

pray with fear

*Consistory Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry
Ukrainian Orthodox Church for the USA
2019/2020*

Teacher Guide – Ages 4-8

Table of Contents

3	Leader Notes
6	Session One – We Pray
7	Session Two – Lord Have Mercy
8	Session Three – The Jesus Prayer
9	Session Four- Candles
10	Session Five- Praying Through our Actions
11	Session Six – Trisagion Hymn
12	Session Seven- Family Session
13	Additional Resources, Materials and Handouts

Teacher's Guide Introduction: Thank you for serving as a youth leader! This curriculum aims to help the children understand:

- important aspects of prayer in the Orthodox Church (what it is and what it isn't);
- prescribed prayers and the cycle of prayer in the Orthodox Church; and,
- ways to work towards the goal of unceasing prayer.

This curriculum is designed to be carried out in one lesson per class meeting, but please feel free to adjust in response to the children. If you find that they want more time to discuss a particular idea or lesson, other lessons may be shortened or abbreviated, as long as the main understandings above are addressed. Students can take turns reading the text to the class, or you may choose for them to read it to themselves if they need to adjust the pace.

This teacher's guide includes many suggested topics and activity ideas with notes provided in *italics*. Again, feel free to modify topics and ideas based on your class and their maturity. However, be sure to check with the Youth Director or Parish Clergy if any significant changes are made.

For most lessons, you will need copies of the Orthodox Study Bible, chart paper or a white board, and pencils.

The first seven sessions are developed in a traditional format and the following eight are set in an interactive format. It is suggested that the praxis sessions be interspersed or combined with the traditional sessions based on your discretion. The praxis sessions may be found in the Praxis Session Plan (a separate file/resource).

General Notes and Suggestions: The Parish Clergy or the Youth Director can provide resources or 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, as well as your students' understanding, and you are encouraged to pre-read the passages and commentary.

Modifications: This curriculum is written for youth 4 to 8 years old, but the maturity and academic abilities of 4 to 8 year olds 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:

Sensitivity: Sensitivity and empathy are key to any learning environment. Encourage students to talk freely about experiences they have had. As facilitator of these discussions, it is important to remind the students that everyone deserves our respect as images of Christ, and that God is the only judge. Keep an eye on all of the students and be sure to address any unusual/unexpected conversations with the encampment Director and Spiritual Advisor in case further discussion is needed. If this is the first time being together for the majority of the group, it might be helpful to do a few "get-to-know-you" activities first. Be sure to include yourself in some of these activities so that the youth begin to develop a relationship with you as well as their peers.

The content of the sessions and conveying that content is an important part of your ministry. However, the time spent together and relationships created and maintained are just as crucial. It is within this combination of worship, relationship, interaction, learning and living that our youth encounter Christ and deepen their relationship with Him and His church.

Iconography use: Icons exist first and foremost as a tool through which we glorify God. Access to images of icons on the internet can enhance the understanding of your students and bring authenticity to their work, however it is important to consider the source of the icon, to be respectful of the author's work, and to be thoughtful about any applicable copyright issues. When possible, it is best practice to use icons after receiving permission from the iconographer. Most of the icons provided in the curriculum materials are used with the permission of the iconographer. Please consult your parish priest for guidance in the selection of appropriate icons.

Taking it Home: It is highly recommended that you create a strong link between your youth programming and the families of youth that you serve. Send home a weekly summary of what you worked on with the youth. This could be accomplished through handouts, email, Facebook groups, etc. You may want to include some points or questions for discussion in the home. Ask the youth to provide suggestions for how they can “take home” and live what they learned. These could be included with the parent update.

We have included a template for this correspondence. There are suggestions throughout the curriculum for activities to be completed at home and brought to the next session. We understand that many parishes struggle with consistent attendance; however, setting this as a habit and an expectation may help to keep youth as involved as possible.

Supporting the Session: We hope to supply additional resources and ways to PRAY WITHOUT CEASING on our social media outlets. Have older youth or parents keep a look-out for these updates. Ask them to share with the group what they learned. You may share the progress of your youth with the OYM Office, which in turn could be shared on our social media for other parishes to enjoy and from which to gain ideas.

**** NOTES FOR SESSION STRUCTURE ****

Each session should contain an element of prayer. You may simply choose an appropriate prayer to begin and end the session, choose a tropar of a saint who you are discussing that day, or join together in a service such as evening prayers, vespers, or an Akathist.

Acknowledgments

Elementary age curriculum written by Debra Burgan, 2009; reworked 2019 by Natalie Kapeluck and Kira Senedak. Curriculum for Ages 4-8 and Praxis Sessions by Natalie Kapeluck, Kira Senedak and Denise Strashinsky. Teenage Curriculum created by Fr. Bohdan Hladio and Natalie Kapeluck. Editing: Lara Galis.

Iconography – Archangel Icons - www.archangelicons.com

Orthodox Clip Art – Orthodox Church in America Department of Religious Education
<http://dce.oca.org/resources/line-drawings/>

Photography - Katherine Anderson, Olena Lymar, Sophia Shilling for UOC Office of Youth Ministry.

"We Pray"

Session 1

Objectives:

Youth will learn how to make the sign of the cross

Materials:

copy of [We Pray](#) by Daniel G Opperwall; blank books or journals; stickers; crayons or colored pencils; copies of the image of a cross and a hand ready to make the sign of the cross that is found in the additional teacher materials at the end of this book



Begin the lesson with a simple prayer such as Lord Have Mercy. Start by talking about the theme- Pray Without Ceasing. Explain that prayer is talking to God. Sometimes we pray to ask Him for things, other times we pray to say thank you to God, we can pray for other people, etc. To do something without ceasing means to do it without stopping.

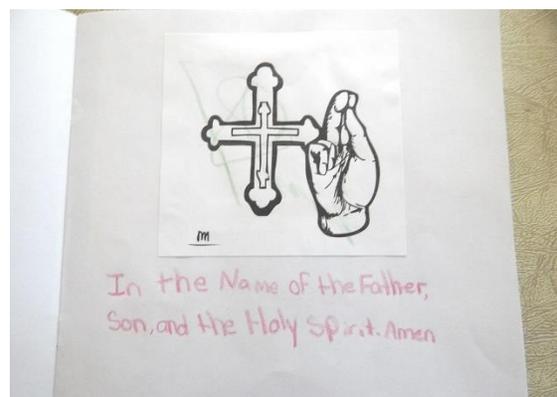
Play a short game to help emphasize what the word "ceasing" means. Have youth stand up and make a silly motion like jumping jacks or twirling in a circle. Keep the motion going until you say the word 'cease.' Repeat several times, allowing youth to change up their motion.

Next, explain that we will be reading this story, *We Pray*, throughout these sessions to learn more about how to pray. Start by reading the first page, the text says, "*We pray every day to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whatever we are doing and wherever we may be.*"

Ask youth to think about when they have heard someone saying the words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (If they do not mention making the sign of the cross, you can prompt them). Explain that making the sign of the cross is an important part of our prayers. We make the sign of the cross in front of us like a shield. It also reminds us that Jesus carried His cross for us. We hold our hand a special way- our thumb and our first two fingers come together to remind us of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit who are each separate but together are all one God. Our other two fingers are tucked in and remind us that Jesus was both God and a man. Take a few minutes to practice making the sign of the cross. Use the song "[God is the Boss](#)" by Gigi Shadid to help youth remember how to hold their hands and the importance of making the cross reverently.

For the final activity, youth will begin to create their own version of the book *We Pray* to personalize and use as a guide when they are saying their prayers at home. Youth can decorate the covers and design the first page by gluing in the picture of the hand making the sign of the cross. If they are able to write, they can add the words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" to the page.

Finish the lesson by making the sign of the cross and saying a short prayer.



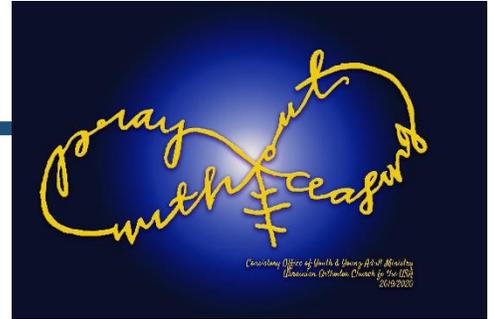
“Lord Have Mercy”

Session 2

Objectives:

- Youth will become familiar with this short prayer
- Youth will learn that memorizing a short prayer can help them as they practice praying without ceasing

Materials: copy of *I Pray Today* by Angela Isaacs; white crayons, watercolor paints and brushes, watercolor paper or canvas; Youth copies of the “We Pray” books and crayons/colored pencils



Begin the session with a prayer that youth are familiar with and practice making the sign of the cross.

Ask youth if they remember our theme (Pray Without Ceasing). Review what it means to do something without ceasing.

Ask youth if there are different times of the day that they say a prayer by themselves or with their family (they may say morning prayers, at meals, bedtime, etc.) Tell them that we will now read a story about a little girl who has a special prayer to say any time of the day.

Read *I Pray Today* with the children. After reading the story, ask them if they remember hearing the words “Lord Have Mercy” before, and remind them that we repeat them many times during the Divine Liturgy and other prayer services.

Watercolor activity: Before the session, write “Lord Have Mercy” in white crayon on watercolor paper. Show the youth the white sheet of paper with the words written in white and ask if they can see what the paper says. Allow them to paint over the words to find the “hidden message.” After they see the word revealed by the paint, explain that when we practice these words over and over again, it will be easier to remember our prayer when we need them or when we don’t know what to pray.

Wrap up the lesson by writing the words “Lord Have Mercy” into the “We Pray” books. For younger children, you may want to print the words out and have them glue them into the book. They can decorate the page or add decorations at home.

Finish the session with the Jesus Prayer and practicing making the sign of the cross.



The Jesus Prayer

Session 3

Objectives:

-Youth will learn the words of the Jesus Prayer

Materials: copy of *We Pray* by Daniel G Opperwall; youth “We Pray” books; copies of prayer rope handout from the Additional Materials section; crayons/colored pencils

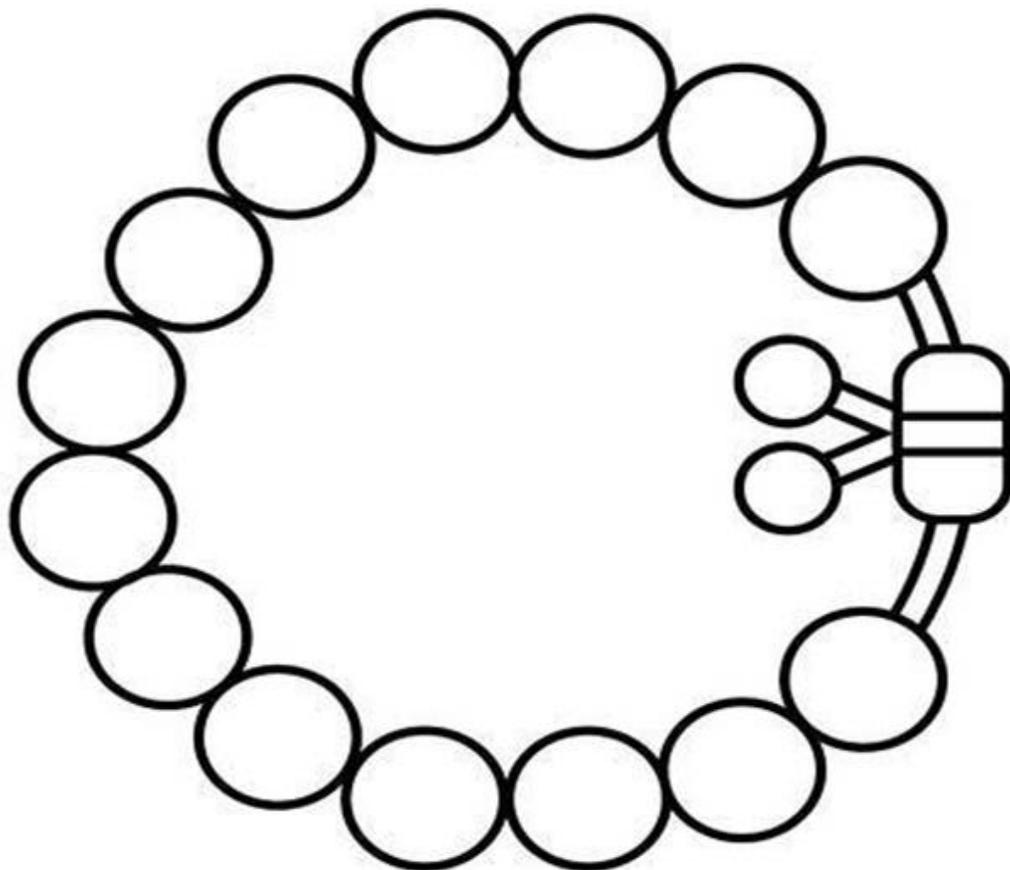


Begin the session with a prayer; practice making the sign of the cross and saying “Lord Have Mercy.”

Tell youth that they will be learning about a prayer called the Jesus Prayer. Read the page from *We Pray* that addresses the Jesus Prayer (text is “We Pray the Jesus Prayer each day, repeating and repeating, so that words of mercy may be written on our hearts.”)

If your session space has a chalkboard or whiteboard, you may want to write the words out. Practice repeating the words of the prayer several times and talk about what they think the words in the book might mean. Explain that “written on our hearts” means that we practice until we never forget the words.

Have youth glue the blank prayer rope bracelet into their personal “We Pray” book. If they are able to write, they can write each word of the prayer onto a bead of the bracelet. If they are younger, the teacher may need to write the words for them. They could also take the book home and fill in the words with a parent. When youth have finished decorating the page in their books, finish the session by saying the Jesus Prayer together.



Candles

Session 4

Objectives:

-Youth will learn about the use of candles in Orthodox prayer

Materials: copy of *We Pray* by Daniel G Opperwall; copy of *In the Candle's Glow* by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson; small glass votive candle holders, small paper icons, gemstones, glue or modge podge, brushes, wicks, beeswax; youth copies of their "We Pray" books and crayons/colored pencils



Begin the session by making the sign of the cross and saying the Jesus Prayer.

Ask youth to think about what they see in church each week and allow them to share a few things (prompt them to think about candles if they don't mention them on their own). Once candles come up in the conversation, transition to reading *In the Candle's Glow*.

As you read or at the end of the story, ask youth to think about how the candle connects to Felicia's prayers. For example, she sees the people that she is praying for in the light of the candle. Explain that candles are very special in the Orthodox Church- they don't have magical powers, but they have lots of important meanings and they help us to pray. In the Old Testament, God told the people to light lamps during the services in the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:5, 25) and to this day, there are always candles lit during our services. Our candles remind us that Jesus said, "I Am the Light of the World." Candles play a special role in special days like a baptism or a wedding.

Have youth decorate their own candle to take home to their icon corner. They can use glue or mod podge to attach a paper icon and embellish with gemstones or stickers. If your space allows, melt the wax and youth can watch as the wax is poured into the candle. Another option is to insert a beeswax votive into the glass.

Have youth add one more section to their "We Pray" book. Remind them that Felicia saw her family in the light of the candle and read the page in *We Pray* that addresses family. (the text reads, "For all our families and everyone we love, that God's great love would bless them in their sadness or their joy.") Youth can decorate a page in their book including their family and any other people that they pray for. You might consider having parents join at the end of the session to help the youth complete this page.

Finish the session with the Jesus Prayer and practicing making the sign of the cross.



Praying Through our Actions

Session 5

Objectives:

-Youth will learn that using our time and talents to glorify God and to do His Will are a form of prayer

Materials: copy of [We Pray](#) by Daniel G Opperwall; copy of [The Monk Who Grew Prayer](#) by Claire Brandenburg; small flower pots and items to be used for decorating the pots such as paper icons, paint and brushes, markers, glitter, etc; seed packets- preferably for Basil; youth copies of their "We Pray" books, copies of image of priest in front of the iconostas found in the Additional Materials, and crayons/colored pencils



Begin the session by reviewing how to make the sign of the cross and saying the Jesus Prayer.

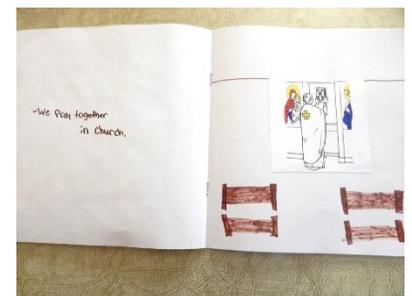
Ask youth if they know what a monk or a nun is. Explain that monks and nuns are people who make a vow or special promise to God. They spend their whole day connected to God and often live in a monastery or sometimes alone in the wilderness so that they aren't distracted by things in the world. Monks and Nuns are good examples of what it means to pray without ceasing because they have special prayers for everything that they do.

Read the story [The Monk Who Grew Prayer](#) with youth. After reading, talk with youth about how much of the day the monk spent saying his prayers- it was the whole day! The monk had a specific prayer for each part of the day. By praying while he did each job, actions like chopping wood and taking care of the garden helped to bring the monk closer to Christ.



Have youth decorate pots with icons, paint, markers, etc. Show youth seed packets of Basil and if it is possible, bring in a few pieces for youth to smell. Explain that when the Empress St. Helen found Christ's cross, there was sweet smelling basil growing there. (You may copy and laminate the icon of St. Helen. Glue the icon to a craft stick and place in the dirt of the planter. The youth may also add a copy of the icon to their We Pray book. Add to the page, Holy St. Helen, pray to God for us!)

Add another page to the youth copies of the "We Pray" books. Remind youth that the monk in the story went through a cycle of prayers each day. Read the pages about Vespers and Divine Liturgy. The text says, "We pray at evening Vesper for a quiet night and loving heart that in the morning we may all receive the Holy Mysteries," and "We Pray on Sunday morning when we gather at our parish, to ask that God be with His Church, and present in His Gifts." Have youth glue the line drawing of the priest and iconostas and ask them to fill in the rest of the picture with what their church looks like when their parish family comes together to pray.



Finish the session with the Jesus Prayer and practicing making the sign of the cross.

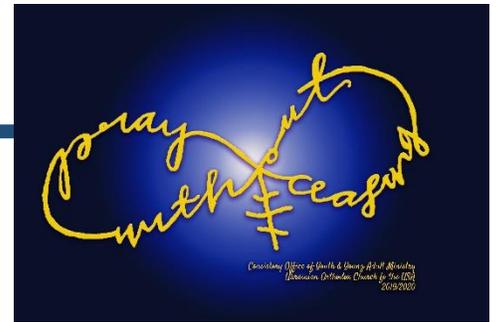
The Trisagion Hymn

Session 6

Objectives:

Youth will become familiar with the Trisagion Hymn

Materials: copy of [We Pray](#) by Daniel G Oppewall; copy of [And Then Nicholas Sang: The Story of the Trisagion Hymn](#) by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson; small clear acrylic tags [like these](#) or heavyweight paper tags; fishing line or clear string, sparkly beads, a stick or small rod, ribbon, markers, Youth copies of their “We Pray” books and crayons/colored pencils



Begin the session by making the sign of the cross and saying the Jesus Prayer.

Ask youth if they think anyone is too little to be able to pray without ceasing. Explain that even little children can use their prayers to glorify God. Then read *And Then Nicholas Sang: The Story of the Trisagion Hymn*.

After reading the story, talk to youth about how God worked through Nicholas to show His power and glory. Nicholas himself didn't have special superpowers, but by learning the prayer that the angels taught him, God worked a miracle through Nicholas. Practice singing the Trisagion Hymn in the version that your parish uses. You may also watch the video on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA Youtube Channel made by the campers at Mommy & Me/Daddy & Me.

Create sun catcher by adding the words “Holy God,” “Holy Mighty,” “Holy Immortal” to each of the acrylic pieces or paper tags. Hang each one from a string about 8-12 inches long and have youth add beads to the strings. Tie each string to the stick or rod and hang ribbon from the ends so that the sun catcher can be hung from a window or outside.

Add a page to the youth copies of the “We Pray” book. They can add the words “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!” and decorate. You may also want to include a line drawing of the icon of the Hospitality of Abraham (included in the additional materials).

Finish the session with the Jesus Prayer and practicing making the sign of the cross.



Family Session Seven

Objective: To bring the family together to review and build prayer life

Materials: We Pray Books, all prayer tools that were not already sent home, Taking It Home Handout for Families, wood plaque (does not have to be same as one shown), paint, brushes, Icon of Last Supper, flowers, gems, pearls, etc.



Preparation: You can use the Taking It Home! Handout as provided or modify for your parish needs.

Begin the Session by explaining plain you will make a family craft. This will use the scripture verse, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.". This is a wonderful reminder for us to pray as a family!

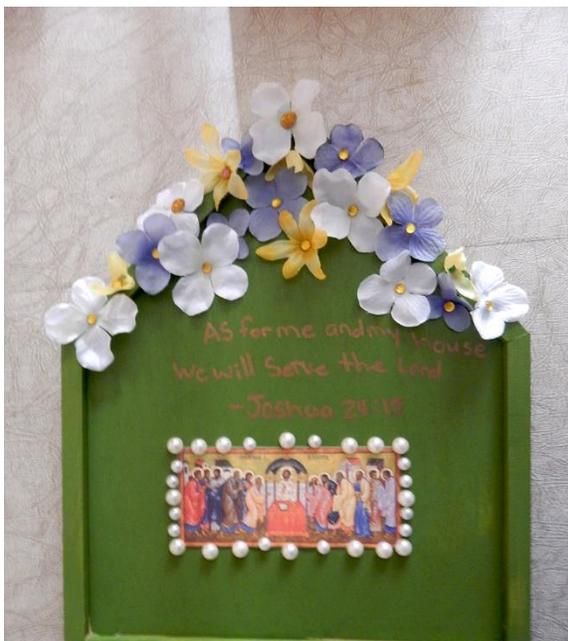
Show the families the example photo or make a sample of your own. Allow the families time to choose their materials. Have them paint the wood. While the paint is drying, pass out the We Pray Books to the children and families. Inform them that we will now pray together using our books. Perhaps let each child lead one of the prayers from each page. After you finish your prayers, ask the children to explain what they learned going page by page through their books. Help them along as needed.

Families can add an additional page to their "We Pray" books. Read the page from *We Pray* that talks about families. The text says, "We Pray for all our families and everyone we love, that God's great love would bless them in their sadness or their joy." Youth can draw a picture of the people in their family and parents can help write their names on the pages.

Have the children show their parents the different prayer tools they made and explain how they can use them at home. By now the paint should be dry enough to complete the craft.

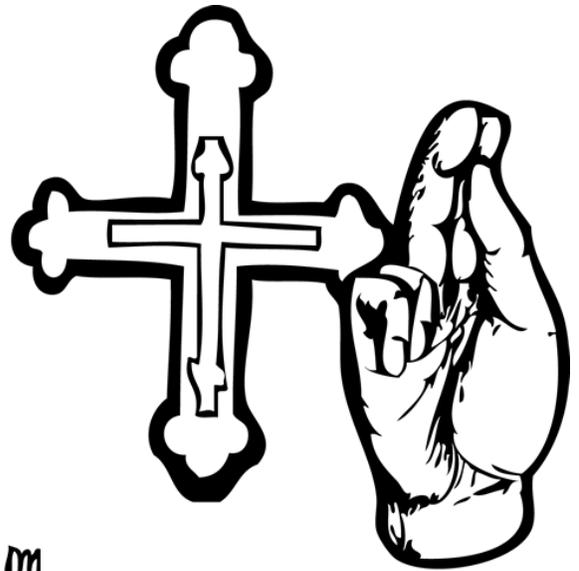
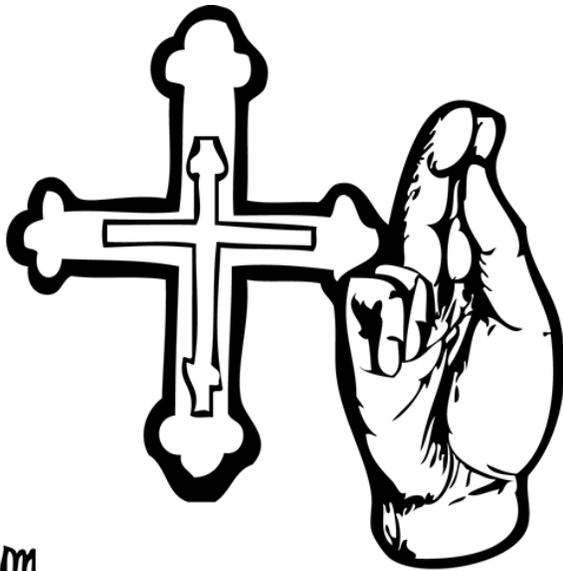
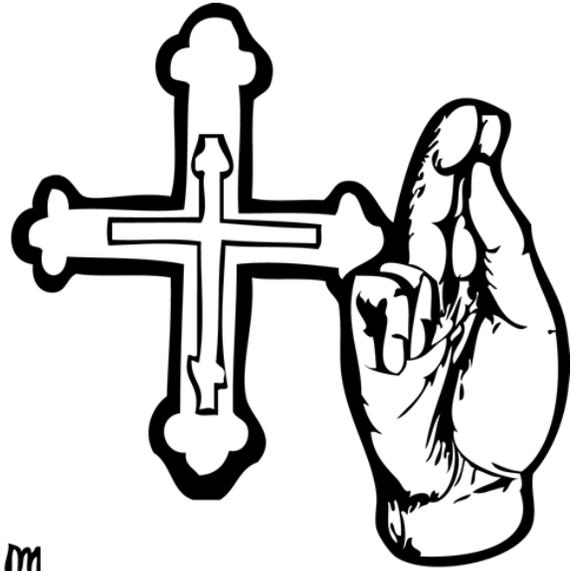
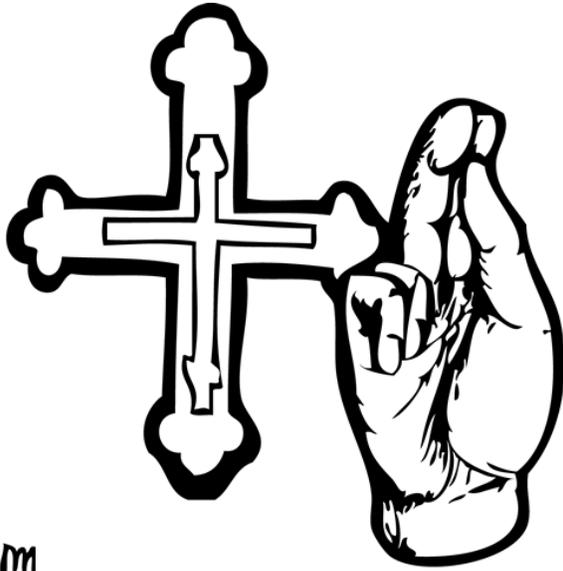
When all is done, pray together once again. Ask the children what they are thankful for learning in the past year. Ask the parents something for which they are thankful.

Pass out the Taking it Home! Handout. Explain that this is an aid to continue the learning at home to Pray Without Ceasing!



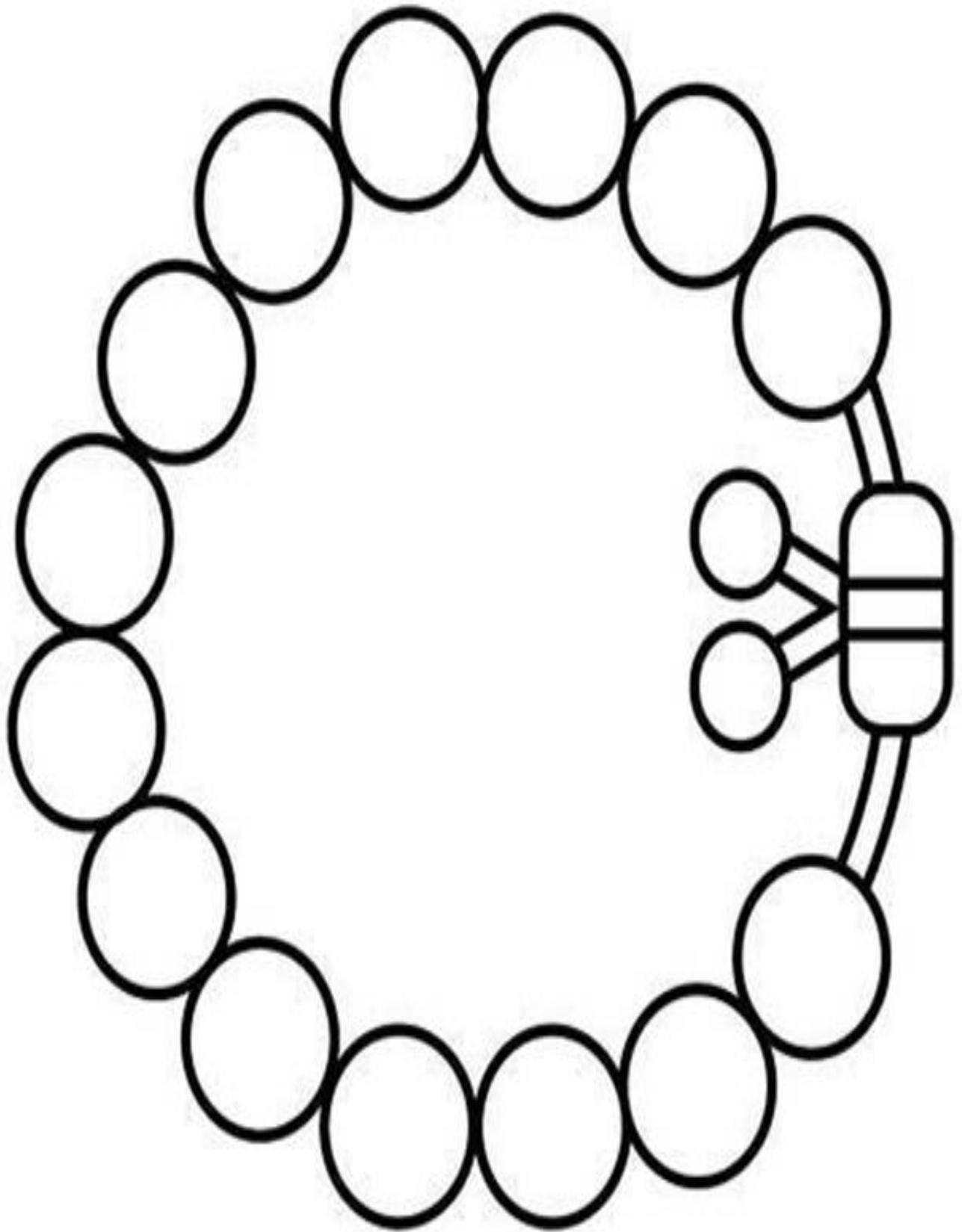
Additional Materials & Handouts:

- Additional resources that complement *We Pray* can be found through this link to the Ancient Faith Store listing: <https://store.ancientfaith.com/we-pray/>.
- *Every time I do My Cross* by Prsv. Angela Alatzakis
<http://www.theorthodoxchildrenspress.com/our-books/on-our-shelf-every-time-i-do-my-cross/>
- *The Jesus Prayer and Me* by Vasiliki Tisgas-Fotinis
<http://www.stnectoriospress.com/the-jesus-prayer-and-me/>
- Line drawings of religious items, icons, symbols, etc. can be found through the OCA Department of Christian Education website. These could be used for additional pages in youth copies of the “We Pray” books. <http://dce.oca.org/resources/line-drawings/page/1/>





My Prayer Rope



My Prayer Rope

