

3—Christians Follow Jesus

Objectives

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

- state that the core of our Christian life is faith in Jesus as the Son of God, the Conqueror of Death.
- identify Jesus as the One Who reveals God as Father and leads us to Him
- recognize Jesus as the One Who bestows the Holy Spirit upon His believing people.
- understand that believing in Jesus means that we trust Him and His way of life as being the best way for us on our journey.

For the Catechists

Knowing that Christians follow Jesus Christ is the focus of this lesson. Emphasize that fact by highlighting the word *Christ* is the word *Christians*. Just as our last name identifies the family we belong to, our title as Christians identifies our family with God as our Father. The first part of this lesson explains how Jesus told us God is our Father and taught us how to pray the "Our Father." Help the students realize that as Christians they need to think and act as Christ would. That is the reason God sent us His Son—to show us how to live as children of God.

This lesson also emphasizes that Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to be with us always. God sent us the Holy Spirit to give us strength and courage to deal with our everyday encounters. The Holy Spirit helps us as individuals and helps our Church grow in understanding, power, and courage. Just as we are to be recognized as Christians by the way we act, our Church family needs to be recognized as Christians by our services, our activities, and our people. Our Church has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit to help it become alive. Some Churches have programs that help the Church family learn how to become a welcoming parish that is alive in Christ.

The "Scriptural Reflection" is a necessary part of each lesson. The main goal of this activity is to have students open the Bible and read Scripture. Learning how to read the Word of God and reflect on it is important for all Christians. Hopefully this activity will help the students want to read Scripture for the rest of their lives. Encourage the students to choose passages they might want to memorize to help them throughout the day. Information about the icon can be found on the back of the icon page from the *Come Bless the Lord* icon packet.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Prayer Page ("O Heavenly King") for your jurisdiction

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

Closing Prayer: Hymn—in the student book

Pens, pencils, markers and white paper

1. Opening Prayer

- Chant or recite "O Heavenly King."

2. Introduction

Ask the students to make a list of the reasons they believe Jesus Christ is the One to follow on their journey to God. Tell them to identify specific scriptural stories that they remember. Allow time for sharing and discussing.

3. Guided Reading

- Before the reading, review last week's objectives. Then summarize this week's objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel pad to use for review next week.
- Have students read aloud and emphasize that Christians follow Jesus.
- For the scriptural passage from John, ask all students to read aloud together.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Help students find Colossians 1:15-20.
- 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.
- 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.
- Possible answers:
 - Representation of a Saint or religious event—"window to heaven"; Jesus is representing God. He is showing us heaven.
 - Jesus is the Son of God and One in the Holy Trinity; therefore, Jesus is One with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
 - Answer will vary.
- Ask: "How can we be icons of Christ?"
"What are some ways we can show we are Christian?"

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. John Chrysostom.
- Have the students answer the questions; then discuss their answers. Suggestions:
 - Believing through faith means we trust it is true because it cannot be shown specifically.
 - We hear the Church Fathers tell us that we are not the only ones that have some problems understanding what Jesus is telling us.
 - "Why do I have to be in church? Why do I have to go to confession?" You might want to offer some ideas if no one is responding. Encourage them to ask the priest, the catechists, and their parents for answers.

Background Reading (The Way)

"Jesus Christ is truly, as He said, the Way by which we travel on the journey. Bridging the infinite space between God and man in His earthly life, Jesus continues to do so for us who are mystically united to Him. In His sacrifice, His self-revelation, and His sacramental presence, Jesus is the only Way to the Father. T am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' (John 14:6)" (*Journey* TM 84).

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask: "What are some signs of Christ's present in our church?"
- Ask: "What can you do to help yourself want to be in the church every Sunday and holy day?"
 "Why should we sing all the responses during the Divine Liturgy?" (*Help the students realize that the Divine Liturgy is a prayer, and we should pray aloud with our Church family.*)

7. My Personal Journal

Ask the students to share their answers with one other student first. If time, discuss the last question. Help the students find a way to stop listening to people and things that want to lead them away from Christ.

8. Closing Prayers

Pray the Hymn in the student book. Ask the students when this hymn is sung? (At the beginning of the Liturgy)

Supplemental Activities:

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

1. Have the students create a testimonial dinner for Jesus. Choose one of the students to be Jesus, and the others must thank Him for the ways He is unique.
2. Write a list of questions that you would want to ask Jesus. Encourage the students to check their eparchy's website for answers and links to other sites with links to find answers to their questions.
3. Write a thank you note to someone who is helping you on your journey to Christ.

Background Reading (The Divine Liturgy)

"In the Liturgy we do not worship an impersonal God, a great machine in the heavens Who records our prayers and either answers them or refuses to. Our God is a person—three persons, in fact. One of these persons, Jesus Christ our Lord, lived among us as a man, shared the joys and pains of our life, and suffered with a God Who is more deeply concerned with us than we are with ourselves and each other" (*Journey* TM 86).