

Objectives

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

- state that the Mystery of Holy Unction (Anointing) works in a spiritual way to strengthen and help the sick.
- list the ways the Holy Spirit brings healing to the sick: through the saints, through some people, through miraculous icons and relics.
- identify miraculous healings as one way God helps us know He is in our midst.

For the Catechist

The Gospels record that Jesus conducted a widespread healing ministry. But the healing of our Lord was aimed first of all to healing from sin, which is the cause of all miseries, bodily infirmities, and death. Jesus' first concern was to heal humanity from sin and to restore to it its first integrity lost through disobedience.

Jesus extends this healing ministry to His Church. The Church associates a rite (Mystery of Holy Unction or Anointing) with its prayers for healing, and the anointing with oil became a symbol of spiritual medicine. Even some Christians in every age of the Church have been especially gifted with a healing ministry. Another way the Lord grants healing is through miraculous icons or wonder-working relics.

Frequently we hear of people who pray for healing or are even convinced that it has occurred, only to find that no healing has taken place. Some become bitter against God or at least confused, wondering what they did wrong. But physical healing is not automatic or even an absolute as far as God is concerned. The people whom Jesus healed later became afflicted again and died. Even Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from death, was to die. When physical healing does occur, it is granted so that our faith can be strengthened and so that we can see God's hand moving in the world.

Materials Needed

Opening and Closing Prayers: Prayer in student book

Introduction: The following words written on separate sheets of paper: *colds, flu, measles, broken bones, cancer, asthma*; pens and pencils

The Message: New Testament, note cards, pens and pencils

Application: Pens and pencils, materials for projects

Icons and Pictures

Teaching Pics: Holy Unction (S20)

Connections

1. Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Have the students gather before the icon and stand (silently for a few seconds. Then make the sign of the cross. Ask the student to think of someone who is ill and to offer the following prayer for this person:

- Prayer from the Mystery of Holy Unction
(prayer in student book, page 103)

2. Review (*Monastics*) (2 minutes)

Use the review cards from the last lesson to define *nun*, *monk*, *monasteries*, and *hermit*. Ask: *How does the monastic lifestyle announce the Kingdom of God?* (Through prayer, simplicity, and service, the monastics show us how to live as God asks.)

3. Introduction (4 minutes)

Materials: Paper with different ailments written on them (In advance write the following names of sicknesses—one per paper: *colds*, *flu*, *measles*, *broken bones*, *cancer*, *asthma*.)

Give each student a sheet of paper with the name of an illness on it. Have them write one thing about the illness that they would not like. Pass the paper around until there are three answers as to what they do not like. Pass the paper to one more person. That person lists the people who can help with the illness. Have the students read the answers aloud.

Connect this activity to the idea that even though we do not like being sick, we know there is someone who tries to help us and always God is with us.

Notes for the lesson:

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

The Message

4. Sickness and Healing (4 minutes)

- a) Have the students read this page.
- b) For the Scripture reading, ask the students to take turns reading the verses.
- c) Ask: *What do we learn about Jesus through the healings? (He has the power to heal and forgive.)*

Supplementary Activity:

Write the question for this lesson on the board or on a poster board: *What are some ways people have been healed?* Write the following answers when you read them in the text:

1. Through prayer.
2. Through the Mystery of Holy Unction or Anointing.
3. Through the intercession of saints.
4. Through relics and icons.

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Those Who Have the Gift of Healing

What are some of the ways people have been healed?



Sickness and Healing
Some sicknesses are more serious than others. Although there are many remarkable things that doctors can do to comfort their patients, there are times when doctors do their best but cannot bring relief.

The Christian troubled by sickness turns to the Lord for strength and comfort. The Lord often gives the sick person the strength to remain in peace in spite of the illness. At times the Lord gives healing to those who call on Him in faith.

During Jesus' life on earth, He healed many people of different diseases. In this way He showed that God's power worked through Him. The people who saw such healings take place praised God for showing Himself in this way.

In one story in the Gospel of Mark 2:1-12, we hear about Jesus healing a paralytic man. Turn to that story to learn what Jesus was trying to show when He healed this man.

We Are God's People Grade 5 Unit 3: Many Gifts, One Giver 101

Background Reading:

(Christ, the Healer)

"Christ the Son of God who became the Son of Man healed not only souls but bodies too: 'The blind see, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the poor are hearing the Good News' (Matthew 11:15). He is light. The very presence of the kingdom of God is made manifest in the Person of Jesus Christ. He is life. In him we are 'renewed in the image of the Creator, and brought to know God' (Col. 13:10)." (FG 47).

5. The Medicine of the Holy Spirit

(6 minutes)

a) Have the students read this section. Tell them to write on the board or on a paper the Mystery about which they are learning. List everything they have learned about it by having students come up to write a fact. (This can be done as a group activity and have each group share their knowledge.)

b) Ask: *Have you ever prayed for someone who was ill? Let's take some time to be silent and think about anyone who we know is ill. Ask God to help them during this difficult time.*

Background Reading:

(Mystery of Anointing)

"In current Byzantine practice, there are two parts to the celebration of the mystery [Holy Anointing]. The first part is an abridgement of matins, much like a paraclisis or moleben service. It is followed by the blessing of oil (mixed with wine, in some traditions, after the example of the good Samaritan), then by seven readings, prayers and anointings (the remnant of the seven Liturgies), followed by the prayer of absolution during which the Gospel book is held over the head of the sick. This is often abridged to a single set of readings, depending on the sick person's condition" (ID 96).

6. Let's remember that... (4 minutes)

Divide the students into groups of three. Have one person from each learn the definition of one of the words. Then give them time to teach the other ones in their group the definition.

Supplementary Activity: Have the students make note cards for the words to be used to review the words in the section.



The Medicine of the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit brings healing in the Church through the Mystery of Holy Unction or Anointing. The priest anoints the person with blessed oil in the name of Jesus. He prays that God would give strength, healing, and encouragement and also prays for the forgiveness of sins. This "medicine" works in a spiritual way to give strength and help. The priest reads from the Gospel and touches the person being anointed with the Gospel Book to show that, in this Mystery, Christ is the One who is touching us.

Through this Mystery, our body may be given strength; we may be healed completely; or we may be started on the road to recovery. Often, our spirit is strengthened, and we feel less miserable. However we are helped, God has touched us in the Mystery.

The Holy Spirit also works to bring healing in other ways. To some in the Church He gives the gift of healing. They do not heal people by their own power or words; God hears their prayers and works through such healers.

The Holy Spirit also brings healing through the saints, God's faithful servants who are

Let us remember that . . .
Healing is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. By it, people are healed of their physical, emotional, and/or spiritual sicknesses through prayer and reverence for holy things.

This ministry takes several forms. The first is the Mystery of Holy Unction or Anointing, (the anointing with blessed oil by the priest in the name of the Church).

Holy Unction (Anointing) is the Mystery in which the Church prays for its sick members. The priest anoints the person with blessed oil and prays that he or she be given health, strength, and the forgiveness of sins.

Still others have found healing by praying before icons known for the gift of healing attributed to them. There are shrines all over the world where these healings have taken place. Often the relics of saints are connected with healing and people who venerate the relics and are touched with them have been restored to health.

Relics are the remains of holy persons, either parts of their bodies or of their clothing and possessions. Relics are honored and venerated just as icons are. Healings are often associated with relics of saints.

already in heaven. When we ask the saints to pray for us, God often hears their prayers and grants us healing. Prayers are often answered at the tombs of these saints, at certain shrines, or before certain icons or relics.

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7. Blessed are they...

(5 minutes)

Read this story about a person who was healed. Remind the students that there are many other wonderful stories about people who have been healed. This story helps us understand the Beatitude: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Read the story as a group or silently. Also, consider reading the story aloud as the students follow in their books—children are never too old to listen to a good story.

8. Prayers from the Mystery of Holy Unction

(2 minutes)

Before reading the prayers aloud, ask the students if they would like to mention the name of someone they know who is ill and in need of prayers. Start by mentioning someone that you know or say, "For everyone who is ill in our parish family."

Blessed are they...

"There's nothing more we can do."

The doctor's words broke the hearts of Father Emmanuel McCarthy, his wife Mary and their children. The specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital said that their 2-year-old daughter, Teresia Benedicta, was going to die.



In 1987 the flu had been going through the McCarthy family and the teenagers were taking Tylenol. Their baby sister watched and imitated them. Whenever one of them took a Tylenol, she did too. But Tylenol is not meant for babies, and after two days Benedicta was suffering from an overdose. Her liver was hopelessly damaged and she was dying.

The McCarthys had named their baby after Edith Stein (Sister Teresia Benedicta), who had died in a Nazi gas chamber in 1942. The family decided to pray to her for healing. Relatives and friends joined them in round-the-clock prayer.

Two days later, the doctors could only say, "This child has made a remarkable recovery." Benedicta had been healed! Several doctors testified that they could not explain the child's recovery. It was medically impossible.

Church officials investigated and, ten years later, confirmed that this was a true miracle. As a result Edith Stein was declared a saint and Benedicta, then in high school, attended the ceremony with her family as Father Emmanuel concelebrated with the pope. Their prayers had been heard. Their daughter was saved and Sister Teresia Benedicta was glorified as a saint.

From the Beatitudes

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

Prayers from the Mystery of Holy Unction

Troparion
O Christ, who are quick to help, speedily visit Your suffering servants freed from high. Deliver them from their infirmities and bitter pains, and raise them up again, so that they may praise and glorify You without ceasing.
Through the prayer of the Mother of God: O You, who alone are the Lover of Mankind.

Prayer
O good Lord and Lover of Mankind, through Your holy apostles You enabled us to heal the infirmities of Your people by oil and prayer. We ask You: sanctify us and heal Your ill servants (names). Raise them from their sick beds so that—lifted up by Your mighty hand—they may serve You with all thanksgiving, and that we may praise and glorify You as the Worker of great and marvelous deeds. For You are merciful and saving, O our God, and we give glory to You, to Your only-begotten Son and to Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now . . .

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Background Reading

(Anointing)

"It has long been a custom in the Greek or 'Southern' Byzantine Churches to offer this mystery to the whole community before Pascha. Today this mystery is generally served on Holy Thursday or the evening of Holy Wednesday. On that day we remember how Christ was anointed at Bethany by a woman who 'anticipated anointing my body for burial' (cf. Mk 14:3-9). In the Slavic Churches this service was only done in cathedrals and monasteries, perhaps due to the availability of seven priests in these major churches . . .

"The reception of Holy Unction for spiritual healing is, in a sense, the culmination of the Great Fast. For forty days we have asked for God's help to put away our old self. We complete this journey with anointing so that we may die with Christ and rise with Him at Pascha" (ID 99-100).

Application

11. Heroes of Eastern Christianity (15 minutes)

For this lesson, the student book has stories about two saints and the teacher's manual has stories about healings, relics and wonder-working icons. Photocopy the additional stories if you need them.

The information from these pages may be used for the "Action Plan" page. Also, the details may be used to create a presentation to be shown at the end of the class or during a final project that is part of Lesson 22.

First, have the students read one story. If there are enough students, have all the stories read by someone or by groups. The following are suggestions on ways to present the information:

1. Have the students present a summary of the details while another student displays the icon of the saint.
2. Have the students complete a biographical sketch of the saint and read that to the students.
3. Act out a short skit that shows one aspect of the saint's life.
4. Write a newspaper article that reports one story about the saint.
5. Write a television newscast story complete with details about the scenes and dialogue.
6. Have the students keep a journal of saints.

After they have read the information, let them write answers for the following in the journal (one student can write all the answers or it can be passed around the group for responses):

- For what do you think this saint would want to be remembered?
- What would you ask him or her if you had the chance? What do you think would be the answer?
- If you could join this saint for a few years, what part of his or her life would you pick? Why did you make that choice?

[Turn to page 222 for a worksheet that can be used for the journal.]

Optional Activities

Have the students read all the saints' information. Have them work in groups and write a script for a "Who Am I?" program. Present the program at the end of this lesson or the end of the unit.

or

List four facts about one saint and write them on a note card. Write the name of the saint on the other side. Complete cards for all the saints in this lesson. Collect these cards to be used as review for future lessons.

Heroes of Eastern Christianity

Saints Cosmas and Damian

Would you like to become a doctor? Some people do because they think doctors make lots of money. Would you still want to become a doctor—or anything else—if you did not get paid for it? Cosmas and Damian did just that! These two brothers were doctors in the third century. They practiced medicine without charging a fee. This is why they are called "Unmercenary."

These brothers were born in Syria and studied medicine in the city of Cyn. But the brothers did not take credit for the good they could do. They believed that their healing skill was really a gift from God. They felt they should not be paid for using God's fit to help God's people. They remembered what Jesus said to His disciples when He sent them to bring God's Word to the people. He told them not to worry about money. "Truly you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

Cosmas and Damian wanted their patients to know God's love for them. Many people in Syria were not Christian in their day, but the brothers led many people to Christ. They cared for the patients' souls as well as their bodies.

The Roman Emperor Diocletian reversed the persecution of Christians. The local prefect had Cosmas and Damian arrested and ordered them to deny Christ. The brothers remained firm in their faith. They were executed in the year 303.

Other sick people would pray to Cosmas and Damian for help and they received healing. The brothers were honored as saints and wonderworkers. Almost three hundred years after their death, the Christian Emperor Justinian prayed for their help and was healed of a dangerous illness. In gratitude the emperor built a church in their honor in Constantinople and restored the old city of Cyn as a way of thanking them for their aid.

We are like Cosmas and Damian in this. Like them, all our talents and skills are gifts from God. We can use these abilities to serve God and be an example to others. Perhaps someone will come to Christ because of the way we use the gifts we have received. These three fast days in July.

Konstantin
Healing restored the grace of healing.

Saint Sharbel the Wonderworker

God's gift of healing is given to the Church in many ways. Among them are saints who heal from their place in heaven, healing people who pray for themselves or for others. Such a saint is Sharbel.

Joseph Malabell was born in a small village in Lebanon in 1828. When he was twenty-three years old, Joseph left home and entered the Monastery of Saint Maron in another part of Lebanon. There he took the new name of Sharbel. He was ordained a priest eight years later and lived in the monastery for twenty-three years. But still he felt called to a life of deeper union with God.

In 1871 Father Sharbel was allowed to leave the monastery and live as a hermit. His way of life became even more strict. He ate only once a day, and then ate only the simplest raw vegetables and a small glass of water. He slept on a straw mat and used a log for a pillow. He lived this life for another twenty-two years, dying in 1898. He was buried simply, without even a coffin, as was the custom of such monks.

But Sharbel's work was just beginning. Immediately, people began to report healings through prayer to him. Three months after his death his body was dug up from the grave and found to be in perfect condition, just as it was at the hour of his death. It has stayed soft and warm as a living body ever since. It even appears to be gasping and bleeding. Every week a monk has to change the restraints on the body because they become soaked with sweat and blood.

Thousands of people have visited Sharbel's hermitage and tried to pray and honor the holy monk. In 1970 one of these visitors, the Monk

Ellen Noller, took a photo of five monks standing by the hermitage. When the film was developed, a sixth person could be seen in the photo: an old, white-haired monk. Some monks who remembered Father Sharbel realized that it was his ghost—a sign that Sharbel was truly blessed.

Hundreds of people who have visited the shrine have been healed of sicknesses. One of them was the nun Mary Anny who had been ill for fourteen years. For ten years she had been unable to walk without help. In 1970 she was taken to Sharbel's tomb. She said, "As soon as my hand touched the stone of the tomb, I felt a current running through my spine." She saw what seemed to be drops of water coming from the stone. She dipped her handkerchief in them and touched the painful parts of her body with it. "What happened?" she says, "I do not know. What I am certain of is that I rose to my feet and walked alone—in the first time in ten years."

Later she checked the position to pray at the saint's hermitage. Doctors examined her and said, "The case of Sister Mary Anny is the most dramatic case and with such astounding results. Cases are explained except through a miracle beyond human knowledge and power."

The same year, Maroun Azzouzi, a young Lebanese soldier, was badly wounded in battle. His left leg was completely crushed. Doctors planned to amputate the leg to save his life. Before he would agree to the operation, Maroun asked to be taken to Sharbel's tomb. He passed there for three days. Then, feeling that God had touched him, he got up by himself and walked on the crushed leg. He even picked up one of the soldiers who had come with him, showing what new strength he had received! Though Sharbel's hermitage, the leg had been made whole again.

Healings still take place at Saint Sharbel's tomb—a sign that God's gift of healing still exists in His Church.

9. Action Plan

(10 minutes)

Materials: Pens, markers, paint and brushes, poster board, construction paper, and any other materials that the students have told you that they need. (Ask parents to help supply materials you cannot get.)

For this lesson, the students are finishing their projects and working on the words they will say. Encourage them to say everything in their own words—not the exact words from the articles. This might avoid reports being read in front of the class. Also, it requires them to learn more about the saint—rather than just read about him or her.

10. Summary

(5 minutes)

Have the students write the word *HEALING* on the board. Tell them to list all the ways we can be healed: spiritually, physically, and mentally. Ask each group to write a short prayer for healing.

11. Closing Prayer

(2 minutes)

Troparion from the Mystery of Holy Unction (Anointing) (in student books, page 103) and/or the healing prayers the students wrote during the summary section of this lesson.

Action Plan

Heroes of Eastern Christianity

Read one story about those who have the gift of healing, and complete the outline on this page. As you write the details about these courageous Christians, think about their choices that show us how to live our life for Jesus Christ.

_____, Wonderworker

A. He lived in the _____ century.

B. Three important facts about his life:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. What part of his life surprised you the most? _____

D. How does a miraculous healing show us that God is with His people? _____

E. This wonderworker is best known for _____

Now continue to work on the final project that will be presented in Lesson 22. Start to write the words you are going to say during your presentation. Remember—your project will introduce the heroes of the Church to many people!

The following are some suggestions to help your project:

1. To make a mosaic, cut-up colored construction paper to fill in the outline
2. To make a stained glass window, use colored cellophane held together with electrical tape in a cardboard outline
3. For a banner use contrasting scraps of material to make the design; thin wire from a craft store can be formed into different shapes.
4. Make a montage by using an icon print placed onto poster board and add various items associated with the person's ministry, countries, or other activities.

Healing Relics of Saint Seraphim

After a visit to the relics of Saint Seraphim in 1926, where he personally witnessed two healings, Dr. Ivan Andreyev tells of meeting two women on the road, a young nun and her companion, a nurse. The nurse often sat with others in a cart, but the nun always walked and did not sit down once. The local custom was that pilgrims would walk the 60 kms. (c. 35 miles) to Sarov, not that they would walk back.

The nurse, Dr. Andreyev writes, "explained to me that her relative, the young nun Veronica of the Smolensk Convent, was ill with tuberculosis in its last stage. The doctors had given her two to three weeks to live. At that time she pleaded that she be given the schema (sign of the final degree of monasticism) and then be carried to the relics of Saint Seraphim. She was brought barely alive, in a separate compartment of the train and then on a cart to Sarov. "Upon venerating the relics of Saint Seraphim, Mother Veronica felt herself healed and said, 'Forgive me, Saint Seraphim, that I could not come to you on foot and wear out my best shoes, but to make up for it, I will not ride the 70 kilometers back to Arzamas, but will walk— and there she was, walking."

("Journey to Sarov and Diviyev")

Several years later Dr. Andreyev learned that Mother Veronica's story became widely known and she was still alive.

Wonder-working Icons

Healings are sometimes connected to certain miraculous icons, both in churches and homes. One such icon is in the Church of the Transfiguration in the Palestinian city of Ramallah. This icon began to emit oil in 1998, and many people came to pray before it. A number received healings of various diseases.

The priest, Father Meletios Khoury, who holds a doctor of psychology degree from the University of Athens, has seen many miracles take place before this icon. He tells the story of a Greek woman with skin cancer who had come to the Haddasah Hospital in Jerusalem to receive treatment in September, 1998. The doctors encouraged her to go back home, because her cancer had far progressed. Nothing could be done to help her. She went to the Holy Sepulchre to venerate the tomb of Christ. During the long wait, she heard two women talking about going to see the miraculous icon in Ramallah. She asked to go with them and venerate this icon. When she arrived at the Ramallah church and witnessed the icon crying and filled with oil, she begged Father Meletios to anoint her with this oil. The nun in the convent helped the Greek woman anoint all of her body with the oil. One week later the same woman returned with two Jewish doctors from the Haddasah hospital claiming her cancer had completely disappeared and she had been cured.

Asked if there was one miracle that stands out in his mind, Father Meletios mentioned a Muslim woman who arrived at the church in June, 1998, with her husband, after hearing the icon is a miraculous one. The Muslim woman could not see from one eye because her black pupil was larger than her other normal pupil. Father Meletios remained in the office while Father Nicola received this woman who said she believed in the Virgin Mary and her crucified son Christ and wanted oil to be put on her eye. Hearing this confession, Father Nicola let her venerate the icon and gave her the oil. It took the woman about two minutes to exit the church and reach the front entrance where her husband was waiting. Father Meletios heard her screaming and yelling, "I can see, I can see... I am well." Her husband was very upset and did not believe this was a miracle, but instead was angry about what type of magic the priest did. The woman answered her husband by saying that whatever you want to believe, believe, the important thing is that I can see and I am well. Father Meletios thought this was an amazing miracle because it involved a Muslim woman.