

19—We Share the Good News

Objectives

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

- state that Christ called His followers to share His divine life with all the world.
- recognize that each Church is invited to answer this call by sending out and/or supporting missionaries.
- realize that we obey Christ's commandment and bring people to life when we share with them the blessing of divine life.

For the Catechists

In the last lesson, students learned that Christians are recognized for their hospitality, their willingness to share what they have. This lesson asks them to realize that the gifts they have from God are not all material. The spiritual treasure He has given them is infinitely greater—they have been given new life in Jesus Christ! Now they are being asked to share their spiritual wealth in love.

This lesson also includes the persecution endured by Christians. Help the students realize that followers of Christ willingly endured these hardships because they knew their reward would be in heaven. The students will read that these persecutions led to more people following Christ because they too wanted the peace that only God can give even in turmoil. As St. John Chrysostom said, "The blood of martyrs is like water for the garden." Through persecution, the Church grew.

Help the students realize that missionaries are needed throughout the world and in all countries. Also help them realize they can be a missionary in their own area. Each time they show Christ's love through their kindness and hospitality, they are witnessing to the Lord. Even in their schools, their actions can encourage other students to want to share in God's love.

Remember that this age group might not be as receptive to spreading the Good News as we would hope. In fact some of them might not even want others to know they are followers of Christ because they might be singled out or bullied for their beliefs. Help them realize that all Christians through the ages have endured these problems. Help them realize the Holy Spirit gives them courage and strength to continue on their journey and to help them invite others to join them on their way to God.

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: Prokimenon: Common for Apostles—on last page of student book: "*Through all the world their voice resounds; their message reaches to the ends of the earth.* "

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 brainstorm about what they think a missionary does. Ask them if they think they could be a missionary. What would they have to do?

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 missionaries.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Read Matthew 28:16-20
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the icon of Jesus commissioning the Apostles. Share some of the facts from the back of the icon.
- 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:
 - Baptize them and teach the people.
 - To be with them always.
 - Jesus can help us stay focused and not go off the path.

Background Reading (Disciples)

"... The early Christians, living in a world ignorant of Christ, were acutely conscious of their mandate to proclaim Christ and to preach the good news of salvation. Just before He ascended to the Father, Jesus commanded His followers to 'make disciples of all the nations... Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you' (Mt. 28:19-20). He told them, 'you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, yes, even to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

"Christians have the duty of being witnesses (martyrs) to the Gospel of Christ. We may proclaim it directly by words, but we also affirm it by our way of life. Bearing witness means more than teaching. It includes a personal involvement in the message that is proclaimed. The Gospel is not a mere recitation of facts; it is the proclamation of an event which actively involves the listener. Jesus heals, forgives, raises and teaches us as surely He did the original hearers. The teaching of the Church is not a collection of stories from the past, but a living tradition that challenges us to an active faith of mercy and justice. Hence, the writings of the apostles and evangelists are read at every Liturgy and the Gospel Book is treated with great honor" (LLI 71).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. Justin the Philosopher.
- Possible answers:
They recognized their peace. They knew being with Christ must be worth the suffering.
They are not allowed in their churches; some are being killed.
We are on our journey to God; we will be rewarded with eternal life.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask the students to explain the importance of the Apostles.

7. Closing Prayers

(Found on last page of student book.)

Through all the world their voice resounds; their message reaches to the ends of the earth.
Prokimenon: Common for Apostles

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 research information about one of the Saints mentioned in the lesson. Share the information during the next class.
2. Brainstorm about ways to share the Good News in school, at home, in the grocery store, at work, and at other places. Make a poster that shows all the ways we can share the Good News.
3. Go into your church and look at the icon screen. Find the icons of the Apostles. Pray to thank the Apostles for sharing the Good News and enduring the persecution.
4. Research information about the persecution of the Church. Discuss how people endure. Make a plan for ways to endure persecution today.

Background Reading (The holy spirit: God is With Us)

"At the close of His earthly ministry Christ promised His followers that He would send them Another in His place who would with them forever, *'the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father'* (in 15:26). The Spirit came upon the Church at Pentecost and remains with us as the Seal and Guarantee of the Kingdom to come, the power of Christ working among us. It is the Holy Spirit who *'provides every gift. He is the One who inspires prophecy and perfects the priesthood; it is He who grants wisdom to the illiterate and turns simple fishermen into wise theologians. Through Him divine order comes in the organization of the Church'* (Vesper Hymn for Pentecost)" (DC 10).

Unit 4 Review

Lesson 14:

- 1) What are the basic rules that God gave His people to follow? In what book of the Bible are they found? (*The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus*)
- 2) In the Mystery of Crowning in Marriage, what do the crowns represent? (*The couple is crowned "with glory and honor." The crowning symbolizes that their marriage is a living relationship that will grow continually and find fulfillment in the Kingdom.*)

Lesson 15:

- 3) What does it mean to be "clothed with Christ"? When did that happen for Christians? (*We are "clothed with Christ" means that all that we do should be the way Jesus did it. People should recognize us by our kindness and love (our clothes). At our Baptism.*)
- 4) How does the word "Christian" remind us of our baptismal promise? (*The word "Christ" is in the word.*)

Lesson 16:

- 5) What kind of icon has the Christian family been called? (*A living icon of the Trinity*)
- 6) Explain how the family can be seen as a miniature Church according to St. John Chrysostom. (*The family is a community of believers gathered in the name of Christ; the family is a community in which people love and serve one another.*)

Lesson 17:

- 7) What Church leaders receive the Mystery of Holy Orders? (*Bishops, priests, and deacons*)
- 8) Our leaders of the Church (bishops, priests, and deacons) serve the whole community. Identify some of the ways they serve us. (*They serve us by offering the Divine Liturgy and help us encounter the Lord through the Mysteries. They offer us ways to grow closer to God.*)

Lesson 18:

- 9) Define hospitality. (*An attitude that welcomes others into our homes and lives.*)
- 10) Identify ways the Divine Liturgy can be compared to a banquet? (*People come together to share in a celebration and meal.*)

Lesson 19:

- 11) Why are Christians persecuted? (*They are persecuted for believing in Christ.*)
- 12) What is a missionary? Do we have to go to another country to be a missionary? (*A missionary is someone who shares the Good News of Christ. We can be a missionary anywhere.*)

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