of my ability endeavor to discuss, briefly gathering up its broad statements, and explaining and defending the ideas which it contains.

What then is the object of the parable? Let us examine the occasion which led to it; for so we shall learn the truth. The blessed Luke therefore had himself said a little before of Christ the Savior of us all, "And all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured saying, This man receives sinners and eats " with them." As therefore the Pharisees and Scribes made this outcry at His gentleness and love to man, and wickedly and impiously blamed Him for receiving and teaching men whose lives were impure, Christ very necessarily set before them the present parable, to show them clearly this very thing, that the God of all requires even him who is thoroughly steadfast, and firm, and who knows how to live holily, and has attained to the highest praise for sobriety of conduct, to be

earnest in following His will, so that when any are called unto repentance, even if they be men highly blamable, he must rejoice rather, and not give way to an unloving vexation on their account.

For we also sometimes experience something of this sort. For some there are who live a perfectly honorable and consistent life, practicing every kind of virtuous action, and abstaining from everything disapproved by the law of God, and crowning themselves with perfect praises in the sight of God and of men: while another is perhaps weak and trodden down, and humbled unto every kind of wickedness, guilty of base deeds, loving impurity, given to covetousness, and stained with all evil. And yet such a one often in old age turns unto God, and asks the forgiveness of his former offences: he prays for mercy, and putting away from him his readiness to fall into sin, sets his affection on virtuous deeds. Or even perhaps when about to close his mortal life, he is admitted to divine baptism, and puts away his offences, God being merciful unto him. And perhaps sometimes persons are indignant at this, and even say, 'This man, who has been guilty of such and such actions, and has spoken such and such words, has not paid unto the judge the retribution of his conduct, but has been counted worthy of a grace thus noble and admirable: he has been inscribed among the sons of God, and honored with the glory of the saints.' Such complaints men sometimes give utterance too from an empty narrowness of mind, not conforming to the purpose of the universal Father. For He greatly rejoices when He sees those who were lost obtaining salvation, and raises them up again to that which they were in the beginning, giving them the dress of freedom, and adorning them with the chief robe, and putting a ring upon their hand, even the orderly behavior which is pleasing to God and suitable to the free.

It is our duty, therefore, to conform ourselves to that which God wills: for He heals those who are sick; He raises those who are fallen; He gives a helping hand to those who have stumbled; He brings back him who has wandered; He forms anew unto a praiseworthy and blameless life those who were wallowing in the mire of sin; He seeks those who were lost; He raises as from the dead those who had suffered the spiritual death. Let us also rejoice: let us, in company with the holy angels, praise Him as being good, and loving unto men; as gentle, and not remembering evil. For if such is our state of mind, Christ will receive us, by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen.

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

## LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

VOCABULARY:

**Prodigal**

INTRODUCTION:

Has anyone here ever seen pigs at the zoo? What do they smell like? Is it nice and neat where they live? What about their food – would you ever feel like you want to eat their food? Today, we are going to hear a story about a boy who got so hungry, that he would have eaten the pigs food.

LESSON BODY:

Our Lord Jesus Christ told this story to His disciples to show how God the Father loves us and when we feel His love: (have the students read the story from their bibles) then you can summarize:

A certain man had two sons, an older one and a younger one. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." (What he meant was that he wanted his inheritance. An inheritance is what parents leave for their children when they die. But this son asked his father to have his inheritance early, so he could take the money and go do what he wanted with it.)

So the father divided to them his money. And soon after, the younger son gathered all his things together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with **prodigal** (wasteful) living. He spent all his money wastefully and on nothing beneficial. Everything his father had given him, he threw away without caring for it. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. This is how hungry he was. Could you imagine wanting to eat pigs' food? This younger son was so hungry, he would have eaten from their food.

But he started to spend some time alone with himself, thinking about his situation. And when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! He started to remember what it was like in his father's house and how nice it was there. And he compared it to the situation he was in now, and how miserable he was. He realized the difference, for it was a huge difference. He continued, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" Look at how sorry he felt for what he had done. He wanted to have his father make him a *servant* in his house. These feelings came to him when he started to be alone and reflect on the decisions he had made.

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. Look at how much his father had missed him and was waiting for him to come back! And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." He made a confession to his father and said, "I have sinned." He knew that he had done something wrong.

But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry.

The Father gave him back everything and restored him to his place in the family. His father continued to love him (even though he left) and was willing to give him back everything, but the son could not eat until he came back to his father. Did the father in this story love his son? [yes, very much]. Could the son feel his father's love when he was outside the house? [no, that is when he was starving and eating pigs' food]. He could only feel his love when he returned back to him in the house.

Now this is a story that our Lord told to show us the relationship between us and our Father in Heaven, God. God is the father in the story, who has given us everything we need. The house in the story is the Church – God's house. And the feelings that the younger son felt are the same feelings that we feel: God continues to love us all the time, even when we leave Him, but if we are outside His house (His church), we will not be able to feel His love. If we are away from Him, we will not be able to feel Him taking care of us and loving us, just like the younger son couldn't feel his father's love when he was outside the house. We will feel God's love when we return back to Him.

How do we feel God's love? It is in our hearts – the work of the Holy Spirit in us. We will actually feel Him listening when we talk to Him, feel Him loving us when we turn to Him, and we will feel that we don't need anything else in the world and that we never want to be away from Him. We will hear His voice in our hearts and we will know that He is always with us. And there is no better love than God's love.

Now we talked about how the father in the story is God and how God continues to love us no matter what. But this is also true with our parents. They don't stop loving us when we do something wrong, even though it may seem like they do. They just don't like the thing that we did. And they are unhappy. So it is important to also go to them and say sorry.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:** Acting might be a good activity for this lesson- prepare a written script
- **Scrap book building**
- **Coloring:**

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#### CONCLUSION

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#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q: Who is the father in the story?

A: *God is the father in the story*

Q: When will we feel God's love?

A: *When we return back to Him*

Q: How do we feel God's love?

A: *It is in our hearts, the work of the Holy Spirit in us*

Q: Is there any better love than God's love?

A: *No, there is no better love than God's love*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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*"I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." Luke 15:18,19*

## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 7. THE MYSTERY OF REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION (I): THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

John 4:1-30

*Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4But He needed to go through Samaria. 5So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. 10Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" 13Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." 15The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." 16Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17The woman answered*

*and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." 19The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 25The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."*

*27And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" 28The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30Then they went out of the city and came to Him.*

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#### CHURCH FATHERS:

##### **St Cyril of Alexandria Commentary on St John Chapter 4**

*4, 5 And He must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*

O great readiness of mind and deep prudence! He prevents by his answers the things that would have been asked of him. For some one would straightway have said, either speaking to another, or secretly reasoning, Why did our Lord Jesus Christ, in not fit season, give illumination to the Samaritans? For once there came to Him the Syrophenician woman, with tears entreating mercy for her wretched daughter; and what said the Compassionate to her? *It is not meet*, saith He, *to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs*. For He did not think it right, I suppose, to pour forth upon the Gentiles before the time the grace assigned to them of Israel. And this Himself made clearer by saying, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. How then (will one say) did He Who was sent to Israel alone begin to instruct the race of the Samaritans, albeit Israel had not yet wholly spurned the grace? To such things does he introduce the reply persuasive with power, to wit, that *He must needs go through Samaria*. For not for this reason alone did He arrange His sojourn with the Samaritans, that He might preach the word among them, and wholly transfer the whole blessing from Israel: but since *He must needs pass through*, therefore doth He teach, fulfilling the work of wisdom.



For as fire will never cease from its inherent natural operation of burning; so I deem it wholly impossible, that |203 the Wisdom of all should not work what befits wisdom. And as, while saying that it *is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto dogs*, yet to the woman who wept and entreated for pity with many words, He cast the grace, not admonished by another of the season for giving it, but Himself with the Father being Appointer of it, as Son and God and Lord: so did He pity the Samaritans too, and unveiling the Ineffable Might of His God-befitting Authority, He made the illumination of a whole country the bye-work of a journey.

It were besides strange, that Israel, who was already mad in folly, and imagining slaughter against the Lord, should be perfectly loved. But since they do not yet thoroughly persecute Him, but as yet only in measure, therefore our Lord Jesus the Christ also doth not yet wholly strip them of His grace, but doth nevertheless draw off the blessing by little and little to others. But His departing wholly from the country of the Jews, and hasting to go into that of aliens, by reason of the cruelty of His persecutors, was a threat, depicted on the nature of the thing as in a type, that they should endure the total loss of grace, and should dismiss unto others their own good, that is, the Christ, unless they abstained from their violence against Him.

*6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well.*

Having crossed the borders of Judaea, and being now among aliens, the Saviour rests upon *Jacob's well*: showing us again as in a type and darkly, that even though the preaching of the Gospel should depart from Jerusalem, and the Divine Word at length hasten forth to the Gentiles, there shall not be lost therewith to Israel the love to their fathers, but Christ shall cleave to them again, and shall again be refreshed and rest, as in His Saints, preserving to them the pristine unfading grace. For He loves to dwell in the memories of His saints, that He may make Himself an en-sample to us in this also, and may become the Beginning and Door of the honor given to the fathers. But *being wearied with His journey*, as it is written, He rests, that in this too He may accuse the impiety of those that drove Him away. For whereas they ought to have gained His friendship by kindly honors, cherishing Him with reverence and fear, as a Benefactor, they maltreat the Lord with toil and labors, that He may be true, saying of them in the book of Psalms, *And they rewarded Me evil for good*.

Herein then is seen the daring of the Jews. But what will the Arians again, neighbors of these in folly, answer us to this, yea rather to whom it would rightly be said, Sodom was justified by thee? For the one crucify Christ in the Flesh, but the others rage against the Ineffable Nature Itself of the Word. Lo, He was wearied with His journey: Who was He Who suffered this? will ye bring before us the Lord of Hosts lacking in might, and will ye lay upon the Only Begotten of the Father the toil of the journey, that He may be conceived of as even Passible, Who cannot suffer? Or will ye, acting rightly, refuse so to think, and attribute the charge of these to the nature of the Body only, yea rather will ye say that the toil befits the Human Nature, rather than Him Who is, and is conceived of, as bare Word by Himself? As then He Who possesseth in

His Own Nature Power over all things, and is Himself the Strength of all, is said to be *wearied* (for do not I pray do not divide the One Christ into a Duality of Sons, even though He make His own the sufferings of His Human Nature) albeit He abideth Impassible, since He became Man, Who had it not in Him to be weary; so if He at all speak also of things which we think rather befit man, and not God, let us not hunt after words, nor, when we most need skill unto piety, be then caught in exceeding folly, putting the plan of the oeconomy of the Flesh far away from us, ascending hotly to the Very Godhead of the Word, and laying hold with much folly of the things above us. For if He were not altogether called Man, if He were not made in the form of a servant, it were right to be troubled, when one said anything servile of Him, and to demand rather all things according to what befits |205 God. But if in firm faith and unswervingly we are confident, that according to the voice of John, *The Word was made Flesh, and tabernacled among us*, when thou seest Him speaking as Flesh, that is, as Man, receive discourse befitting man, for confirmation of the preaching. For in no other way could we know certainly, that He being God and Word, became Man, had not the Impassible been recorded to have suffered something, and the High One to have uttered something lowly.

*it was about the sixth hour.*

He shews that opportunely did Jesus rest upon the well. For the sun pouring down its strongest rays from the mid-vault on those upon the earth, and consuming bodies with its unmitigated strokes, it would not have been without hurt to have gone further, but was more convenient to rest a little, especially when He would easily have thrust away the charge of luxuriousness, if the fitness of the season had agreed thereto.

He does not say that it was *the sixth hour* precisely, but *about* the sixth hour, that we too may learn not to be indifferent even about the least things, but rather to try and practise truth in common things.

*7, 8, 9 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink. (For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat). Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him,*

The Saviour was not ignorant of the woman's coming. For right well did He know being Very God, that she would forthwith be there to draw the cold stream from the fountain. But when she was now come, He began to get His prey within the toils, and straightway holding forth the word of teaching, made His discourse from what was before Him.

The Law appointed for the Jews that they must not be defiled in any way, and therefore ordered them to withdraw from every unclean thing, and not to mix themselves up with strangers, or uncircumcised. But they, carrying forward the force of the commandment to something more, and |206 following most empty observances, rather than the exactness of the Law, nor venturing so much as to touch the flesh of any alien, used to think that they would

incur all uncleanness, if they were found having to do with the Samaritans in anything. To so great an extent did their disagreement at length advance, that they recoiled from tasting water or food brought to them by the hand of aliens. In order then that the woman may exclaim, and that His unwonted conduct may invite her to ask Who He is, and whence, and how He despises the Jewish customs; and so at length the conversation may come to His aim, He makes as though thirsty, saying, *Give Me to drink*. But she said,

10 *How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her,*

Enquiry is the beginning of learning, and to those who are ignorant upon any subject, doubt concerning it is the root of understanding. This commencement the discourse aims at: wherefore the Saviour wisely hints, that He accounts of no value the customs of the Jews.

11 *If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who It is That saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him,*

Not knowing the Essence of the Only Begotten, surpassing earth and heaven, yea rather being wholly ignorant of the Incarnate Word, the woman was calling Him a Jew. And profitably is He silent to this, that the foundation of His discourse with her may be kept. Yet does He uplift her to a higher conception of Himself, saying that she knows not *Who It is* Who asked drink, or how great grace Divine gifts have, insomuch that if she had had knowledge of it, she would not have endured to be behindhand, for she would have prevented the Lord in asking. He rouses her then by these things to a very earnest wish to learn. Observe how now too fashioning His discourse skillfully and free from boast, He says that He is God, even though the woman be slow to understand. For inducing her to marvel |207 at the gift of God, He introduces Himself as the Giver of it. For *if (says He,) thou knewest the gift of God and Who It is That saith to thee, thou wouldest have asked of Him*. But whom would it befit to give the things of God? would it not Him Who is by Nature God?

But He calls the quickening gift of the Spirit living water, whereby alone human nature, albeit well nigh parched to its very roots, rendered now dry and barren of all virtue by the villainies of the devil, runneth back to its pristine beauty of nature, and drinking in the life-giving grace, is adorned with varied forms of good things, and shooting forth into a virtuous habit puts forth most thriving shoots of love towards God. Some such thing as this God says to us by the Prophet Isaiah also, *The beast of the field shall honour Me, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen, whom I have formed for Myself to declare Mine excellencies*. And another of the Saints says that the soul of the righteous *shall be as a fruitful tree, and shall spring up as grass among the waters, and shall appear as the willow by running water*.

We might heap up, besides those already quoted, many other testimonies also from the Divine Scripture, whence it would be very easy to shew, that under the name of water, the Divine Spirit is often named. But it is no time to linger here. Wherefore we will swim to other places, pressing on upon the great and wide sea of Divine meditations.

*Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?*

The woman imagines nothing more than what she is accustomed to; and by no means understands the force of what is said, but supposes that like some of those who are accustomed to work wonders by means of charms and devilish deceit, without a line or other contrivance He will draw up the water to her from the depths of the well. But she calls that *living water*, according to her own meaning, which has fresh flowed from the breasts of the fountain. |208

*12, 13 Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her,*

The woman arrests herself, and that as quickly as possible, being conscious that she had taken up ideas of Him neither holily nor surely true. For it was not possible that she should not be altogether profited to understanding, who is wholly enjoying the Divine words. Since then it was possible that He Who speaks should not be a magician, but rather a Prophet, and one of those surpassing in holiness, and had therefore promised to give her the living water, without the usual means of buckets, or having found water far better to use from another source, she straightway changes her discourse for the soberer, and as it were compares saint with saint, saying, *Art Thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well?* Receive the intelligence of her thought, from her no longer wondering at His promising water with out a rope, but speaking only of its quality to the taste.

The Samaritans then were aliens (for they were colonists of the Babylonians), but they call Jacob their father for two reasons. For as inhabiting a country bordering on, and the neighbour of the Jews' land, they were taking a little impression themselves of their worship, and were accustomed to boast of the Jews' ancestors. Besides, it was really true that the greater number of the inhabitants of Samaria were sprung from the root of Jacob. For Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, having gathered together ten tribes of Israel, and the half-tribe of Ephraim, departed from Jerusalem in the time of the kingdom of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, and took Samaria, and built houses therein and cities.

*14, 15 Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto Him,*

The woman of Samaria proposing, as a hard question |209 and difficult to cope with. *Art Thou greater than our father Jacob*; the Saviour most skilfully avoids all boasting, not saying clearly that He is greater, yet from the nature of the actions does He persuade her to approve Him who excels. Therefore He shews that incomparable is the difference between the spiritual waters, and the sensible and grosser ones, saying, *Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again*, but he that is filled (saith He) with My water, shall not only be shewn to be superior to thirst henceforth, but he shall have in him a *well of water* able to nourish him to *eternal life*. Therefore He that giveth the greater, is greater (saith He) than he that hath the less, and the worsted will not carry off the same glory as the conqueror.

We must know again, that the Saviour here calls the grace of the Holy Ghost water, whereof if any be partaker, he shall have the gift of the Divine teaching evermore flowing up within him, so as no more to be in need of admonition from others, yea rather, readily to suffice to exhort those who thirst after the Divine and heavenly Word, such as were some yet living in this present life and upon earth, the holy Prophets and Apostles, and the heirs of their ministrations, of whom it was written, *And ye shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation*.

16 *Give me this water, that I thirst not neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her,*

Again does she both speak and imagine only ordinary things, and of the things that were said understands no whit; but she supposes that in being released from petty toils, will consist all the aim of our Saviour, and to thirsting no more does she bound the measure of the grace of God, not so much as in bare idea receiving things above the world.

*Go call thy husband, and come hither.*

Well and not untruly might one say, that the minds of woman are womanish, and that an effeminate soul is in them, never having the power of understanding readily. But the nature of man somehow is apter for learning, and far more ready for reasoning, having a mind awake to |210 wisdom, and (so to say) warm, and of matured manhood. For this reason (I suppose) did He bid the woman call her husband, secretly convicting her as having a heart most slow to learn, not practised in the words of wisdom; yet He is at the same time contriving something else most beautiful.

17, 18, 19 *The woman saith to Him I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou hast well said I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto Him,*

To whom is it not now evident that the Saviour was not ignorant that she was bereft of any rightful husband and that He made the enquiry about her husband who was not, a plea for making known hidden things? For He was, He was thus with difficulty able to help her no longer marvelling at Him as one of us, but as now above man, by reason of His wondrous knowledge of

her circumstances. And profitably does He approve her saying she has *no husband*, although she had had so many; for not the coming together out of pleasure, but the approval of the law and bond of pure love make marriage blameless.

*Sir, I perceive that THOU art a Prophet.*

With difficulty does she brighten up to apprehension, and that again not yet perfect. For she still calls the Lord of Prophets *a Prophet*. But she has by degrees shewn herself better than before, in no way ashamed at reproof, seizing to her own profit the force of the sign and so going forth from her effeminate understanding, attaining to some extent to a vigorous mind, and stretching forth the eye of her heart to an unwonted view of things. Wherein we must chiefly admire alike the forbearance and power of our Saviour, who easily remodels our untutored understanding to an admirable condition.

*20, 21 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and YE say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her,*

Conceiving that the Lord is in truth a Prophet and a |211 Jew, she boasts exceedingly of the customs of her country, and asserts that the Samaritans are far superior in wisdom to the Jews. For the Jews admitting too gross notions of the Divine and Incorporeal Nature, contended that *in Jerusalem* alone, or its neighbour Sion, ought the God over all to be worshipped, as though the whole Ineffable and Incomprehensible Nature had once for all there taken abode, and was enclosed in temples made with hands. Wherefore they were convicted of being utterly without understanding, by the voice of the Prophets, God saying, *Heaven is My Throne and earth is My Footstool, what house will ye build Me, saith the Lord, or what is the place of My rest?* The Samaritans again little remote from the folly of the Jews, bordering both in country alike and uninstructedness, supposing that in the mount called Gerizim they ought both to pray and worship, rightly escape not being laughed at. But the plea to them also of their senselessness was, that the blessing was given in Mount Gerizim, as we find written in Deuteronomy. This question the woman proposes to the Saviour, as some great and difficult problem, saying, *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, &c.*

*Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming, when neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain, shall ye worship the Father.*

He condemns alike the folly of all, saying that the mode of worship of both shall be transformed to the more truthful. For no longer (saith He) shall a place be sought, wherein they shall deem that God properly dwells, but as filling and able to contain all things, *shall they worship* the Lord *every one from his place*, as one of the holy Prophets says. He says that His own sojourn in the world with a Body is the time and season for a change of such customs.

Observe how with most gentle leading of discourse, does He guide the mind of the woman to right conceptions respecting the Son, by calling God *the Father*. For how shall the Father at all be conceived of, if the Son be not? |212

**CHAPTER V. That the Son is not in the number of worshippers, in that He is Word and God, but rather is worshipped with the Father.**

*22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.*

He speaks again as a Jew and a man, since the economy of the matter in hand demands now too this mode of speaking (for Christ would not have missed meet opportunity): yet does He attribute something more in respect of understanding to the worship of the Jews. For the Samaritans worship God simply and without search, but the Jews having received through the Law and Prophets the knowledge of Him Who is, as far as they were able. Therefore He says that the Samaritans *know not*, but that the Jews have good knowledge, of whom He affirms, that *salvation* shall be revealed, that is Himself. For Christ was of the seed of David according to the flesh, David of the tribe of Judah. Amongst the worshippers again as Man does He class Himself, Who together with God the Father is worshipped both by us and the holy angels. For since He had put on the garb of a servant, He fulfilleth the ministry befitting a servant, having not lost the being God and Lord and to be worshipped. For He abideth the Same, even though He hath become Man, retaining throughout the plan of the dispensation after the Flesh.

And even though thou see an abasement great and supernatural, approach wondering, not accusing, not faultfinding, but rather imitating. For such Paul desireth to see us, saying, *Let this mind be in each of you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the Form of God, thought |213 it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself: taking upon Him the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.* Seest thou how the Son became to us a Pattern of lowliness, being in Equality and Form of the Father as it is written: yet descended for our sakes to a voluntary obedience and lowliness? How then could the garb of obedience, how could that of lowliness appear, otherwise than through deeds and words beneath His God-befitting Dignity, and having a great inferiority to those wherein He was while yet bare Word with the Father, and not involved in the form of a servant? How shall we say that He has at all descended, if we allow Him nothing unworthy of Him? How was He *made in the likeness of men*, according to the voice of Paul, if He imitated not what befits man? But a thing most befitting men is worship, regarded in the light of a debt, and offered by us to God. Therefore He worshippeth as Man, when He became Man; He is worshipped ever with the Father, since He was and is and will be, God by Nature and *Very*.

But our opponent will not endure this, but will withstand us, saying: "Think it not strange when we say that the Son worships: for we do not suppose that the Son ought to worship the Father, in the same way as we or the angels, for example: but the worship of the Son is something special and far better than ours."



What then shall we reply to these things? Thou thinkest, fellow, to mislead us, by putting a most noble bondage about the Only-Begotten, and gilding over the dignity of a servant by certain words of deceit. Cease from glorifying the Son with dishonour, that thou mayest continue to honour the Father. For *he that honoureth not the Son*, neither doth he *honour the Father*, as it is written. For what (tell me) will it profit the Only-Begotten in respect of freedom, that His worship of the Father should be made more excellent than ours? For so long as He is found among worshippers, He will be altogether a bondman, and |214 even though He be conceived of as a superior worshipper, yet will He by no means differ from creatures in respect of being originate, but only in the remaining excellencies, as to men is superior Michael or any other of the holy and reasonable powers, to whom superiority to those upon earth seems essentially to belong, either in respect of holiness or any superabundance of glory, it having been so decreed by the Chief Artificer of all things, God: but the being classed with things originate, as having been created, is common to them with the rest. The Word then Who is in the Father and of the Father by Nature will never escape being originate, even though He be said to worship in a more excellent way. Then how will that which is made be yet Son, or how will the bondman and worshipper be by Nature Lord? For I suppose that the royal and lordly dignity is pre-eminent in being worshipped: but the office of servant and slave is defined in his paying worship. We confess then by being subject that we hold ourselves bound to worship the Nature which is superior and above all. Wherefore it was proclaimed to the whole creation by the all-wise Moses, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve*. So that to whatsoever servitude belongs by nature, and whatever boweth under the yoke of the Godhead, this full surely must needs worship, and submit to the garb of adoration. For in saying *Lord*, he defines the bond, in saying *God*, the creature. For together are they conceived of, and contrasted, the bond with Him who is by Nature Lord, and that which is brought into being, with the Inoriginate Godhead.

But seeing the Son is eternally in the Father and is Lord as God, I am at a loss to shew whence He can appear to owe worship. But let them proceed with their babbling: "The Only Begotten (says he) will worship the Father, neither as bond nor created, but as a Son the Father." We must therefore take adoration into the definition of Sonship, and say that it altogether behoves the Son to worship the Father, for that in this consists |215 His being, even as does ours in being reasonable mortal creatures, recipient of mind and knowledge, rather than in committing ourselves to motions external and impulsive, and to the mere swayings of will. For if there have been implanted by Nature into the Only Begotten, the duty wholly and of necessity to worship, and they so hold and say, how will they not be caught in naked blasphemy against the Father Himself? For it is altogether necessary to conceive of Him too as such, since the Son is His Image and Impress, and whatever things are in exact likeness, these full surely will differ in nothing. But if they say that the Son pays worship to the Father in will alone, they are guessers, rather than knowers of the truth. For what would hinder others too from saying, fabricating a hazardous piety, that it was the will of the Father to worship the Son, though not a worshipper by Nature?



"But (says he) fitness itself will remove the Person of the Father, will subject the Son to this, His worship of the Father not unwilling."

What sayest thou, o sir? Dost thou again bring forth to us oracles as from shrines, or Greek tripods, or comest thou like that *Shemaiah the Nehelamite*, belching forth out of thine own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord? and dost thou not blush, opposing to us fitness, as though invincible in these matters? For dost thou not think it befits Him Who is by Nature God, to have the Word begotten of Him God, and that He Whom the whole creation worships, should be called and be by Nature the Father of a Son Who is worshipped, rather than a worshipper? But I think I say nothing displeasing to the truly wise. But how shall we define that it also befits that the Father be worshipped by His Own offspring, when such a conception as to Both endures so great damage? For in the first place that which worships not will be neither in equality of dignity, nor in exact Image of nature with that which worships. For it worships as inferior, and that not |216 measurable by quantity, in respect of any natural quality (for He That is God or Lord will not be lesser), but as differing in the definition of mode of being. Then how will He be shewn to be true in saying, *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father*? how doth He say that He ought to be honoured in no less degree than the Father, if He be not His Equal in glory by reason of His worshipping? Then besides, the Father will Himself too appear to be in no slight unseemliness. For it is His glory to beget such as Himself is by Nature: on the other hand it is no slight disgrace, to have a son of another kind and alien, and to be in such case as even the very nature of things originate shrinks from. For they that have received power to bear, bear not worse than themselves, by the ordinance and will of the Artificer of all things. For, saith He, *let the earth bring forth grass, the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind and after his likeness*. The Godhead then will be in worse case than things originate, since they are thus, It not so, but that which was adjudged alike to befit and to have been well arranged for the successions of things which are, this It Alone will be found without.

Who then, most excellent sirs, will endure you saying, that it befits the Son to worship His Father? But when it has been added to those words of yours, that neither is this unwilling by the Only-Begotten, and this gratuitous argument of yours ye fortify merely by fitness; come, let us consider this too from the Divine Scriptures, whence I think one ought zealously to look for proof on every disputed point. The law therefore enjoined the half of a didrachm to be paid by every one of the Jews to Him Who is God over all, not as devising a way of getting wealth, nor contributions of money to no purpose, but imparting us instruction by clearest types: first, that no one is lord of his own head, but that we all have one Lord, enrolled unto servitude by the deposit of tribute; next, depicting the mental and spiritual fruits, as in a grosser representation and act. For (says he) *Honour the Lord with thy |217 righteous labours, and render Him the first fruits of thy fruits of righteousness*, which came to pass through the Gospel teaching, the worship after the law being at last closed. For no longer do we think we ought to worship with external offerings the Lord of all, pressing to pay the didrachm of corruptible matter: but being *true worshippers*, we worship God the Father in Spirit and in truth. This meaning we must suppose to lie hid in the letter of the law.

When then the Lord was in Jerusalem, the gatherers of the didrachm were asking of Peter, saying, *Doth not your Master pay the didrachm? But when he was come into the house, as it is written, Jesus prevented him, saying, of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own. children or of strangers?* When he said, *Of strangers,* Jesus said, *Then are the children free; yet lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater: that take and give unto them for Me and thee.* Seest thou that the Son endured not to be under tribute, and as one of those under' the yoke of bondage, to undergo a servile thing? For knowing the free dignity of His Own Nature He affirms that He owes nothing servile to God the Father: for He says, *The children are free.* How then hath He the worship befitting a slave, and that of His own will? He who shrank at even the bare type of the thing, how could He accept the verity? For shall we not reckon worship as a tribute and spiritual fruit-bearing, and say that it is a kind of service? For why did the law join service to worship, saying, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve?* For worship is so to say the gate and way to service in deed, being the beginning of servitude to God. Wherefore the Psalmist says to some, *O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord our Maker.* Seest thou how the duty of falling down follows upon, and is joined to, worshipping? than which what will be more befitting a | 218 servant, at least in the estimation of those who rightly weigh the qualities of things, I cannot say.

But if our opponents persist, bearing themselves haughtily in yet unbroken impudence, and cease not from their uninstructed reasonings on these subjects, let them going through the whole Holy Scripture, shew us the Son worshipping God the Father, while He was yet bare Word, before the times of the Incarnation and the garb of servitude. For now as Man, He worships unblamed: but then, not yet so. But they will not be able to shew this from the Divine and sacred Scriptures, but heaping up conjectures and surmisings of corrupt imaginations, will with reason hear. *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the glory of the Only Begotten.* For that He does not worship in that He is Word and God, but having become as we, He undertook to endure this too as befits man, by reason of the dispensation of the Flesh----; the proof shall not be sought by us from without, but we shall know it from His own Words. For what is it that He is saying to the woman of Samaria? *YE worship ye know not what, WE know what we worship.* Is it not hence too clear to every body that in using the plural number and numbering Himself with those who worship of necessity and as bond, that it is as made in human nature which is bond that He is saying this? For what (tell me) would hinder His drawing the worship apart into His own Person, if He wished to be conceived of by us as a worshipper? for He should rather have said, *I know what I worship,* in order that, unclassed with the rest, He might appropriate the force of the utterance to Himself alone. But, now most excellently and with all security He says WE, as already ranked among the bond by reason of His Manhood, as numbered among the worshippers, as a Jew by country.

23, 24, 25 *But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman saith to Him,*

He is intimating the time now present of His Own |219 Presence and says that the type shall be transferred to truth and the shadow of the Law to spiritual worship: He tells that through the Gospel teaching *the true worshipper*, that is, the spiritual man, shall be conducted to a polity well-pleasing unto the Father, hasting unto oneness with God. For God is conceived of as a Spirit, in reference to the embodied nature. Rightly therefore does He accept the spiritual worshipper, who does not in form and type carry in Jewish wise the form of godliness, but in Gospel manner resplendent in the achievements of virtue and in rightness of the Divine doctrines fulfilleth the really true worship.

*We know that Messiah is coming, Which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things.*

Upon Christ teaching that the hour and season will come, rather is already present, wherein the true worshippers shall offer to God the Father the worship in spirit; forthwith the woman is winged to thoughts above her wont unto the hope spoken of by the Jews. She confesses that she knows that the Messiah will come in His own time, and to whom He will come, she does not exactly say, receiving (as is like) the common reports of Him without any investigation, as being a laughter-loving and carnal-minded woman; yet is she not wholly ignorant that He will be manifested to Israel as a bringer in of better teaching, finding most certainly this information too in the reports about Him.

26 *Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.*

Not to untutored or wholly ignorant souls doth Christ reveal Himself, but shines upon and appears the rather to those who are more ready to desire to learn, and travailing with the beginning of the faith in simple words, press forward to the knowledge of what is more perfect. Such an one as this was the woman of Samaria also shewn to us, giving her mind more grossly than she ought to the truly Divine ideas, but not entirely removed from the desire of understanding somewhat. For first, on Christ asking for drink, she does not readily give it: but beholding Him breaking (as far as one can speak |220 humanly) the national customs of the Jews, she begins to seek first the reason of this, all but, by her mentioning it, inviting the Lord to an explanation: *How is it (says she) that THOU being a Jew askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria?* But when during the progress of questioning, she at length begun to confess that He was a Prophet, having received His reproof a medicine unto salvation, she added another inquiry saying with zeal for learning: *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and YE say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* But He was teaching this again, that the time shall come, yea, is already present, when *the true worshippers*, rejecting worship on the mountains of earth, shall offer the higher and spiritual worship to God the

Father. She attributing the best of all as the due of the Christ alone, and keeping the more perfect knowledge for those times, says, *We know that Messias cometh Which is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things.* Seest thou how ready to believe the woman was already getting, and as though ascending a staircase, springs up from little questions to a higher condition? It was right then to lay open to her with now clearer voice what she longed for, telling her that that which was preserved in good hope is at length set before her in sight, *I that speak unto thee am He.*

Let them therefore who have the care of teaching in the Churches commit to the new-born disciples, the word of teaching to be digested, and so at length let them shew them Jesus, bringing them up from slight instruction to the more perfect knowledge of the faith. But let them who, taking hold of the alien and so proselyte, and bringing him within the inner veil, suffer him to offer the Lamb with hands yet unwashen, and crown with the dignity of the Priesthood him who is not yet instructed, prepare for a mighty account in the day of judgment. It is sufficient for me only to say this.

### *27 And upon this came His disciples*

The presence of the disciples is the conclusion of His |221 conversation with the woman. For the Saviour is at length silent, and having placed in the Samaritans the glowing spark of the faith, commits it to their inward parts to be kindled to a mighty flame. Thus you may understand what was said by Him, *I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?*

*and marvelled that He talked with the woman:*

The disciples again are astonished at the gentleness of the Saviour, and wonder at His meek way. For not after the manner of some who are fierce with unslacked religion, did He think right to shun conversation with the woman, but unfolds His Loving-kindness to all, and hereby shews, that He being wholly One Artificer, doth not to men alone impart the life through faith, but snareth the female race also thereto.

Let him that teacheth in the Church gain this too as a pattern, and not refuse to help women. For one must in every thing follow not one's own will, but the service of preaching.

*yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?*

It was the work of wise disciples, and knowing how to preserve their Master's honour, not to seem by their superfluous questions to be going off into strange surmises, because He was talking with a woman, but rather in reverence and fear to restrain their tongue within their teeth, and to await their Lord speaking of His own accord, and giving them a voluntary explanation. We must therefore herein marvel at Christ for His gentleness, at the disciples for their wisdom and understanding and knowledge of what is becoming.

28 *The woman therefore left her waterpot and went her way into the city,*

The woman now shews herself superior to and above the cares of the body, who two or three days ago was the wife of many, and she who oftentimes was easily taken captive by vain pleasures, now overreaches the flesh of its necessary |222 want, disregarding alike thirst and drink, and is re-wrought unto another habit through faith. Forthwith doth she, exercising love the fairest of all virtues, and neighbourly-affection, diligently proclaiming to others also the good which appeared to her, hasten quickly into the city. For probably the Saviour was telling her, and secretly whispering in her mind, *Freely ye received, freely give*. Learn we hereby, not to imitate that sloth-loving servant, and who therefore *hid* his talent *in the earth*, but rather let us be diligent to trade with it. Which thing too that much-talked-of woman well doing, communicates to the rest the good which fell to her, no longer taking the water which she came to draw, from its fountain-depths, nor carrying home *her waterpot* of the earth, but rather with Divine and heavenly grace and the all-wise teaching of the Saviour filling the garner of her understanding.

We must hence learn, as in a type and outline, that by thoroughly despising little and corporal things, we shall receive of God things manifold more and better. For what is earthly water, compared with Heavenly wisdom?

29 *and saith to the men Come see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; is not This the Christ?*

O wondrous change! O truly great and God-befitting Might, translucent with unspeakable marvel! Skilful workwoman unto doctrine, and initiator is she, who understood none of the things that were said at first, and therefore rightly heard, *Go, call thy husband and come hither*. For see how skilfully she conversed with the Samaritans. She does not say at once that she has found the Christ, nor does she introduce Jesus at first into her account. For rightly would she have been rejected, as far surpassing the measure of words befitting her, finding her hearers not ignorant of her habits. She first then prepares the way for this wonder, and having first astonished them with the miracle, makes the way smoother, so to say, to the faith. *Come and see*, she wisely says; all but crying aloud with more earnest voice, Sight alone |223 will suffice to belief, and will assure those present with its more note-worthy marvels. For He Who knoweth the hidden things, and hath this great and God-befitting dignity, how shall He not speed with prosperous course to the fulfilment of those things which He willeth?

30 *They went out of the city, and came unto Him.* The obedience of the Samaritans is a conviction of the hardness of heart of the Jews, and their inhumanity is clearly shewn in the gentleness of these. And let the seeker of learning see again the difference of habit in both, that he may justly wonder at Jesus, departing from the Synagogue of the Jews, and giving Himself rather to the aliens. For that Christ should come to the Jews, and for what causes He should be revealed, the law of Moses declared to us, the all-august choir of the Prophets did

proclaim, and did point Him out at length all but present at the doors, saying, *Behold your God, Behold the Lord*; and last of all John, the great *among them that are born of women*, did manifest Him already appeared, and dwelling among us, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*; and (yet more wonderfully than all) the Saviour was revealing Himself through many deeds of power and God-befitting authority. What then do these men unbridled unto strange counsels at last meditate yet? They devise murder unjustly, they plot impiously, they envy stubbornly, they drive forth of their land and city, the Life, the Light, the Salvation of all, the Way to the kingdom, the Remission of sins, the Bestower of sonship. Wherefore rightly said the Saviour, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you*. But the Samaritans shew themselves superior to the folly of the Jews, and by obedience victorious over their innate unlearning, having given ear to one miracle only, they flock quickly to Jesus, not persuaded thereto by the voices of the holy Prophets, or by the proclamations |224 of Moses, nor yet the actual pointings of John, but one only woman and she a sinner telling them of Him. With reason then, let us too admiring the sentence of the Saviour against them, say, *Righteous art Thou, o Lord, and upright Thy Judgment*.

31, 32 *In the mean time His disciples prayed Him, saying Master, eat. But He saith unto them*

Most excellently doth the Divine Evangelist manage the compilation of this book, and omits nothing which he believes will at all be of use to the readers. Hear therefore how he introduces Jesus again as the Ensample of a most note-worthy act. For I do not think that any thing has been put in vain in the writings of the saints, but what any man deems small, he sometimes finds pregnant with no contemptible profit. The conversion of the Samaritans being then begun, and they on the point of looking for Him (for He knew as God that they would come): wholly and entirely is He intent upon the salvation of them which are called, and makes no account of bodily food, although *wearied with His journey*, as it is written: that hereby again He might profit the teachers in the Churches, and persuade them to disregard all fatigue, and use more diligent zeal for those who are being saved, than for the care of their bodies. For *Cursed*, saith the Prophet, be *he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently*. In order then that we may learn that the Lord was accustomed to go without food at such times, he introduces the disciples, begging and all but on their knees, that He would take a little of their provisions, as inevitable and necessary food. For they had *gone away into the city to buy meat* which they had now got and come with.

*I have meat to eat that YE know not of.*

Skilfully does the Saviour fashion His answer from what was before Him. He all but says darkly, that if they knew that the conversion of the Samaritans was at the doors, they would have persuaded Him rather to cling to that as a delicacy than to nourish the flesh. From this |225



again we may learn how great love for man the Divine Nature hath: for It considereth the return of the lost unto salvation as both meat and treat.

33, 34 *Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them,*

The disciples not yet understanding the discourse which was obscure, were reasoning about what had often happened among themselves, and descend to common place ideas, fancying that food had been brought Him by some one, and that it was perhaps more costly or sweeter than what had been got together by them.

*My meat is to do the Will of Him That sent Me and to complete His Work.*

Having wholly torn away the veil from His speech, He shewed them in full translucence the truth, and forthwith introduces Himself as a type unto future teachers of the world, of steadfast and most exceeding excellent zeal, to wit in respect of the duty of teaching, and on this account fitly keeping thought for the needful care of the body secondary. For in saying that it was to Himself most pleasant *meat, to do the Will of Him that sent Him and to finish His Work*, He limns the office of the Apostolic ministry and clearly shews, what manner of men they ought to be in habit. For it was necessary (as it seems) that they should be strung to taking thought for teaching only, and it behoved them to be so far removed from the pleasure of the body, as at times not even to desire the service necessary for the mere accomplishing its preservation from death.

And let this be said for the present, as tending to the type and pattern of Apostolic polity. But if we must in addition to what has been said, apply ourselves to speak more doctrinally, He says that He was *sent*, clearly by God the Father, either in respect of the Incarnation, wherein He beamed on the world with Flesh, by the good Pleasure and Approbation of the Father; or as the Word proceeding <sup>10</sup> | 226 in some way from the begetting Mind, and sent and fulfilling His decree, not as though taken as a minister of others' wills, but Himself being alike both the Living Word and the most evident Will of the Father, readily saving those that were lost. Therefore in saying that it is *the work of Him That hath sent Him*, Himself is shewn as its Fulfiller: for all things are by the Father through the Son in the Spirit. For that the Son is the Word and Counsel and Will and Power of the Father is, I suppose, evident to all: but it is no trouble to prove it from the Divine Scripture also. Therefore let any one see that He is the Word in this, *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*: let him see Counsel, in that the Psalmist says, as to God the Father, *In Thy Counsel Thou guidedst me and with glory didst Thou receive me*: let him see Will again in his saying, *Lord in Thy Will give strength to my beauty*. For He strengthened the beauty of His saints, that is, their vigour unto every virtue, He, the Living and Hypostatic Will of the Father, that is the SON. That He is Power also, thou shalt again understand hence, *Command, O God* (he says) *Thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which Thou wroughtest for us*. Thou seest clearly herein, that by the good Pleasure

of God the Father, His Power, that is, the Son, was Incarnate, that He might strengthen this body, which He perfected for us. For if He had not tabernacled among us, neither would the nature of the flesh at all have put off the infirmity of corruption. The Son then being Himself the good Will of the Father, *perfects His Work*, being shewn forth salvation to them that believe on Him.

But some one will say to this: "If the Son is Himself the Will of the Father, what *will* was He sent to fulfil? for the fulfilled must needs be other than the fulfiller." What therefore do we say to this? The giving of names |227 indeed demands difference in the things signified, but often there is no difference in respect of God, and word regarding the supreme Nature rejects accuracy herein. For Its Properties are spoken of, not altogether as they are in truth, but as tongue can express, and ear of man hear. For he that seeth darkly, darkly also he speaketh. For what wilt thou do when He Who is by Nature Simple introduceth Himself to us as compound, in that He saith of them of Israel, And their children they made pass through *the fire, which I commanded not, neither came it into My heart?* for must not the heart needs be other than he in whom it is? and how then shall God be yet conceived of as Simple? The things therefore about God, are spoken of after the manner of men: they are so conceived of, as befits God, and the measure of our tongue will not wrong the Nature That is above all. And therefore even though the Son be found speaking of the Will of the Father, as of something other than He, you will make no difference, attributing fitly to the weakness of our words their not being able to say any thing greater, nor to signify their meaning in any other way.

And let these things be said in proof of the Son being conceived of as also the Will of the Father; but in the passage before us, no reason will compel us to conceive that *the Will of the Father* means the Son, but rather we may well receive it as His good Will to the lost.

35 Say not YE, *There are yet four months and the harvest cometh?*

He again taketh occasions of His Discourse from the time and event, and from the grosser things of sense He fashioneth His declaration of spiritual ideas. For it was *yet* winter at that time, and the tender sprouting and fresh stalk of the seed was scarce bristling forth from the soil: but after the expiration of four months, it was awaiting its fall into the hand of the reaper. Do not therefore YE men say (saith He) that *there are yet four months, and the harvest cometh?* |228

*Behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.*

That is, raising up the eye of your understanding a little from the affairs of the earth, consider ye the spiritual sowing, that it hath progressed already and whitened unto the floor, and at length calls for the reaper's sickle unto itself. But from the similarity to things in actual life, you will see what is meant. For you will conceive that the spiritual sowing and multitude of spiritual



ears, are they who, tilled beforehand by the voice of the Prophets, are brought to the faith that should be shewn through Christ. But it is *white*, as being *already* ripe and ready to the faith, and confirmed unto piety. But the sickle of the reaper is the glittering and most sharp word of the Apostle, cutting away the hearers from the worship according to the law, transferring them to the floor, that is, to the Church of God: there they bruised and pressed by good toils shall be set forth pure wheat worthy of the garner of Him Who gathereth it.

*36, 37 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For herein is the saying true, One soweth and another reapeth.*

It is the time (saith He) of the Word calling to the Faith, and shewing to the hearers the arrival at its consummation of the legal and Prophetic preachings. For the law by typical services, as in shadows did foreshew Him That should come, that is, Christ: the Prophets after it, interpreting the words of the Spirit, *Yet a little while*, were fore-signifying that He was even now at hand and coming. But since He hath stepped within the doors, the word of the Apostles will not remove to far distant hope that which was expected, but will reveal it already present: and will *reap* from legal worship those who are yet in bondage to the law and who rest in the letter only, and will transfer them as sheaves into the Evangelic habit and polity; and will likewise cut off from polytheistic straying |229 the worshipper of idols, and will transfer him to the knowledge of Him That is in truth God, and, to speak all in brief and succinctly; will transform them who mind *things on the earth* unto the life of the Angels through faith to Christ-ward.

This (saith He) the word of the reapers will effect, yet shall it not be without an hire: for it shall surely gather for them *fruit* which nourisheth *unto life eternal*: nor shall they who receive rejoice in themselves alone but as having entered into the labours of the Prophets, and having reaped the seed fore-tilled by them, shall fill up one company with them. But I suppose that the most wise Paul, having thoroughly learnt the types of things to come, hence says of the holy fathers and Prophets that, *These all, perfected through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*. For the Saviour thought good, that the reaper should *rejoice together* with him who before had sown.

*38 I sent you to reap that whereon YE have not laboured: other men have laboured, and YE are entered into their labours.*

He at length unveils to them the whole mystery, and having removed the dark cloak of words, renders most clear the understanding of His meaning. For the Saviour being a Lover of the Prophets, and a Lover of the Apostles, makes neither the labour of those to be apart from the hand of the Apostles, nor does He allot entirely to the holy Apostles the glorying in respect of those who should be saved through faith in Him: but having mingled as it were the toil of each with their mutual co-work, He says (and with great reason) that one shall be the honour to

both. He affirms that the Apostles had entered into the labours of the holy Prophets, not suffering them to spring upon the good fame of those who proceeded them, but persuading them rather to honour them, |230 as having gone before them in labour and time. That this will be to us too a most beautiful lesson, who will refuse to admit?

*39 And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on Him for the saying of the woman which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

Israel is again hereby too condemned, and by the obedience <sup>11</sup> of the Samaritans, is convicted of being alike reckless of knowing and harsh. For the Evangelist marvels much at the *many* who *believed on Christ*, saying, *For the saying of the woman*; although they who were instructed through the law to the knowledge hereof, neither received the words of Moses, nor acknowledged that they ought to believe the heraldings of the Prophets. He in these words prepares the way before, or rather wisely makes a defence before, for that Israel should with reason be thrust away from the grace and hope that is to Christ-ward and that instead should come in the more obedient fulness of the Gentiles, or aliens.

*40, 41 So when the Samaritans were come unto Him, they besought Him that He would tarry with them: and He abode there two days. And many more believed because of His Own Word,*

He explains in simplicity of words what took place: but prepares again another proof, that Israel ought justly to be cast off from their hope, and the aliens to be transplanted into it. For the Jews with their bitter and intolerable surmises, spitefully entreat Jesus manifoldly working miracles and radiant in God-befitting glory, and blush not to rage to so great an extent as to make Him an exile, and zealously to drive out of their city Him Who is the giver to them of all joy: while the Samaritans persuaded by the words of one woman, consider that they ought to come to Him with all speed. And when they were come, |231 they began zealously to entreat Him to come into their city, and to pour forth to them of the word of salvation; and readily does Christ assent to both, knowing that the grace will not be unfruitful. For *many believed because of His own Word*.

Let him that is God-loving and pious hence know, that from them that grieve Him Christ departeth, but He dwelleth in them that gladden Him through obedience and good faith.

*42 And said unto the woman, No longer do we believe, because of thy saying: for ourselves have heard Him and know that This is indeed the Saviour of the world.*

From the greater things does the faith of the Samaritans spring, and not any longer from what they learn from others, but from those whereof they are the wondering ear-witnesses. For they say that they *know that He is indeed the Saviour of the world*, making the confession of their hope in Him the pledge of their faith.

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

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LESSON PREPARATION:

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SONG:

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VOCABULARY:

**Samaria, Samaritan, Holy Spirit, Chrismation**

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INTRODUCTION:

We have been hearing wonderful stories of how our Lord Jesus Christ met with people who were sinners and lovingly forgave them, and how these people, after they have had this experience with our Lord, become very strong saints in the church. When we are hearing these stories, we want to remember that our Lord can and will also do the same for us. All we need to do is go to Him.

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LESSON BODY:

(Let the students read the story from the Bible)

Once there was a woman who lived in a small region called **Samaria**. Because she was from Samaria, she is called the **Samaritan** woman in the Bible. This woman had lived a life deep in sin and sadness: she had gotten married, and then divorced, married and then divorced – 5 times. And at the time that we meet her in this story, she wasn't even married, but was living with a man who was not her husband. Now because of everything in her life that she had done wrong – all the times getting divorced, she did not feel good about herself. Sin brings sadness with it,

and bad feelings. This is true in general. She didn't have joy in her life and she was ashamed to be around any of the other people from her town. Back then, the women would have to go and draw water from a well because they didn't have faucets at home with running water in them. Now all the women in her town would go in the morning because the sun was not as hot in the early morning. This Samaritan woman, however, would choose to go at a different time – when it was hot – just so she could avoid the other women. She would be alone, drawing water, so she wouldn't have to face anyone. Can you imagine how painful this was?

One day, our Lord Jesus Christ was passing through her town and He stopped at the well to rest. When the Samaritan woman came to draw water, our Lord began to talk to her. As she continued talking with Him, she realized that He was not like other people who might put her down or say things that were not kind. She started to see how gentle He was with her, and that He was Someone great. Now we know that our Lord knows everything that we do, because He is God. But the Samaritan woman did not know that yet. She was meeting Him for the first time ever. Now our Lord was so gentle with her, and as He was speaking with her, He made known to her that He knew her sins – how many times she had been divorced and that she was living with a man now who was not her husband. But He did this in such a gentle and loving way, that she came to recognize Him as God and that He forgave her for everything she had done. She looked into His eyes and saw love and acceptance and forgiveness, *even though* He knew everything about her. Our Lord then told her who He was – that He was the Christ, the One that everyone was waiting for to come to save them. This woman, who had long lived in shame and hiding and sadness, began to feel joy and life within herself again. She immediately ran and started to tell everyone in her town, “Come see a Man who told me everything I have ever done! This is the Christ!” She wasn't scared of any of the people anymore. Christ loved her and forgave her! And she was so excited and so joyful when she was telling the people this. The people in her town listened and came to see Him and believed in Him – because of her!

This is a beautiful story about our Lord that shows us how much He can forgive us, no matter what we have done, and how gentle He is with us. And He was not this way just with the Samaritan woman, but with all people. Now our Lord told and taught His disciples (His helpers) to do the same with people – He gave them to be able to forgive peoples' sins and taught them to be as He is: kind, gentle, loving when they do it. They in turn gave that to their disciples who came after them, through all the generations until even our Bishops today, who gave it to all the Abounas in our church to do that for us today. When we sit with a priest or a bishop and tell him our sins, it is called *confessing*.

Let us look to ourselves now – how will I know when I have done something wrong and when I need to go to our Lord to be forgiven? It is the **Holy Spirit** within me. When each one of us were

baptized, the priest then did something else called **Christmation** where he anointed me with the holy oil and *sealed* the Holy Spirit inside me. The Holy Spirit is God who lives inside us ever since that time and helps us to love God and to love others. [You can show the picture of the baby who received the light during Christmation].

The Holy Spirit also helps us find what we have done wrong. How does this happen? Let us look at an example to help us understand – when there is a very soft breeze blowing outside, if I am running around like crazy and shouting and playing, will I be able to notice the breeze? If it is very soft? No, there is no way. I would be way too busy. What would I need to do to notice the breeze? Stop and be silent. The Holy Spirit is like a very soft breeze inside us. If I want to notice Him, to hear Him, I also need to stop and be silent and spend some time alone being that way. When I do this, I can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help me find what I did wrong. Then I will start to think of things that maybe I should not have done during that day. I will start to remember, and my heart will feel bad about the wrong things I did. We must sit with ourselves like this every night, and then write down the things that I remember. And I take this list with me when I go and confess with Abouna; we will talk more about confession next week. Today, you just need to remember to sit with yourself silently before you go to sleep, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you find what you did wrong, and write down the things that come to your mind.

If I get into this habit of slowing down and quieting down to listen to the Holy Spirit, I will be able to feel His presence more and more. And do you know what a person feels when he/she feels the presence of the Holy Spirit? Peace, love, and joy. This is what the Holy Spirit brings with Him.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

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#### CONCLUSION

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q: How did Christ uncover the Samaritan woman's sins?

*A: He uncovered her sins gently and she felt loved by Him even though He knew all the things she had done in her life.*

Q: What is the result of sin?

*A: sadness, no peace, we do not feel good about ourselves*

Q: Who will help me find what I have done wrong?

*A: The Holy Spirit*

Q: How often should we try to listen to the Holy Spirit?

*A: Every day before I sleep*

Q: How do I listen to the Holy Spirit?

*A: I need to stop and be silent and spend some time alone being that way. When I do this, I can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help me find what I did wrong. Then I will start to think of things that maybe I should not have done during that day.*

#### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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Psalm 46:10 *"Be still and know that I am God."*

## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 8. THE MYSTERY OF REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION (II): THE CONFESSION (IN STEPS)

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

CHURCH FATHERS:

REFLECTION:

PRAYER:

LESSON PREPARATION:

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SONG:

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VOCABULARY:

**Confession, Advice, Absolution**

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INTRODUCTION:

Last week we spoke about how one person found peace and joy in being forgiven for her sins, and how her life was completely changed and she became a very strong person who loved God with all her heart and soul. Each one of us will find this same peace and joy when we are forgiven of our sins as well. When we go to **confession**, we are meeting our Lord to say sorry to Him. Our Lord gave to His disciples the authority to ask for the forgiveness of peoples' sins, and they passed it to their disciples... all the way to our Pope who gave it to the abounas who are with us today.

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LESSON BODY:

When we sit with abouna to confess our sins, we are meeting our Lord Jesus Christ to ask His forgiveness and say sorry. Every time that it is time for me to go to confession again, I need to sit and remember how much our Lord Jesus Christ loves me, and how He gave His life for me so that I can live free of anything bad. I need to remember His love and care for me, and how He wants me with Him always, and how He showed me how much He wants me with Him – that He died on the cross so that I can be with Him. I need to remember that He loves me much more than even my parents or anyone else that I know, and that He is the most kind, the most loving, and the most gentle. When I remember our Lord in this way before my confession, it makes me want to run to Him and never be away from Him, and it makes me really feel sorry for all what I have done. People even cry when they remember this and when they think of the bad things they have done.

Last week we learned how to sit with ourselves to find what we have done wrong. We must do this *before* we go to confession. It is a must. And add to it, to remember all this about our Lord's great love for us.



To make a good confession, we need to:

1. Prepare with a prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you find what you have done wrong.
2. When I go to the priest, he prays the “Our Father” with me.
3. I tell my sins to the priest
4. The priest sometimes gives us **advice** and sometimes reads with us something from the Bible
5. The priest gives us an **Absolution** – a prayer that the priest prays to God on our behalf to ask forgiveness from God in our Lord Jesus name. Then he would make the sign of the cross as he anoints us with oil.
6. We come out feeling Peace and Joy and that we are able to start over loving God and others

[Go over the process with the students to help them understand what will happen. Encourage them to pay attention to their hearts within themselves before, during, and after their confession. Explain to them that the joy and peace they will feel afterwards is like a hidden gift that the Holy Spirit gives to them].

[Make a list of regular confession every month to check on students to establish them in the mystery. Explain to them that the class will start confessing regularly and speak to them about any questions they have or any misconceptions they have about confessing. Their parents should be involved.]

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- ***Scrap book building***
- ***Coloring:***

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#### CONCLUSION

## REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q: When we confess to abouna who are we meeting?

A: Jesus Christ

Q: What are we asking of Him?

A: forgiveness for our sins

Q: Why did Christ die on the cross?

A: Because He loves us

Q: Who loves us more than Christ?

A: No one

Q: Name two steps to make a good confession? (name at least two of the below)

1. A: Prepare with a prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you find what you have done wrong.
2. When I go to the priest, he prays the “Our Father” with me.
3. I tell my sins to the priest
4. The priest sometimes gives us **advice** and sometimes reads with us something from the Bible
5. The priest gives us an **Absolution** – a prayer that the priest prays to God on our behalf to ask forgiveness from God in our Lord Jesus name. Then he would make the sign of the cross as he anoints us with oil.
6. We come out feeling Peace and Joy and that we are able to start over loving God and others

## VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit I: Repentance and Confession

**Purpose:** In this unit, the child builds a foundation for recognizing our sinfulness, the role of the Holy Spirit in “spotting out” our sins, as well as viewing the Holy Trinity as loving the sinners but hating sin. The first part of the unit is meant to shape their conscious according to God’s commandments, tailored to their level. The second part helps the children to accept God’s forgiveness granted through the sacrament of repentance & confession. The children should be given clear instruction on how to make a good confession and how to start on a regular schedule of confession

### 9. UNIT REVIEW

SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

CHURCH FATHERS:

REFLECTION:

PRAYER:

LESSON PREPARATION:

SONG:

VOCABULARY:

INTRODUCTION:

LESSON BODY:

PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- **Idea:**
- *Scrap book building*
- *Coloring:*

CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## *God Gives Us Reconciliation and Eternal Life In His Son*

### UNIT II: THE DIVINE LITURGY

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this unit is to lead the children to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as a way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

Use hands-on liturgy kit, the liturgy pictures and a white board; this unit would be appropriate to act out and show pictures. Kids should be able to recite the main events in Our Lord's life on earth that we would act out in the Liturgy

Lesson 10: Introduction to the Holy Liturgy: Holy Space, Holy Time

Lesson 11: The Preparatory

Lesson 12: The Offertory

Lesson 13: Liturgy of the Word

Lesson 14: Liturgy of the Faithful: Reconciliation Prayer and Anaphora

Lesson 15: Liturgy of the Faithful: Anamnesis and Epiclesis

Lesson 16: Liturgy of the Faithful: Litanies and Commemoration

Lesson 17: Liturgy of the Faithful: The Fraction and the Pledge

## Lesson 18: Liturgy of the Faithful: How to Prepare for Communion

## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

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### LESSON 10: INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLY LITURGY: HOLY SPACE, HOLY TIME

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

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#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Psalm 121, from the Sunset Prayer:

*I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." Our feet have been standing within your gates O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together. Where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to the testimony of Israel. To give thanks to the name of the Lord. For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls. Prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, "Peace be within you." Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good. Alleluia.*

Psalm 83, from the Sixth Hour Prayer:

*How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts. My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young. Even Your altars O Lord of hosts, my King and my God, blessed are those who dwell in Your house. They will still be praising You. Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a spring. The rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength. Every one of them appears before God in Zion. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer, give ear O God of Jacob! O God, behold our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed. For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord is a sun*



*and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory: No good thing will He withhold: from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You! Alleluia.*

Psalm 14, from the First Hour Prayer:

*Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart, he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbour nor does he take up a reproach against his friend. In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honours those who fear the Lord. He who swears to his own hurt and does not change. He who does not put out his money at usury. Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. Alleluia.*

How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy by H.G. Bishop Mettaos:

Upon reaching the church, make the sign of the cross, then quietly enter so as not to disturb anybody. Enter the church, the house of God, in reverence and righteousness remembering what the gospel mentioned about Simon the Elder, *"He came by the Spirit to the temple, he took Him (Jesus) in his arms and blessed God"* (Luke 2:25-28).

When entering the church, say with the Psalmist, *"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy. In fear of You I will worship towards Your holy temple"* (Psalm 5:7). When you reach the altar, make the sign of the cross, and prostrate three times saying, *"I worship You Christ our God, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us."* Then reverently stand before the altar and pray the, *"Our Father..."* Touch the hem of the curtain's veil and reverently kiss it as it is a symbol of Christ's garment about which the woman with the flow of blood said, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction"* (Mark 5:25-34). Take a blessing from the priest by kissing the cross and his right hand holding the cross. Then quietly take your place in the church and start partaking in the prayers. You can use the Coptic Liturgy book. If you enter the church at the time of the Gospel reading, you must stand reverently at the door of the church, listen to the gospel with the others and after the gospel is read you may go forward and kneel before the altar. In the book of, 'The Mystery of the Trinity in the Ministry of Priesthood', it mentions that, *"If anyone approaches the door of the church and hears the reading of the gospel, he should stand still until the end of the reading."*

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CHURCH FATHERS:

"We have to depart from this holy place as if descending from heaven itself... Show the outside people that you were in the company of the Seraphim, counted with the heavenly creatures, considered as an angelic chorus, talking with God and in the presence of Christ." *St John Chrysostom*

"When the Sacrifice is brought forth, and Christ, the Lamb of God, is sacrificed, when you hear the words; Let us all pray together, when you behold the curtains drawn aside, then think that heaven is parted and the angels are descending." *St John Chrysostom*

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#### REFLECTION:

The Church lies at the heart of the orthodox life. And by paying the greatest attention to the conduct in the church that we learn holiness. It is clear from the encounters of the people of God- in the old and the new (Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, Peter, John and James...etc)- with God's "place of dwelling" that we learn how the people of God ought to conduct themselves inside the Consecrated place. It is very useful to show the third graders what you do when you enter the church and teach them what to say. Also present that as we consecrate a place for God we consecrate time. It is very suitable that we offer to God the first part of the time which is Sunday early Morning

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#### PRAYER:

*"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy. In fear of You I will worship towards Your holy temple"*

*"Before the angels I will sing praises to You and bow before your holy Altar"*

*"I worship You Christ our God, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us."*

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#### LESSON PREPARATION

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#### SONG:

"The Cherubim worship You"

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## VOCABULARY:

Sanctuary, Altar, Nave, Narthex, Iconostasis, Liturgy

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## INTRODUCTION

Prepare stickers for different objects in church; like Iconostasis, Altar, and Narthex. Show the children a movie or power point of the church and ask them to place different parts in their correct places.

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## LESSON BODY:

### 1. What is the meaning of each place in the church:

- a) The Holy, The Sanctuary or the Altar is the most special place in the church. It is where we offer the Body and Blood of our Lord as well as incense to God the Father on the Holy Altar. It represents the throne of God the Father. Only Abouna and the altar deacons go inside. When they go inside they take off their shoes. We all take off our shoes when we take communion because where the body of our Lord is, it is the most holy place.
- b) The Nave, where the deacons and the people of God pray. It is separated from the Sanctuary by the Iconostasis (the wall carrying the Icons). The nave has a place for deacons, and for the rest of us. From the second we enter through the door between the Narthex and the Nave, we should respect the House of God (what should not be done in the Nave; try a skit where a servant represents a disrespectful behavior).
- c) The Narthex, is the place outside the Nave, it is where we prepare ourselves to enter the church.

### 2. Preparing for the Liturgy:

- a) By Vespers when we offer prayers and incense at night, midnight praises, and Matins when we offer incense again in the morning
- b) By preparing ourselves from the night before:
  - i. Clean body
  - ii. Well rested

iii. Examine oneself and confess if needed

3. Going to Church:

a) Prayers as we enter the church:

When entering the church Narthex, say

*"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy.*

*Before the angels I will praise You. In fear of You I will worship towards Your holy temple" (Psalm 5:7)*

When you come before the Sanctuary you bow down and say:

*"I worship You Christ our God, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us."*

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PLAN AND MATERIALS:

Choose one or more:

- **Sheets of paper and stickers for the different places in the church:** *after explaining different names for the places ask the children to write the name of the place and put the stickers in their right sites. Let them mark east and west first*
- **Acting:** *mark the places in the class as you proceed entering the church. For example; The door of the class would be the door to the Nave, and the opposing wall would be the iconostasis.*
- **Movies showing monks or saints entering the church and reciting the prayers, Moses when asked to take off his shoes by the burning bush**
- **Coloring**
- **Scrap book building**

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CONCLUSION

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q. What is the most holy place in the church?

A. The Sanctuary or the Holy, where the Altar is.

Q. What does this place represent?

A. *The Throne of God the Father.*

Q. What are the other places in the church?

A. *The Nave and the Narthex*

Q. How do we prepare the church for the liturgy?

A. *By vespers, praises and Matins*

Q. How do I prepare myself for the Liturgy?

A. *by: 1. A shower. 2. Resting well. 3. Examining my heart and confessing if I need to.*

Q. Show me what you do when entering the church?

A. *let children act out the three prayers and the Metanoia.*

#### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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*"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy.*

*Before the angels I will praise You. In fear of You I will worship towards Your holy temple" (Psalm 5:7)*

*"I worship You Christ our God, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us."*

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## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

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### LESSON 11: PREPARATORY

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

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##### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Matthew 26: 17-19

*17Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" 18And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples."19So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.*

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##### CHURCH FATHERS:

One deacon asked the saintly Father Barsonofius (Sixth Century saint), *"Father, as you are ordaining me to serve around the holy altar, tell me what to think about while standing in front of God and helping serve with the priest, especially if I am holding the Holy Chalice? And should I have a specific garment for the altar service?"* The Saint answered, *"My son, these are spiritual matters as the deacon must be like the Cherubim, all eyes and mind thinking about heavenly matters. This should be done in awe and fear praising God while carrying the blood of the eternal King. He is like the Cherubim who proclaims the praise guarding the fearful sacrament like what the angels do in heaven with their wings. Remember those wings signify the enlightenment of the mind from the heavy earthly matters to blissful heavenly matters, crying without fatigue in his inner self, proclaiming the praise of victory for the majestic glory of God, praying reverently saying: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of your Holy Glory."*

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#### REFLECTION:

In the Preparatory, I try to get rid of all distractions, violence, self-sufficiency which takes up all my time. These three make the chief enemy of prayer. In this lesson we are going to focus on the Altar. Explain the utensils and exploring the three main actions that happen in the liturgy: offering, receiving and remembering.

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#### PRAYER:

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#### LESSON PREPARATION:

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#### SONG:

"Alleluiah this is the day which the Lord has made..."

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#### VOCABULARY:

Preparatory, Liturgy, Patten, Chalice, Throne, Misteer, Star/Dome, Corporals, Censor, Prospherin.

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#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Review verse to remember:

"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy.

Before the angels I will praise You. In fear of You I will worship towards Your holy temple" (Psalm 5:7)

"I worship You Christ our God, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us."

2. Connection point:

You remembered how we learned the different place of the church and how we ought to behave in the church. Today we are going to continue to learn how to prepare ourselves to participate in the liturgy.

What you would do to prepare for a trip: tell a story about a person who missed something from the preparation that they would not enjoy the trip...you are the person missing out. A birthday invitation needs preparation such as a gift.

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#### LESSON BODY:

- Preparation is preparing the body, heart and mind the day before the liturgy.
- dressing the deacons and the Altar
- Praying the Agpeya
- The priest washing his hands

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Use Altar kit to teach about the utensils
- bring a tonia to demonstrate the deacon clothing
- use a demonstration of washing an object similar to a heart

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#### CONCLUSION

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

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#### VERSE TO REMEMBER

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## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

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### LESSON 12: WE OFFER – THE OFFERTORY

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

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#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

John1:29-39

*"29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' 31I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." 32And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." 35Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God! 37The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" 39He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)."*

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#### CHURCH FATHERS:

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#### REFLECTION:

It is in the offertory that we start the *remembering* of our Lord. The offertory is where we remember the Baptism and the revelation of the holy Trinity. It is where we discover who Christ is. He is both the Son, and the Lamb of God. A link should be established between the Holy Theophany, The offering of thanks and our remembrance.

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#### PRAYER:

O Lord, Master and Almighty God, the Father of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, we thank You on every occasion, in every condition, and for all things. For you have protected, assisted, preserved and accepted us, had compassion upon us, supported us and brought us till this hour.

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#### LESSON PREPARATION:

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#### SONG:

Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now and forevermore. Amen. Alleluia.

Do[a Patri kai Uiw kai `agiw Pneumati > kai nun kai `a`i kai eic touc `ewnac tw n `ewnwn > amhn > allhloui`a .

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#### VOCABULARY:

Eucharist, offertory, Theophany

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#### INTRODUCTION:

##### 1. Review verse to remember:

“But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy.

Before the angels I will praise You. In fear of Your I will worship towards Your holy temple" (Psalm 5:7)

"I worship You Christ our God, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us."

2. Connection point:

You remembered how we learned to prepare ourselves for the Holy liturgy and how (and what we do and say as we enter the church). Today we will learn how as the family of God we offer to Him our offerings.

3. What does it mean to offer to God?

Tell a story of offering that highlight and explain the concept. Then show how we offer God our best. Let the children wonder about what it means to offer God their best. If possible, Abraham offering Isaac might be the best to highlight this.

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LESSON BODY:

1. The Holy Theophany, Our Lord is the best offering, "the Lamb of God"
2. The bread of offering is called the lamb, because Jesus our Lord took it and made of it His Holy Body.
3. We offer ourselves with thanksgiving to God who had sent us His Son and the Holy Spirit and made us His Children, that is why the liturgy is called Eucharist (thanksgiving). We offer the bread at the door of the sanctuary. Because we offer God things by placing it on the altar.
4. We offer praise to the Holy Trinity by thanksgiving and praises.
5. Explain the steps of the offertory in short, using the altar kit and powerpoint if needed:
  - At the end of the preparatory, the priest washes his hands asking God to purify his heart so that he may continue to the offertory and the whole liturgy.
  - The priest then holds the cross in his right hand and stands in front of the altar facing the west with one deacon holding the basket of korban in front of him, the wine on the right and the water on the left.
  - In order to choose the perfect bread for the Lamb, the priest crosses his hands over the tray in the shape of the cross and says: "May the Lord choose a Lamb without blemish."
  - The priest chooses the best korban and signs it with the cross, he returns to the altar.

- The priest then carries the Lamb takes some water in his hand and makes the sign of the cross on the bread from the top of the bread to the bottom, then around the bread from the left side to the right. This is the baptism of the Lamb and represents the baptism of our Lord.
- He prays silently a deep prayer called the Prayer of Commemoration. He places upon the Lamb that is about to be slain for us, all the sins of His people. Just as in the Old Testament.
- Then the priest covers the Lamb with the corporal which now to represents all our sins. The Lamb is now completely covered with all our sins and is presented to the congregation as the pure Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
- Then the priest carries the lamb wrapped in the corporal with the Cross laid upon it around the altar followed by the deacons who carry the wine and water.
- At the altar, the priest then makes the sign of the cross three times over the Lamb while saying “Blessed be God the Father, the Pantocrator. Blessed be His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete”
- Now the priest takes the wine and pours it into the chalice as we say the thanksgiving prayer
- The priest and the deacon then cover the altar with the Prosphering which represents the large stone covering the tomb and the priest places the corporal that represented our sins, folded on top of the Prosphering as the seal placed on the tomb.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Review the utensils used in the preparatory lesson using the altar kit.
- Show a part of a movie from Abraham story (chapter 26)
- Show the liturgy video or PowerPoint to demonstrate the choosing and baptism of the Lamb.
- Give cards to the children to write on it what they would like to thank God for and what they would like to ask abouna to pray for, to be placed on the Altar. Give the cards to the servants.

- Miracle of the woman who wanted to present oil to a monastery but did not have much to offer. she offered the little she had and saw that it had filled the vessel completely.

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#### CONCLUSION:

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q-What does it mean to offer to God?

A. We offer our prayers, thanksgiving, our hearts, our focus, and time daily to God.

Q. What is Theophany?

A. It is the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Who do offer praise to in the Liturgy?

A. We offer praise to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity.

Q. Why do we offer bread and wine in the liturgy?

A. Because this will become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ that is our salvation.

Q. What is the meaning of Liturgy of the Eucharist?

A. It means the work of the people of thanksgiving.

#### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** is to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

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### LESSON 13: LITURGY OF THE WORD

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

##### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Bishop Mettaos: How to Benefit from the Holy Liturgy:

My beloved, listen to these divine readings with concentration, so that they may cure your wounds, answer your queries, and give solutions to your problems. Try to learn a verse or two which attracts your attention during the readings. Put this verse in your heart, with the Psalmist, saying, **"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You"** (Psalm 119:2). Put this verse in the three weights of flour, that is, your body, soul and spirit, so that the yeast may work in the dough, thus all your inner and outer senses may be purified, while the priest prays in the Mystery of the Pauline: **"Purify our hearts and sanctify our souls, cleanse us from every sin, which we have done willingly and unwillingly."** The Lord has clearly indicated the importance of effective listening to the Divine sayings, in purifying and sanctifying a person, **"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you"** (John 15:3).

The parable of the sower: Matthew 13: 18-23

*Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

1 Peter 1:22-25

*22Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24because " All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

Hebrews 4:12

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

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#### CHURCH FATHERS:

It was indeed fitting for us instead of asking the help of the written word to show a life so pure that the grace of the Spirit should be to our souls instead of the books to our minds so that as the books are written with ink even so should the spirit "writes" on our hearts. But because we have utterly rejected the grace of the Spirit, let us by any means take the second best course.

Because the first way was better, God had made it clear, both by His words and by His doings. Since to Noah, and to Abraham and Abraham's children and to Job and to Moses too, He conversed not by writings but Himself by Himself, finding their mind pure. But after the whole people of the Hebrews had fallen into the very pit of wickedness, then and there after God gave a written word and tables and the warnings which is given by these.

This was the case not only of the Old Testament but also of the new testament. For neither to the apostles did God give anything in writing, but instead of written words He promised that He would give them the grace of the Spirit: for "He, our Lord said, "shall bring all things to your remembrance." And that you may learn that this was far better, hear what He says by the Prophet: "I will make a new covenant with you, putting my laws into their mind, and in their heart I will write them," and, "they shall be all taught of God." And Paul too, pointing out the same superiority, said, that they had received a law "not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. But because after sometime people have broken the Laws of God some with regard to doctrines, others as to life and manners, there was again need that they should be put in remembrance by the written word.

Reflect then how great an evil it is for us, who ought to live so purely as not even to need written words, but to yield up our hearts, as books, to the Spirit; now that we have lost that honor, and are come to have need of these, to fail again in right use even of this second remedy



for if it is a blame to stand in need of written words, and not to have brought down on ourselves the grace of the Spirit; consider how heavy the charge of not choosing to profit even from this assistance, but rather treating what is written with neglect, as if it were thrown at us without purpose, and at random, and so bringing down upon ourselves our punishment with increase. But that no such effect may ensue, let us give strict heed unto the things that are written. *Simplified St. John Chrysostom Commentary on Matthew Homely 1:1-2 Nicene and post Nicene Fathers volume 10*

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#### REFLECTION:

When the Bible tells us that the word of God is like a seed as in the book of Mathew or is alive as the letters of the Apostles, we should understand that God's grace is given to us through His word. If I take the word and hide it in my heart and patiently continue thinking of it I would expect a great plant with delightful fruit. It should be recommended that the servants transmit a zeal for the word of God to their students not just to listen to it carefully in the liturgy but read it with openness and welcome on daily basis. Another image of the Word of God is the two edged sword, some see in the image of the two edged sword the "cutting to the heart" that happens to the reader/hearer.

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#### PRAYER:

O Master and Lord Jesus Christ our God, who told His holy and honored disciples and pure apostles, that many prophets and righteous men earnestly desired to see what you are seeing but they could not, and to hear what you are now listening to but they could not. Blessed are your eyes for they can see, and your ears for they can hear. Make us worthy to hear and perform according to Your holy gospels, through the petitions of Your saints. *From the litany of the Gospel*

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## LESSON PREPARATION:

### SONG:

“The Cherubim Worship You”

### VOCABULARY:

Pauline Epistle, Catholic Epistle, The Book of Acts, The Synaxarium

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Review Questions: (Last week’s conclusion’s questions and answers)
2. Review Verse to remember: last week’s verse.
3. Connection Points: Use the poster or the Power Point so the children can memorize the different parts of the liturgy

### LESSON BODY:

The liturgy of the word: (*We listen carefully*) We receive the **Word of God**. Tell stories of how Jesus traveled around and many people would follow Him because they were attracted to His teachings and they felt they needed it. ***Galilee, Judea and Samaria***

- i. We **receive** the instructions of God the Father through the words of the Bible. We should pay attention, be still and quiet, and try to understand what is said. If we listen carefully, we will hear God speak to us in a personal way.
- ii. Options: the story of St. Antony or the story of Samuel listening to God in the night
- iii. What do we read?
  1. Part from the letters of St. Paul – Pauline epistle (teaching).
  2. Part from other apostles’ letters – Catholic epistle (teaching).
  3. Part from the book of Acts – Epraxis (story of first church).
  4. Story of the saint or martyr of the day – Synaxarium (story).
  5. Read a piece from the psalms (a prayer).
  6. Read a piece from the Gospels (the good news) - (story and teaching of Our Lord Jesus)
    - a- Before the Gospel we pray the litany of the Gospel

- b- We sing Alleluia (praise God) with the reading of the psalm to show our happiness of receiving God's word.
- c- We give God respect and honor by saying "Doxasi kyrie" which means (Glory to You O Lord) as He is about to talk to us. At the end we say "Glory to God forever. Amen"
- d- During the readings Abouna goes around to bless us and to take confession... during the incense we can say any special prayer and it goes up to God with the incense.

The sermon when Abouna explains to us the readings of the gospel of the day.

We respond to the readings from the Liturgy of the Word saying to Him, "we trust You and are willing to obey You" in the *Creed*.

Activity for the Lesson: Put the Readings on separate pieces of paper and ask the kids to organize it

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Bring the Katamars ( the reading of the day collected all in one book)
- Bring a Bible and show where the different books are.
- Give cards to the children with the different readings and ask them to organize them in the order they are read.

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#### CONCLUSION

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#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

Q-What is our role during the liturgy of the Word?

A-Listen carefully to God's word and God's instructions

Q- What is the first Reading?

A- *The Pauline Epistle (part of one of the letters of Saint Paul)*

Q- What is the second Reading?

A-*The Catholic Epistle (part of the reading of all other letters, St. Peter, St. James, St. John, St. Jude)*

Q- What is the third reading?

A-*Part of the book of acts (record of the church of the apostols)*

Q- What is the fourth reading?

A- *The Synaxerium (story of the saint of the day or the church celebration)*

Q- What is the fifth reading?

A- *The psalm*

Q- What is the Sixth Reading?

A- *The Gospel*

Q- What are the 4 Gospels?

A *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*

Q-What do we pray before the Gospel?

A- *The litany of the Gospel*

#### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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*Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path*

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## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** is to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

### LESSON 14: LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL: RECONCILIATION PRAYER AND ANAPHORA

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

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#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

Therefore being justified by faith, Creed  
We have peace with God through our Lord  
Jesus Christ: Reconciliation prayer  
By whom also we have access by faith  
into this grace wherein we stand, Heaven  
and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.  
Romans 5:1-2

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation. Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances; so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace; (Ephesians 2: 14-15)

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#### CHURCH FATHERS:

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

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## LESSON PREPARATION

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SONG:

“The Cherubim Worship You”

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VOCABULARY:

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INTRODUCTION:

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LESSON BODY:

- The Reconciliation prayer: (*forgive us as we forgive*) a request for peace through cleansing of sins – the kiss of peace: we forgive one another by the resurrection. **by the tomb of Christ**
- We reconcile (make peace) with God, ourselves and others.
- What is the kiss of peace? It represents our heartfelt love towards each other, a love without any hatred or anguish towards each other. If you are really upset at someone that you will not greet them, you cannot take communion.
- The Anaphora and the Trisagion (*worthy and Holy*), Heavenly praise. **Heaven**
- **Heaven:** We are now in heaven with all the hosts of angels and we hear them as they sing the Trisagion.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Use a story to demonstrate peace with yourself...Story of Cain and Abel: They both used to offer sacrifices but only Abel sacrifice was accepted because Cain sacrifice was without any peace with others especially his brother.
- Story of Judas and the kiss of betrayal.
- Story of St. John the Beloved who visited heaven
- Talk about the Anchorites that would pray in the churches and the saints would see them, ex: Pope Kyrillos

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#### CONCLUSION

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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#### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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*Your Law is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths*

## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** is to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

### LESSON 15: LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL: ANAMNESIS AND EPICLESIS

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

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VERSE & REFERENCES:

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CHURCH FATHERS:

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

#### LESSON PREPARATION



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#### SONG:

“The Cherubim Worship You”

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#### VOCABULARY:

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#### INTRODUCTION:

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#### LESSON BODY:

- The Remembrance and the Consecration prayers- Institution (“He broke” and “He mixed”) the upper room.
- Remembrance is actually re-living the story of the life of Christ. Then we remember the church, and everything in the church. We remember the saints and martyrs and those who have departed.
- We **DO NOT** remember sin or our bad habits.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Use the Altar kit
- Story of the First Institution. Use video clip of Anba Makarius praying the liturgy.

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#### CONCLUSION

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#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

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### LESSON 16: LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL: THE LITANIES AND COMMEMORATION

#### SERVANT PREPARATION

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VERSE & REFERENCES:

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CHURCH FATHERS:

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REFLECTION:

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PRAYER:

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LESSON PREPARATION:

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#### SONG:

“The Cherubim Worship You”

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#### VOCABULARY:

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#### INTRODUCTION:

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#### LESSON BODY:

- Litanies: prayer for everything and everyone (to be one body and have a share with all saints part 1) upper room
- commemoration of the saints and the departed solidarity with the church in heaven (to be one body and to have a share with all saints part 2) heaven
- The litany of the departed

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Use the Altar kit
- Give the story of the moving of the mountain...the people had to pray Kyrie Elaison (Lord have mercy)
- Give a couple of stories of the Saints in the commemoration.
- Talk about the ranks if the heavenly hosts.

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#### CONCLUSION

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#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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## VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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### Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** is to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

## LESSON 17: LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL: THE FRACTION AND THE PLEDGE

### SERVANT PREPARATION

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

#### CHURCH FATHERS:

#### REFLECTION:

#### PRAYER:

### LESSON PREPARATION

#### SONG:

## “The Cherubim Worship You”

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### VOCABULARY:

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### INTRODUCTION:

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### LESSON BODY:

- The Fraction and The confession
- Fraction: breaking the body- offering Our Lord’s body and blood to the Father with everything we offered up till now (ourselves, our confessions, our prayers and material offerings, requests for others, our heavenly family) (The broken Holy Body and the spilled precious Blood) Golgotha
- Breaking the bread (the Body): once you break the bread, it cannot be mend back together and therefore must be eaten right away.
- Confession: pledge of faith and partaking to receive (forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as well as unity with everyone in the church). (I believe, I confess, so I partake)

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### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Use the Altar kit

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### CONCLUSION

### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit II: The Divine Liturgy

**Purpose:** is to lead the third graders to discover the journey of the liturgy as a living memorial of our Lord's life and sacrifice, as well as the way of unity in the church. How everyone gets out of their bed and their homes to become what our Lord called us to be- "His own holy people". We come to share His life through prayers and actions, we tell the story, and what we offer and receive as God's own family of Love. And how we are transformed by it to be able to serve and transform the world.

### LESSON 18: LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL: HOW TO PREPARE FOR COMMUNION

I SERVANT PREPARATION:

VERSE & REFERENCES:

CHURCH FATHERS:

REFLECTION:

PRAYER:

II LESSON PREPARATION:

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#### SONG:

“The Cherubim worship You”

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#### VOCABULARY:

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#### INTRODUCTION:

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#### LESSON BODY:

- No talking, no looking around. We should recite the “Prayer Before Communion.”
- We empty our minds and our hearts to prepare a space for Christ the King of our hearts.
- When we come to communion we should keep our eyes focused straight ahead. Use the corporal on your hand to receive any pieces of the Body (Jewels) that fall during communion, give enough space for Abouna’s hand. We open our mouths widely to receive the Body. When we receive the Blood, make sure you do not have chap stick on, or anything else on your lips.
- We fast 9 hours before Communion. We fast because we are invited to eat at the Table of the Lord. If someone you like invites you to eat at their house, would you eat before you go? Or would you prepare yourself by being hungry, so you would have an appetite to eat?
- Take communion at least once a week because it fills us with joy and gives us the energy to continue following the commandments until the next week.
- We come out ready to do the work of God:
- Pray and thank God for the gift of Communion. (Read the prayer after Communion)
- Enjoy time with family and friends
- Serving others

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- Use the Altar kit
- Story of Pope Kyrillos: He used to take communion every day.



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## CONCLUSION

### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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## Unit VI: Seasonal lessons

**Purpose:** This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

### 1. FEAST OF NYROUZ

#### II SERVANT PREPARATION:

##### VERSE & REFERENCES:

- 1 Peter 1:3-9 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls."*

- Eph 1:13-14 *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."*

- 1 John 3:1-3 *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."*

- Heb 11:13-16 *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."*

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## CHURCH FATHERS:

### **A martyr from The Apostolic Fathers: St. Ignatius of Antioch**

#### **Feast on the twenty-fourth day of Kiahk**

Virtually nothing is known of St. Ignatius' life preceding his journey to martyrdom from Antioch to Rome. St. Ignatius (about 35-107 C.E.) was probably born a pagan of Syrian origin. In the year 69 C.E, St. Ignatius was appointed as the second bishop of Antioch, succeeding St. Peter the Apostle. Antioch is a city in Syria where St. Paul and St. Barnabas started their famous journey. Also at that time, St. Ignatius was a disciple of the apostle John.

#### His Martyrdom

St. Ignatius was ordered by the Roman prefect to be chained and sent to Rome during the reign of Emperor Trajan. When the Emperor heard that St. Ignatius had attracted many to believe in the Lord Christ through his teachings, the Emperor brought the saint and asked him, "Are you Ignatius the Theophoros?" St. Ignatius replied, "Yes, I am." The Emperor inquired about the meaning of his name. The saint replied saying, "Theophoros means 'God-bearer.'" The Emperor asked, "Do you think that we do not carry our gods to support us in wars?" The Saint answered, "How can these statues be gods? Listen, there is no God except the only God that created the Heaven and Earth, and His Son Jesus Christ who was incarnated to save mankind. So if you had believed in Him, you would be content now in your kingship." The emperor attempted to persuade him to forsake Christianity, but he refused. The Emperor was enraged, ordered him bound with chains, and taken to Rome to be thrown to the beasts.

Despite the misery that St. Ignatius was subjected to, he was still always content and thankful. Ignatius responded to the Emperor's orders by kissing the chains that would be his means of receiving the crown of martyrdom. He shouted in joy, "Thank You Lord, for You granted to honor me with the abundance of Your love. You allowed me to be chained like Your Apostle Paul." He then left Syria under a heavy guardianship of ten soldiers. Two members of his own church, Rufus and Zosimus, also accompanied him and were also eventually sentenced to death. The believers tried to save St. Ignatius by paying bribes to the soldiers, but St. Ignatius refused, for he was yearning for martyrdom. He went on his way to Izmir (Smyrna) where the guards halted the journey for an extended rest stop. This is where he wrote a letter to the Christians of Rome that said in it: "I am afraid that your love may be harmful. If you wish to prevent my death, that will not be difficult for you. But allow me to be slaughtered wherever the altar has been prepared... I am wheat which must be ground, to make bread, to be offered to Jesus Christ. Whenever the people will not behold me anymore, I will behold our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Izmir (Smyrna) St. Ignatius was received with great honor by St. Polycarp and was visited by many priests, deacons, and members of neighboring Christian communities. Onesimus, bishop of Ephesus, was also with Ignatius there. Onesimus brought along a deacon named Burrhus who was a scribe, and with his help, Ignatius wrote letters to the churches. He wrote thence to the Churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles, letters of encouragement, and a fourth to the Church at Rome, begging them not to deprive him of martyrdom by intervention with the pagan authorities.

From Izmir (Smyrna), the guards hauled Ignatius to the port city of Troas. Burrhus the scribe stayed with him, still writing letters to the various churches. He wrote to Philadelphia, Smyrna, and St. Polycarp. Then he was taken from there through Macedonia and Illyria to Dyrrhachium, where he was embarked for Italy.

When he arrived at the coliseum in Rome, the guards rushed him into the arena where he faced the wild beasts cheerfully as a person hurrying to eternal glory. Two lions sprang upon him and left only a few bones of him as the Saint delivered up his soul in the hand of the Lord. Then the lion released him and went back to his place, and the believers came and carried his body with great honor to a place that they had prepared for him in Antioch. Emperor Theodosius the Young (408-450) put the relics in the temple of Fortune located in the center of Antioch, which was converted to a Christian church, and named it after St. Ignatius' name.

#### His Feast

The feast of St. Ignatius is the 17<sup>th</sup> of October in the Roman Catholic calendar. It is the 20<sup>th</sup> of December in the Greek Church. The Coptic Church celebrates his feast on Kiahk 24 (January 2<sup>nd</sup>).

#### His Letters

St. Ignatius' life is represented mainly by his letters and writings. Seven of St. Ignatius' writings composed on his way from Antioch to Rome are preserved. The seven epistles are an invaluable testimony to the beliefs and internal organization of the early Christians. St. Ignatius is the first writer to stress the virgin birth. He firmly denounced Docetism and viewed the mystery of the Trinity as an implicit doctrine of faith. The only guarantee against heresy, he taught, is the church united under a bishop. St. Ignatius is also the first in Christian literature to use the word *Catholic*.

The overall theme of St. Ignatius' letters is best described by St. Paul the Apostle's words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory!" (Col 1:27) To St. Ignatius, union with Christ is more important than anything else imaginable. St. Ignatius' theme can be summed up by his final salutation to the Church of Smyrna, "I salute the bishop, worthy of God, and presbytery for God, and my fellow slaves, the deacons, and all of you, individually and together in the name of Jesus Christ and His flesh and blood, in union with God and with you." (St. Ignatius' letter to Smyrna 12:2)

Each of St. Ignatius' letters is fairly similar in content, though each one has its own uniqueness. Perhaps the most common element of each letter is St. Ignatius' emphasis of the unity of the church and the role of the bishop as the center of that unity. He is most emphatic about the value and role of the Eucharist as the primary means of mediating the life of the risen Lord to the members of His body, the church. The letters differ according to St. Ignatius' delegations and conversations with the separate regions. These letters are of immeasurable significance for the history of the dogma.

### His Teachings

St. Ignatius' letters reflect how fervidly he spoke and show us how he taught through intense religious zeal. In his letters, St. Ignatius addressed the question, "how can we attain salvation?" He taught that salvation may be attained by "fellowship with Christ, the only source of life," and "isolation from those whom we do not live the true life with." Also, he explained that we have attained salvation through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified to grant us life. Finally, salvation may be attained by our unity with the risen body of Christ. The Lord is immortal life who grants us the new risen life and divine love.

St. Ignatius' letters reveal to us much of the history of the Church and the foundation of its true beliefs. For instance, St. Ignatius proceeds to write about the Church's role for Christians. He explains that the Church is a place of sacrifice, presenting the Eucharist as the sacrifice of the Church. It is a place of salvation, as salvation uses infinite love towards God to destroy death and the authority of the devil. He states that the Church is a place of prayer, as the combined prayers of the clergy and people are much more powerful than those of the individual. He also asserts that the Church is a place of purity, and all who are involved with the Church are pure.

St. Ignatius is the first to use the term "Catholic Church," denoting the faithful gathered collectively and universally. It has been used in our liturgies, not to mean universality in location, but the spiritual

existence in relation with the one altar and one Eucharist. It is the Church who gathers in love and unity in Christ.

St. Ignatius has also reiterated the function of the sacraments in our church's early history. Baptism is among the sacraments that St. Ignatius wrote about. He taught that baptism was necessary for Jesus to purify the water from the dominion of the devil and to fulfill every righteousness. St. Ignatius also taught of the sacrament of the Eucharist. He affirmed that it is the primary means of mediating the life of the risen Lord to the members of the church and renewing our spiritual life. St. Ignatius has also underlined the rules of marriage. He declared that marriages must be held before the bishop and through his approval, as he is the father of the couple, and he emphasized the importance of celibacy and the sanctity of marriage. St. Ignatius also had very much to say about priesthood, as he was the bishop of Antioch.

St. Ignatius also had much to contribute to the hierarchical orders of the church. He portrayed a vivid picture of the ranks of priesthood and their place in ministering. He also confirmed that God had established these ranks by his own will and through the Holy Spirit, and thus they are to be respected regardless of their age or any trivial matters. The idea that the head of the Church represents Christ causes Ignatius to view these positions with great dignity, yet humility. He also manifests the great responsibility that priests and bishops must have, because without them not even baptism, agape, or Eucharist may be celebrated.

Finally, St. Ignatius taught that we must follow the perfect example; that of Christ. As Christ imitated his Father so must we imitate Christ. St. Ignatius chose to be martyred as the perfect imitation of Christ; hence "only he is the true disciple of Christ who is ready to sacrifice his own life for Him." St. Ignatius teaches that we must always seek Christ, placing Him who died for us before all the earth. Thus we must always yearn to be in God's hands and never fear death, as death is actually bondage of the devil.

## THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS

### TO THE ROMANS

*Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which has obtained mercy, through the majesty of the Most High Father, and Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son; the Church which is beloved and enlightened by the will of Him that wills all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of the highest happiness, worthy of praise, worthy of obtaining her every desire, worthy of being deemed holy, and which presides over love, is named from Christ, and from the Father, which I also salute in the*

*name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: to those who are united, both according to the flesh and spirit, to every one of His commandments; who are filled inseparably with the grace of God, and are purified from every strange taint, [I wish] abundance of happiness unblameably, in Jesus Christ our God.*

#### **CHAPTER 1: AS A PRISONER, I HOPE TO SEE YOU**

Through prayer to God I have obtained the privilege of seeing your most worthy faces, and have even been granted more than I requested; for I hope as a prisoner in Christ Jesus to salute you, if indeed it be the will of God that I be thought worthy of attaining unto the end. For the beginning has been well ordered, if I may obtain grace to cling to my lot without hindrance unto the end. For I am afraid of your love, lest it should do me an injury. For it is easy for you to accomplish what you please; but it is difficult for me to attain to God, if ye spare me.

#### **CHAPTER 2: DO NOT SAVE ME FROM MARTYRDOM**

For it is not my desire to act towards you as a man-pleaser, but as pleasing God, even as also ye please Him. For neither shall I ever have such [another] opportunity of attaining to God; nor will ye, if ye shall now be silent, ever be entitled to the honor of a better work. For if ye are silent concerning me, I shall become God's; but if you show your love to my flesh, I shall again have to run my race. Pray, then, do not seek to confer any greater favor upon me than that I be sacrificed to God while the altar is still prepared; that, being gathered together in love, ye may sing praise to the Father, through Christ Jesus, that God has deemed me, the bishop of Syria, worthy to be sent for from the east unto the west. It is good to set from the world unto God, that I may rise again to Him.

#### **CHAPTER 3: PRAY RATHER THAT I MAY ATTAIN TO MARTYRDOM**

You have never envied any one; ye have taught others. Now I desire that those things may be confirmed [by your conduct], which in your instructions ye enjoin [on others]. Only request in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but [truly] will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. For if I be truly found [a Christian], I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing visible is eternal. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." For our God, Jesus Christ, Now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed [in His glory]. Christianity is not a thing of silence only, but also of [manifest] greatness.

#### **CHAPTER 4: ALLOW ME TO FALL A PREY TO THE WILD BEASTS**

I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless ye hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.

Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body; so that when I have fallen asleep [in death], I may be no trouble to anyone. Then shall I truly be a disciple of Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Entreat Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God]. I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles; I am but a condemned man: they were free, while I am, even until now, a servant. But when I suffer, I shall be the freedman of Jesus, and shall rise again emancipated in Him. And now, being a prisoner, I learn not to desire anything worldly or vain.

## **CHAPTER 5: I DESIRE TO DIE**

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries [to act as a disciple of Christ]; “yet am I not thereby justified.” May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me [in this]: I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, envy me that I should attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ.

## **CHAPTER 6: BY DEATH I SHALL ATTAIN TRUE LIFE**

All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. “For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?” Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not

ye give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light: when I have gone thither, I shall indeed be a man of God. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If anyone has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy with me, as knowing how I am straitened.

## **CHAPTER 7: REASON OF DESIRING TO DIE**

The prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my disposition towards God. Let none of you, therefore, who are [in Rome] help him; rather be ye on my side, that is, on the side of God. Do not speak of Jesus Christ, and yet set your desires on the world. Let not envy find a dwelling-place among you; nor even should I, when present with you, exhort you to it, be ye persuaded to listen to me, but rather give credit to those things which I now write to you. For though I am alive while I write to you, yet I am eager to die. My love has been crucified, and there is no fire in me desiring to be fed; but there is within me a water that lives and speaks, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father. I have no delight in



corruptible food, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and I desire the drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life.

#### CHAPTER 8: BE YE FAVORABLE TO ME

I no longer wish to live after the manner of men, and my desire shall be fulfilled if ye consent. Be ye willing, then, that ye also may have your desires fulfilled. I entreat you in this brief letter; do ye give credit to me. Jesus Christ will reveal these things to you, [so that ye shall know] that I speak truly. He is the mouth altogether free from falsehood, by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray ye for me, that I may attain [the object of my desire]. I have not written to you according to the flesh, but according to the will of God. If I shall suffer, ye have wished [well] to me; but if I am rejected, ye have hated me.

#### CHAPTER 9: PRAY FOR THE CHURCH IN SYRIA

Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, which now has God for its shepherd, instead of me. Jesus Christ alone will oversee it, and your love [will also regard it]. But as for me, I am ashamed to be counted one of them; for indeed I am not worthy, as being the very last of them, and one born out of due time. But I have obtained mercy to be somebody, if I shall attain to God. My spirit salutes you, and the love of the Churches that have received me in the name of Jesus Christ, and not as a mere passer-by. For even those Churches which were not near to me in the way, I mean according to the flesh, have gone before me, city by city, [to meet me.]

#### CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

Now I write these things to you from Smyrna by the Ephesians, who are deservedly most happy. There is also with me, along with many others, Crocus, one dearly beloved by me. As to those who have gone before me from Syria to Rome for the glory of God, I believe that you are acquainted with them; to whom, [then,] do ye make known that I am at hand. For they are all worthy, both of God and of you; and it is becoming that you should refresh them in all things. I have written these things unto you, on the day before the ninth of the Calends of September (that is, on the twenty-third day of August). Fare ye well to the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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#### REFLECTION:

The theme of this year is reconciliation through repentance, leading to forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Repentance (metania) is a radical change of the way we view our lives and the world we live in that will shape everything we think and do. St. John in his first epistle recommends for us the hope of eternal life as a purifying tool: *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we*

*shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2,3).* The martyrs embody for us this metania. They have their minds and hearts set on Heaven, caring less for what happens to the body and their lives on this earth.

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#### PRAYER:

Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion; And to You the vow shall be performed.

O You who hear prayer, To You all flesh will come.

*Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You will provide atonement for them.*

*Blessed is the man* You choose, And cause to approach *You, That* he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Of Your holy temple.

*By* awesome deeds in righteousness You will answer us, O God of our salvation, *You who are* the confidence of all the ends of the earth, And of the far-off seas;

Who established the mountains by His strength, *Being* clothed with power;

You who still the noise of the seas, The noise of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples.

They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs; You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice.

You visit the earth and water it, You greatly enrich it; The river of God is full of water;

You provide their grain, For so You have prepared it.

You water its ridges abundantly, You settle its furrows;

You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth.

You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip *with* abundance.

They drop *on* the pastures of the wilderness, And the little hills rejoice on every side.

The pastures are clothed with flocks; The valleys also are covered with grain; They shout for joy, they also sing. *Psalms 65*

### III LESSON PREPARATION:

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#### SONG:

O red dates your color is like...

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#### VOCABULARY:

**Relic – part of a saints' body; Martyr – one who bears witness to the Truth, even up to death**

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#### INTRODUCTION

Once there was a young girl – your age – who traveled to a far country with her family on vacation. When she was there, the first thing she noticed was the mountain. It was huge and beautiful and covered with snow at the top and sometimes the clouds would come and hide the very top from her sight. She fell in love with the mountain and she longed in her heart to be able to climb up one day to the very top. When it was time to leave and go home, she was very sad about leaving her mountain behind.

When she grew up and it was time for her to choose a college to go to, she knew in her heart that she would only be happy going to college near her mountain, so that she could see it every day. Her family and her friends tried to tell her, and beg her, not to go – it was so far away from them – but she would not listen. When the time came for her to leave, she could only think about how wonderful it would be there and how joyful it would make her.

What does this story have to do with a **martyr's** story? How is the girl in this story like a martyr? The martyrs are people who were living here on earth, but, deep within their hearts, they love another country and they want to be in that country with all their hearts. They long to be there so much, that everything on earth seems to them to be **worthless**. What is that other country that they desire to be in? They long to be in Heaven, in God's country. The question is why. Why do they want to be in that far country? What is there, that is better than all things on earth, that they long to see and desire to see? It is not a thing, it is a person: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Because when they think about Him right now, when they thought about Him while they were on earth, they would get excited and very joyful. And they didn't want anything in the world to keep them away from Him.

The martyr St. Ignatius said, "All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. "For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?" Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the

gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death.” This martyr does not consider what happens now as living – can you believe that? For him, living means only being with Christ.

“One of the great blessings of Heaven is the appreciation of Heaven on earth. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” Jim Elliott [Help the kids understand this].

The martyrs have a very special place in Heaven and in the church. If your church owns relics of martyrs you can ask your students: *Who here knows what all those red tubes are that we have in our church?* Does anybody know what is inside them, why they are so special? [*there are **relics** of the saints inside them!*] Does anybody know on which feast we take out almost all of them? [*Nyrouz! Nyrouz is one of the feasts of the church and it is the Coptic New Year. It comes every year in September. Every year, our church does a very big procession, even going outside and around the church, with all the deacons holding a relic*]. Does anybody know which special saints’ relics we take out on Nyrouz? [*The **Martyrs***]. Martyrs are people who were killed because they believed in Christ. They are most honored in the church and God gives them a very special place in Heaven. And on the Feast of Nyrouz, we remember the martyrs and we celebrate them (because we are happy that they were victorious on earth and are now with God in Paradise), we celebrate *with* them (because the church in heaven and the church on earth together worship and praise God joyfully), and we also thank God for giving the martyrs to His church because without them, the church would not have survived.

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## LESSON BODY:

### THE MANY MARTYRS OF OUR CHURCH

Take one copy of each one of the icons so that every martyr is represented and put them up on the board or at the front of the room so all the students can see them. Tell the students the names of each one of the martyrs. Explain to the students that each student will get to choose one of these icons, color their own icon, sign their name on the back, frame it, and then walk in the procession at church on Nyrouz vespers with their icon, showing the church this martyr so that the people can honor him/her.

Have the students choose their icons. Have the ones who chose the same icons sit in groups. As each group is coloring their icon, one servant will come and sit with the students and (gently) explain the story of that martyr to them while they are coloring. Servants will also help the students sign their names and frame their icons when they are finished coloring. Icons will be

stored in the classroom. Servants will come up with a plan for distributing the icons to the students on the feast vespers procession and will tell the students what they should do in order to get their icon on Nyrouz and to be ready to walk in the procession. Servants should carefully plan and assist students to participate in the procession in co-ordination with the priest and the deacons.

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#### PLAN AND MATERIALS:

*The purpose of this class is to give the students a way to take part in the feast of Nyrouz. By coloring and framing their own icons in order to walk in the procession, the students will come to understand that they have a role in the church and an important place in the family of God. The stories of the saints' lives will be told to the students while they are coloring (gently).*

- Copies of the icons of martyrs for the students to color and frame preferably on card paper
- Crayons and colored pencils
- Frames
- Decorations for the frames
- A way for the students to sign their names to the back of their icon
- A letter to the parents to bring their children on the eve of Nyrouz for vespers

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#### CONCLUSION

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q. What is Nyrouz?

A. *The feast of the new coptic year*

Q. What do we celebrate on Nyrouz?

A. *The Martyrs of the Church*

Q. How do we celebrate the Nyrouz feast?

A. *By Making a procession with relics and icons of martyrs*

Q. What is a martyr?

A. *One who bears witness to the truth even to the point of death*

Q. What is a relic?

A. *A part of the body of the martyr.*

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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*"You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance." Psalm 65:11*  
or,

*"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21*

## Unit VI: Seasonal lessons

**Purpose:** This unit covers the feasts and the seasons of the church. The main focus of this unit is to prepare the students to fully engage in the church life and celebrations.

### 2. FEAST OF THE CROSS

#### SERVANT PREPARATION:

#### VERSE & REFERENCES:

*John 12:32-34 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die. The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, "The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"*

*Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

*Matthew 24:29-31 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

#### CHURCH FATHERS:

St Cyril of Alexandria Commentary on St John's Gospel 12:32,33

Howbeit, after that Christ had given Himself unto the Father for our salvation as a Spotless Victim, and was now on the point of paying the penalties that He suffered on our behalf, we were ransomed from the accusations of sin. And so, when the beast has been removed from our midst, and the tyrant is deposed, then Christ brings unto Himself the race that had strayed away, calling not only Jews but all mankind as well unto salvation through the faith that is in Him. For whereas the calling through the Law was partial, that through Christ was universal. For Christ alone, as God, was able to procure all good things for us. And with exceeding good omen, He speaks of being "uplifted" instead of being "crucified." For He would keep the mystery invisible to those intent on killing Him; for they were not worthy to learn it: nevertheless, He allowed them that were wiser to understand that He would suffer because of all and on behalf

of all. And especially I suppose any one might take it in this way, and very fitly; that the Death on the Cross was an exaltation which is ever associated in our thoughts with honor and glory. For on this account too Christ is glorified, forasmuch as the benefits He procured for humanity thereby are many. And by these He draws men *unto Himself*, and does not, like the disciples, lead them to another. He shows therefore that He is Himself by Nature God, in that He does not put the Father outside Himself. For it is through the Son that a man is drawn unto the knowledge of the Father.

*33 But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die.*

Hereby the Evangelist showed that the Lord did not suffer in ignorance, but voluntarily; and with full knowledge, not only that He was dying, but also in what manner: and He named the Cross [as His] death.

#### **St John Chrysostom commentary on the letter to the Galatians chapter 6:14**

**Verse 14.** *“But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Truly this symbol is thought despicable; but it is so in the world’s reckoning, and among men; in Heaven and among the faithful it is the highest glory. Poverty too is despicable, but it is our boast; and to be cheaply thought of by the public is a matter of laughter to them, but we are elated by it. So too is the Cross our boast. He does not say, “I boast not,” nor, “I will not boast,” but, “Far be it from me that I should,” as if he abominated it as absurd, and invoked the aid of God in order to his success therein. And what is the boast of the Cross? That Christ for my sake took on Him the form of a slave, and bore His sufferings for me the slave, the enemy, the unfeeling one; yea He so loved me as to give Himself up to a

curse for me. What can be comparable to this! If servants who only receive praise from their masters, to whom they are akin by nature, are elated thereby, how must we not boast when the Master who is very God is not ashamed of the Cross which was endured for us. Let us then not be ashamed of His unspeakable tenderness; He was not ashamed of being crucified for thy sake, and wilt thou be ashamed to confess His infinite solicitude? It is as if a prisoner who had not been ashamed of his King, should, after that King had come to the prison and himself loosed the chains, become ashamed of him on that account. Yet this would be the height of madness, for this very fact would be an especial ground for boasting.

**Verse 14.** *“Through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*

What he here calls the world is not the heaven nor the earth, but the affairs of life, the praise of men, retinues, glory, wealth, and all such things as have a show of splendor. To me these things are dead. Such an one it behooves a Christian to be, and always to use this language. Nor was he content with the former putting to death, but added another, saying, “and I unto the world,” thus implying a double putting to death, and saying, They are dead to me, and I to them, neither can they captivate and overcome me, for they are dead once for all, nor can I desire



them, for I too am dead to them. Nothing can be more blessed than this putting to death, for it is the foundation of the blessed life.

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#### REFLECTION:

*The Church celebrates the feast of the finding of the Holy Cross with two processions. One short at vespers and another longer and more elaborate at Matins. Children would be excited to share in both processions, but because the feast in most years falls on week days, it might be impractical for them to participate in the morning one. All attention should be given to them in participating in the vespers procession.*

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#### PRAYER:

Lord, who on the sixth day, at the sixth hour You were nailed to the Cross for the sin that Adam dared to commit in paradise. Break the bonds of our sins, Lord Christ and save us. I cried to the Lord and He heard me. Lord accept my prayer and answer my supplication, hear me in the evening and in the morning and at noon. Hear my words and spare my soul.

## II LESSON PREPARATION:

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#### SONG:

Evol Heten pi-Estavros.

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#### VOCABULARY:

**Trinity, Blessed**

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#### INTRODUCTION

I have a very important question for you today; the answer to this question has literally changed peoples' lives. What is the most powerful sign in the whole world? [May need to provide examples of signs so that the students understand: a heart, an arrow, etc... Encourage them to think of truly the most *powerful* one]. The Cross. This is the most powerful sign in the world.

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## LESSON BODY:

### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Why is the Cross so powerful? Because when I sign myself with the Cross, I sign myself with the weapon that defeated the devil and sin. Because when our Lord gave up Himself on the cross He brought us back to His kingdom.

It is powerful because I say with it the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (make the sign of the cross as this is being said). This is the Name of our God, of the **Trinity**. And it is the most important name and the most **blessed** name.

I need to tell you something else – the sign of the Cross is almost like a secret for the Christians. Other people who are not Christian do not understand how special the Cross is to Christians and to them, it just seems like moving your hand around. But a Christian knows the secret, knows how powerful and how special the Cross is. Remember that.

When I sign myself with the Cross, I go from top to bottom. This means something. Let me ask you – who went from the top to the bottom? What is up there, at the top? [Heaven]. And what is down here, that we are standing on? [Earth]. Who was living in Heaven and then came down to Earth? [Our Lord Jesus Christ]. So when I take my fingers and I go from top to bottom, I am doing what Christ did when He came from Heaven down to Earth and was born from St. Mary.

Then after this, we go from left to right. This also means something very special. The left side represents the sadness and darkness we were in without Christ. Then when I move my fingers from the left side to the right side, this shows the change that Christ has done in my life – He moved me from a dark, sad place and to a place that is full of light and joy, moved me closer to Him.

### USING THE CROSS

Does anybody know when we use the sign of the Cross? [Anytime and all the time!] We use the cross before we do anything: before we leave our room, eat, sleep, do our work in school and at home. We also use the sign of the cross if we are ever scared or sad or angry. [Invite the students to name other times they would use the sign of the cross].

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## PLAN AND MATERIALS:

- *Prepare wooden crosses for the students to carry during procession. have them decorating it during the class and write messages of love to Christ our Lord.*

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## CONCLUSION

### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

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Q. Why the sign of the cross is powerful?

A. *Because it is the sign that defeated the devil and that we say the Name of God with it*

Q. When do we bless ourselves with the sign of the cross?

A. *Before we start anything*

Q. When I make the sign of the cross, why do I move my hand from my head to my belly?

A. *To say that Our Lord came down from heaven to the belly of St Mary*

Q. Why do I move my hand from left to right

A. *To say that by the Cross of Our Lord we were moved from darkness and sadness to light and joy*

### VERSE TO REMEMBER:

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Galatians 6:14

*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

# Third Section

## Mini Reference

### THE LITURGICAL CYCLE:

- Every family has their own celebrations (for example: birthdays, anniversaries). The Church, as the family of God, comes to celebrate certain occasions.
- The church invites all of us to celebrate the important occasions that made our faith as one body
- What are the feasts we celebrate in general?

- Feasts of the Lord- Major and Minor

**A. Major Feasts :**

1. Holy Nativity
2. Holy Theophany
3. Palm Sunday
4. Covenant Thursday
5. Holy Resurrection
6. Holy Pentecost
7. Holy Anscension

**B. Minor Feasts:**

1. Presentation into the Temple
2. Circumcision
3. Entry into Egypt
4. Wedding of Cana of Galilee
5. Holy Transfiguration
6. Holy Ascension
7. Thomas Sunday

- In addition we celebrate the feasts of the saints on daily basis, except in the Holy fifty days, as we focus all our attention to the *Resurrected Lord*.

- Fasting

**A. First Degree Fast:** Absolute restriction to meat & dairy & seafood; includes

- Every Wednesday and Friday (*except during the 50 days after Resurrection*)
- the Great Lent
- Baramoun days
- Jonah's Fast

**B. Second Degree Fast:** Absolute restriction to meat & dairy- seafood is allowed; includes:

- Advent
- Fast of the Apostles
- the Fast of St. Mary

C. **Moveable Feasts and Fasts:** Do not come on a fixed date every year

- i. Jonah's fast
- ii. Beginning of Holy Lent
- iii. Holy Week
- iv. Holy Resurrection
- v. Holy Pentecost

## PRAYERS: 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE

### 1. The Sign of the Cross

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

### 2. Our Father

Our Father who art in Heaven

Hallowed by Thy name

Thy Kingdom come

Thy will be done

On Earth as it is in Heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

### 3. Thanksgiving Prayer (section)

Let us give thanks to the beneficent and merciful God, the Father of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, for He has covered us, helped us, guarded us, accepted us unto Him, spared us, supported us, and brought us to this hour. Let us also ask Him, the Lord our God, the Almighty, to guard us in all peace this holy day and all the days of our life.

O Master, Lord, God the Almighty, the Father of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, we thank You for every condition, concerning every condition, and in every condition, for You have covered us, helped us, guarded us, accepted us unto You, spared us, supported us, and brought us to this hour.

### 4. Introduction to the creed

We exalt you, The Mother of the True Light. We Glory you, O saint, the Theotokos, for you brought forth unto us the Savior of the Whole world; He came and saved our souls.

Glory to You our Master, our King, Christ the pride of the Apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the joy of the righteous, the firmness of the churches, the forgiveness of sins.

We proclaim the Holy Trinity in One Godhead. We worship and glorify Him. Lord Have Mercy, Lord Have mercy, Lord Bless. Amen.

## 5. Liturgy Responses

- A. Lord have mercy: Kereye lieson
- B. Glory be the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the age of all ages. Amen, Alleluia : Doxa patri ke eyou Ke Agiou Epnevmati Ke nin ke a-ee ke Ke yes tos e-onas Ton e-onon. Amen, Alleluia
- C. Peace be with you all: Irene Passe
- D. And with your spirit: Ke to pnevmati soo
- E. Alleluia. this is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Lord save us, O Lord straighten our ways. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Alleluia : Alleluia fai pe pi eho-oo eta ep Chois thamiof: maren thelil en ten oonof emmon enkhitf: O Ep Chois ek-e nahmen: O Ep Chois ek-e sooten nen moit: Ef-esmaro-oot enje fi ethnioo khi ef raan em ep Chois: Alleluia
- F. Amen. Amen. Amen. Your death, O Lord, we proclaim. Your holy resurrection and ascension, we confess. We praise You, we bless You, we thank You, O Lord, and we entreat You, O our God.
- G. The golden censer is the Virgin, her aroma is our Savior. She gave birth to Him; He saved us and forgave us our sins.  
  
Tee-shory ennob te ti-Parthenos, pes-aro-mata pe pen-Soteer, asmisi emmof, afsoti emmon, owoh ka nen-novi nan e-vol.

## 6. Seasonal Responses:

- A. Thok te ti gom nem bi ouh nem bi ezmouh nem bi amahi sha eneh. amin. Emanoel benouti pen oro.  
+ thok te ti gom nem bi ouh nem bi ezmouh nem bi amahi sha eneh amin  
bashoice  
essous bi ekhristos basotir en aghathos. (Tagom nem bi ezmoh bi ebchioce av

shobe-niah av- soutiria efouaab).

+ thok te ti gom nem bi ouh nem bi ezmouh nem bi amahi sha eneh. Amin

To you is the power, and the glory, and blessing for ever amen. Emanuel our God and our king.

+ To you is the power, the glory, the majesty for ever amen. My Lord Jesus Christ my good Savior. (My strength, and my hymnal is the Lord and he became my holy salvation).

+ To you is the power, the glory, the majesty for ever amen.

- B.** He ascended unto heaven and sent to us the Paraclete, The Spirit of Truth the comforter, Amen Alleluia



## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

### **Drawing and Art**

- Album/CD covers
- Boxes (for art projects or collections)
- Flyers
- Greeting cards
- Mobiles
- Models from clay or dough
- Mosaics (construction paper, paper punch holes, Easter egg shells, seeds)
- Bulletin boards
- Christmas trees
- Collages (magazine pictures or odds and ends)
- Displays
- Banners
- Book jackets
- Booklets (bound with yarn or staples, accordion type)
- Bookmarks
- Doorknob hangers
- Dot pictures
- Finger paintings
- Fingerprint pictures from ink pads (details with felt-tipped pens)
- Movies
- Puppets
- Sculpture (wire, paper, aluminum, foil, clay)
- Sponge paintings
- Stained-glass windows
- Student-made storybooks
- Texts lettered on seashells, rocks
- Paper dolls
- Paper weight
- Photo albums with illustrations and captions
- Photo essays (magazine pictures or photos)
- Posters
- T-shirts
- Water pictures on the board
- Yarn-and-cloth pictures

### **Writing**

- TV shows
- Web pages
- Paraphrases of Bible passages
- Poems
- Prayers

- Questions and answers
- Quizzes
- Reports
- Riddles
- Commercials
- Conversations
- Crossword puzzles
- Diaries
- Emails
- Interviews
- Letters
- Litanies
- Modern parables/stories
- Newspaper headlines/stories
- Skits
- Speeches
- Stories

### **Speaking and singing**

### **Audiovisuals**

- DVDs
- Flannel boards
- LCD projectors
- Maps
- Models
- Movies
- Multimedia shows
- Pictures
- Power-point presentations
- Bulletin boards
- CDs
- Chalk-talk
- Charts
- Computers

- Panel discussions
- Questions and answers
- Singing

- Concrete aids
- Scrapbooks
- Slides
- Songs
- Transparencies
- Videocassettes or audiocassettes

### **Role-Playing and Dramatizing**

- Cutouts on overheard projector
- Puppet shows
- Role-plays
- Dramatic reading/storytelling
- Gestures to songs
- Plays

- Storytelling
- Discussions (small group/large group)

- Guest speakers
- Interviews
- Lectures

### **Playing games**

- Board games
  - Spelling bees
  - Team games
  - Trivia games
  - Drawing games
  - Icebreakers
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- Quiz shows
  - Skill games