

Unit Four

Living On in Hope

15. We Wait in Hope

God has given us a direction, and He sent us Jesus Christ to lead the way to eternal life. Our union with Christ gives us hope that we will be glorified in Christ at the end of time.

16. From Glory to Glory

Our lifelong process of becoming "God-like" is called theosis or divinization. This process of our transformation began at our Baptism, but our full triumph in Christ is yet to come.

17. Facing Death

Death is not God's doing, but He does make something good of it. Through Christ's Resurrection, death is conquered and becomes a tunnel leading to eternal life with God.

18. Life after Death

The way we lead our life today develops our relationship with God that will continue in our life after death. For those who live in Jesus Christ, they will grow closer to God after death. For those who reject God, they will be aware of their torment throughout eternity.

19. The Life of the World to Come

In the Nicene Creed, we pray that "*we expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come*" We believe that our body and our spirit will share in the glory of God when Christ will come again.

15 — We Wait in Hope

Objectives

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

- define our hope as a trust that our glory in Christ will be fulfilled.
- recognize that our Christian worldview is based on God's revelation and our Tradition.
- understand that our Christian worldview directs us to look for the fulfillment of creation and the glory of Christ.
- learn to make choices that lead us to our fulfillment in Christ that is yet to come.
- recognize that our union with Christ gives us our hope

For the Catechist

"Living On in Hope," the title of this Fourth Unit, introduces the focus on our hope in Jesus Christ and our belief in eternal life with God. Even though those ideas have been presented throughout this God With Us series, this is the first year the emphasis is on our glorification with Christ in His second coming. Through the Scriptures the students will hear God calling them to follow Christ Who leads them to heaven. This unit helps the students realize how important it is to live their lives in a way that will let them experience God's kingdom on earth and in heaven after their death.

Looking toward the future is an essential part of Christian thinking. We see ourselves and the entire universe as unfinished, awaiting completion in the age to come. Our orientation toward the future gives us a hopeful approach to the mystery of death. We look beyond death to the second phase of our existence, when our spirits are separated from our bodies. We will be awaiting our perfection and completion at Christ's triumphal second coming. Then our bodies shall be resurrected and whole once more, as we were meant to be from the beginning. We shall be with the Lord forever.

As Christians we look to Jesus Christ and the Saints to learn how to live so that we can be with God forever. Regretfully, many people look to certain groups and famous people to learn how to live. Help students learn to look to Jesus Christ and the saints for their role models. This lesson asks the students to look to Saint Stephen, the first martyr, who willingly died for Christ because Stephen was confident in the glorified Christ. This confidence enabled Stephen to endure suffering and eventually death. Help the students realize that the source of our hope is Jesus Christ, and our completion in Him will come only at the end of time.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Vesper folder

Review: Easel or wall pad markers

Introduction: Cookies or candy or some other treat

Guided Reading: student text, pens, pencils, paper

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

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

Activity B: Poster board, scissors, markers, glue, paper, pencils, magazines

Closing Prayer: Vespers folders

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather around the icon corner.
- Pray the "Hymn of Glorification" from the Vespers folder.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson

- We need to continue to build our relationship with God that was started at our Baptism.
- Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help us grow in our relationship to God.

3. Introduction

- Give each student a chocolate candy or a cookie. Place the bag with the rest of the treats on the table. Tell the students that they might be able to get another treat depending on the way the class goes.
- As the students eat, ask them to discuss what they think will get them another treat—what behavior, attitude, or actions will be expected.
- Ask how keeping this reward in mind will help them stay focused.

Read the following aloud to the students or restate it in your own way:

Our first taste of today's treat made us anticipate and want more. We can think the same way about how God is helping us want to be with Him forever. Each day He gives us a glimpse of His joy through the love of our family and friends and the beauty of God's creation all around us. He is showing us the joy of eternal life. He is giving us hope as we wait for the kingdom to come. Now just imagine if we can stay focused just to receive a treat, how focused we should stay on Christ who can lead us to eternal life with God. Today's session will help us understand how important it is to wait in hope.

4. Guided Reading, Page 75 "Our Hope"

- Ask each student to write one thing they are hoping for in their lifetime. Next to it, write what they must do to see that hope realized. Do they have to prepare?
- Read the section "Our Hope" aloud. Now ask them to reread their papers and decide if their hope is something they believe will happen.

Background Reading (Christian Worldview)

"This exaltation of Christ and the share in this glory which is ours gives us a specific view toward history and where it is going. Many people in the Greek civilization at the time of Christ believed that history always repeated itself, always went around in circles. Today many feel that history is going nowhere: that our world is headed for annihilation. The Christian view of history is quite different. We believe that there is a direction to history, all things are going somewhere, because God has stepped into our time frame to open it out to eternity. Time no longer devours its children, but makes of them children of resurrection. We as Christians see human history up to now as divided into three periods: the first, from the fall to the Annunciation, the time of preparation as God readies the way for the coming of His Son. The second period is that of the earthly life of Christ, the beginning of the new creation. The time after the sending of the Spirit on Pentecost is the age of the Church in which we who are called to it, supported by the indwelling presence of the Spirit, must freely become this new creation in our lives. We who have been joined to Christ now must allow His Spirit to work in us like yeast in the making of bread. But history will not be complete until we arrive at the new heaven and new earth which will be ours when our share in Christ's glory shall be at its fullest" (*With Eyes of Faith* 88).

- Now ask them to write on their paper what they believe will happen to them according to the promise of Jesus Christ. Write next to this answer, what they must do to let them realize this hope.
- Ask for volunteers to share one of their answers.

Guided Reading, Pages 75-76 "Destiny of Glory"

- Read this section aloud.
- Ask the students to share any ideas on how to focus on their own glory with Jesus Christ during times when they are being asked to forget about following Jesus Christ. [Possibilities: wearing a cross on their necks; remembering to say the Jesus Prayer or any prayer for help; looking at or picturing an icon; picturing a crown of your head]

Guided Reading, Pages 76

Divide the students into 2 groups. Have each group read one of the sections: "Christian Worldview" or "Jesus Christ, Our Strength and Our Hope."

Have the one group teach the other group the ideas that are presented.

5. A Mother's Witness

- Either the students or catechist should read the story (the top section of this page) aloud.
- Ask the students to remain silent for a few seconds as they meditate on how this young girl faced her death. Now ask them to meditate for a few seconds on how they think they would react if this happened to them.
- Allow time for discussion if anyone wants to share comments.
- Continue reading the excerpts from the letter sent to her brother. Ask the students if they agree that God reveals Himself through sorrow and suffering. Discuss how that is possible.

6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on the icon of Saint Stephen.
- If possible go into your church to find this icon that is often one of the deacon doors.

Background Reading (Our Hope)

"In a world subject to sin and death, the Church is thus the vanguard of the new humanity: a people delivered from the ultimate power of these evils. Until Christ comes again, however, we are still in tension with this world, living as we do between the already and the not yet. Nonetheless, as the Church we are a people who recognize that Christ, victorious over death, is a model of humanity, the first of many brethren, and that as His brethren we are on our way to be transformed by sharing in His resurrection. 'The kingdom of God is among you,' as a seed which will blossom in the life to come. Our priestly role as Church is to proclaim this transformation and to invite the world to accept it....

"The Church is not a herald of the new creation simply by what it says, but by what it is—the temple of the Holy Spirit. The fact of the Spirit's presence points to the future because the Spirit is given to us as a token of something to come....The Spirit-as-down-payment, in Paul's image, is a pledge that a fuller inheritance is yet to come.

"The new creation is meant to be broader than the Church as well. The mystery of salvation is meant to touch all creation, to transfigure the entire cosmos The climax of the age of the Church will be when 'the world itself will be freed from its slavery of corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God' (Romans 8:21)" (*With Eyes of Faith* 88-90).

7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about litanies.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of the first section of this litany (see page 119 in this instructional manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue the hymn onto the top of a new page in their Vespers 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.

9. Activity B — Our Hope

- Ask the students to write short scripts in which they help someone make the right choice. Alternatives: write e-mails, Facebook pages, or twitter responses that convince people to make the right choice.
- Use these words to create posters for display in the classroom. Cut out pictures from magazines for the posters or draw the pictures.
- Act out any scenes that were written. Consider sharing these short plays with younger students.

10. Summary

Review the lesson by asking the students to identify one idea that made them think about their faith. [Use the lesson's objectives to focus comments.] Ask if there are any further comments or questions about today's topics.

11. Closing Prayer

- Gather around the icon of Jesus Christ.
- Pray the section of the "Second Litany" from this lesson.

Reminder: Don't forget to share the rest of the treat from the beginning of class. Remind them that the rewards on earth don't even come close to our reward in heaven—it will definitely be worth making the right choices!

SECOND LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

PRIEST: Let us complete our evening prayer to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

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

ALL: Lord, have mercy!

PRIEST: That this evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and without sin, let us beseech the Lord.

ALL: Grant it, O Lord! *(and after each petition)*

For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us beseech the Lord.

For the pardon and remission of our sins and offenses, let us beseech the Lord.

For what is good and beneficial to our souls, and for peace in the world, let us beseech the Lord.

That we may spend the rest of our life in peace and repentance, let us beseech the Lord.

For a Christian, painless, unashamed, peaceful end of our life, and for a good account before the fearsome judgment-seat of Christ, let us beseech the Lord.

My Personal Journal

What is the highest goal in life that you would like to obtain? List what you must do to accomplish this goal.

Even though your goal might be demanding and challenging, why are you still willing to work towards accomplishing it?

Have you ever made sacrifices to attain a greater good for the future for yourself or for other people? Were the sacrifices worth it?

How does your faith in Jesus Christ help you endure the sacrifices and difficulties you must face daily?
