

8—The Sin of Adam

Objectives

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

- recognize that evil uses seductive ways to make people disobey and want more.
- state that our first parents chose to not trust God and disobey Him.
- understand that the result of their sin is pain, suffering and death.
- state that the story of Cain and Abel reflects the continuing of sin throughout history.

For the Catechist

In the last lesson the students read the story of fall in Genesis 3. In this lesson they will read the explanation of the result of the fall. The word exegesis means an explanation of the words and meaning of a written passage especially from the Bible. Even though this word is not introduced, the meaning of the scriptural images is explained to help students understand how these images create the meaning of a passage. Help the students experience God talking to them through His Word. Remember that like the Creation story, the story of the Fall is generally understood to be more parable than history.

In Scripture, the term "death" is often used to mean more than physical death. It is employed to suggest the spiritual death which results from separation from God. The reign of death, according to Paul, began with Adam and continued through the era of the Jewish Law. Life, however, comes with Jesus Christ. Christ spoke in these same terms when He said, "... *whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will have life, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die*" (Jn 11:25-26).

Emphasize that this year the emphasis is on the meaning or Christian understanding of the stories of Creation and the Fall. Yet, we need to be aware of new scientific research on DNA and mapping genetic relationships among people. From their studies scientists have found that there was possibly a woman from whom we are all descended, and there was possibly a human pair from whom we are all descended. Although scientists are conducting experiments to learn about the biological connection among people, we look to the Bible to learn about the spiritual connection of all people.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Vespers folders

Introduction: Easel or wall pad, markers

Guided Reading: Bibles, student text, note cards, pencils and pens

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

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

Activity B: Mural and news reports, pens and pencils, markers, poster board, glue

Closing Prayer: Vespers folders

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather around the icon table.
- Pray the Litany of Peace.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- Sin and its effects have been present to humans from the beginning.
- Sin is the broken or fallen condition caused by our separation from God.
- Temptation encourages us to choose something that looks good but separates us from God.
- The story of the fall of Adam and Eve relates the effects of sin.

Note: *In that last lesson, a website was included to locate information about the Three Holy Hierarchs. Let any students share information they might have.*

3. Introduction

- Ask the students to share some of the punishments that someone their age can get for not following their parents' rules. Ask if the punishment ever affects the whole family.
- Tell the students today's lesson explains the effect on all men and women when the first man and woman disobeyed God.

4. Guided Reading, Page 38, "Interpretation of the Story"

- Have the students take turns reading the first page.
- Ask them which image of the snake reminds them of evil.

Guided Reading, Page 39, "Change in Attitude"

- Give each student a notecard before the reading. Ask them to write at least one thing they really want and do not have. Ask them to write the reason they want it.
- Read this section aloud.
- Have the students go back to the note card and write who or what is making them think they must have this item. Help connect their feelings about their "must haves" to the same kind of pressure Adam and Eve felt.

Guided Reading, Page 39, "Effects of Sin"

- Read this section and discuss the resulting disorder and confusion.
- Ask the students if they can relate to Adam and Eve making excuses. Let them share their experiences if they want.

Background Reading (The Meaning of God's Command)

Here is the full meaning of the warning that had accompanied God's command not to eat, 'The moment you eat from it you will surely die' (Genesis 2:17). God had already breathed into Adam and Eve the breath of life. He had already shared His own life with them, creating them in His image and giving them dominion over the rest of creation. Until they disobeyed in order to steal divinity from God, they were already enjoying divine life, at least in a preparatory way. They were already 'like gods' in Paradise and faithful obedience was the attitude required to maintain their life-giving relationship with God. God's warning, 'You will die' is not a threat of punishment. It is rather a reminder that death is the consequence of turning away from the Giver of Life" (OTB 40-41).

Guided Reading, Page 39, "God's Response"

- Read this section aloud.
- Have the students take turns reading Genesis 3:14-24 from their Bibles.

Guided Reading, Page 39, "Cain and Abel"

- Read this section aloud.
- Have the students take turns reading Genesis 4:1-16 from their Bibles.

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: Adam and Eve lost what they had because they wanted more; we lose what we have; some people listen to others who convince them to want more.]

6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on the Pantocrator icon.
- Arrange to have the students go into your church to find this icon.
- Ask the students to remain silent for a few minutes as they meditate on the Lord's presence.

7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about Psalms aloud.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of this Psalm (see page 73 in this teacher manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this Psalm onto the next page in their folder.

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.

Background Reading (Ancestral Sin)

"The term *original sin* . . . was unknown in both the Eastern and Western Church until Augustine (c. 354-430). The concept may have arisen in the writing of Tertullian, but the expression seems to have appeared first in Augustine's works. Prior to this the theologians of the early Church used different terminology indicating a contrasting way of thinking about the fall, its effects and God's response to it. The phrase the Greek Fathers used to describe the tragedy in the Garden was *ancestral sin* . . .

" The Eastern Church, unlike its Western counterpart, never speaks of guilt being passed from Adam and Eve to their progeny. "What then is the inheritance of humanity from Adam and Eve if it is not guilt?" The Orthodox Fathers answer as one: death (1 Cor 15:21). Instead it is posited that each person bears the guilt of his or her own sin. . . .Our nature, teaches Cyril of Alexandria, became 'diseased . . . through the sin of one.' It is not guilt that is passed on, for the Orthodox Fathers; it is a condition, a disease" ("Ancestral Versus Original Sin <http://www.antiochian.org/node/22104>).

9. Activity B: Mural and Stories

Many news stories are devoted to sharing bad news, and the story of the fall of Adam and Eve and the continuation of evil with Cain and Abel are definitely bad news stories. Have the students write their versions of one of the stories. These stories can be for traditional newspapers and television or they can be for Facebook, Twitter, and texting. Share these stories with the group. Place them on a bulletin board for display.

10. Summary

Review the lesson and ask if there are any further comments or questions about today's topics.

11. Closing Prayer

- Gather around the icon of the Holy Trinity.
- Pray Psalm 140 (141).

PSALM 140 (141)

O Lord, I call to you;
 come quickly to help me;
 listen to my plea when I call.
Let my prayer be incense before you;
 my uplifted hands an evening sacrifice.
Set a guard, Lord, before my mouth,
 a gatekeeper at my lips.
Do not let my heart incline to evil
 or yield to any sin.
I will never feast upon
 the fine food of evildoers.
Let the just strike me; that is kindness;
 let them rebuke me; that is oil for my head.
All this I shall not refuse,
 but will pray despite these trials.
When their leaders are cast over the cliff,
 all will learn that my prayers were heard.
As when a farmer plows a field into broken clods,
 so their bones will be strewn at the mouth of Sheol.
My eyes are upon you, O God, my Lord;
 in you I take refuge; do not strip me of life.
Guard me from the trap they have set for me,
 from the snares of evildoers.
Into their own nets let all the wicked fall,
 while I make good my own escape.

My Personal Journal

Name specific situations in which you became obsessed with wanting something you could not have. How did you handle the situation?

Write a prayer that you can say to help you overcome an obsession or a temptation. Memorize it and pray it when you need God's help.
