

## Unit Two

### *Directions for the Journey*

#### **6. Scripture: Listening to God's Word**

The many elements of Tradition have an important effect on the life of the Church and have guided the Church in each century. The most solemn element in the Church's Tradition is Scripture. Christians need to take time to read and listen to God's Word to help them know God as He reveals Himself to us.

#### **7. Prayer: Growing in Relationship with God**

Scripture asks us to "pray unceasingly," which is one way to experience God is with us always. Praying The Jesus Prayer helps us find peace as we journey to God.

#### **8. Fasting: Keeping Us Focused on Our Journey**

Fasting requires discipline and sacrifice. Through fasting we learn to say "no" to ourselves and "yes" to Jesus. While fasting we train ourselves to look to Jesus as we grow stronger in our relationship with the Lord.

#### **9. Feast Days: Recalling God's Blessings**

Feast days ask us to relive the great events of our salvation and inspire us to continue on our journey to God. The greatest feast day is the Resurrection of Our Lord together, and each Sunday commemorates Christ's Resurrection.

#### **10. Divine Services: Traveling Together**

During our Church's Divine Services, we experience our journey as one with all of creation. The Divine Liturgy is our most important act of worship because Christ's physical presence is with us.

## Unit Two

# Directions for the Journey

### **6. Scripture: Listening to God's Word**

The many elements of Tradition have an important effect on the life of the Church and have guided the Church in each century. The most solemn element in the Church's Tradition is Scripture. Christians need to take time to read and listen to God's Word to help them know God as He reveals Himself to us.

### **7. Prayer: Growing in Relationship with God**

Scripture asks us to "pray unceasingly," which is one way to experience God is with us always. Praying The Jesus Prayer helps us find peace as we journey to God.

### **8. Fasting: Keeping Us Focused on Our Journey**

Fasting requires discipline and sacrifice. Through fasting we learn to say "no" to ourselves and "yes" to Jesus. While fasting we train ourselves to look to Jesus as we grow stronger in our relationship with the Lord.

### **9. Feast Days: Recalling God's Blessings**

Feast days ask us to relive the great events of our salvation and inspire us to continue on our journey to God. The greatest feast day is the Resurrection of Our Lord together, and each Sunday commemorates Christ's Resurrection.

### **10. Divine Services: Traveling Together**

During our Church's Divine Services, we experience our journey as one with all of creation. The Divine Liturgy is our most important act of worship because Christ's physical presence is with us.

# 6—Scripture: Listening to God’s Word

## *Objectives*

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

- state that the basis for the Church's life today is built on Holy Tradition that has Christ as its center.
- list some of the elements which make up the Church's Holy Tradition: Scripture, liturgical services, Councils, writings of the Church Fathers, and icons
- recognize that the clergy—bishops, priests, and deacons—are the elders or spiritual guides who help us find meaning in Holy Tradition.
- realize that the Scriptures are inspired: that the writing and compiling of these books was especially guided by the Holy Spirit.

## *For the Catechists*

The presence of the Spirit in the Church is attested by His activity through the ages. This continuous stream of the Church's Spirit-led experience is called Holy Tradition. At the core of this Tradition is the collection of writings called the Bible. Other elements of Holy Tradition are liturgical services, Councils, writings of the Church Fathers, and icons.

The same Spirit Who has given us Tradition has also given us help in understanding it by setting up in the Church ministries of teaching and guidance. With the help of those individuals who have been given these gifts by the Spirit, Tradition ceases to be beyond our grasp: we learn to understand it and experience its strength according to the level of our growth. Our Church gives us bishops, priests, deacons, and spiritual guides to help us learn how to pray, read the Scriptures, and live the Christian lifestyle.

Learning how to read Scripture is included in this lesson. By offering exact guidelines on how to read the Bible, this lesson hopefully encourages students to follow the plan. Possibly the catechist could help the students by having a class plan. The lesson suggests students read every day. As a class, decide on reading one of the Gospels. Make a time table listing the number of chapters that should be read each week. At the beginning of class, discuss the reading. Ask the students what passages seem to be talking to them. Encourage discussions about how God is talking to them about today's life. Ask them to share when and where they have been reading Scripture.

Although not all students might stay with the reading Scripture plan, continue expecting them to read the passages. Sometimes it takes time for students to realize that you really do expect them to read the Bible. Hopefully, the students will come to realize that God is talking to them.

## *Materials Needed*

*Opening Prayer:* "The Lord's Prayer"

*Icon:* Christ Pantocrator (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #3).

*Closing Prayer:* "Prayer before the Gospel"—in the student book

Pens, pencils, markers and white paper

**1. Opening Prayer**

- Chant or recite "The Lord's Prayer."

**2. Introduction**

Allow a few minutes to talk about reading the Bible: Do they read it? When do they read it? Why should they want to read it?

**3. Guided Reading**

- Have students read text aloud and emphasize the importance of Holy Tradition, our Church elders, and Scripture.
- Complete the activity "How do you spend your minutes?" Have the students share their answers. Ask them if this activity will help them spend more time with God? What will they do when they are spending time with God?

**4. Scriptural Reflection**

- 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 aloud.
- Possible answers:
  - Martha welcomed Jesus and served Him.
  - Mary sat by Jesus and listened to Him.
  - Jesus is telling us to stop being so busy and take time to listen to Him.

\*\*\*\*\*

***Background Reading (The Priest)***

"The original name given to a priest was presbyter or 'elder.' The Church in its first few centuries ... had to struggle with pagan religions and break with the Jewish Church so they did not want their priests to be confused with priests who offered animal sacrifices. The Christian priest offers only the Divine Liturgy, the sacrifice of praise, and a commemoration of the one true sacrifice of our Lord. In the New Testament the word 'priest' is applied only to Christ Himself and in one place to the whole community: 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God calls for His own to proclaim the glorious works' (1 Pt. 2:9).

"In time the ordained elders were given the special title of priest. This was in recognition of the special relationship they had with Christ the High Priest by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament [Sacramental Mystery] of Holy Orders.... It is the duty of the priest to serve his community, and of the faithful to support the priest." (*Journey* TM 132-133).

**5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers**

- Ask one student to read the words from St. John of Damascus.
- Have the students open the Bible to the New Testament and choose a passage.
- Work in groups of 2, and have each one read the passage aloud to the other. Ask them to figure out what the passage might be telling them. If time share all passages with the class.

**6. Liturgical Study**

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask: "What does it mean to be at attention?" Practice being "at attention" during the entire Divine Liturgy.

**7. Closing Prayers**

Read the "Prayer before the Gospel" aloud as a class.

Should this prayer be said at other times? When? *(Every time we read the Bible, we should say this prayer first to ask God to help us listen to and understand His Word.)*

**Supplemental Activities:**

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

1. Make a list of what we call Holy Tradition in our Church. Write an explanation as to how you think the Holy Spirit is guiding the Tradition.
2. Ask the students to work in groups of two, open the Bible and point to two different passages on that page. Write the passage and repeat the activity 4 more times. Choose one of these passages and write a 3-minute sermon about it. Give the sermon to the rest of the class.
3. Start reading the Bible every day for about 5 minutes at least. Before the reading, find a good place to read attentively. What plan works best for you? Share your plan with the class the next week.

\*\*\*\*\*

***Background Reading (The Liturgy)***

"We must understand that the Liturgy may not bring an immediate answer to all our problems. Some seek to simplify the faith too much, to make it a magic machine that solves all our problems. When it fails, then we are disillusioned. Our faith, and our Liturgy are both as complicated as life itself. In them is the key to the meaning of our creation and redemption. This key, however, is not an intellectual thesis, but the presence of God. In the Eucharist Christ comes to us in person, and it is through Him that we live in hope and are saved. Often we will not be able to understand the Liturgy, often our minds will wander. However, we must be watchful, for Christ the bridegroom of the Church is coming to us in the Liturgy (Mt 25:1-13). We must set aside our earthly cares, precisely to welcome Him, to 'receive in Communion the King of all, invisibly escorted by angelic hosts' (*Journey* TM 140).