

As Church, We Worship

Objective: The students will be able to list the ways we worship God in church where we come together as one.

For the Catechist

A spirit of reverence in worship is essential. When we enter the church or wherever we pray, we have to adopt an unhurried attitude as we strive to respond to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

At each Liturgy we worship God and thank Him. In our acts of worship, we stand, kneel, and bow to give glory to God. In this lesson the children learn that the Church as one body shows outwardly the love and belief that is shared.

The Divine Liturgy is the greatest prayer of our Church. It is all of God's people praying together. We remember all that God has done for us, and we express our dependency upon Him. By receiving Christ in the Eucharist, we show that we cannot live without Him.

Use this lesson to encourage the children to actively participate in the Divine Liturgy. Encourage the children to focus on the presence of Jesus in our midst as we gather to pray; therefore, we would want to give Jesus our full attention

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: The Creed

Introduction: Play the game Simon Says.

Read Text Aloud: Have students volunteer to read the text. Use questions in the teacher manual to discuss the lesson with the students.

Activity Tracks:

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

- *Basic:* Thank You, God
- *Group:* "Alleluia" Game
- *Craft:* "Alleluia" Sign

Closing: The Creed

[For next week's craft, ask your priest for a list of homebound people in your parish.]

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
The Holy Trinity

Teaching Pics:

Divine Liturgy (DL6, DL10, DL22)

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Liturgical Life

"Of the several aspects common to parish life, worship is the high point. Our tradition has a rich and varied life of worship in which we are able to share. As we set our calendars, we should take into consideration the times when our parish family gathers to stand together before the Lord and should plan accordingly. The more regularly we gather in the wider fellowship of the church, the more deeply our domestic church will be immersed in our spiritual tradition" (DC 41-42).

The Body in Worship

"For centuries our worship has included elements of the physical. The Body is used in a number of ways to accentuate our prayer. Some of these gestures are:

"The Sign of the Cross - is made in Byzantine practice by joining the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand while folding the remaining two fingers into the palm. Then one blesses oneself by bringing the right hand to the forehead and then to the abdomen (In the name of the Father'), then to the right shoulder ('and of the Son' - who sits at the Father's right) and finally to the left ('and of the Holy Spirit').

"The sign of the cross is generally made whenever the persons of the Trinity are mentioned in prayer or to indicate an individual's desire to make the words of a prayer especially his.

"The Metany - is the ordinary gesture of reverence made when entering a church., before beginning prayer, at certain prayers (e.g. 'Holy God...' or 'Come, let us worship...'), upon kissing an icon or the cross or receiving any holy thing (the Eucharist, antidoron, anointing, etc). It is made (usually three times in succession) by bowing from the waist with the right hand extended downward then rising to make the sign of the cross.

"The Great Metany or Prostration - is a more solemn form of the metany generally used during the Great Fast or when venerating the cross on September 14. Instead of bowing, we made the sign of the cross then kneel on both knees and touch the forehead and both palms to the ground for a moment before rising" (DC 43-44).

Music in Worship

"Traditionally, all prayer in Eastern liturgical services is sung, because song is the most heightened form of speech available to us and it is the best form of everything which we want to offer to God. For the same reason the texts of our hymns are generally poetry, another heightened form of speech" (DC 44-45).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Today we are going to continue saying the Creed. Did you say the Creed during the Divine Liturgy this week? Let's begin with the sign of the cross. [Use the prayer worksheet according to your jurisdiction.]

Introduction

Before we start the lesson, let's play a game. It is called Simon Says. Does anyone know how to play it? [Let someone tell the rules.] Now, I am going to be the leader. You must do what I say as long as I say Simon says. Simon says stand up. Simon says sit down. Stand up. [If someone stood up, remind them you didn't say Simon says.] Simon says stand up. Simon says make the sign of the cross. Simon says sing "Amen." Simon says bow. Sing "Amen." [Remind them you didn't say Simon says.] Simon says sit down.

Okay, let's stop. How many of you have played that game before? In that game we did each activity as a group: we stood up together; we sat down together. Why is it good being part of a group?

Jesus also calls us to join together. Does anyone remember the name given to us who follow Jesus? (Christians) We Christians join together to form the Church. We also come together to honor and worship God. Where do we go to do that? (Your church's name) During the Divine Liturgy we join together as a group. We become one body and join together to worship God. What are some things other than sitting and standing that we do together in church? (Sing, bow, pray, go to Communion) All of these are ways we worship God.

Let's turn to our lesson to learn more about worshiping God.

As Church, We Worship

Jesus shows us how we are to love God. He tells us we are to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus knows God wants to be part of every minute of our life.

At times the disciples would ask Jesus questions to help them understand how to honor and worship God. Many times Jesus answers by telling them to pray. One day Jesus used these words to tell them what happens when we pray together:



Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:19-20)

We are following Jesus' words every time we go to church. We gather together in Jesus' name. We join the priest and the people to give glory and honor to God. Together we say and sing the prayers and services. When we attend the Divine Liturgy, we come together to receive Communion and to be united to God and each other.

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).

... what happens when we pray together:

When we come together in church, we become one group. We are members of the group from [Say the name of your church.] What did Jesus tell us He will do when we gather together in His name? (Hear our prayer and be with us.)

The Divine Liturgy is our greatest form of worship to God. It is our time to come together to honor and thank God for everything. Just as Jesus told the disciples, He will be with us as we gather in His name. Throughout the Divine Liturgy, we have many ways to show Jesus we are thankful He is with us.



Every time we sing in church, we are worshiping God. Our songs praise God and glorify His name. We sing "Alleluia" to thank God for all that He has done for us. God has given us everything that we have, and we are grateful.

As one body, we stand to show honor to God. We always stand when the Gospel is carried or read by the priest. We stand to show our respect to the Word of God. Standing during the Divine Liturgy is our way to show God we honor and worship His being with us through His words.



Bowing is another way we worship God. We bow our heads to show God that He is our Lord and Master. We show our respect for His glory and honor. Each time we cross ourselves we bow to honor the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

... we have many ways to show Jesus we are thankful He is with us.

Why do we sing? (To praise God and thank Him) Why do we bow? (To honor God) Why do we stand? (To honor God) Each time we move with respect with our bodies we say we thank You, God, for everything. We say we know you are with us.

Group: "Alleluia" Game

We learned that we worship God in many ways. What are some of the ways? (Praying, singing, etc.) Now we are going to praise God in a special way. We are going to say "Alleluia" every time we think of something to thank God for. We are going to walk in a circle around the room. When I say stop, anyone who is thinking of something to be grateful for, raise your hand. I'll call on someone who will walk into the center of the circle and tell us what the blessing is. All of us will say, "Alleluia." That person stays in the center. We will keep doing this until everyone is in the center.



Craft: "Alleluia" Sign

Materials: "Alleluia" worksheet, plastic canvas cut 7" by 2", 1/8" ribbon cut in 36" lengths, markers, masking or regular tape, magnet strips and glue

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Last week we made a magnet for our refrigerator. What did it say? (I Believe) Today we are going to make "Alleluia" signs to place below our "I Believe" sign. Why would we put them by each other? (We are thanking God for everything we believe in the Creed.) What does Alleluia mean? (Praise to God.)*

Cut out the "Alleluia" from the worksheet. Color the white around the word. [On one end of the ribbon, tightly wrap tape to create a sharp point to pull through the holes of the plastic canvas.] Use the pointed end of the ribbon as a needle. Pull the ribbon from the back to the front through one hole in the center of the bottom side of the canvas; pull the ribbon from the back to the front through the corner hole on the canvas; pull the ribbon from the back to the front through the center of the next side; pull the ribbon from the back to the front through the next corner hole. Continue doing this until all sides are covered. Tie the two ends into a bow. The bow will hang from the bottom of your sign. Next glue the "Alleluia" onto the plastic canvas decorated with the ribbon. Glue two magnet strips on both ends of the canvas.

Closing:

Let's get our prayer books and turn to the Creed for our closing prayer. I hope you are remembering to say the Creed during the Divine Liturgy every time you are there. Let's begin with the sign of the cross.

[For next week's craft, ask your priest for a list of home-bound people in your parish.]

Alleluia

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