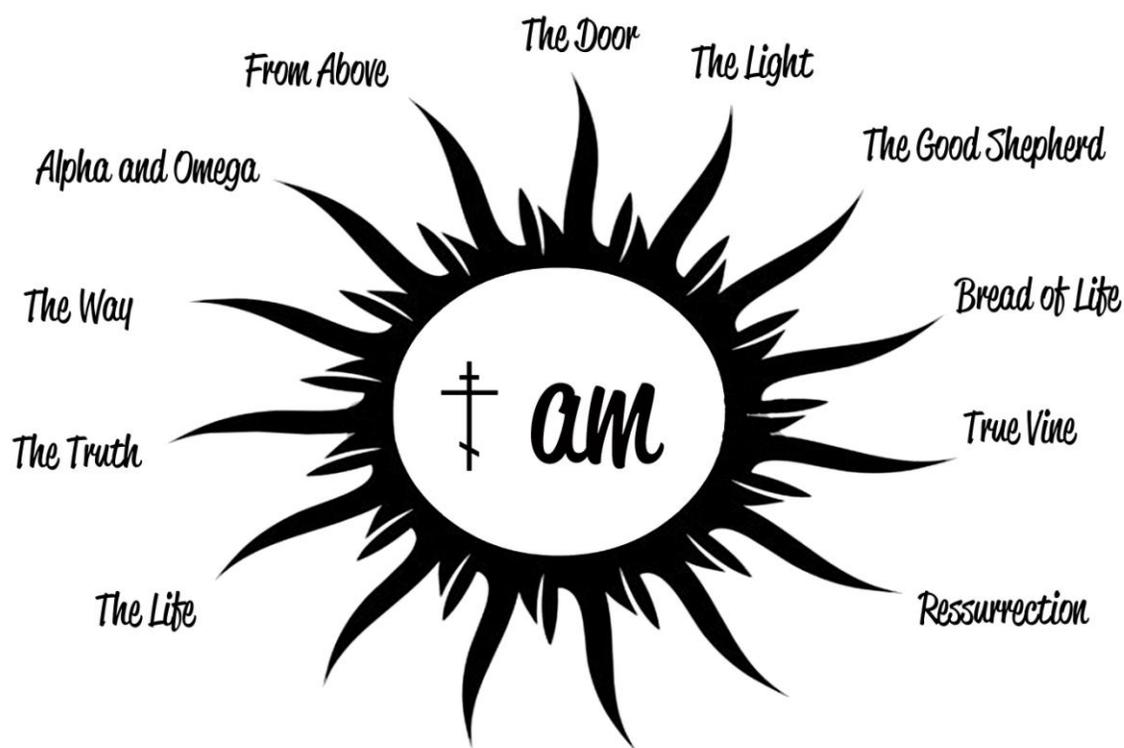


Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA



Consistory Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry 2014-2015

I Am Workbook

LEADER'S EDITION WITH
INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
For ages 4-7

2014

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***I Am* - Leader's Guide Introduction:**

This curriculum aims to help the youth understand:

- their relationship to Christ through His *I Am* statements
- their relationship to others based on the *I Am* statements
- specific ways that they may emulate Christ

This curriculum is designed to be carried out in one lesson per meeting, however adjust in response to the participants. If you find that they want more time to discuss a particular idea or lesson, others may be shortened or abbreviated, as long as the main understandings above are addressed. The curriculum is to be used in conjunction with the book by Fr. Anthony Coniaris, No Man Ever Spoke As This Man: The Great I Am's of Jesus. This book should be used by the leader for personal reference on the topic. They may be obtained through Light and Life Publishing.

This leader's guide includes many suggested topics and activity ideas, and notes are in bold face. Modify based on your group and their maturity. Be sure to check with your Spiritual Father if any significant changes are made.

The Participant Workbook may be utilized in two ways:

1. Needed section copied and provided on an as needed basis
2. Full workbook printed and bound (suggested usage)

General Notes and Suggestions:

Professional Development: You may be interested in reading more about the theme before teaching. The Office of Youth Ministry website provides additional resources or the OYM office may answer any questions you may have. Also, the commentary included in the Orthodox Study Bible can be very useful to your understanding of the content.

Modifications: This curriculum is written for the median age level of 4-7 year olds, but the maturity and academic abilities of youth can vary greatly, as well as their familiarity with the topics being discussed. Although there are some specific ideas for modification listed throughout the curriculum, here are a few general suggestions:

- Modifying for younger participants/lower abilities:
 - Paraphrase the Bible passages for participants. It is important for participants to become familiar with the process of finding specific passages and reading the language, but if you feel a particular passage will be far too difficult to understand you may want to put it in your own words. This may also be useful if you find the participants need more time working on a different section of the lesson.
 - Answer questions together. In most cases, the participants are given a space to either write a few words or draw a picture of the concept. If you feel participants may need more explanation, ask them to answer together using the white boards or large paper.

Session One

Who Do You Say I Am?

Who is Jesus?

Needed Items:

Colored Pencils, markers
Copies of Participant Sheets
Orthodox Study Bibles
King Costume
Pictures or photos of people or objects easily
identifiable by children of this age

Preparation:

Choose your pictures/photos as described in "Needed Items", ensure that they are printed and cut out to a size no larger than 5" x 7".

10 minutes- Introduce yourself as the leader and have participants introduce themselves to the group. Begin with this simple and fun activity to introduce the theme.

Instructions

1

Pick picture for each person playing. Don't let any of the players see the pictures until the game starts. The pictures/photos can represent real people you know, animated characters, storybook characters, animals, toys, etc. There are endless possibilities, but keep in mind the age- and group-appropriateness of the choices. Don't make them so obscure or difficult that people give up.

2

Stick one label on each person's back. Do not allow him to see the name before you put it there.

3

Tell everyone the rules. Each person gets 10 "yes or no" questions to find out who she is. For instance, she can ask, "Am I real person?" "Am I a male?" "Am I alive?" "Did I invent something?" "Am I in a current movie?" and so forth. The questions cannot be either/or questions like "Am I male or female?" The players have to roam around the room to ask other people the questions. Tell them they can't ask only one person all the questions; the point is to mingle. Whoever guesses correctly first wins the game. No hints are allowed, unless everyone is stuck and can't figure out who they are. For children on the younger end, you may need to help them ask their questions.

4

Vary the game by using the names of objects instead of people and characters. If everyone is enjoying the game, make a second set of tags and play again.

Once complete, then have participants read through the following paragraph to introduce the general topic. Conduct a short discussing comparing their opening activity to what they read.

Introduction:

As you may know, this year's theme is "I AM!" The lessons in this workbook will help us to learn more about this theme. Throughout His time here on Earth, Jesus told His followers about the many ways He can be involved in our lives. He is the Door, the Bread of Life, the One from Above, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the Resurrection, the True Vine, the King, and the Alpha and the Omega. He gave us these examples to help us to know that God is always with us and to help us to see His guiding hand in everything we do. Let's begin by preparing our books.

5 minutes: Pass out the workbook to each participant. Allow them time to write their name (or help them to write their name).

I Am!

Who is Jesus? Who are you? We just played a game asking questions to figure out who was on our back. Who do you think Jesus is? Allow time for discussion. Write their answers on a white board, chalk board, or poster board. Which of these words do you think best describes Jesus? Let them choose five words. Once this is complete, have the older children write the words in the space provided in the workbook. For younger children, help them to write and then they may draw a picture of one of the words.

Who Do You Say I Am?

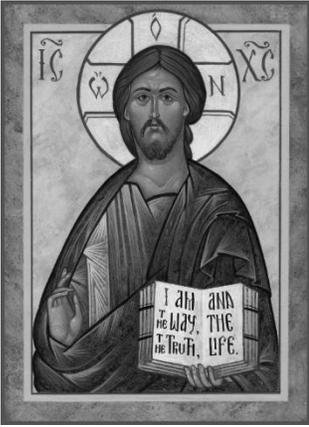
We know that Jesus is God, but at the time when Jesus was here on Earth, not everyone was sure of who Jesus was. His followers, the disciples, tried to teach others about Jesus, but not everyone believed them. Some people were confused and wondered how Jesus could be God and man. Some people, like kings and emperors, were angry because their subjects listened to Jesus and the disciples instead of them. Other people believed that Jesus was actually other more well-known religious men. Take a look at the verses below to see who people thought Jesus was.

Who does Jesus say He is?

As I said before, Jesus tells us who He is in many different ways. Let us look at this next page. There are many different pictures for us to choose from as to who Jesus is, let's look at each one and circle those that we think are correct.

Allow time for this exercise - encourage discussion and tell them not to circle until everyone is sure that is a correct answer. The pictures to circle: door, king, light, cross(resurrection and life), shepherd, Communion (bread of life), and vine.

When completed - allow time for the participants to color the icon of Christ in the middle. This concludes the first session.



Session Two

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

What does it mean to be "the way, the truth, and the life?"

How does the truth help us?

In what ways is Jesus all three?

Needed Items:

Bibles

Participant Worksheet

Items for Way & Truth Trip

Map of your location

Scrapbook stickers - nice stickers to adorn icons

candles - one per each participant

Pre-lesson Preparation:

Way & Truth Trip

Choose a location for your "trip". Ensure that your map is easy to understand for young children. Have the children gather at your start point. You will need to designate (#) locations for your road signs. Print out arrow signs pointing in various locations. You could color code your arrows that green is the correct route, red and yellow are incorrect. Place a cross on the arrow that is pointing in the correct direction. At each location along the way your arrows should point in different directions with only one pointing in the correct direction.

Participants will use their maps to determine the correct route. If weather permits, hold this lesson outside on parish property or a local park.

This is an excellent session for parents to be involved for the "trip" section. Once they reach the final destination, parents could remain for the session or leave. If parents are unable to participate, ask the teenagers of the parish to help with this activity as guides for the younger children.

20-30 minutes: Welcome participants and conduct your "trip".

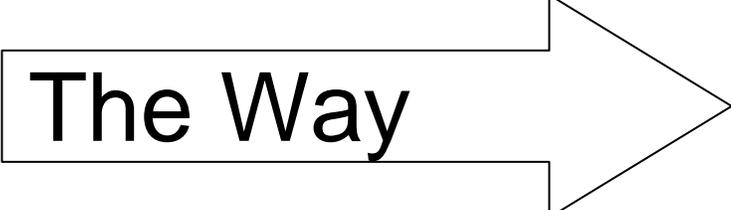
5 minutes: Read the Bible passage below to introduce the lesson on the way, the truth, and the life.

John 14: 1 – 7

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am you may

be also. And where I go you know and the way you know.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on, you know Him and have seen Him.”

Jesus told His disciples that He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” Let’s take a look at what each of these means to us and our relationship with Christ.



The Way

Knowing the right way

When we went on our trip, why were there so many arrows? Allow time for answers. That is right!

For children in school: We make many decisions each day about the right way to do something and in many cases there can be more than one right way to do things. For example, you probably have to make choices about how to get all of your homework done each night, as well as, attend extra-curricular activities to which you have made commitments. As long as the work gets done, it doesn’t matter too much whether you do the homework before practice, after you get home, or during a study hall at school.

For preschool children: Can you tell me how to get to church from your house? What kind of roads do you take and what buildings do you see? (Allow students a chance to describe their route as best as possible. Ask them if there is more than one way to get to church from their house and look for similarities and differences in the routes they take or landmarks they recognize)

How Can We Know the Way tells us that there is only one way to enter the kingdom of heaven, and that is Jesus. He is the Way! Although there is only one, the good thing is that we know the path and it has been made very clear to us. If we remain on the right path by doing what Jesus asks us to do, we can’t get lost!

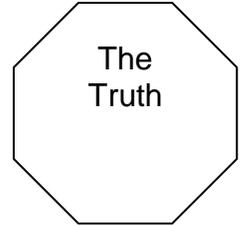
5 Minutes: Give the participants statements and ask them if they are true or false (a lie). Sample statements might be:

- Fairies live on rainbows - false
 - Bananas taste like apples - false
 - Rain gets you wet - true
- Make your statements simple yet fun.

Talk about the definition of truth and what clues they used to determine the truth in the game.

10 minutes: Take the class outside into the sunshine. Give each participant a candle and have them light them. Ask the participants to answer the following questions:

- Is your candle making light? How do you know that?
- Is it lighting up something near you?
- Why does the candle not throw light in the area around you?
- If the sun is brighter than the candle does that mean that the candle is not a "real" light?



Read the following passage when you come back to the classroom.

The Truth

Think about your candle. What happened when out blew it out? Nothing really happened because the sun was shining, right? The truth of Jesus Christ is like the Sun. Its light is everywhere and nothing can shine brighter than Him. The candles were all small parts of the light - little bits of truth that men may "discover" in life- but none of them were the whole truth, which would answer all questions

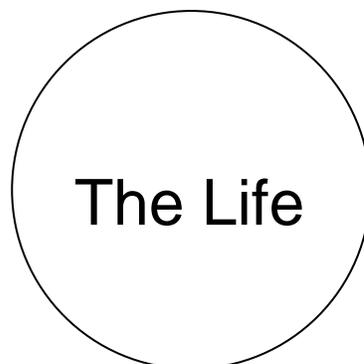
Keeping True

It is one thing to know the truth and another to live it. What are some ways that we can show that Jesus is Truth? (going to church, choosing to do what Jesus would want us to do, being an example to others, etc.)

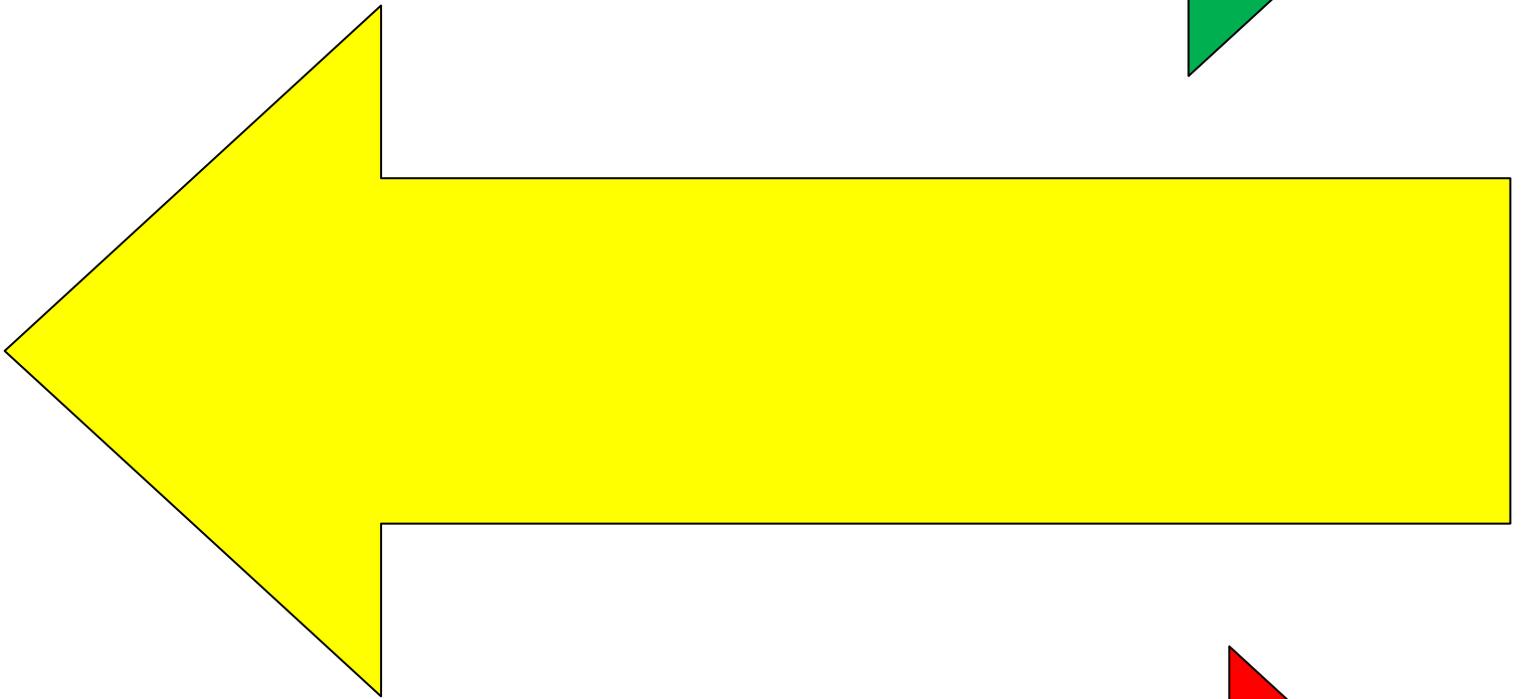
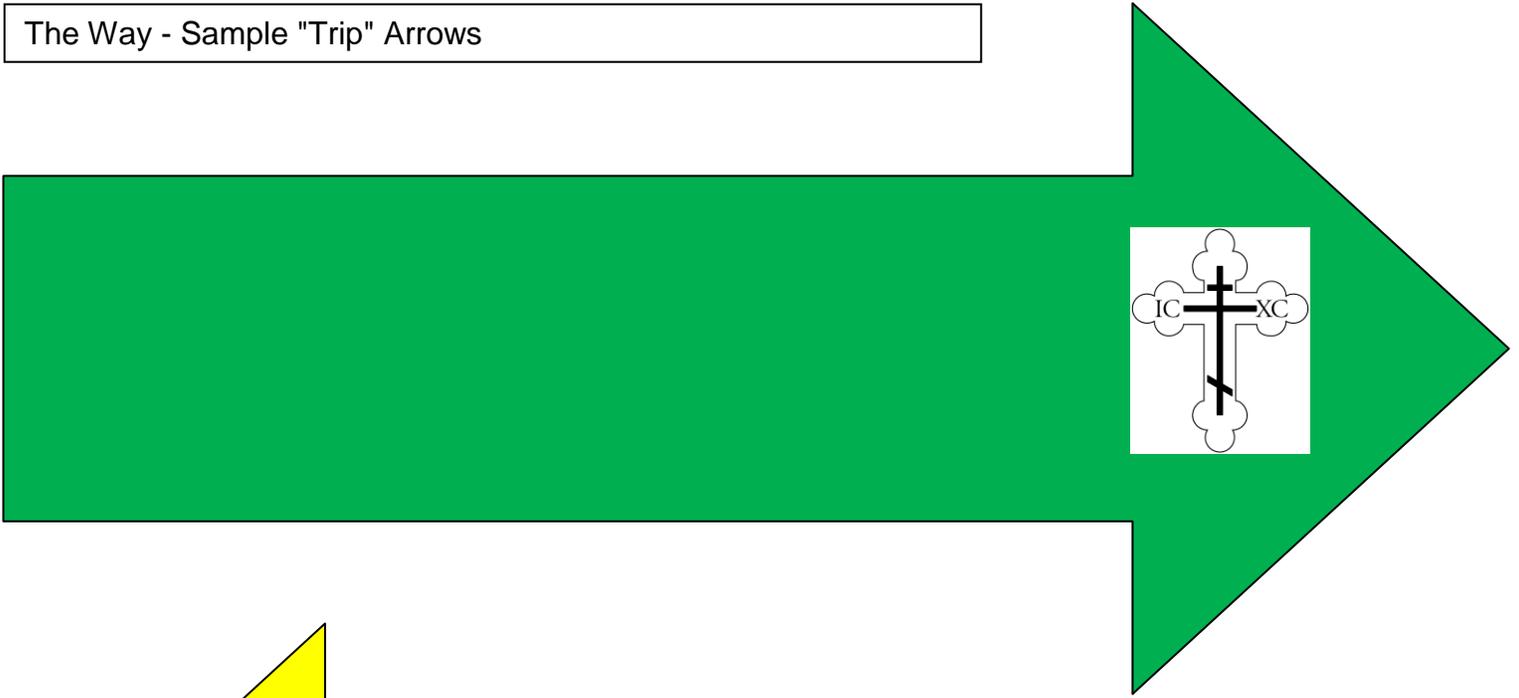
Life

Today we learned that Jesus is the Way to follow to be a good, loving person. Following Him is true and real. If we follow Jesus' way with truth then we will have life with Him forever. Can you draw a picture of life with Jesus? When done, add your icon of Jesus - the Way, the Truth and the Life and decorate it to make it beautiful.

Allow time to draw the picture and then give them a copy of the provided icon. Use the scrapbooking stickers to illuminate.



The Way - Sample "Trip" Arrows



Session Three

The Good Shepherd



What is a shepherd and what does it take to be a good one?
How is Christ the Good Shepherd and who is His flock?

Needed Items:

Penned in area

Participant workbook

Chart paper or white board

Scrapbook stickers

Photo of Holy Chrismation or brush and container of Holy Oil

(photos may be found in the *Teaching Pics* pack from Orthodox Christian Education Center or utilize the book *Christina Learns the Sacraments* from Amazon)

10 minutes: Good Shepherd game. Several adults will be designated as the shepherds - the children are the sheep. Give the following instructions:

The sheep are to "graze" in the open area by crawling around and making sheep noises. The shepherds are to begin calling for their sheep. The sheep will need to listen carefully to hear *their* shepherd and make their way to him or her. The Shepherd is responsible for all of his or her sheep. They have only two minutes to gather their sheep. Once a sheep makes it to the shepherd they are safe. The shepherd should do whatever it takes to make his sheep safe.

The participants do not know - but during the game some adults or fellow participants will appear as wolves and try to steal the sheep. We will see what the shepherds' reactions are. If the children are mostly of the younger ages you may want to skip this step so as not to scare them unduly.

Follow up questions might include:

- Was the game easy or hard? Why? What would have made it easier?
- Sheep, what made it hard to hear your Shepherd?
- Shepherd, what was it like to direct your sheep when they didn't hear your voice?
- How is this like listening for the ways Jesus wants us to follow Him?

10 minutes: Begin the session by briefly reviewing the previous sessions and name the I Am's that have been covered. Paraphrase the bible verses. Ask the children what does Jesus say makes a good shepherd? Help them along with answers.

Luke 15: 3-7

So He spoke this parable to them saying: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.



A good shepherd: Each sheep in the flock is important, and the shepherd will spend more time and energy looking for the lost one, than on taking care of the whole group because he loves the sheep and it is his job to care for them.

John 10: 3- 5

"To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."



A good shepherd: There is a strong relationship between the shepherd and his sheep; they follow him and know him because he cares so deeply about them and takes such good care of them.

John 10:11-15

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."



A good shepherd: will do anything for the sheep because they are his and his responsibility; a person who's job is to care for the sheep may not do as much to take care of them. Do any of you have a pet? Do you take care of them? Do you love them? What do you do to make sure they are happy and safe? How does Jesus take care of you and make sure you are safe and happy? Jesus did give his life for us, His sheep - that is how much He loves us.

John 10:27

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."



A good shepherd: is always there and paying attention to the sheep, so they know him and listen to him.
Remember the sheep game and how we followed the voice of our shepherd!

Have you ever gotten lost from your mom or dad? How did that feel? Jesus tells us that if we love and follow Him like the sheep - He will make sure that we never get lost!

10 minutes: Show a photo of Holy Chrismation and discuss that this is when the Holy Spirit comes down to accept us as one of the Church - one of the flock! Explain how and why sheep are branded. Explain that during our Chrismation we are "branded" by our baptism and Chrismation. Show the brush and explain how the cross is placed on our body. You can use a small paint brush to show the act on each child. We also wear our crosses to show that we belong to Jesus. We usually receive our cross at our Baptism. Allow the children time to use the brush and make the cross on each other. Hands, feet, lips, eyes, ears, chin and chest. Wrap up the lesson. Your priest may be able to attend and show them Holy Chrism and the actual brush used in anointing.



I Know My Own

As you have learned, a good shepherd keeps track of every member of the flock for which he is responsible. He also makes sure that others know that his sheep belong to him. In what ways do we show others that we are part of Christ's flock?

Allow time for children to illuminate their icon of the good Shepherd.

Additional Activity: Pocket Prayers

This simple little project will provide participants with a portable reminder of the Word and how to continue looking UP-ward.

Needed items:

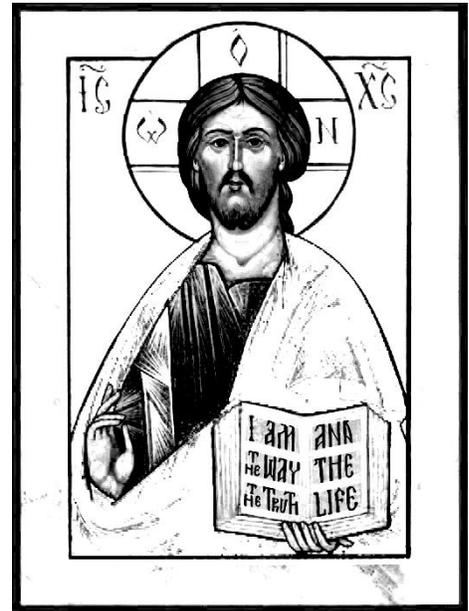
Printed prayers or short passages from scripture

Paper Icons

Markers

Glue

laminator/laminator or contact paper



The prayers and icons should be no larger than a business card so that they are easily portable or able to be kept in a pocket.

Allow the participants to choose a prayer and an icon. They may "illuminate" or decorate the prayer. Have them pair up the icon and prayer back- to- back and then laminate them for use.

Alternative Ideas:

You may purchase blank printable business cards. Print the prayers on one side on print icon line drawings on the other. Allow the participants to color in the icons and illuminate the prayers. Laminate.

Session Four

The Door

What do doors provide for us?
How is Christ a door in our lives?

Needed Items:

Alice in Wonderland Animated Movie

Participant worksheets

Door hangers (may be found at various craft stores)

Icon of Christ

glue

paint, permanent markers, flowers, items to decorate the door hanger

10 minutes: Watch the section of classic cartoon movie, *Alice in Wonderland* where Alice must choose a door to enter and what she had to go through to enter that door.

Ways to use doors

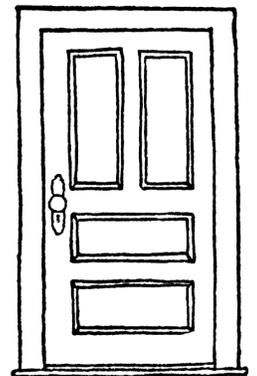
It might seem like a pretty simple question, but how do we use doors? Make a list of the ways we can use a door and what doors help us to do.

(to make it easier to get to parts of a building, to protect things, to block things out, etc.).

Jesus tells us:

John 10:9

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.



The Door of the Sheep

Do you remember when we talked about Jesus being the Good Shepherd. Well sheep live in pen. It is like a big circle or square that has a fence made of wood or rocks. Have you ever been to see animals who live inside a fence? How did you have to get in to pet them? The door is the way to get into the pen and the shepherd acts as the door to protect the sheep from any danger. As the good shepherd who watches over us, His flock, Christ acts as both the door that opens up for us and closes to protect us from danger.

Christ the Door

If we know of Jesus' door and walk in with Him, what do you think is inside Jesus' door?

Everything we need, Life - help the younger children print their answers.

What does Christ protect us from by closing the door?
He protects us from the Evil One and things that may hurt us

The Door

Jesus Christ is *the* Door, not just any door to heaven. There are lots of people and things that try to take our attention away from Jesus in life, but we need to make sure we are paying attention to the choices we make and the directions we go. If we pick the wrong door it might not lead us where we want to go, or maybe it won't even open. We also have to make sure we are ready to enter the door. The door to heaven, Jesus, is always open, but we need to live the life He asks us to and follow His directions so that we fit His size and shape of the door. Remember what Alice had to do to go through the right door?

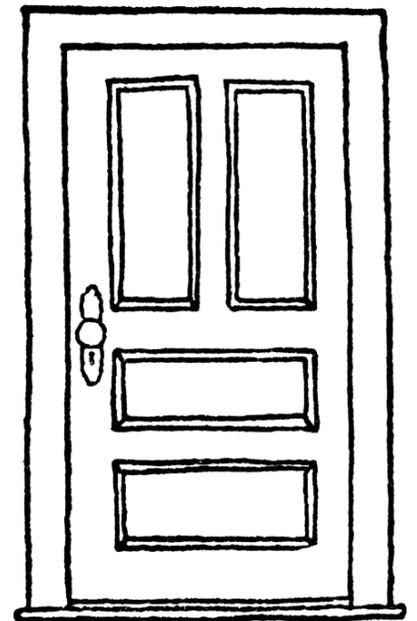
What was different about the doors? What did Alice have to do to enter through the doors? How are we like Alice? We need to fit through Christ's door. If time allows, let the children "illuminate" the icon with stickers or drawings.

Activity:

Door Hangers: Have the children paint or color their door hanger. They can then glue on the icon of Christ. The door hanger may be decorated with icons and the passage "I Am the Door..." Explain that they should hang this on one of their doors at home to remind them the Jesus is the correct door to choose!

Door Cross: Purchase wooden crosses from any local craft store. Crosses that are thinner in depth work better. Have the participant beautify the cross with sharpies, silk flowers, et. Add an icon of Christ and the passage, "I am the Door..."

These should be hung on the interior of their family home front door as a reminder every time they exit of Christ in their life.



Session Five

The True Vine

What does a vine need to thrive?
How is Jesus the vine of our lives?

Needed Items:

Plant - one with flowers would be ideal

Participant workbooks

flower pots - one for each child

potting soil

seeds (ivy seeds ideal but any flower or plant would work)

Supplies for family craft (optional)

Book(optional) - *The Man and the Vine* (may be purchased through Ancient Faith Publishing)

This session may need to be split into two sessions.

5 minutes: Quickly review previous lessons. Be sure to fill in for participants who have missed any of the sessions.

15 minutes: Sketch activity and share drawings.

Sketch it out

Bring out your plant. Ask the children to describe the plant. Make sure they identify all parts: trunk, branches, leaves, flowers or fruits, roots. Allow them time to sketch their own vine and branches in the space provided.

15 minutes: Read the Bible passage below (paraphrase for younger children). Take time to explain the passage. Read through each of the parts of the vine. Have participants add to or change their sketches as needed.

John 15: 1-5

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing."

Jesus tells us in the bible passage that He is the vine and God the Father is the person who takes care of the vine. He also tells us that if we live with Jesus in our life it is like being a

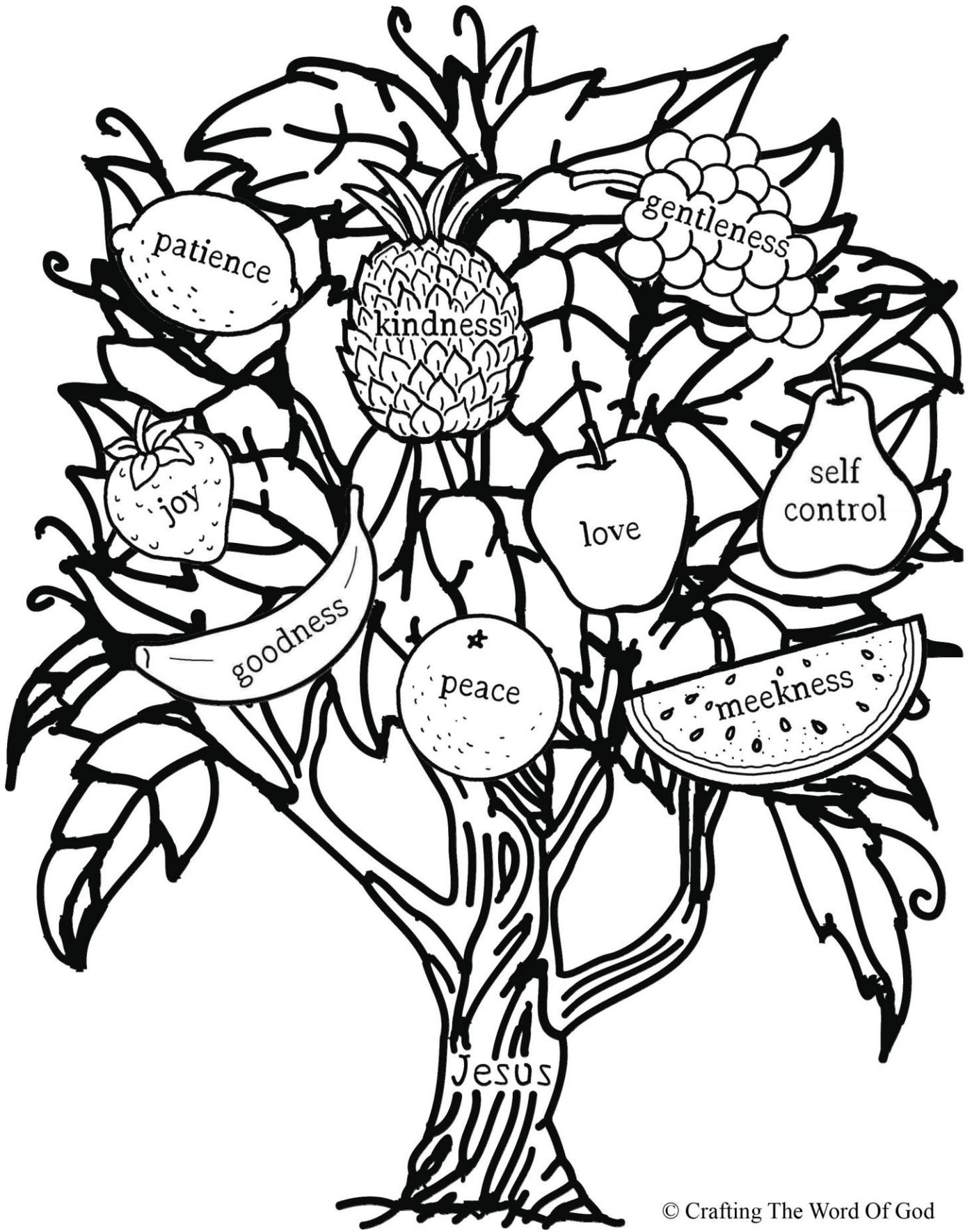
branch on the vine. What does that mean? *Allow some time for answers.* Let's look at the icon in our book. Where is Jesus? Yes! He is in the middle - He is the vine. Who is in the branches? The apostles. We are just like the apostles - we are also branches on Jesus' vine. What happens if you break off one of the branches? *It will die.* If we don't stay close to Jesus we may also wilt and feel sad and have no energy. Do you know what the roots do? *They provide the water and food to the vine/plant.* Jesus provides us with all the things we need to be healthy in our lives. What are ways we can stay a part of Jesus' vine and make good fruit? *At this point go to the page with fruit of the spirit tree and discuss each of these and how they can live each fruit.*

Take a "field trip" with the participants, Have them look at the electric poles on the nearest street. Ask them what the difference are between the pole and the trees surrounding them. The electric/telephone poles have no roots. They could be easily uprooted; they have nothing to give them nourishment to still be alive, nothing to help them grow fruit or leaves. Highlight being "rooted" in Christ. How does this help us? A strong root system in the Church and Christ might include things like reading the Bible, learning prayers, attending services, etc. Participants can sketch these parts of the roots.

Living a life that shows other people how blessed we are to be part of Jesus' vine. This might include attending services, being kind to others, following the commandments, etc. How is each of us like a branch on the Vine? Ask what the difference is between a vine that just grows (bears) leaves and one that bears leaves and fruit. What makes the fruit special? Have the participants add names of their fellow participants to the branches. They may also add names of family and friends.

What fruits might you add to the vine you have sketched? Be sure to label them on your drawing. Pass out the hand outs, Fruit of the Spirit. Discuss each fruit with the participants and indicate that these are the fruits that the Holy Spirit provides for us to use to be "fruitful".

Activity: Have the children decorate their flower pots with paint, stickers, jewels, etc. Help them to print *I Am the Vine*. When dry(perhaps after a snack or meal), help them to place in the potting soil and plant the seed. Explain to them that they are the "vinedresser" and will help care for the vine/plant and watch how it grows!



© Crafting The Word Of God

Additional Activities:

Family Activity: Invite your participant's family to join you at a certain time. Conduct this activity provided by Orthodox Education Blogspot <http://orthodoxeducation.blogspot.com/2011/02/icon-family-tree.html>

Vine Cross:

If you still have good weather, go outside and trim some pliable vines or branches (ferns work well!) If you find ferns, strip of the feathery leaves. Then you will want to wind the stem into a cross. Utilize some natural twine or decorative ribbon to hold the cross together.



Session Six

I am a King

How do we make sure that He is the king of our lives?

Needed Items:

Colored Pencils, markers
Participant Workbook
Orthodox Study Bibles
King Costume



Preparation:

Ask an adult or one of the participants to become King of your town. For example, King Pittsburgh. Tell them that you will ask them to join the group at some point. Their entrance should be made into a big deal. Give them the opportunity to interact with the group, all the while acting very "royal", ie. making demands, assuming people will go out of their way for them, expecting the best, etc.. Allow your King plenty of time to prepare for this, do not ask them five minutes prior to the session.

Welcome! Who remembers what we discussed at our last session? Take a few moments to allow participants to remember the theme and discussion on "who is Jesus?" Great! Let's look at a new I Am that Jesus gave to us. Jesus said, "I am a King". Many people thought Jesus, would be a king coming to save them from the rule of evil leaders. They knew that the prophets had told of the coming of a man who would be the "king of kings." Jesus is our king, but He did not come to sit on a throne and rule a kingdom here.

What words describe a king? For younger children allow time for discussion and help them write one or two words. For older children allow them to write their own words.

What kind of king is Jesus?

Allow time for discussion and to write descriptive words. Ask them if King City was more like the *King* page or the *Jesus* page? Why? How was he different? What are the differences between the *King* list and the *Jesus* list?

5 minutes: Talk to the participants about how we can treat Jesus as the king of our lives. Read the next two sections, then have participants answer the follow up question.

Philippians 2: 10-11

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Obeying the King

Even though Jesus is not a worldly king, we are told that we are expected to obey Him like one. Every King has an army. His army swears to follow whatever He tells them to do. In what ways can we treat Jesus like He is our king?

Pre-reading the entire "...I Am a King" section in the book (pages 119-123) will provide additional answers to guide the participants to. Especially in the older grades, conversation may gravitate to the idea that a good king is someone for whom you make sacrifices, and who does the same for you. Jesus sacrificed His life for us, what do we sacrifice to make room for Him in our lives?

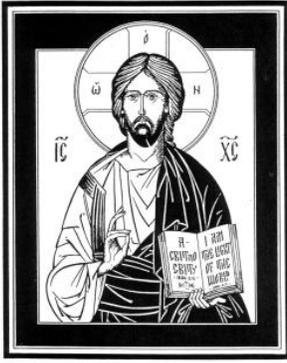
Wrap up your session with a meal or fun activity. Allot time to illuminate the icon.

Notes for this Session: You may want to rearrange and have this session fall during the Nativity season. In this way, you can tie in the birth of The King of Kings. Hold an additional discussion based on the Nativity scripture readings.

Certain topics to touch upon:

- Why was King Herod threatened by the possibility of a new king?
- What type of king were the wise men looking for?
- How did Jesus show us what type of king he was going to be based upon his birth?





Session Seven

The Light of the World

Where does Christ's light shine in our world?
How do we make sure that we let the light in?

Needed Items:

Copies of Participant Workbooks

One Votive Candle per family (three or five day clear church votives are ideal - preferable plastic case)

One taper candle per participant (and one for each family member of that participant)

Strong flashlight

Flashlights to use for activity

Preparation: place the candles or votives around the room under tables/chairs or in darker areas that you would need a flashlight to help see.

15 minutes: Introduce theme of the session with the Bible verse below. What would be different if there was no light. No sun, no electricity, no candles....nothing? What types of lights help people in the dark (encourage them to think in bigger picture, stars, light houses, runway/landing strips at airports, etc.).

Have you ever been afraid of the dark. How did you feel, what made or makes you feel better? "At one time or another, most people are afraid of the dark. That is ok! We know that the many things we mentioned make us feel better or safe. Let's see what Jesus tells us about light.

10 minutes: work through the next few sections highlighting that the darkness is not a place we usually like to be, and it is harder to navigate.

John 8:12

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Being Without the Light

Being in the dark is a little scary in many ways. We may become lost and even end up getting hurt. It's the same when we're in the darkness of sin. We become lost and hurt ourselves. When we're in the dark and without the light of truth we can't find the right way to God. We need light!

Finding the Light

We need a special light to shine away the darkness of sin, but what kind of light does this? You need to be close to the base of a lamp if you want to be in its light. Take the flashlight and shine it down or at the wall. Have the children take turns placing body parts into and out of the light. We want to be IN Jesus' light. Jesus shines His light of truth, love, and

forgiveness into our hearts and lives. *Light and Life* and *Light and Health* help us to learn more about the importance of Light in our lives.

20 minutes: Have participants conduct the "flashlight search" and then proceed to the church family activity.

The Light that Guides

There are candles hidden around the room. Use the flashlight to find them! **Tell them how many there are to find.** Did using the flashlight help to find the candles? Whether we've been to a place a hundred times, or never before, having light to guide our way is always helpful. Christ is the Light - like the flashlight - that provides guidance in our lives at all times. Whether we've faced a problem many times before or are facing it for the first time, thinking about the guiding of Light of Christ helps us to follow the right path.

At this point, all participants will proceed to the church building. Invite the parents to join you for this section of the session. There will be a special votive candle in front of the Icon of Christ. Each participant will be given a taper candle that was found in the search and a votive for their home. If family members are unable to join you, have instructions ready to send home with the candles. Have any participants without family members present conduct the activity with you as you are their spiritual family. Say to the participants:

From page 43 *You are Lights* " He who lives with Christ not only has light but also becomes light for others. The same Jesus who said, "I am the light of the world." also said, "you are the light of the world." It is not our light. It is Christ's light that is reflected in our lives as the moon reflects the sun."

Ask each participant to come up and light his or her candle from the votive in front of the Icon of Christ. As they are doing this, ask them - "Is the flame of your candle any different from that of the flame on the votive candle?" The flame is almost exactly the same - it is not the original flame but it was made from the original - just like you. Continue from the book, " True, compared to Jesus our light may be only a candlelight but it is still light. It still shines and provides light in the darkness. Thus we may say that the light of God shines in:

1. the Savior: "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)
2. The Scriptures "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105)
3. The Saints: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

In a world where men create things that are not very nice or hurtful, surely it is part of our responsibility as God's children to be lights in that darkness.. lights that cannot be put out. By your actions, living like Christ, how many people might be able to see the light, who might have never had the opportunity without you. Look at your candle, is it a steady flame? No, it

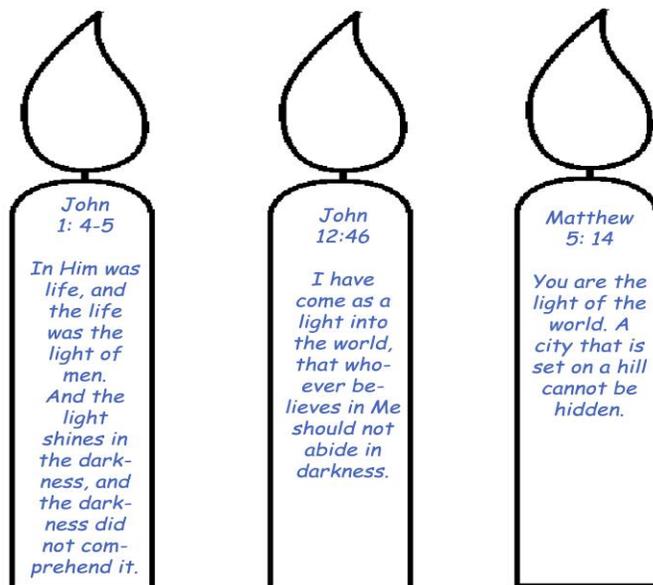
flickers - the wind is like life - we are tested, but the closer we are to the way Christ wants us to walk in his ...path, the stronger our flame will be and the brighter the flame for all to see.

St. Peter tells us, "But you are a chosen a holy race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

Give each family one of the votive candles - Instruct the families to light the votive together with their tapers when they arrive at home and place it in their icon corner. They are working together to shine the light of Christ brighter and stronger.

Allow time for children and the family to decorate their votive candles. They may also color the candles in their workbook. While they are working, teach the song, *This Little Light of Mine*. Have them sing while they work! As they complete, have one of the parents or a helper take the children to learn motions to the song.

How can we act as lights in the world, guiding others closer to the light of Christ?



Session Eight

The Bread of Life

What does the Bread of Life provide for us?

How do we learn to fill up on Christ, instead of on the things we want in this life?

Needed Items:

Gold Fish Crackers

Bowl

Napkins

Participant Workbooks

Items for bread baking activity

Book (optional) - *The Woman and the Wheat* (Available through Ancient Faith Publishing)

Opening Activity:

Have a bowl of carefully counted gold fish crackers. Allow each child to take five crackers until the bowl is empty. Refill with the same number of crackers. Begin the lesson as they eat. When you see that they have eaten all of their crackers, tell them they may take five more and then refill the bowl. This may continue a few times during the opening but they must run out by the time of the Bread of Life section.

10 minutes: Have participants review previous lessons. Then introduce topic of the day with the Bible verse below.

John 6:35

“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”

5 minutes: Begin the session by asking the participants - have they ever really, really wanted something that it was almost like they were hungry for it - that they wanted it so bad? Ask them to give some examples. Ask them if they ever got that thing. If any say yes, ask them how long they used it before they got bored with it and put it on the side and started wanting something else.

Ask them how they felt when you told them that something went wrong with snack/coffee hour and that they would have to wait almost another hour to eat? Did they feel even hungrier at that point? How did they feel when she said that she was just kidding? Did they feel less hungry? How did their breakfast taste that morning? How do they feel if they don't eat for a long time? Tired, grumpy, irritable? How do they feel after they eat? Better, happier, their usual self?



The Bread of Life

Our life is a little like that thing we really wanted, received and then got bored with - only to move on to the next thing. Nothing really make us filled up forever. Sort of like our Goldfish crackers! Every time we took some we had to keep refilling the bowl until there were no more. Sometimes we don't even know what we want, we just know that we want something. Only Christ can fill us up forever. When we are feeling grumpy, tired, disappointed, frustrated with life lots of things may distract us for a short time - but only Christ can make us feel better, happier, safer, less frustrated in the long run. Getting closer to Him means getting farther away from those feelings.

10 minutes: At this point ask the class to just sit for two minutes - in silence, not moving. When the time is up, ask them how they felt.

Being unsatisfied

Did you ever feel like you just had to DO something, play, run, yell or you would go crazy. When we feel restless it is because we are not finding the important things in life and are becoming bored and need to DO something!. What we don't realize is that all we need is Christ to fill it up. Think about all of the ways we could be helping others AND doing what God wants us to do to fill that time!

What are some ways we can fill up our time doing what God wants?

Things are nice, but they can't fill us up and make us happy forever- only Jesus, living in His way, showing His truth by doing good deeds, following His Light, and reading His words will truly fill us up. He tells us "I am the bread of life - if you come to me you will never be hungry or thirsty." This can mean feeling hungry in our belly and being thirsty, but it also means those feelings of restless and bored.

10 minutes: Ask the participants if they know the story of the loaves and fishes. Review the story. Ask them - How is this like what Jesus tells us about Him being the Bread of Life? The disciples doubted Jesus and yet what happened?

Matthew 14: 15-21

When it was evening, His disciples came to Him saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they

said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me.: Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Why Bread?

Why does Jesus so often use bread as an example? There are many reasons. Bread is a food that is easy to make with just a few ingredients and can be found in everyone's home. It makes you feel full easily, and you could live on bread and water alone if you needed to. Just about every culture or country around the world has some form of bread in their meals on a regular basis. At the time that Christ lived bread was a necessity to live. Let's look at another place we talk about bread and Jesus.

The Lord's Prayer

Have the children circle the correct word. Aid younger children with the activity.

Our Father Who Art in (Space Heaven), Hallowed be Your name. Your

kingdom come, Your (wishes will) be done on Earth as it is in

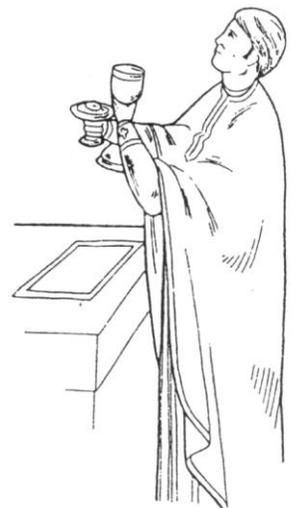
(Heaven School). Give us this day our (daily bread morning cereal)
and forgive us our trespasses as we (are mad at forgive) those

who trespass against us. And lead us not into (a forest temptation)

but deliver us from the (mailman Evil One).

Holy Communion

Following the Lord's Prayer early Christians would receive Holy Communion every day. Why? Because the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a gift for the healing of our souls and bodies. We need to eat food and drink liquid to keep our bodies healthy. We need Holy Communion to keep our soul and body healthy by receiving Jesus, the Bread of Life.



Receiving the Bread of Life

Receiving Holy Communion is one way to partake of the Bread of Life. Any time that we welcome Christ into our lives, we are receiving nourishment from the Bread of Life. Can you think of other ways to allow Jesus into your life?

In their workbook, have them write all of the different ways that they can come to Christ.

Aid smaller children to write one way and then draw a picture. They may also color the linedrawing.

Family Activity:

Paska baking. Ahead of time, prepare dough for paska bread. When the session is complete, have the families gather at a clean table. Provide flour and a ball of dough. They will make simple braided paska bread.

Have them divide the bread into three smaller balls and then roll out into long tubes. They will then braid the three tubes together. Place the braided dough on a cookie sheet for baking.

Activity for older children:

Prosphora baking. Ask your priest if he would be able to come and teach the youth how to bake prosphora.



Resources:

Prosphora Baking Website -

<http://www.prosphora.org/>

Lesson on Baking Prosphora - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Youth Department

<http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/youth/youthworkers/sessions/prosphoro>

<http://orthodoxeducation.blogspot.com/search?q=bread>

Optional activities:

- Ask one of your parish family to come and teach the group how to bake paska bread.
- Bake regular bread together and donate it to a local soup kitchen
- Ask your choir director to teach the group how to sing a communion hymn and then have them begin singing it during Divine Liturgies. A perfect hymn to learn might be Bread from Heaven, which may be found in the book of Ukrainian Orthodox Hymns published by the Ukrainian Orthodox League.



Session Nine

The Resurrection and the Life

How does Christ's Resurrection change our lives?
How can we make sure to live our lives so that we can benefit from His sacrifice?

Needed Items:

Participant Workbooks

Book *Miracle of the Red Egg* (may be purchased through Ancient Faith Publishing)

Paper Mache Eggs

Red water color paint

paint brushes

Hoola Hoop or other circular object like a ring

5 minutes: Quickly review past sessions then spend a minute introducing today's theme with the quote below.

John 11:25 – 26

Jesus said to her, "I am the Resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

Key Words to Review:

Do you know what these words mean? Give each word and allow time to have each child respond.

Resurrect - to bring back to life after death

Sin - actions that go against God's instructions, making wrong choices

Life - being alive, breathing, acting, thinking,

10 minutes: Make sure participants have a basic understanding of Christ's Resurrection. What happened? Did the disciples believe in his Resurrection? To whom did Christ appear?

The Resurrection and the Life

What does it mean that Christ is the "Resurrection and the Life"? We are told that if we believe in Christ, if we Live like He did and Live by his rules that we will Live with Him forever. How long is forever? Allow time to discuss. This is a difficult concept for small children. Show

them the hoola hoop. Ask them. Where does the hoola hoop start? Where does it end? Allow a little time to discuss and promise they may play with the hoola hoop after the session! that is right - it doesn't have a beginning or end - it just keeps in going in a circle forever with no ending. Our goal is to Live with Jesus FOREVER in heaven. Sin is a way of pulling away from God a little each day. But, we have been given a way to "Resurrect" with Him through repentance or asking for forgiveness. Through the Sacrament of Holy Confession/Reconciliation we are resurrected into a new life and a new chance every time! What a gift! Some of you will begin preparing for your first Holy Confession soon!

Have you ever seen a caterpillar become a butterfly? Let's watch and see.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AUeM8MbaIk>

After watching this transformation, why do you think that the butterfly has become a symbol for people who follow Jesus? Because Christ died and was resurrected. We are like the butterfly, we start one way and through a life like Christ, we must "die" or transform into something better and more beautiful. We are "born" into a new life. Can you think of something that happens to you in church that is similar to the lifecycle of a butterfly? The Sacrament of Baptism!! When we enter the water we are one person, and are submerged three times. Can you guess why? Yes, because Christ was three days in the tomb. When we emerge after three "dunks", we are now born into Christ with a new promise to life eternal!

The butterfly can be seen as the insect who 'dies' as a caterpillar, is buried in the cocoon for a length of time, and emerges in a new life-that as a creature who has the ability to transcend the ordinary and take flight into the heavens. In many spiritual circles the butterfly represents the spirit or soul. Denise Handlon

15 minutes - Read *The Miracle of the Red Egg* and allow time to discuss. When complete begin the paper mache egg craft. Have the children paint their own red egg to take home as a reminder. Also allow time to illuminate their final icon! While working on the activities, teach the Paschal Troparion - *Christ is Risen!* Review how the words support today's session.

Optional Activities:

Caterpillar to Butterfly Craft -

http://www.daniellesplace.com/HTML/bible_themes_s.html (about half way down screen)

Resurrection Cookies:

<http://www.orthodoxmom.com/2012/04/11/resurrection-cookies-recipe/>

Paschal Icon:

Utilize a Paschal Icon and walk through the icon explaining its meaning.

http://lent.goarch.org/holy_pascha/learn/

http://orthodoxinfo.com/death/resurrection_icon.aspx

Fun Snack ideas for after this session:

Butterfly cookies -

<http://www.bakedecoratecelebrate.com/projects/butterflysnacks.cfm>

Butterfly Snack bags -

<http://www.twosasters.com/2012/06/butterfly-preschool-snack.html>

Additional Resources:

Music

Fight the Good Fight by Gigi Baba Shadid

- Light of the World
- Photini

Icons

Icons in this curriculum provided by Archangel Icons. Additional icons of the I Am's may be made available by them at their website www.archangelicons.com.

Icon of *The True Vine* is of public domain.

Line Drawing

Most orthodox line drawings contained within are available from the Department of Religious Education, Orthodox Church in America. www.oca.org

Fruit of the Spirit Tree provided by Crafting the Word of God

Additional Activity:

To help enforce the theme, have the children perform one of the following:

- Draw a picture for each I Am to place on the wall
- Create a group collage of each I Am
- Keep a poster board with a Large I Am on top and list each new I Am under it. For younger children be sure to include a picture.

