

# *Blessed are the Peacemakers*

*Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry –  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA  
Jr. Ukrainian Orthodox League of the USA*

*This resource was originally created for the 2015 Great Lent  
Giveaway and has been reworked for 2022*

Objective: To instill in our youth the true meaning of Great Lent by:

1. Providing displaced, injured and financially burdened individuals aid
2. Learning more about their faith
3. Discovering how to become peacemakers in our lives through caring and giving
4. Devoting more time to prayer

Steps for initiating this discussion. This program may be divided into several sessions or one retreat:

1. Prepare for your first gathering of discussion. Watch the video provided by the OYM on “How to discuss the War in Ukraine with your youth” Provided at [www.uocyouth.org](http://www.uocyouth.org)
2. This particular session is designed to discuss peace in times of war
3. Your young people will be harboring a range of emotions. You want to create a safe environment where they feel heard and loved. ENSURE that any information you contribute is age appropriate. Before speaking with any young children, speak to the parents first to inform them of talk and grant them an option to attend with their child.
4. There are various resources provided on the OYM website:
  - Music and lyrics of Bozhe Veliky in English, Ukrainian and Phonetic Ukrainian
  - Graphics for our youth to use on social media
  - Pray for Ukraine for our Hierarchs
  - Infographic about Archangel Michael Patron and Protector of Kyiv and All Ukraine
5. There are three sessions to this resource:
  1. Initial Discussion and Prayer
  2. Who are Peacemakers
  3. Loving All Life from Beginning to End

We are calling our youth to prayer. The most powerful tool they have in their life.





# Blessed are the Peacemakers

## Outline for Initial Discussion

### Ages 12 - 18

#### Needed Items:

White Board or a notebook for you to keep notes on discussion

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of USA Prayer for Ukraine

Episode on Prayer from Be the Bee [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnaY\\_2xC\\_uE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnaY_2xC_uE)

Talking About Ukraine with our Children by Dr. Aliza Pressman <https://draliza.bulletin.com/talking-about-ukraine-with-our-children/>

Begin your gathering in Prayer. Being that Great Lent has begun you could choose to have your first discussion following one of the weekday services. If choosing the weekend, perhaps plan to cook a lenten meal together.

#### *Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian*

Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power and idle talk. But rather, grant unto me thy servant, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yes Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother for blessed are you to the ages of ages. Amen.

1. Ask the participants, “What is Great Lent preparing us for?” *Pascha* “The Church in its wisdom always provides us with tools in our journey to Christ to help us along the way. Many tools are given to us during Great Lent on our journey to Pascha – can you name them?” *Increased Prayer, Additional Divine Services, Fasting, Almsgiving/Christian Love and Charity.*

At this point watch the episode of Be the Bee. Ask the group what their thoughts are concerning what they watched. How is this relevant to the Great Lent Giveaway?

2. Proceed with the following. It is important to know where your youth are at to have a meaningful and informed discussion. Keep in mind the emotions will vary from fear to anger to sadness to confusion. Some of what you hear may be misinformed. Do not harshly correct any youth with strong feelings or statements. We will work through this with them. Start by telling participants that we are here to love on another. Ask the participants the following questions:
  - What do you know about the war in Ukraine?
  - How are you feeling right now?
  - What did you think about what was said in the Be the Bee video?
3. *Next discuss that prayer is our turning to God. Our relying on Him for everything in our lives. Pass out the Prayer for Ukraine from our Hierarchs. Read through each line of the prayer and discuss. Point out that the prayer starts out in penitence. Relate this back to the video. Once you have reviewed and discussed the prayer, Give the youth a few moments to breath quietly, only about 10 seconds, and then pray the prayer together.*
4. Share this quote on prayer with the group. If possible, have it printed for them:

*Prayer is a ladder leading up to God; for there is nothing more powerful than prayer. There is no sin which cannot be forgiven by means of prayer, and there is no sentence of punishment which it cannot undo. There is no revelation which does not have prayer as its cause, and there are no types or symbols which prayer cannot interpret.* Anonymous, from The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life

Allow time for questions or discussion on this quote. Tie it back to the importance of prayer.
5. At this point, you can move onto the other sections of the resource or close until the next time.
6. Reassure youth that they can contact you or your priest if they have any continued questions or concerns.