

ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



Galilee Division

Class V
(English)

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Preface

Education is a continuing and refreshing endeavour which attempts to train and equip kids and the young people for a spiritual, active and successful life; and hence it is an 'investment' for today and tomorrow. The myriad possibilities of education have encouraged religion, countries and ideologies to adapt it for furthering their objectives and long term aims. In the Christian tradition "Christian education' is a ministry of the Church.

Secular education programme in every situation and country has undergone enormous transformation through the years. More and more study and research is going into the philosophical base, content, techniques of teaching and learning, learners' participation, technique of evaluation etc. So it is only natural that 'revisions' happen from time to time.

"Christian Education", for which the Sunday School lays the foundation and prods nurture, is never intended to be a carbon copy of what happens in the world of secular education. Christian education has its unique aim and objectives, philosophy, ethics and vision. However, it is not irrelevant to learn from the relevant and succesful 'techniques' available and adopted in the secular front. But we must be constantly careful, never to slip away from our firm Orthodox foundations!

It is highly commendable that the Orthodox Syrian Sundayschool Association has taken the bold step to completely revise the whole curriculum, trusting in God, who loves children. Every lesson and every detail is prepared after a pretty long stretch of study, discussion, correction and revisits by a team of people who have the interest and expertise to engage in this exacting and time-consuming exercise. Provisions are made to give proper guidelines and direction to teachers. All this study materials are being prepared in Malayalam and English simultaneously. The regional schools, especially, those outside India, shall adapt these basic materials to suit local situations, linguistic and cultural variances; and aptitudes of children but keeping the broad structure and basics intact.

These revised study materials are dedicated to the Church, with the fervent expectation that all those who love the Church, and our children who are dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, shall certainly welcome this venture.

Devalokom
20-10-2012

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Introduction

We are living through a period of rapid changes. The educational sector reflects these changes to a great extent. Secular education is undergoing a lot of revisions and children are greatly influenced by secular education. Therefore Sunday School Curriculum also requires to be revised according to the new learning methods. The comprehensive revision of the curriculum is undertaken in the light of this reality.

We have no notion that just by implementing the secular methodology of learning, we can reform the character of our children. The fundamental principle there should be the teacher-student relationship modelled on the love between Christ and his disciples. The method of presentation followed in this book would help teachers and students alike in the transaction of the topics discussed.

This textbook comes as a product of the strenuous efforts of the Curriculum Revision Committee headed by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenius, President, OSSAE. The contributions of those who wrote various units are invaluable. This textbook, on its completion, owes much to all members of the curriculum committee, especially H.G. Mar Irenius, President OSSAE and executive editor Sam V. Daniel. Suggestions to improve this book are welcome.

Let me pray for this New Curriculum to inaugurate a new age of Spiritual Enlightenment in Sunday School education. Let me also place on record the gratitude to all those who worked for it. We are highly obliged to **Prof. Jose K. Philip** for preparing this English edition.

Devalokam
01-11-2013

Fr. Dr. O. Thomas
Director General

Dear students,

We are undertaking a comprehensive revision of the Sunday School Curriculum. Relevant changes have been brought about in the content and structure of the lessons. We are preparing a teachers' Handbook along with the textbook for students. We expect that this arrangement will be more helpful to teachers and students alike.

The period of learning from Pre-School to Class XII is divided into 5 stages

1. Bethlahem	Preschool class	Upto Age 5
2. Nazreth	Class I to III	Age 5-7
3. Galilee	Class IV to VII	Age 8-11
4. Jerusalem	Class VIII to X	Age 12-14
5. Tabor	Class XI and XII	Age 15-16

This is the textbook for Class V in the Galilee category. Let us look into the structure of the lessons given in the textbook.

1. Theme: The central idea that should be sensitised through each lesson is given here. We should give special emphasis to this idea while transacting a lesson.

2. Verse to be memorized: A biblical verse related to the central theme of the lesson is given for memorizing. The teacher should read out this verse from the Holy Bible at the end of the class and the students should say it aloud several times. Prompt the students to learn the verse, including its reference, by heart.

3. Learning aids: Take care to provide pictures and books, connected to the central theme as well as the Holy Bible in the classroom.

4. Introduction: This section helps in making the presentation of the lesson attractive and enjoyable. Simple questions, anecdotes connected with the life-experience of children and the things we see around are given here.

A simple and enjoyable introduction alone ensures easy learning further. Hence read and present the ideas given here with diligence.

5. Reading Passage or text: This is the content of the lesson. We have tried our best to make it student-centred. The ideas should be presented in a participatory manner. There should be good student involvement. The teacher should take the Holy Bible to class. He should readout the biblical passages. The descriptions made should have the quality of a narration. The students should be encouraged through interaction questions. When important ideas come let the students recite them in Chorus. Questions given in the 'Pause and reflect' section must be posed before the students. Song or hymns, picture stories, short plays etc. are given in the lesson.

Students shall be made to sing songs and enact small plays. Stories should be read out to them. There are separate units of Prayer, Hymns of Worship, My Church, Good habits etc. The unit 'Prayer' aims at making the students say prayers in the evening and in the morning regularly. Students should be encouraged to do that. Directions for this are given in each lesson.

6. Let us think: These are evaluation questions given to examine how for the students have grasped the ideas in the text. The teacher should ask these questions in the class. Space for writing the answers are also provided. Either teacher or parents can write answers for the students.

7. Activities: Most of the tasks given in the section are for enacting, drawing, physical action or narration. Take care to make children do these tasks. The number of lessons have been reduced. Hence we think that there will be ample time for these activities as well.

8. Song or Hymns: A song or hymn connected with the lesson is given here. The teacher should sing it aloud and the students should recite it in chorus. Many songs a quite simple and familiar. So the students can sing them easily. Songs of OVBS classes are also included. So most of the songs will be familiar to students. The teacher seek the help of others who have musical aptitude. It will be better if the teacher can supplement suitable actions while reciting the songs.

9. Let us Pray: A simple prayer connected with the theme of the lesson is given here. The teacher and the students can say this prayer in the class together. All should stand up and cross themselves before the prayer. The teacher can recite it aloud and the student can repeat the prayer.

10. Our Our Decision: An idea that can touch the students' mind like a Our Decision and that can be implemented in their lives is given in this section. Make the students say aloud this concept.

11. Further Reading: Various biblical passages connected with the lesson are given for reading in the evening and in the morning of all days of a week. If the students are unable to read them on their own, elders should read it aloud for them. The biblical passages are arranged in such a manner that a student can read it from one Sunday evening till the next Sunday morning. Parents should encourage their words to read the prescribed passages along with the prayers at home. We hope that this practice will prompt regular family prayers and meditation of biblical verses.

The examination for Nazareth category is oral examination. Hence students should be encouraged to say the answers well in the class. The students should be enthusiastic in the class. The teachers should be able to create a student friendly atmosphere in the class.

The service rendered by our Sunday School teachers in imparting spiritual training to the growing generation and confirming them in right faith and right worship is invaluable. Full co-operation of all students and teachers is essential for the successful implementation of the New Curriculum. Since the new system is different to a great extent from the old, teachers should handle the new curriculum and methods of learning carefully and diligently. Be kind enough to let your valuable suggestions and encouragement known to us. Let there be abundant blessings of the benevolent God on this righteous endeavour of Sunday School teachers and other authorities for the sake of the Holy Church.

Dr. Sam V. Daniel

Executive Editor

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Unit 1

Bible Stories

Chapter 1

Moses at the Palace: Egpt

(Exodus 2:1-5)

Message: Let us realize that God is compassionate towards all. When we are in trouble, he comes to our rescue. Though we are weak, God will strengthen us so that his purposes shall be fulfilled through us.

Verse to be memorised: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds.” (Acts 7:22)

Learning aids: Picture of a royal palace.

Introduction

What do you call the large houses in which kings and emperors lived? They are called palaces. Kings, queens, princes and princesses live in the royal palace. Today we shall learn about a person who lived like a prince in a palace. His name is ‘Moses’.

Reading Passage

Moses was the son of Amram, a member of the priestly tribe of Levi of Israel. His mother was Jochebed. He had a brother named Aaron and a sister named Miriam. Moses, the younger son of Amram and Jochebed was unusually handsome.

Israelites (Hebrews) were treated as slaves in Egypt. King Pharaoh of Egypt was jealous of the growth of Jews in number. Hence he ordered the genocide of all male children of Israelites. The parents of Moses desired to save the life of their child. Hence they hid the child from others for three months. However, they feared

someone would hear the cries of the child. They could no longer hide him. So they made a small basket from paperers reeds, water proof of it with tar and put the baby in it. They laid the basket among the papyrus heeds on the banks of river Nile. This spot was wed by the daughter of Pharaoh for taking bath. When the princess came down with her maids to bath, she heard the cry of the baby. She saw the little basket with the baby floating in the river among the reeds.

She was moved by the sight of the innocent and handsome child. She took him up in her arms and told her maids to find a mother to suckle and nurse the child. The baby's sister Miriam was watching all this from a distance. She approached the princess and asked "Shall I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you"?

The princess agreed. So the little girl rushed home and called the child's mother. Thus the child's own mother got an opportunity to suckle and nurse the child at home; and she was paid for this! The princess named him Moses (meaning "drawn out of water". When child grew up the mother brought him bask to the princess. Let's stop to think. Why did Moses' parents hido their baby? What is the meaning of the name "Moses"? Is it not amazing that Moses' mother paid for nurturing her own bary.

Moses was destined to deliver the people of God (the Israelites) from Egypt. Hence God gave him wisdom and the opportunity to grow up like a prince in the place. "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds". (acts 7:22) He got food, education and nurturing like a prince. But he never forgot his own people. While he was being groomed at the palace, he was moved by the difficulties faced by his own fellow Hebrews. His heart bled at the slave-life of his Hebrew brethren. "By faith Moss, when he came of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:24, 25) Moses lived for forty years in Pharaoh's palace.

What are the qualities of a good leader?

People love, respect and follow them. They in turn show love and concern for the people. A true leader is one who guides his people through the right path. Leaders should have the wisdom and common sense required for this. Moses who became the deliverer of Jews from Egypt, gained his learning, common sense and leadership qualities from the royal palace. There is no doubt that it was all ordained by God.

Answer the following questions

1. Name the tribe in which Moses was born.
.....
2. Who were the parents of Moses?
.....
3. Name the siblings of Moses
.....
4. Name the martyr in the New Testament who spoke about Moses and his growth. Find out and write down the quoted verse from the reading passage.
.....
5. What is said about Moses in the list of those who bore testimony of Faith in Epistle to Hebrews?
.....
.....

Let us pray

O Lord give us wisdom and teach us to be humble and hmane so that we can do good to others.

Our Decision

We would make use of the opportunities before us in a right manner.
We would study well and also try to help others who are in need.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 1:6-11
Monday	Hebrews 11:23-26	Exodus 1:15-22
Tuesday	Hebrews 11:27-31	Exodus 2:1-10
Wednesday	St.Mark 7:6-13	Exodus 2:11-15
Thursday	St.Mark 9:2-8	Exodus 2:16-22
Friday	St.Mark 12:26-27	Exodus 2:23-25
Saturday	St.Luke 9:28-36	St.Luke 2:22-24

Chapter 2

The Lord Calls Moses

(Exodus 3:1-4:17)

Message: The Lord calls us for following his purposes. Let us respond to and obey the Lord's call and surrender ourselves to Him.

Verse to be memorised: "Follow. Me, and I will make you become fishers of men".
(St. Mark 1:17)

Learning aids: The Picture of "burning bush". The picture of Moses tending his flock.

Introduction

Is it not wonderful to know that God has plans and expectations about our lives. He calls us to fulfil his will as we grow up. Let us remain powerfully vigilant to listen to that call. When we listen to and obey the call, we would become useful to many others. Today we are going to learn about a leader who was called to deliver his people from slavery in Egypt. He is none other than Moses, the deliverer of the Hebrews.

Reading Passage

Moses fled from the palace of Pharaoh and started tending the flock of Jethro, the priest of Midian. He married zipporah the daughter of Jethro. He lived in MIDAN for forty years, tending the flock of Jethro, the priest. Thus the prince became a shepherd in the desert. This job enabled him to learn patience and concern for the poor and oppressed. Moses learned his early lessons to lead the people of God while he was tending the flock of sheep.

Moses went up to Horeb with his flock. There he saw a strange sight. A bush of thorns was on fire. But the flames didn't burn it. What Moses saw was very different from the common forest fires he was used to. He went near the flames out of curiosity.

Moses heard someone calling him “Moses, Moses” from the bush of thorns. “Here I am”, he replied. He also heard a voice. Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground,” The voice instructed him to change his ways of life and tread a new path. God told him “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” Moses was afraid to look at God. However it was necessary for him to ascertain who the Lord was. The voice from the burning bush commanded Moses to tell the people of Israel that “I Am” has sent him to them. This statement reveals the eternity of the Lord.

The Lord was moved to pity by the sufferings of His chosen people. He wished to deliver them from the Egyptians and take them out of Egypt to freedom. God entrusted this task with Moses. He was to take the people to the land of Canaan “flowing with milk and honey”. God sent Moses to the Pharaoh to with the demand to let the Hebrews go out of Egypt. The Lord also gave him three miracles to be performed before the Pharaoh. These miracles were sufficient to prove that Moses was the ambassador of the Almighty God. The miracles were.

1. God commanded him to throw his shepherd’s rod on the ground. When Moses threw it down it became a serpent. When he took it back it became a rod in his hand again.

2. God Commanded Moses to place his hand inside his robe near the Chest. The hand turned white with leprosy. The Lord commanded to place the hand next to the Chest once again. Then it became normal.

3. Moses took water from the Nile river and poured it on the ground upon God’s command. It turned into blood.

Moses then pleaded with God “O Lord I’m just not a good speaker. I have a speech impediment”. When the Lord heard it He said “I will help you to speak well and I will tell you what to say. God appointed Aaron as the assistant to Moses. God sent Aaron who was a good speaker to the Pharaoh instead to Moses who had speech impediment. Then Moses accepted his appointment as the one to deliver the Hebrews from the Egyptians bondage.

Activities

Write down the conversation between God and Moses at the bush of thorns after reading the relevant biblical passage in the form of a dialogue.

Let us write

1. "Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground." What do you think was the reason for this direction?
2. Make a list of the miracles performed by God through Moses. Describe each of them.

Let us pray

O Lord! You have given an assignment to each one us. Bless me to realize this and do good to others.

Our Decision

I will accept Lord's call with humility and shall try to fulfil it as best as I can.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Acts 3:22-26	Exodus 3:1-6
Monday	Acts 6:7-15	Exodus 3:7-10
Tuesday	Acts 7:18-25	Exodus 3:11-14
Wednesday	Acts 7:30-34	Exodus 3:15-22
Thursday	Acts 7:44-50	Exodus 4:1-5
Friday	Acts 13:38-41	Exodus 4:6-10
Saturday	Acts 24:10-15	Exodus 4:11-19

Chapter 3

The Ten Plagues on Egypt

(Exodus Chapters 7-11)

Message: God performs miracles to reveal his power and glory, in his purpose of delivering us from evil.

Verse to be memorised: “Praise the Lord; To Him who alone does great wonders, for His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:4)

Learning aids: 1. Flash cards exhibiting the ten plagues in Egypt.
2. Pictures explaining the plagues.

Introduction

The Lord performs miracles to resume His chosen people who had been treated as slaves and tortured in Egypt. God always has mercy for His people. He has great concern for those who suffer. God wants to liberate them. The Lord knows the sufferings of people and delivers them from their misery.

Reading Passage

The Lord sent Moses and Aron to the Pharaoh, and asked him to allow the Hebrews to go. The pharaoh was persecuting the Hebrews who had been treated as slaves in Egypt. But Pharaoh refused to let the people go. He forced them to do hard labour, and never gave the proper wages. Moses came to the palace on God’s command to demand the release of his people. Moses performed the first miracles before the Pharaoh. He threw down his rod before the court and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh’s sorcerers also threw down their rods. Their rods too became serpents. But Moses’ serpent swallowed the rods of the sorcerers. Pharaoh remained unmoved by this miracle and still refused to let the people of Israel go. So the Lord sent ten afflictions on the Egyptians. Let us see what they were.

Stop think. What do you mean by slave”? The Pharaoh refused to relieve the Hebrews. Why? What do you think of the Pharaoh.

1. **Waters of Nile turn to blood:** Moses struck the water of the river Nile with his staff and , the river turned to blood. Similarly all waters of Egypt became blood. The fish died and the river stunk. Then Moses asked Pharaoh to release his people as per the Lord's command. But Pharaoh refused.
2. **Hordes of Frogs in Egypt:** Hordes of frogs covered the whole of Egypt. Pharaoh asked Moses and Aron to plead with God to take the frogs away. Then he would let the people go away. All the frogs died and were piled into great heaps. Pharaoh's heart hardened again and he refused to release the people.
3. **Lice:** Upon God's command, Moses struck the dust on the ground with his rod. Suddenly lice infested the entire nation, all the people of Egypt and their animals. But pharaoh's heart was hard and he refused to let the people go away.
4. **Swarms of flies:** Since the people of Israel were not released, terrible swarms of flies came and covered Pharaoh, his men, the Egyptians and their homes.
5. **Plague:** A deadly plague affected the animals of Egypt. But the Israeli herds and flocks were spared. All cattle of the Egyptians died.
6. **Boils on people and animals:** Moses took ashes from the Kiln and stood teefore the Pharaoh. When Moses loosed it into the sky boils broke out on men and animals alike throughout Egypt.
7. **Hailstorm:** Some of the Egyptians were terrified by God's threat of hailstorm. They brought their cattle and slaves in from their fields. But those who had no regard for the word of Jehovah left them out in the storm. At God's command Moses held out his hand towards the sky. The Lord send thunder and hail and lightning and ruined the land.
8. **Locusts:** The Pharaoh was still unwilling to let the people of Israel go. So locusts came and covered the land. They ate every bit of vegetation on the land.
9. **Darkness:** When Moses lifted his hand at the Lord's command, thick darkness descended on the land. But the Hebrlews and their settlements had light.
10. **Assassination of the first born:** Inspite of the terrible afflictions, Pharaoh's heart was hard. Jehovah said to Moses that He would send one more disaster on Pharaoh and Egypt. After that the Pharaoh would let the people go. All the first born in every Egyptian family died. This dance of death claimed all from the first born child of Pharaoh to the first born child of the slave. The

wail of death resounded throughout the land. Even the first born of animals died. Jehovah commanded that none of these disasters will harm the people of Israel.

Moses and Aaron performed all these miracles before the Pharaoh. However Pharaoh's heart remained hard throughout these disasters. He let the people of Israel go only after the tenth affliction. Those ten disasters were the Lord's Judgement on the Pharaoh and his deities.

Activities

1. Make a list of the ten afflictions in one word each.
2. Write the miracle performed by Moses before the ten afflictions.

Let us pray

"Oh Lord help us to discriminate between good and evil and help us to those the God."

Our Decision

I will powerful try to identity the purposes of the Lord.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Exodus 2:11-15	Exodus 6:1-9
Monday	Exodus 7:1-15	Exodus 7:8-25
Tuesday	Exodus 2:23-25	Exodus 8:1-15
Wednesday	Leviticus 12:1-4	Exodus 8:16-32
Thursday	St.Luke 16:19-31	Exodus 9:1-15
Friday	St.Luke 24:13-21	Exodus 9:22-35
Saturday	St.Luke 24:22-33	Exodus 12:1-15

Chapter 4

Deliverance of the Jews

(Exodus Chapters 12-14)

Message: To Learn to praise divine interventions and submit ourselves humbly before God. God then will take care of all our needs and remove our woes.

Verse to be memorised: “The king sent and release him, the ruler of the people let him free”. (Psalm 105:20)

Introduction

The Lord with his mighty hand delivered his people from slavery. Along with this, commencement of a great ritual, in memory of this incident is ordained by the Lord. We see a community which goes forward undaunted by crises and problems. The people experience the love and care of God. This lesson helps us to realise the history of a Godly grace.

Reading Passage

When the tenth afflictions happened, Egyptians became afraid of Moses. The servants and subjects of the Pharaoh considered him a great man. However pharaoh's heart was hard. He changed his mind only when the tenth disaster, namely, slaughter of the first born, happened. This was unbearable to the Pharaoh and he was forced to release the Hebrews. However, the angel of wrath “passed over” the houses of Hebrews, the doorposts there were marked with the blood of the lamb.

Observance of the Passover

The Passover is observed as the memorial of the deliverance of Hebrews from their captivity in Egypt. It is also the beginning of a new era and new life. The history of the Jews begin in the month of “Abeeb” or “Nissan”. On the 10th day of the month of Abeeb each family should select a lamb and keep it till the 14th day. It

should be killed in the evening of the 14th day. The lamb should be a one year old male without defects. The blood of the slaughtered lamb should be collected in a vessel and it should be smeared on the two side frames of the door of every home and on the panel above the door. The meal should be roasted and should be eaten with bitter herb. It must not be eaten raw or boiled. The Jews should eat only unleavened bread for the seven succeeding days. This observance of the Passover indicates the redemption of the sinner through Jesus Christ. Jesus was the lamb who bore the sins of the world.

Later the Jews settled down as a nation in Palestine and the practice of Killing the lamb at home stopped. Instead, the sacrifices were now offered in the temple of Jerusalem. The practice of smearing blood on the doorposts ended. The blood was poured at the foot of the altar itself. Besides, the practice of burning the fat and eating meat also began. Each family with not less than ten members could celebrate the Passover at home. That is why Jesus Christ and His disciples observed the Passover in a large furnished house. Jesus Christ, the sacrificial lamb of the Passover, was crucified the very next day itself. On the day of Passover Jesus Christ founded the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday which was the tenth day of the month of Nissan. He became the sacrificial lamb of the Passover. The lamb became an offering after four days. The Passover of the Old Testament was a memorial of the deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Jesus sacrifice on the cross saved us from sin and death. The Holy Eucharist founded by Jesus Christ is believed to be the offering for the redemption of sinners.

The deliverance

The Holy Bible records that the Jews were slaves for 430 years in Egypt (Exodus 12:40-41) When Jehovah foretold Abraham about this captivity, the time span recorded is 400 years (Genesis 15:3). When the people of God began their journey from Egypt, all the Egyptians were busy burying their dead first born sons. (Numbers 33:4) About six lakh men, except women and children, began their journey on foot from Egypt.

Crossing the Red Sea

The people of Israel coming out of Egypt had to cross the Red Sea. The Red Sea was a great hurdle in their journey. The people were sore afraid with the Red Sea in front and the enemy army in the rear. They cried out to the Lord to help them and spoke against Moses. They told Moses that it was better to be slaves to the Egyptians

than be dead in the desert. But Moses told the people. “Don’t be afraid. Just stand where you are and watch. You will see the wonderful way the Lord will rescue you today.... The Lord will fight for you and you shall be speechless with surprise.”

God commanded Moses to hold his staff over the water and split the Red Sea. Moses stretched his staff over the sea. The water split apart and stood as walls on either side. The people of Israel walked through the dry seabed and reached the other shore. The Egyptians chased after the people of Israel. Pharaoh’s horses, Chariots and the horsemen followed them into the middle of the sea. In the early morning Jehovah looked down from the cloud of fire upon the array of the Egyptians and began to trouble them. Then Moses stretched his hand again over the sea and the sea returned to normal. The water came back and drowned the Chariots and horsemen of the Egyptians. Thus Jehovah saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians. The people of Israel saw the Egyptians dead, washed upon the seashore. The Red Sea became the site of victory. The people of Israel became happy and sang praises of the Lord. Miriam took a timbrel and led the people in their songs of rejoicing. Thus they continued their journey.

Let us write

1. What is the name of the Festival of Unleavened Bread?
2. How was the Old Testament Passover observed?
3. How do we Christians observe the “Passover” today?
4. Find out from the Song to the Lord sung by People of Israel (Exodus chapter 15) verses which refer to this journey.

Let us pray

O Lord who delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt, lead us under your guidance. Just as you helped the Hebrews cross the Red Sea, helpless to overcome the challenges of Life. Amen.

Our Decision

**We will understand and follow God’s will
through out our life.**

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Psalm 68:1-6	Exodus 12:21-28
Monday	Psalm 68:7-14	Exodus 12:29-36
Tuesday	Psalm 68:19-23	Exodus 12:37-42
Wednesday	Psalm 68:24-31	Exodus 12:43-51
Thursday	Psalm 68:32-35	Exodus 13:3-10
Friday	Isaiah 43:1-7	Exodus 13:11-14
Saturday	Isaiah 43:8-13	Exodus 13:15-22

Chapter 5

Exodus of the Hebrews through the desert

(Exodus Chapters 15:-22-18:27)

Message: We should fulfil our Christian pilgrimage to the heavenly Cannan, by trying to know the call of the Lord and living accordingly.

Verse to be memorised: ‘Men ate angel’s food; He sent them food to the full’ (Psalm 178:25)

Learning aids: A historical map of the Exodus. Pictures of Manna and quail.

Introduction

God is his merry, provides for our needs and give us guidance life. We depend on rod for everything. The Exodus of the people of Israel thought he desert is the history of God’s grace and mercy showered on a community. Their journey is a profile for the pilgrimage of the Christian community.

Reading Passage

God protects His people. He redeemed the people of Israel from destruction in the Red Sea. They were protected in the shade of a guiding cloud during day and by a pillar of fire gave them light during night. Thus the Hebrewns travelled safely during their exodus from Egypt. Can you recall the statement “I am the light of the world”? Who said it?”

The bitter water of Marah

They reached the desert of Shur. They didn’t get water for three days. Arriving at Marah, they couldn’t drink the water because it was bitter. The people complained to Moses. Moses pleaded with the Lord to help them. The Lord showed him a tree to be cut and thrown into the water. Then the water became sweet. This tree is a symbol of the Holy Cross at Calvary. Yahweh said to them “I am the Lord who heals you” (Exodus 15:26) He promised them that He will not make them suffer the plagues He sent on the Egyptians.

Manna and quail

Later the people of Israel reached Elim. There were twelve springs and seventy palm trees in that place.

Stop and think What is the message we get from the water turnings weet at Marah? Can you identify the significance of the number '12' and '70' in the Gospeels? Let us continue. They camped there beside the springs. Later they left Elim and journeyed into the Sihh wildness between Elim and Mt. Sinai. The people were starving without food.

They spoke bitterly against Moses and Aaron in that resort. "Oh, that we were back in Egypt", they moaned, and that the Lord had killed us there! For there we had plenty to eat. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to kill us with starvation". (Exodus 16:3) When the people complained against their starvation the Lord said that He would rain down food from the heaven for them. When the dew disappeared in the morning, tiny flakes of something as small as hoarfrost was seen on the ground. The people gave, it the name "Manna", it tasted sweet. They continued to get it until they reached the land of Cannan. It was white like coriander seed and flat and tasted like honey bread. Each person could collect about three quarts of 'manna'. On the sixth day they could gather twice as much as usual and keep it for Sabbath on the next day. The food stored for the next day on all other days became stale with maggots. So they gathered the food every morning and captured quails. Those who gathered little had no lack. Upon the Lord's instruction they kept three quarts of 'manna' as s memorial for the later generations to see. Aaron put it in a container and kept in the Ark in the Tabernacle. Thus the people of received Manna and quail as their food in the desert.

Water from the Rock

When the people left Shin desert and reached Rephidim they had no water to drink. Once again the people growled and complained to Moses. God commanded Moses to strike the rock on Mount Horeb. Moses did as he was told and water gushed out. Moses named the place Massah (Massah = temptation) and Meribah (Meaning strife or quarrell).

On another occasion when the people reached Kadesh. they rebelled against Moses for there was no water. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock. Moses and Aaron summoned the people and said "Listen you rebels! Must we bring you water from this rock? (Numbers 20:10) Then Moses struck the rock twice with his rod. Water gushed out. The people and their animals drank water and were satisfied. God had asked Moses to command the rock. But Moses who became angry with is people and against God's command struck the rock with his rod. Because of this

disobedience, God punished Moses and Aron. They were to die before they entered the promised land (Numbers 20:12)

Moses used to settle the disputes between people. When Jethro, the father in law of Moses saw this, he advised Moses to appoint judges under him. Moses appointed judges for each group of one thousand, one hundred, fifty and ten people respectively. Thus he decentronized authority and served the people of Israel with justice. Later he selected seventy elders filled with god's spirit and appointed them as judges of people of Israel.

Thus the system of having Council of Elders who ruled the people of Israel originated there.

The people of Israel enjoyed God's love and care most during the time of Moses. Moses led the people of Israel as an ideal leader in World history.

Answer the following questions

1. Give three instances of God's presence by Hebrews during their Exodus through the desert.
2. What was the promise given by God after turning bitter water to sweet in the desert of Shur?
3. Write the meaning of the following ...: Marah, Massah and Meribah.
4. What kind of a food was Manna?
5. How did the Council of Elders originate?

Let us pray

O God who gave food and water to people of Israel in the desert miraculously, give us what we need and bless us.

Our Decision

We will depend on God in all trials and difficulties of life.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Exodus 15:22-27	Exodus 12:37-42
Monday	Exodus 17:1-7	Exodus 12:43-51
Tuesday	Numbers 33:5-6	Exodus 13:1-10
Wednesday	Hebrews 3:1-6	Exodus 13:17-22
Thursday	Exodus 19:1-8	Exodus 14:5-14
Friday	Exodus 19:9-13	Exodus 14:15-30
Saturday	Exodus 19:14-24	Exodus 16:1-5, 10-23

Chapter 6

Parables of Jesus

(St. Matthew 13:3-50)

Message: To receive the messages in the parables of Jesus into our life.

Verse to be memorised: To you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of heaven (St. Mathew 13:11)

Learning aids: Picture of a man sowing seeds, pictures showing different places where the seeds fell, a paddy plant/ wheat plant, picture of a fishing net, a few mustard seeds, an ear of paddy/wheat.

Introduction

Do you like to hear public discourses? Are you in the habit of attending church conventions enthusiastically? We do like to hear certain talks; is it not? Messages in those talks will sustain in us, and we shall not at all be bored of those. Such were the talks given by Jesus. Such talks touch the hearts of the listeners. Jesus used to teach with the help of small stories. The listeners of Jesus were mostly farmers, vendors, fishermen etc. They assembled around Jesus on the seashores, valleys and deserts. Today we are going to study certain stories told by Jesus on such occasions.

Reading Passage

The Stories told by Jesus were simple and they contained deep messages. These stories are called parables. Can you tell certain parables of Jesus? – parable of good Samaritan, prodigal son, parable of the sower etc. Among these, parable of the sower is a very important parable.

Parable of the sower

Teacher: I shall narrate the parable of the sower today. Students shall attend carefully. One day Jesus was teaching the people assembled at a seashore. Jesus told the story of a sower on that day. Have you seen sower sowing seeds?... I shall show you a picture, please look. As the sower sowed, some seeds fell on the wayside and

the birds came and ate them up. Some seeds fell on rocky ground, where there was not much soil. They sprang up quickly but when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no roof they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty fold and some thirty.

Teacher: What is meant by hundred fold, sixty fold etc.?

Teacher shows a paddy plant/wheat plant to students. This is a plant sprang out of a single seed. Then the teacher shows an ear of paddy/wheat. How many seeds are there on this? Students counts and says the number; say it is 60. Now 60 seeds are obtained out of a single seed. Here the yield is sixty fold. Some times it will be hundred fold, sometimes 20 fold and so on.

Suppose there are 80 grains on an ear of paddy. What is the yield?

Students: eighty fold.

Pause and think

Mention the places where the seeds fell from the sower and write what happened to them.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Teacher: Could you understand the meaning of this parable

Students : No

Teacher: Similarly, the disciples also couldn't understand the meaning of the parable. Jesus taught them the meaning of the parable. Now we shall find out the meaning of the parable as taught by Jesus.

Group activity

Teacher may divide the students into four groups. The groups are named as wayside, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil. Select a leader for each group. The students shall have Bible with them. Each group shall find out from the Bible, the meaning of the seeds fell on the place corresponding to their group name. After a fixed time the leader shall report the findings in the class. Teacher shall give explanations where ever necessary.

The findings can be summarized as follows.

The seed sown by the sower is the word of God. Seed sown on the wayside represents the word heard by the person but the devil snatches away the word from his heart. Seed sown on rocks is the word which is accepted but stumbles when tribulations and persecutions arise. He who received the seeds among thorns is he who receives the word and the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becomes unfruitful. The seed sown on good soil represents the word which is heard and obeyed to produce fruits accordingly. The message of the parable is that we shall receive the word like this and produce good fruits.

Let us think

Explain the meaning of the following

1. Seed
2. Seeds that fell on wayside
3. Seed that fell on rocks
4. Seeds that fell on thorns
5. Seeds that fell on good soil

Activities

1. Write the letters corresponding to the correct word against the statements:

Wayside A

Rocks B

Thorns C

Good soil D

i) Plants that sprang up here were withered away due to lack of soil

ii) Here seeds sprang up but choked

iii) Seeds fell here were taken away by birds

iv) Seeds fell here gave good yield

v) In which group shall you be

2. Find out and explain the parables in the Bible which indicates the kingdom of God.

i) Hidden treasure (St. Mathew 13 :44)

ii) Parable of the dragnet (St. Mathew 13:47-50)

3. Match with lines

Seed

Devil

Good soil

Heart without faith

Birds

Worldly cares

Rocks

Word

Thorns

fruitful

Let us pray

Oh God bless us to be fruitful as the seeds on good soil. Help us to obey your word even in tribulations and persecutions. Amen.

Our Decision

We will live with firm faith in the word of God.
We will read and meditate the word daily.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Luke 7:36-50	St.Luke 8:4-15
Monday	St.Luke 10:25-40	St.Luke 12:13-21
Tuesday	St.Matthew 13:44-45	St.Luke 13:6-9
Wednesday	St.Matthew 13:47-50	St.Luke 13:18-21
Thursday	St.Luke 12:13-33	St.Luke 14:15-24
Friday	St.Luke 15:1-10	St.Luke 15:11-31
Saturday	St.Luke 16:1-8	St.Luke 18:9-14

Chapter 7

Transfiguration of our Lord

(St.Matthew 17:1-13, St.Mark 9:2-9, St.Luke 9:28-36)

Message It is revealed that Jesus is God through the transfiguration incident. God, the father, Witnesses this fact. Jesus is the Lord of the living and the dead. Disciples who saw the transfiguration were sent to those who suffer for various reasons in this world.

Verse to be memorised: Look to him, and be radiant, so your faces shall never be ashamed. (Psalms 34:5)

Learning aids: Picture of the transfiguration of Jesus, Bible.

Introduction

Do you pray daily in the morning and evening? Do you use to choose certain places for personal devotion and worship? Jesus used to go to some isolated places in the morning and evening to pray and meditate. In the bible we read that 'In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went to a deserted place, and there he prayed' (St.Mark 1:35). One day Jesus went to a high mountain (Tabore) along with Peter, James and John. We are going to study the incident happened there while Jesus was praying.

Reading Passage

Teacher: I shall tell you the transfiguration incident in detail. Please listen.

Jesus was praying on the top of the Mount Tabore along with three disciples. Suddenly the appearance of his face changed; it shone like the sun. His clothes became dazzling white. The disciples saw two men, Moses and Elijah talking to Him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of the departure which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord it is good for us to be here; if you wish I'll make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'. Actually Peter didn't know what he said. While he was still speaking,

a bright cloud overshadowed them and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my son the beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him.’

Let us think

1. What was Jesus doing at the top of the mountain?
2. Who were the two persons appeared there?
3. What was the change happened to Jesus?
4. What would have been the purpose behind the preparation of dwelling places?
5. Who was behind the voice from the cloud?

When the disciples heard the voice, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. Jesus came and touched them saying ‘Get up and do not be afraid’. By this, the cloud and the two men disappeared.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus asked him not to tell anybody about the incident then. When they came down, a crowd was waiting there to get cured and relieved from their diseases and sufferings. Jesus led the disciples towards them to teach them the real mission.

Let us think

1. What was the name of the mountain of transfiguration?
2. What do you know about Moses and Elijah?
3. What was the voice from the cloud? How do you understand the voice?
4. Why Jesus did not support Peter’s suggestion to dwell on the mountain?
5. What do you understand about the real mission of the disciples of Jesus?

Activities

1. Present a skit on the Transfiguration incident.
2. Three students come forward to present the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

3. Match the following

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Tabore | bright like sun |
| Appearance of the face | Father |
| Cloud | Transfiguration |
| Prophets | Peter |
| Three dwelling places | Moses and Elijah |

4. Give a '✓' mark against the statements you agree.

- i. Jesus went up the mountain with twelve disciples.
- ii. Jesus and the disciples were transfigured.
- iii. Moses and Elijah were persons who were not alive.
- iv. Bright cloud represents the presence of God.
- v. Jesus never wished to make a dwelling place on the top of the mountain.
- vi. Gods voice from above revealed that Jesus is God.

Let us pray

Oh Lord Jesus, on the mount Tabore you have revealed that you are the God of the living and the dead. Help us to hear from you in this life and the life after.

Our Decision

**We understand that Jesus is the son of God.
We will listen to Him and obey Him**

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Mark 9:2-8	St.Matthew 17:1-8
Monday	St.Luke 9:28-36	2 Peter 1:6-8
Tuesday	2 King 2:1-4	2 Corinthians 3:12-18
Wednesday	2 King 2:5-14	2 Corinthians 4:1-6
Thursday	St.Matthew 5:17-20	2 Corinthians 4:7-12
Friday	St.Matthew 20:20-28	2 Corinthians 4:13-18
Saturday	St.Mark 10:35-45	St.Matthew 22:23-33

Chapter 8

Lord's Prayer–The Prayer That Jesus Taught

(St. Matthew 6:9-13)

Message: Lord's Prayer is the one included in all the prayers of the Church and also in the Holy Qurbana. We ought to say it with a pure and repentant heart.

Verse to be memorised: "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; being an offering and come into his Courts³." (Psalm 96:8)

Learning aids: A picture of a family in prayer, A picture of our Lord praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Charts with the verses in Lord's prayer written on them.

Introduction

Don't we pray in the morning and evening? The Church Fathers have arranged our prayers in seven canonical hours. Do you know which are the Seven Canonical Hours?

The teacher gives them the list: Vespers, Compline, Matins, Lauds, Terce, Sext, None. The names of the seven Canonical Hours correspond to Evensong, Soothoro, Midnight, Morning, Third Hour, Sixth Hour and the Ninth Hour. Can you identify the prayer which is said at the beginning and end of every canonical hour? A pupil says : " Kauma Prayer " Tr. accepts the answer and appreciates the pupil and says that the Lord's Prayer is an important part of the Kauma .

Tr. asks "Do you remember the Lord's Prayer which you learned in Class One? Pupils get ready to say the Lord's Prayer, all together. Tr. says that when we say the Lord's Prayer our eyes and open arms should be raised towards heaven. All the pupils do accordingly, and begin the Prayer:

“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
Forgive our debts and sins, as we have forgiven our debtors
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from the evil one
For Thine is the Kingdom, Power and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading Passage

This prayer is seen in two Gospel passages: St. Matthew 6: 9-13. and St Luke: 11: 2-4; Pupils are asked to find out the passages and read them.

Tr. asks them to find out from St. Luke's Gospel the context in which Jesus taught this prayer. A pupil reads the relevant passage,

“Jesus was praying in a place.....

Yes. That is right. In the Jewish religion, rabbais used to teach their disciples. Accordingly, John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. Jesus too, was following the same tradition, when he taught his disciples to pray St. Matthew has given a relatively full text of the Lord's Prayer in his gospel.

Let us stop to think for a while

Identify the gospel passages which contain the Lord's Prayer.

What was the cause or the context for teaching this prayer?

Continued.....

There are six petitions in this prayer. The first three petitions are based on our hope for the Kingdom of God which will be fully established at the second coming of Christ. The last three deal with the “basic” needs of human beings on this earth.

Try to understand the meaning of each of the sentences in this prayer.

1. Our Father who art in heaven

One major idea her is that God is our Father, and he has granted us the blessed state of being called his children. We have the freedom to call him, “our Father”. Besides, the term “our” suggests that we form a fellowship; we are related to each other we are members of the one Body of Christ. We are never alone; we are part of a community in Christ. As we approach God the Father as his own children, we begin to establish a deep spiritual relationship with him. Here we come to the realization that we are neither strangers nor slaves before him, but his own children. In prayer we can approach God's presence in full happy freedom, as his children.

2. Hallowed be Thy name

This prayer is said acknowledging the holiness of God. The word “name” shall be specially noted. In Jewish thinking, the name of a person represents his whole personality. So God’s “name” stands for all God’s characteristics, God’s being. Also here is a pledge that we who have the honored status of the children of God shall never do anything to belittle the glory of God. This idea is clear also from the prayer of Agoor in the book of Proverbs (chapter nine). One of the pupils reads the passage. Teacher explains the prayer

Tr. also refers to Psalm 135 (1-3)

Praise the name of the Lord

Sing to the name of the Lord, for it is beautiful

For this, we need to keep ourselves holy and pure.

3. Thy kingdom come

Here we pray that the whole creation be under the rule of God

B.4. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One

If we fall into the trap of the temptations of Satan, it will not be easy to extricate ourselves from them. So, we ask God not to let us fall into the Enemy’s temptations. This means that when temptations come, we should be equipped to resist them, with the strength we receive from God. In such exigencies we require the grace of God not to be defeated by the evil designs of the Evil One; and we need spiritual strength for that.

What will happen if we make friends with bad people? Those bad people shall influence us in a bad way and try to make us also evil! We may end up sick in body and soul, and may meet with damnation. Thus this prayer becomes so meaningful and relevant.

However, when we fall sick, the sacrament of “Anointing the Sick” will make us whole. Also, the sacrament of “Holy Confession” shall cleanse us of our sins and foibles.

B. 5. For Thine is the Kingdom, power and Glory forever and ever

The Lord’s Prayer ends with a sense of total surrender and dedication to God. Surrender before God would be possible only when we say good-bye to our selfishness, pride and all other evil in us. As we surrender before God, we become free; and then only we realize that what we earn in this earthly life are not our own, but that everything belongs to God; and we receive all amenities as a gift from God.

Such a realization and state of mind shall make us humble, and enable us to understand the love and greatness of God.

Teacher: Now you are free to ask questions and raise doubts, if any.

A pupil: Is not the Lord's Prayer the most important prayer in the prayers of the Church?

Teacher: Of course. All our divine services start with the Lord's Prayer.

A pupil: Don't we say the Lord's Prayer in the Holy Qurbana?

Teacher: Yes, we do. Actually the fourth section in the Holy Qurbana starts with the Lord's Prayer. You should listen carefully to the prayer that the priest says just before the Lord's Prayer. He entreats God to enable us to say this prayer with sanctity of the body, cleanliness of the tongue, self confidence and a broken heart (meaning, *with repentance*). It is a call to get ready to say this Prayer.

Another pupil: Teacher, now I understand how important the Lord's Prayer is. We shall say this prayer with full dedication and concentration of mind and soul.

Let us think

1. Identify the three requests in the Lord's Prayer which are for the coming of the Kingdom of God.
2. What are the three blessings necessary for a life which is surrendered to the "Rule of God"?
3. Why do we learn to say prayers?
4. To whom are our prayers addressed to?
4. Why should we pray to God?
5. Who gets transformed through prayer?

Activities

1. Write the Lord's Prayer in big attractive letters and hang it on the wall in your room. Look at it and repeat the prayer.
2. Say your morning and evening prayers regularly.

Let us sing

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, hallowed be Thy Name
Give us this day daily bread, hallowed be Thy Name
Forgive us our debts and sins, hallowed be Thy Name
As we forgive our debtors, hallowed be Thy Name
Lead us not into temptation, hallowed be Thy Name
And deliver us from the Evil One, hallowed be Thy Name
For Thine is the Kingdom, Power and the Glory, hallowed be Thy Name
Forever and ever and ever and ever, hallowed be Thy Name.

Let us pray

All rise, make the sign of the Cross, raise their eyes and hands towards heaven and join the Teacher to say the Lord's Prayer.

Our Decision

We shall say the prayer taught by our Lord every day, and experience the joy and satisfaction it offers to us.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Luke 6:37-38	St.Matthew 6:1-4
Monday	St.Luke 6:27-31	St.Matthew 6:5-6
Tuesday	St.Matthew 6:32-36	St.Matthew 6:7-15
Wednesday	St.Matthew 11:9-13	St.Matthew 6:16-18
Thursday	Psalm 25:1-7	St.Matthew 6:19-23
Friday	Psalm 25:8-16	St.Matthew 6:24-27
Saturday	Psalm 25:16-22	St.Matthew 6:28-34

Chapter 9

“I am the Good Shepherd”

(St.John 10:11)

Message: To understand the qualities of a Good Shepherd, and learn to follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Verse to be memorised: I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John: 10: 11)

Learning aids: 1. A picture showing Jesus holding a sheep, 2. A picture depicting a shepherd and a flock of sheep, 3. The Bible

Introduction

Who were the people, who first came to know of the birth of Christ? The shepherds.

“Shepherd” is the term used to call those who take care of herds of sheep. Teacher shows the picture of a shepherd standing in the midst of his flock. Can you tell me what the duties of a shepherd are?

Children give several answers

The shepherd leads the sheep to green pastures, and helps them to have their full. He takes them to water fountains, where they quench their thirst. He lays himself down near his flock to protect them from wild beasts. If they get injured, he will apply oil to the wounds for healing. The shepherd is ready to risk his life for the safety of his sheep. There are the characteristics of a good shepherd.

Jesus told the people that he is the “Good Shepherd”. In this lesson, we are going to learn about Jesus, the Good shepherd.

Reading Passage

Psalm 23 is familiar to all of us, right? It is a beautiful song in which King David, who was once a shepherd himself, extols God as “The Shepherd”, in the light of his own experiences in life.

Children are asked to open the Bible and get to Psalm 23. One of the pupils is asked to read the Psalm aloud. When he is done, Teacher asks children to make a list of the qualities of a good shepherd as seen in Psalm 23. They identify them one by one:

- ✦ He makes the sheep to lie down in green pastures
- ✦ He leads them to still waters
- ✦ He restores the soul of the sheep (i.e. he gives strength)
- ✦ He protects the sheep and so, they are not afraid
- ✦ He always stays with the sheep

One pupil asks what the meaning of “rod and staff” is. Teacher says that the rod and staff are the tools used by the shepherd to help sheep to find food, and to protect them. The rod is used to draw the branches of trees so that sheep can easily reach them.

Here the teacher exhibits the picture, “Jesus, the Good Shepherd”

He goes onto say that in the same way, Jesus, the Good Shepherd protects and provides for us. He asks a child to read verse 4, and explains that we will never be afraid, even in difficult situations, since Jesus is with us. When we do wrong, he warns and reproves us.

The teacher points to the word “staff” in verse 4. Teacher explains the “staff” is also used to punish the sheep, if it goes astray. Thus the Good Shepherd is our “comforter” in life. He protects us from our enemies. We shall enjoy the goodness and mercy of God, as long as we are alive. This Psalm also looks to the future: we shall dwell in the “House of the Lord” for all times! So we have eternal hope in our Lord, here in this life and life afterwards. He is our Good Shepherd!

Teacher: Now let us look into the New Testament where Jesus claims he is the Good Shepherd. He makes children read St. John 10: 1-15. He invites children to look for the qualities of the Good Shepherd as given in this gospel passage. Children mention the qualities of the Good Shepherd as explained by Jesus himself. Children find out answers:

- ✦ The sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd
- ✦ The shepherd calls his sheep by name and leads them out

Here the teacher helps children recall Jesus calling Zacchaeus to come down from the fig tree. (St. Luke 19). Children continue with the qualities of the Good Shepherd:

- ✦ The shepherd walks ahead of the sheep. Here the teacher asks who a wolf will attack first if they come to catch the sheep. Children are ready

with the answer; and they understand the way in which the shepherd protects the sheep even risking his own life.

Teacher asks why so many people must have followed Jesus to listen to him. Pupils have no doubt: because he was the Good Shepherd. Teacher agrees and says that it tells us that this Good Shepherd is always with us, guarding and guiding us all the way. Teacher asks children to locate John 10: 11 and read it. They do. He tells them that it is a unique nature of this Good Shepherd that he lays down his life for the sake of his sheep. He who is a hired labourer and not the real shepherd runs away when he sees the wolf coming; and the wolf catches the sheep and kills them. But Jesus our Good Shepherd gave his life for us and saved us. Teacher: Where did Jesus lay down his life? Children answer: On the cross on Calvary.

Teacher: Now, let us find out seven statements of Jesus, where he said, “I am.....”. All these statements are in the gospel according to St. John.

Children read the verses as given by the teacher:

1. St. John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd”.
2. St. John 10:9 “I am the door.”
3. St. John 6:35 “I am the bread of life.”
4. St. John 8:12 “I am the light of the world.”
5. St. John 11: 25 “I am the resurrection and the life.”
6. St John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth and the life.”
7. St John 15: 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches.”

Teacher gives brief interpretation for each of them. And children are asked to ask questions, if any.

Let us stop to think

1. To whom and where did Jesus say “I am the resurrection and the life”?
2. From your reading of Psalm 23, list the characteristics of the Good Shepherd.
3. What are the rare qualities which we find in Jesus as “Good Shepherd”?
4. Jesus declared, “I am the Bread of Life”. To which sacrament would you relate this declaration?
5. Locate the following verse in the New Testament: “You are the light of the world” [clue: our Lord’s ‘sermon on the mount’]

Activities

1. Recite Psalm 23.
2. Mark (✓) or (x) to show if the following statements are true or false:
Jesus said: "I am the Good Shepherd"
The Good Shepherd runs away when the wolf comes
The rod and the staff in the hands of the shepherd give comfort to the sheep
Jesus the good Shepherd gave us his life and made us heirs in the Kingdom of heaven
3. *Match the following:*

I am the light	and Life
I am the way	shepherd
I am the good	of the world
I am the resurrection	of life
I am the bread	the truth and the life
4. Present the story of the shepherd who goes in search of the 'lost sheep' as a skit
5. Try to find out, from the Old Testament passages you have read, evidence to prove that Moses who led the Israelites through the desert was a good shepherd, and record them.

Let us sing

Jesus, our Good Shepherd
Takes care of us everyday
Day and night, in weal and woe
Will never abandon us.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd
Gave his life for us
That we may live in peace
And with him, forever.

Let us pray

Jesus our Good Shepherd, gather us all to your presence, and help us to be your obedient sheep. Give us the wisdom and humility to listen to your voice and follow you all through our lives!

Our Decision

We will never be afraid, for Jesus, the Good Shepherd takes care of us. We shall obey the commandments of God; and live in His presence as his beloved children.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Matthew 7:15-20	St.John 10:1-6
Monday	St.Luke 8:22-25	St.John 10:7-10
Tuesday	St.Matthew 7:1-6	St.John 10:11-16
Wednesday	St.Matthew 6:19-21	St.Luke 15:1-7
Thursday	1 Peter 5:1-4	Psalm 23:1-6
Friday	1 Peter 5:5-7	St.John 15:1-4
Saturday	1 Peter 5:8-11	St.John 15:5-10

Chapter 10

The Sermon on the Mount

(St. Matthew Chapters 5,6,7)

Message To learn what should be our relation with God and also our relation with our fellow beings

Verse to be memorised: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”. (Matthew 5:8)

Teaching aids: The Holy Bible, a picture of Jesus sitting and teaching

Introduction

Teacher: Children, what was the methodology of Jesus when he was teaching others?

Students: Jesus was teaching through small stories.

Teacher: Yes, you are right. Jesus taught the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven through stories and simple examples. The Sermon on the Mount is an important teaching exercise carried out by Jesus on these lines. Has anyone of you read this sermon from the Bible? Do you know where this sermon appears in the New Testament? Yes, this is recorded in the Gospel according to St Matthew chapters 5 to 7. We are now going to learn the Sermon on the Mount.

Reading Passage

During the early part of his public ministry, Jesus had been teaching his disciples and the people who came to listen to him. He was teaching them mainly on the following subjects.

Who is blessed in the eyes of God?

Once we are with God, how shall we live with our fellow beings as also with the nature? Based on the Sermon on the Mount, we will learn some of the virtues such

as how to pray and how to keep our body and our heart clean and pure as Jesus taught us. He has also re defined some of the standards followed by Old Testament to make them more meaningful and practical.

Beatitudes

At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has given eight beatitudes. Here, he declares who all can be called blessed. Now, the teacher shall ask a student to read out this portion from the Bible (Matthew 5: 3-10). Other students closely follow this text of the Bible.

Teacher: Now we have heard what these beatitudes are. Look into each of these and find out whether there is anything here which you have not understood or you find difficult to catch the proper meaning. We will see them one by one and try to understand the meanings.

One student: Teacher, what is meant by “poor in spirit”?

Teacher: God provides us everything. All good gifts come from God. We must, therefore, always be humble before God and thankful to Him. One who is poor in spirit will never be proud. He will never be heavy headed. He is always humble.

Like this, students shall understand the meaning behind each of these beatitudes with help of the teacher. Now, let us try to understand some other teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

1. You are the light and salt of the earth

Teacher: What is the specialty of light? Rays of light emanating from a source help us see the surroundings clearly. Jesus tells us that we ourselves should be light for others.

Teacher: What are the peculiarities of salt? Salt gives taste to our food. Also salt is used to preserve certain food items. From this example we can understand that our life should be useful to others just like salt is useful to other items.

2. Jesus gives new interpretations to Laws given through Moses

Teacher asks a student to read Matthew 5: 17 and he reads it.

Teacher: One of the Ten Commandments is, “You shall not murder”. This means that one who kills another will be brought before judgment. Based on this, Jesus says that it just not enough that one doesn’t kill another, but one shall not ever shower abuses on another. One shall not call another “fool”.

These are all offences attracting judgment and punishment.

Teacher asks a student to read Matthew 5: 38-39 and he reads it.

Teacher: The Laws given through Moses says 'eye for eye' and 'tooth for tooth' indicating instant revenge. But Jesus teaches that you are not supposed to work against a friend who behaves rudely, instead love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you.

3. Keep your body and heart clean and pure

Teacher asks a student to read Matthew 5: 27-28 and he reads it.

Teacher: One of the Ten Commandments is, "You shall not commit adultery". Here Jesus explains that one who looks at a woman with lust commits adultery in his heart.

4. About prayer and fasting

Teacher asks a student to read Matthew 6: 5-8 and he reads it.

Teacher: Jesus dismisses all sorts of showing off while praying. God accepts only sincere prayers coming out of a pure heart. He knows our needs in advance.

Teacher now asks a student to read Matthew 6: 9-15 and he reads it.

Teacher: This is the Lord's Prayer, which we have already learnt earlier.

A student now reads Matthew 6: 16-18 as told by the teacher.

Teacher: Fasting should be an act that comes out of one's heart. This is not something to demonstrate before others.

A student as told by the teacher reads Matthew 7: 7-11.

Teacher: Jesus encourages to keep on praying because God is our father who loves us.

5. Judging others

Teacher asks a student to read Matthew 7: 1-5 and he reads it.

Teacher: God alone is the Judge, the only one Judge. We shall not, therefore, indulge in judging our fellow beings.

Teacher: Thus, the Sermon on the Mount teaches us how to love God, how to love others and how to develop good virtues.

To think over

- ✦ What is the meaning of “Blessed are those who mourn”?
- ✦ “I am the light of the world”. Find out the verse carrying this statement of Jesus from the Gospel according to St. John.
- ✦ What are the characteristics of salt?
- ✦ Who is the Judge of all creations?
- ✦ Is it possible to love your enemy? How?
- ✦ How does Jesus explain the Commandment, “You shall not murder”?
- ✦ What does Jesus say about true prayer? (Matthew 6: 5-8)
- ✦ Find out what is true fasting and proper lent? (Isaiah 58: 5-7, Matthew 6: 16-18)
- ✦ What is wrong in people judging among themselves?

Activities

1. Prepare a chart containing the eight beatitudes.
2. Present the beatitudes in class as two students reciting them alternatively like, 1: Blessed are the pure in heart; 2: For theirs is the Kingdom of God.
3. Present a skit in the class explaining how to pray. This shall be based on the prayers of the tax collector and the pharisee
4. Match the following:

A	B
Those who mourn	Will inherit the earth
Poor in spirit	Will be shown mercy
The peace makers	Will be filled
Pure in heart	Will be comforted
Merciful	Theirs is the Kingdom of God
Meek	Children of God

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness They will see God

Let us sing

By thy light, we see the light, Jesus full of light;
Thou, true light, dost give the light,
To thy creatures all, lighten us with thy gay light,
Thou, the fathers light divine.

Thou who dwellest in the light mansions holy, pure:
Keep us from all hateful thoughts, from all passions vile,
Grant us cleanness in our hearts,
Deeds of righteousness to do.

Let us pray

Our Lord, teach us to pray, teach us to love our enemies also and help us to keep our body and heart holy! Amen.

Our Decision

We will pray before our God with utmost sincerity.
We will not judge others. We know God is the only one Judge.
We will live with our faith in God.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Matthew 6:1-4	St.Matthew 5:1-10
Monday	St.Matthew 6:14-18	St.Matthew 5:11-16
Tuesday	St.Matthew 6:19-24	St.Matthew 5:17-20
Wednesday	St.Matthew 6:25-34	St.Matthew 5:21-26
Thursday	St.Matthew 7:1-6	St.Matthew 5:27-30
Friday	St.Matthew 7:13-18	St.Matthew 5:31-42
Saturday	St.Matthew 7:24-29	St.Matthew 5:43-47

Unit 2

Prayer

Chapter 11

O, Holy Saint Pray for us”

Learning objective: Learn the prayer’ Have mercy upon us, O Lord, by the prayers of They saints’ said during midnight prayer and appreciate its meaning.

Verse to be memorised: "Then he knelt down and cried out in aloud Voice, “Lord, do not hold this sine against them.” (ACTS 7:60)

Introduction

Do you say morning prayers every day? Today we are going to learn a prayer used in our midnight (Nocturn) prayer. ‘These who pleased Thee’ refer to the saints.

Reading Passage

Let us say the first part of this prayer together.

“Have mercy upon us, O Lord, by the prayers of They saints, who pleased Thee by their lives.”

This is an intercessory prayer. One special feature of Orthodox worship is remembering the saints and seeking refuge in their intercession in all the prayers. This prayer is given in the ‘Book of Family Worship (common prayer)’ of the Orthodox Church, after an intercessory prayer to Saint Mary.

Let us say together the next venture in the prayer.

“The prophets is who spoke of Tee in the spirit, the Apostles who announced Thy revelation, and the Martyrs who died for the love of Thee, shall pray to thee for us; have mercy upon us.”

In this prayer we seek refuge in the intercession of prophets, Apostles and the martyrs. Who are prophets? Prophets are people who inspired by the Holy Spirit, gives the messages from God. You have learned about the prophesies about Christ made by prophet Isiah (Isiah 9:6, 11:1)

The intercession of Apostles in mentioned next. The word ‘apostle’ means “messenger “or” one who is sent on a mission”. The apostles mentioned here refer to Christ’s disciples. It was they who proclaimed the salvific mission of Jesus Christ in the world.

We also rely upon the intercession of Martyrs who got killed for their love for Christ. The word martyr means those who died or those who were killed for a noble cause. While saying this prayer we shall meditate on martyrs like St. John the Baptist, St. Stephen, St. George, and St. Kuriakose.

Here we are proclaiming before God our belief that these prophets, apostles and martyrs do always pray for us. We pray to God to show mercy listening to the intercessions that make for our sake.

Pause and Reflect

1. Say the names of the prophets who you remember.
2. Name the martyrs you meditate upon while saying this prayer.

Now let us say the last part of this prayer together.

“Pray for us, all ye Saints, to Him whose will you performed, that He may remove and avert from us punishments and rods of rage. O Lord, by their supplications and intercessions, absolve us, and our departed ones. Amen.”

In this part of the prayer we address the Saints directly. We believe that when we pray, the saints also pray along with us. Here we request the prophets, apostles and the martyrs to pray along with us so that our prayer will be strengthened.

How great and holy is the hour in which the saints pray along with us to God? How great an experience is this.

The last sentence of the prayer is a repetition of the first sentence.

Our Decision

We would say the prayer 'Have mercy upon us, O Lord, by the prayers of They Saints...' every morning, seeking the intercession of Saints and martyrs.

Activities

1. Say and meditate on this prayer in Chorus.
2. Name three prophets, apostles and martyrs each.
3. Name two saints who don't belong to any of these categories.
4. Find out a hymn which requests for prayers of saints.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Mark 11:22-26	Psalm 67:1-7
Monday	Ephesians 6:14-19	St.John 9:31-33
Tuesday	St.Matthew 6:5-13	1 Corinthians 8:5-6
Wednesday	St.Matthew 7:7-12	Psalm 103:1-14
Thursday	Jonah 2:1-10	Psalm 103:15-22
Friday	St.John 17:1-26	Psalm 44:1-3
Saturday	Romans 8:26-27	Psalm 44:4-8

Chapter 12

O Thou, who art kind to Sinners

Learning Objets: To learn to recite this prayer, “O Thou, who art kind to sinners...” and understand its meaning.

Verse to be memorised: “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of Judgement” (St.John 16:8)

Introduction

We have learned a prayer said at the end of morning devoions in the previous lesson. Another prayer begins like this. “O Thou, who art kind to sinners...” We say this prayer also along with prayers of the night and morning worship.

Reading Passage

How do we address the Lord in our prayers? We address Him in various ways as “Our Father, who art in Heaven”, ‘O merciful God’, ‘O Lord Jesus Christ’ etc. In the prayer we learn today, God is addressed in four different ways. A plea is submitted along with each of them. Now let us learn the prayer in detail.

“O Thou, who art kind to sinners, have mercy upon us on the day of Judgement. In the abundance of Thy grace, forgive us our debts and sins.” It is acknowledged that the Lord is kind to sinners. Our plea is that Christ should show mercy to us on the day of His Second corning and Final Judgement.

When we say this prayer we should meditate upon three concepts. One, we are sinners, second Christ is merciful and third, we are waiting for the Final Judgement. This prayer should offer these convictions in our mind.

“The Distressed knock at thy door, O gracious one, answer their petitions, by They loving Kindness.”

This sentence is an intercessory prayer as well. We pray that let 'their' petitions be answered. This prayer is for all the Distressed people who powerfully rely upon God's grace. Here the Lord is addressed as 'Gracious One'. How do we address God in the Lord's prayer? Our Father Yes, we are His beloved children! "O heavenly Father! We beseech Thee. Accept our office and be merciful to us." God has made us eligible to call him 'as Heavenly Father.'

In the prayer 'Accept our office and be merciful to us' "office" refers to spiritual duties and worship. Also we must think of our service to the people around us. The simple prayer 'have mercy on me' is so beautiful and touching. It is the prayer of public and the temple. Let us make it a habit to ask for God's mercy in us all. We need to prepare our selves to offer this prayer through worship and self purification. Without a sense of dedication no one would become eligible to say this prayer.

"O Lord of the angels, and the hope of men, accept our office and be merciful to us".

Here the request is similar to that in the previous one. However there is greater passion and intimacy in addressing the Lord. When the God is addressed as 'Lord of the angels and the hope of men' the entire creation is included in our prayer. Angels refer to all the Chores of heavenly army and men refer to the entire mankind. We say that the Lord is the only hope of all this creation and pray that He be merciful to us.

This prayer expressly tell us that our only hope is God and God only. He is the Lord of all of heaven and' earth.

Activities

1. Say this prayer in chorus
2. Take a Our Decision that this prayer would be said and meditated upon every morning.
3. When we pray for the distressed, remember all the distressed people you know and submit them before the Lord.
4. Find out a few verses from the Book of Psalms, which declare that God is the Lord of all Universe.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.John 16:23-24	Psalm 104:1-9
Monday	Romans 10:11-13	Psalm 104:10-15
Tuesday	Romans 12:9-16	Psalm 104:15-23
Wednesday	Romans 15:7-13	Psalm 104:24-30
Thursday	St.John 15:11-17	Psalm 104:31-35
Friday	St.Luke 23:40-43	Psalm 105:1-6
Saturday	St.Mark 11:22-26	Psalm 105:7-11

Chapter 13

Prayer of Praise used in the Matins

Learning Objective: Learn the prayer of praise ‘How good it is to give thanks to Thee, O Lord’; said in our morning prayer.

Verse to be memorised: ‘O God, You are my God; early will I seek You’ (Psalm 63:1)

About the Lesson

The prayer ‘How good it is to give thanks to Thee, O Lord’ is a prayer of praise included in the Hourly prayer of Matins. This prayer is not usually used in the Sunday morning worship in the Church. However it is included in the morning prayers of Good Friday.

Introduction

Read Psalm 92 verses 1 to 3. These biblical verses have close similarity with the prayer we are learning today.

Reading Passage

“How good it is to give thanks to Thee, O Lord and to sing praises to Thine exalted Name; to declare Thy loving kindness at the break of the day and Thy faithfulness during the night.”

This is a hymn of praise used to submit our praise and thanks before the Lord in the morning before we go about our day to day activities. Like the Psalmist we also pray that praising the Lord for His kindness and love, in the morning is most appropriate.

What do we thank the Lord for? Find out a few ways of expressing our gratefulness to God. In the rest of the prayer also a strong influence of the psalms is seen “ O Lord hearken to our voice at the dawn of the day and in the morning, let us be found ready by Thee.” The idea here sounds very similar to verse 3 of Psalm 5. We pray to the Lord to help us be prepared for morning worship. In the morning we

are getting ready to meet the Lord, and feel his presence. The preparation is important. No one could remain lazy without preparing for morning worship. Remember, the Lord is waiting to listen to our prayer.

“O Lord, absolve and pardon all our sins. O Holy one, over-shadow Thy right hand upon us and heal all our infirmities for the sake of Thy eternal Name.”

Here we pray for absolution of our sins and cure of our disease of transgressions. Sin is a disease in itself. We shall also request to heal us from the diseases caused by sins.

Step and think

Do you think that sin may lead to diseases of body and mind you notice that asking for pardon for sins is an important part of our prayers?

It is a story message that when we are genuinely joyful, God is also happy when he heals our infirmities. The result is that God's Holy Name is glorified in and through us.

Activities

1. Say this prayer in Chorus
2. Read Psalms 5 and 92 and meditate on them.
3. We should develop the habit of praying for all and people also for us.
4. Who is the source of all healing?
5. Find out a passage in the Bible wherein sin and sickness are related.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St. Matthew 18:18-20	Psalm 118:1-9
Monday	St. Matthew 6:5-8	Psalm 118:10-14
Tuesday	Psalm 126:1-8	Psalm 118:15-19
Wednesday	Psalm 130:1-8	Psalm 118:20-25
Thursday	Psalm 131:1-3	Psalm 118:26-29
Friday	Psalm 138:1-4	Psalm 118:33-40
Saturday	Psalm 138:5-8	Psalm 119:41-48

Unit 3

Hymns of Worship

Chapter 14

Hymns before Readings from the New Testament

Learning objective: Learn to sing the hymns and understand their meaning.

Verse to be memorised: “If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed,” (Galatians 1:9)

About the Lesson

Can you identify the occasion when Holy Bible is read during the service of the Holy Eucharist? After the morning worship the deacon would come to the Alb and read the Holy Bible. Can you say which part of the Holy Bible he would read from? He reads from the Old Testament. Now a days girls or women too read the old Testament portion, This is called “Readings”. Have you noticed the readings made after the public worship of the Holy Eucharist begins? Which passages are read then? The deacon would read one passage standing at the northern side of the entrance to the Holy of Holies and another from the south end of the Holy.

The readings made at the north end of the Holy of Holies will be from either Acts of Apostles or from the general epistles.

The readings made at the south end will be from Epistles of St. Paul only.

The people are prepared for the readings from the Holy Bible, by singing a hymn each before those readings. Do you know these hymn? Let us learn them in detail today.

Introduction

The Orthodox Church gives great importance to the Holy Bible. There is no Church service without reading the Holy Bible. Psalm 51 which is a prayer of

atonement or confession is included at the beginning of most of the church services. There is hardly any church service without it. How many readings from the Holy Bible are made in connection with the Holy Eucharist? There are readings of two or three passages from the Old Testament, one passage each on either side of the Holy of Holies and one passage from the Gospels. They are read at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist.

After the public worship of the Holy Eucharist begins, a Trisagion prayer is recited. Then the deacon proceeds to the north end of the Holy of Holies. The hymn sung before he makes his reading is the first hymn we are learning today.

Reading Passage

We have already learned the books of the Holy Bible from which the reading at the north end of the Holy of Holies is made. These books describe the evangelical activities of Christ's Apostles and St. Paul in various parts of the world. They reached about the Kingdom of God inherited by those who accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This song exhorts us to listen to the passage to be read with the same faith and conviction.

The Apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit. So they preached gospels in all parts of the world, including the gentiles. They preached that kingdom of God is at hand, given to all who receive the gospels about Jesus Christ. This is the central theme of the first hymn.

The reading follows this hymn. The hymn exhorts all of us who want to inherit God's Kingdom to listen to the reading carefully.

The next hymn is sung before the reading at the south end of the door of Holy of Holies. Which are the epistles read at the south end? The epistles of St. Paul. At first the evangelical activities were carried out among the Jews. The gentiles were evangelised only later. That is why readings from the Apostle of the gentiles that is, St. Paul's Epistles are included as the second reading. Let's now learn the hymn sung before the second reading.

The hymn is a versified rendering of the ideas in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians Chapter 1, verse 6. The hymn begins saying, let us listen to the warning given by St Paul. St Paul said that if someone preaches something contrary to what they had preached, he will be cursed. The curse of the church will fall upon him 'even if he is an angel from heaven.' Several ideas and teachings originate and spread in the world. Those who remain steadfast in the teachings of God from beginning to the end will be blessed.

Right teaching is the one made by the Church. This biblical passage also reminds us that individual interpretations might go wrong. The hymn asks us not to accept even an angel if his teachings are against those of the Church. This hymn is very significant in modern times because a number of individuals and religious groups talk against the teachings of the Church. The deacon address the cangregation, ‘Habiba’ and ‘Ahai’. They mean ‘my beloved brotheren.

Activities

1. Read Epistle to Galations 1:8
2. Make a list of the biblical passages and ‘my brother and sister’ referred to in the first hymn.
4. Note the variant statements made by the deacon and the laity before reading different passages at the north end of the Holy of Holies.
5. Imagine that some one comes to your house with a teaching different from that of the church. What will be your response?
6. Explain the meaning of ‘Habibai’ and ‘Ahai’
7. What response do me make to the deacon addressing the congregation before reading the Bible passages.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		St.John 6:25-31
Monday	Psalm 63:1-2	St.John 16:32-40
Tuesday	Psalm 63:3-4	St.John 1:1-9
Wednesday	Psalm 63:5-6	St.John 1:10-14
Thursday	Psalm 63:7-8	St.Luke 1:46-50
Friday	Psalm 63:9-10	St.Luke 1:51-53
Saturday	Psalm 63:11	St.Luke 1:54-56

Chapter 15

Hymns following the reading from the Gospel (Evangelion)

Learning Objective: To help children learn the hymns sung after the reading from the Gospels (Evangelion) in the Holy qurbana.

Verse to be memorised: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

About the lesson

After the reading from the Gospels, a hymn is sung by all before the priest proceeds to read the ‘promeyon’. There are several hymns given in the Book of liturgy to be sung on this occasion. Today we are going to learn two hymns given in the Book of the Holy Liturgy.

Introduction

Who makes the reading from the Gospels during the Holy Eucharist? The gospel passage is always read by the priest. The Greek word ‘Evangelion’ is used to refer to the gospels. Can you recollect any hymn sung after the reading from the gospels during the Holy Eucharist? We have learned one hymn for the occasion in Class IV. Other two hymns sung in most churches are.

Let us analyse the meaning of those two hymns and learn them today.

Reading Passage

This hymn remembers all noble and saintly people who departed from this world and seeks refuge in their intercession. We remember prophets, apostles who preached the gospels around the world, Saintly and just people, martyrs, messengers, and to the Mother of God through this hymn. Let their prayer inspire us.

At this point let us try to explain the meaning of the hymn, line by line.

The first line of this hymn is based on the Gospel according to St. John (6:51) which says “I am the living bread which came down from heaven”. The first two lines of the hymn in fact quote this biblical verse. Other lines are also statements made by Jesus Christ on various occasions. This hymn is presented in the form of statements made by Jesus Christ Himself.

I Who am ‘Word’ (St John 1:1) was sent by God the Father to save the world. Archangel Gabriel sowed this word like a farmer, on this Earth. Like a fertile land receiving the seed, the womb of St Mary received the seed of that Word from Archangel Gabriel (St Luke 1:38). Now the priests praise and celebrate me on the Holy Altar, just like I am praised by the Angels in heaven. This line refer to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ, celebrated by the priest. This hymn gives in shell the Orthodox theology of the incarnation and relates the incarnation to the Holy Qurbana.

This hymn emphasizes the importance of the Holy Eucharist, the greatness of St Mary and the goal of Christ’s Incarnation.

Sing the hymn meditatively comprehending its meaning.

Activities

1. Learn the meaning of other songs sung after the ‘Evangelion’ and write about this on them.
2. Read the biblical passages referred to in the lesson.
3. Find out a variant version of the hymn.

Find out the word used there in place of “sowed”.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Romans 15:14-19
Monday	Ephesians 6:1-3	Acts 9:15-18
Tuesday	Ephesians 6:4-6	Romans 11:13-15
Wednesday	Ephesians 6:7-9	Romans 11:16-18
Thursday	Ephesians 6:10-12	Romans 11:19-21
Friday	Ephesians 6:13-15	Romans 11:22-24
Saturday	Ephesians 6:16-18	Romans 11:25-27

Unit 4

My Church

Chapter 16

The Church during the Apostolic Times

Learning Objective: To form an idea about the origin and development of the early church.

Verse to be memorized: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread and in prayers.” (Acts 42)

Introduction

Christian Church and Christian faith are rooted in the incarnation and the salvific works of Christ.

Reading Passage

The biblical passage which tells us about the origin of the Christian church is the first part of Chapter 2 of ‘Acts of Apostles’. After Christ’s Ascension His disciples prayed in one accord in the upper Room (Mansion of St. Mark) Suddenly the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of ‘tongues of fire’ and they began to speak in other languages. This is considered as the inauguration of the Holy Church. After the speech made by St. Peter, about three thousand people joined the Church on that day. Thereafter the growth of the Church was very rapid. The Church spread out among the Jews at first. ‘Several Jews were attracted by the teachings and preaching of the apostles and joined the Church.

Features of the Apostolic Church

The apostolic Church had four important Characteristics as given in the New Testament.

1. Acceptance of the teaching of the apostles.
2. Observance of fellowship
3. Breaking the bread
4. Prayer

Form of worship of the apostolic church

The form of worship of the early church had close resemblance with that of the Jews. The place of worship of the early church were the Synagogues. Later worship was shifted to the homes of the believers. These were, later called “home Churches” The Old Testament was read and interpreted in the early church as the Holy Scriptures. Besides they confessed that Jesus Christ was the ‘Messiah’ they had awaited. The earliest Christian creed is Jesus Christ is Lord”.

Pause and Reflect

1. When did the Christian Church Originate?
2. What were the features of the apostolic Church?
3. What was the scripture followed in the early church?

Selection of Deacons

When the Church grew in numbers seven deacons were selected for the service of orphans and widows. St. Stephen was the Chief among them.

The coming of St. Paul

The growth and development of the Church created jealousy and anger in the Jews and their priestly classes. So they turned against the Church. Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee. He repented and became a Christian

Pause and think

What was the incident that transferred Paul? This was a milestone in the history of the early church. (Acts 9, 22:6-21; 26: 12-18, Galatians 1:12-16) The followers of Christ got the name ‘Christians’ for the first time in Antioch (Acts 11:26) Saul surrendered to Christ and became the greatest missionary in history and he became the greatest promoter of the Christian Church.

Activities of the Apostles

The Apostles who were the disciples of Christ, travelled to different countries and preached the Gospel to the people. Large number of people believed in Christ

and joined the Church. Their witness enabled the spread of Christianity in the world.

Apostle St. Thomas came to India preach the Good News (God of Christ The Christian Church was inaugurated on the day of the Pentecost and it spread in the world as a result of the missionary activities of the Apostles. It became the major relations in the world.

Pause and Reflect

1. What were the responsibilities of the deacons?
2. How did the Apostles propagate the Christian Church/
3. How did themartyrdom of stephen affect saul?

Activities

1. Read more about the Apostolic church form the Acts of Apostles.
2. Enact the conversion of St. Paul in the class.
3. With the help of a map, identify the areas of apostles missionary journeys.

Let us pray

O Lord! We praise You for showing us the path of Church life. Help us to remain steadfast in the true faith.

Our Decision

We would observe and conserve the faith and holy traditions of the Church.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Acts 12:1-5	Acts 2:1-13
Monday	Acts 13:1-5	Acts 2:43-47
Tuesday	Acts 15:1-14	Acts 4:32-37
Wednesday	Acts 15:15-21	Acts 4:17-26
Thursday	Acts 16:6-10	Acts 6:8-15, 54-60
Friday	Acts 16:11-15	Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-19
Saturday	Acts 16:16-34	Acts 10:44-48

Chapter 17

Apostolic Foundation of the Malankara Church— a historical, perspective

Learning Objective: To understand and appreciate ancient history, authority and the Apostolic tradition of the Malankara Church founded by St. Thomas.

Verse to be memorised: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
(St. Mark 16:15)

Introduction

There exist two traditions regarding the coming of St. Thomas to India and the founding the Christian Church. They are the North Indian tradition and the South Indian tradition. Evidences of the apostolic foundations of the Malankara Church are given below.

Reading Passage

1. Commercial relationship of Kerala with foreign lands

The South Indian tradition states that St. Thomas came to Kerala in AD 52. He landed at Kodungalloor. But the North Indian tradition says that St. Thomas first came to Gondophoros, the ruler of Taxila. Kerala had maritime commercial relationship with the middle Eastern and European countries from very ancient times. Muziris or Kodungalloor, where St. Thomas landed was in those days a major port visited by ships from abroad.

2. Jewish presence in Kerala

In the previous lesson we learned that Christ’s disciples and the early church functioned at first among the Jews. It is a historical fact that those Jews have lived in Kerala since the time of King Solomon. This Jewish presence was helpful for the activities of St. Thomas in Malankara.

3. A Christian community claiming the heritage of St. Thomas

One major evidence for the apostolic of St. Thomas is the seven and a half Churches established by St. Thomas when he came to Kerala in AD 52. The tradition also believes that St. Thomas ordained priests from families like Pakalomattom, Sankarapuri, Kali and Kaliyankal.

4. Overseas travels have recorded that they met a Christian community claiming the heritage of St. Thomas in the early centuries in Kerala.

1. Which are the two traditions connected with the visit of St. Thomas to Kerala?
2. What is the connection between overseas trade relations of Kerala with St. Thomas?
3. Name the families from which St. Thomas selected priests?

5. Traditional songs

Certain traditional songs and art forms used by Christians of Kerala during special occasions like marriage, festivals and feasts etc. throw light on the foundation of Malankara Church by St. Thomas. “Ramban” songs (Thoma Parvam), ‘Maargamkali’ songs, ‘Villadichaan’ songs etc. are examples.

6. The tomb of St. Thomas

St. Thomas suffered martyrdom in AD 72 and was buried at Mylapore near Chennai. This fact supports the claims of South Indian tradition. The relics of St. Thomas were taken to Uraha (Edessa) after AD 160.

7. The testimony of Church fathers and international travellers

Church Fathers like St. Abhrem, St. Gregory of Nyassa, St. Clement of Alexandria and St. Ambrose and travellers to India like Marco Polo, Cosmos, John Marinjoli etc. confirm that the Malankara Church was established by St. Thomas.

Let us think

1. What are the important Christian art forms and songs existing in the Malankara Church? What is their significance?
2. Name the Church Fathers and travellers who stated that the founder of Malankara Church is St. Thomas?
3. How can we provide to prove that St. Thomas founded the ‘Malankara Church’?

Activities

1. Collect more information about the families from which St. Thomas appointed priests.
2. Visit monuments like the Jewish Synagogue of Mattancherry, and the Tomb of St. Thomas in Madras and collect details about them.
3. Collect more statements of Church Fathers and travellers about the heritage of St. Thomas.

Let us Sing

(Teacher may help the students to sing any song connected with the lesson)

Let us pray

O Lord help us to preserve the heritage of our Father St. Thomas and enable us to praise You along with him.

Our Decision

We will preserve the heritage and succession of St. Thomas gifted to us by our Lord.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	2 Thessalonians 3:13-17	St.John 11:1-16
Monday	1 Peter 1:13-16	St.John 20:24-29
Tuesday	1 Peter 2:1-5	St.Luke 9:1-6
Wednesday	1 Peter 2:6-10	St.Luke 14:1-7
Thursday	1 Corinthians 5:9-13	St.Matthew 10:1-4
Friday	St.Matthew 18:1-5	St.Matthew 10:5-10
Saturday	St.Matthew 18:10-14	Acts 1:6-14

Unit 5

Holy Qurbana

Chapter 18

The Holy Eucharist: A Fellowship of the whole Church

Message: Students shall understand that the Holy Eucharist is a fellowship of the visible and the Invisible Church.

Verse to be memorised: “The bread which me break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Introduction

A beautiful element in the Christian Church is its fellowship. The word used for this fellowship in the New Testament is ‘Koinonia’. In this fellowship the members of the invisible church and the faithful of the visible church come together to Christ. The fellowship of the Church becomes complete only when the living and the departed come together. The time of celebrating the Holy Encharist is the greatest moment in which the total fellowship of the Church gets expressed and experienced.

Reading Passage

Let us analyse the Bible passage which tells us about the fellowship in the Holy Worship.

Revelation Chapters 4 to 6

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of the Books of Revelation clarifies the meaning and objective of worship in the Early Church. Jesus Christ who Incarnated for the salvation of the world was called. “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” by St. John the Baptist (John 1:29). We read in Revelation how the church worships this

Lamb which was scarified on the day of the Passover for the salvation of the world. (Revelation 4-6). The important ideas of this passage could be summerised as follows.

1. God the Father sits on a throne in heaven. Twenty four elders sit around this throne. They represent twelve Clan Heads of the Old Testament. The Lamb which was slain stand in the middle of heavenly creatures who shout “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty”. (Revelation 4:8)
2. Several terms (Eg. Amen), gestures (Eg. Prostration (falling on the ground and worshipping) and Church instruments (Eg. Censer) we use in the Holy Eucharist today are found in the description of this worship.
3. The worship of the Lamb takes place where one lakh forty four thousand people assemble, twelve thousand each representing each tribe of Israel. The souls of those who were slain for the sake of Jesus are seen under the altar (Revelation 6:9) From this we can understand that this worship is an assembly of the living and the dead.

The Holy Eucharist as a fellowship of the heavenly hosts and earthly church

We have seen that heavenly hosts and earthly creatures assemble alike in The Holy Encharist ie, the angels the saints and the faithful departed come together and join the living the Echerist. We believe that the visible and the invisible church assemble in our present day Encharist also. The Invisible church includes the angels. Saints and martyrs. That is why we pray for the presence of angels, and symbolically lave isle of the church building free for the presence of the invisible church. You might have seen deacons offer incense bow before this invisible Church. Icons of angels and saints help to realise the presence of the “invisible church” with us.

The dead and the living assemble in the Holy Eacharist

The Orthodox faith holds that the souls of the departed participate in the divine worship. That is why we remember the departed at our prayers. In the Litany. Hymns in the Eucharist devotion like. We pray with and for the departed Moreover on commemorative prayers called “Thubden” ‘Eyptio’ we remember the martyrs who died for Christ and the Church Fathers as well as our departed relatives.

Teacher: Can you recite the first hymn after the elevation of the Mysteries. The students sing the hymn....

Tr.: Do you know the meaning of the hymn? I will explain. We should remember our departed parents, brother and sisters in our Hourly prayers and the

Holy Eucharist they have taught us this true faith so that we shall become the children of God. May the son of God would give them comfort with saints and the righteous ones in the eternal world of the Kingdom of God. O Lord help us and have mercy on us.

Reema: Teacher. My grandfather passed away last year. He was greatly fond of me. Will he too participate in our Holy Eucharist?

Teacher: Certainly What do you understand from what I have told you till now? Reema do you see your uncle who lives in the USA?

Reema: No.

Teacher: Yet you pray for your uncle. Such is the case of the departed. Here after, when you participate in the Holy Eucharist, you shall be aware of this fellowship of the visible and the invisible Church. Though our dear relatives departed from this world, they worship the Lord along with us in the Holy Eucharist act no keep take in entad.

Activities

1. Find out the prayers and hymn's commemorating the departed used in the our Holy Encharist.
2. Read the Book of Resolution Chapters 4 to 6 and write down the prayers you see there.
3. Find out from the list given below the members of the invisible church remembered in the 4th 'Thubden'.

St. Mary	sarah, wife of Abraham
Prophets	Teachers
Apostles	Martyrs
Gospelists	St. John the Baptist
Job	St. Stephen
Philip	St. Thomas
Peter	St. Paul

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		St.Luke 4:1-6
Monday	St.Matthew 19:1-6	St.Luke 4:7-12
Tuesday	St.Matthew 19:7-12	St.Luke 4:13-20
Wednesday	St.Matthew 19:13-20	St.Luke 4:21-27
Thursday	St.Matthew 19:21-26	St.Luke 4:28-32
Friday	St.Matthew 19:27-28	St.Luke 4:33-40
Saturday	St.Matthew 19:29-30	St.Luke 4:41-44

Chapter 19

Perfect Participation of the faithful in the Holy Eucharist

Message: The laity are not mere spectators in the Holy Eucharist. There should be full and perfect participation of the body mind and spirit.

Verse to be memorised: “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him” (St. John 6:56)

Introduction

The Holy Eucharist required our complete participation in the Holy Service. Certain Churches permit their priests to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in private (Eg. Roman Catholic Church). But our church doesn't permit such a practice. We can understand this if we examine the Book of liturgy carefully. There are prayer to be said by the priest, the deacon and the laity through our liturgy. Some churches require only the priest and the choir to complete the Holy Mass. But our holy liturgy becomes complete only with the participation of the congregation through appropriate responses to the prayers. Moreover, as the priest prays for the laity, the laity need to pray for the priest in return. Do you remember what the priest says at the end of the Final Benediction at the end of the Holy Eucharist? He requires the congregation of pray for him always. This is similar to the Jews standing in the valley of Mount Sinai and praying for Moses while the prophet was conversing with the Lord up in the mountain. The participation of body mind and spirit in worship to very essential. We realise this through the experiences of our sense organs - internal and external.

Reading Passage

Complete participation of an individual in the Holy Eucharist.

The reformist churches of the west give great importance to preaching in their scheme of worship. The focal point of their Holy mass is the preaching at the middle

of it. However in our Liturgy, the laity are not supposed to be mere “listeners”. The participation of all the five senses are very important in our worship. Our Holy Eucharist gives opportunities to see, hear, taste, smell and touch.

Look at this passage.

The Apostles gave witness to “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of Life...” (1 John 1:1) Our worship will become complete only if we have a similar experience of God in all aspects of our persons.

Holy Eucharist for this Purpose

1. Seeing (Isiah 6:1-8)

The Orthodox Churches insist on decorating the place of worship beautifully. If we celebrate the Holy Eucharist in a hall, it will not give us satisfaction. The decorations, candle light, icons and paintings in the church and the Holy of Holies should be as meaningful as those arrangements made by Moses upon God’s command in the Tabernacle and by Solomon in the Temple of Jerusalem. In the Byzantine churches, the icons on the inner and outer walls of the Church provide a heavenly experience to the laity. Even though we do not have elaborate icons, the decorations in the altar and the vestments of the priest are pleasant to the eye. Moreover each of them have the background of the Bible and the Holy Eucharist

2. Hearing (Revelation 5:11-13)

Chanting and melodious singing are the essential elements in the Orthodox worship. We say that we chant the liturgy rather than ‘read’ it. The orderly ‘choir’ in the Churches enhance the auditory sweetness of worship. However, the Holy Eucharist shall never end up a “musical concert”. That is why musical instruments are not allowed in excess within the church. The prayers and hymns should be related by the congregation of believers. The duty of the choir is to lead them for this. Neither the sound of musical instruments nor the song of the Choir should drown or supercede the prayers of the congregation. The laity should recite the prayers harmoniously when they participate in the Holy Eucharist. The sounds produced by bells and the “fan” (Marvaltheo) should accompany the recitals of the laity. We also have the practice of tolling the church bell during the important parts of the Holy Eucharist.

3. Smell (Malachi 1:11, Revelations 8:4)

The use of sweet incense during the Holy Eucharist is a very meaningful practice. The fragrance from the censer in which frank incense is burned creates a heavenly atmosphere. Haven't you seen the practice of bowing before the cross on Good Friday? There too the incense has a significant meaning presence of God and saint; prayers going up to heaven etc.

4. Touching (Isiah 6:7)

Earlier the kiss of Peace at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist was conducted with the laity physically kissing each other. Later this was changed to hugging and shake hand in certain places. We follow the practice of touching the palms of the other person with our palms. When the prayer of peace is said we shall exchange the "kiss of peace" looking into the eyes of the fellow worshippers. It should not be a mechanical exercise. We should not have any hatred towards any one. Jesus Christ asks us to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters before offering our gifts on the altar. (St. Mathew 5:23-24)

5. Taste (Psalms 34:8)

Our participation in the Holy Eucharist becomes complete with the Holy Communion. We receive the bread and wine together in our Holy Communion. The priest pours the wine in the Chalice onto the bread in the Paten before giving us the Holy Communion. They are the blood and body of Christ who became. Incriminated was crucified and Resurrected from the dead for our salvation. So we receive the living body and blood of our Lord in faith. Thus the Holy Eucharist is not meant to be a public performance which makes us more spectators or listeners. Our body mind and spirit should participate in it in one accord. We should 'experience' it through our five senses.

Activities

1. Say how the following sense organs contribute to our sensory experience of the Holy Eucharist.

Eye

.....
.....

Ear

.....
.....

Nose

.....
.....

Tongue

.....
.....

Skin

.....
.....

2. Conduct a discussion in the class about the need and role of Choir in the Holy Eucharist.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		1 Corinthians 12:1-6
Monday	Acts 10:1-4	1 Corinthians 12:7-10
Tuesday	Acts 10:5-9	1 Corinthians 12:11-16
Wednesday	Acts 10:10-16	1 Corinthians 12:17-21
Thursday	Acts 10:17-21	1 Corinthians 12:22-26
Friday	Acts 10:22-26	1 Corinthians 12:27-29
Saturday	Acts 10:27-30	1 Corinthians 12:30-31

Unit 6

The Basic Dogmas

Chapter 20

“Moranaya” Festivals

Learning objective: To Learn about the festivals and feasts that shall be observed like Sundays.

Verse to be memorised: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalms 23:6)

Reading Passage

Orthodox Churches retain the Holy Tradition and writings of Church Fathers. “Moranaya” festivals are connected with the incidents in the life of Jesus Christ, recorded in the Holy Bible.

What are Moranaya Festivals?

The Syriac word ‘Moran’ means ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ’. The Moranaya festivals are described as the festivals related to Christ. Though all days in the life of Jesus Christ are important, the church has given supreme importance to some of them. These festivals help us to meditate and participate in spirit in the life of Christ and experience God’s presence in our lives.

How are Moranaya festivals celebrated?

The “Moranaya” day is observed like a Sunday. Like on Sunday, The Holy Eucharist is celebrated on these festival days and the faithful shall participate in it. The ‘Promeyon’, ‘sedra’, Readings from Holy Bible, ‘Evangelion’ and hymns for each festival are specific for the day. There is no kneeling or prostration down from the vesper of the previous day till the None of the next day (just as we do on Sundays).

If the festival falls on Wednesday or Friday, there is no need to observe fasting, as we receive the Holy Communion. This also means that we should partake of the Holy Communion on these days. We should stay away from worldly activities, as on Sundays and devote our time for activities like spiritual reading and charity work. Since the Moranaya festivals Easter and The Pentecost fall on Sundays the list of festivals given doesn't include them.

Stop and think

What do we mean by "Moranaya" festivals? What is meant by saying that they should be observed like Sundays?

Which are the Moranaya festivals?

1. The feast of Yeldo or Christmas

Yeldo is a syriac word meaning birth or revelation." The birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated with twenty five days Advent Lent. The feast of Yeldo is properly known in Christmas. Orthodox tradition gives more importance to twenty five days lent and the special church service of Yeldo held in early morning of 25th December.

2. The Feast of Epiphany or 'Danaha'

Though Christ was born in Bethlehem, he started his public ministry only at the age of thirty after being baptized by St. John the Baptist in River Jordan. So Baptism of Jesus is the time of his 'down' in this world. We celebrate Feast of 'Danaha' on January 6 to commemorate this event.

3. Maayaltho or Presentation of Jesus Christ at the Temple of Jerusalem

Jesus Christ was presented to the Lord on the 40th day of His birth at the Temple of Jerusalem. This event is remembered on February 2.

4. 'Suboro' or The Feast of Annunciation (March 25)

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ became possible because St Mary submitted herself to the Lord's will. Hence Annunciation event is very important. Annunciation to St Mary is also remembered on the fifth sunday preceeding Christmas Even if the Feast of Annunciation comes during the Passion week oduring the Great Lent, the Holy Encharist should be celebrated. The prayers and prostration usual for Lent are not allowed on the day and the day should be observed like a Sunday.

5. The feast of Transfiguration of Christ (August 6)

It commemorates the revelation of Christ's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mount Tabor). It is also called the feast of Tabernacles.

6. 'Suloko' (Ascension of Jesus Christ)

The date of this feast is not fixed. Ascension is celebrated on the Thursday which comes 40 days after Resurrection. The Sunday that falls on the 10th day after Ascension, is observed as the Day of The Pentecost. The Church teaches that the ten days between Ascension and The Pentecost should be observed as 'Days of Awaiting'. That is why the Church doesn't permit marriages during those ten days.

7. Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14)

Queen Helen, mother of Emperor Constantine who proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire visited Jerusalem and discovered the cross on which Jesus was crucified. This cross was taken to Rome with great devotion and honour and was placed on the altar of a newly built Church with a lot of festivities. The Church remembers this incident as the day of the discovery and exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Feasts to be observed like 'Moranaya festivals.

All the above mentioned feasts are directly connected with the life of Jesus Christ. Some other feasts do not have direct connection. Yet they are important in understanding the Christian faith and tradition. Hence such three feasts are included in the group of feasts to be observed in the same status as Sunday. They are:

1. The memorial feast of St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29)

The thirteen days lent (Lent of the Apostles) which begins on June 16th ends with the feast St. Peter and St. Paul on June 29. St. Peter was crucified upside down and St. Paul was executed in AD 64 during the persecution by emperor Nero in AD 64. This Feast celebrates their martyrdom.

2. The 'Dukrono' or memory of St. Thomas (July 3)

St. Thomas apostle of India was martyred on December 21 at Mylapore. His relics were taken to "Uraha" (Edessa) in the 4th century. This event is remembered on July 3rd. The Malankara Church observes his memory on December 21st as well because St. Thomas is the founder of the India Church.

3. Sunoyo or “Dormition of St. Mary” (August 15)

At the end of Sunoyo lent for fifteen days (from August 1 to 15), we observe the Feast of Dormition of St. Mary. A Church tradition tells that the Mother of God was taken to heaven with special honours.

Activities

1. Find out how each Moranaya festival is celebrated?
2. Are we able to celebrate all these feasts like Sundays? If not, identify the reasons.
3. Generally Sundays are holidays. But Moranaya festivals fall on week days. How can we make their observance more effective?
4. What is the importance of August 15 besides being the Feast of St. Mary? How can we combine all these significances in our observance of the day? Discuss your suggestions.
5. Read and comprehend the list of Lenten seasons given in the ‘Pambakkuda; Book of Prayer.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Psalm 100:1-5	St.Luke 2:8-20
Monday	St.John 6:55-59	St.Luke 3:2-22
Tuesday	1 Peter 3:18-22	St.Luke 2:41-51
Wednesday	St.John 20:19-23	St.Luke 1:26-38
Thursday	St.John 6:50-71	St.Matthew 17:1-13
Friday	Psalm 40:6-11	St.Luke 24:50-53
Saturday	1 Corinthians 13:8-13	Galatians 6:14-17

Chapter 21

Holy Sacraments - An Introduction

Learning objective: To Understand the meaning and significance of the Sacraments and comprehend their Biblical and theological bases.

Verse to be memorised: “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” (St. Mathew 28:19)

Reading Passage

Let us look at reference to the sacraments given in the Holy Bible (Eg. The Baptism of Jesus Christ)

Mooran - The sacred anointment (1 Corinthians 3:6)

The Holy Eucharist (St. Luke 22:19-20, St. John 6:48, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Priesthood (Acts 6:16, 14:23)

Anointing with Holy oil or Extreme Unction (St. Mark 6:13) and James 5:14-16)

Confession (St. John 20:23)

Marriage (St. Mathew 19:2-9, Ephesians 5:25)

Song

O Holy Church, the bride of Our Saviour.....

What are sacraments?

The English word ‘Sacrament’ comes from the Latin word ‘sacramentum’. The tenth Council of the Catholic Church defines them as the visible expressions of the invisible graces which Jesus Christ has commanded as requisites for human salvation.” The Orthodox Churches prefer to call the sacraments as Holy mysteries.” We cannot comprehend the essence of sacraments using our intellect. The orthodox Churches give importance to

participating in the sacraments meaningfully and receiving the special experience of them.

An entrance to the Lord's court

H.G. Paulose Mar Gregorios, who is a renowned scholar, describes the sacraments as follows. There are ranks of heavenly hosts consisting of Apostles, Saints and angels standing around the throne of the Lord. We can describe it in human terms as God's court. It is a great fortune to get an opportunity to enter this court. This court is realised in this world through the sacraments. In each sacrament Mother of God, Apostles, and the departed saints join with the sinful mankind. The bishop teaches us that the sacraments enable us to grow in purity.

The ultimate aim of sacraments is to lead us to sanctity. Even though our personal sorrows and needs can be removed through the sacraments our ultimate goal should not be this. Christ has commanded us in St. Mathew 6:33. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His right eousnecs and all these things shall be added to you". When we establish a good relationship with God, God will provide us all our physical needs. When we reach this stage of relationship with God, we won't try to attain our greedy and selfish needs through prayer.

How should we understand the sacraments? What is meant by saying that they are Holy mysteries? How are the sacraments different from other prayers?

There are numerous prayer groups around us. While some people participate actively in the worship in the Church, other prefer such prayer groups. We should learn how the sacraments of the Church are different from those prayer groups. There are two important features which distinguish the sacraments.

1. The Sacraments originate in Christ

The Church Fathers teach us that Christ Himself is a sacrament. Let us examine briefly what this statement means? It is impossible for man to save the mankind which had fallen into sin as a result of the disobedience in the garden of Eden. Only God can work out man's solation. A God-man who combined Godliness and human nature was required for God to commune with humans. Hence Jesus Christ who was the second person of the Holy Trinity took human form without shedding his godliness. Christ became the means through which God's grace was given to the world. It is in this sense that we say that Christ is the prototype of all the sacraments.

2. The Church owns all sacraments

Individuals can come together and pray. But they cannot administer the sacraments. God has entrusted the church to administer sacraments. During this Incarnation, Jesus Christ selected twelve apostles and gave them authority to continue all that had done in this world. Later seventy messenger were also given this authority (St. Luke 10:1-16). Christ gave authority to cast out evil spirits, resurrect the dead and heal the sick as well as all His graces to the Church. For example in order to baptize a person there should be water, a priest to conduct baptism, and the presence of Holy Spirit. All these aspects were there when Christ received his baptism. We see water of Jordan river, St. John as the Baptist, and the, descend of the Holy Spirit (St Mathew 3:13-17). When Jesus Christ broke bread and gave it to His disciples saying that it was his body and blood, he was making use of mere earthly matter (bread) for his purpose. But when Christ gave them to His disciples, they were transformed into real body and blood. The disciples who travelled to Emmaus were once again convinced of this fact. (St. Luke 24:13-35). If God's grace is to permeate on matter, an individual, however personal goodness he has, cannot do it alone. This grace has to spread out in the world through the church. "God's grace will spread out through matter like water, oil, bread, wine, ring or chain. This invisible grace comes to us through visible means. When the priest authorized by the church officiates them, together with the believers, within the church. Hence the Orthodox churches believe and teach that sacraments are better means of receiving god's grace.

Number of Sacraments

Roman Church talks about seven sacraments. But the Orthodox do not fix the number like that.

Activities

1. Illustrate the court of God in your imagination.
2. How do sacraments differ from prayer fellowships? Discuss.
3. In what sense do we say that Christ himself is a sacrament? Discuss.
4. If the ultimate goal of all sacraments is acquiring godliness, can we receive sacraments for personal benefits. Discuss in groups.
5. Why is that the Orthodox do not insist on the number '7' for sacraments, like the Roman Church?

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Mark 1:9-11	St.Matthew 28:19-20, St.John 3:5
Monday	Acts 19:1-6	Acts 8:14-17
Tuesday	St.James 5:14-15	St.Mark 19:22-25
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	St.Mark 2:1-10
Thursday	St.John 20:21-23	St.Mark 6:12-13
Friday	Acts 20:25-31	St.Mark 10:2-12
Saturday	Ephesians 5:32-33	St.Mark 3:13-19

Unit 7

Great Men of God

Lesson 22

St. George, the Martyr

Theme: St George was a great martyr who lived and died for Christ. He exemplified the words of St. Paul that “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (1 Philippians 1:21). We shall seek refuge in his intercession for mental strength in times of adversity.

Verse to be memorized: “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.” (St. Luke 9:24)

About the Lesson

We have already learned about the saintly martyr in lower classes. We have learned the stories of the saintly martyrs and St. Kuriakose. We call them martyrs because they renounced the world, family, clan and Christ and lived and died for Christ. St. George is one great martyr who has a large number of devotees.

Introduction

Teacher: Haven't you heard about the St. George Church, Puthupally Kerala?

Student: Yes teacher

Teacher: Have you ever visited this shrine?

Some students: Yes

Some others: No

Teacher: Do you know in whose name is this church founded?

Students: In the name of St. George?

Teacher: Who was St. George?

Student: One who killed the serpent?

Student: He was a soldier.

Display a picture of St. George in the class. Say or make the students say the names of churches founded in the name of St. George.

Today we are learning about St. George. He began his life as a soldier, fought well, conserved faith and attained the crown of glory.

Reading Passage

What comes to our minds when we hear the name of St. George is the picture of an armoured soldier mounted on horseback in the act of killing a poisonous serpent with his lance.

St. George was born into a high class Christian family of Cappadoceia in AD283. When his father died he went to Palestine with his mother and lived there. The holy land had been his mother's native place. When he grew up into a well-built and energetic youth, he joined the military service. Because of his intelligence, proactive attitude and service mindedness, he was promoted to various cadres of military service and finally became the commander of the army. He enjoyed the favours of emperor Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) who entrusted several, administrative responsibilities with him. The emperor delegated him as his ambassador to various foreign countries. Thus he could visit various foreign countries and carry out diplomatic missions. One important centre of his activity was England. As a result he was raised to the status of the Patron saint of England in later ages. While in England he heard about the anti Christian proclamation of Emperor Diocletian and returned to his home land. He declared his Christian faith before the Emperor. He tore away the copy of royal decree to register his protest. The emperor flew into a fit of rage and subjected him to terrible torture. He was mounted on a spiked wheel and was inflicted with terrible injuries. Later he was drowned in molten lead and thrown in bonfire with the purpose of killing him. But he survived all these tortures. Finally he was guillotined at Nicomedia on 23rd April, A.D. 303 and he became the first martyr during the time of Emperor Diocletian. Devotees around the world observe April 23rd as his day of Commemoration.

The story of the serpent is a famous legend associated with his life. A poisonous serpent appeared in the marshy lands of a village called Salena in Libiya. The poisonous gas that exuded from its mouth caused terrible diseases to people. Moreover it began to hunt humans and animals for food. People grew afraid. They started giving two goats everyday as food for the serpent. When goats became scarce, they drew lots and sent a human being each to the serpent. Once the lot fell on the

princess of the land. The hapless virgin was decorated like a bride and was placed near the marsh. As the king and the people were retreating from the marshes, St. George came that way. He saw the princess and enquired. When she learned that the serpent was the cause of all that trouble, he killed the serpent and rescued the virgin. The trunk of the slaughtered serpent was carried off in four chariots. The king and his subjects were converted into Christianity.

The truth of this legend had been controversial. Whether true or false, this legend gives us a great message. Christian life is a struggle. Each Christian should be a soldier fighting for true faith, righteousness and justice. He should also fight against vices, injustice and devilish forces. The book of Genesis teaches us that the serpent is a symbol of Satan.

Let us Reflect

1. Who was St. George?
.....
2. In which period did he live?
.....
3. When is his day of commemoration observed?
.....
4. Name the Emperor who reigned during his time.
.....
5. Name a few famous churches founded in the name of St. George?
.....
.....
6. What is the famous legend associated with St. George?
.....
.....
7. What position did the English give him?
.....

Activities

Sing 'Maargam Kali' songs about St. George and teach the students those lines. Teach 'Maargam Kali' if possible.

Prayer

Oh, St. George, the martyr intercede for us. Help us to remain steadfast in faith in times of temptations, problems and adversity.

Our Decision

**Like St. George we will readily lay down our lives
in our fight against injustice.**

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Matthew 5:38-47	Romans 8:31-35
Monday	St.Luke 6:20-26	St.Mathew 10:26-33
Tuesday	2 Timothy 1:1-12	Hebrews 10:26-29
Wednesday	1 Thessa. 2:1-15	Romans 13:1-14
Thursday	2 Corin. 6:1-10	Romans 9:1-13
Friday	Acts 12:1-19	Romans 5:12-21
Saturday	2 Corin. 4:7-10	1 Peter 4:12-16

Lesson 23

St. Joseph

Theme: St. Joseph, the step father of Lord Jesus Christ is a saint who renounced his personal likes and submitted himself to the will of God. He lived according to the word of God. The Holy Bible testifies that he was a just man. Let his intercession help us to live according to God's righteousness.

Verse to be memorized: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." (St. Matthew 5:6)

About the lesson

Recollect what you have learned about the birth of Jesus Christ and about St. Mary in the previous classes. The incomparable role of Virgin Mary in the Incarnation of the Son of God is almost equalled by the role of St. Joseph. The references in the Holy Bible several the role of St. Joseph in the scheme of salvation of Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Teacher: Name the saints of Malankara Church.

Students: St. Gregorios of Parumala, St. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius.

Teacher: Name the other saints whom we rever.

Students: St. Thomas, St. George

Teacher: Who are saints?

They are people who lived according to God's will. They provide good models of philanthropy and communion with God. St. Joseph is one such saint. Yet most people don't acknowledge and respect him as a saint and seek his intercession. We shall look into the greatness of this saint on the basis of biblical proofs.

Reading Passage

Joseph, the step father of Jesus was born into the tribe of Judea and the clan of David (Refer to the genealogy given in St. Matthew 1:1-7 and St. Luke 3:24-38)

It is generally believed that St. Joseph got married twice. It is traditionally held that the brothers James, Joses, Simon and Judas mentioned in St. Matthew 13:55 are the sons in his first wife. He married Mary after the death of his first wife.

Virgin Mary got conceived by the Holy Spirit after the betrothal of Joseph and Mary. When Joseph came to know about it, his response was noble and great. We find Joseph's first response to the news in St. Matthew 1:19. "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly." The common procedure was to put away publically. But Joseph realized that it would cause shame to her before the world. Hence he decides to do it secretly. A just man is one who doesn't want to put another to shame before the world. Those who accuse others in public can't become just. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said. " Joseph don't be afraid to taken to you Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She shall bring forth a son and you should name him Jesus." Joseph obeyed the Lord's command and took Mary as his wife. We can't find another person like Joseph in the New Testament who directly received God's command. Joseph received the Lord's command four times in his dream.

When Mary was pregnant with the child, Augustus Caesar issued the decree that all people should register their names. Joseph went from Nazareth in Galilee to his own city, Bethlehem. He took Mary with him. What we see thereafter is the greatness of the pains taken by Joseph for the sake of Jesus Christ.

They travelled a long distance to reach Bethlehem. But they didn't get room in the inn. Mary was in pain to deliver the child. The agony of Joseph when he couldn't find room for his wife to deliver the child would have been great. The Holy Bible doesn't state clearly where Mary gave birth to the child. St. Luke 2:7 records that the Child was laid in a manger because there was no room in the inn.

The Child was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Jewish scripture. (St Luke 2:21). On completion of forty days the child was taken to the temple of Jerusalem and a pair of turtle doves were sacrificed. (St.Luke 2:24). Simeon and Anna visited the child. The wisemen from the east came and submitted gifts to child Jesus. Joseph was present on all these occasions.

When everything is settled, comes King Herod's order to kill all children below the age of two. However Joseph was warned by the angle of the Lord regarding the massacre of the Innocents. He fled to Egypt with the child. We do not know how long did he live in Egypt. We don't know how they earned their daily bread there. After the death of Herod, Joseph and Mary returned and dwelt in Nazareth. Thus Jesus Christ got the name Nazarene. Joseph worked as a carpenter and looked after his family.

Later we see Joseph when Jesus Christ is twelve years old. A Jewish boy is raised to the status of 'son of the scriptures' at the age of twelve. He thereafter has to obey the laws completely. Joseph and Mary used to go to the Feast of the Passover every year. When he was twelve years old, Jesus Christ also went with them to the temple. The parents returned home leaving boy Jesus with the teachers in the temple. They didn't notice that the boy wasn't with them because of the large crowd at the temple. His mother thought that he would be with the father and the father thought that he would be with the mother. They realized that Jesus wasn't with them only after a day's journey. We can imagine the panic of the parents at that time. They found him at the temple only after three days of searching. This reveals how anxious the parents have been. The last verse of the description is also notable. "Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them." This passage teaches us that we should respect and obey our parents.

Hereafter the Holy Bible doesn't say anything about St. Joseph. Yet it is not wrong to believe that Joseph wasn't alive during the time of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. It is generally believed that Joseph died when Jesus was entering his youth hood. Let the intercession of this saint who obeyed Lord's commands and suffered for the sake of Jesus Christ help us to defend ourselves during hardships in life.

Let us Reflect

1. What is the meaning of the word Joseph?
.....
2. Which tribe was Joseph born into?
.....
3. Where was Joseph born?
.....
4. Where did Joseph live with his family?
.....
5. What was Joseph's occupation?
.....
6. How does the Holy Bible describe Joseph?
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Name the sons of Joseph?

.....

8. How many times did Joseph see the Lord in his dreams?

.....

Activities

I. Why did Joseph decide to put away Mary secretly? Tick (ü) the correct answer.

1. As per the scriptures
2. To avoid putting her to shame before the world.
3. Fearing the humiliation he is likely to face.

II. What are the features of Joseph's character? Tick (ü) the correct ones and cross (û) the wrong ones.

1. Just
2. Helpless in adversity.
3. Obeys Lord's commands
4. Readiness to take up hardships

III. Match the following suitably.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Augustus Caesar | House of Bread |
| Herod | Let Lord increase. |
| Joseph | Registration of names |
| Bethlehem | Massacre of innocents |

Song

O Israelite - Son of king David-
Master Carpenter
Sentinal of Mother Mary - Grand
old man revered by us
Patron father of Jesus
- O St. Joseph Perfect man
Intercede - ever on our behalf.

Prayer

O St. Joseph pray on our behalf your Son so that we are not disheartened in our sufferings. Help us to realize that sufferings yield tolerance, tolerance Enlightenment and Enlightenment yield Hope so that we can praise Him even in our sufferings.

Our Decision

**We would do justice to Christ's commandments
for ever in our lives.**

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.Matthew 1:1-16	St.Matthew 1:18-24
Monday	Exodus 20:8-12	St.Matthew 2:1-12
Tuesday	Proverbs 6:20-23	St.Matthew 2:13-18
Wednesday	Genesis 2:18-25	St.Matthew 2:19-23
Thursday	1 Corin. 3:9-12	St.Luke 2:1-7
Friday	1 Peter 5:5-7	St.Luke 2:21-24
Saturday	St.Luke 2:41-51	St.Luke 2:25-38

Unit 8

Good Habits

Lesson 24

Hospitality

Theme: Always show love, kindness and respect towards other and be prepared to do good to others.

Verse to be Memorized: “Therefore, what ever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and Prophets.” (St.Matthew 7:12)

Introduction

When we visit another home, what reception do we expect from the inmates. We expect the hosts to welcome us and serve us food whole heartedly. We would be pleased only if the host behaves with love and hospitality. Today we are learning how to receive guests and behave hospitality towards them.

Reading Passage

Imagine two guests visiting you at home. What will be your response when you see them? Will you be happy or will you feel irritated? We should receive guests with happiness. Good manners demand from us love, kindness and respect towards others. There are several good manners which we should observe. We should take special care in receiving guests and behaving cordially towards them.

One afternoon the parents went out to visit their friends. They left behind their children - eleven year old daughter Susan and eight year old son Rajan - at home. By five O’ clock in the evening their mother’s sister and her husband came to their house. Susan was doing homework and Rajan was playing cricket at that time. As soon as the children saw the guests, they ran towards them and invited them to their living room. Susan greeted them and talked to them for a while. Then she went to the kitchen and prepared tea. She took some pieces of cake and a bunch of plantain from the Cupboard and served her guests with them. Meanwhile Rajan

was engaging the guests in a conversation. By the time the guests were about to leave, the parents returned. Their mother expressed regret in not being able to treat the guests. But the guests were quite happy with the hospitality shown by the children. They praised Susan and Rajan for their good behavior. Rajan had abandoned his game of cricket to talk with them and Susan had laid the table for them. It was an act of appropriate conduct. Dear learner, what would have you have if you were Rajan or Susan?

Good conduct is an important hall mark of culture. Possessing a behavior that can impress others and create happiness in them is a great asset. It will lead us to greater heights in life. We cannot get it merely from formal education. What is required is good training in manners.

It is said that the British King George fifth had Kept a board on his table on which it was written: "We would pass through this world only once. We should not fore go any opportunity to help and please others during this journey." All of us should uphold this principle in life.

One should receive one's training in good manners from the family at a tender age. The basic lessons of hospitality are learned from the cordial behaviour between members of the family. The training in receiving guests cordially and behaving with love and respect to wards them should be got at a tender age itself. The children learn it from parents and other elders.

The hospitality of Abraham, Our Father is faith and the Lord's minion is a model for all of us. (Genesis 18:1-10,16)

Abraham was living with his family in the oak grove at Mamre in Hebron. One day he had a pleasant experience. There men came to the tent where they were living. They were strangers. Yet Abraham sprang up and ran to them and welcomed them. He bowed before them and pleaded not to go any further from them. "Stop awhile and rest here in the shade of this tree while I get water to refresh. Your feel and a bile to eat to strengthen you" you can leave after your hunger is quenched. These there man reveal Lord's plan for Abraham. As Abraham received these strangers and served them food, he became blessed. The guests who visited him in the tent were satisfied with the reception given to them. They gave the blessing that a son will be born to Abraham within an year.

The house that received Jesus Christ (St. Luke 10:38-42)

Jesus loved Lazarus's home in Bethania very much. Jesus was given a loving welcome in that house. They took pleasure in listening to His words and serving Him food. Hence Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead and showed the greatness of Hope.

One oft repeated theme of St. Paul's teachings is reception of guests. We should be distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality." (Romans 12:13).

When St. Paul talks about Heads of Church, he reminds us of Timothy. “A bishop then must be, blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach.” (1 Timothy 3:2) During the New Testament times very few inns were available for travellers. They were not safe as well. Hence believers reaching a place often longed to take lodgings, in the homes of other believers in that region. We should think that hospitality is the responsibility of our family. Those who maintain good friendship with others will be interested in hospitality.

A person who pays attention to his behaviour and conduct, will be diligent while dealing with all others. When we show cordial and warm attitude towards relatives, guests and colleagues, we attract them to us. This helps us to maintain our friendship with them.

Activities

1. Who did Abraham welcome to his tent at Mamre?- what did he do for them?- Find out from the passage ‘Abraham’s Hospitality.’
2. Zacchaeus received Jesus Christ at his house. Read St. Luke 19:1-10 and say what transformation happened to Zacchaeus.
3. Write the biblical passage in which St. Paul speaks about hospitality and receiving guests.

Moral of the Lesson

We should be able to respect others and show hospitality towards them.

Our Decision

We would behave cordially towards all people for the love of Christ.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		Romans 12:1-9
Monday	Genesis 18:1-8	Romans 12:10-21
Tuesday	Genesis 18:16-15	St.Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday	Genesis 18:16-19	1 Timothy 3:1-4
Thursday	St.Luke 10:38-42	1 Timothy 3:5-11
Friday	St.John 11:1-16	1 Timothy 6:17-22
Saturday	St.John 11:17-44	1 Peter 3:13-22

Lesson 25

Punctuality

Theme: Make your life successful by being punctual in life.

Verse to be Memorized: “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil”
(Ephes. 5:15)

Introduction

Some achieve success in life. Some other fail in life. Have you ever thought why such failures happen? Life in this world is a gift of God. It is gifted to us in order to be lived according to God’s will. When we act with this goal in mind life becomes successful, when we see life casually it becomes a failure. This lesson deals with how to lead an orderly life.

Reading Passage

What do we see in the mornings? The sun rises in the east. New buds bloom on plants. Bees and butterflies flutter around for drinking nectar from flowers. Birds ring from tree tops. Thus a new day makes all creatures of nature do their work actively.

All activities in this universe take place as decided by God. The various activities of nature take place like parts of a well oiled machine as decided by God. Man should also observe certain orderliness in his life.

However most people fail to be punctual in life. Birds wake up in the morning and sing God’s praise. They won’t change this routine during any reason. But what about man? On some days he gets up early; on some others he gets up late. He says his prayers on certain days; on other days he doesn’t pray. Sometimes children won’t their time for studies. Instead they would devote more time for sleep, play and watching TV. They want study their lessons systematically. They think they can study when exams approach. But they will fail to study all the lessons together at the time of exams.

The main reason for this failure is lack of punctuality. Laziness cause lack of punctuality. Mahatma Gandhi has said that laziness is the cause of all evil. His life was a true model in the case of punctuality. His body and mind worked like a faultless clock. Gandhi had to deal with a lot of things; but he set apart time for each work and followed his schedule.

There are people who abandon the work they had begun; some others continue with it half heartedly. If we run after many things at the same time, we cannot complete anything satisfactorily. We fail to concentrate on one thing. No one will intrust responsibilities with such people.

Whatever work we do should give us satisfaction. We should allot time for each work and do it within the allot time. We will get satisfaction only when we complete the works we have begun. Satisfaction prompts us to take up more tasks and do them properly. Thus our lives will become proactive ones.

We should not underestimate any task we undertake. We should neither feel discouraged that we cannot fulfil the tasks before us. We should complete our tasks systematically however small the tasks are only such people will be respected Remember what Jesus Christ has told us: "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much." (St. Luke 16:10)

The parable of Talents

Lord Jesus Christ exhorts us to increase what we have got through the parable of the talents. (St Luke 19:11-27). The parable tells us that a noble man gave ten minas to his ten servants before he went to a far country. After he returned he called three of them to know what their achievements were. One servant earned ten minas and another one earned five. But the third servant was prejudiced against His master and had tied his mina up in a handkerchief. He did not make use of what he had got. The Master scolded and punished this third servant. (A variant of this parable is seen in St. Matthew (25:14-30) Not making use of your talents is punishable. We need to have faithfulness, Punctuality and sense of purpose to make use of our talents.

The parable of ten Virgins (St. Matthew 25:1-13)

Five out of ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom forgot to take oil for their lamps. As a result they would not meet the bridegroom who came at midnight. These virgins were lazy ones. People who are punctual would do the right things at the right time. The blessed ones are those servants who remain awake. When the Master comes.

Observe discipline in Worship

The prayer of Canonical Hours, the Holy Eucharist, Fasts and fasting make us punctual in Christian life. Besides it will help us to be disciplined even in worldly life. Hence regular prayers, total participation in worship and genuine interest in Fasts and fasting will make our lives well disciplined. Only those who can order their lives well and grow in goodness can achieve success in life.

We often remember Benjamin Franklin with great respect. He took certain decisions in his life to manage time and execute all his duties well. He said “We should set apart time for each of the tasks before us before getting up from bed, I would plan out what I should do that day. I also want answer to what good I did that day before I go to bed at night.”

What we often postpone are things which we have no interest in and which we find difficult to complete. But our burden doesn't decrease merely by postponing them. We should complete what we have to do a day within that day itself. Laziness and lethargy prompts us to postpone our work. Those who desire for efficiency will try to complete their tasks for a day before night.

Apostle James says: “Where as you do not know what will happen to morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” (James 4:14)

Activities

1. Find out the differences between the parables of talents described in the gospels of St Luke and St Matthew.
2. Write the parable of ten virgins in the form of a conversation.
4. Who does Apostle St. James address using the verse quoted in the lesson? Find out from the Holy Bible.

Moral of the lesson

When we do our work systematically we will achieve success in life.
It help us to lead a satisfied life.

Our Decision

We would lead a well disciplined life believing that time is precious.

Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		St.James 4:13-17
Monday	St.Luke 16:1-4	St.Matthew 5:13-16
Tuesday	St.Luke 16:5-9	Ephesians 5:15-21
Wednesday	St.Luke 16:9-13	1 Thessa. 5:1-6
Thursday	St.Luke 19:11-27	1 Timothy 6:3-10
Friday	St.Matthew 25:1-3	1 Timothy 6:11-16
Saturday	St.Matthew 25:14-30	St.John 5:1-4