

# 16 — From Glory to Glory

## *Objectives*

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

- understand that we began our life in Christ at our Baptism, but our full triumph in Christ is yet to come.
- recognize that the process of becoming "God-like," our theosis or deification, is a lifelong process during which we cooperate with God.
- state that the Feast of the Ascension celebrates Christ's glorification.

## *For the Catechist*

Scripture contains a varied number of images about life after death. Some are places, like heaven (which means the skies) or Abraham's bosom. Other images of the afterlife are happenings, like a worship service (Revelation 7:9-12) or a wedding banquet (Revelation 19:6-9).

We are accustomed to think of the age to come more as a place—heaven—than as an event. For that reason, it is often difficult for us to see our transformation as an ongoing process which will only be perfected at the final resurrection. We speak about dying and going to heaven as if the presence of our spirits with God is the end of our transformation. For some of us our ordinary way of speaking on this subject needs to be readjusted because our Church teaches us that life after death is a continuing process. The climax or highpoint of this process is the resurrection and transformation of our bodies in the image of the risen body of Christ.

In the *God With Us* series, this is the first lesson that uses the words *deification* and *theosis* to identify this ongoing process that transforms us to become like God. The title of Book 7, *We Become God-Like*, announces that we are growing in our image and likeness to God and becoming deified, like God. Help the students want to realize this triumph in becoming like God that is yet to come.

Young adolescents often have a very dogmatic attitude toward most things. Things are either black or white, now or never. It is frequently difficult for them to comprehend that "already but not yet" quality of life in Christ. By discussing in the introduction section the same quality in their own personalities, the lesson prepares them to see the fullness of life in Christ as yet to come. This life is already truly present in the sacramental life of the here-and-now. Through the Mysteries of the Church, we are called to experience the Kingdom of God.

## *Materials Needed*

*Opening Prayer:* Vesper folder

*Review:* Easel or wall pad markers with the objectives listed

*Introduction:* Introduction worksheet, pens or pencils

*Guided Reading:* student text, pens, pencils, paper, flashlights (optional)

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

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

*Closing Prayer:* Vespers folders

**\*\*\*\* For Next Week: As the students to bring in a picture of a relative or friend who died. Preferably, the picture should be of someone they remember.**

## 1. Opening Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner and distribute the Vespers folders.
- Ask one student to choose the opening prayer.

## 2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

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

## 3. Introduction

- Ask the students to complete the introduction worksheet on their own. Help them figure out the years that ask for dates.
- Ask for volunteers to share any of their answers.
- Discuss the reason it is good to look to the future—to plan ahead. Tell them today's lesson talks about our future with God.

**Alternative:** If you have access to an Internet connection, show the following YouTube videos from Serbia that give a glimpse of what Heaven might be like:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/zorangrbic#p/u/0/iuczNQonTXQ> (about 4 1/2 minutes)

[http://www.youtube.com/user/zorangrbic#p/u/1/bFyEg.\[c\]gbY](http://www.youtube.com/user/zorangrbic#p/u/1/bFyEg.[c]gbY) (about 4 1/2 minutes)

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## Background Reading (The Life of the World to Come)

"And so we find a kind of tension in the life of the Church. It is already alive in the Spirit, but not fully. It is now the kingdom of God, but not completely. It is today eternal life, but only because already it lives in the future. The transfiguration of believers begins now, but its fulfillment will only be obtained in the life to come. What this tension points to is what the creed calls the life of the world to come.

"No one can describe this eternal life in any detail, except to say that it will be an ultimate experience of God, just as the Church's divine life now is a provisional experience of Him. And so, when St. Irenaeus asks 'What will it be like when, after we are resurrected, we will see Him face to face if now—having received the promise of the Spirit—we can cry 'Abba, Father?'' we cannot answer. The Scripture gives no details and speaks always in imagery. The most the New Testament will say is that, '*What we shall later be has not yet come to light. We know that when it comes to light, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.*' 1 John 3:2" (*With Eyes of Faith* 90).

#### 4. Guided Reading, Pages 80-81 "Christ's Triumph" and "Our Inheritance"

- Ask the students to define the following words before the reading:  
*triumph*—success and victory  
*inheritance*—ownership due to heredity or birthright
- Divide the students into 2 groups. Ask one group to read and be ready to explain "Christ's Triumph" and the other group to read and be ready to explain "Our Inheritance."

#### Guided Reading, Page 81, "The Transformation"

- Define transformation as a change. Then read the first paragraph aloud in this section. Emphasize that we are being transformed into the "same image" as the "glory of the Lord."
- Continue the reading, and ask the students to circle any new words they hear.
- Discuss theosis or deification. Also tell them the word *divinization* can be used to describe this process that leads to their becoming divine.
- **Supplemental activity:** Have a few flashlights in class. Ask the students to share some of the times they needed to use a flashlight. Give the student the flashlight to turn on while they tell their story. Ask them to think of a time they were like a flashlight for someone—they helped someone. Ask them to think of their ongoing process of becoming like God as like the light from the flashlight. As they grow in God's likeness, their light shines more often.

#### Guided Reading, Pages 81

- Complete the reading "Our Victory in Christ."
- Ask why our inheritance to live with God forever far surpasses any inheritance we can get from our family. (*God is giving us everlasting life with Him. No amount of money can buy that!*)

#### 5. Ancient Wisdom for Today

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

[Suggestions: The highpoint is seeing God; humans are mature when they are in their glory and see God; seeing God equals everlasting life because God created us to exist forever.]

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#### Background Reading (Our Transfiguration)

"Our spirituality is really a process of growth as we are made like God. It is a lifetime journey and involves our whole life. It begins at Baptism and is not finished until death, and beyond. In the *Life of Moses*, St. Gregory of Nyssa compared the spiritual life to the Exodus. Our Baptism is the start of the journey, like the crossing of the Red Sea. We enter a new life, only vaguely aware of where it will lead. We spend forty years in the desert: our life in the world. We struggle on, advance, fall back, rest and go on. But God makes His presence felt in the pillar of fire (the Holy Mysteries) and in the cloud (Holy Tradition). In death we reach the Promised Land, crossing the Jordan and entering the Age to come. At the resurrection will come the final transformation, we will be transfigured totally—body, soul and spirit—in the likeness of God

"An apt image of this transfiguration, given by God Himself, is the burning bush on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 3). An ordinary weed is gloriously transfigured and made beautiful by the fire of God's Presence in it. It remains a weed—it does not become a rosebush—and is not destroyed, but penetrated and glorified. In the same way, our life in Christ is meant to transfigure us: we are to radiate the divine nature in which God chooses to give us a share" (*LLIII* 20-21).

## 6. Icon Study

- Read the commentary on the Transfiguration icon.
- If possible go into your church to find this icon. Ask the students how they think Peter, James, and John felt as they were watching.
- Shine a flashlight on Jesus. Then shine the flashlight on individual students. Ask the students why they closed their eyes or looked away.
- Ask: *Why do you think the apostles are looking away? (Christ's light is so bright.)*

## 7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about the Sabbath.
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of the remainder of the Litany (see page 125 in this teacher manual).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this section to the page that has the first part of the Second Litany.

## 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

Review the lesson. Ask if they are any further comments or questions about today's topics.

## 10. Closing Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner.
- Pray the entire Second Litany from Vespers.

## For Next Week's Lesson:

**Ask the students to bring in a picture of a relative or friend who died—preferably a person that they remember, but they could bring in a picture of someone even if they did not know them personally such as a grandmother or grandfather.**

## SECOND LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

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 You are a gracious God, and You love mankind, and we give glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever.

ALL: Amen.

PRIEST: Peace + be with all!

ALL: And with your spirit!

PRIEST: Bow your heads to the Lord.

ALL: To You, O Lord.

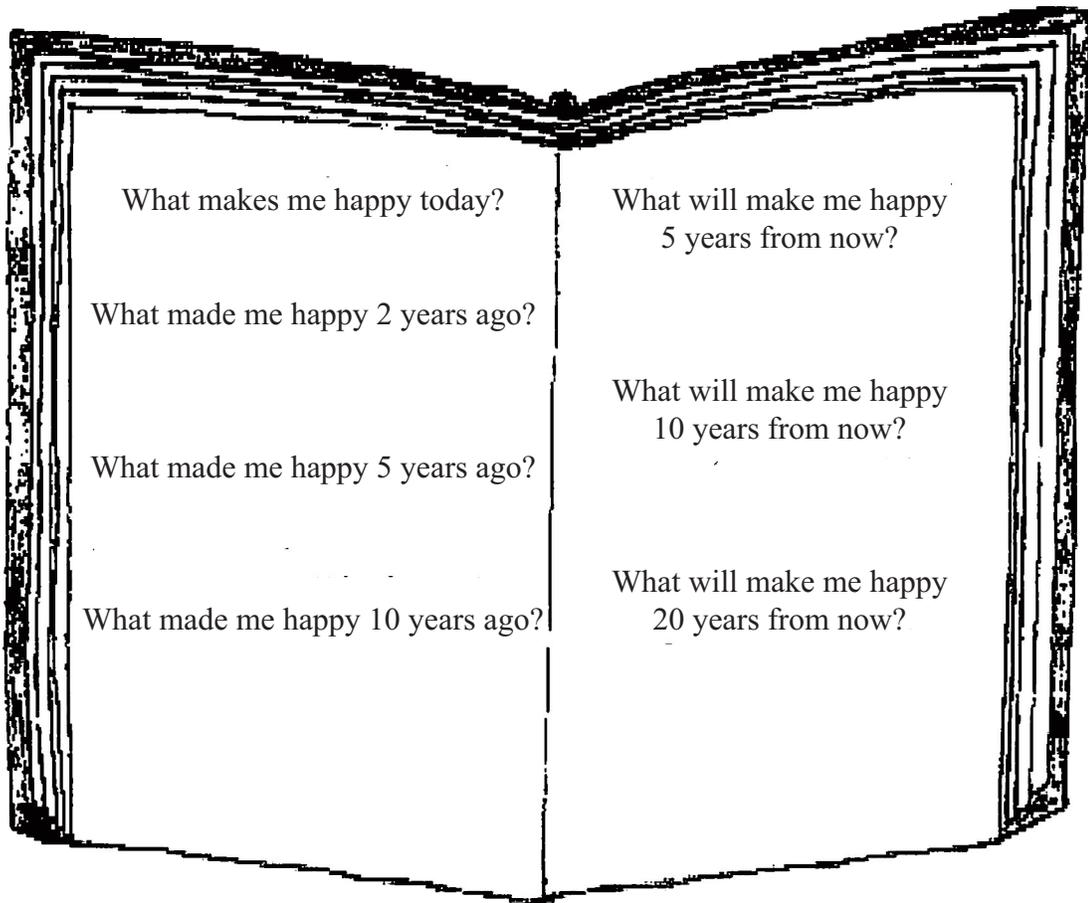
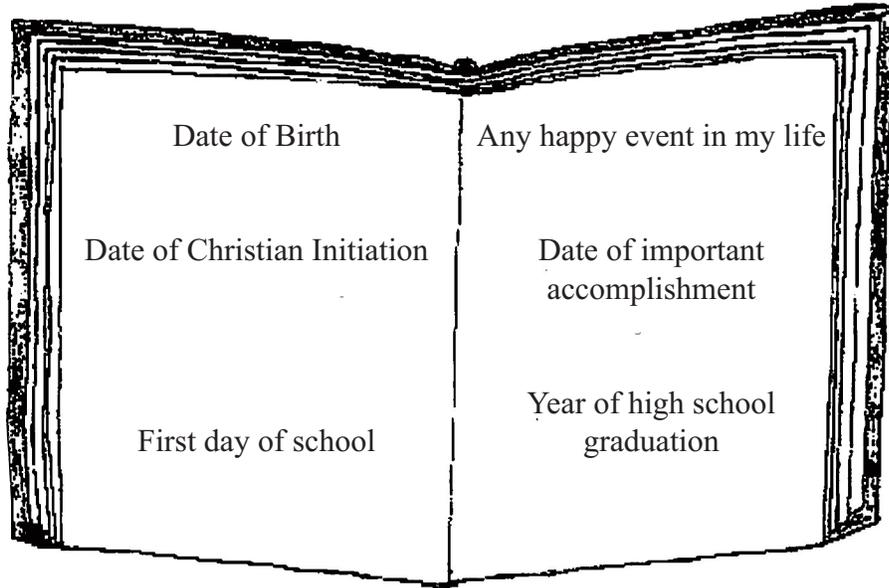
PRIEST: O Lord our God, You lowered the heavens when You came down for the salvation of the human race. Now look down on Your servants and on Your inheritance; for they have bowed their heads to You, the Judge, both awesome and loving. They do not await the help that is from man, but look for Your mercy and are ready to receive Your salvation. Guard them at all times, this evening and tonight, against all enemies, against the devil's assaults, against vain thoughts and evil dreams. May the might of Your kingdom be blessed and exalted, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever.

ALL: Amen.

# My Life and My Happiness

by

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## *My Personal Journal*

For the introduction for this lesson, you wrote lists of what makes you happy. Look at the lists and place an X by things such as iPhone and computer. Place an O by people or events. Write the things on the first line and people or events on the second line below.

*Things:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*People or Events* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does your list show about your values? Are you more concerned with material things or with relationships?

\_\_\_\_\_

Look again at the areas marked with X and those marked with an O. When you thought about the future, did you change your focus?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did this exercise tell you about yourself and your values in the past and for the future?

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