

We Call Our Priest "Father"

Objective: The students will learn about and appreciate the role of the priest as "Father" in the Church family.

For the Catechist

In the previous lesson the children learned that in the Church we are one family. Family is the model for Church in Eastern theology. We have been taught by Jesus Christ to call God, in heaven, our Father. In like manner Christians began calling those who gave them spiritual life on earth, through Baptism and the other Mysteries, "Father." Also, many great theologians, both of east and west, are called Father of the Church.

As noted in the previous lessons where fathers and mothers were discussed, all children may not be so fortunate as to have a father (or mother) who shows loving care and concern to them. Be especially sensitive to your children's family situations in this lesson. If some lack a healthy father image from their biological father, perhaps a grandfather, uncle, or other man has stepped in the breach. Also, the child may be able to understand fatherhood from a friend's father.

Priesthood. The priest is ordained "to proclaim the Gospel... to offer you [Lord] spiritual gifts and sacrifices, to renew your people by the bath of rebirth..." (Byzantine Liturgy, Euchologion). After the death of Jesus Christ, bishops presided over every eucharistic liturgy. With the growth of Christianity, it was soon impossible for the bishops to do so. Priests were appointed as co-workers to assist in their tasks. It is the bishop who gives a priest charge over a local church.

Vestments. The use of vestments began in the fourth century when Christianity became legal and, in fact, became the state religion of the Roman Empire. At that point the bishops were made senior imperial officials who had an obligatory dress code. With the evolution of the eucharistic service into the splendid Divine Liturgy we celebrate today came the development of ecclesiastical vestments. Each piece has come to symbolize a task of the priest, and the prayers of vesting reflect the

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Beginning prayers from "Holy God" to "All Holy Trinity," and/or Paschal Troparion.

Introduction: Questions students have for Father **Need:** Pencil and paper.

Read Text Aloud: Ask questions noted on following pages as text is being read

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

•*Basic 1:* We Call Our Priest "Father"

•*Basic 2:* He Cares for Us Like a Father

•*Group:* "Thank You, Father" Book

•*Craft:* Prayer for Father

Closing: Beginning Prayers from "Holy God" to "All-Holy Trinity" and/or "Paschal Troparion"

Come Bless the Lord Icon:

Packet I:
Packet II:

Teaching Pics

House Blessing (F14), Holy Order (S17)

symbolism. The vestments help us to remember that in the Divine Liturgy those who serve the Holy Table are engaged in a heavenly work—something out of the ordinary.

The children are certainly aware of the priest's task of leading our worship. In fostering the concept of "father," however, it is important for the children to see a broader picture. They should be reminded that the priest baptizes them and so brings them into God's family and that he continues to care for them in a personal manner. If you or the children can share stories of visits with the priest, house blessings, and anointings when sick, these stories will encourage appreciation of the priest as "father."

Background Reading

(Direct quotations are from the sources noted.)

Priests in the Christian Community

The function proper to the presbyterate in the catechetical task arises from the sacrament of Holy Orders which they have received.' Through that sacrament priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest, in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head' In virtue of this ontological configuration to Christ, the ministry of the priest is a service which forms the Christian community and coordinates and strengthens other charisms and services. In catechesis the sacrament of Holy Orders constitutes priests as 'educators of the faith.' They work, therefore, to see that the faithful are properly formed and reach true Christian maturity. Conscious, on the other hand, that their 'ministerial Priesthood' is at the service of 'the common Priesthood of the faithful,' priests foster the vocation and work of catechists and assist them in carrying out a function which springs from Baptism and is exercised in virtue of a mission entrusted to them by the Church. Thus priests put into effect the request which the Second Vatican Council made of them: 'to recognize and promote the dignity of the laity and their specific role in the Church's mission'" (GDC 210-211).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

[See Lesson 16 for information on Beginning Prayers.] *We have been saying the first part of the Beginning or Trisagion Prayers for this unit. Let's come to the icon corner and begin with the sign of the cross.*

Introduction

Our lessons now are about our worship. There is one very important person to think about when we think of worship. Do you know who I mean? (Our priest) What do we call our priest? (Father) Why do you suppose we call him that? [Allow responses.] In some Churches, deacons and monks are also called "Father."

Have you ever talked with Father? What have you talked about? Most children have questions they would like to ask Father. Think for a few minutes about anything you'd want to know about Father. I'd like to have him come to talk with us one day. I'll write down your questions, and he can answer them. [Start paper with "Dear Father, The first grade class is studying about priests. We would love for you to visit our class. Here are some questions we have for you." Let children have some time to think of questions. Write them down. Try to arrange a time for Father to visit.]

Let's see what our lesson can teach us about our priest, and why we call him "Father."

18

We Call Our Priest “Father”

Our Church family cares for one another.
We share together.
We worship together.



Our priest leads our worship.
We call our priest “Father.”
He makes us part of God’s family at Baptism.

Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type). See “Reading of Text” in Lesson 1 for use of the Vocabulary Visual Aid.

He makes us part of God's family at Baptism.

*What is happening in the photograph?
(A baby is being baptized.) This is how the priest makes us apart of God's family.*

He prays to God for all of us.
He brings bread and wine to the Holy Table.
He gives us God’s Holy Communion.



He blesses our homes.
He prays for us when we are sick.
He cares for us like a good father.

He brings bread and wine to the Holy Table.

When Father brings bread and wine to the Holy Table, there is a name for the procession. Do you know what it is? (The Great Entrance).

He blesses our homes.

Do you remember when Father came to bless your home? [Allow time for sharing.]

He cares for us like a good father.

Why do you think we call our priest “Father”? (He cares for us like a father.) [If you have students whose fathers are absent or not healthy “father models,” say to the group:] I want you to think of someone now who is a good father—either your own dad or someone you know. When I talk about fathers, think about this person.

We are worshipping God.

A sign is like a reminder to help us remember something. Of what are vestments a sign? (They remind us that we are doing something special and holy when we worship God.)

He leads our worship of God.

Why is Father special? (He leads our worship of God.)

Let's review: *What was the title of our lesson today? ("We Call our Priest "Father.") Why do we call him "Father"? (He cares for us like a father.) What are some of the things he does? (Baptizes, teaches, blesses our homes, gives us Holy Communion, leads our worship).*

Those who serve at the Holy Table wear vestments. Vestments are a sign that we are doing something special. We are doing something holy. We are worshipping God.



Father is special.
He leads our worship of God.

Activity Tracks

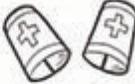
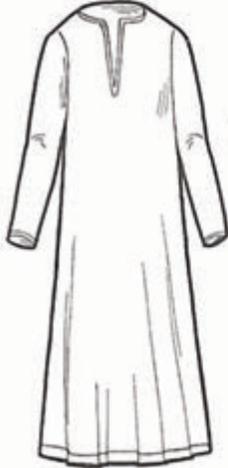
Basic 1: We Call Our Priest "Father"
[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we learned the many things our priest does for us and the way he cares for us like a father. On this worksheet, see if you can match the phrase that says what Father does with the picture. One letter is missing in each phrase; see if you can figure out the letter and write it in.

We Call Our Priest "Father"

Fill in the missing letters, color the pictures.

Our priest gives us Holy Communion.



Our priest wears vestments.

Basic 2: He Cares for Us like a Father

Today we learned about the many ways Father cares for us. Let's see how many you remember with this riddle worksheet.

Group: "Thank You, Father" Book

Materials: Construction paper for front and back cover, paper, markers, stapler

Today we learned why the priest is so important in our Church family. Many times we forget to say "thank you" to Father, just as we forget to say it to our own parents. As a way of saying thank you, let's make a big card, actually, a big book from our class. Each page will be a picture of something Father does for us, and you can write a message at the bottom. Then we'll put it in a cover and give it to Father.

Craft: Pray for Father

Materials: "Pray for Father" worksheet, construction paper (9" x 12") scissors, markers, hole punch, yarn

Today we learned the many ways Father _____ cares for us like a good father. What can we do in return? We can pray for Father _____. Here is something that will help you remember that. It says [Show example.] *God Bless Father.* After you color the picture, we'll paste it onto the construction paper. You can either stand it up in your icon corner or hang it on the same nail as an icon or cross so that it hangs below. [Cut construction paper in three 4" x 9" rectangles. Fold these in thirds.]

Closing: When our priest leads us in worship, we are worshipping with the saints in heaven. Someday we will all worship God together in heaven! It will be glorious. We can all be in heaven someday because Christ has risen from the dead and opened the gates of heaven to us. Let's stand quietly now. [Stand quietly in prayer position for 20 seconds; then begin the Beginning Prayers from "Holy God" through All-holy Trinity," and/or Paschal troparion.]

God bless you, and have a good week!

**He Cares for Us
Like a Father**

The riddles below have their answer in the pictures on the side. Match each riddle with its answer.

1. With a chalice and spoon
Father gives us a precious
gift. What is Father doing?



2. He comes once a year with
holy water and vestments.
What is Father doing?

blessing our home

3. To the hospital he comes
to see my grandmother. What
is Father doing?



4. After the gospel reading
Father talks to us. What is
Father doing?

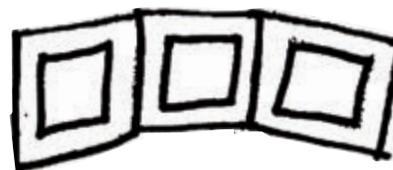
baptizing the baby

5. During the Divine Liturgy
Father is in charge. What is
Father doing?



6. A little baby is brought to
church ready to be dressed in
white. What will Father be
doing?

praying for the sick





priest



**Holy
Communion**



vestments

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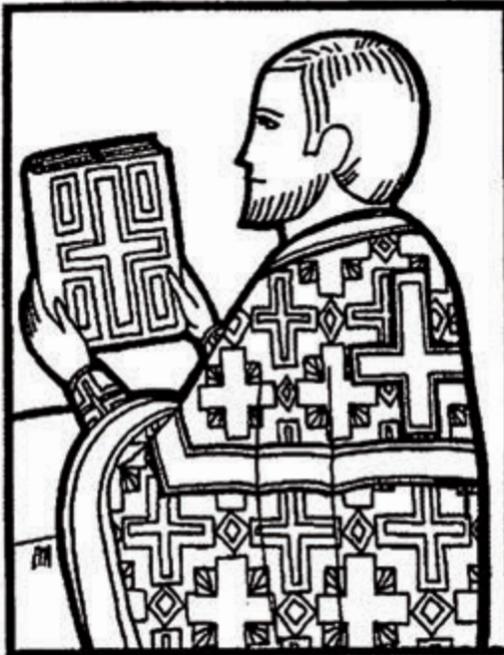
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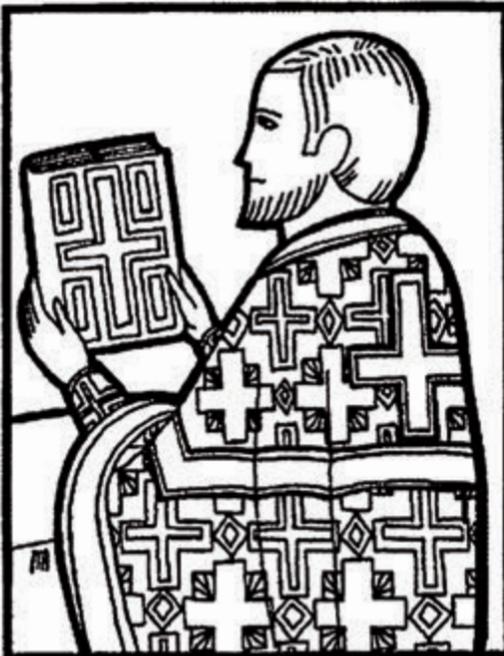
praying for the sick

**God
Bless**



Father

**God
Bless**



Father
