

## *Unit 1*

# **We Have Been Called by God**

### **1. Called to the New Covenant**

What do we promise to do in the New Covenant?

### **2. Baptism: The Lord Enters Our Lives**

What do we promise on the day of our Baptism?

### **3. Chrismation: the Lord Seals This New Relationship**

What action shows that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit in Chrismation?

### **4. Alive in Christ**

What happens to us when we become followers of Christ?

### **5. A Christian Is...**

What are some of the signs of the Holy Spirit's presence in us?

# Supplementary Activities

The following are suggested activities to help students focus on the information of the lesson:

1. Write the lesson's question on the board or on a poster board. After sections of the lesson are read, go back to the question and write answers. This supplementary activity is explained on the third page of each lesson plan.
2. This next activity could be done as a class or individual project. At the beginning of each lesson, distribute note cards. Have the students write the words from the "Let us remember..." section in the student text on one side and the definition on the other side. Use these cards for review throughout the year.
3. At the beginning of each lesson, ask the students to draw a picture of what they think they will learn in the lesson. Tell them they are making the front cover page for each lesson. Discuss some of these pictures at the beginning and/or at the end of the lesson. At the end of the unit, display these pictures on poster boards or on a bulletin board. (This activity could be done at the end of the lesson instead of the beginning.)

## ***Objectives***

By the end of this lesson, the students should be able to

- define a covenant as an agreement between God and His people.
- identify the Ten Commandments and God's Law as a sign of the Old Covenant, the agreement between God and the Israelites.
- state that God sent His Son Jesus to grant us eternal life.
- define the New Covenant as this new agreement made through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- state that the New Commandment (John 13:34-35) tells us how to live out our life in the New Covenant.

## ***For the Catechist***

This first lesson of the year seeks to review the basic overview of last year's program. Grade 4 focused on the idea of the covenant as the biblical understanding of how God relates with His people. The Old Covenant with its commandments defined how the Israelites were to respond to God. The New Covenant with its New Commandment—"Love one another as I have loved you"—sets forth how we, the Christian people, are to express our union with God and one another. Review the 4th grade text, *God's Promise Is Fulfilled*—especially lessons 11,12 and 19—to see how these covenants were presented to your students last year.

Your aim in this lesson should be to reinforce this emphasis on covenant and commandment. Some students will recall the terms in the sidebar (Prophet, Messiah, Christ, Anointed One); others will not. See what the students remember about these terms and show how they relate to the Old and New Covenants. Use the story of Saint John Chrysostom to show how following the commandments of God is a real challenge.

## ***Materials Needed***

**Opening and Closing Prayers:** New Testament, prayer page

**Introduction:** Notecards, pens or markers

**Review:** Worksheets, pencils or pens

**The Message:** Pencils or pens

**Application:** Pencils or pens

## ***Icons and Pictures***

*Come Bless the Lord:* Christ the Teacher

# Connections

## 1. Introduction

(5 minutes)

*Materials: Note cards, pens or markers*

[The purpose of this introductory game is to let everyone see and hear each other's name.] Have the children write their first and last name on two separate note cards. Collect the cards, shuffle them, and place them (name down) on a table. Students take one turn at a time trying to find their name by turning over two cards at each turn. When they match their own two cards, they go to the icon table. Say their name aloud as you collect their cards. Once everyone has been called, begin to pray.

## 2. Opening Prayer

(2 minutes)

*Materials: New Testament*

Invite the class to stand by the icon and remain silent for a few seconds before making the sign of the cross.

- Read (Luke 11:1-4). The prayer Jesus taught us reminds us that God is our Father too.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer

## 3. Review (Old and New Covenant)

(5 minutes)

*Materials: Covenant worksheet, pens or pencils*

Help the students recall the details they learned last year about the Old and the New Covenant. Use the worksheet at the end of this lesson and have the students match the words to the Old Covenant or the New Covenant. Let the children explain what they know about each word.

Connect this review to the lesson by having the students turn their student book (page 2) to look at the picture of Isaiah, the prophet who foretold the coming of Jesus. Begin the reading.

### Notes for the lesson:

(Use this space to write helpful hints to use each year)

**Alternate:** Write the terms Old Covenant and New Covenant on construction paper or posterboard. Have the students cut out the words from the worksheet at the end of this lesson and paste each word under the correct term. Display the poster.

# The Message

## 4. The Old Covenant (8 minutes)

a) Have the students read aloud or silently the first two paragraphs.

Discuss: *Did Pharaoh want to free the Israelites? Why not?* (They were the slaves, the workers, for the Egyptians.) *Why do you think the Israelites wanted to be free?* (They wanted to work and act their own way.)

b) Read the next two paragraphs aloud or silently.

Discuss: *Why do you think the Israelites wanted to follow God's way?* (They were so happy that they were free, and they wanted to thank God.) *What did God promise them in return for accepting His Law and the Ten Commandments?* (He would be with them always.)

### Supplementary Activity:

(Activity 1 on the back of the unit page) Write the question for this lesson on the board or on a poster board: *What do we promise to do in the New Covenant?* Write the following answers after you read them in the text:

1. To believe in Jesus Christ and to live as Jesus taught.
2. To follow the New Commandment: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so also you should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(John 13:34-35)

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## Called to the New Covenant

What do we promise to do in the New Covenant?



**The Old Covenant**  
In the Old Testament we read about many people who were called by God. Some people were called to speak directly on behalf of God with a special message for the people. We call these people prophets. Isaiah was one of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah.

Also, the Old Testament tells us about the way people lived before Jesus was born. In one story we read about the Hebrew people who were slaves in Egypt. They called out to God to save them. God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery, and Moses said "Yes" to God's call. First, Moses had to ask

the Pharaoh many times to free the people. Pharaoh finally agreed.

With the freed Israelites, God formed a covenant, an agreement. God promised to take care of His people, and they accepted God's Law and the Ten Commandments as a sign of the covenant.

Whenever we read this story about Moses, we hear how happy the people were to accept God's covenant. Why do you think they wanted to follow God's way? What did God promise them in return for accepting His Law and the Ten Commandments?

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### Background Reading:

(The Loving Relationship)

"The exodus is the model for all of God's relationships to His people. In it we encounter a God who takes the initiative in loving us and calling us to His friendship. As the Lord passed before him, Moses was moved to cry out, 'The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity, continuing in his kindness for a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness and crime and sin' (Ex 34:6-7). In later years the prophets would never forget how God deals with the human race: He remains faithful even though His people sin" (LLI 33).

#### 4. The Old Covenant

(continued)

c) Ask the students to think of a time they made an agreement with someone. Ask them to remember if they were able to keep the agreement that they made. Remind them that because we are human, sometimes we keep our promises and sometimes we do not.

d) Read the first two paragraphs. Ask: Did the Israelites keep their promise? (No) What is a savior? (A leader who saves his people) From what did the Israelites want to be saved? (Their problems on earth—You may wish to mention that Israel was occupied by troops of the Roman Empire.)

#### Background Reading: (The Role of the Prophets)

"A second group of texts [of the Bible] circulated as scrolls bearing the names of individuals: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc. The prophets, whose vocation was to be God's spokesmen at key moments in Israel's journey, preached forcefully about the present and the future. In one sense, they functioned as social critics, pointing out the injustices, the hypocrisy and the abuses in Israelite society and reminded the people and their elders of the moral obligations to God and to each other which the covenant imposed. The message of the prophets often took on concrete political dimensions" (OTB 4).

#### 5. The New Covenant

(4 minutes)

a) Before we begin, look at the scriptural passage on this page. From where was this passage taken? (The Gospel of John, chapter 3, verse 16)

b) Read the paragraphs aloud. Reread the Scripture and ask: Why did God send His Son to us, according to the Gospel (hint: "that whoever...")? What do we call this new agreement? (The New Covenant) Stress: When we know that God is with us, we will never feel alone. What are we promised in the New Covenant? (To believe in Jesus Christ and to live as Jesus taught us to live)

#### 6. Let us remember that...

(2 minutes)

Invite the students to read the sidebar on page 3 and identify any prophets they remember by name. (Elias, Isaiah, Jeremiah)

#### Supplementary Activity:

(Activity 2 on the back of the unit page) Have the students make note cards to be used for review.

But the Israelites could not keep this covenant on their own. They could not live the way God asked because they tried to live without God's help. The Israelites were not living as they had promised.

God knew His people needed someone to show them how to live as God's people. God sent His Son Jesus to be their Savior. The Israelites were waiting for a savior to help them, but they thought their savior would save them from their problems on earth.

**The New Covenant**  
God had another plan for His people. He sent them a Savior who would do much more for the people than they ever thought possible. God's Son Jesus gained for all people eternal life united to God forever.

In the New Testament we read:

"Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life."  
(John 3:16)

We call this new agreement with God the New Covenant. God promises to be with us always, and we promise to believe in Jesus Christ and to live as Jesus taught us to live.

**Let us remember that . . .**  
A **prophet** is someone filled with a special gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling him to speak directly on behalf of God with a special message for the people. There were many prophets in the Old Testament times who tried to call the people back to God when they strayed away, and they also prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah.

Prophets often tried to show by the way they lived as well as by what they said that God's way was important. In this they resembled monks and nuns whose way of life tries to say that they are centered on God.

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## 7. The New Commandment (3 minutes)

**a)** Read the paragraphs aloud. Reread the Scripture as a group; then ask: *Why did Jesus give us the New Commandment?* (To tell us how we are to love) *Identify some ways we show we are following the New Commandment. What does the New Covenant ask us to promise?* (To believe in Christ and to live as He taught us to live.)

### Supplementary Activity:

*Materials: Construction paper, markers, glue, sparkles*

Have the students write the New Commandment on construction paper and decorate the paper with sparkles. Place the posters around the room.

## 8. Let us remember that... (3 minutes)

**a)** Ask the students to think of a word they use to describe themselves. (Student, friend—help them by describing yourself as teacher, member of your church) Remind the students that words tell us what we are thinking about ourselves and what other people think about us.

**b)** Look at the sidebar and ask: *What are the three words in bold print?* (Messiah, Christ, and Anointed One) Tell them to listen closely as they read aloud or silently to learn what these words tell them about Jesus.

**c)** Complete the reading and ask: *Why was Jesus called the Messiah?* (He was the Savior for whom the Israelites were waiting.) *Why was Jesus called the Anointed One?* (He was filled to the fullest with the Holy Spirit.) *Why should we be called "another Christ"?* (We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit just as Christ was.) *If we started thinking about ourselves as "another Christ," another anointed One, how would we act?* (The way Jesus acts.)

### Supplementary Activity:

(Activity 2 on the back of the unit page) Have the students make note cards to be used for review.



**The New Commandment**  
In the Gospels we read stories about the way Jesus treated others. Jesus also told stories or parables to teach us how we are to live as members of God's family. Most importantly, He gave us a New Commandment to follow as people of the New Covenant:

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so also you should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."  
(John 13:34-35)

Jesus tells us that God asks us to love everyone. We are to live our life in a way that shows our love for God and for each other.

**Let us remember that . . .**  
The Hebrew word *Messiah* means the "Anointed One." It was the title they gave to the Savior whose coming they awaited for many centuries. The early followers of Jesus realized that He was the expected Savior, and so they called Him the Messiah, or in Greek, Christ.

The title *Christ* is a Greek word which is a translation of the Old Testament Hebrew word *Messiah*. Both words mean "the anointed one." Jesus is called the **Anointed One** because He was filled to the fullest with the Holy Spirit, anointed, as it were, with His grace and power.

When a Christian has been anointed in the Mystery of Chrismation and thus receives the Holy Spirit, he is said to be—according to the idea of some Church Fathers—"another Christ," another anointed One.

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## Background Reading:

(The Unity between God and Man)

"[God] overlooks the brokenness in us because we are joined to Christ. It is as if Jesus' holiness was now our own, and we are treated in God's eyes as if we were Christ. In God's eyes all of us who have been baptized into Christ have truly put on Christ. We become God's adopted children, and our lineage is changed as by the stroke of a pen. We are not simply Christ's followers, but co-heirs with Him of the fullness of life.

"This could only be possible because Christ is both truly God and truly man. Because of His divinity He is complete in union with the Father and extends the energy of God to us. Because He shares our humanity fully, He is by nature one with us as well. He is the meeting place of God and man" (WEF 37).

# Application

## 9. Heroes of Eastern Christianity (Saint John Chrysostom) (10 minutes)

Read and summarize the first two paragraphs in the story of Saint John; then read the third paragraph aloud together. Ask the following: *Do you think Saint John*

*was wise to criticize the rich and important? Do you think he was living the New Commandment?* [Note that doing the right thing isn't always easy or popular.]

Complete the reading on this page and have the students write their answers for the "What do you think?" section. [Help them by suggesting talents such as being able to play sports and/or being a good student.]

## Background Information (St. John Chrysostom)

If we look at the panoply of saints in the Menaion, each of us will find several individuals who had the same vocation, life situation, personality (with its strong and weak points), challenges or difficulties as we do. We can see how they dealt with similar situations in their lives: better yet, how they saw such situations, the perspective in which they viewed them, the dynamics involved, and their response. This can help us in living out our own particular life situation. We see that we are not alone in this, and that brothers and sisters before us dealt with similar issues successfully in Christ using the same Scriptures, Mysteries and graces that we have been given.

"Finally, the saints' love for the whole Church, and for all creation, transcends their early life. Now in glory the saints join their prayers to Christ's unceasing intercession for us. The history of the Church also recounts numberless instances of the saints' intervention on our behalf in response to prayer or the veneration of their icons and relics (LLIII 94-95).

### Optional Activity 1 (Life of Saint John Chrysostom)

*Materials:* White paper, construction paper, glue, scissors, copy of the icon

Have the students write a summary about the life of Saint John Chrysostom. Paste a copy of his icon on a sheet of construction paper, and under it paste the summary. Display this page in the classroom or on a church bulletin board. Also, the page can be laminated and placed in a notebook or folder that can be called *Our Book of Christian Heroes*.

### Optional Activity 2 (Your Questions)

Have the students work in groups as they answer the following questions:

- *What questions would you have asked Saint John if you could have talked to him when he was alive?*
- *What do you think he would have answered?*

Let the students share their answers with the entire class.

**Heroes of Eastern Christianity**

**Saint John Chrysostom**  
The best way to learn to share is to look to people who show us how. Saint John Chrysostom was convinced that Christians must share the love they have received. Saint John lived in Antioch in the fourth century. He was ordained a deacon there in 341 and a priest in 346. For twelve years John preached in the cathedral at Antioch every Saturday and Sunday and sometimes every day. He was using the talent he had received to share the Good News.

People came to large crowds to hear him. They were so impressed by his preaching that they often applauded him right in the cathedral. They so loved listening to him that they nicknamed him Chrysostom, which means golden-mouthed. He became so well known that when the Archbishop of Constantinople died in 397, John was chosen to succeed him.

In Constantinople John urged people to share what they had to help the poor. He continually criticized the selfishness of some rich people who would not help to relieve their misery. John said, "You are rich—if you are nothing against that. You are selfish—if you are rich with that. The process and enjoy what is rightly yours—and that is right. But you must others' goods—if you are indifferent to that. If you want to share me to do that?" I would be ready, if I could change your hearts." This man has more in common with some important people but also made him loved by others.

In 403 a group of John's opponents brought false charges against him and had him removed as bishop. He was sent into exile but was allowed to return after just a few days because his supporters protested so much. This movement did not stop Saint John from teaching others to follow the Gospel.

The next year he was exiled again for criticizing the Emperor for his luxurious life and for his disrespect for the Church, suffering from hardships and loneliness, John died to exile in 407, at the age of 54.

Years later people realized that Saint John was right: to follow Christ we must be ready to care for others selfishly, as Christ has cared for us. John's body was brought back to Constantinople with honor and he was declared a saint. His celebration has been day on November 13.

**What do you think?**

1. Just as Saint John was given the talent to be a great speaker, you also have been given talents. List two of your talents.

2. Now choose one of them and describe how you might share this talent with someone else.

## 10. Action Plan (10 minutes)

Use this page to help the students learn to think about how to live out the New Commandment. Have the students begin this page in class and complete it at home or have them work together in groups in class. Remind the students that they are to think about something they can try to do every day at home.

Before they begin writing, ask the following: What is the most difficult part of serving others? *What is the easiest part of serving others? Do you expect people to thank you when you do serve them? Do you thank other people when they serve you?*

## 11. Summary (5 minutes)

Forming two teams, use the "Jeopardy!" or another popular quiz program format to summarize the points of the lesson. Use questions such as the following:

- The way God dealt with the Israelites. (What is the Old Covenant?)
- People who tried to call the Israelites back to God. (Who are the prophets?)
- Christ, Messiah, Savior (What are three titles for Christ?)
- The way God deals with us through Jesus Christ (What is the New Covenant?)
- A bishop who criticized the Christians who would not help the poor (Who is Saint John Chrysostom?)

## 12. Closing Prayer

(3 Minutes)  
(Prayer page at the end of lesson)

Invite the students to pray the Sessional Hymn of Saint John Chrysostom. Before praying, remain silent for a short time and thank God for Saint John Chrysostom.

### Action Plan

#### *The New Commandment*

Have you ever heard the following: "Actions speak louder than words"? Let's think of some actions that say we are following Jesus by showing our love for God and for each other. Use the letters to begin a phrase or a sentence that identifies one way you can show you are following the New Commandment. For example, the first sentence could be ...

Learn to forgive people who are not nice to me.

O (Only speak kind words.)

V (Volunteer to help my parents.)

E (Enjoy being with my family.)

O (On Sunday go to church)

N (Never hurt anyone.)

E (Everyday Remember to Pray)

A (Always offer to help someone who drops his or her books.)

N (Notice the many ways my parents take care of me.)

O (Often remember to thank my parents and teachers for helping me.)

T (Talk to my parents with respect.)

H (Help my mom and dad when they ask for help-- don't make them wait.)

E (Even when I do not feel like it, be nice to other people.)

R (Remember to love everyone the Jesus has taught us to love.)

## Background Reading

(Our Mission as Christians)

"True spiritual maturity brings us to serve as Christ served, becoming true servants. The object of our service is the whole of creation, which Christ came to save, transfigure and unite to His Father. The world is not outside our realm or concern as Christians. We are not saved from the world, but through and in it. We have an authentic mission to the whole world: to call it to be transformed by Christ through the power of the Spirit; to call it to become the Sacrament it was created to be and to call all in it to transfiguring communion. If this is to happen, however, it will not be because we followed a strategy but because the love of God overflows from our hearts" (LLIII 90).

# God's Covenants with His People

Draw a line from the word or phrase to the covenant to which it belongs.

Moses

Jesus Christ

The Ten Commandments

The Beatitudes

Exodus

**Old Covenant**

**New Covenant**

The Israelites

All People

Isaiah

New Commandment

Mount Sinai

Bethlehem



**Sessional Hymn**

**of Saint John Chrysostom**

Having learned the wisdom which comes from on high, and having received the grace of speaking well from God, you shone like gold in the furnace before all; you preached the unity of the Holy Trinity, and the arrows of your words pierced the vice of greediness. In your zeal you reprimanded the Empress for this trait, and you were most unjustly exiled from your flock. O blessed John Chrysostom, intercede before Christ our God that He grant remission of sins to those who wholeheartedly celebrate your sacred memory.

(Sessional Hymn from Matins, Nov. 13)

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