

22—We Journey with The Church

Objectives

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

- recognize that the community is important because Christ has identified the Church as His Body, His visible extension among us.
- state that being faithful to our life in Christ will result in our divinization.
- define divinization as sharing in the divine nature of God.
- understand that Christians reflect the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

For the Catechists

The Church is the community of believers. Christ calls the Church His Body. Through the Church (the community of believers), the presence of Christ (His Body) is made real in our world today. Our Church gives us many ways for us to experience God is with us. We need to continue being an active member of the Church to keep our relationship with God alive and active as we experience God is with us

Divinization or deification is presented again in this lesson. The emphasis needs to be made so that students realize their potential today and the rest of their lives. Also, students need to recognize that their relationship with the Holy Spirit will affect their personality. By identifying the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22), Scripture identifies the personality of Jesus. Help the students realize that these qualities are signs of strength in the Lord. Help them realize this is the way they are to live out their daily life.

Spiritual guides are mentioned in this lesson. Our Eastern Church encourages us to have a spiritual guide to direct us under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. A spiritual guide is an elder in the faith who helps us set up the right Christian lifestyle and direct us to deepen our spiritual activities as we mature. Many times, our priest is our spiritual guide.

Attending Divine Liturgy at least once a week is a definite part of our journey. Help students realize that attending Divine Liturgy helps them to keep going. Through the Church, we are given many ways to gain strength to stay focused on our journey. Through the Church services, Feast days, and the Mysteries, we grow in our relationship with Christ. Now help these young people want to attend Church because they need to be "recharged" and energized by the Lord to continue on their journey throughout the week.

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 Lesson 20 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 share which part of the Liturgy or the Church year do they feel helps them grow in their relationship with God.

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 the Church.
- Allow time to complete "My Personal Journal." Share the responses with each other.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Read Ephesians 2:19-23.
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the picture. Ask them to picture their church in this picture.
- 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:
 - The Saints
 - Heaven
 - I attend Divine Liturgy

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from Aristides.
- Possible answers:
 - Helping other people.
 - Receiving mirovanije.
 - The icons

Background Reading (Our Church)

"As members of God's family, we belong to one another, and so we live an active **Community Life** as Church. Most importantly, we join one another in **worship**. Our style of worship in the Eastern Churches reflects the presence of the risen Christ among us in glory and joy. All the senses take part in our worship to express this glory. We see icons, vestments, candles; we smell incense and perfumes; we hear continual singing; we taste blessed foods and use physical gestures such as bowing, prostrating and cross ourselves to express our wonder at the glory of God" (DC 8).

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask the students to identify why we go to church?

7. Closing Prayers

"The Beatitudes"—on last page of Lesson 20 in this manual

Supplemental Activities:

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

1. Write a one-minute homily on divinization.
2. Make a chart of the "fruit of the Spirit." List the ways people can recognize these qualities in our personality.
3. Draw a path for your journey with the Church. Add the names of the Church services and activities that are part of the journey. Add the names of the people walking with you.

Background Reading (Service)

"Our Lord died for the sanctification of the whole person, body and soul. This is clear from the way the Liturgy is celebrated and from the words of the Liturgy itself... This is why our posture at worship is important. We can pray better if we pray with our whole being, and not only our mind is bent towards God, but our necks as well. To 'stand aright' is to give glory to God and is a manifestation of our inner joy at His presence. Holiness, then, should not be thought of as deprivation, a poverty of expression, but as a wholeness, in which we 'have it all together.' Holiness is the health of soul and body given us by Jesus Christ" (*Journey* TM 270).