

Jesus Teaches Us True Happiness

Objective: Students will be able to 1) identify the Beatitudes as the first part of the Sermon on the Mount and 2) explain that the Beatitudes identify the happiness that is possible when we do the will of God.

For the Catechist

Children in Grade 4 are used to measuring success by being the best and by owning many things. Also, they hear about the quick fixes from drugs and other things that can help them feel happy all the time. In direct contrast will be the focus of this lesson—the only true happiness is from God.

Webster defines *happy* as "favored by circumstances; lucky; fortunate; joyous; glad; pleased." These words seem in conflict with what we will hear Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet, if we think of happiness as meaning ultimate bliss, we can reconcile the paradox that seems to exist. If we live the Beatitudes given to us by Jesus, our "reward will be great in heaven" (Mt 5:12). Throughout this year the children have been learning that God keeps His promises, and now they hear the promise Jesus makes if we follow the Beatitudes. Help the children realize we believe Jesus because God always keeps His promises.

Learning to live the Beatitudes is a challenge today just as it was in the time of Jesus. We need to remember the promise of true happiness and the reward in heaven to keep us motivated. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to live the Beatitudes.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "Remember me, O Lord"

Introduction: Discussion of happiness

Need: construction paper, markers, pictures and ads from magazines

Read Text Aloud: Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

Activity Tracks:

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

- *Basic:* The Beatitudes
- *Group:* "The Beatitudes" Matching Game
- *Craft:* "The Beatitudes"

Closing: "Remember me, O Lord"

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
Christ the Teacher

Teaching Pics

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes

"St. Matthew's unique contribution consists in a carefully written comparison of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai with the moral and spiritual doctrines of Jesus. He accomplishes this in the famous scene known popularly as the 'Sermon on the Mount' (Matthew chapters 5-7). Just as the Law was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, so Jesus delivers His new commandments on an unidentified mountain (Matthew 5:1). Already the superiority of the New Covenant is obvious in the fact that Moses the mediator is replaced by the divine Law-giver who is both God and Man. To emphasize His authority (which is acknowledged by the crowds later at Matthew 7:27-28) St. Matthew takes care to note that Jesus sat down—the traditional position of an authoritative Jewish teacher.

"Jesus first presents His new Torah in capsule form in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11). These brief and memorable sayings, which take the form of observations on happiness rather than of commands, occupy the same place in the context of the Sermon on the Mount as the Ten Commandments do in the Sinai account of Exodus 19. What follows the Beatitudes makes the comparison with the old Law undeniably obvious. Citing several of the Ten Commandments one by one, Jesus reinterprets them, makes them more demanding, and expands them to include attitudes as well as actions. In each case, the formula used is the same: 'You have heard it said of old,' Jesus begins and then quotes one of the commandments, 'but what I say to you is this.' and He proceeds to give His own, new law (Matthew 5:21-48). A sense that the old Law is being fulfilled and that Jesus has greater authority than Moses are both expressed in each of these statements. This is precisely what Jesus Himself claims: 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them, but to fulfill them' (Matthew 5:7). In the light of the overall correspondence between the Passover of the Old Testament and the Christian Pascha which embraces both the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we can now better appreciate what our Lord and the Evangelists understood by the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets" (*OTB* 80-81).

A Lifestyle for the Kingdom

"It is not only in our liturgical life that we live in the heavenly realm. It affects our daily life as well. We live in two worlds, as it were. One we share with every other member of the human race. The other, the heavenly realm, is ours because of our union with God in Christ and our daily life is meant to reflect this share we have in God's kingdom. This is why religious expression in Eastern Christianity is part and parcel of our everyday behavior....

"The world around us often cannot understand the standards of the gospel; more often the gospel standards are directly opposed to the wisdom of this world. The society in which we live sees the meaning of life in success, prosperity, and earthly happiness. The believer cherishes his share in the divine nature far above these other realities, and this affects the way he acts, the decisions he makes, the priorities he sets" (*DC* 12-13).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

*Let us pray some familiar words that are said during the Divine Liturgy: "Remember me, O Lord"
When do we say this prayer? (As part of the Prayer before Communion)*

Introduction

[Distribute advertisements taken from magazines and newspapers and give out construction paper and markers.] *Today we are going to look at some things that are supposed to make us happy. Let's find some words or pictures that guarantee happiness. [After a short time, let the students share.] Now I want you to draw on your paper something that you think will make you happy. Add words and pictures like the ad. [After a few minutes, tell the children to turn on the other side of the paper.]*

Now answer the following questions about the happiness you will feel:

1. How long will you be happy with whatever you drew? 2. Think about presents you have wanted for Christmas or birthdays. How much time do you play with them now? 3. Can you even remember what gifts you received? 4. Can you think of anything that will make you happy forever? [Let the children share.]

Today we are going to read about the joy and happiness Jesus talked about to the people who followed Him. We might be surprised to hear what He tells us to do to be happy.

Let's turn to our lesson.

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Jesus Teaches Us True Happiness



Often we hear people say they would be really happy if only something was different in their lives. Some people think a new car would make them happy. Sometimes we think a new bike would make us the happiest person.

Often we think a new video game is all we really need to make us happy. Sometimes we even say that we will not ask for anything more if we just get this one thing.

For some of us, as soon as we get what we wanted, we find out that we are no happier now than we were before. Then we start thinking about the next thing that we want.

Jesus knew people could not be perfectly happy just by keeping busy or getting more possessions. Jesus knew that the only way to true happiness is by following the will of God



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Unit 4: This Is My Beloved Son

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).

... next thing that we want.

Did any of you ever try to make yourself happy by buying something? What happened? How long did the happiness last?

Jesus knew that the only way to true happiness is by following the will of God.

How can we know the will of God? (By reading the Scripture, by praying)

.. He talked to the people at the mountain.

What does the word beatitude mean? (Perfect blessedness or happiness) Did you ever hear these words before? Where? (Sometimes we sing them during the Divine Liturgy.)

Whenever we read the Beatitudes, we hear that we are to depend totally on God. Let's look at some of the words and hear what they mean.

poor in spirit - content with whatever one has and dependent on God

mourn - being sorry for one's sins and for the sufferings of others

meek - humble and gentle

righteousness - doing what is right

merciful - kind to others

clean of heart - having integrity in one's stand before God, not divided. We do not try to hide anything from God when we are clean of heart.

Jesus is telling us that a spiritual blessedness rather than the happiness of this world is the way people who follow the Beatitudes will feel. They will be rewarded in heaven

As Jesus traveled, He talked about the way God wants people to live. People followed Him and listened to what He said. They also watched the way He acted. They saw that Jesus lived the way He asked them to live. In Jesus they had the perfect example of how to live according to God's will.

One day Jesus saw a large group gathered around Him. He went up to the top of a mountain and began to teach. We call this lesson the Sermon on the Mount. He wanted the people to know how they should live if they want to enter the Kingdom of God.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes. The word *beatitude* means perfect blessedness or happiness. We read at the beginning of each statement the words "Blessed are . . ." Let us turn to **Matthew 5:1-12**. Before we begin reading, we will be quiet to prepare to listen to Jesus. He is talking to us the same way that He talked to the people at the mountain.

Let's think about what some of the words mean. "Poor in spirit" means "being content with what you have." How will that make you happy or blessed? How could being a "peacemaker" or "merciful to others" make you happy or blessed?



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... "reward will be great in heaven" (Matthew 5:12).

Which part of the Beatitudes do you think would be hard to follow? Why? [Let the children share.] What are some of the things that keep us too busy to think about God and following His will? (Television, school activities, video games, computers) What can we do to remind us to follow the Beatitudes? (Pray) We need the help of the Holy Spirit to remind us what is important. What will be our reward for living the way God asks? (Heaven)

Words to Remember: [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

The words Jesus said can be confusing for us because we do not think about happiness the way Jesus preaches. The happiness and blessedness Jesus describes comes from following the will of God. We are living as God's children and that is the reason for our happiness.

The people who listened were surprised by Jesus' words. We are surprised also because Jesus' way to be happy is not the way most people think. In fact, sometimes it seems the opposite of the way people expect us to live.

We cannot really understand how some of the ways in the Beatitudes can lead to happiness. In fact, some of them seem as if they will make us unhappy. Many of us think we should live by buying things and doing many activities to make us popular and happy. But the Beatitudes are telling us the opposite. When we read the Beatitudes, we have to listen closely because we are hearing about a way to live that will be difficult. We must trust God and believe that His ways lead us to a happiness that is only possible with God.

We believe God loves us completely. By following the Beatitudes, we are learning to love God and each other as God has loved us.

Sometimes we sing the Beatitudes during the Divine Liturgy. We pray that the Holy Spirit will help us live according to God's will. We believe that is the only way we can be truly happy and our "reward will be great in heaven" (Matthew 5:12).

Words to Remember:
Sermon on the Mount: The speech Jesus gave from the mountain.
Beatitudes: The word *beatitude* means perfect blessedness or happiness. The Beatitudes is the name given to the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: The Beatitudes

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we are going to complete the crossword puzzle that helps us recall the words from the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes

Complete the puzzle below. After you have finished, open your New Testament to Matthew 5:3-12 and check your answers.

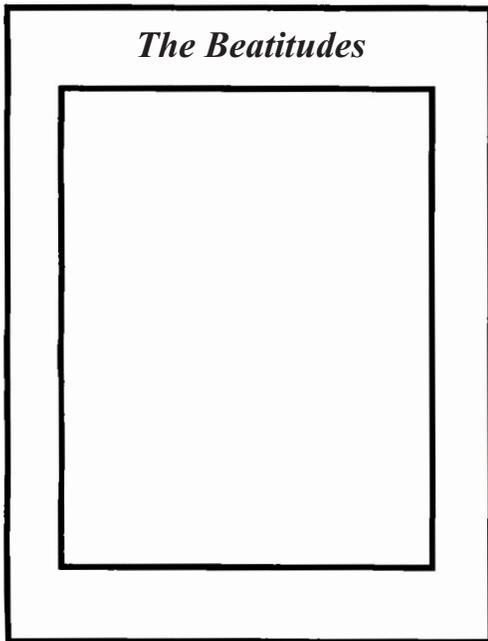
Blessed are the (9 Across) in (8 Down), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who hunger and (1 Down) for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the (5 Down), for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of (1 Down), for they will (8 Across) God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of (3 Across).
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] (6 Across) of me.
Rejoice and be glad for your (7 Across) will be great in heaven.
Thus they persecuted the (2 Down) who were before you.

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Group: "The Beatitudes" Matching Game

Materials: Beatitudes worksheet copied onto heavier paper

[Have the cards cut out and placed face down on the table.] *Today we are going to play a matching game with the cards on the table. The beginning words of the Beatitudes statement is on one card and the second half on another. We are going to try to match the cards, but the problem is they are face down on the table. That means we have to remember where they are. I have helped a little. All the beginning words are in this column, and all the ending words are in this column.*



Craft: The Beatitudes

Materials: Calligraphy or parchment paper from a craft store if possible or white paper, thin markers or pen, poster board or heavy paper (8 1/2" x 11"), construction paper, glue, scissors, rectangle worksheet.

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Today we are going to write in our nicest handwriting or printing the Beatitudes. Before we do that we are going to make the frame in which we are going to place the beatitudes. [Give each student poster board or heavy construction paper and another piece of construction paper.] Place the rectangle I am giving you in the center of your poster board and trace around it. Cut along the lines and remove the center of the board. Glue the construction paper onto the back side of the poster board making sure you leave one of the 8 1/2" edges unglued. That is the way you will put your Beatitudes paper into your frame. Write the words The Beatitudes onto the top or bottom of the frame.*

Now write the Beatitudes onto the paper that you will put in the frame. First, place the same paper that you used to draw the rectangle onto this page. Draw around the rectangle to make the margins for your writing

Closing: "Remember me, O Lord"

[You may add this to your booklets.] *Why should we follow the Beatitudes? (To have peace in our hearts and to be rewarded in heaven) Today's prayer asks for the same reward. Let's pray.*

*Sermon on
the Mount*

Beatitudes

The word beatitude means perfect
blessedness or happiness. The Beatitudes
is the name given to the beginning of the
Sermon on the Mount.

The speech Jesus gave from the mountain.

Remember me, O Lord

Remember me, O Lord.
Remember me, O Holy One.
Remember me, O my God,
when You come into Your kingdom!

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

Remember me, O Lord

Remember me, O Lord,
in Thy kingdom!.

Romanian
Greek
Catholic
Diocese of
Canton

Remember me, O Lord

Remember me, O Lord, when You shall come into Your kingdom! Remember me, O Master, when You shall come into Your kingdom! Remember me, O Holy One, when You shall come into Your kingdom!

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metropolitan
Province

Remember me, O Lord

Remember me, O Lord in Your kingdom! Remember me, O Master, in Your kingdom! Remember me, O Holy One, in Your kingdom!

Ukrainian
Catholic
Diocese of
St. Josaphat

Remember me, O Lord

Remember me, O Lord, when You come into Your
kingdom! Remember me, O Master, when You come into
Your kingdom! Remember me, O Holy One, when
You come into Your kingdom!

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod

*Blessed are the
poor in spirit*

*for theirs is
the kingdom
of heaven.*

*Blessed are
they who mourn*

*for they will
be comforted.*

*Blessed are
the meek*

*for they will
inherit the
land.*

*Blessed are
they who hunger
and thirst for
righteousness,*

*for they will
be satisfied.*

*Blessed are
the merciful,*

*for they will be
shown mercy.*

*Blessed are
the clean of
heart,*

*for they will
see God*

*Blessed are
the peacemakers*

*for they will
be called
children of God.*

*Blessed are they
who are persecuted
for the sake of
righteousness,*

*for theirs is
the kingdom
of heaven.*

*Blessed are you
when they insult you and
persecute you and utter
every kind of evil against
you [falsely].*

*Rejoice and be
glad for your
reward will be
great in heaven.*

