

2—People Travel Together

Objectives

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

- state that God initiates the journey and reveals Himself in His creation.
- recognize that God especially revealed Himself in the choice of Israel as His special people.
- understand that the coming of Jesus Christ is the climax of God's revelation to humankind.

For the Catechists

In this lesson students learn about other major religions. The Grade 6 book, *We Respond to God*, in the God With Us Series also includes information about other religions. The purpose is to let students know that through religious teaching people find information about their existence and about God. Hopefully, the students have been discovering that they truly believe in the teachings of the Eastern Christian Churches. Catechists need to help students realize the treasure they have in their Eastern Christian Churches.

This lesson emphasizes God's way of letting us know He is God. Share with the students ways that they can see God in His creation: the sunset, the colors of autumn, the gigantic tree by the church, the smile on each other's faces. Remind the students that the Chosen People of Israel and the prophets shared the Word of God from generation to generation. Encourage them to think about their ancestors and the ways they kept the Eastern Christian faith passed on from generation to generation. Most of all, help the students realize that God revealed Himself to us by becoming one of us. God loves us enough to become one of us to share in our existence.

Remind the students that it takes just one generation to stop going to church to end a tradition that has been followed for many generations. Share any stories that you know about how our ancestors took their faith with them wherever they moved. Attending an Eastern Christian Church was so important to them that they sacrificed to build beautiful churches. These churches were built not as a "nationality" identity but as a spiritual reality observed by a common experience. Help the students realize that they need to continue to attend their church to keep Eastern Christian spirituality alive.

To keep with the theme of a journey, this lesson asks the students to think about all people on a journey together. That is one of the many reasons to attend Divine Liturgy—to come together as one to be in the presence of the Lord. Just as the wheat becomes the flour that becomes the bread and the grapes become the wine, we are called together to become one in the Holy Spirit. By receiving the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ, we become one with God and with each other—what a powerful reason to be in church on Sunday!

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: Psalm 96:11-13—in 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.
- Chant or recite "O Heavenly King." (Prayer sheets at end of last week's lesson.)

2. Introduction

Ask the students if they know of any other religions besides Eastern Christian. Write the list on paper or on the chalkboard. Call attention to the many different religions that exist. Encourage the students to talk about why they are glad that they are Eastern Christian.

3. Guided Reading

- Before the reading, summarize this week's objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel
- Have students read text aloud and emphasize the belief that God does exist.
- For the scriptural passage from Romans, ask all students to read aloud together.
- Take turns reading the descriptions of the religions. Check to see if they were mentioned in the list made at the beginning of class. Allow time to share any other information the students might have learned at school.

[Taoism is a Chinese philosophy based on simple and honest living and harmony with nature. Shinto is a Japanese religion with devotion to gods of natural forces and veneration of the Emperor as a descendant of the sun goddess.]

- For the scriptural passage from Romans, ask all students to read aloud to

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Help students find Hebrews 1:1-4.
- 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 listening to Jesus.

Background Reading (Divine Liturgy)

"The Divine Liturgy is also meant to be the climax of our day or week of serving God in our personal lives. As all of history is leading up to the triumph of Christ at His glorious second coming, so also we should see our personal histories as climaxing in the experience of 'heaven on earth' which our Liturgy is often called. If we do not see our whole life as an act of worship, then our sharing in the Eucharist will not touch us as fully as it might. It will remain a fragmented and isolated religious experience rather than the summation of our life in Christ. Our life is meant to be one act of worship, encompassing our daily prayer and activities and culminating in the Eucharist celebration" (*Life and Worship* 70).

- 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:
 - Through prophets, through Christ.
 - Jesus told us the Words of God.
 - Through Scripture and the Church
 - Answers will vary.
- Ask: "What keeps you from listening to God?"
 - "How long do you think you should wait to hear God?"

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. Justin.
- Have the students answer the questions; then discuss their answers. Suggestions:
 - Jesus is showing us how to live the way God told us to—Jesus is the words in action.
 - Problems: drug abuse, poverty—Jesus says He is with all of us.
 - Jesus helps us by listening to us always.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask: "Why do you think the priest stands in the Holy Place with his back facing us?"
- Ask: "What can you do to help yourself want to be in church every Sunday and holy day?"
 - "What can you do to help other people want to be in church?"

7. Closing Prayer

Pray Psalm 96:11-13—in 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. Identify some of the other religions in the world. Make a list of the reasons people follow a religion. Identify how a belief in a religion helps people live out their life.
2. Have the students write an invitation to people to come to church.
3. Write a thank you note to the priest for leading us in prayer every Sunday.

Background Reading (The Divine Liturgy)

"After the singing of the third antiphon, the priest carries the Gospel Book solemnly in procession. The people sing the following hymn: 'Come, let us worship and bow before Christ, O Son of God wondrous in Your saints, save us who sing to you. Alleluia.' This jubilant exclamation is borrowed from the 95th Psalm, inviting people to enter the sanctuary where God is present in a special way and where He accepts the adoration of His people. Because God is our Creator, it is in the spirit of greatest humility that we bow before Him and show Him our deepest respect" (*Journey* TM 84).