



WITH
FAITH & LOVE
DRAW NEAR

CONSISTORY OFFICE
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE USA

Preparing to go to Church!

Praxis Objective: Youth and parishioners examine how they prepare themselves to be participants in the Divine Liturgy. By doing so, faithful will deepen their commitment and understanding of the liturgy.

Things to think about!

Discuss these questions with your youth and share with your parish. Once you have discussed the questions. Read the article provided (it is also included in the Fall issue of UOC Youth.)

Challenge your youth to develop a thoughtful preparation for Divine Liturgy.
Provide the worksheet for their use.

You may choose to use some of the recommended books from the website. For our "mini" aged youth, share the books *Josiah and Julia Go to Church* or *Its Sunday Shall We Go To Church?* Information on both book may be found at www.uocyouth.org/withfaithlovedrawnear



PREPARING TO GO TO CHURCH



Prayer

Are you familiar with the Preparatory prayers before communion? Do you know where to find them? Do you read them all or in part?



Fasting

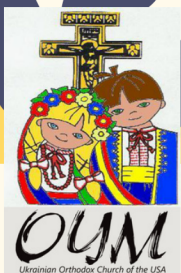
Why do we fast before Divine Liturgy? Do you find this challenging?



Preparation

In what other ways do you prepare for Divine Liturgy? Have you thought about this before and why do anything special ahead of time?

Ways I can Prepare for Divine Liturgy



Preparing OURSELVES FOR LITURGY

TEEN VERSION

Fr. Bohdan Hladko, Kira Senedak, Natalie Kapeluck

Anyone who has ever taken a test knows the importance of proper preparation. Everything is easier and better when we are prepared for it. As the English saying goes, “well begun is half done.” We spend a lot of time and effort getting ready for the things that matter to us- like school, sports or music lessons, parties, concerts, etc. So how much more important is it, then, to attend Church services in a proper state of preparation?

We prepare for Divine services both spiritually and physically; it’s important to emphasize both as Orthodox Christians. God has given us both a body and a soul, and everything we do to prepare for our worship and our participation in the sacramental life of the Church must reflect that! We must never believe that anything we do is “only physical” or “only spiritual.” Both of these aspects of our nature impact each other, and so the way we dress really can be as important as how we pray.

At Home

When we’re getting ready to go to Church our goal is to make sure that our home and the people in it have an atmosphere of peace and quiet. We need to keep in mind that what we are really getting ready for is what we are called upon to do in Church - to participate in the life of heaven. How can you help?

The night before, your family may attend Vespers to prepare spiritually. We can lay our clothes out the night before so that we aren’t rushing to find clothes and shoes in the morning. We can also keep the evening calm by reading a book that reminds us of Christ and the saints or listening to church music.

In the morning before church, it’s important to be quiet and obedient when our parents are getting us ready, to not bother or provoke our siblings, and to not complain or distract anyone from their preparation for Divine Liturgy.

We should always be grateful to be able to go to Church, as it is a great blessing.

How should we dress?

Why does it matter what we wear to church, doesn’t God accept us as we are? Yes, He does. But think about when you are going somewhere special like a party or to meet someone important. We want to look our best. We normally take the time to choose our clothes carefully! When we go to Church, we are meeting with THE most important person, God! So we should take the time and care for what we wear when we are with him. This doesn’t mean our clothing has to be fancy or expensive. Choosing clean, neat and simple is best. We don’t need to show-off for God. We just want to be respectful.

If wearing pants, choose long pants, with a proper nice shirt/top. It is preferable to not wear anything with a logo or graphic. Men should never wear hats either in the Church or in the Church hall. Girls can wear a modest skirt or dress. When choosing a blouse or shirt, think about one which covers the shoulders. Some women choose to wear a head-covering (a scarf or for a special occasion a hat). It’s interesting to note that only women and clergymen are permitted to have their heads covered in Church - this is a sign of the special grace given them by God (cf. I Cor. 11:10).

Preparing OURSELVES FOR LITURGY

TEEN VERSION PAGE 2

Fasting

Fasting means to not eat or drink anything. We Orthodox Christians usually fast before Liturgy, and don't eat or drink anything from midnight until receiving Holy Communion. This doesn't apply to babies and young children, but as we grow up we learn to fast, so that by the time we're eight or nine years old we are able to fast just like the adults do. There are also exceptions for people who have to take medicine or eat a special diet for medical reasons. Our health is a gift from God and it's our job to take care of our bodies. Always make sure to follow the directions of your parents and your priest as far as what you should eat and drink before coming to Church.

Why do we fast? Fasting before receiving Holy Communion has been compared to a "fast of anticipation," or preparation. It helps us to increase our attention at the Liturgy. As we all know, a full stomach makes us sleepy and brings our attention to the food we just ate instead of the service we are in. This fast also teaches us in a very physical, concrete way that a Sunday or Holy day is different. We read in the 50th Psalm that "a sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit . . .", waiting to eat until after church can also be a truly meaningful sacrifice!

Confession and Forgiveness

It's important to always be at peace with others when we attend services. If we're upset with someone or feel guilty about something we have done, it can be a distraction from the service. During the Divine Liturgy, we are given the opportunity to forgive anyone or ask for forgiveness. Have you ever noticed directly before the Creed, the priest says, "Let us love one another, so that with one mind we may confess?" Some priests will also say, "Offer the Kiss of Peace." It was the tradition in the church at this point to offer a "kiss" to the people around you or to those with whom you might have an issue. You would offer peace and forgiveness with that kiss. Many Orthodox churches still practice the Kiss of Peace during the liturgy. As you get older, usually when you're about seven years of age or so, you will be mature enough to begin approaching for Holy Confession. Make sure to talk to your parents, church-school teacher, and priest if you have any questions about Holy Confession.

Prayer

Always try to say your prayers every morning and evening. Our prayer books contain some beautiful prayers to help us prepare for Holy Communion, and sometimes families read these prayers together either at home or in the car on the way to Church.

Final Preparations

Always remember that going to Church is a wonderful and joyful experience. The more we prepare our bodies and our minds, the more we will be able to experience that joy! If you ever have any questions about what we do in Church or about what something means make sure to ask your parents, church-school teacher, or parents.

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YOUTH VERSION PAGE 1

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