

Unit Three

Falling and Getting Up Again on the Journey

11. Sin: Turning off the Path

When we sin, we choose to follow our own path that leads us away from our life with God and leads us to darkness. But God, Who never abandons us, calls us to repentance.

12. Repentance: Finding Our Way Again

When we repent, we turn from sin to God. The Mystery of Repentance takes us back to the path on our journey to God. We need to stay focused on our journey so that we don't allow sin to distract us and make us lose our way.

13. Healing: Regaining Strength for the Journey

Spiritual infirmities are hurts within us that keep us from following God's path. Through prayers and the Mystery of the Anointing of the Sick, the Church helps us with these sufferings. We Christians believe God is with us and listening even when our prayers are not answered in the way we want.

Unit Three

Falling and Getting Up Again on the Journey

11. Sin: Turning off the Path

When we sin, we choose to follow our own path that leads us away from our life with God and leads us to darkness. But God, Who never abandons us, calls us to repentance.

12. Repentance: Finding Our Way Again

When we repent, we turn from sin to God. The Mystery of Repentance takes us back to the path on our journey to God. We need to stay focused on our journey so that we don't allow sin to distract us and make us lose our way.

13. Healing: Regaining Strength for the Journey

Spiritual infirmities are hurts within us that keep us from following God's path. Through prayers and the Mystery of the Anointing of the Sick, the Church helps us with these sufferings. We Christians believe God is with us and listening even when our prayers are not answered in the way we want.

11—Sin: Turning off the Path

Objectives

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

- define sin as the turning off the path to life with God.
- state that when we decide to follow our own way and leave the light of Christ, we end up in darkness.
- realize that God never abandons us when we leave His path.
- understand that when we build our lives around God's way of living, we will not want to leave the path.

For the Catechists

Sin is discussed in all the books in the God With Us series. In the Grade 7 student book, sin is defined in the following way: "We sin when we disobey God. We sin when we choose to follow our own path without thinking about what God would want." This year the students will be asked to define sin in a similar way—turning off the path to life with God. In the earlier grades, the students defined sin as a turning away from God. Also, sin was defined as missing the mark. With all definitions, students are asked to realize that God is with them always—they are the ones who leave God. Help students realize that they always need God on their journey to become one with Him.

This lesson also helps the students realize our daily life offers many ways to leave the path, and the devil is the source of all these distractions. References to Adam and Eve help students realize the devil is powerful, but God is more powerful. Help the students believe that God's unfailing love is stronger than our sinfulness. Young people need to understand that God has saved them because He loves them even when they make a wrong choice.

With the temptation of drugs, alcohol, and social media, young people have a difficult time experiencing God is with them always. This lesson asks them to reflect on God's presence and forgiveness. This lesson emphasizes that each day—almost each hour—we are asked to make choices, and sometimes we make a wrong choice that takes us off the path. Through God's forgiveness and our repentance, we can get on the right path without feeling guilty for our bad choices.

The lesson ends with a discussion about Jesus as our light on our journey. Help the students realize that when they make choices in the light of Jesus, they feel God's peace. But when they walk without the light of Jesus and enter into the darkness of the world, they enter a life of confusion, disruption, anger, secrecy, and deception. They need to get back to the path with the light of Jesus to help them continue on their journey to God.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: ""We have seen the true Light"

Icon: The Descent into Hades (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #13).

Closing Prayer: Prayer—in the student book

Pens, pencils, markers and white paper

1. Opening Prayer

- Chant or recite "We have seen the true Light."
[Find this prayer in the Divine Liturgy books in your church. This prayer is sung after the priest gives the blessing after everyone has received Holy Eucharist.]

2. Introduction

Discuss all the new electronic devices and gadgets and games that are being sold. "Why do people want them? Why do some people wait in line for hours to buy them?" Then ask, "Do you think people get tired of this new product and look forward to getting something else?" Use this idea to connect to this lesson about leaving the path on our journey. Help students realize that distractions take us away from the path, but they never make us completely happy. We always need more. When we stay on the path, we continue to feel peace, and we don't need more.

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 text aloud and emphasize the importance of staying on the path on our journey.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Read John 12:46-48
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the picture with the icon and candles. Ask the students to see themselves with a candle in front of them—they are following the light of 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:

Jesus is the light that shows us how to live with God.

They are not at peace. They will be judged based on how Jesus showed them to live out their life in Christ.

Pray, read stories about saints and other people who stayed on the path, recognize the lack of peace for people who are not on the path.

Background Reading (Union With God)

"The Christian who values his union with God in Christ keeps the commandments, not because they are a law, but because they reflect reality as seen by the One who has given them.

Observing the commandments becomes a way of uniting ourselves with the mind and heart of the Lord and becoming one in will with Him" (*STBH* 32).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.
- Possible answers:
"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart... and your neighbor as yourself."
Love God and your neighbor.
Once we confess our sins, we are forgiven.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask: How can our body and our words let God know we thank Him for everything He has done for us?

7. Closing Prayers

Read the "Prayer" aloud as a class.

How do you feel knowing that God loves you so much that He wants to be with you always, and all you need to do in return is love Him and want to be with Him always?

Supplemental Activities:

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

1. Ask the students to read their letter to God aloud. Possibly make a list of the prayers that were included. These prayers can be used throughout the year.

2. Draw a winding road on a poster board or have each student draw his or her own road on a smaller paper. Ask them to add a picture of them walking with Jesus. Add different distractions that might pull them away from the path. Have them build onto the distractions to show how one wrong choice can lead to other wrong choices. Then let them see how far they strayed from the path. Share the pictures.

3. Using a similar idea as #2, have the student tell a group story. One person says a sentence, and the next student adds another sentence. Then, suggest someone identifies a bad choice and build upon that. Let the students realize that once we start walking away from the path, we start finding more reasons to stay away from the path.

For example: Every Sunday night our family has game night.

My favorite game is Monopoly because I usually win.

In the middle of the game, my friend called to ask me to go to the movies.

I asked my mom, and she said no.

I started saying I never....

Then I flipped the board and all the pieces fell.

[Let the students decide on their story as they discover how making the wrong choice (in this case, disobedience) leads to more problems (anger). Help them realize God is asking us to follow His example always because one wrong choice can lead to many other wrong choices.]