

# 5—We Are Called to Fulfill God's Plan

## *Objectives*

By the end of this lesson students will be able to ...

- state that we are called to grow and mature in the spiritual life.
- understand that the gift of the Holy Spirit and our cooperation makes it possible to grow in holiness.
- state that our journey towards God ultimately leads to eternal life.

## *For the Catechist*

Adolescents are uncomfortable with growth and change. Because of this they need to realize that their growth process is normal, good and leading towards a goal—physical and emotional maturity. Many school-based counseling and "life development" programs explain their growth in this way. But Christians are called to a level of growth beyond that. Christians are called to spiritual maturity, becoming holy and spending eternity with God.

While Lesson Four emphasized that creation is not finished, this lesson focuses on the growing process of the individual. The students learned that all creation is good and destined for perfection according to God's plan. And we humans have been called to grow in our image and likeness to God throughout our lifetime. That means we need to continue growing in our knowledge and love of God even after we have completed our spiritual education classes offered throughout our school years. We need to work with God our entire lifetime as we grow in our image and likeness of Him. This lifetime process that is called theosis helps us become sharers in God's divine nature. God calls all of us to become what He had planned for us—to become God-like!

Help the students realize that all of us are involved in God's plan for Creation. We are co-creators with God! This role was given to us when God gave humans dominion over all things. Now we need to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to develop and take care of the world. This last lesson in Unit 1 teaches that we humans, the highpoint of God's creation, are called to bring Creation to its fulfillment.

## *Materials Needed*

*Opening Prayer:* Vespers folder

*Review:* Wallboard or easel pad with chalk or markers.

*Guided Reading:* student text, drawing paper or poster board, markers

*Ancient Wisdom:* pens or pencils

*Vespers:* Folders, prayer sheets, tape or glue, scissors

*Activity A:* "Journal," Journal folders

*Activity B:* Unit Review, game show props

*Closing Prayer:* Vespers folder

## **1. Opening Prayer**

- Ask the students to look at the icon of the Theotokos on page 25 of the student text.
- Gather in front of the icon corner. Light the candle and give the students the prayer sheet.
- Chant or recite the hymn to the Theotokos.

## 2. Review

Ask the students to recall the main points of last week's lesson:

- God is not finished creating.
- Creation awaits its perfection in Christ Who is the beginning and the end.
- From the beginning God willed humans to have dominion over His Creation.
- To "have dominion" means to be stewards or caretakers of God's Creation.

### **Encourage any further discussion of last week's session.**

If you used Activity A (Stewards of Creation) last week, ask the students to share how they practiced being a steward of creation in the past week. Write their responses on the wallboard or easel pad. When the discussion is finished, ask the students to choose another "act of stewardship" from this list and adopt it as their own for the coming week.

## 3. Introduction and Guided Reading (page 22)

- Make four columns on the wallboard or easel pad entitled "Child—Positive," "Child—Negative," "Teenager—Positive," and "Teenager—Negative."
- Have the students brainstorm positive and negative characteristics of each, e.g. Child (**Negative**: self-centered, insists on having her way, has temper tantrums and **Positive**: happy, playful, carefree, etc.); Teenager (**Negative**: self-centered, jealous, insecure, self-conscious and **Positive**: becoming more responsible, can help younger siblings/children, becoming more mature, etc.)
- Beside each negative characteristic, ask for a corresponding positive characteristic (e.g. "self-centered/serving others" or "insist on having one's way/yielding to another," etc.)
- Ask for a volunteer to read the paragraphs on page 22 of their text to summarize the discussion. Encourage the students to give examples that prove the last sentence: "Each person with whom you interact is affected by the way you treat them." [Possibilities for discussion: bullying, gossiping, not including other people in your group]

## 4. Guided Reading (page 23—Sharers in the Nature of God)

- Divide the group in two. Have one group read the first paragraph of the section "Sharers in the Nature of God" and the second group read the second paragraph.
- Have the groups write on the board or pad a summary of their paragraph.
- Have the groups orally summarize their reading and "teach" the meaning.

### **Guided Reading (page 23—Working with God)**

- Ask the students how much time they spend in church each week? Do they think God is working in their lives when they are not in church? How can they relate to God always?
- Tell the students that the next section, "Working with God," discusses ways for relating to God daily. Ask the students to read this section aloud.
- Ask the students to share when and how they pray. Encourage them to pray often.

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## **Background Reading (Living as the Image and Likeness of God)**

"The perfect person does not only try to avoid evil. Nor does he do good for fear of punishment, still less in order to qualify for the hope of a promised reward. The perfect person does good through love. His actions are not motivated by desire for personal benefit, so he does not have personal advantage as his aim. But as soon as he has recognized the beauty of doing good, he does it with all his energies and in all that he does. He is not interested in fame or a good reputation, or a human or divine reward. The rule of life for a perfect person is to be the image and likeness of God" (Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellaneous Studies* 4,22, 135ff).

## 5. Ancient Wisdom for Today

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the quote on this page. Have the students write their answers and then share them with the class.

[Suggestions: God wants us to see Him and have everlasting life; "to see God" means to be in His presence always; I can continue coming to class, read the Bible, read religious books; and my family can read Scripture together, go to church often, and pray together.]

## 6. Icon Study

- Read the information about the Theotokos on page 25 of the student text.  
Emphasize the following points:
  - Angels are described in Scripture as worshipping God, the Lord of hosts. Read the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-5).
  - This icon is modeled on that scene but instead of the inaccessible God we find Jesus, the incarnate God, and His human mother.
  - This is the monographer's way of saying that "God became man" (in Jesus) "so that man (in Mary and in us) might become god."
- Encourage the students to answer the question at the bottom of the page.

## 7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about Vespers aloud.
- Distribute the Vespers folder and the section of the Psalm verses 24-35 (see page 51 in this instructional manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this final section of the Psalm on the next page or on the back of page 2—then the entire Psalm will be on one page only.

## 8. Activity A: My Personal Journal

Distribute Worksheet A along with pens or pencils. Have the students complete the worksheet in silence (or you can play religious music if available) and place it in their folder. Plan accordingly, but they should need no more than 5 minutes to complete the journal entry.

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## Background Reading (Our Unity in the Church)

"The holy Church includes many people: men, women and children without number. They are all quite different from one another in birth, in size, in nationality and language, in style of living and age, in trades and opinions, in clothes and customs, in knowledge and rank, in welfare and in appearance. They are, nonetheless, all of them in the selfsame Church. Thanks to her, they are all reborn, newly created in the Spirit. The Church grants to all of them without distinction the grace of belonging to Christ and of taking his name by calling themselves Christians. Faith, moreover, puts us in a position which is extremely simple and incapable of separation in such a way that the differences between us seem not to exist, because everything is gathered together into the Church and reconciled in her. No one lives alone any more, no one is separated from the others, but all are mutually joined together as brothers and sisters in the simple and indivisible power of faith" (St. Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia* 1).

## **9. Activity B: Unit Review**

- Divide the class into two teams based on age, height or alphabetical order.
- Using the format of a popular game show, e.g. Jeopardy!, quiz the teams using the questions on the review worksheet. Use props (e.g. buzzers) and posters to simulate your "game show."

## **10. Summary**

Ask the students what the main idea of today's lesson is. Refer back to the objectives that you might have listed on the board or read at the beginning of class. Ask the students if they have any further comments or questions about what you discussed today.

## **11. Closing Prayer**

- Gather the students at the icon corner.
- Pray the words of the Psalm that are in their Vespers booklet.
- Encourage the students to continue praying the prayers they learned last week. Tell them that many people have memorized Psalms, and maybe some of them might want to memorize Psalm 103 (104).

**[Note: Although memorization is not required often in today's world, you might consider challenging your students to memorize one of the Psalms that are part of Vespers. Possibly you can offer a reward to anyone who memorizes a Psalm.]**

## Psalm 103 (104)

How varied are your works, Lord!  
In wisdom you have wrought them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
Look at the sea, great and wide!  
It teems with countless beings,  
living things both large and small.  
Here ships ply their course;  
here Leviathan, your creature, plays.

All of these look to you  
to give them food in due time.  
When you give to them, they gather;  
when you open your hand, they are well filled.  
When you hide your face, they are lost.  
When you take away their breath, they perish  
and return to the dust from which they came.  
When you send forth your breath, they are created,  
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;  
may the Lord be glad in these works!  
If God glares at the earth, it trembles;  
if God touches the mountains, they smoke!

I will sing to the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God while I live.  
May my theme be pleasing to God;  
I will rejoice in the Lord.  
May sinners vanish from the earth,  
and the wicked be no more.  
Bless the Lord, my soul! Hallelujah!

## MY PERSONAL JOURNAL

In today's lesson we learned that growth and change are a natural part of human life. Take a few moments to think about your behavior as you answer the following questions:

When I cannot accomplish what I set out to do, I usually:

- a. Become moody.
- b. Find someone else to blame.
- c. Become frustrated and irritable.
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope your response will be five years from now?

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When I achieve something great I usually:

- a. Brag about it to everyone.
- b. Deny that I did such a thing.
- c. Thank those who helped me achieve.
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope your response will be five years from now?

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When asked to do something undesirable I usually:

- a. Sneak out and hide somewhere.
- b. Do the job, but grumble and complain.
- c. Do the job cheerfully.
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope your response will be five years from now?

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## Unit Review

### *Lesson 1:*

- 1) According to the Bible, why did God make all things? (*"For he fashioned all things that they might have being" Wisdom 1:14; God made all things to live.*)
- 2) What does the first chapter of Genesis tell us about created things? (*They are good. They are of God.*)
- 3) What is a "worldview"? (*The way a person looks at life*)

### *Lesson 2:*

- 4) How does Genesis tell us that God created everything? (*From nothing, by His Word*)
- 5) What can science tell us about creation? (*The "what" of our universe.*)
- 6) What can Scripture tell us about creation? (*The "why" of our universe—the reason we were created.*)

### *Lesson 3:*

- 7) What does it mean to be "in God's image"? (*We can be creative and caring.*) ^^
- 8) What does it mean to restore God's likeness in us? (*To grow more God-like in our thoughts and actions.*)

### *Lesson 4:*

- 9) God gave humans dominion over Creation? What does that mean? (*Dominion means to take care of God's Creation.*)
- 10) What is a steward of Creation? (*Someone who cares for nature and all life.*)

### *Lesson 5:*

- 11) What is spiritual maturity? (*Growing in our image and likeness of God*)
- 12) What do we do when we pray? (*We think, listen, and talk to God.*)
- 13) What does it mean to be a co-creator with God? (*We work with God to bring all of Creation to fulfillment.*)
- 14) What is the ultimate goal of our journey through life? (*Eternal life with God, being God-like, being in the presence of God.*)