

17—Ordained Servants Help Us

Objectives

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

- recognize that the leaders in the Church are the servants to the whole community.
- list bishops, priests, and deacons as the leaders of the Church.
- state that men become bishops, priests, and deacons in the Mystery of Holy Orders
- realize that these ministries exist to help Christians mature in faith and oneness in Christ.

For the Catechists

In this unit the students have been learning that Christians are called to love and serve God and each other. This lesson focuses on the men who have been chosen by God to dedicate their entire life to serving God. These men are our ordained clergy—deacons, priests, and bishops.

Help the student realize that these leaders in the Church are the servants to the whole community. We call our priest "Father" because he is the provider of the Church family. As father of the family, the priest sanctifies the household of faith by providing the nourishment of the Word and the Eucharist. He is the guide on our journey to God. As in the home, the father is empowered with authority but only to serve.

In Scripture we read, "whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28). This lesson asks the student to realize that the ordained clergy, while having first place in the Church, have it so that they might lead and serve all the believers in their priestly service.

Our Church asks us to pray for vocations. This lesson explains the importance of these vocations. If possible, invite your priest and/or deacon to come to class to discuss how he heard the call to serve God and His people. Ask them to share details on how they are serving God and us—through the Liturgy and all the other ways.

At the end of the lesson, ask the boys in your class to think about becoming a priest. Some priests have said that they did not consider a vocation until someone suggested the idea. We catechists are blessed to have the opportunity to ask our young men to consider being a priest. We need to ask lovingly and without intimidation. And we need to pray that the young men become quiet and still so that they can hear God's call.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal ...

Icon: The Holy Trinity (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #18).

Closing Prayer: Pray the "Prayer"—in the student book. End with the singing of "God grant you many years" for the clergy of our Church.

Pens, pencils, markers and white paper

1. Opening Prayer

Chant or recite "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal...."

[Find this prayer in the Divine Liturgy books in your church. This prayer is before the reading of the Epistle]

2. Introduction

Ask the students to list the many ways the priest serves the Church family.

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 family.
- Complete the Leaders of Our Church section. Check your church papers to find the correct spelling for the names.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Read Hebrews 13:17-18
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the icon of Christ the King
- 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:
 - Make good choices, attend church services
 - They are praying for us; they need God's blessing
 - The priest is responsible for helping us live out our life in God. (Students can say they are going to church, helping family, following the commandments—all good choices.)

Background Reading (Priest and the Christian Community)

"The function proper to the presbyterate in the catechetical task arises from the sacrament of Holy Orders which they have received. 'Through that sacrament priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest, in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head.' In virtue of this ontological configuration to Christ, the ministry of the priest is a service which forms the Christian community and coordinates and strengthens other charisms and services. In catechesis the sacrament of Holy Orders constitutes priests as 'educators of the faith.' They work, therefore, to see that the faithful are properly formed and reach true Christian maturity. Conscious, on the other hand, that their 'ministerial Priesthood' is at the service of 'the common Priesthood of the faithful,' priests foster the vocation and work of catechists and assist them in carrying out a function which springs from Baptism and is exercised in virtue of a mission entrusted to them by the Church. Thus priests put into effect the request which the Second Vatican Council made of them: 'to recognize and promote the dignity of the laity and their specific role in the Church's mission'" (GDC 210-211).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. John Chrysostom.
- Possible answers:
The priest gives us eternal life.
Remember his birthday and feast day; thank him for what he does; do what he asks.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask the students to explain how our priest is a servant of the Lord and our Church.

7. Closing Prayers

Pray the "Prayer" in the student book. End with the singing of "God grant you many

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 card to use as a thank you note for your priest. Each student should write at least one sentence thanking their priest for something he has done to help them travel on their journey to God. (Remind the students of the role of the priest during the consecration of Holy Eucharist.)
2. Ask the students to check websites for information about becoming a priest. Share the information next week.
3. Students learned that they became a member of the royal priesthood on the day of their Baptism. Ask them to make a poster that identifies ways they can help each other on the journey to God. Even though they do not have a vocation, they have been called to "the altar in the streets" (St. John Chrysostom) to help people realize God is with them.

Background Reading (Our Priesthood)

“Christ calls us to love one another as He has done: by giving of ourselves in service. He presents His own service as our model of the way we are meant to serve one another. His way of serving us is, in fact, His priesthood and He calls us to a share in it.

"Every one of us enters into the priesthood of Christ by Baptism and Chrismation. At Baptism we sing a hymn taken from Galatians 3:27, and which is sung on certain feast of the Church year, "all of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Him." By this mystery we have "put on" Christ, we have become a different people, we have become other Christs, and we are able to offer the sacrifice of Christ, the Divine Liturgy, called our "sacrifice of praise" (*Journey* TM 241-242).