



For the Life of the World

All American Council 2018

GRADES 9-11 CURRICULUM

OVERARCHING GOAL: Youth will discover how Liturgy is relevant to their relationship with self, God, and the world.

SECTIONS/GOALS:

1. Liturgy and Self: Youth will understand the need to go to church and to offer themselves to God.
2. Liturgy and God: Youth will learn how God finds us and helps us to discover our gifts through our lives in the church.
3. Liturgy and the World: Learning that every moment in our lives is a sacrament, Youth will discover how to offer themselves to God and others in their daily lives.

MATERIALS:

- Folder for each youth to hold materials
- Quote Hand-out to follow along with as a visual aid during the lessons
- For the Life of the World BDA Hand-out (1 per youth)
- Writing Utensils
- Paper
- YouTube viewing access
- Jelly beans, two flavors (one delectable and one detestable). Two flavors for each youth.

ICEBREAKER GAME:

Take the time to go around as a large group and allow youth to introduce themselves with their name, church location, grade and perhaps something additional (favorite kitchen utensil, saint, icon, Lenten meal, ethnic food, ice cream, etc.)

PART 1: LITURGY & SELF

THEME BRAINSTORM: “FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

Materials:

- For the Life of the World BDA Hand-out (1 per youth)
- Writing Utensils

Explain that the theme for the entire week of the council is “For the Life of the World”. Without any explanations or discussions, ask the youth to write out on the hand-out what “For the Life of the World” means to them right now, as broad as it may seem! Explain that we will revisit this definition as we continue this week.

After they have written their response, allow people to share their thoughts and remark accordingly. Then, have the youth put their hand-outs back into their folders.

GAME: CHRYSOSTOM CHALLENGE

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing Utensils

Divide the large group into small groups of 3-5. Give groups time to re-acquaint themselves with names, then provide each group with one sheet of paper and a writing utensil. Have each group choose a writer and the rest will help guide their writers.

Without the use of any resources, each group is to write down as many parts/sections of the Liturgy as they can remember. Give a 10-minute time limit. Ten minutes is not enough time to recall the many sections of the Liturgy, but it is interesting to see which parts of the Liturgy are recollected and are worthy of discussion. You may also choose to allow groups an extra couple minutes to organize/re-organize their recorded sections.

Discuss which parts they remembered. Did most groups record the same parts? Were there some unique ones? The discussion may reveal a lack of knowledge, which is always interesting to point out – what did people forget or choose not to write? Why did no one think of certain parts? Which parts seem the most important/valued/understood to their age? Are their personal connections to any of those parts? Etc.

Explain that this activity helps us to review the Liturgy which is what we are going to talk about this week in relationship to ourselves, our relationship to God and our relationship to the world.

DISCUSSION: WHY GO TO CHURCH?

Discuss the importance of Liturgy in our lives using the discussion questions below to guide you (possible responses in Italics).

- Why is Liturgy so important in our lives? *As Christians, we are continually called to give thank (The full title of Liturgy is “Eucharistic Liturgy” which means to “give thanks”, within the Eucharistic Liturgy we partake of the life of Christ which we should bring with us into our daily lives, etc.*
- Has anyone ever taken a non-Orthodox friend to an Orthodox Liturgy before? What were their reactions? What was your response? *Perhaps a remark about the length or about the “short sermons”.....how do we respond to that? Do we ever make excuses for it, work to justify it (and what are the “justifications” we make for the length?), Is it ever good to make justifications for our faith? Why is it so long? Why are Orthodox Christians often unique with their “lengthy” services? Feel free to recap some of the parts of the Liturgy mentioned in the Chrysostom Challenge and the important part of each section and how they work together to prepare us for the Eucharistic Gifts and why that is such an important part of our service (many Christians don’t have communion on a regular basis, etc.), etc.*
- What does Liturgy do for us as an individual? As a community? *As an individual it can bring us closer to Christ, Christ longs for us to be in unity with him with each other and church is a place where that unity is at work. It is a gift and invitation from God to unite us with the divine energies and to be a part of His eternal kingdom.*
- Why do we bother going to church? Why is it important to make time for our church, especially if God is essentially “everywhere?” *Church is a place where we are together in Christ, church is a place where we can receive the sacrament of communion, etc.*

DISCUSSION & VIDEO: RELIGIOUS VS. SPIRITUAL

Materials:

- YouTube viewing access

We live in a culture where individuals often create their own faith and reasons to go or not to go to church. As a teenager, it’s very natural for you to question the importance of going to church especially when you are learning to question many other things in your life. When we talk about the reasons we make the attempt to go to church and the importance behind it, it’s hard to not talk about the popular saying, “I’m Spiritual and not religious” said abundantly in our modern society. Discuss this idea further using the questions as a guide:

- In our modern world, it’s popular for people to label themselves as “spiritual” and not “religious”. What do people mean when they say that? *Often, they mean that they don’t belong to an organized religion and don’t go to church, but they believe in a God and prefer to worship them in their own way.*
- Why do many find that so attractive? Why is it becoming “cool?” *It might be an attempt to lovingly demonstrate an acceptance of others’ beliefs? It might be a way of avoiding some bad/evil experiences that their church life provided, etc. It may even be an excuse to not go to church or reveal a lack of understanding of what the Church is.*
- Is this okay? Is religion something we should leave at church? *Make sure to explain that the world was never meant to be separate from religion. Being religious vs. worldly was not how we were created to be. Our church Liturgy brings the world into it even through the act of communion where our worldly food (wine & bread) is transformed into what it is meant to be – in communion with God!*

- Talk about the term “spiritual”. Explain that “spiritual” today is such a very broad term that you can technically be Wiccan and spiritual. For the rest of the conversation we are going to think of “Spiritual” as “True Christian”....so our question revolves around being “true Christian” vs. religious”.

Watch the YouTube Video “Spirituality VS Religion” with Fr. Thomas Hopko, then respond to these questions.

Note: The entire video is about 25-30 minutes, but the first 11 minutes is a solid interview session with Fr. Hopko. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJBlp9UgkUk>. After is a few minutes with a nun, and then a continued interview with Fr. Hopko. The questions below are for the first 11 minutes. Feel free to watch more if the youth are engaged.

- Fr. Thomas Hopko makes several remarks why we personally need Christ and His Church. What were some of his reasons? *We need church, because God is the answer to our needs, not other men, We can't find God without the help of the church because it fulfills the interaction between God and the people, church is the community in which the living God inspires us through psalms and sacraments, etc.*
- Fr. Hopko states that Orthodox Christians would say that God is seeking us. What does he mean by that? *We are in a world in which many people are trying to make their own God, we seek a God we want, but we need to let God find us! It is only through His grace that we can know Him. We need to let God into our lives to make us, not make our own Gods. We need to begin to go to Church to know our God as He is.*
- In the sense that we need to let God find us, instead of us finding God....how do we do that besides the act of going to church? *Talk about surrender- saying Yes to God, letting Him into our lives, giving ourselves to Him.*

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: SPIRITUAL VS. RELIGIOUS

Excerpts from Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's *For the Life of the World*:

- *The real tragedy of Christianity is not its “compromise” with the world and progressive “materialism,” but on the contrary, its “spiritualization” and transformation into “religion.” And religion – as we know already – has thus come to mean a world of pure spirituality, a concentration of attention of matters pertaining to the “soul.” [discuss how sad it is that religion and spirituality are discussed as separate from our daily lives!]*
- *The sin was not that man neglected his religious duties. The sin was that he thought of God in terms of religion, i.e., opposing Him to life. The only real fall of man is his non-eucharistic life in a non-Eucharistic world. The fall is not that he preferred world to God, distorted the balance between the spiritual and material, but that he made the world material, whereas he was to have transformed it into “life in God,” filled with meaning and spirit. (18)*

DISCUSSION & READING: SURRENDER!

When we listened to Fr. Thomas Hopko, he mentioned that we need to let God find us. If you watched the entire clip, there is mention that spirituality in the world is self-centered with the continual question of “Who is God to me?” So, to truly let God find us, we need to be willing to get rid of our “self” separated from God.

Our Liturgy calls us to do this act every time! Ask the group what they think the phrase “Thine Own of Thine Own” means? Where might they remember it being said during the Liturgy? Explain that it happens in the Anaphora, right before the Consecration of the Holy Gifts. *If needed, read or have youth read or re-enact the excerpt below.*

PRIEST: (quietly) Having in remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming:

(The Priest takes up the Diskarion and the Chalice and elevates them over the Antimins; he makes the sign of the Cross with them over the Antimins as he lowers them, saying:)

(Aloud) Thine own of thine own we offer unto thee, in behalf of all, and for all.

CHOIR: We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar, and continues with the Prayer of Consecration)

PRIEST: (Quietly) Again we offer unto thee this reasonable and unbloody service, and beseech thee and pray thee and supplicate thee: send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here spread forth: (The Priest signs the Holy Bread with the sign of the cross, saying quietly:) And make this bread the precious Body of thy Christ; Amen. (The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Chalice, saying quietly:) And that which is in this cup, the precious Blood of thy Christ; Amen. (The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over both the holy Gifts, saying quietly:)

PRIEST: Changing them by thy Holy Spirit; Amen, Amen, Amen.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar and continues the prayer quietly:)

That to those who shall partake thereof they may be unto cleansing of soul, unto the remission of sins, unto the communion of thy Holy Spirit, unto the fulfilment of the kingdom of Heaven, unto boldness toward thee, and not unto judgement nor unto condemnation.

And again we offer unto thee this reasonable service for all those who in faith have gone before us to their rest: Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith:

PRIEST: (Aloud) Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary:

After discussing possible youth responses to what they think the phrase means, lead the group by explaining that “Thine own of Thine Own” is basically “I surrender” – an offering to God. As Christians we need to offer ourselves to God.

Explain that we must give ourselves entirely to God! By doing so, God will help us give our gifts and talents to others and we are free to live a life holy and pleasing to the Lord! To accept God’s will, we have to open our hearts to Him and let Him live in us.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: SURRENDER

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion (Excerpts taken from Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*):

- “Only love for God, the absolute object of all love, frees obedience from blindness and makes it the joyful acceptance of that alone which is worthy of being accepted. But love without obedience to God is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16).” (84)
- “True obedience is thus true love for God, the true response of Creation to its creator. Humanity is fully humanity when it is this response to God, when it becomes the movement of total self-giving and obedience to Him.” (Schmemmann 85)

DISCUSSION: THEOTOKOS AS EXAMPLE OF SURRENDER TO GOD

Begin by asking the following questions (Possible responses are in italics):

- Why do we hold the mother of God in such a high regard? Is it too high according to protestants? Have any of you encountered a protestant friend who has accused you of giving her false worship or ignoring the focus of Jesus Christ? *Simply allow open discussion for youth to recall interactions about the Theotokos with peers.*
- Why is the Annunciation so important? What does it mean when she willingly, without question accepts God’s will? *This is our goal! To accept God’s will for us! Think about how incredibly scary saying “yes” was in her situation: engaged, young woman to have a child by someone other than her betrothed! How incredibly frightening for her life!*

- What is the difference between how the Theotokos accepts Gabriel's statement compared to Zachariah's questioning? *One comes out of innocent humility while the other comes out of experience and arrogance. One is the voice of acceptance and trust while the other is of disbelief, which eventually needs to see to and is an OT doubting Thomas. He doubts in private – in the Holy of Holies, but then proclaims publicly before family and those gathered, the miracle of God. Compare Zachariah's response to Elizabeth's praise with compassion and mercy.*
- How is the Theotokos present in your life? *Could be as simple as prayers in church, recognizing Theotokos feast days, or asking for her prayers or guidance in your daily struggles. Reference Christ on the cross – Woman behold your son. Behold your mother...how does that scripture play in our daily lives? With our own mothers? Aunts? Grandmothers?*

Look back at the last Liturgical text with "Thine Own of Thine Own" embedded into it. Shortly after the highlighted "part" of the Liturgy, there is the offering unto thee for "all who have gone before us in faith....especially the Theotokos"! Why after this phrase do we immediately reference her? Allow for various responses but lead into the idea that the Theotokos is the ultimate example of one who has offered herself to God. What did she do that demonstrates her complete trust in God? *Lead into the fact that she accepted God's will and gave herself to it fully.*

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: THEOTOKOS AS EXAMPLE OF SURRENDER

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

Luke 1:26-38 when the Archangel Gabriel Announces Christ's birth to Mary and she accepts.

- *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Excerpt from Schmemmann's For the Life of the World

- "She is the Mother of Christ. She is the fullness of love accepting the coming of God to us – giving life to Him, who is the Life of the world. And the whole creation rejoices in her, because it recognizes through her that the end and fulfillment of all life, of all love is to accept Christ, to give Him life in ourselves. And there should be no fear that this joy about Mary takes anything from Christ, diminishes in any way the glory due to Him and Him alone. For what we find in her and what constitutes the joy of the Church is precisely the fullness of our adoration of Christ, of

acceptance and love for Him. Really, here is no “cult of movement of joy and thanksgiving, of acceptance and obedience – the wedding to the Holy Spirit, which makes it the only complete joy on earth.” (87)

You may also choose to look at some of the Liturgical Hymns to the Theotokos:

- *Hymn to the Theotokos:*

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

- *All Creation Rejoices:*

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, the assembly of Angels and the race of men. O Sanctified Temple and Rational Paradise! O Glory of Virgins! From you, God was incarnate and became a child, our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, o Full of Grace! Glory to you!

Discuss how each of the hymns gives her status above the angels. We witness the Archangel Gabriel in the Bible honoring her in his greeting to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” but when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. (Luke 1: 28-29) We can obtain a spiritual relationship with God through our love and doing His will. Together with the saints and the angels we honor her as an intercessor for us as she gave herself fully to God. All of creation rejoices in her!

DISCUSSION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE A SACRAMENTAL LIFE?

We talked about surrendering ourselves to God. Jesus himself, whom we are called to imitate, sacrificed Himself for us! Like Him, we are to sacrifice ourselves, to give ourselves to others and to God, to open our hearts to His love. Discuss the meaning of the word *sacrament*? *The youth know this, but let them explain and lead to the fact that sacraments are officially called “holy mysteries”. It is a means of which we can experience the love for us that God intends us to feel, a means to direct all that we do to God.*

Explain that we all know “the traditional seven sacraments”, but that “traditionally the Orthodox never counted the sacraments. The number of seven was adopted in Orthodoxy very recently under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Traditionally the Orthodox understand everything in the Church to be sacramental. All of life becomes a sacrament in Christ who fills life itself with the Spirit of God.” (*The Orthodox Faith: Volume ii Worship by Fr. Thomas Hopko*)

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LIVING A SACRAMENTAL LIFE

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- *“The Church may be defined as the new life in Christ. It is man’s life lived by the Holy Spirit in union with God. All aspects of the new life of the Church participate in the mystery of salvation. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. And so in Christ and the Holy Spirit everything in the Church becomes a sacrament, an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God as it is already being experienced in the life of this world.” -The Orthodox Faith: Volume ii Worship by Fr. Thomas Hopko*
- *“Man was created for Eucharist – for the pure love of God, for the sake of God, for the recognition of God as the content of his very life, as the answer to all his questions, the Purpose of all his desires.” -Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

DISCUSSION: FINDING YOUR SPIRITUAL BALANCE

We’ve been talking about the importance of going to church and offering ourselves to God. By going to church we learn about ourselves and how we uniquely grow closer to God. Discuss the following:

- What are the rules in the church? How do we apply them? *Talk about different types of rules – communion, fasting, confession, etc. How often do we do these things/should we do these things, etc.*
- How do we behave in church? Is it okay to stand and be passive or should we always be “busy?” *Orthodoxy has always been an active worship involving all the senses. It is not only with the mind that we are called to worship – our eyes sense God’s glory through the iconography, our noses through the incense, our posture through prostrations, our lips through song, etc. All these actions are meant to help our being to worship God. If we stand in awe of His presence, standing is okay. However, we are also called to discover our talents within the church! Becoming active within the church helps us to discover our gifts – in what ways can we serve? When we serve within the church community, we learn how we can take that service into our worldly communities.*
- What does a “lazy Orthodox Christian” look like? What does a “Super Intense Christian” do? What would a “Super Intense Christian” do to prepare for communion? *Visa-versa A lazy Orthodox might not eat breakfast in the morning before communion, but a super intense Orthodox might go to Vespers and confession of sorts the night before communion, fast from food and drink since the evening prior and say many prayers, etc.*
- Which example do we follow? *Explain that we are judged by God based on the level at which we are able, which is not our level, but God’s. We often compare ourselves to those around us – our parents or other church community members. Some of those people are very intense and can be fantastic examples to admire, but we need to remember not to compare ourselves. When we compare, we can either feel downcast and unworthy or we might feel prideful if we see ourselves as better. We need to not think of our judgment, but think of God and His judgment.*
- What happens when we lose focus in church? (Thinking about what needs to be done after Liturgy – oops! Need to study for that test!) What can we do? *First, know that you are not alone! This is a common battle that usually stems from praying with our minds and not our hearts. Keep praying! Just start praying again! We are humbled by this battle because we realize that we cannot succeed in prayer without God’s mercy. We learn to fight sin through the Liturgy (lay aside all earthly cares), be Christian (hearing the instructions of the Epistles), nourishing our bodies (receiving the Eucharist) – equipped to fight the good fight, staying focused and committed to living as Christians wherever we are in life.*
- What happens when we don’t follow or live up to the Church community or parent’s expectation of us in the church? *Despair*
- What happens when we do more than we can practically handle? *We might feel overwhelmed and crash at a certain point, etc.*
- So....how can we find our spiritual balance? *Go to church, use the tools – talk to a spiritual father, a god-parent, parent, talk to God - PRAY for guidance. If you find yourself shutting down because you are too overwhelmed or find yourself despairing that you are not good enough, try to adjust what you are doing with prayer. It’s okay to say I don’t know what I am supposed to do, God, but I’m willing to trust you because You know. In that way we surrender and let God guide us in how we can grow closer to Him. Cast your troubles onto Him!*

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Our first section was about making Liturgy relevant to our relationship with our self. What have you learned or realized about the “Self?” **KEY MESSAGE: THAT WE NEED TO OFFER OURSELVES TO GOD, That the self needs the church to fully know God.**

Re-cap Questions:

- Why do we need Liturgy? *We need the Liturgy in our lives because God is the answer to our needs, it is where God has called us to give ourselves to Him. It is the first step in living our entire lives even outside of the church as a sacrament.*
- What can we do with ourselves to make Liturgy meaningful? *First, come. Come with the intent to pray. It even starts with making the decision to come even before arriving. Opening our hearts and letting God in will help us form*

that relationship. We can also choose areas in the church to become active and use our talents such as singing or serving or greeting, etc.

Sometimes the idea of getting rid of self confuses people to believe that our “self” is not important. God loves us all individually and values our gifts and uniqueness. Read the following quote from Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*:

To be truly man means to be fully oneself. The confirmation is the confirmation of man in his own, unique “personality.” It is, to use again the same image, his ordination to be himself, to become what God wants him to be, what He has loved in me from all eternity. It is the gift of vocation. If the Church is truly the ‘newness of life’ – the world and nature as restored in Christ.

Each of us is called to love God and others fully, but we are called to do so uniquely. We come together with different gifts united as one. To really know what gifts we can offer, we must first offer them to God and pray. You may choose to read 1 Corinthians 12:4-12 to emphasize this point:

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

PART 2: LITURGY & GOD

DISCUSSION: LITURGY & GOD

We’ve been talking a lot about finding our place in the Liturgy, the need to come to church and to offer ourselves to God in the way He is calling us, to be willing to surrender to live a sacramental life. We need to let God find us and not run away from Him. Once we do that, how do we foster that relationship with God? What does He give us through the Liturgy? What are our expectations of Him? How can we continue to strengthen our relationship with Him?

- What Does God give or offer us through the Liturgy? *It is a way we can be in communion with each other and God. We are entering a heavenly realm where we can worship with the angels, saints and each other all as one – as it was originally given to us in the Garden! In the Liturgy our earthly food is transformed into the holy state it was meant for – to share with God and taste and see that He is good.*
- How many of you have been asked by peers if you have a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ?” In our current modern world there is a large emphasis on “me” and the “personal relationship with Jesus Christ”. Why is that not a common question in our Orthodox world? *It is good to develop a personal connection with our God, but we need to also recognize that we are not called to separate ourselves from others. Many people talk about their relationship with God in a way to describe how they find God outside of church, on their own, outside of community. Explain that In the Orthodox view, we believe we are to be in communion, “community” with God and our neighbors. It is true, that we are unique and have special gifts to offer and our individual connection to Jesus is valued and of great importance, but it is how we share that love and those gifts with others that bring that holy communion to life.*
- If the community life is so important in the church, how do we also work on our personal connection with God? *St. Seraphim taught us “Acquire peace, and thousands round you will be saved. When a person is in a peaceful state of mind, he can from himself give out to others the light of the illumination of the reason. This peace, like some priceless treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ left to His disciples before His death.” In our church community, we must first offer ourselves to God through the church life, in participation, fasting, and prayer and when we have acquired that peace we have much to offer our community and our world.*

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LITURGY AND GOD

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- *“When we set ourselves apart from others, we are not Christian. We are true Christians when we have a profound sense that we are members of the mystical body of Christ, of the Church, in an unbroken relationship of love – when we live united in Christ, that is, when we experience unity in His Church with a sense of oneness. This is why Christ prays to His Father saying, that they may be one. He repeats the prayer again and again and the apostles emphasize it everywhere. This is the most profound aspect, the most exalted meaning, of the Church. This is where the secret is to be found: for all to be united as one person in God. There is no other religion like this; no other religion says anything of this sort. They have something to say, but not this mystery, this exquisite point of the mystery which Christ demands and tells us that this is how we must become, that he wants us to be His.” - Elder Porphyrios in Wounded by Love,*

LEAD-IN ACTIVITY: FALSE EXPECTATIONS

Materials:

- Jelly beans, two flavors (one delectable and one detestable). Two flavors for each youth.

Give each youth who wants one, a jelly bean with a detestable flavor (try to have them eat it at the same time so everyone is surprised). Wait for some fun reactions and talk about how it probably tasted different than expected. Feel free to give a second jelly bean with a sweet taste to help them have a better taste in their mouths and comment on how some may be nervous to taste another one after their first experience!

DISCUSSION: FALSE EXPECTATIONS:

What did you expect from the first jelly bean? Why? Ask what kind of expectations we have in life? *We may expect our friends to be supportive, God to answer our prayers, etc.* Discuss the following questions, stressing the need to have realistic expectations of church, ourselves, families, friends and God.

- What do we expect when we come to church or What might your classmates at school or non-orthodox friends want from church? *Talk about how many people come to the church wanting to be entertained or expecting to feel good about themselves and the world and have support from their church community for whatever personal struggle they are enduring.*
- Are these expectations realistic? *Explain that while there is a beauty in that “feel-good” need because God is indeed Good and if we truly let Him in we feel that overflowing goodness within us, but it is often not realistic because we must be willing to surrender first, to give ourselves to receive His goodness.*
- What kinds of things do we work for in our lives? *Feel free to take responses, but remind youth that we live in a culture where we expect too much of others. Most of us live in homes where we are given food, shelter and many forms of entertainment without giving much effort on our part. The Orthodox Church believes in God’s Grace, but recognizes the need for us to surrender ourselves for that grace to enter our lives. Surrendering ourselves takes work! We must work to make our relationship strong. We work on our passions/sins through prayer, we confront others to forgive and be forgiven, etc. Explain that the Orthodox Church allows us a place to work on ourselves surrounded by a community of love to help us receive God’s true Grace.*
- In addition, we need to work on our expectations of others. What do we expect to be given from the church community? Why do we have these expectations? *Talk about prayer support, love, outreach, etc.* What about our expectations of a close friend in the church? *Remember that our friends can only give us some comfort, because only from God can we find true comfort. Sometimes we forget this and treat our friends and family as if they should have God-like qualities, which means if they fail us in any way, it may create an unnecessary bitterness or anger in our relationship. If our expectations of others are too high, we may feel crushed when they don’t live up to them and it can leave a bitter taste in our mouth (like those jelly beans!)*

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION: “FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

Materials:

- BDA Hand-Out

- Writing Utensils.

Remind youth that this week's theme revolves around the Eucharistic Liturgy with the phrase "For the Life of the World". Ask them what they think "for the Life of the World" means to them now. What life are we called to live as Christians? Have them write their responses on their hand -out and discuss them.

You may choose to read the part of Liturgy in which this phrase appears to encourage them to think about it:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

*Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was delivered up, or rather when **He delivered Himself up for the life of the world**, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, giving thanks and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:*

The Priest exclaims: Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

After discussing youth responses, explain that "For the Life of the World" is essentially Jesus dying for the world, for us. We are also called to give of ourselves, to offer ourselves fully to God and one of the ways to help us in this endeavor is through Liturgy. The Liturgy, which we recently discussed parts of, is something we are not supposed to leave at church. The process of leaving our daily routines to attend church and the process of departing are part of the Liturgy. The Liturgy allows us to bring Christ into the world because Jesus delivered Himself up for the life of the world.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- "Let us depart in peace," says the celebrant as he leaves the altar, and this is the last commandment of the liturgy. We must not stay on Mount Tabor, although we know that it is good for us to be there. We are sent back. But now "we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit." And it is as witnesses of this Light, as witnesses of the Spirit, that we must "go forth" and begin the never-ending mission of the Church. Eucharist was the end of the journey, the end of time." (45) - Alexander Schmemmann's *For the Life of the World*
- "To leave, to come.... This is the beginning, the starting point of the sacrament, the condition of its transforming power and reality." (28) - Alexander Schmemmann's *For the Life of the World*

DISCUSSION: SACRAMENTS IN THE LITURGICAL LIFE HELP US IN SELF DISCOVERY

Going to church and using the tools it provides can help us discover ourselves. What are some tools in the church that can help strengthen our relationship with God? *Fasting, confession, communion, etc.* Often these tools are also called sacraments. They are gifts that we can use to offer ourselves to God. If we take part in these sacraments, we are better able to discover our true selves!

The sacrament of fasting, for example, is a tool that is also a physical commitment that begins with helping us remember how much we need Christ.

Remind them of the image from the bible in Exodus 17 when the Israelites were wandering the desert and encountered their first attack from a group of people called the Amalekites.

“And so it was, when Moses held up his hands, that Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. Now Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and one on the other; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” (Exodus 17: 11-13)

Ask what they think of this image? What might it have to do with the idea of fasting? *Allow for various responses but lead to explain that in this image, we see God working through Moses, who is working hard to hold up the staff. So hard that he cannot do it alone and is willing to accept support of his friends. Like Moses, we must work to allow God to use us and we can have the support of the church to help us in this endeavor. We may be tempted to do it all on our own and even hide any difficulties we may have, but we are called to come to God and not be afraid to ask for help.*

Explain that fasting reminds us that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4) It is not the material things in life that bring us true comfort, but God himself. Think about how uncomfortable Moses probably was holding up his hands. Fasting reminds us to not be controlled by the things that make us comfortable, the things we want and it also reminds us to be thankful for all the necessities we have – and every time we give thanks, we are giving an offering to God!

In our culture, many of us live a life of comfort. We have food, clothing, shelter, gadgets, many things to keep us busy, etc. Because we often find ourselves with all we need, we forget our true need is God. In our fallen nature try to fill an emptiness with earthly things (and always end up wanting more!), but that need can only be filled by God. We need to train that desire to yearn for God – the ultimate fulfillment. Within the Church, fasting is a tool for us to direct that need.

Talk about the different kinds of fasting. Ask about other things besides food that giving up could make us uncomfortable. Lent is a good opportunity for us to live “uncomfortably” so we can seek comfort in God. Fasting from types of food is a great way to do that, but what about our “need” for social media or for gaming? Cutting off from those and seeking a stronger relationship with Christ might be a better focus.

Talk about how some of us are already fasting and needing God not realizing our current work. Many college kids are fasting living without their families. If your family has recently suffered a death, that is a type of fast – living without someone. There is no need to make additional fasting attempts when you are already so uncomfortable. Just try to reach out to God and his church with the struggle as much as you can during that difficult time!

Fasting is a way to open ourselves up to God and when we let Him in we begin to gracefully discover our true selves.

When we begin to live uncomfortably, we start to see where we struggle. We begin to see more clearly our sins and passions. Our sins or passions keep us confused about who we really are, so it is by working on conquering our passions and letting God in that we begin to see what we are really like. Fasting is a way to rely on God and help us to better see our sins and passions to work on them. And when we can see our sins, we are better able to use the sacrament of confession to bring us closer to God.

Will we ever truly discover who we are? Some of us do, but for many or most it is a life long journey. Living a Liturgical life will help you understand your unique set of gifts and abilities. We will most likely make many mistakes along the way!

What do people mean outside of the church when they say, “Be yourself?” Feel free to talk about how people embrace a sexuality, a gender, an ideal, etc. Some people find political callings to stand up for, etc. Explain that while it’s important to discover a vocation, it’s important to “put on Christ” first. That way, pride, vanity or other passions will be less likely to direct our ways.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Our second section was about discovering ways to understand how Liturgy can help shape our relationship with God. What have you discovered about God in this section? **KEY MESSAGE: THAT WHEN WE GO TO THE LITURGY AND PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, GOD FINDS US AND USES US, HELPING US TO DISCOVER OUR TRUE SELVES.**

Additional re-cap questions:

- Does God need us? *NO! But we need Him! He doesn't need us, but He wants us because He loves us so much! He is ready to pour His grace on us when we stop running away from Him, much like the father in the Prodigal Son.*
- What can we expect of God? *Nothing! We should never expect anything! He has already poured His grace on us through His Son, Jesus Christ. However, like an earthly friendship or family relationship, we have to do our part for our relationship with God to grow.*

PART 3: LITURGY AND THE WORLD

We've talked about how all of life is meant to be a sacrament, not just our lives and actions within the Liturgy. So how can we bring the Liturgy into the world? How can we turn our daily lives towards God? Once we have openly received God's gifts and learned about ourselves, how can we share that gift with the world as we are called to do? As Alexander Schmemmann states in *For the Life of the World*, we have the Liturgy of mission left,

"And now the time has come for us to return into the world. "Let us depart in peace," says the celebrant as he leaves the altar, and this is the last commandment of the Liturgy. We must not stay on Mount Tabor, although we know that it is good for us to be there. We are sent back. But now "we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit." And it is as witnesses of this Light, as witnesses of the Spirit, that we must "go forth" and begin the neverending mission of the Church." (45)

To begin our mission, we must use our "Fruits" and to learn how to truly live in the moment.

DISCUSSION: OUR FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Begin by reading this quote from Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

"Man ate the forbidden fruit. The fruit of that one tree, whatever else it may signify, was unlike every other fruit in the Garden: It was not offered as a gift to man. Not given, not blessed by God, it was food whose eating was condemned to be communion with itself alone, and not with God. It is the image of the world loved for itself, and eating it is the image of life understood as an end in itself."

- Discuss possible youth interpretations of this quote. *Eventually lead into the idea that the gifts we are given individually are meant to be shared with God and the world. If we keep these gifts selfishly for ourselves we live a life separate from God and being separate from God is our own condemnation.*
- What are the fruits of the spirit? *Feel free to mention the commonly referred to fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, but our true fruits can be more specific. What gifts or talents do we have? Remind them that being active in the Liturgy helps us to find and use our talents, which can help us discover our vocations. You can discover yourself and your talents in the life of the church through prayer and fasting while being empowered by the teachings of Christ to do them for the life of the world.*
- What roles can be filled by youth in the church right now? *Singing, greeting, serving, etc.* Emphasize that they are important in the church NOW given their abilities and talents, even though they are not yet an adult! When you say YES to Christ you are affirming the church. You are the church/part of the church. If you have a talent for sewing, perhaps you would like to be a fashion designer – then ask if you can help with sewing vestments or choir robes. If you have a talent for people, can you serve as a greeter? If you have a talent for education, can you teach? Start there, and God will enrich you and guide you. We all have the same calling "to put on Christ",

which comes first, and if we do that along with our unique and individual talents then we can truly start our mission in the world by doing our worldly work with God shining through us. Not some “I will be”, you ARE. Activate that now by being good to other kids in class and living out the moment. Then, bring those talents into the world!

DISCUSSION: LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Ask what “Living in the moment” means to them when they hear it outside of church and allow for responses. Explain that Today “living in the moment” often means living life to its fullest, being busy all of the time – going to social events, doing a bucket list, it can also mean making thoughtless decisions to do something daring or exciting. But within the church, “the present moment” is considered a sacrament. A gift given to us – an opportunity to interact with the Lord – to praise Him, to thank Him, to be fully present with Him in every moment. To not be anxious about the future or regretful of the past, but to be mindful that all are in His care. This is not to say that we shouldn’t plan ahead or care about our futures, but to remember that the present is a time we are called to be in.

Ask why it’s sooo difficult to live in the moment, to not think or worry about the past or the future, to not replay things already said in your mind or to plan things to say in the future, etc. Feel free to talk about how our minds can measure the future and the past, but they cannot measure the current moment, which makes it sooo hard to enter because our minds take us away from it. The mind cannot trust the present moment because it has no control.

Is it okay to remember things? Absolutely! Remembering things helps us to grow, but at what point does hanging on to moments in the past become dysfunctional? Do we hold grudges? Do we regret something so much that we don’t feel like we can move on?

Is it okay to think about the future? Yes! The future is more possibilities for us to do good! But at what point does fear or anxiety of the unknown become detrimental?

How can we better enter the present moment? Prayer! Explain that being in the present is being with Christ. To be present is to pray. We are not able to use our gifts and talents to their full potential if we are not in the now.

How many of you have ever suffered from anxiety or fear or know people who really struggle with them? These are symptoms of not living in the moment. Have an open discussion about different kinds of anxiety (friends doing bad things, test anxiety, acceptance into colleges, try-outs for sport teams, etc) and fear (bad dreams, telling the truth about something, afraid to go to a party or gathering, afraid of what people think about you, etc.) How can we deal with these? Talk about how some of these fears and anxieties are part of our fight with our passions, some fears and anxieties have to do with vanities for example, our desire to please other people instead of focusing on what God wants. But our biggest fear should be of being separate from God. And that idea can re-direct our thinking.

When we remember how much we don’t want to be separate from God, it can help us to live in the moment and turn that fear into love. We can live like we are not afraid of Hell, but that we are in love with heaven.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- “We treasure each breath with the awareness that our breath – that is, life – is given to us to become a healing presence for others and ourselves.” Albert Rossi’s *Becoming a Healing Presence*
- “Time is ours to transform and transfigure. So the meaning of time is found in the risk of love, in relationships, in response and openness to the other. Of course, our basic relationship is with Jesus Christ. We try to use our God-given time to be as aware and connected with Him as we can and then to do what He has put us on the planet to do. Time is a gift to become more of a healing presence.” Albert Rossi’s *Becoming a Healing Presence*
- “We are called to live in the world seeing everything in it as a revelation of God, a sign of His presence, the joy of His coming.” Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*:

DISCUSSION: RESPONDING TO EVENTS

Our country has been enduring many trials and conflicts in the recent years. How do bring the Liturgy into this world of Chaos? Have an open conversation about recent and current tragedies (school shootings, BLM, Syria, etc.) Feel free to list them and allow students to express concern.

Bring up the latest controversial phrase “Thoughts and Prayers” and why that may anger people. Make sure to talk about how prayer is something we Orthodox believe to be work and effort. Read the quote from St. Seraphim from *An Extraordinary Peace*

“Acquire peace, and thousands round you will be saved. When a person is in a peaceful state of mind, he can from himself give out to others the light of illumination of the reason. This peace like some priceless treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ left to His disciples before His death.” 30

When we can work on ourselves and let God in our hearts we can truly save others. That light can shine through us and God works through our prayers. In addition, God’s love is active. Love is active. Having that peace and allowing God to use our gifts will help to prompt us to make a difference in whatever ways we are able. Some of us will find a voice to spread awareness, some of us may find the means to offer money or charity, etc.

How do we respond in our daily lives in our own high school settings? What if your friends were gossiping or bullying or you were being bullied? Allow for various responses and mention the importance of remembering who God is calling you to be and not being afraid of that. Feel free to also read the quote below from Elder Porphyrios *Wounded by Love*:

“At your work, whatever it may be, you can become a saint through meekness, patience, and love.”

RESPONDING TO EVENTS EXAMPLE: ST. THEODORA

Ask if they can think of any saints who have responded to events and made a difference? Allow them to share, and then continue to read the brief example of St. Theodora below:

Read the excerpt from *Christina’s True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilus during the ninth century. This as a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

The name “Theodora” means “gift of God.” Saint Theodora was a very courageous woman who wanted to make a difference. She hoped that the time would come when the icons would have a rightful place in the house of God. She secretly owned many icons. Some people say she used to hide them under her huge big beautiful skirts.

Finally when her husband died, Theodora asked for a very important meeting called the General Synod in the year 843 A.D. At that meeting everyone agreed to keep the icons. We celebrate that decision every first Sunday of Great Lent, known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We have a big procession to celebrate this victory of the icons, just like the parade in Constantinople led by Saint Theodora and the Patriarch.

Saint Theodora is a true champion of the faith because she fought to keep the icons. She did not fight with guns and weapons, but she fought with love and faith. She had love for Christ as our true Savior and faith that the icons help us pray to God.

Talk about how she was able to stand up for what she believed in, she had to have patience and love to make the change, but because she chose to be courageous and say Yes for God, we can now have icons in our church.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

If all of life is to be a sacrament, how can we live a sacramental life in our daily lives? How can we live our life in a way well pleasing unto God? Read the biblical passage below to help guide responses:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
(Romans 12:1-2)

Discuss the reality. Bringing church into our daily lives is hard! We have so many distractions in our daily lives, especially as teenagers!

Other Questions to explore (Possible responses in Italics):

- What distractions pull you away from the mindfulness of God? *There are so many pressures! Academics, extracurricular activities, friends/social lives, our home lives, our own personal needs!*
- How can we find the time or energy to bring God into our chaotic moments? How can we be truly sacramental in our daily motions? *Try to remember moments to be thankful, ask for the Theotokos' prayers or other saints who have offered themselves fully to God, etc.*
- How do we live sacramentally in the church? *Being mindful of the service and its aim for us to forgive and be in communion with our church community and God. Participating actively in the church life through service such as altar serving, singing, trustee, etc.*
- How do we live sacramentally outside the church? *Giving up our personal time to serve others – volunteering at food shelves or other humanitarian organizations, helping a peer at school with a need such as comfort or friendship, etc.*
- How do we live in the mystery? How do we accept the mystery into our life? Is it tangible? *We go back home, do homework, practice dance, soccer, piano etc. how do we live in the kingdom? First we have to accept that which we don't understand – faith is a leap! God gave us the freedom to make that leap of Faith – to accept his sacramental mystery and share it with others. IT IS HARD because we are surrounded by distractions. We will fail, but we can still get up and try again.*
- "Blessed is the kingdom"....are we called to be in the kingdom now? *YES! God created this beautiful world – it's our job to help that beauty shine and show God's love!*
- If these are the end times – as the Apostles said, what does it mean to live as if Christ is coming tomorrow?
- If we are "living in the kingdom" how do we relate to others? Our families? Our friends? Ourselves?
- Because a sacramental life means we are living without fear of the distractions and concerns of the world, we're not shaken by modern events, tragedies, natural disasters or celebrity scandals. We're not fearful of death or tragedy – yes, they are unfortunate, but we live with the humble and simple peace of the Theotokos, and the promise of Christ that He is with us always....."God is with us"

THEME RECAP

Materials:

- BDA Hand-out
- Writing Utensils

The theme for the week was "For the Life of the World". We have discussed how Liturgy is relevant to our selves, our relationship with God and our relationship with the world. Take a moment and look back at the BDA hand-out and add any additional in-put on what the phrase "For the Life of the world" now means to you. Give them a few minutes and then some time to share their responses if they'd like. Feel free to discuss how their responses evolved throughout.

GRADES 6-8 CURRICULUM

OVERARCHING GOAL: Youth will discover how Liturgy is relevant to their relationship with self, God, and the world.

SECTIONS/GOALS:

1. Liturgy and Self: Youth will understand the need to go to church and to offer themselves to God.
2. Liturgy and God: Youth will learn how God finds us and helps us to discover our gifts through our lives in the church.
3. Liturgy and the World: Learning that every moment in our lives is a sacrament, Youth will discover how to offer themselves to God and others in their daily lives.

MATERIALS:

- Folder for each youth to hold materials
- Quote Hand-out to follow along with as a visual aid during the lessons
- For the Life of the World BDA Hand-out (1 per youth)
- Writing Utensils
- Paper
- YouTube viewing access
- Jelly beans, two flavors (one delectable and one detestable). Two flavors for each youth.
- Minute-to-win-it supplies:
 - Oreo Cookies (1 per youth)
 - Need 6 unsharpened pencils per person, 2 plastic cups per person held to the ground or table by masking tape.
 - Table! 5 Christmas Cards or other greeting cards per person

ICEBREAKER GAME:

Take the time to go around as a large group and allow youth to introduce themselves with their name, church location, grade and perhaps something additional (favorite kitchen utensil, saint, icon, Lenten meal, ethnic food, ice cream, etc.)

PART 1: LITURGY AND SELF

THEME BRAINSTORM: “FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

Materials:

- For the Life of the World BDA Hand-out (1 per youth)
- Writing Utensils

Explain that the theme for the entire week of the council is “For the Life of the World”. Without any explanations or discussions, ask the youth to write out on the hand-out what “For the Life of the World” means to them right now, as broad as it may seem! Explain that we will revisit this definition as we continue this week.

After they have written their response, allow people to share their thoughts and remark accordingly. Then, have the youth put their hand-outs back into their folders.

GAME: CHRYSOSTOM CHALLENGE

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing Utensils

Divide the large group into small groups of 3-5. Give groups time to re-acquaint themselves with names, then provide each group with one sheet of paper and a writing utensil. Have each group choose a writer and the rest will help guide their writers.

Without the use of any resources, each group is to write down as many parts/sections of the Liturgy as they can remember. Give a 10-minute time limit. Ten minutes is not enough time to recall the many sections of the Liturgy, but it is interesting to see which parts of the Liturgy are recollected and are worthy of discussion. You may also choose to allow groups an extra couple minutes to organize/re-organize their recorded sections.

Discuss which parts they remembered. Did most groups record the same parts? Were there some unique ones? The discussion may reveal a lack of knowledge, which is always interesting to point out – what did people forget or choose not to write? Why did no one think of certain parts? Which parts seem the most important/valued/understood to their age? Are their personal connections to any of those parts? Etc.

Explain that this activity helps us to review the Liturgy which is what we are going to talk about this week in relationship to ourselves, our relationship to God and our relationship to the world.

DISCUSSION: WHY GO TO CHURCH?

Discuss the importance of Liturgy in our lives using the discussion questions below to guide you (possible responses in *Italics*).

- What are some reasons we may NOT WANT to come to church? *Talk about how our parents may force us, maybe when we are at church we are scolded for not living up to others' expectations (elders in the church, Sunday school teachers, parents, grandparents, etc.), maybe it's "boring", etc. Feel free to talk about ways youth can deal with those issues through their own prayer life, etc.*
- Has anyone ever taken a non-Orthodox friend to an Orthodox Liturgy before? What were their reactions? What was your response? *Often there is comment is about how long Liturgy is and many times how short the sermon is...how do we respond to that? Do we ever make excuses for it, work to justify it (and what are the "justifications" we make for the length?), Is it ever good to make justifications for our faith? Why is it so long? Why are Orthodox Christians often unique with their "lengthy" services? Feel free to recap some of the parts of the Liturgy mentioned in the Chrysostom Challenge and the important part of each section and how they work together to prepare us for the Eucharistic Gifts and why that is such an important part of our service (many Christians don't have communion on a regular basis, etc.), etc. You may want to also discuss their experiences and impressions when visiting other churches.*
- Why is Liturgy so important in our lives? *As Christians, we are continually called to give thanks, within the Eucharistic Liturgy we partake of the life of Christ which we should bring with us into our daily lives, etc. The full title of the Liturgy is "Eucharistic Liturgy" and Eucharistic itself means to "give thanks."*
- What does Liturgy do for us as an individual? As a community? *As an individual it can bring us closer to Christ, Christ longs for us to be in unity with him with each other and church is a place where that unity is at work. It is a gift and invitation from God to unite us with the divine energies and to be a part of His eternal kingdom.*
- Why do we bother going to church? Why is it important to make time for our church, especially if God is essentially "everywhere?" *Church is a place where we are together in Christ, church is a place where we can receive the sacrament of communion, etc.*

DISCUSSION: SURRENDER

The act of going to church or even deciding to go to church is a first step into the journey of the church which Orthodox believe to be in a "dimension" of the Kingdom. Sometimes, this first step of deciding to go to church with an open heart is the hardest thing! Especially if we first battle our parents who may seem to be forcing us. Once we are humble enough to obey and be willing to open ourselves to God, we have the opportunity to let God find us! To truly let God find us, we have to be willing to get rid of our "self" separated from God.

Our Liturgy calls us to do this act every time! Ask the group what they think the phrase "Thine Own of Thine Own" means? Where might they remember it being said during the Liturgy? Explain that it happens in the Anaphora, right before the Consecration of the Holy Gifts. *If needed, read or have youth re-enact the excerpt below.*

PRIEST: (quietly) Having in remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming:

(The Priest takes up the Diskarion and the Chalice and elevates them over the Antimins; he makes the sign of the Cross with them over the Antimins as he lowers them, saying:)

(Aloud) Thine own of thine own we offer unto thee, in behalf of all, and for all.

CHOIR: We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar, and continues with the Prayer of Consecration)

PRIEST: (Quietly) Again we offer unto thee this reasonable and unbloody service, and beseech thee and pray thee and supplicate thee: send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here spread forth:

(The Priest signs the Holy Bread with the sign of the cross, saying quietly:)

And make this bread the precious Body of thy Christ; Amen.

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Chalice, saying quietly:)

And that which is in this cup, the precious Blood of thy Christ; Amen.

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over both the holy Gifts, saying quietly:)

PRIEST: Changing them by thy Holy Spirit; Amen, Amen, Amen.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar and continues the prayer quietly:)

That to those who shall partake thereof they may be unto cleansing of soul, unto the remission of sins, unto the communion of thy Holy Spirit, unto the fulfilment of the kingdom of Heaven, unto boldness toward thee, and not unto judgement nor unto condemnation.

And again we offer unto thee this reasonable service for all those who in faith have gone before us to their rest: Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith:

PRIEST: (Aloud) Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary:

After discussing possible youth responses to what they think the phrase means, lead the group by explaining that “Thine own of Thine Own” is basically “I surrender” – an offering to God. As Christians we need to offer ourselves to God. By doing so, God will help us give our gifts and talents to others and we are free to live a life holy and pleasing to the Lord! To accept God’s will, we have to open our hearts to Him and let Him live in us.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: SURRENDER

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- “Only love for God, the absolute object of all love, frees obedience from blindness and makes it the joyful acceptance of that alone which is worthy of being accepted. But love without obedience to God is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16).” (84)
- “True obedience is thus true love for God, the true response of Creation to its creator. Humanity is fully humanity when it is this response to God, when it becomes the movement of total self-giving and obedience to Him.” (Schmemmann 85)

THEOTOKOS AS EXAMPLE OF SURRENDER TO GOD

Begin by asking the following questions (Possible responses are in italics):

- Why do we hold the mother of God in such a high regard? Is it too high according to protestants? Have any of you encountered a protestant friend who has accused you of giving her false worship or ignoring the focus of Jesus Christ? *Simply allow open discussion for youth to recall interactions about the Theotokos with peers.*
- Why is the annunciation so important? What does it mean when she willingly, without question accepts God's will? *This is our goal! To accept God's will for us! Think about how incredibly scary saying "yes" was in her situation: engaged, young woman to have a child by someone other than her betrothed! How incredibly frightening for her life!*
- What is the difference between how the Theotokos accepts Gabriel's statement compared to Zachariah's questioning? *One comes out of innocent humility while the other comes out of experience and arrogance. One is the voice of acceptance and trust while the other is of disbelief, which eventually needs to see to and is an OT doubting Thomas. He doubts in private – in the Holy of Holies, but then proclaims publically before family and those gathered, the miracle of God. Compare Zachariah's response to Elizabeth's praise with compassion and mercy.*
- How is the Theotokos present in your life? *Could be as simple as prayers in church, recognizing Theotokos feast days, or asking for her prayers or guidance in your daily struggles. Reference Christ on the cross – Woman behold your son. Behold your mother...how does that scripture play in our daily lives? With our own mothers? Aunts? Grandmothers?*

Look back at the last Liturgical text with "Thine Own of Thine Own" embedded into it. Shortly after the highlighted "part" of the Liturgy, there is the offering unto thee for "all who have gone before us in faith....especially the Theotokos"! Why after this phrase do we immediately reference her? Allow for various responses but lead into the idea that the Theotokos is the ultimate example of one who has offered herself to God. What did she do that demonstrates her complete trust in God? *Lead into the fact that she accepted God's will and gave herself to it fully.*

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: THEOTOKOS AS EXAMPLE OF SURRENDER

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

Luke 1:26-38 when the Archangel Gabriel Announces Christ's birth to Mary and she accepts.

- *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Excerpt from Schmemmann's For the Life of the World

- “She is the Mother of Christ. She is the fullness of love accepting the coming of God to us – giving life to Him, who is the Life of the world. And the whole creation rejoices in her, because it recognizes through her that the end and fulfillment of all life, of all love is to accept Christ, to give Him life in ourselves. And there should be no fear that this joy about Mary takes anything from Christ, diminishes in any way the glory due to Him and Him alone. For what we find in her and what constitutes the joy of the Church is precisely the fullness of our adoration of Christ, of acceptance and love for Him. Really, here is no “cult of movement of joy and thanksgiving, of acceptance and obedience – the wedding to the Holy Spirit, which makes it the only complete joy on earth.” (87)

You may also choose to look at some of the Liturgical Hymns to the Theotokos:

- *Hymn to the Theotokos:*
It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you!
- *All Creation Rejoices:*
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, the assembly of Angels and the race of men. O Sanctified Temple and Rational Paradise! O Glory of Virgins! From you, God was incarnate and became a child, our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, o Full of Grace! Glory to you!

Discuss how each of the hymns gives her status above the angels. We witness the Archangel Gabriel in the Bible honoring her in his greeting to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” but when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. (Luke 1: 28-29) We can obtain a spiritual relationship with God through our love and doing His will. Together with the saints and the angels we honor her as an intercessor for us as she gave herself fully to God. All of creation rejoices in her!

DISCUSSION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE A SACRAMENTAL LIFE?

We talked about surrendering ourselves to God. Jesus himself, whom we are called to imitate, sacrificed Himself for us! Like Him, we are to sacrifice ourselves, to give ourselves to others and to God, to open our hearts to His love. Discuss the meaning of the word *sacrament*? *The youth know this, but let them explain and lead to the fact that sacraments are officially called “holy mysteries”. It is a means of which we can experience the love for us that God intends us to feel, a means to direct all that we do to God.*

Explain that we all know “the traditional seven sacraments”, but that “traditionally the Orthodox never counted the sacraments. The number of seven was adopted in Orthodoxy very recently under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Traditionally the Orthodox understand everything in the Church to be sacramental. All of life becomes a sacrament in Christ who fills life itself with the Spirit of God.” (*The Orthodox Faith: Volume ii Worship by Fr. Thomas Hopko*)

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LIVING A SACRAMENTAL LIFE

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- *“The Church may be defined as the new life in Christ. It is man’s life lived by the Holy Spirit in union with God. All aspects of the new life of the Church participate in the mystery of salvation. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. And so in Christ and the Holy Spirit everything in the Church becomes a sacrament, an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God as it is already being experienced in the life of this world.” -The Orthodox Faith: Volume ii Worship by Fr. Thomas Hopko*

- *“Man was created for Eucharist – for the pure love of God, for the sake of God, for the recognition of God as the content of his very life, as the answer to all his questions, the Purpose of all his desires.” -Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

DISCUSSION: FINDING YOUR SPIRITUAL BALANCE

We’ve been talking about the importance of going to church and offering ourselves to God. By going to church we learn about ourselves and how we uniquely grow closer to God. Discuss the following:

- What are the rules in the church? How do we apply them? *Talk about different types of rules – communion, fasting, confession, etc. How often do we do these things/should we do these things, etc.*
- How do we behave in church? Is it okay to stand and be passive or should we always be “busy?” *Orthodoxy has always been an active worship involving all the senses. It is not only with the mind that we are called to worship – our eyes sense God’s glory through the iconography, our noses through the incense, our posture through prostrations, our lips through song, etc. All these actions are meant to help our being to worship God. If we stand in awe of His presence, standing is okay. However, we are also called to discover our talents within the church! Becoming active within the church helps us to discover our gifts – in what ways can we serve? When we serve within the church community, we learn how we can take that service into our worldly communities.*
- What does a “lazy Orthodox Christian” look like? What does a “Super Intense Christian” do? What would a “Super Intense Christian” do to prepare for communion? *Visa-versa A lazy Orthodox might not eat breakfast in the morning before communion, but a super intense Orthodox might go to Vespers and confession of sorts the night before communion, fast from food and drink since the evening prior and say many prayers, etc.*
- Which example do we follow? *Explain that we are judged by God based on the level at which we are able, which is not our level, but God’s. We often compare ourselves to those around us – our parents or other church community members. Some of those people are very intense and can be fantastic examples to admire, but we need to remember not to compare ourselves. When we compare, we can either feel downcast and unworthy or we might feel prideful if we see ourselves as better. We need to not think of our judgment, but think of God and His judgment.*
- What happens when we lose focus in church? (Thinking about what needs to be done after Liturgy – oops! Need to study for that test!) What can we do? *First, know that you are not alone! This is a common battle that usually stems from praying with our minds and not our hearts. Keep praying! Just start praying again! We are humbled by this battle because we realize that we cannot succeed in prayer without God’s mercy. We learn to fight sin through the Liturgy (lay aside all earthly cares), be Christian (hearing the instructions of the Epistles), nourishing our bodies (receiving the Eucharist) – equipped to fight the good fight, staying focused and committed to living as Christians wherever we are in life.*
- What happens when we don’t follow or live up to the Church community or parent’s expectation of us in the church? *Despair*
- What happens when we do more than we can practically handle? *We might feel overwhelmed and crash at a certain point, etc.*
- So....how can we find our spiritual balance? *Go to church, use the tools – talk to a spiritual father, a god-parent, parent, talk to God - PRAY for guidance. If you find yourself shutting down because you are too overwhelmed or find yourself despairing that you are not good enough, try to adjust what you are doing with prayer. It’s okay to say I don’t know what I am supposed to do, God, but I’m willing to trust you because You know. In that way we surrender and let God guide us in how we can grow closer to Him. Cast your troubles onto Him!*

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Our first section was about making Liturgy relevant to our relationship with our self. What have you learned or realized about the “Self?” **KEY MESSAGE: THAT WE NEED TO OFFER OURSELVES TO GOD, That the self needs the church to fully know God.**

Re-cap Questions:

- Why do we need Liturgy? *We need the Liturgy in our lives because God is the answer to our needs, it is where God has called us to give ourselves to Him. It is the first step in living our entire lives even outside of the church as a sacrament.*
- What can we do with ourselves to make Liturgy meaningful? *First, come. Come with the intent to pray. It even starts with making the decision to come even before arriving. Opening our hearts and letting God in will help us form that relationship. We can also choose areas in the church to become active and use our talents such as singing or serving or greeting, etc.*

Sometimes the idea of getting rid of self confuses people to believe that our “self” is not important. God loves us all individually and values our gifts and uniqueness. Read the following quote from Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*:

To be truly man means to be fully oneself. The confirmation is the confirmation of man in his own, unique “personality.” It is, to use again the same image, his ordination to be himself, to become what God wants him to be, what He has loved in me from all eternity. It is the gift of vocation. If the Church is truly the ‘newness of life’ – the world and nature as restored in Christ.

Each of us is called to love God and others fully, but we are called to do so uniquely. We come together with different gifts united as one. To really know what gifts we can offer, we must first offer them to God and pray. You may choose to read 1 Corinthians 12:4-12 to emphasize this point:

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

PART 2: LITURGY & GOD

When we begin to go to church ready to open our hearts to God, we begin to see who we are meant to be! In this section we will discuss how the church/Liturgy helps us to discover the gifts God has given us. Who are we when we let God in?

Ask the question, how do we find ourselves with God when we are still living with our Earthly family? *Possible responses include seeking out involvement in church, talking with a priest or a father confessor, finding a father confessor, etc.* Talk about how Jesus lived with His family for longer, but started to talk and ask questions within His church family.

How do we take what we know about ourselves and become what God wants us to be within our families?

Read the excerpt:

“All our knowledge of ourselves comes primarily from parents or parent figures, first from our physical ones and then from our spiritual ones. The world will be giving you a lot of other knowledge, but not self-knowledge – and I mean if you include all the psychiatrists you want, unless they are members of God’s family and full of God’s wisdom about mankind. So if you do not accept membership in God’s family and learn about yourself from God, you will never have much more self-knowledge than you’ve got right now. You become mature by getting to know yourself well, and the only way you can do that is by going to God. That’s why he said, in his wonderful thunderous voice,

Ask me of things concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, ask me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. (Is. 45: 11-13)”

When we are trying to grow close to God within our families, it is not enough to listen and learn from them. We need to also adopt our Heavenly Father and seek Him – ask Him about who we are. This is a lifelong process, but he will point you in the way that you should go if you are attentive. This will also help to bring Church within our homes – help to bring God into your family life!

DISCUSSION: LITURGY & GOD

We've been talking a lot about finding our place in the Liturgy, the need to come to church and to offer ourselves to God in the way He is calling us, to be willing to surrender to live a sacramental life. We need to let God find us and not run away from Him. Once we do that, how do we foster that relationship with God? What does He give us through the Liturgy? What are our expectations of Him? How can we continue to strengthen our relationship with Him?

- What Does God give or offer us through the Liturgy? *It is a way we can be in communion with each other and God. We are entering a heavenly realm where we can worship with the angels, saints and each other all as one – as it was originally given to us in the Garden! In the Liturgy our earthly food is transformed into the holy state it was meant for – to share with God and taste and see that He is good.*
- How many of you have been asked by peers if you have a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ?” In our current modern world there is a large emphasis on “me” and the “personal relationship with Jesus Christ”. Why is that not a common question in our Orthodox world? *It is good to develop a personal connection with our God, but we need to also recognize that we are not called to separate ourselves from others. Many people talk about their relationship with God in a way to describe how they find God outside of church, on their own, outside of community. Explain that In the Orthodox view, we believe we are to be in communion, “community” with God and our neighbors. It is true, that we are unique and have special gifts to offer and our individual connection to Jesus is valued and of great importance, but it is how we share that love and those gifts with others that bring that holy communion to life.*
- If the community life is so important in the church, how do we also work on our personal connection with God? *St. Seraphim taught us “Acquire peace, and thousands round you will be saved. When a person is in a peaceful state of mind, he can from himself give out to others the light of the illumination of the reason. This peace, like some priceless treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ left to His disciples before His death.” In our church community, we must first offer ourselves to God through the church life, in participation, fasting, and prayer and when we have acquired that peace we have much to offer our community and our world.*

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LITURGY AND GOD

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- *“When we set ourselves apart from others, we are not Christian. We are true Christians when we have a profound sense that we are members of the mystical body of Christ, of the Church, in an unbroken relationship of love – when we live united in Christ, that is, when we experience unity in His Church with a sense of oneness. This is why Christ prays to His Father saying, that they may be one. He repeats the prayer again and again and the apostles emphasize it everywhere. This is the most profound aspect, the most exalted meaning, of the Church. This is where the secret is to be found: for all to be united as one person in God. There is no other religion like this; no other religion says anything of this sort. They have something to say, but not this mystery, this exquisite point of the mystery which Christ demands and tells us that this is how we must become, that he wants us to be His.” - Elder Porphyrios in Wounded by Love,*

LEAD-IN ACTIVITY: FALSE EXPECTATIONS

Materials:

- Jelly beans, two flavors (one delectable and one detestable). Two flavors for each youth.

Give each youth who wants one, a jelly bean with a detestable flavor (try to have them eat it at the same time so everyone is surprised). Wait for some fun reactions and talk about how it probably tasted different than expected. Feel

free to give a second jelly bean with a sweet taste to help them have a better taste in their mouths and comment on how some may be nervous to taste another one after their first experience!

DISCUSSION: FALSE EXPECTATIONS:

What did you expect from the first jelly bean? Why? Ask what kind of expectations we have in life? *We may expect our friends to be supportive, God to answer our prayers, etc.* Discuss the following questions, stressing the need to have realistic expectations of church, ourselves, families, friends and God.

- What do we expect when we come to church or What might your classmates at school or non-orthodox friends want from church? *Talk about how many people come to the church wanting to be entertained or expecting to feel good about themselves and the world and have support from their church community for whatever personal struggle they are enduring.*
- Are these expectations realistic? *Explain that while there is a beauty in that “feel-good” need because God is indeed Good and if we truly let Him in we feel that overflowing goodness within us, but it is often not realistic because we must be willing to surrender first, to give ourselves to receive His goodness.*
- What kinds of things do we work for in our lives? *Feel free to take responses, but remind youth that we live in a culture where we expect too much of others. Most of us live in homes where we are given food, shelter and many forms of entertainment without giving much effort on our part. The Orthodox Church believes in God’s Grace, but recognizes the need for us to surrender ourselves for that grace to enter our lives. Surrendering ourselves takes work! We must work to make our relationship strong. We work on our passions/sins through prayer, we confront others to forgive and be forgiven, etc. Explain that the Orthodox Church allows us a place to work on ourselves surrounded by a community of love to help us receive God’s true Grace.*
- In addition, we need to work on our expectations of others. What do we expect to be given from the church community? Why do we have these expectations? *Talk about prayer support, love, outreach, etc.* What about our expectations of a close friend in the church? *Remember that our friends can only give us some comfort, because only from God can we find true comfort. Sometimes we forget this and treat our friends and family as if they should have God-like qualities, which means if they fail us in any way, it may create an unnecessary bitterness or anger in our relationship.* If our expectations of others are too high, we may feel crushed when they don’t live up to them and it can leave a bitter taste in our mouth (like those jelly beans!)

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION: “FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

Materials:

- BDA Hand-Out
- Writing Utensils.

Remind youth that this week’s theme revolves around the Eucharistic Liturgy with the phrase “For the Life of the World”. Ask them what they think “for the Life of the World” means to them now. What life are we called to live as Christians? Have them write their responses on their hand -out and discuss them.

You may choose to read the part of Liturgy in which this phrase appears to encourage them to think about it:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

*Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was delivered up, or rather when **He delivered Himself up for the life of the world**, He took bread in His*

holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, giving thanks and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:

The Priest exclaims: Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

After discussing youth responses, explain that “For the Life of the World” is essentially Jesus dying for the world, for us. We are also called to give of ourselves, to offer ourselves fully to God and one of the ways to help us in this endeavor is through Liturgy. The Liturgy, which we recently discussed parts of, is something we are not supposed to leave at church. The process of leaving our daily routines to attend church and the process of departing are part of the Liturgy. The Liturgy allows us to bring Christ into the world because Jesus delivered Himself up for the life of the world.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- *“Let us depart in peace,” says the celebrant as he leaves the altar, and this is the last commandment of the liturgy. We must not stay on Mount Tabor, although we know that it is good for us to be there. We are sent back. But now “we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit.” And it is as witnesses of this Light, as witnesses of the Spirit, that we must “go forth” and begin the never-ending mission of the Church. Eucharist was the end of the journey, the end of time.” (45) - Alexander Schmemmann’s For the Life of the World*
- *“To leave, to come.... This is the beginning, the starting point of the sacrament, the condition of its transforming power and reality.” (28) - Alexander Schmemmann’s For the Life of the World*

DISCUSSION: SACRAMENTS IN THE LITURGICAL LIFE HELP US IN SELF DISCOVERY

Going to church and using the tools it provides can help us discover ourselves. What are some tools in the church that can help strengthen our relationship with God? *Fasting, confession, communion, etc.* Often these tools are also called sacraments. They are gifts that we can use to offer ourselves to God. If we take part in these sacraments, we are better able to discover our true selves!

The sacrament of fasting, for example, is a tool that is also a physical commitment that begins with helping us remember how much we need Christ.

Remind them of the image from the bible in Exodus 17 when the Israelites were wandering the desert and encountered their first attack from a group of people called the Amalekites.

“And so it was, when Moses held up his hands, that Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. Now Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur sup[ported his hands, one on one side, and one on the other; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” (Exodus 17: 11-13)

Ask what they think of this image? What might it have to do with the idea of fasting? *Allow for various responses but lead to explain that in this image, we see God working through Moses, who is working hard to hold up the staff. So hard that he cannot do it alone and is willing to accept support of his friends. Like Moses, we must work to allow God to use us and we can have the support of the church to help us in this endeavor. We may be tempted to do it all on our own and even hide any difficulties we may have, but we are called to come to God and not be afraid to ask for help.*

Explain that fasting reminds us that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Mathew 4:4) It is not the material things in live that bring us true comfort, but God himself. Think about how uncomfortable Moses probably was holding up his hands. Fasting reminds us to not be controlled by the things that make us comfortable, the things we want and it also reminds us to be thankful for all the necessities we have – and every time we give thanks, we are giving an offering to God!

In our culture, many of us live a life of comfort. We have food, clothing, shelter, gadgets, many things to keep us busy, etc. Because we often find ourselves with all we need, we forget our true need is God. In our fallen nature try to fill an emptiness with earthly things (and always end up wanting more!), but that need can only be filled by God. We need to train that desire to yearn for God – the ultimate fulfillment. Within the Church, fasting is a tool for us to direct that need.

Talk about the different kinds of fasting. Ask about other things besides food that giving up could make us uncomfortable. Lent is a good opportunity for us to live “uncomfortably” so we can seek comfort in God. Fasting from types of food is a great way to do that, but what about our “need” for social media or for gaming? Cutting off from those and seeking a stronger relationship with Christ might be a better focus.

Fasting is a way to open ourselves up to God and when we let Him in we begin to gracefully discover our true selves.

When we begin to live uncomfortably, we start to see where we struggle. We begin to see more clearly our sins. Our sins keep us confused about who we really are, so it is by working on conquering them and letting God in that we begin to see what we are really like. Fasting is a way to rely on God and help us to better see our sins to work on them. And when we can see our sins, we are better able to use the sacrament of confession to bring us closer to God.

Will we ever truly discover who we are? Some of us do, but for many or most it is a life long journey. Living a Liturgical life will help you understand your unique set of gifts and abilities. We will most likely make many mistakes along the way!

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Our second section was about discovering ways to understand how Liturgy can help shape our relationship with God. What have you discovered about God in this section? *KEY MESSAGE: THAT WHEN WE GO TO THE LITURGY AND PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, GOD FINDS US AND USES US, HELPING US TO DISCOVER OUR TRUE SELVES.*

Additional re-cap questions:

- Does God need us? *NO! But we need Him! He doesn't need us, but He wants us because He loves us so much! He is ready to pour His grace on us when we stop running away from Him, much like the father in the Prodigal Son.*
- What can we expect of God? *Nothing! We should never expect anything! He has already poured His grace on us through His Son, Jesus Christ. However, like an earthly friendship or family relationship, we have to do our part for our relationship with God to grow.*

PART 3: LITURGY AND THE WORLD

We've talked about how all of life is meant to be a sacrament, not just our lives and actions within the Liturgy. So how can we bring the Liturgy into the world? How can we turn our daily lives towards God? Once we have openly received God's gifts and learned about ourselves, how can we share that gift with the world as we are called to do? As Alexander Schmemmann states in *For the Life of the World*, we have the Liturgy of mission left,

“And now the time has come for us to return into the world. “Let us depart in peace,” says the celebrant as he leaves the altar, and this is the last commandment of the Liturgy. We must not stay on Mount Tabor, although we know that it is good for us to be there. We are sent back. But now “we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit.” And it is as witnesses of this Light, as witnesses of the Spirit, that we must “go forth” and begin the neverending mission of the Church.” (45)

To begin our mission, we must use our “Fruits” and to learn how to truly live in the moment.

DISCUSSION: OUR FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Begin by reading this quote from Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

“Man ate the forbidden fruit. The fruit of that one tree, whatever else it may signify, was unlike every other fruit in the Garden: It was not offered as a gift to man. Not given, not blessed by God, it was food whose eating was condemned to be communion with itself alone, and not with God. It is the image of the world loved for itself, and eating it is the image of life understood as an end in itself.”

- Discuss possible youth interpretations of this quote. *Eventually lead into the idea that the gifts we are given individually are meant to be shared with God and the world. If we keep these gifts selfishly for ourselves we live a life separate from God and being separate from God is our own condemnation.*
- What are the fruits of the spirit? *Feel free to mention the commonly referred to fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, but our true fruits can be more specific. What gifts or talents do we have? Remind them that being active in the Liturgy helps us to find and use our talents, which can help us discover our vocations. You can discover yourself and your talents in the life of the church through prayer and fasting while being empowered by the teachings of Christ to do them for the life of the world.*
- What roles can be filled by youth in the church right now? *Singing, greeting, serving, etc.* Emphasize that they are important in the church NOW given their abilities and talents, even though they are not yet an adult! When you say YES to Christ you are affirming the church. You are the church/part of the church. If you have a talent for sewing, perhaps you would like to be a fashion designer – then ask if you can help with sewing vestments or choir robes. If you have a talent for people, can you serve as a greeter? If you have a talent for education, can you teach? Start there, and God will enrich you and guide you. We all have the same calling “to put on Christ”, which comes first, and if we do that along with our unique and individual talents then we can truly start our mission in the world by doing our worldly work with God shining through us. Not some “I will be”, you ARE. Activate that now by being good to other kids in class and living out the moment. Then, bring those talents into the world!

DISCUSSION: LIVING IN THE MOMENT DAILY LIVES

- What does it mean to “live in the moment”? *Talk about how outside the church it usually means living life to the fullest, doing a bucket list, etc. But in the church, the present moment is a sacrament – a gift given to us, an opportunity to be with God, to praise Him, to thank Him, to be fully present with him in every moment.*
- Why are we anxious/nervous? What are some things that make you nervous or worry? *Tests in school, first day of school jitters, sports competitions, maybe some of you worry about if a girl or boy likes you? Being anxious or nervous are usually symptoms of not living in the moment.*
- Why do we worry so much? How many of you have ever been really bothered by this worry, like our stomachs are in knots or we can’t sit still or we can’t sleep because we’re thinking too much about it?
- What are some fears we have? *Fears of the dark? Of bad dreams?* How do we overcome those? *Go to the feet of Jesus instead of others*
- What does God have to say about this? Read the passage below from Matthew 6:25-34:
 - Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more cloth you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- How can we use God's words to not be anxious?

GAME: MINUTE TO WIN-IT

There will be 3 stations. Each station should be set up in a different area of the room (preferably a table). Explain each station before splitting up into three groups. You may choose to omit stations and just move from activity to activity with the whole group OR you can choose people for each group and do it in front of the rest of the group so there is an audience.

STATION 1: "FACE THE COOKIE"

Materials: Oreo Cookies (1 per youth)

Instructions:

1. Prior to game start, contestants must be seated with their hands on their laps and cookies pre-set in the center of their forehead not touching the eyebrows.
2. When the timer starts, the player may start moving their face and head to move the cookie.
3. The cookie must remain in contact with the player's face at all times.
4. If the cookie falls or breaks, the player starts over with an intact cookie.
5. To complete the game, the contestant must hold an intact cookie with his or her mouth within the 60-second time limit.

STATION 2: "SPEED ERASER"

Materials: Need 6 unsharpened pencils per person, 2 plastic cups per person held to the ground or table by masking tape.

Instructions:

1. When the timer starts, player may hold more than 1 pencil in their non-throwing hand, and may bounce pencils into the cups, 1 at a time using their designated throwing hand.
2. Pencils must bounce off the table and land directly into the bottom of the cup with no interference in order to be counted.
3. To complete the game, player must land all 6 pencils into the bottom of the cup within the 60 second time limit.

STATION 3: "CARD CLIFFHANGER"

Materials: Table! 5 Christmas Cards or other greeting cards per person

Instructions:

1. Before the timer starts, stand the cards horizontally along the edge of the table.
2. When the clock starts, contestant may start blowing the first card.
3. Contestant may not touch any card.
4. To complete the game, the contestant, using only his/her breath, must blow a card so that one side of the fold hangs over the edge of the table within the 60-second time limit and remains that way for 3 consecutive seconds.

Follow up Discussion:

- How did you feel when you played the games? Were you anxious, worried, or focused?
- What else in life gives us those feelings? *Refer back to tests, friendships, homework, competitions, etc.*
- When we're feeling these feelings, How can we overcome them? Prayer is our biggest defence and our biggest fear should be of being separate from God and that can re-direct our thinking. *When we remember how much we don't want to be separate from God, it can help us to live in the moment and turn that fear into love.*
- In God's sermon on the mount that we read, he commanded us not to be anxious. We have to listen and to focus on Him first.

Talk about how the point of the Christian life is to acquire the spirit of peace, not to get annoyed, fearful or anxious. To not worry about the future or the past, but remember that all are in God's care. This doesn't mean we shouldn't plan

ahead or care about our future, but to remember that the present is a time we are called to be in. To be in the present is being with Christ. To be present is to pray. We are not able to use our gifts and talents to their full potential if we are not in the now.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Read the following texts for emphasis and possible further discussion

- The Lord is near; do not be anxious, but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Then the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. And now, my friends, all that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is lovable and attractive, whatever is excellent and admirable – fill your thoughts with these things. Put into practice the lessons I taught you, the tradition I have passed on, all that you heard me say or saw me do; and the God of peace will be with you. - Phillippians 4:19
- “We are called to live in the world seeing everything in it as a revelation of God, a sign of His presence, the joy of His coming.” - Fr. Alexander Schmemmann
- “God is Love. And if we call upon God in our life as the Holy Fathers teach us, then we are calling upon Love. If we know and believe that He is present everywhere at all time and if we are united with Him in our hearts, He will teach us how to love our neighbor.” - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica
- “A person who lives as if he were to die every day – give that our life is uncertain by definition – will not sin, for good fear extinguishes most of the disorder of our appetites; whereas he who thinks he has a long life ahead of him will easily let himself be dominated by pleasures.” - St. Athanasios the Great
- This is why I tell you not to be anxious about food and drink to keep you alive and about clothes to cover your body. Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes. Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow and reap and store in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than the birds? Can anxious thought add a single day to your life? And why be anxious about clothes? Consider how the lilies grow in the fields; they do not work, they do not spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendour was not attired like one of them. If that is how God clothes the grass in the fields, which is there today and tomorrow is thrown on the stove, will he not all the more clothe you? How little faith you have! Do not ask anxiously, “What are we to eat? What are we to drink? What shall we wear?” These are the things that occupy the minds of the heathen, but your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your mind on God’s kingdom and his justice before everything else, and all the rest will come to you as well. So do not be anxious about tomorrow; tomorrow will look after itself. Each day has troubles enough of its own. - Mathew 6:25-
- “I believe in person to person. Every person is Christ to me, and since there is only one Jesus, that person is the only person in the world **at that moment.**” - Mother Teresa

DISCUSSION: RESPONDING TO EVENTS

Our country has been enduring many trials and conflicts in the recent years. How do we bring the Liturgy into this world of Chaos? Have an open conversation about recent and current tragedies (school shootings, BLM, Syria, etc.) Feel free to list them and allow students to express concern.

Bring up the latest controversial phrase “Thoughts and Prayers” and why that may anger people. Make sure to talk about how prayer is something we Orthodox believe to be work and effort. Read the quote from St. Seraphim from *An Extraordinary Peace*

“Acquire peace, and thousands round you will be saved. When a person is in a peaceful state of mind, he can from himself give out to others the light of illumination of the reason. This peace like some priceless treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ left to His disciples before His death.” 30

When we can work on ourselves and let God in our hearts we can truly save others. That light can shine through us and God works through our prayers. In addition, God's love is active. Love is active. Having that peace and allowing God to use our gifts will help to prompt us to make a difference in whatever ways we are able. Some of us will find a voice to spread awareness, some of us may find the means to offer money or charity, etc.

How do we respond in our daily lives in our own high school settings? What if your friends were gossiping or bullying or you were being bullied? Allow for various responses and mention the importance of remembering who God is calling you to be and not being afraid of that.

RESPONDING TO EVENTS EXAMPLE: ST. THEODORA

Ask if they can think of any saints who have responded to events and made a difference? Allow them to share, and then continue to read the brief example of St. Theodora below:

Read the excerpt from *Christina's True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilos during the ninth century. This was a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

The name "Theodora" means "gift of God." Saint Theodora was a very courageous woman who wanted to make a difference. She hoped that the time would come when the icons would have a rightful place in the house of God. She secretly owned many icons. Some people say she used to hide them under her huge big beautiful skirts.

Finally when her husband died, Theodora asked for a very important meeting called the General Synod in the year 843 A.D. At that meeting everyone agreed to keep the icons. We celebrate that decision every first Sunday of Great Lent, known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We have a big procession to celebrate this victory of the icons, just like the parade in Constantinople led by Saint Theodora and the Patriarch.

Saint Theodora is a true champion of the faith because she fought to keep the icons. She did not fight with guns and weapons, but she fought with love and faith. She had love for Christ as our true Savior and faith that the icons help us pray to God.

Talk about how she was able to stand up for what she believed in, she had to have patience and love to make the change, but because she chose to be courageous and say Yes for God, we can now have icons in our church.

VIDEO & DISCUSSION: RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Another very big problem in our culture that happens daily is bullying. Ask the youth for some examples that they see of bullying in their schools or other activity life.

Watch Youtube Video "Why I still Struggle with Self Image" by Erin Wojcik

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPUADFeHTx0>

Discuss the video with the following questions:

- How many of you have witnessed some of the things that Erin talks about on her video?
- In what ways can you relate to Erin?
- Is this a "boy" struggle too? In what ways might boys be more likely to be bullied?
- How can we bring Christ into the world in these situations as a victim?
- How can we bring Christ into the world in these situations as a bystander?
- How might we stop ourselves from being a perpetrator?

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

If all of life is to be a sacrament, how can we live a sacramental life in our daily lives? How can we live our life in a way well pleasing unto God? Read the biblical passage below to help guide responses:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
(Romans 12:1-2)

Discuss the reality. Bringing church into our daily lives is hard! We have so many distractions in our daily lives, especially as teenagers!

Other Questions to explore (Possible responses in Italics):

- What distractions pull you away from the mindfulness of God? *There are so many pressures! Academics, extracurricular activities, friends/social lives, our home lives, our own personal needs!*
- How can we find the time or energy to bring God into our chaotic moments? How can we be truly sacramental in our daily motions? *Try to remember moments to be thankful, ask for the Theotokos' prayers or other saints who have offered themselves fully to God, etc.*
- How do we live sacramentally in the church? *Being mindful of the service and its aim for us to forgive and be in communion with our church community and God. Participating actively in the church life through service such as altar serving, singing, trustee, etc.*
- How do we live sacramentally outside the church? *Giving up our personal time to serve others – volunteering at food shelves or other humanitarian organizations, helping a peer at school with a need such as comfort or friendship, etc.*
- How do we live in the mystery? How do we accept the mystery into our life? Is it tangible? *We go back home, do homework, practice dance, soccer, piano etc. how do we live in the kingdom? First we have to accept that which we don't understand – faith is a leap! God gave us the freedom to make that leap of Faith – to accept his sacramental mystery and share it with others. IT IS HARD because we are surrounded by distractions. We will fail, but we can still get up and try again.*
- "Blessed is the kingdom"....are we called to be in the kingdom now? *YES! God created this beautiful world – it's our job to help that beauty shine and show God's love!*
- If these are the end times – as the Apostles said, what does it mean to live as if Christ is coming tomorrow?
- If we are "living in the kingdom" how do we relate to others? Our families? Our friends? Ourselves?
- Because a sacramental life means we are living without fear of the distractions and concerns of the world, we're not shaken by modern events, tragedies, natural disasters or celebrity scandals. We're not fearful of death or tragedy – yes, they are unfortunate, but we live with the humble and simple peace of the Theotokos, and the promise of Christ that He is with us always....."God is with us"

THEME RECAP

Materials:

- BDA Hand-out
- Writing Utensils

The theme for the week was "For the Life of the World". We have discussed how Liturgy is relevant to ourselves, our relationship with God and our relationship with the world. Take a moment and look back at the BDA hand-out and add any additional in-put on what the phrase "For the Life of the world" now means to you. Give them a few minutes and then some time to share their responses if they'd like. Feel free to discuss how their responses evolved throughout.

GRADES 3-5 CURRICULUM

OVERARCHING GOAL: Youth will find ways to make Liturgy relevant to their relationship with their self, relationship with God and meaningful in their worldly/daily lives.

SECTIONS/GOALS:

1. Youth will learn why it's important to go to church even when they don't always want to.
2. Youth will learn what it means to say "yes" to God.
3. Youth will learn ways we can give back to God in our daily lives.

MATERIALS:

- Folders for each youth to keep their materials in. Have their names on these.
- Nametag materials: pre-cut construction paper strung with yarn for a necklace
- Markers/crayons
- Religious stickers
- Paint Tabs (1 per youth)
- Bibles (1 per youth)
- Pens/writing utensils
- Icon of Christ
- Chalice & Diskos
- Notecards with a "yes" or "no" pre-written on them. There should be one notecard per person and an equal amount of "yes" and "no".
- Individual print-outs of the Creed.
- Cut-out sections of the Liturgy with titles
- Book: *Christina's True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.
- St. Theodora Print-out
- For the Life of the World Script

ICEBREAKER:

Have youth create their own nametag to wear around their neck (NOTE: some youth may need help writing their names). Have them write their names and decorate it with stickers of their choice. Then, allow each youth to introduce themselves.

PART 1: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GO TO CHURCH?

DISCUSSION: WHY DO WE GO TO CHURCH?

- What are some reasons we may NOT WANT to come to church? Talk about how our parents might force us, maybe when we are at church we are scolded for misbehaving, maybe it's boring, etc. Feel free to talk about ways youth can deal with those issues through their own prayer life, etc.
- Why is church so important in our lives? It's a way to give thanks (remind them or explain that the word "Eucharistic" means to "give thanks"), a way for a community to come together, etc.

Explain that with the theme "For the Life of the World" this week, we are going to be talking about why church is important for our self, our relationship with God and our relationship with the world. We are beginning with why it's important to go to church even when we don't always want to.

BOOKMARK ACTIVITY: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CHURCH?

Materials:

- Paint Tabs (1 per youth)
- Bibles (1 per youth)
- Pens



Using Paint tabs (like the image above), have the youth look up the following bible verses listed below that talk about church and write each verse on a paint tab color, creating a bookmark they can use in their own bibles. There are some extra verses here – depending on the number of paint tabs – they can choose which ones to write.

Bible Verses:

- Matthew 16:18 “And so I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”
- Matthew: 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
- Matthew 28:19-20 “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.”
- Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
- Romans 10:17 “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
- Ephesians 4:11-13 “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”
- Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
- 2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”
- Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

After youth have found the bible verses and written them down, go through them and talk about what each one says and how even in the bible we learn how important church is for us. Explain most of them talk about the importance of “coming together”. God calls us together!

WHERE DID OUR LITURGY COME FROM?

We’ve talked about church and God’s call for us to come together, but how did “church” start? How did the Liturgy that we know today from? Allow youth to share what they know about the early church.

ACTIVITY: MOCK ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Materials:

- Notecards with a “yes” or “no” pre-written on them. There should be one notecard per person and an equal amount of “yes” and “no”.
- Writing utensils

Have the group sit in a circle. Explain that they are going to agree or disagree with a topic. The Topic is “Should people be allowed to go barefoot anywhere they want?” (feel free to substitute this topic for a different one!) Explain that half of the group will get a card that says “Yes” and half of the group will get a card that says “no”. They will need to support what their card says even if they don’t agree with it. Hand out the cards and allow youth time to come up with a reason to write on the back of their card. Explain that the reason can be serious or seemingly ridiculous as long as it aligns with the argument. Then go around the circle and allow each person to read their argument and reason.

Talk about the arguments made – did some seem silly or ridiculous to you, and maybe not to others? Did some arguments seem truer to you? Why or why not?

Explain that this activity was to show how the Liturgy started to take shape! Explain that after Christ, people started to gather to offer praise together...they read the teachings of Christ and the apostles and a priest talked to them about how they should imitate it and they had bread and wine – the Eucharist, but it wasn't until years later that the Liturgy, St. John's Chrysostom's Liturgy was created (written by St. John). The Liturgy was agreed upon and compiled gradually through the ecumenical councils. One of the first parts of the Liturgy agreed upon was the Nicene Creed. The activity they just did was an example of an ecumenical council, which is when teachers, priests and leaders of the church gathered together to decide on common faith decisions – the traditions, beliefs, etc.

THE CREED

What do we believe as Orthodox Christians? Allow youth to provide various responses and then read through the creed.

*I believe in one God, Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.
Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;
And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended into the heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
And He will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end.
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.
In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.*

What is the connection to why it's important to go to church? When we go to church, we are affirming our beliefs together! We are coming together as the Bible asks us to with a common and shared belief! Explain that when someone asks us what our beliefs are, we can tell them or show them our creed!

Our church was formed by people coming together to agree on ways to worship our God and for us to seek Him. There have been many decisions made, always by the coming together of people.

ACTIVITY: CHRYSOSTOM CHALLENGE

Materials:

- Cut-out sections of the Liturgy with titles

Give each youth a cut-out section of the Liturgy with the Title of that section in bold. Give the group 10 minutes to see if they can put their sections in the correct order by arranging themselves in a sort-of half-circle with a beginning and end (This way they can all see each other).

After they have put them in order, go through each one, rather briefly asking if the section might have come from the Bible, Holy Tradition, or from a decision in an Ecumenical Council. (NOTE: Yes, things are more complicated than these three options, but this activity is simply to help youth gain a sense of how our Liturgy was formed).

After the activity, again, talk about how much our Liturgy is a way for people to come together and Give Thanks to God.

DISCUSSION: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Simply re-cap the things you discussed already:

- Why do we go to church?
- Where did our Liturgy come from?

PART 2: HOW CAN I SAY YES TO GOD?

DISCUSSION: SAYING YES

- What does it mean to say yes to God? *It means we are willing to be obedient, to listen to Him and to love Him. We are willing to let Him into our lives.*
- Do you know of any saints or Holy people who have said Yes to God? *Noah said yes to build an ark, Moses said yes to return to Egypt, Jesus' disciples said yes and left their loved ones. Allow for various responses, but lead them to the biggest example: Mary, the Theotokos.*
- Is it always easy to say "Yes" to God? *NO! Sometimes it's very scary! Think about how Noah felt building an ark when no one else believed or how Moses put himself in danger going back to Egypt, etc.*

BOOK: THE STORY OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

As you read highlight how Mary's parents, Anna & Joachim also said Yes to God and offered their gift of Mary back to Him. Highlight how Mary said Yes to the angel even though that may have been very scary! Talk about how Mary went to the temple with Joy in her obedience to God.

DISCUSSION: HOW CAN I SAY YES?

- How did Joachim and Anna, Mary's parents say "yes" to God? *Talk about their willingness to give back their gift to God, to offer their daughter to His service.*
- How did Mary say "Yes" to God when she was a little girl? *Talk about how she danced with joy upon entering the temple, she went willingly and joyfully into His presence.*
- How did Mary say "Yes" to God when she was grown? *She accepted God's Will for her to be Jesus' mother, even though it was scary.*
- How is the Theotokos present in your life? *Could be as simple as prayers in church, recognizing Theotokos feast days, or asking for her prayers or guidance in your daily struggles.*

GAME: YES/NO CONE TOSS

Materials:

- Two cones, one with "NO" printed on it via tape & one with "YES" printed on it via tape,
- Paper plates with the centers cut out and the following phrases written on each (each are examples or not examples of people saying "Yes" to God – enough so that each person gets to throw one plate):
 - Helping a new kid make friends at school
 - You're throwing a ball in the house and accidentally break something of your mom's. Mom hears the crash and comes running and you pretend you accidentally bumped it.
 - You got in trouble and you're angry. Your parents punished you, but you think your sibling deserves to be punished. You decide to break of your sibling's toys.
 - Doing a friend's homework for them
 - Walking away when someone hits you
 - Giving food or toys to people who don't have enough
 - Your friend says mean things about another person, so you do too.
 - Helping someone clean up a mess even though you did not make it.
 - Your friend moved away and is lonely. You get yourself and other friends to write him/her letters.
 - Your team has just lost a game and everyone is sad. You encourage your teammates reminding them of things they did well.
 - You have a sick parent, and you help clean up the kitchen.

- You were told to pick up your toys, but you're having fun and don't want to stop playing, so you choose to keep playing.
- Your mom only made enough cookies for the guests. She tells you not to eat any. You really want a cookie, so you decide to take one.

Give people turns throwing 1 plate on a cone and then talk about it afterwards in the discussion below. Feel free to have the cones a challenging distance for fun!

DISCUSSION:

- Is saying "Yes" always the right thing? *If it will bring us closer to God, than it probably is, but if we are not sure if it's right, then we should talk to a parent or a priest or another trusted adult.*
- What if we say "no?" *Sometimes saying "yes" when we should is soooo hard! And sometimes we make mistakes. The important thing is to remember that if we are sorry, God will forgive us and we need to forgive ourselves too. Try again!*

DISCUSSION:

- Is saying "Yes" always the right thing? *If it will bring us closer to God, than it probably is, but if we are not sure if it's right, then we should talk to a parent or a priest or another trusted adult.*
- What if we say "no?" *Sometimes saying "yes" when we should is soooo hard! And sometimes we make mistakes. The important thing is to remember that if we are sorry, God will forgive us and we need to forgive ourselves too. Try again!*

SAINT EXAMPLE: ST. THEODORA

Ask if they can think of any saints who had the courage to say "Yes"? Allow them to share, and then continue to read the brief example of St. Theodora below:

Read the excerpt from *Christina's True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilos during the ninth century. This was a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

The name "Theodora" means "gift of God." Saint Theodora was a very courageous woman who wanted to make a difference. She hoped that the time would come when the icons would have a rightful place in the house of God. She secretly owned many icons. Some people say she used to hide them under her huge big beautiful skirts.

Finally when her husband died, Theodora asked for a very important meeting called the General Synod in the year 843 A.D. At that meeting everyone agreed to keep the icons. We celebrate that decision every first Sunday of Great Lent, known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We have a big procession to celebrate this victory of the icons, just like the parade in Constantinople led by Saint Theodora and the Patriarch.

Saint Theodora is a true champion of the faith because she fought to keep the icons. She did not fight with guns and weapons, but she fought with love and faith. She had love for Christ as our true Savior and faith that the icons help us pray to God.

Talk about how she was able to stand up for what she believed in, she had to have patience and love to make the change, but because she chose to be courageous and say Yes for God, we can now have icons in our church.

CRAFT: SUPERHERO

When we say yes, we are letting God in us! We are opening our hearts to Him, which is honestly kind of like a super power, because when we let Him in, we can do great things in LOVE for others! Read the following bible quote:

“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

Explain that we are going to show off that “YES” power of God’s by making some capes.

Materials:

- Capes cut out from table cloths in different colors (1 cape per youth)
- YES in a Superhero shape cut outs from a strong paper. (1 per youth)

Have youth color their “YES” superhero shape and attach it to their capes.

How can we use our “YES” power with God right now in the church? *Singing, greeting, serving, etc.* Emphasize that You are important in the church NOW given your abilities and talents, even though you are not yet an adult! Explore your interests and talents within the church community! Do you like to bake? Perhaps you can help with baking the Prosfophora or help with bake sales to raise money for various causes. Do you like to greet people? Maybe you can help greet people when they walk into church – especially kids who visit! Start there, and God will enrich you and guide you.

DISCUSSION: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Does saying “Yes” to God always have to be a BIG heroic thing? *No! We can say “yes” even in the little things in our lives. We can simply say yes by talking like the people of God with kindness and love and acting like people of God doing good works, etc.*
- How can our unique talents be used as a way to say “yes” to God? *We can use our voices to sing in the choir or our service skills to serve in the altar. We can help care for younger kids/siblings than us in church, etc.*

PART 3: HOW CAN I GIVE BACK TO GOD IN MY DAILY LIFE?

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY: “FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

Materials:

- Icon of Christ
- Chalice & Diskos

Tell the kids that this week we have been learning that one of the biggest reasons we go to church is “For the Life of the World”. We are given life by God, our creator and we are asked to give back – to say Yes to God and to help everyone in our world. During Liturgy, the priest actually says “For the Life of the World” when we are saying prayers to get ready for Holy Communion.

Have the chalice and diskos start on a table in front of an icon of Jesus. Then read the Script out loud telling the kids that this is what the priest says. Then have the teacher appoint one child to take the chalice and diskos, turning to another kid and saying the words “For the Life of the World”, facing another child giving them the vessels.

SCRIPT:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was

delivered up, or rather when He delivered Himself up for the life of the world, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, giving thanks and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:

The Priest exclaims: Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

Have each child say “He delivered Himself up for the life of the world” while facing another child, passing the chalice and diskos around in a circle. And then back to the teacher at the end who says the words while placing the vessels in front of the icon of Christ – offering back to God. Make sure to have no other conversations or discussions until after they’ve gone around the entire circle so they can see they’re a part of a continual chain which leads back to Christ.

Then, explain that when we say FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD, we are remembering that EVERYTHING in the world is God’s. We are remembering that God is the boss and we are thanking Him for all that we have.

When we sing the communion hymn “I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord” we are offering a sacrifice of praise – we are receiving God’s Body and Blood and offering it back to Him with praise.

BOOK: *Everything Tells Us about God* by Katherine Bolger Hyde

While you read this, point out that both little things and big things are gifts and can be given back to God.

DISCUSSION:

- Are the only gifts from God ones that come in the form of nature? *No! Even our technology is a gift, because someone was given the talents to create them. We can use technology as a means to serve God and love God and be thankful!*
- How does the book say God uses us? *Talk about how God is talking to you through the world around you and when you give thanks, you are giving back those gifts!*

BOOK: *In the Candle’s Glow* by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson

As you read, point out how nature’s gift can be used as an offering back to God, created into a candle and the candle is our prayers for others and often for thanksgiving.

CRAFT: CANDLE MAKING

- Beeswax sheets that can be rolled (might be neat if they can be colored!)
- Wicks
- scissors

Have youth choose 1-2 beeswax sheets (depending on how they are cut) and a wick. Have them roll the wicks into the beeswax sheets. Cut the wick to a proper length.

Remind youth that a candle is an example of giving a gift from God back to Him, especially if we use the candle to pray! Tell them they can take this candle home and with their parents’ help and guidance they can light it as they pray.

DISCUSSION: PRAYER

One of the best ways to bring God into our daily lives and to offer each moment back to Him is through prayer because each moment is also a gift from God.

- When and where can you pray? *Anytime and anywhere! There is not a single place where we can’t find God and He can’t find us.*

- Should you always pray with an icon and/or candle? *If they are available, they are great helpers when we pray because they help us focus our hearts and minds on God, but because God is everywhere, you should pray everywhere even without icons and candles.*
- What are some short, simple prayers we can say easily during the day? *Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, Have mercy on me a sinner, "Lord Have Mercy", "Glory to God!", "Lord, Save and Protect!", "Bless o Lord!". Saying longer prayers are important when we have the time and place to give to our God, but because we try to give God every moment, we learn how to say these short prayers throughout the day. When we are thankful, "Glory to God!" when we are worried, "Lord Have Mercy", When we are scared, "Lord, Save and Protect!" etc.*

BOOK: Sasha and the Dragon

Sometimes we forget to pray to God because feelings of fear or worry keep us from thinking about God. But it is important even in those times to pray. Remember those short prayers "Lord, Save and Protect!"? As you read the story, highlight how God and the saints hear Sasha Pray! Talk about how we are not alone, God has given us each an angel and there are saints praying for us all the time too who want to help us!

CRAFT: Glow in the Dark Cross

Materials:

- Black construction paper (1 per person)
- Glow-in-the dark tape

Create a glow-in-the dark cross to hang up in their rooms at night so they can remember that even they get scared at night, God is there! Pray to Him! Feel free to discuss fears of the dark and how adults are sometimes afraid of the dark too. The important thing is to remember you are not alone with God, the angels and the saints.

DISCUSSION: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Remember when we talked about "For the Life of the World" and in Church reminded that everything is a gift from God and we show our love and thanksgiving by giving everything back to Him.

- It is important to come to church because God is calling us together – He wants US to join Him in His heavenly kingdom! How did our church come to be?
- We also give back by saying YES to God! What were/are some ways we can say "yes" to God?
- We also give back by remembering that everything is a gift, even our daily moments. What are ways we can remember to give back?

GRADES K-2 CURRICULUM

OVERARCHING GOAL: Youth will find ways to make Liturgy relevant to their relationship with their self, relationship with God and meaningful in their worldly/daily lives.

SECTION/GOALS:

1. Youth will learn ways to show God they love Him when they are in Church.
2. Youth will learn what it means to say “Yes” to God
3. Youth will learn ways we can give back to God in our daily lives.

Materials:

- Nametag materials: pre-cut construction paper strung with yarn for a necklace
- Markers/crayons
- Religious stickers
- Craft Activity: Keys to Obedience
 - Key outlines on laminated colored paper for youth to cut out. (there should be 3 different colors, each color with a different word: Faith, Joy, Love).
 - Scissors
 - Writing utensils
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Hole punchers
 - Laminated white paper with bible verse printed on them.
- Book: *The Story of Mary the Mother of God* by Dorrie Papademetriou
- Cape Craft Materials:
 - Capes cut out from table cloths in different colors (1 cape per youth)
 - YES in a Superhero shape cut outs from a strong paper. (1 per youth)
- Icon of Christ
- Chalice & Diskos
- Book: *Everything Tells Us about God* by Katherine Bolger Hyde
- Book: *In the Candle's Glow* by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson
- Beeswax sheets that can be rolled (might be neat if they can be colored!)
- Wicks
- Book: *Sasha and the Dragon* by Laura E. Wolfe
- Black construction paper (1 per person)
- Glow-in-the dark tape
- Book: *Christina's True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

ICEBREAKER:

Have youth create their own nametag to wear around their neck (NOTE: some youth may need help writing their names). Have them write their names and decorate it with stickers of their choice. Then, allow each youth to introduce themselves.

PART 1: HOW CAN I SHOW GOD I LOVE HIM WHEN I'M IN CHURCH?

DISCUSSION: MISBEHAVIOR

- How many of you have ever been told to not do something in church? What was it? *Shouting, hitting or kicking a sibling, running, jumping, kicking a kneeler over, facing the wrong way, etc.*
- Why do we do these things? *Sometimes we forget, sometimes we get excited, sometimes we might get bored, etc.*
- Why should we try not to do these things? *Our behavior in church is a way to show God we love him. Listening to the songs and stories are ways that we can show our love. Sometimes bringing our books about God to church with us for the times in church when things are hard to understand is another way to share our love with God.*

DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN I DO IN CHURCH?

- What are some things you can do in church that are good? *Lighting candles, kissing the icons, etc.*
- Why are those things good? *They are things that show our love for God*
- What are things in church that make you happy? *Songs, being with family together, being with our extended family or friends, etc.*
- What are some other things that we can do in the church that might make us happy or joyful, with permission from our family and sometimes others? *Sing in the choir, serve as an altar boy, help as a communion assistant, pray for people, help children who are younger than us, etc.*

GAME: UP, DOWN, STOP, GO:

The teacher is the caller. When the teacher says, “Up” the kids do a squat. When the teacher says, “Down” the kids jump as high as they can with arms outstretched. When the teacher says, “Stop” the kids walk around the room. When the teacher says “Go” the kids freeze. Allow the kids a few rounds to play and get used to the commands, then from this point on, they will have to sit out if they miss the directions or make a mistake.

DISCUSSION: OBEDIENCE

- Talk about what happened when you didn’t listen to the instructions correctly. Possible responses include *I lost the game, I felt sad to not be a part of the game anymore.*
- Talk about what happened when you could do the game correctly. Possible responses include *I felt happy that I was still in the game, etc.*
- Ask what it means to be obedient? *Possible responses include listening to your parents, doing what you’re told, etc.* Then explain that obedience doesn’t always mean doing exactly what you are told. It means doing things for others (even when we don’t want to) for THEM or for GOD. It means putting others first. When we are being obedient in church is a way to put others and God before ourselves.

CRAFT: KEYS TO OBEDIENCE

Materials:

- Key outlines on laminated colored paper for youth to cut out. (there should be 3 different colors, each color with a different word: Faith, Joy, Love).
- Scissors
- Writing utensils
- Pipe cleaners
- Hole punchers
- Laminated white paper with bible verse printed on them.

Read the following bible verse to the youth: “If you love me, you will obey all that I have commanded you.” (John 14:15).

Ask the youth how we should obey? Should we do so with complaints or anger? Lead the youth to the idea is obey with love and faith and joy. Those are our keys to obedience. We need to try to love God with faith in Him and Joy in Him!

Allow the kids to either cut out the 3 different keys from laminated paper and then punch a hole at the top of each. Have the youth string their keys onto a pipe cleaner and attach it to their keychain with the bible verse printed on them.

DISCUSSION: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Simply re-cap the things you discussed already:

- What are some ways we can show God we love him when we are in church?
- What can help us when we don’t feel like going to church?
- What can help us when we don’t want to behave?

PART 2: HOW CAN I SAY YES TO GOD?

DISCUSSION: SAYING YES

- What does it mean to say yes to God? *It means we are willing to be obedient, to listen to Him and to love Him. We are willing to let Him into our lives.*
- Do you know of any saints or Holy people who have said Yes to God? *Noah said yes to build an ark, Moses said yes to return to Egypt, Jesus' disciples said yes and left their loved ones. Allow for various responses, but lead them to the biggest example: Mary, the Theotokos.*
- Is it always easy to say "Yes" to God? *NO! Sometimes it's very scary! Think about how Noah felt building an ark when no one else believed or how Moses put himself in danger going back to Egypt, etc.*

BOOK: THE STORY OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

As you read highlight how Mary's parents, Anna & Joachim also said Yes to God and offered their gift of Mary back to Him. Highlight how Mary said Yes to the angel even though that may have been very scary! Talk about how Mary went to the temple with Joy in her obedience to God.

DISCUSSION: HOW CAN I SAY YES?

- How did Joachim and Anna, Mary's parents say "yes" to God? *Talk about their willingness to give back their gift to God, to offer their daughter to His service.*
- How did Mary say "Yes" to God when she was a little girl? *Talk about how she danced with joy upon entering the temple, she went willingly and joyfully into His presence.*
- How did Mary say "Yes" to God when she was grown? *She accepted God's Will for her to be Jesus' mother, even though it was scary.*

GAME: YES/NO CONE TOSS

Materials:

- Two cones, one with "NO" printed on it via tape & one with "YES" printed on it via tape,
- Paper plates with the centers cut out and the following phrases written on each (each are examples or not examples of people saying "Yes" to God – enough so that each person gets to throw one plate):
 - Helping a new kid make friends at school
 - You're throwing a ball in the house and accidentally break something of your mom's. Mom hears the crash and comes running and you pretend you accidentally bumped it.
 - You got in trouble and you're angry. Your parents punished you, but you think your sibling deserves to be punished. You decide to break of your sibling's toys.
 - Doing a friend's homework for them
 - Walking away when someone hits you
 - Giving food or toys to people who don't have enough
 - Your friend says mean things about another person, so you do too.
 - Helping someone clean up a mess even though you did not make it.
 - Your friend moved away and is lonely. You get yourself and other friends to write him/her letters.
 - Your team has just lost a game and everyone is sad. You encourage your teammates reminding them of things they did well.
 - You have a sick parent, and you help clean up the kitchen.
 - You were told to pick up your toys, but you're having fun and don't want to stop playing, so you choose to keep playing.
 - Your mom only made enough cookies for the guests. She tells you not to eat any. You really want a cookie, so you decide to take one.

Give people turns throwing 1 plate on a cone and then talk about it afterwards in the discussion below. Feel free to have the cones a challenging distance for fun!

DISCUSSION:

- Is saying “Yes” always the right thing? *If it will bring us closer to God, than it probably is, but if we are not sure if it’s right, then we should talk to a parent or a priest or another trusted adult.*
- What if we say “no?” *Sometimes saying “yes” when we should is soooo hard! And sometimes we make mistakes. The important thing is to remember that if we are sorry, God will forgive us and we need to forgive ourselves too. Try again!*

SAINT EXAMPLE: ST. THEODORA

Ask if they can think of any saints who had the courage to say “Yes”? Allow them to share, and then continue to read the brief example of St. Theodora below:

Read the excerpt from *Christina’s True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilus during the ninth century. This as a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

The name “Theodora” means “gift of God.” Saint Theodora was a very courageous woman who wanted to make a difference. She hoped that the time would come when the icons would have a rightful place in the house of God. She secretly owned many icons. Some people say she used to hide them under her huge big beautiful skirts.

Finally when her husband died, Theodora asked for a very important meeting called the General Synod in the year 843 A.D. At that meeting everyone agreed to keep the icons. We celebrate that decision every first Sunday of Great Lent, known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We have a big procession to celebrate this victory of the icons, just like the parade in Constantinople led by Saint Theodora and the Patriarch.

Saint Theodora is a true champion of the faith because she fought to keep the icons. She did not fight with guns and weapons, but she fought with love and faith. She had love for Christ as our true Savior and faith that the icons help us pray to God.

Talk about how she was able to stand up for what she believed in, she had to have patience and love to make the change, but because she chose to be courageous and say Yes for God, we can now have icons in our church.

CRAFT: SUPERHERO

When we say yes, we are letting God in us! We are opening our hearts to Him, which is honestly kind of like a super power, because when we let Him in, we can do great things in LOVE for others! Read the following bible quote:

“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

Explain that we are going to show off that “YES” power of God’s by making some capes.

Materials:

- Capes cut out from table cloths in different colors (1 cape per youth)
- YES in a Superhero shape cut outs from a strong paper. (1 per youth)

Have youth color their “YES” superhero shape and attach it to their capes.

DISCUSSION: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Does saying “Yes” to God always have to be a BIG heroic thing? *No! We can say “yes” even in the little things in our lives. We can simply say yes by talking like the people of God with kindness and love and acting like people of God doing good works, etc.*
- How can our unique talents be used as a way to say “yes” to God? *We can use our voices to sing in the choir or our service skills to serve in the altar. We can help care for younger kids/siblings than us in church, etc.*

PART 3: HOW CAN I GIVE BACK TO GOD IN MY DAILY LIFE?

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY: “FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD”

Materials:

- Icon of Christ
- Chalice & Diskos

Tell the kids that this week we have been learning that one of the biggest reasons we go to church is “For the Life of the World”. We are given life by God, our creator and we are asked to give back – to say Yes to God and to help everyone in our world. During Liturgy, the priest actually says “For the Life of the World” when we are saying prayers to get ready for Holy Communion.

Have the chalice and diskos start on a table in front of an icon of Jesus. Then read the Script out loud telling the kids that this is what the priest says. Then have the teacher appoint one child to take the chalice and diskos, turning to another kid and saying the words “For the Life of the World”, facing another child giving them the vessels.

SCRIPT:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was delivered up, or rather when He delivered Himself up for the life of the world, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, giving thanks and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:

The Priest exclaims: Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

Have each child say it while facing another child, passing the chalice and diskos around in a circle. And then back to the teacher at the end who says the words while placing the vessels in front of the icon of Christ – offering back to God. Make sure to have no other conversations or discussions until after they’ve gone around the entire circle so they can see they’re a part of a continual chain which leads back to Christ.

Then, explain that when we say FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD, we are remembering that EVERYTHING in the world is God’s. We are remembering that God is the boss and we are thanking Him for all that we have.

BOOK: *Everything Tells Us about God* by Katherine Bolger Hyde

While you read this, point out that both little things and big things are gifts and can be given back to God.

DISCUSSION:

- Are the only gifts from God ones that come in the form of nature? *No! Even our technology is a gift, because someone was given the talents to create them. We can use technology as a means to serve God and love God and be thankful!*
- How does the book say God uses us? *Talk about how God is talking to you through the world around you and when you give thanks, you are giving back those gifts!*

BOOK: In the Candle's Glow by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson

As you read, point out how nature's gift can be used as an offering back to God, created into a candle and the candle is our prayers for others and often for thanksgiving.

CRAFT: CANDLE MAKING

- Beeswax sheets that can be rolled (might be neat if they can be colored!)
- Wicks
- scissors

Have youth choose 1-2 beeswax sheets (depending on how they are cut) and a wick. Have them roll the wicks into the beeswax sheets. Cut the wick to a proper length.

Remind youth that a candle is an example of giving a gift from God back to Him, especially if we use the candle to pray! Tell them they can take this candle home and with their parents' help and guidance they can light it as they pray.

DISCUSSION: PRAYER

One of the best ways to bring God into our daily lives and to offer each moment back to Him is through prayer because each moment is also a gift from God.

- When and where can you pray? *Anytime and anywhere! There is not a single place where we can't find God and He can't find us.*
- Should you always pray with an icon and/or candle? *If they are available, they are great helpers when we pray because they help us focus our hearts and minds on God, but because God is everywhere, you should pray everywhere even without icons and candles.*
- What are some short, simple prayers we can say easily during the day? *Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, Have mercy on me a sinner, "Lord Have Mercy", "Glory to God!", "Lord, Save and Protect!", "Bless o Lord!". Saying longer prayers are important when we have the time and place to give to our God, but because we try to give God every moment, we learn how to say these short prayers throughout the day. When we are thankful, "Glory to God!" when we are worried, "Lord Have Mercy", When we are scared, "Lord, Save and Protect!" etc.*

BOOK: Sasha and the Dragon

Sometimes we forget to pray to God because feelings of fear or worry keep us from thinking about God. But it is important even in those times to pray. Remember those short prayers "Lord, Save and Protect!"? As you read the story, highlight how God and the saints hear Sasha Pray! Talk about how we are not alone, God has given us each an angel and there are saints praying for us all the time too who want to help us!

CRAFT: Glow in the Dark Cross

Materials:

- Black construction paper (1 per person)
- Glow-in-the dark tape

Create a glow-in-the dark cross to hang up in their rooms at night so they can remember that even they get scared at night, God is there! Pray to Him! Feel free to discuss fears of the dark and how adults are sometimes afraid of the dark too. The important thing is to remember you are not alone with God, the angels and the saints.

DISCUSSION: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Remember when we talked about “For the Life of the World” and in Church reminded that everything is a gift from God and we show our love and thanksgiving by giving everything back to Him.

- We start by showing God how we love Him when we are in church. How can we do that again?
- We also give back by saying YES to God! What were/are some ways we can say “yes” to God?
- We also give back by remembering that everything is a gift, even our daily moments. What are ways we can remember to give back?

“FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD” BDA HAND-OUT

What does the phrase “For the Life of the World” mean to you?

BEFORE Before any lessons or discussions	DURING Mid-lessons and discussions	AFTER After lessons and discussions
HOW DID YOUR RESPONSE EVOLVE THROUGHOUT THE COUNCIL?		

HIGH SCHOOL QUOTES HAND-OUT

PART 1: LITURGY & SELF

SPIRITUAL VS. RELIGIOUS

- The real tragedy of Christianity is not its “compromise” with the world and progressive “materialism,” but on the contrary, its “spiritualization” and transformation into “religion.” And religion – as we know already – has thus come to mean a world of pure spirituality, a concentration of attention of matters pertaining to the “soul.” - Fr. Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*
- The sin was not that man neglected his religious duties. The sin was that he thought of God in terms of religion, i.e., opposing Him to life. The only real fall of man is his non-eucharistic life in a non-Eucharistic world. The fall is not that he preferred world to God, distorted the balance between the spiritual and material, but that he made the world material, whereas he was to have transformed it into “life in God,” filled with meaning and spirit. - Fr. Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*

THINE OWN OF THINE OWN

Excerpt taken from the Anaphora in Divine Liturgy (right before the Consecration of the Holy Gifts):

PRIEST: (quietly) Having in remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming:

(The Priest takes up the Diskarion and the Chalice and elevates them over the Antimins; he makes the sign of the Cross with them over the Antimins as he lowers them, saying:)

(Aloud) Thine own of thine own we offer unto thee, in behalf of all, and for all.

CHOIR: We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar, and continues with the Prayer of Consecration)

PRIEST: (Quietly) Again we offer unto thee this reasonable and unbloody service, and beseech thee and pray thee and supplicate thee: send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here spread forth:

(The Priest signs the Holy Bread with the sign of the cross, saying quietly:)

And make this bread the precious Body of thy Christ; Amen.

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Chalice, saying quietly:)

And that which is in this cup, the precious Blood of thy Christ; Amen.

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over both the holy Gifts, saying quietly:)

PRIEST: Changing them by thy Holy Spirit; Amen, Amen, Amen.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar and continues the prayer quietly:)

That to those who shall partake thereof they may be unto cleansing of soul, unto the remission of sins, unto the communion of thy Holy Spirit, unto the fulfilment of the kingdom of Heaven, unto boldness toward thee, and not unto judgement nor unto condemnation.

And again we offer unto thee this reasonable service for all those who in faith have gone before us to their rest:

Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith:

PRIEST: (Aloud) Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary:

SURRENDER

- “Only love for God, the absolute object of all love, frees obedience from blindness and makes it the joyful acceptance of that alone which is worthy of being accepted. But love without obedience to God is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16).” - Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*
- “True obedience is thus true love for God, the true response of Creation to its creator. Humanity is fully humanity when it is this response to God, when it becomes the movement of total self-giving and obedience to Him.”
Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*

THEOTOKOS

- Luke 1:26-38 when the Archangel Gabriel Announces Christ’s birth to Mary and she accepts:

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.”

Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- “She is the Mother of Christ. She is the fullness of love accepting the coming of God to us – giving life to Him, who is the Life of the world. And the whole creation rejoices in her, because it recognizes through her that the end and fulfillment of all life, of all love is to accept Christ, to give Him life in ourselves. And there should be no fear that this joy about Mary takes anything from Christ, diminishes in any way the glory due to Him and Him alone. For what we find in her and what constitutes the joy of the Church is precisely the fullness of our adoration of Christ, of acceptance and love for Him. Really, here is no “cult of movement of joy and thanksgiving, of acceptance and obedience – the wedding to the Holy Spirit, which makes it the only complete joy on earth.” -Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*
- Liturgical Hymns to the Theotokos:
 - Hymn to the Theotokos:
It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you!
 - All Creation Rejoices:

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, the assembly of Angels and the race of men. O Sanctified Temple and Rational Paradise! O Glory of Virgins! From you, God was incarnate and became a child, our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, o Full of Grace! Glory to you!

LIFE AS A SACRAMENT

- *“The Church may be defined as the new life in Christ. It is man’s life lived by the Holy Spirit in union with God. All aspects of the new life of the Church participate in the mystery of salvation. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. And so in Christ and the Holy Spirit everything in the Church becomes a sacrament, an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God as it is already being experienced in the life of this world.” -The Orthodox Faith: Volume ii Worship by Fr. Thomas Hopko*
- *“Man was created for Eucharist – for the pure love of God, for the sake of God, for the recognition of God as the content of his very life, as the answer to all his questions, the Purpose of all his desires.” -Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

MORE QUOTES!

- To be truly man means to be fully oneself. The confirmation is the confirmation of man in his own, unique “personality.” It is, to use again the same image, his ordination to be himself, to become what God wants him to be, what He has loved in me from all eternity. It is the gift of vocation. If the Church is truly the ‘newness of life’ – the world and nature as restored in Christ. - Alexander Schmemmann’s For the Life of the World
- There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. -1 Corinthians 12:4-12

PART 2: LITURGY & GOD

LITURGY AND GOD

- “When we set ourselves apart from others, we are not Christian. We are true Christians when we have a profound sense that we are members of the mystical body of Christ, of the Church, in an unbroken relationship of love – when we live united in Christ, that is, when we experience unity in His Church with a sense of oneness. This is why Christ prays to His Father saying, that they may be one. He repeats the prayer again and again and the apostles emphasize it everywhere. This is the most profound aspect, the most exalted meaning, of the Church. This is where the secret is to be found: for all to be united as one person in God. There is no other religion like this; no other religion says anything of this sort. They have something to say, but not this mystery, this exquisite point of the mystery which Christ demands and tells us that this is how we must become, that he wants us to be His.” - Elder Porphyrios in Wounded by Love,

FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

Excerpt taken from the Divine Liturgy:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

*Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was delivered up, or rather when **He delivered Himself up for the life of the world**, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, giving thanks and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:*

The Priest exclaims: Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

- *“Let us depart in peace,” says the celebrant as he leaves the altar, and this is the last commandment of the liturgy. We must not stay on Mount Tabor, although we know that it is good for us to be there. We are sent back. But now “we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit.” And it is as witnesses of this Light, as witnesses of the Spirit, that we must “go forth” and begin the never-ending mission of the Church. Eucharist was the end of the journey, the end of time.” (45) - Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World**
- *“To leave, to come.... This is the beginning, the starting point of the sacrament, the condition of its transforming power and reality.” (28) - Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World**

SACRAMENTS & SELF-DISCOVERY

- *“And so it was, when Moses held up his hands, that Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. Now Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur sup[ported his hands, one on one side, and one on the other; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” (Exodus 17: 11-13)*

PART 3: LITURGY AND THE WORLD

*“And now the time has come for us to return into the world. “Let us depart in peace,” says the celebrant as he leaves the altar, and this is the last commandment of the Liturgy. We must not stay on Mount Tabor, although we know that it is good for us to be there. We are sent back. But now “we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit.” And it is as witnesses of this Light, as witnesses of the Spirit, that we must “go forth” and begin the neverending mission of the Church.” (45) Alexander Schmemmann states in *For the Life of the World**

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

- *“Man ate the forbidden fruit. The fruit of that one tree, whatever else it may signify, was unlike every other fruit in the Garden: It was not offered as a gift to man. Not given, not blessed by God, it was food whose eating was condemned to be communion with itself alone, and not with God. It is the image of the world loved for itself, and eating it is the image of life understood as an end in itself.” - Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

- *“We treasure each breath with the awareness that our breath – that is, life – is given to us to become a healing presence for others and ourselves.” Albert Rossi’s *Becoming a Healing Presence**
- *“Time is ours to transform and transfigure. So the meaning of time is found in the risk of love, in relationships, in response and openness to the other. Of course, our basic relationship is with Jesus Christ. We try to use our God-*

given time to be as aware and connected with Him as we can and then to do what He has put us on the planet to do. Time is a gift to become more of a healing presence.” Albert Rossi’s *Becoming a Healing Presence*

- “We are called to live in the world seeing everything in it as a revelation of God, a sign of His presence, the joy of His coming.” Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*:

RESPONDING TO EVENTS

- “Acquire peace, and thousands round you will be saved. When a person is in a peaceful state of mind, he can from himself give out to others the light of illumination of the reason. This peace like some priceless treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ left to His disciples before His death.” - St. Seraphim from *An Extraordinary Peace*
- “At your work, whatever it may be, you can become a saint through meekness, patience, and love.” - Elder Porphyrios *Wounded by Love*

ST. THEODORA

Excerpt from *Christina’s True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilos during the ninth century. This was a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

The name “Theodora” means “gift of God.” Saint Theodora was a very courageous woman who wanted to make a difference. She hoped that the time would come when the icons would have a rightful place in the house of God. She secretly owned many icons. Some people say she used to hide them under her huge big beautiful skirts.

Finally when her husband died, Theodora asked for a very important meeting called the General Synod in the year 843 A.D. At that meeting everyone agreed to keep the icons. We celebrate that decision every first Sunday of Great Lent, known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We have a big procession to celebrate this victory of the icons, just like the parade in Constantinople led by Saint Theodora and the Patriarch.

Saint Theodora is a true champion of the faith because she fought to keep the icons. She did not fight with guns and weapons, but she fought with love and faith. She had love for Christ as our true Savior and faith that the icons help us pray to God.

MORE QUOTES!

- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

GRADES 6-8 QUOTES HAND-OUT

PART 1: LITURGY & SELF

THINE OWN OF THINE OWN

Excerpt taken from the Anaphora in Divine Liturgy (right before the Consecration of the Holy Gifts):

PRIEST: (quietly) Having in remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming:

(The Priest takes up the Diskarion and the Chalice and elevates them over the Antimins; he makes the sign of the Cross with them over the Antimins as he lowers them, saying:)

(Aloud) Thine own of thine own we offer unto thee, in behalf of all, and for all.

CHOIR: We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar, and continues with the Prayer of Consecration)

PRIEST: (Quietly) Again we offer unto thee this reasonable and unbloody service, and beseech thee and pray thee and supplicate thee: send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here spread forth:

(The Priest signs the Holy Bread with the sign of the cross, saying quietly:)

And make this bread the precious Body of thy Christ; Amen.

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over the Chalice, saying quietly:)

And that which is in this cup, the precious Blood of thy Christ; Amen.

(The Priest makes the sign of the Cross over both the holy Gifts, saying quietly:)

PRIEST: Changing them by thy Holy Spirit; Amen, Amen, Amen.

(The Priest makes a low bow before the Altar and continues the prayer quietly:)

That to those who shall partake thereof they may be unto cleansing of soul, unto the remission of sins, unto the communion of thy Holy Spirit, unto the fulfilment of the kingdom of Heaven, unto boldness toward thee, and not unto judgement nor unto condemnation.

And again we offer unto thee this reasonable service for all those who in faith have gone before us to their rest:

Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith:

PRIEST: (Aloud) Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary:

SURRENDER

- “Only love for God, the absolute object of all love, frees obedience from blindness and makes it the joyful acceptance of that alone which is worthy of being accepted. But love without obedience to God is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16).” - Alexander Schmemmann’s *For the Life of the World*
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- "She is the Mother of Christ. She is the fullness of love accepting the coming of God to us – giving life to Him, who is the Life of the world. And the whole creation rejoices in her, because it recognizes through her that the end and fulfillment of all life, of all love is to accept Christ, to give Him life in ourselves. And there should be no fear that this joy about Mary takes anything from Christ, diminishes in any way the glory due to Him and Him alone. For what we find in her and what constitutes the joy of the Church is precisely the fullness of our adoration of Christ, of acceptance and love for Him. Really, here is no "cult of movement of joy and thanksgiving, of acceptance and obedience – the wedding to the Holy Spirit, which makes it the only complete joy on earth." -Alexander Schmemmann's *For the Life of the World*
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LIFE AS A SACRAMENT

- *"The Church may be defined as the new life in Christ. It is man's life lived by the Holy Spirit in union with God. All aspects of the new life of the Church participate in the mystery of salvation. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. And so in Christ and the Holy Spirit everything in the Church becomes a sacrament, an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God"*

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PART 2: LITURGY & GOD

“All our knowledge of ourselves comes primarily from parents or parent figures, first from our physical ones and then from our spiritual ones. The world will be giving you a lot of other knowledge, but not self-knowledge – and I mean if you include all the psychiatrists you want, unless they are members of God’s family and full of God’s wisdom about mankind. So if you do not accept membership in God’s family and learn about yourself from God, you will never have much more self-knowledge than you’ve got right now. You become mature by getting to know yourself well, and the only way you can do that is by going to God. That’s why he said, in his wonderful thunderous voice,

Ask me of things concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, ask me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. (Is. 45: 11-13)”

Who is God? Who Am I? Who are You? By Dee Pennock

LITURGY AND GOD

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PART 3: LITURGY AND THE WORLD

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FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

- *“Man ate the forbidden fruit. The fruit of that one tree, whatever else it may signify, was unlike every other fruit in the Garden: It was not offered as a gift to man. Not given, not blessed by God, it was food whose eating was condemned to be communion with itself alone, and not with God. It is the image of the world loved for itself, and eating it is the image of life understood as an end in itself.” - Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

ADDITIONAL QUOTES: LIVING IN THE MOMENT

- *The Lord is near; do not be anxious, but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Then the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. And now, my friends, all that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is lovable and*

attractive, whatever is excellent and admirable – fill your thoughts with these things. Put into practice the lessons I taught you, the tradition I have passed on, all that you heard me say or saw me do; and the God of peace will be with you. - Philippians 4:19

- “We are called to live in the world seeing everything in it as a revelation of God, a sign of His presence, the joy of His coming.” - Fr. Alexander Schmemmann
- “God is Love. And if we call upon God in our life as the Holy Fathers teach us, then we are calling upon Love. If we know and believe that He is present everywhere at all times and if we are united with Him in our hearts, He will teach us how to love our neighbor.” - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica
- “A person who lives as if he were to die every day – given that our life is uncertain by definition – will not sin, for good fear extinguishes most of the disorder of our appetites; whereas he who thinks he has a long life ahead of him will easily let himself be dominated by pleasures.” - St. Athanasios the Great
- This is why I tell you not to be anxious about food and drink to keep you alive and about clothes to cover your body. Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes. Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow and reap and store in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than the birds? Can anxious thought add a single day to your life? And why be anxious about clothes? Consider how the lilies grow in the fields; they do not work, they do not spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendour was not attired like one of them. If that is how God clothes the grass in the fields, which is there today and tomorrow is thrown on the stove, will he not all the more clothe you? How little faith you have! Do not ask anxiously, “What are we to eat? What are we to drink? What shall we wear?” These are the things that occupy the minds of the heather, but your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your mind on God’s kingdom and his justice before everything else, and all the rest will come to you as well. So do not be anxious about tomorrow; tomorrow will look after itself. Each day has troubles enough of its own. - Mathew 6:25-
- “I believe in person to person. Every person is Christ to me, and since there is only one Jesus, that person is the only person in the world **at that moment.**” - Mother Teresa

RESPONDING TO EVENTS

- “Acquire peace, and thousands round you will be saved. When a person is in a peaceful state of mind, he can from himself give out to others the light of illumination of the reason. This peace like some priceless treasure, our Lord Jesus Christ left to His disciples before His death.” - St. Seraphim from *An Extraordinary Peace*

ST. THEODORA

Excerpt from *Christina’s True Heroes* by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.:

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilus during the ninth century. This was a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

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MORE QUOTES!

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GRADES 3-5 CREED PRINT-OUT

I believe in one God, Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into the heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

GRADES 3-5 ST. THEODORA

Saint Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor named Theophilus during the ninth century. This was a terrible time when people were divided and fighting for many years about icons. Some people, called iconoclasts, wanted icons removed from the churches. Sometimes they used violence and persecuted the faithful who wanted to continue venerating the holy icons.

The name “Theodora” means “gift of God.” Saint Theodora was a very courageous woman who wanted to make a difference. She hoped that the time would come when the icons would have a rightful place in the house of God. She secretly owned many icons. Some people say she used to hide them under her huge big beautiful skirts.

Finally when her husband died, Theodora asked for a very important meeting called the General Synod in the year 843 A.D. At that meeting everyone agreed to keep the icons. We celebrate that decision every first Sunday of Great Lent, known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We have a big procession to celebrate this victory of the icons, just like the parade in Constantinople led by Saint Theodora and the Patriarch.

Saint Theodora is a true champion of the faith because she fought to keep the icons. She did not fight with guns and weapons, but she fought with love and faith. She had love for Christ as our true Savior and faith that the icons help us pray to God.



Excerpt from Christina's True Heroes by Maria C. Khoury, Ed. D.

CHRYSTOM CHALLENGE LITURGY CUT-OUT SECTIONS

THE GREAT LITANY

PRIEST: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For this holy House, and for those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For our Archbishop (or Bishop, or Metropolitan) N., for the venerable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the President of the United States and all civil authorities, and for the Armed Forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For this city, and for every city and land, and for the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For healthful seasons, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PEOPLE: For travelers by sea, by land, and by air; for the sick and suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

PEOPLE: To thee O Lord.

The First Antiphon

Bless the Lord, O my soul! Blessed art Thou, O Lord!
Bless the Lord, O my soul! And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul! And forget not all His benefits!
Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases!
The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness!
Bless the Lord, O my soul! Blessed art Thou, O Lord!

THE LITTLE LITANY

DEACON: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Commemorating our most Holy, most Pure, most Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

PEOPLE: To thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: For Thine is the majesty, and Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have being.

Put not your trust in princes, in sons of men in whom there is no salvation.

When his breath departs he returns to his earth; on that very day his plans perish.

The Lord will reign forever; Thy God, O Zion, to all generations.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. No wand ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Only-begotten Son and Immortal Word of God who for our salvation didst will to be incarnate of the Holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary.

Who without change didst become man and wast crucified.

O Christ our God, trampling down death by death,

Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Save us!

THE LITTLE LITANY

DEACON: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Commemorating our most Holy, most Pure, most Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

PEOPLE: To Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: For Thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe Glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

In Thy Kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, or they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

DEACON: Wisdom! Let us Attend!

CHOIR: Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ,

(Sundays:) who rose from the dead,

(Weekdays:) who is wonderful in His saints,

(Feast of the Theotokos:) through the prayers of the Theotokos,

O Son of God, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

TROPARIA/KONTAKIA

PRIEST: For holy are Thou, O our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever.

DEACON: And unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

THE TRISAGION HYMN

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. (3) Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us.

THE PROKEIMENON AND EPISTLE

DEACON: Let us attend!

PRIEST: Peace be unto all!

READER: And to your spirit!

DEACON: Wisdom!

READER & CHOIR: The prokeimenon in the _____ tone.

DEACON: Wisdom!

READER: The reading (from the Acts of the Holy Apostles) (from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the _____)

DEACON: Let us attend!

The reader reads the Epistle for the day. Upon its completion, the Priest blesses the Reader.

PRIEST: Peace be unto you, reader.

Reader: And to your spirit.

BEFORE THE GOSPEL:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! The Reader chants the appointed Alleluia verses. After each one, the Choir repeats the Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL:

DEACON: Bless, Master, him who proclaims the good tidings of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John the Theologian).

PRIEST: May God, through the prayers of the Holy, Glorious, and all-laudable Apostle and Evnagelist _____, enable you to proclaim the glad tidings with great power, to the fulfillment of the Gospel of His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

DEACON: Amen. Wisdom! Let us attend. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

PRIEST: Peace be unto all.

PEOPLE: And to your spirit.

DEACON: The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint _____.

PEOPLE: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

PRIEST: Let us attend!

The appointed Gospel lesson is read. Upon its completion, the Priest blesses the faithful with the Gospel.

PEOPLE: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

HOMILY/SERMON

THE LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

DEACON: Let us say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: O Lord almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3)

DEACON: Again we pray for our Metropolitan _____, for our Bishop _____, for priests, deacons, and all other clergy; and for all our brethren in Christ.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3)

DEACON: Again we pray for the President of our country, for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3)

DEACON: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable holy Orthodox patriarchs; and for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy house; and for all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us _____, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3)

DEACON: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God _____, and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3)

DEACON: Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable house; for those who labor and those who sing; and for all the people here present, who await Thy great and rich mercy.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: For Thou art a merciful God, and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

DEACON: Let us, the faithful, again and again in peace pray unto the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Wisdom!

PRIEST: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

DEACON: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Wisdom!

PRIEST: That guarded always by Thy might we may ascribe glory unto Thee: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

THE CHERUBIC HYMN & GREAT ENTRANCE

CHOIR: Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim, and who sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now lay aside all earthly cares.

PRIEST: You and all Orthodox Christians may the Lord God remember in His Kingdom always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen. That we may receive the King of All, who comes invisibly upborne by the angelic hosts. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

LITANY OF SUPPLICATION:

DEACON: Let us complete our prayer unto the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For the precious Gifts now offered, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For this holy house, and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: That the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant it, O Lord.

DEACON: An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant it, O Lord.

DEACON: Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant it, O Lord.

DEACON: All things that are good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant it, O Lord.

DEACON: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant it, O Lord.

DEACON: A Christian ending to our life: painless, blameless, and peaceful; and a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant it, O Lord.

DEACON: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

PEOPLE: To Thee, O Lord.

DEACON: Through the compassions of Thine only-begotten Son, with whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

THE PEACE

PRIEST: Peace be unto all.

PEOPLE: And to your spirit.

PRIEST: Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess.

PEOPLE: Father, Son and Holy Spirit! The Trinity, one in essence, and undivided!

PRIEST: Christ is in our midst.

PEOPLE: He is and ever shall be!

DEACON: The doors! The doors! In wisdom, let us attend!

THE CREED

I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; He will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His Kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets. In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

THE ANAPHORA

DEACON: Let us stand aright! Let us stand with fear! Let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Oblation in peace.

PEOPLE: A mercy of peace! A sacrifice of praise!

PRIEST: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

PEOPLE: And with your spirit.

PRIEST: Let us lift up our hearts.

PEOPLE: We lift them up unto the Lord.

PRIEST: Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

PEOPLE: It is meet and right to worship the Father, and the son, and the Holy Spirit: the Trinity, one in essence, and undivided.

PRIEST: It is meet and right to hymn Thee, to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to give thanks to Thee, and to worship Thee in every place of Thy dominion: for Thou art God ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing and eternally the same, Thou and Thine only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit. Thou it was who brought us from non-existence into being, and when we had fallen away didst raise us up again, and didst not cease to do all things until Thou hadst brought us up to heaven, and hadst endowed us with Thy Kingdom which is to come. For all these things we give thanks to Thee, and to Thine only-begotten Son, and to Thy Holy Spirit; for all things of which we know and of which we know not, whether manifest or unseen; and we thank Thee for this Liturgy which Thou hast deigned to accept at our hands, though there stand by Thee thousands of archangels and hosts of angels, the cherubim and the seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, who soar aloft, borne on their pinions, Singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming and saying:

PEOPLE: Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

PRIEST: With these blessed powers, O Master who lovest mankind, we also cry aloud and say: Holy art Thou and all-holy, Thou and Thine only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit! Holy art Thou and all-holy, and magnificent is Thy glory! Who hast so loved Thy world as to give Thine only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; who when He had come and had fulfilled all the dispensation for us, in the night in which He was given up – or rather, gave Himself up for the life of the world – took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands; and when He had given thanks and blessed it, and hallowed it, and broken it, He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying: Take! Eat! This is My Body which is broken for you, for the remission of sins.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: And likewise, after supper, He took the cup, saying: Drink of it, all of you! This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins!

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee, in behalf of all and for all.

CHOIR: We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We give thanks unto Thee, O Lord. And we pray unto Thee, O our God.

PRIEST: O Lord, who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit upon Thine apostles at the third hour: Take Him not from us, O good One, but renew Him in us who pray to Thee.

DEACON: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

PRIEST: O Lord, who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit upon Thine apostles at the third hour: Take Him not from us, O Good One, but renew Him in us who pray to Thee.

DEACON: Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

PRIEST: O Lord, who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit upon Thine apostles at the third hour: Take Him not from us, O Good one, but renew Him in us who pray to Thee.

PRIEST: Again we offer unto Thee this reasonable and bloodless worship, and ask Thee, and pray Thee, and supplicate Thee: Send down Thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts here offered.

THE EPICLESIS (The Consecration of the Holy Gifts)

DEACON: Bless, Master, the Holy Bread.

PRIEST: And make this Bread the precious Body of Thy Christ.

PEOPLE: Amen.

DEACON: Bless, Master, the Holy Cup.

PRIEST: And that which is in this Cup, the precious Blood of Thy Christ.

PEOPLE: Amen.

DEACON: Bless both, Master.

PRIEST: Making the change by Thy Holy Spirit.

PEOPLE: Amen. Amen. Amen.

PRIEST: That they may be to those who partake for the purification of soul, for the remission of sins, for the communion of Thy Holy Spirit, for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven, for boldness towards Thee, and not for judgment or condemnation.

Again we offer unto Thee this reasonable worship for those who have fallen asleep in the faith: ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith. Especially for our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

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

PRIEST: Among the first, remember, O Lord, His Beatitude, our Metropolitan _____; His Grace, our Bishop _____. Grant them for Thy holy churches in peace, safety, honor, health, and length of days, rightly to define the word of Thy truth.

CHOIR: And all mankind.

PRIEST: And grant that with one mouth and one heart we may praise Thine all-honorable and majestic name; of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: And the mercies of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ shall be with all of you.

PEOPLE: And with your spirit.

LITANY BEFORE THE LORD'S PRAYER

DEACON: Having remembered all the saints, again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For the precious Gifts offered and sanctified, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: That our God, who loves mankind, receiving them upon His holy, heavenly, and ideal altar as a sweet spiritual fragrance, will send down upon us in return His divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Having asked for the unity of the Faith, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

PEOPLE TO Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: And make us worthy, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation we may dare to call on Thee, the heavenly God, as Father and to say:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PEOPLE: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

PRIEST: For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

PRIEST: Peace be with all.

PEOPLE: And with your spirit.

DEACON: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

PEOPLE: To Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: Through the grace and compassion and love toward mankind of Thine only-begotten Son, with whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen. Amen.

DEACON: Let us attend!

PRIEST: The holy things for the holy!

CHOIR: One is Holy. One is the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COMMUNION HYMN

CHOIR: Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

COMMUNION OF THE CLERGY AND THE FAITHFUL

A Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

PEOPLE: I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, who camest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first. I believe also that this is truly Thine own most pure Body, and that this is truly Thine own precious Blood. Therefore, I pray Thee: have mercy upon me and forgive my transgressions both voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, committed in knowledge or in ignorance. And make me worthy to partake without condemnation of Thy most pure Mysteries, for the remission of my sins, and unto life everlasting. Amen.

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant; for I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies, neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss; but like the thief will I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom. May the communion of Thy holy Mysteries be neither to my judgment, nor to my condemnation, O Lord, but to the healing of soul and body. Amen.

DEACON: In the fear of God, and with faith and in love draw near!

CHOIR: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!

CHOIR: Receive the Body of Christ; taste the fountain of immortality. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRIEST: O God, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance.

CHOIR: We have seen the true Light! We have received the heavenly Spirit! We have found the true Faith! Worshipping the undivided Trinity, who has saved us.

PRIEST: Always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen. Let our mouths be filled with Thy praise, O Lord, that we may sing of Thy glory; for Thou hast made us worthy to partake of Thy holy, divine, immortal, and life-creating Mysteries. Keep us in Thy holiness, that all the day we may meditate upon Thy righteousness. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

DEACON: Let us attend! Having partaken of the divine, holy, most pure, immortal, heavenly, life-creating, and awesome Mysteries of Christ, let us worthily give thanks unto the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us O God, by Thy grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Asking that the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

PEOPLE: To Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: We thank Thee, O Master who lovest mankind, Benefactor of our souls, that Thou hast made us worthy this day of Thy heavenly and immortal mysteries. Make straight our path; strengthen us all in Thy fear; guard our life; make firm our steps; through the prayers and intercessions of the glorious Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, and of all Thy saints. For Thou art our Sanctification, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

PRIEST: Let us depart in peace

PEOPLE: In the name of the Lord.

DEACON: Let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

THE PRAYER BEFORE THE AMBO

PRIEST: O Lord, who blesses those who bless Thee, and sanctifies those who trust in Thee: Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Preserve the fullness of Thy Church. Sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house; glorify them in return by Thy divine power, and forsake us not who put our hope in Thee. Give peace to Thy world, to Thy churches, to Thy priests, to all those in civil authority, and to all Thy people. For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from Thee, the Father of Lights, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, thanksgiving, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen. Blessed be the name of the Lord, henceforth and forevermore. (3)

PRIEST: The blessing of the Lord be upon you through His grace and love for mankind always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

PRIEST: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee!

PEOPLE: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

LORD, have mercy. (3) Father, bless.

PEOPLE: Amen.

FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD SCRIPT

People: *Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

Priest *(in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, Master, Who loves mankind, we also exclaim and say: Holy are You and most holy, You and Your only-begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. Holy are You and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. When He had come and fulfilled for our sake the entire plan of salvation, on the night in which He was delivered up, or rather when He delivered Himself up for the life of the world, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, and, giving thanks and blessing, He hallowed and broke it, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying:*

The Priest exclaims: Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

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