

7—It Is So from the Beginning

Objectives

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

- state that sin and its effects have been present to humans from the beginning.
- define sin as the broken or fallen condition caused by our separation from God.
- recognize temptation as something that looks good but separates us from God.
- retell the story of the fall of Adam and Eve.

For the Catechist

Lessons 7 and 8 work together to help the student understand the effect of the fall of Adam and Eve. At the beginning of this lesson, students will read Genesis 3 to hear the story about the fall of Adam and Eve. The details of the Genesis story clearly could not have been passed down from the original participants, tens of thousands of years ago. One possibility is that the details of the story were directly revealed to the Jewish people by God. Another possibility is that the narrative is a story much like the parables of Jesus. These stories were to teach the truths about man and sin. While we are not certain about the historical character of the Genesis account, we are certain that man has fallen from his original harmonious relationship with God.

Each of us is affected by this sin of Adam and Eve, our ancestral sin. In fact, all sins and weaknesses of others affect us. Our parents, families, teachers and other associates have passed on to us the effects of their own sins and weaknesses. In return, we communicate to others the effects of our sins. During the funeral service of our Church, we are reminded of this distortion that began with Adam and Eve when we sing, "there is no man who will live and not sin."

Pre-adolescents and early adolescents are not always able to see the truth in fiction and fantasy. That means they may not be able to appreciate the fact that something can be true and non-historical at the same time. In this session help the students understand that the story of the fall of Adam and Eve embodies a truth about choices and the result of those choices. In this story we hear how our first parents chose to disobey God, and we learn about the result—the separation of man from God—that has been passed down through all generations.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Vespers folder—"O Heavenly King... and Holy God"

Introduction: Easel or wall pad, markers

Guided Reading: student text, pens, pencils, white-lined paper for news stories

Uncreation: pens or pencils [Supplemental: posterboard, magazines, markers, glue, scissors]

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

Activity A: "Journal," and Journal folders and pens or pencils

Closing Prayer: Vespers folder—"O most holy Trinity and Our Father."

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather around the The Holy Trinity icon.
- Pray "O Heavenly King and Holy God."

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- the universe was created out of God's goodness and love.
- the disorder in the world that results from our not living up to our role as "stewards of creation."
- in our own hearts we are torn between doing what we know is right and our impulse to do wrong.

3. Introduction

- Ask the students if anyone can retell the story about the fall of Adam and Eve. If most raise their hands, ask one at a time to state one sentence and then go to the next person. Try to have everyone contribute a detail.
- Then ask if anyone ever read the story from the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament, and tell them by the end of today's class they will have read the whole story.

4. Guided Reading, Page 33

- Have the students take turns reading the first page and the first column up to "Change in Attitude" of the second page of the lesson.

Guided Reading, Page 34, "Change in Attitude"

- Read only the first paragraph in this section: "Change in Attitude."
- Announce the reading of Genesis 3, but first tell the students to picture the scenes and think about how this story would be told on the news, on Facebook, on Twitter, or in the newspaper—*Which parts would be told? Which ones would not?*
- Read Genesis 3 aloud—either a dramatic reading by the catechist or a sharing of the reading by the students.
- Complete the reading on page 34.

Supplemental Activity: Have the students write a summary of the fall of Adam and Eve for a news story or an e-mail or text or an entry on Facebook or Twitter. Tell them to write it the way they would if it happened today. Ask them to share their writings by reading them aloud.

Background Reading (Origins of Evil)

"The Genesis account of how human choice disfigured the whole material creation and estranged humanity from God is likewise rather simple. Genesis 3, the story of the first sin, is a Hebrew reworking of a basic story known throughout the ancient Near East. Unique to the biblical account are the leading role assigned to human beings and the insistence on only one God, both hallmarks of Old Testament religion. Still, the biblical story accepts without alteration such obviously mythological elements as sacred trees and talking snakes.

"... Genesis does not pretend to offer a philosophical treatise on the origins of evil. The concern is rather to document how the effects of sin do not stop with the sinner: harm is also done to man's relationship to God, to others, and to the environment" (*OTB* 39-40).

5. Ancient Wisdom for Today

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

[Suggestions: St. John is summarizing the story of the Fall; people insist on being wiser than God; some people want to feel more important than everyone else.

6. Icon Study

- Read the information about the Church Father and about the Three Holy Hierarchs.
- Encourage the students to find more information about St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and/or St. Gregory of Nazianzus for next class—Give them the following website to check: www.goarch.org. Tell them to bring in the information for next class.
- Discuss how the writings of the Fathers can help us pray.

7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about Litanies aloud.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of the second part of the Litany (see page 67 in this teacher manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this section of the Litany to the beginning of this Litany from last week. Use the back of this paper if necessary so that the prayer is on one paper.

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.

9. Summary

Ask the students what the main idea of today's lesson. 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.

10. Closing Prayer

- Gather the students at the icon corner.
- Pray the words from "The Great Ektenia" that was placed in their Vespers booklet.

Background Reading (Origins of Evil)

"Here is the real heart of Genesis' teaching about the first sin and about all sins. Adam and Eve broke a divine commandment: 'You shall not eat...' and are therefore guilty of disobedience. Behind this disobedience, however, lies something more deadly. Eve sinned because she was led to distrust and doubt God's good intentions. The first sin was really an act of disbelief, a statement of mistrust against the order and goodness of God's plan. Adam and Eve ate in order to steal from God what they suspected He would otherwise have withheld from them: real life, fulfillment and happiness, a share of His divine life" (*OTB* 40).

For reasonable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

For the safety of those who travel by sea, air, and land, and for the salvation of the sick, the suffering, and the captive, let us pray to the Lord.

That we be delivered from all affliction, wrath, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by Your grace.

Remembering our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ, our God.

ALL: To You, O Lord!

PRIEST: For to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever, and forever.

ALL: Amen.

My Personal Journal

Write a story about a world without sin. (Use the questions below to help you think about ideas or use your own.)

- How would you treat your family members if you did not sin?
- How would they treat you if sin was not part of your family life?
- How would school and school activities be different if sin was not part of life?
