

Unit One

Our Journey

1. Our Life Is a Meaningful Journey

Christians are on a journey that has purpose and direction even though not every step is clearly marked. We live our life moving toward the goal of sharing in the glory of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Christians know their destination is life with God.

2. People Travel Together

People have been asking questions about their existence throughout the ages. People have looked to religion to get answers to their questions. God has given us answers through His creation, His people, and His Son.

3. Christians Follow Jesus

Believing in Jesus Christ means that we trust Him and His way of life as being the best way for us on our journey to God.

4. The Church Is a Community of Faith

The Church is the community of faith that witnesses and celebrates God's presence and leads us on our journey to God. The Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, has guided the Church throughout the ages. We Christians who have received the Good News are called on to continue sharing the Good News today.

5. Holy Eucharist Nourishes Us on Our Journey

The Mysteries of Initiation—Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist—begin our new life in Christ. Each time we receive the Eucharist, our life in Christ and our relationship with each other become stronger. As nourishment for our journey, we need to receive Holy Eucharist often.

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1—Our Life Is a Meaningful Journey

Objectives

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

- state that life is a meaningful journey because it is rooted in God.
- understand that this sacred journey is a lifelong movement toward God
- recognize that on our journey we walk in union with Christ and each other.

For the Catechists

The lessons in this book, *We Journey with God and Each Other*, help young people discover how to live out their life walking with Jesus as they travel to their union with God. The icon on the cover, the Road to Emmaus, shows Jesus walking with His friends. Help students see themselves in that icon. Throughout the year remind them often to see themselves walking and talking with Christ every day. The catechist's goal is to encourage the students to want to stay on this road with Christ and each other for the rest of their lives so that they can reach their destination—life with Christ!

Book 7, *We Become God-Like*, helped the students understand that they are made in the image and likeness of God. As St. Athanasius claimed, "For He was made man that we might be made God." By becoming part of the human race, Jesus transformed humanity and made it possible for humans to have fellowship with God and union with Him.

This year the students are asked to walk with Jesus Christ on their journey to heaven. The lessons ask the students to reflect on the relationship they have with Jesus, and the activities encourage this relationship to grow. Also, the lessons identify the many problems of today that try to break this relationship and interrupt their journey with Christ. Catechists need to help the adolescents recognize that they need to continue on their journey with Jesus and each other even though they might be encouraged and sometimes even bullied to leave the path.

At the beginning of the lesson allow the students to become reacquainted. Consider having them introduce themselves by sharing a story about a memorable trip they took. Encourage them to share why the trip was worth it.

To encourage students to want to learn more about their Church and the teachings of the Church as applied to today's complicated world, consider having a shoe box (decorated however you want) for any questions students might have. At the end of the month, answer these questions in the beginning of a class. [In advance, look at the questions and research the answers, if necessary.]

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Prayer Page ("O Heavenly King") for your jurisdiction—end of this lesson

Icon: Christ the Teacher (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #4).

Closing Prayer: "Prayer of the Traveler"—in the student book

Pens, pencils, markers, and white paper

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather at the icon corner with the icon of Christ the Teacher (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #4). Light a candle and hand out copies of the Prayer Page.
- Pray for the wisdom to grow in the knowledge of God as the school year begins. Take a few moments to allow the students to voice their own intentions, either verbally or silently.
- Chant or recite "O Heavenly King." (Prayer sheets at end of this lesson.)

2. Introduction

Give students a few minutes to greet each other. Ask them to introduce themselves by sharing a story about a trip they went on sometime in their lifetime.

3. Guided Reading

- Before the reading, summarize this week's objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel pad to use for review next week.
- Have students read text aloud and emphasize the holiness of our life as an on-going journey with Christ leading the procession to eternal life.
- For the scriptural passage from Proverbs, ask all students to read aloud together.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Help students find John 15:1-6.
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the icon and ask the students to see themselves in the icon.
- Give the students 3 minutes to answer the questions and read the passage again.
- Ask the students to work in groups of 2 and share their answers aloud.
- Possible answers:
 - It will bear fruit.
 - It will wither and be thrown into the fire to burn.
 - We are the branches and He is the vine—life flows from Jesus to us.
 - We will be disconnected from our life with Jesus that was given to us through our Baptism.
- Ask: "What are some activities that would disconnect you from Jesus?"

Background Reading (Proverbs)

"The Old Testament book of Proverbs is a collection of sayings meant to show people the right way to live. In Proverbs 4:10-13, the author compares life to a journey and suggests how best to make this journey.

"These proverbs are close to 3,000 years old, but the truth they teach still lasts. Life is still a kind of journey opening out before us and we can keep to the right road or get lost on the way" (*Journey* TM 71).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the information about Church Fathers
- Have the students answer the questions; then discuss their answers.
- Possible answers:

She is on a spiritual journey.

We are being quiet and listening to God.

If we think about our life as a journey, we can think about our choices as turns in the road. We don't want to make a wrong turn that will get us lost so we don't want to make a wrong choice that will take us on the wrong path away from God.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud. (If possible, go into the church for the reading.)
- Ask the students to remain silent for a minute as they reflect on being in the boat to heaven.
- Ask: What can rock the boat for a group of students your age? What rocks your boat?
- Remind the students to think about the final quotation. Suggest they memorize it: "He parted the heavens and came down."

7. My Personal Journal: "Who Am I?"

- Read the poem aloud and answer the questions. Discuss the answers. "What can rock the boat for a group of students your age? What rocks your boat?"
- Possible answers

Answers will vary

Possibility

In this poem, the person's entire life is recognized. On our journey, we have our past to help us, the present to motivate us, and the future to keep us focused on God.

Background Reading (The Divine Liturgy)

"People very often have a very static concept of the Liturgy. It is a duty to be fulfilled, without much relevance to our daily lives. However, in our worship our lives are given a new direction. The first step in this direction is the narthex (vestibule), which represents the world, but the world as already being invited to Christ. Here, in the Mystery of Baptism, the new Christian renounces evil and accepts Christ. In the narthex, he or she is leaving life-without-Christ to begin a journey that ends only with full union with the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Here, in the Mystery of Crowning [in Marriage], the couple is met by the priest, who will 'bless' their natural union, bringing into it a new reality, the infinite love of our Lord. Here, the person who has just died is met by the priest, and is sped on the final journey to God by the prayers and intercession of the loving community.

"For many people the Liturgy is just a weekly duty. However it should be more than just a cut and dried ceremonial. By our participation, we take part in a process in which we come ever closer to God and are made constantly more God-like" (*Journey* TM 69).

8. Closing Prayers

Pray the "Prayer of the Traveler" found in the student book.

Supplemental Activities:

Review—At the end of the lesson, ask the students what they remember by using one of the following suggestions:

1. Draw a picture of the main idea of the "Liturgical Study" in this lesson. Ask them to explain how their picture reminds them of the point. (The comparison between a boat and our church building)

2. Create a "Faith Book."

=> Give each student a notebook, and tell them this is their "Faith Book."

=> They will add entries to it throughout the year. Ask them to add the date for each of their entries.

=> For today they are to write an invitation that asks people to join them on their journey to Christ.

=> Encourage the students to bring in pictures to add to their "Faith Book" to show how they are living their life on their journey.

=> Encourage students to decorate their books. Help them think of affirmations they can add to help them on their journey:

Say "Yes " to Jesus and "No " to Sin

Take time to talk to Jesus

Learn to listen

Remember to pray

Opening and Closing Prayers
The Melkite Greek Catholic Church

Heavenly King, Consoler, Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, the Treasury of blessings and the Giver of life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Opening and Closing Prayers
The Romanian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Canton

O heavenly King, Consoler, Spirit of truth, present in all places and filling all things, the Treasury of blessings and the Giver of life: come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Opening and Closing Prayers
The Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things. Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.

Opening and Closing Prayers
The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth! You are present everywhere and fill all things. Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us. Cleanse us of every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord.

Opening and Closing Prayers
The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Synod

Heavenly King, Advocate, Spirit of Truth, Who are everywhere present and fill all things. Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life, come and dwell within us; cleanse us of all that defiles us, and, O Good One, save our souls.