

Great Lent
Giveaway
2011

Benefitting
The Ukrainian
Orthodox
Church
Monastery
Initiative



Youth Group Session 1

Below you will find a list of commonly asked questions concerning Orthodox Monasticism. Discuss each question after reading the answer.

What is Monasticism?

- In the Orthodox Tradition the monastic calling is considered to be a personal gift of God to the individual soul for his salvation and service to the Body of Christ. The monastic vocation is the calling to personal repentance in a life dedicated solely to God. The ultimate Christian virtue of love is sought by the monk or nun primarily through prayer and fasting, and through the exercise of the Christian virtues of poverty, chastity, humility and obedience. (Orthodox Faith Vol. II: Worship, Fr. Thomas Hopko)
- The ancient Christian practice of withdrawal from the world in order to dedicate oneself fully and intensely to the life of the Gospel, seeking union with Jesus Christ. (Orthodox Wiki)
- Many call it, "the barometer of spiritual life of the Church".
- A call to a life of stillness

What is a Monastery?

- This is the place where monastics (monks and nuns) retreat to live a life dedicated to God and prayer.
- There are different types of monastic living:
Cenobium: monks and or nuns living, praying, and working together as a community. A Lavra (which Pochaiv is a lavra), is one of the largest monasteries.
Skete: a very small monastic community with one elder and only a few monks (sometimes no more than two). These monks/nuns conduct most of their prayer and work in private and they come together on Sundays, feast days and sometimes for meals.
Hermits: This is the highest form of monastic asceticism. These monks/nuns do not live in any type of community but live in solitude (alone).
Ascetic means to practice strict self-denial as a measure of spiritual discipline

What is a monk/nun?

- A person who has chosen to leave the outside world and "marry" themselves to Christ.
- They vow to simply live by God's Commandments.
- They vow to live by three simple ways: 1. obedience, 2. chastity and 3. poverty.
- Monks and nuns practice "hesachysm" – the spiritual struggle of purification, illumination and divinization.
- Live the life of the Church in a direct and immediate manner

Why "hesachysm"?

- Monks and nuns strive for a pure life because our Jesus told us, "be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48

Who is the model for an Orthodox Monk?

- Jesus Christ, Himself!!
- Christ went into the wilderness to pray and fast
- Christ is perfect and monastics (as do all Christians) strive for that perfection.