

27—Saints Peter and Paul

Objectives

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

- recognize Saints Peter and Paul as "two great luminaries of the Church."
- state Saint Peter was called to become spokesperson for the Apostles and the leader of the Church.
- state that Saint Paul was called by Jesus to witness to the Good News.

For the Catechists

This last "Observance" lesson focuses on two Saints who are called by Jesus. The details given about Saints Peter and Paul help students realize that they were men who were willing to suffer for Christ. Details about their death remind us that they were willing to die for Jesus as Jesus was willing to die for us. Our eternal life with God is worth whatever we need to experience on earth. Also, these Saints show us that we need to share the Good News with all people. Saints Peter and Paul heard Jesus speak to them, and they responded to His call.

Use this lesson to help the students realize that they, too, are called by Jesus to tell others about God's saving plan for all people. Even though we do not hear God's voice, we do hear His Word through Scripture. We need to read the Bible to hear God talk to us, and we need to go to church to worship and thank God. When we come together as Church, we become the Body of Christ—our way to witness to our faith in Christ.

On Feast Days we need to take time to go to church. Regretfully, we sometimes check to see if our Church calendar says we need to be in church as an obligation. Instead we need to see the Feast Day celebration as a chance to stop and gain our strength before we continue on our journey. Feast Days ask us to stop and listen to details about past events and to recognize these events as happening today.

Throughout this book, we have been identifying ways to recognize our daily life events as part of our journey to God. Help the students recognize that Feast Days as days of celebration. We are celebrating the fact that this journey has been taken by many people throughout the ages. They have been rewarded in heaven for their faith and love. Now it is our turn to take the journey and keep our eyes focused on heaven as they did. During one Great Fast retreat, a priest asked us to look at the icons and see ourselves in the icon. Then, he told us to see ourselves as a future Saint whose journey will be recalled by future generations. He told us to remember that "for God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: "The Thanksgiving Hymn—May our Mouths be filled"

Icon: The Mystical Supper (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #10).

Closing Prayer: "Blessed be the name of the Lord" - in the Divine Liturgy books

Pens, pencils, markers, and white paper

1. Opening Prayer

Chant or recite "The Thanksgiving Hymn—May our Mouths be filled...."

[Find this prayer in the Divine Liturgy books in your church. This hymn is sung after we receive Holy Eucharist.

2. Introduction

Ask the students to share what they know about Saints Peter and Paul.

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 lives of Saints Peter and Paul.
- Allow time to complete "Prayers for the Journey."

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Read Matthew 16:17-19 and Acts 22:6-16
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the picture showing students reading Scripture. Ask them if this picture were of them, where would they be reading Scripture?
- 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:
(Answers will vary.)
When our choices help us grow closer to God, we know we are listening to Him.

Background Reading (Saints)

"The Church also celebrates the feasts of its heroes of faith, the saints, based on this understanding of God's glorification of humanity. Through their holiness and their heroism for the sake of the faith, they reveal the ongoing action of the Spirit in the life of the people of God, deifying them and exalting them by riches of faith and love. The saints do not replace Christ as the one mediator between God and humanity (ref 2 Tim 2:5-6). The rule of worship once again determines our faith. We ask the saints to pray and to intercede for us with God. Their ability to help us comes only from their union with God. Just as we ask others to pray for us, we can ask those who have already achieved unity with God to pray for us, We also pray for the saints, that their share in the divine life be continually deepened. Our veneration of the saints is actually a sign of our faith in the resurrection and of the solidarity of all faithful through God. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is the God of the living and not the dead (Lk 20:37-38). Our veneration of the saints is a mark of our trust in God, who always keeps His covenant with us, 'so that in [Christ] we might become the very holiness of God' (2 Cor 5:21)" (LLII 46-47).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. Clement of Rome
- Possible answers:
They were telling people about Jesus.
Yes, persecutions are occurring throughout the world. Check the news for details.
Possibilities: How did your families react to your suffering? They were Christians and encouraged me to continue preaching.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask the students to explain why we celebrate Feast Days.

7. Closing Prayers

Sing or pray "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Find the words in the Divine Liturgy books of your church. This prayer is before the dismissal.

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 page about the life of Saint Peter or Saint Paul in your "Faith Book." Find information to add to the details found in this lesson.
2. Write words of advice that Saints Peter and Paul would give to Christians today.
3. Read one of St. Paul's Epistles found in the New Testament. While you are reading, think about how the people of his day might have responded. Then think about how we respond to his words today. Write a letter back to St. Paul and tell him what part of his epistle helps you follow Jesus.

Background Reading (Divine Liturgy)

"The celebration of the Liturgy is the center of our spiritual life. There are some who might say that Christianity is better expressed in service to the community, or in our private prayer to God, that churches and dogmas are old-fashioned, that worship is only empty words and rituals, but still most people have very strong feelings about the Liturgy. It is the main gathering place for the parish community, and it gives us our identity as Christians. On the deepest level, this identity is that we are members of the Body of Christ. This is the gospel according to St. Paul, "we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. (Romans 12:5)" "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? (1 Corinthians 6:15)" This identity is manifested as we partake of the one loaf, the bread that has become the body of Christ, and of the one cup, the wine that has become the blood of Christ. Since we can only receive one Christ, it is the Eucharist that is the center of Christian unity and solidarity" (Father David Petras, "Worship in the Twentieth Century," June, 1996).