

Unit Five

Never-Ending Journey

20. We Journey Alone with Christ

The private time we spend with God helps us develop our relationship with Him and forms the basis for our public activities in the Church. We need to pray, read Scripture, and sit quietly with the Lord to help our Christian spiritual life develop.

21. We Journey with Family and Friends

Our family and friends help keep us on the path as we journey together. They help us realize that God is with us always.

22. We Journey with The Church

The Church is Christ's Body, the visible extension among us. When we journey with the Church, we are walking with Christ and making our whole life holy.

23. We Become One with Christ

Our faithfulness to living out our life in Christ leads to our deification. .At the end of our journey, we become one with Christ forever. Our final transformation will be complete only when our bodies are resurrected in the life of the world to come.

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20—We Journey Alone with Christ

Objectives

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

- recognize that Christian spiritual life includes time alone with Christ.
- state that the private aspect of our faith is important as the basis of our public activities in the Church
- identify the Beatitudes as our guide from Jesus Who tells us how to live and be blessed.

For the Catechists

This last unit helps the students realize they are called to holiness. Being holy in today's world is difficult at all ages, but for this age group it is not even considered by some because of peer pressure. Many young people worry about being popular; they are not even thinking about being holy. For this reason these lessons are very important. Details are given as to where they can go and what they can do to keep themselves focused on their journey to God.

The unit is called "Never-Ending Journey" because we spend our lifetime growing in our relationship with God. An emphasis on this journey requiring a lifetime is important because sometimes young people view religious practices as part of the senior citizen lifestyle—not their age-group lifestyle. Help them realize that God calls all of us to work together on this journey because we never know when our journey will end. But remind them that senior citizens need to continue growing in their relationship just as younger people do. No one is ever done growing closer to the Lord.

In this lesson the Beatitudes are discussed as our way to be happy and blessed. Help the students realize that being blessed refers to our spiritual well-being and being happy refers to our material activities. Now the challenge is to make the students realize that being happy lasts just a short time but being blessed lasts a lifetime. Catechists should share (if they are willing) personal examples of being blessed in their lifetime. Also, the Beatitudes give students a chance to learn how to become grateful for their blessings even if they are not getting the recognition they see others get.

This unit includes "My Personal Journal." Take time to have the students respond to the questions. If possible, let them share their responses with each other. The goal of this section is to ask students to think about their journey and to realize the many ways they can stay focused on the path to God.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: "Nicene Creed—I Believe"

Icon: Icon of the Sign (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #5).

Closing Prayer: "The Beatitudes"—on last page of previous lesson in this manual

Pens, pencils, markers and white paper

1. **Opening Prayer**

Chant or recite the "Nicene Creed."

[Find this prayer in the Divine Liturgy books in your church.]

2. **Introduction**

Ask the students to brainstorm about being in the presence of the God. If possible, go into your church and allow students to sit wherever they want for 5 minutes. In advance, tell them to try to be quiet and peaceful as they sit surrounded by the icons. Discuss the experience when you return to the classroom.

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 being in the presence of the Lord. Also, allow time for discussion about the Beatitudes.

4. **Scriptural Reflection**

- Read Matthew 5:14-16
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the picture showing students helping. Ask them what picture from their life could have been placed in this book.
- 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:
 - Through us people see Jesus.
 - When we do something nice, we show how God wants to be with and help all people. Our kindness reflects God's love.
 - Helping a classmate study shows I want everyone to succeed; helping Mom clean shows that I value what Mom does

Background Reading (Our Whole Life)

"In the Liturgy we are often invited to "commend ourselves, one another and our whole life to Christ, our God." By this we mean that for Christians no area of life is meant to be left out of our following of Christ. Often people feel the opposite. They see only certain areas as being for God: church on Sunday or not violating the Ten Commandments. Everything else is for them. They see people who do more as 'fanatics.' In fact, people with this attitude are more like children who feel that they are meant to do whatever they want as long as their parents haven't expressly forbidden it. But Christ calls us to a whole style of living, and that involves more than a few explicit do's and do not's" (*Journey* TM 269).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. Simeon.
- Possible answers:
 God is the Fire. We should be inflamed by the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 I would smile at all people; I would compliment people; I would try to let a sad person know I want to help.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask the students to explain what it means to be sanctified. Ask them to share how hearing "The Holy things for the holy" makes them feel.

7. Closing Prayers

"The Beatitudes"—on the final page of this lesson in this teacher manual.

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 chart of the Beatitudes. Ask the students to add a definite example of a person or situation that shows people living the blessed life. Articles and pictures could be added.
2. Give the students time to pray. Go into church, if possible, or find quiet places to go to alone to read Scripture or to pray or to be silent. Often we talk about being in the presence of the Lord, but we never let students experience this aloneness with God.
3. Rewrite the Beatitudes in contemporary language. Encourage students to add specific details to show blessedness in action.

Background Reading (Spiritual Maturity)

"The mark of authentication of spiritual maturity, then, is growth in compassion, the presence and activity of the God-love within us. Without this, there has been no genuine growth. The love will transform the personality, but not change it into something alien. Some people will become more ascetic, silent and introspective. Others will become more active, outgoing and involved. While at an earlier stage a person may volunteer in a social ministry on Tuesday afternoons, at this stage the believer's commitment to others will be less planned, more natural, Hospitality will be more a way of life than one of the things we do for God. In each case, this growth in love is a freeing and perfecting of the unique image of God as existing already in that person. In whatever way it occurs, it will draw the person into a more loving communion with God, others and the whole creation" (*Light for Life III* 86).

THE BEATITUDES

(Matthew 5:3-12)

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind
of evil against you [falsely] because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they
persecuted the prophets who were before you.