

When We Turn Away from God's Love, We Sin

Objective: Students will be able to state that 1) we sin when we turn away from God's love, and 2) on the third Sunday of the Great Fast we venerate the Holy Cross.

For the Catechist

Children have some understanding of wrongdoing. They learned this from their parents who told them it was wrong to hurt others and themselves. This lesson builds on that understanding by showing why those actions are wrong. They are wrong because they do not follow God's plan for us to love. When we turn away from God's love, we sin.

As Christians we have been called by God to live in relationship with God and each other. When we sin, it affects our relationship with God and the community. It is in this tension between knowing how we are to live as God's people and the difficulty of actually living in this way in our day to day existence that we come to an awareness of sin. We know God expects us to be "on target" with our love; and when we "miss the mark," we sin. In the earlier grades, sin has been presented as the hurting of others on purpose. That concept is broadened this year to include the change in the relationship with God as a result of sin. Now the children will realize that sin hurts others and their relationship with God.

This lesson on sin is taught appropriately on the third Sunday of the Great Fast. God loves us so much that He gave us His Son to save us. The Holy Cross reminds us that Jesus died on the cross to give us eternal life. As we venerate the Holy Cross, we thank Jesus for His suffering and death. This Sunday is the half way mark on our journey through the Great Fast.

By now we are noticing the changes in the church during the Great Fast. Dark colors for

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "Veneration of the Cross" Prayer

Introduction: : Discussion of the forty day journey

Read Text Aloud: Have students volunteer to read aloud.

Activity Tracks:

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

- *Basic:* Our Church during the Great Fast
- *Group:* Prayer for Confession
- *Craft:* "Veneration of the Cross" Prayer Page

Closing: "Veneration of the Cross" Prayer

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord: The Crucifixion

Teaching Pics:

Veneration of the Cross (GL7)

the priest's vestments and the altar covers; melodies are slower; people do prostrations in the aisles; and the services are longer. Encourage the children and their families to notice these changes as they attend some of the beautiful services: Presanctified Liturgy, Great Compline, and the Akathist Hymn.

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

God's Plan

" God's plan for us is that we reflect His image and likeness in creation. Unable to do this because of the fall, we look to Christ as the pattern for true humanity in God's image. We achieve union with Him in baptism and attempt to live out that oneness by modelling our lives on His. Only Christ, the image of the Father, is the perfection of God's plan for us because humanity itself is broken, marred by sin" (*STBH 27*).

"The Christian who values his union with God in Christ keeps the commandments, not because they are a law, but because they reflect reality as seen by the One who has given them. Observing the commandments becomes a way of uniting ourselves with the mind and heart of the Lord and becoming one in will with Him" (*STBH 32*).

Sin: Missing the Mark

"People who sin may be compared to an arrow seeking to chart its own course rather than relying on the direction set by the archer. They seek to be their own person, to determine their own truth. Yet this insistence on their individuality is in itself a failure to realize that they are fulfilled, not by setting their own goal and creating their own world, but by living out their true nature in God's image as reflected now in Christ. Sin, then, destroys our humanity in the very act of 'trying to be me' (*STBH 28-29*).

"The Scriptures teach that there is a basic undercurrent of sin in everyone's life, 'for all have sinned, all have fallen short of the glory of God' (Rom 3:23). At the same time, it teaches that there are distinctions in sins. 'All wrongdoing is sin, but not all sin is deadly' (1 Jn 5:17). We can shoot the arrow so far off course that it is lost in the woods behind the target; or it can come to rest near the target where we can easily retrieve it and try again. Nevertheless, in either case we are off the mark" (*STBH 32-33*).

"In any case, it is the action of taking our eye off the target—the model of Christ— which causes us to miss the mark at which our Creator has aimed us: of sharing in His life that we might mirror His holiness to all the world" (*STBH 41*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

How many days are in the Great Fast? (40) Today is day 21 of the Great Fast. This is the Sunday when we venerate the Holy Cross, and we have a special prayer to say. With this prayer we make the sign of the cross and bow when we say, "We" [Give the students the prayer page they will use for their prayer books.] Let's say our prayer three times.

Introduction

We have been on our journey through the Great Fast for 21 days. Let's count our footsteps to number 21. [As a group count the footsteps to 21.] This week we are going to add a name to the guidepost by number 21. Our sign says Veneration of the Cross. [If you have enough room, have the children walk around the room as they count to 21 again.] Look at the rest of the footsteps we still need to travel on our journey to Pascha.

Last week we learned three ways we can prepare. What are they? (Praying, fasting, and giving alms) We use the Great Fast to spend more time with God. Does anyone remember why we call Jesus our Savior? (He saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life.) Jesus had to die on the cross to save us from eternal death. That is why we venerate the Holy Cross today. What does venerate mean? (To honor and worship) [If there is time, go to the church to venerate the Holy Cross on the icon stand.]

Let's turn to today's lesson.

18

When We Turn Away From God's Love, We Sin

On the Third Sunday of the Great Fast, we honor the Holy Cross. When we walk into church, we see a special cross on the icon stand. During the Divine Liturgy, we sing a special song and venerate the cross. We thank Jesus for dying on the cross for us. We promise to continue preparing for Pascha.



This Sunday reminds us of the words Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). That is what we are doing during the Great Fast. We are following Jesus through our prayers, fasting, and almsgiving.

The Church gives us many ways to show we are preparing ourselves for Pascha. Did you notice any changes that have been made in our church during the Great Fast?

76 God Walks Us Grade 3

Unit 4: The Church Prepares for Pascha

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).

We promise to continue preparing for Pascha.

What do we venerate on this Sunday? (The Cross) [If you could not arrange to go into church during the introduction, have a cross in your classroom. Remind the students to make the sign of the cross, to bow, to kiss the cross, and to make the sign of the cross again.]

The priest's vestments and the altar cloths are dark. Dark colors help us realize we are in a time of repentance.

Incense is used during the special services we attend. As the smoke and fragrance rise, we pray and ask that our prayers rise like incense to God.



We sing our songs with a slower melody. This gives us time to think about wanting to be with God.

We make a profound bow to show God with our whole body we are sorry for our sins, and we want to return completely to Him.

The Great Fast gives us time to think about wanting to be with God always.

77

The Great Fast gives us time to think about wanting to be with God always.

What are some ways our church shows us we are in the Great Fast? (The altar covers are dark; the music is slower; more prayers are said; we make profound bows.) Did you recognize any of these changes?

We want to use the Great Fast to help us grow closer to God.

God wants us to love Him so much that we want to be with Him always. What do we do when we sin? (We turn away from God's love.) What are some ways we sin? (We do things that are wrong on purpose, and we don't do the good things God asks.) Why should we thank the Church for giving us the Great Fast? (To make us take time to think about the times we sin and to learn how to live in God's love always)

Let's review: *What special service do we have on the third Sunday of the Great Fast? (The Veneration of the Cross) When do we sin? (When we turn away from God's love; when we do not follow God's way)*

But sometimes we turn away from God's love. These are the times we sin.

Some days we say, "No, I'm too busy for You, God." We say to our friends, "I don't want to help you or be nice to you." Some of us even yell at our friends or upset our family. These are the times we choose not to follow God's way. When we turn away from God's love, we sin.

Jesus shows us how to live God's way. In the Gospel we read stories about Jesus helping everyone. We are to learn from Jesus how to love everyone.

During the Great Fast we should think about the times we did not help our family and friends. We should think about the times we did something wrong on purpose. Our Church gives us the Great Fast to think about how lonely and sad we are when we do not follow God's way. We need to remember our sins and ask for forgiveness.

On the Third Sunday of the Great Fast we are given the cross to look at and remember Christ's love for us. We also remember that we are to love each other as Jesus Christ loves us. We thank our Church for giving us so many ways to help us remember to follow God's way. We want to use the Great Fast to help us grow closer to God.

When we turn away from God's love, we sin.
We look at the cross and remember how much God loves us.

Words to Remember:
Sin We sin by doing what is wrong or by not doing what we should do. We turn away from God's love.
The Veneration of the Holy Cross: A special service held on the third Sunday of the Great Fast.
Repentance: Being sorry for our sins.

78

Activity Tracks

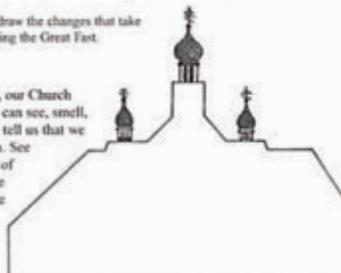
Basic: Our Church during the Great Fast
[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we are going to draw the changes that we have noticed in our church during the Great Fast.
[If possible, arrange to go into the church. Have the students complete the sketch of the changes while they are in church.]

Our Church during the Great Fast

Today we are going to draw the changes that take place in our church during the Great Fast.

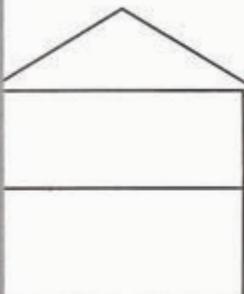
During the Great Fast, our Church gives us signs that we can see, smell, touch, and taste. They tell us that we are in a special season. See if you can draw some of these signs that we use in the Great Fast in the drawing of the Church.



Example:

- Draw an altar with dark covers on it.
- Draw people bowing.
- Draw people kneeling.

How can you make the Great Fast a special time at home? In the drawing of the house, draw something by which you will make the Great Fast a special time.



Example:

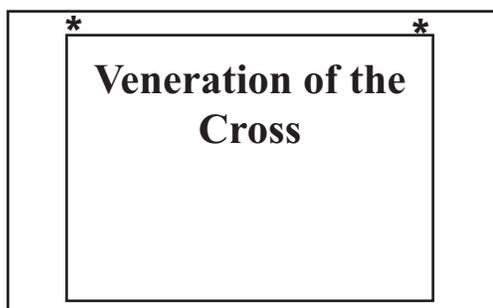
- Less food on our tables.
- Praying together.
- Forgiving one another.

Group: Prayer for Confession

Materials: Poster board and markers

[Use the prayer that you got from your priest during the week or use the Prayer for Forgiveness for your jurisdiction included in "Part 2- Liturgical Texts" in this *Teacher Manual*.]

We will be going to confession during the Great Fast. Let's make a big poster for our prayer for confession. While doing this, let's practice saying the words.



Craft: Veneration of the Cross

Materials: "Veneration of the Cross" prayer page according to each translations, heavier white paper or construction paper (1/2 sheet per student), hole punch, markers, stickers or stars, scissors, and glue

[Have sample ready to show children.] *We said the prayer at the beginning of our class today. What are the first two words? (We bow) Today we are going to make another page to add to our prayer book.*

Paste the words on a half sheet of construction paper. You can draw pictures around the words, or you can add the stars or stickers I have here. Punch two holes to match the ones on the prayer cover. Untie the yarn on your prayer book cover and add this new page. Now pull the yarn through the holes and tie.

Closing

Let's pray the "Veneration of the Cross" prayer. Let's say our prayer three times as we venerate the cross.

Veneration of the Cross

We bow in worship
before Your cross, O Master,
and we give praise
to Your holy resurrection.

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

Veneration of the Cross

We worship Your cross,
O Christ,
and we praise and glorify
Thy holy resurrection.

Romanian
Greek
Catholic
Diocese of
Canton

Veneration of the Cross

Before Your cross we bow down
in worship, O Master,
and Your holy resurrection
we glorify.

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metro-
politan
Province

Veneration of the Cross

To Your cross, O Master,
we bow in veneration,
and we glorify
Your holy resurrection.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Diocese of
St.
Josaphat

Veneration of the Cross

To Your cross, O Master,
we bow in veneration,
and we glorify Your holy resurrection.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod