



**The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
The Southern USA**

SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM



GRADE 4

Πατριεπισκοπος ἡρεμῆχημι
ἡορθοδοξος
ἡτε νιθωψ ετρωτπ ετσαρηс



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PREFACE

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States, under the auspices of His Grace Bishop Youssef, felt the pressing need for a modified Sunday School Curriculum which would be better suited to address the problems and issues facing children both in America and the lands of immigration. Therefore, the efforts and time of many faithful servants have been dedicated to modify and improve the presently used English translation of the syllabus published by the Youth Services Committee of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. This has resulted in the elimination of many existing lessons from this syllabus and the substitution with new lessons that are more appropriate for our youth in American society. These additional lessons give greater consideration to the differences in quality of life, education, media influence, cultural differences and the surrounding diversity of beliefs between Egyptian society and that of the west.

We pray that God may bless this work for the spiritual growth of our children in the immigration countries. We also thank His Grace Bishop Youssef for his continued support, prayers and motivating guidance in this service.

May God reward every servant who offered time and effort toward the completion of this Sunday School Curriculum.

“Thus Far the Lord Has Helped Us”

(1 Samuel 7:12)



INTRODUCTION

This grade 4 of Sunday school curriculum has been modified by substituting 16 lessons from the previous curriculum published by the Youth Service Committee of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate with new lessons that are suitable for the youth in America. The order of the lessons has also been changed to follow the major events in the church. This resulted in the following order assuming the starting date is the first week after the Coptic New Year celebration (El Nayrouz) on September 11:

- 3 lessons for the month of September.
- 4 lessons for each of the months of October through January.
- Variable number of filler lessons for the period between the beginning of February and Jonah's fast.
- 2 lessons, one before and one after Jonah's fast.
- 7 lessons during the Great Fast.
- 7 lessons for the period between Easter and the Feast of the Pentecost.
- Variable number of filler lessons between the Feast of the Pentecost and the Apostles' Feast.
- 3 lessons for the remainder of July after the Apostles' Feast.
- 4 lessons for August.
- 1 lesson for the first week of September.

Please note that filler lessons can also be used for the occasional fifth Sunday in any month. These filler lessons are in the beginning of the book and it is preferable that they be used in sequence for the sake of unity in all the churches.

The students of grade 4 should know most of the Bible stories and many of the Saints stories by the end of this grade. They have to test the blessings of living in grace and behaving in grace. We have to offer opportunities to the students so that they may discover these aspects in the lessons and apply them. The servants should be creative in presenting the lessons in interesting means to avoid the common boardroom words used in this age. Any lesson, however perfect it may be, and however well prepared it is, needs a good Servant to teach it. Every Servant must prepare his lessons well. The lessons should include the following aspects:

- A lesson full of prayer, knowledge, hymns and group interaction.
- Assignments in the form of Scripture studies, answering questions, drawing, etc.
- External social activities in which parents, pastors and children meet.
- Partaking all types of public worship, teaching and various occasions.

Children should keep a private notebook in which they can write notes about these lessons and do their homework and activities. They also have a tremendous memory capacity at this age and this is a good opportunity to memorize as much as possible from the Bible, Psalms or prayers. It is also important that by the end of grade 4, the students should have good understanding of the church sacraments and are practicing them regularly in their life. They should have also established the habits of regular prayer and reading the Bible on their own. Try to know a lot about the children by asking about them, being acquainted with them, and visiting them either individually or with others. Involve the students in visiting children, delivering letters to houses, distributing pictures in the class, gathering alms, arranging and cleaning seats, doing social services, etc. They become concerned with the church occasions and saints' celebrations. These give them vital fellowship as each one of them takes part as an individual. Children of this age discover new dimensions in serving the church through their offerings and through drawing pictures and icons, etc., and so on.

After all, this can still be considered as a preliminary modified curriculum for grade 4 that will require your feedback as a servant in order to continue the improvement process. Any inquiries or comments can be forwarded to ssc@suscopts.org

May the Holy Spirit guide every servant using this curriculum.

FILLER LESSONS

These lessons are to be used for the fifth Sunday in a month and to fill the empty weeks due to the changing date of the Resurrection Feast.

1- The Structure of the Church

2- Marriage

3- The Good Counsel: Rehoboam and the Advice of the Older Men

4- Love for the House of God: Araunah the Jebusite

5- St. Paul the First Hermit

6- The Philippian Jailer

7- Daniel and the Priests of Baal

1- The Structure of the Church

Objective:

- ❖ To understand the structure of the House of God and why it is built that way.
- ❖ To connect the Temple of God in the Old Testament to the Church of Salvation that we now pray in.

Memory Verse:

“O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own” (1 Chronicles 29:16)

References:

- ❖ Sermon of H.G. Bishop Youssef on “The Church”

Introduction:

Ask the children: What does your room look like at home? What is hanging on your walls? Do you decorate your room with things you like? Is your room ordered in a certain way? Why? The House of God is decorated and ordered for Him. There are things on the walls that He loves, too. There are certain ways that His house is organized and all of it is done for certain purposes.

Lesson Outlines:

I. The Structure of the Church

The Church is shaped like the Tabernacle, Noah’s ark or a cross. It has three sections:

- ❖ The First Section is the Sanctuary (Holy of Holies): It represents Heaven and contains the Altar, the dome, the steps, and the Eastern wall.
- ❖ The Altar: where the sacrifice is offered. It is square in shape, made out of either wood or marble, has three coverings on top and must have a “holy board” on it or anointed with Chrism.
- ❖ The dome: above the altar is based on four columns, painted in blue to represent Heaven, with angels drawn on it and has curtains are suspended from between the columns
- ❖ The Steps: Seven semi-circular steps that lead up to the Bishop’s throne, underneath the Eastern wall. The Bishop would be sitting under the feet of Christ (after having climbed seven (complete) steps (virtues) and speaks to the people from behind the Altar, because his words and service is not due to his own righteousness, but to the righteousness of Christ.
- ❖ The Eastern wall: Is a semi-circular wall called the “Father’s Bosom”. It has an Icon of Christ sitting, surrounded by Cherubim and Seraphim. He carries in one hand the earth (because He is the controller of everything – the Pantocrator) and carries a staff in the

other hand to shepherd His people (John 10:11). He is looking directly at the people and opening His chest to them to accept them all to Him. Only the Icon of Christ should be in the Sanctuary as He is the only one who is in Heaven (along with the angels) right now.

- ❖ The gateway to the Sanctuary is called the “Royal Gate” from which only the priests should enter.
- ❖ The Sanctuary is separated from the church by an iconostasis (carrier of the icons). It is not a divider (like in the tabernacle), but a means to get into the Holy of Holies (by the prayers of the saints). The Icons have a specific order as they are placed on the iconostasis.
 - ❑ On the right side:
 - Christ
 - John the Baptist
 - The Saint of the church
 - Any saint or martyr, or any biblical event
 - ❑ On the left side:
 - The Theotokos (Mother of God)
 - The Annunciation (of Christ’s birth)
 - Archangel Michael
 - St. Mark
 - ❑ Above
 - The Last supper, surrounded by the 12 disciples
 - Above them is Christ crucified, with St. Mary at his right and St. John at his left
 - Ostrich eggs are suspend in between them
 - Eggs in general represent Resurrection (life inside a tomb)
 - Lighted oil lamps are hung in front of all the icons, except Christ, because He is the light of the world
 - ❑ Around the nave of the church, the rest of the icons are placed in a specific order:
 - From left to right: Angels, St. Mary, St. John the Baptist, Disciples (as mentioned above) and then Old Testament Saints, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and New Testament Saints.
 - At the west side of the church is the Baptismal font (because through Baptism, we are taken from darkness into light, and from being far away from God to His bosom; so we move from west to east).

Conclusion:

Review the format of the church. The church has a specific order and structure to it. Everything has been placed in a certain way for a reason. When we understand the purpose

behind these orderings we can appreciate them more, and they will help us to honor God with them.

Applications:

- ❖ Take the children outside the classroom to the church and show them all of the things they have learned about. They are probably better visual than audio learners.
- ❖ Ask them to always pay attention to the order and structure of the church each time they enter and to remember that God decorates His house as an ark of Salvation for us.

2- Marriage

Objective:

- ❖ The child should understand that marriage is the way God has selected to start a family, raise children and continue the church until His second coming. God unite two adults into one.

Memory Verse:

“Marriage is honorable among all” (Hebrews 13:4)

References:

- ❖ Scriptures John 2:1-11, Matthew 19:1-6, Ephesians 5:22-6:3
- ❖ “Church Sacraments” Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ “How lovely it is”, “Take my life” from the book of Songs and Praises

Introduction:

Ask the children about the Seven Sacraments of the Church and give gifts to those who can say them all. Ask them about marriage and if anyone attended marriage lately. Why everyone is happy and joyful at the weddings?

Lesson Outlines:

1. In the beginning God created a man and a woman. Male and female He created them. Then God blessed them saying “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth.” So they started producing children and that is why we celebrate our marriages at the church because without marriage there will be no children and no church.
2. Before marriage the couple goes to their father of confession, ask his advice and his blessing to get married. You cannot pick any one, as you watch on TV, and marry him or her. That is not right and end up real bad. But if they consult their families and their father in confession, they will have their love, their support and on top of all God’s blessing in their life.
3. Both must be adults, very responsible because they are going to have children. They must love their children, care for them, give them food and clothes and when they become sick they take care of them.
4. The bride and the groom come to the church two persons but leave as one. Like when the priest prays and the bread and wine turn to the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The priest prays and the Holy Spirit unites the married couple. They both leave their families and start a new family as a new church in town. Everyone is happy for them even their families, although they are leaving them, because they know that they love their families and have their blessings for that marriage.
5. They come to the church separately and at the door of the church the groom holds his bride in his right hand and the deacons take them with joyful songs to the Altar. If it is during the 50 days after Resurrection the song will be “Christ Has risen” otherwise it will be “O

King of peace.” When they reach there, the priest will pray, raise incense, read the Bible, anoint them with oil, dress the groom up with the golden priest’s robe as a king and priest of the house, put golden crowns on both heads like king and queen, pray on top of their heads together and give them instructions on how to treat one another with love and respect. Then they both kneel in front of the Altar and the priest blesses them.

6. From this moment on, they are no longer two but one. They stay married until death. In many countries like here they even carry the same family name (the groom’s because he is representing Christ and the bride representing the church).
7. Then the deacons take them back to the church entrance with songs (“Christ Has risen” or “Hail to Mary”) where they receive the congratulations of all the congregation wishing them a happy life and blessed children.

1. How a man and a woman start a life together?
2. Whom they should consult before marriage?
3. Can two young kids marry?
4. Who can pray to join a man and a woman in marriage?
5. Can I pray to join a man and a woman in marriage?
6. Where does Christian marriage take place?
7. Do the bride and groom arrive together to the church?
8. Do they enter the church separately?
9. How they enter the church?
10. What song is said if it is not in the 50 days following the Resurrection?
11. Where does the bride always stand? Is it to the right or to the left of the groom?
12. What they wear on their heads? Why?
13. What is read in the church?
14. Do they kneel and where?
15. What does the priest do when they kneel?
16. What do they do after that?

Conclusion:

Marriage is one of the 7 mysteries of the church by which a new Christian family starts. A Christian family should be built on the love of Christ who is the source of all good things.

Applications:

- ❖ When I attend a wedding of two adults in the church I see the blessing of God in our lives and thank him for my father and my mother who brought me to life, cared for me and still protect me.
- ❖ When I attend a wedding I should go to the bride and the groom to congratulate them and wish them happy life and blessed children.

3- The Good Counsel: Rehoboam and the Advice of the Older Men

Objective:

- ❖ Acceptance of the good counsel that is according to the will of God

Memory Verse:

“Keep my commands and live” (Proverbs 4:4)

References:

- ❖ 1 Kings 12
- ❖ Explanation of the First Book of Kings
- ❖ Stories and Tales from the Holy Bible, Part 8, Beirut

Introduction:

- ❖ Is it better to do a thing at once or to ask the advice of someone first?
- ❖ Whose advice do you follow... friends or strangers?
- ❖ Who is David? Why did he order the soldiers to show kindness to Absalom?
- ❖ Do you remember Mephibosheth? How did David treat him?
- ❖ When Saul was in the cavern, where was David?

Lesson Outlines:

David was a good man...so the Lord said to him “There will be peace and security in your days. Your son will succeed you on the throne and no strange man will rule after the death of David”. King Solomon ruled the kingdom. In his days, he annoyed some people and wanted to kill them, so they fled and left their country for other far away places. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king.

The people whom Solomon ill-treated returned to the country when Rehoboam became king and “Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying: Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you. So he said to them: Depart for three days, then come back to me. And the people departed. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said: How do you advise me to answer these people? And they spoke to him, saying: If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever” (1 Kings 12:3-7).

- ❖ What is the name of Solomon’s son?
- ❖ What did the people ask for?
- ❖ What was Rehoboam’s reply?

- ❖ What was the old men's advice?

Let us say together: "Keep my commands and live".

"But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them: What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?' Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying: Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us'--thus you shall say to them, 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!' So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying: Come back to me the third day. Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying: My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges! So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the Lord that He might fulfill His word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (1 Kings 12:8-15).

Let us say together: "Keep my commands and live".

"Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David! So Israel departed to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon" (1 Kings 12:16-21).

- ❖ Why did the people desert their country during Solomon's reign?
- ❖ What did they say to Rehoboam, Solomon's son?
- ❖ What did the older men advise him to do?
- ❖ What did the young men advise him to do?

- ❖ What might have been better for Rehoboam, to follow the advice of the old men or to follow the advice of the young men?
- ❖ What was the people's reaction?
- ❖ Who can say the verse?

Conclusion:

It is very important to take the opinion of more experienced and knowledgeable people whenever, we are about to do anything major or take any decisions.

Applications:

- ❖ Consult our father the priest or your elders, or your parents about what is wrong and what is right.
- ❖ Read 1 Kings 12.
- ❖ Study the last passage of the sixth hour prayer.

4- Love for the House of God: Araunah the Jebusite

Objective:

- ❖ To learn to love the House of God.

Memory Verse:

“In the midst of the assembly, I will sing praise to You” (Hebrews 2:12)

References:

- ❖ 1 Chronicles 21

Introduction:

- ❖ How do I stand in the church?
- ❖ Am I attentive or absent-minded when I am in the church?
- ❖ How can I participate in the prayers: with my voice, with understanding or with spirit?
- ❖ Do I prefer the church to my personal interests?

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ What do you know about David?
- ❖ Who wrote the Psalms?

The Lord commanded David not to count the people so that he might not boast of his strength. David disobeyed. The Lord sent his angel to punish the people and the king David cried to the Lord to forgive him.

The Lord said: “The angel of the Lord is there at the threshing place of Araunah, the Jebusite”. David saw the angel standing in mid air - Araunah was threshing wheat, and when he saw the king he ran to meet him and bowed low with his face touching the ground, greeted him and welcomed him. David entered his house and spoke with him.

- ❖ What wrong did David do?
- ❖ Why did the Lord order the angel to stop killing people?
- ❖ What are the types of prayer, individual, family, public...?
- ❖ How many times do you pray? Where do you pray? Who attended the Divine mass last week?

The king said to Araunah, “I desire to build a house for our Lord God in this field”. Araunah rejoiced because there would be an altar, incense, pictures, and icons. He said: “Your Majesty, do whatever you wish...Here are these oxen to burn as an offering on the altar, and here are the threshing boards to use as fuel, and wheat to give as an offering. I give it all to

you”. David was very pleased with Araunah and said to him: “Because you so loved the church and offered all these things to God, the Lord will give you many good things and repay you”. Araunah said: “Your Majesty, when you build this house of the Lord, my sons and I will be servants in it. We shall go early to pray. I’ll teach my children how to stand quietly and attentively in the House of God and I will say: David was pleased with Araunah because he loved the House of God”.

17. What did Araunah offer to the House of God?
18. What things can you do to serve in the church?
19. Let us say together: In the middle of the church...

Conclusion:

The love to the church is the fruit of the love to God. Since the church is the house of God and whenever, we would like to visit God we come and visit Him in His house. The love of the church strengthen our desire to serve and help in the church just like Araunah who wanted to give his land and offerings to the house of God.

Applications:

- ❖ Ask some children to do the following: Light the Church, turn on the electric fan or AC when it is hot, shut the windows in winter, distribute the hymn books, collect hymn books after the service, clean the church, arrange the seats, etc.
- ❖ Plan these activities between children where some can do these things for a month then others do them for a month and so on.
- ❖ Draw your church inside a rectangle then color the doors and windows.

5- St. Paul the First Hermit

Objective:

- ❖ To learn the story of St. Paul and the meaning of a hermit.
- ❖ To learn that the more we love the Lord the more time we would want to spend with Him.

Memory Verse:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalms 23:1)

References:

- ❖ “St. Paul the Hermit of Thebes” St. Jerome (English and Arabic)
- ❖ “St. Abba Paul” stories of the saints, series #21 by Malak Louka (Arabic)
- ❖ The Coptic Synaxarium - The second day of Amshir.

Introduction:

The word hermit means someone that lives alone in the desert or the wilderness for many years without seeing anybody. St. Paul is considered the first hermit because he was the leader in this kind of life. He lived alone in a cave in the desert without seeing anybody for 70 years. A hermit is different from a monk because a monk usually lives with or visits other monks. The story of St. Paul is a very interesting story and many of us take St. Paul as an intercessor or beloved saint. There is also a monastery in his name close to the Red Sea in Egypt. We celebrate his departure on the second day of Amshir in year 341 A.D.

Lesson Outlines:

He was from the city of Alexandria, and had a brother whose name was Peter. When his father passed away, they divided the inheritance between them. When his brother took the greater share, Paul’s feelings were hurt. He asked his brother “why don’t you give me my rightful share of the inheritance of my father?” Peter replied, “You are a young man and I am afraid that you might waste the money. Therefore, I will keep it for you”. When they did not agree with each other, they went to the governor to judge between them. As they were going, they saw a funeral. Paul asked one of the men about the deceased man. He was told that he was one of the noble and rich people of the city and that he left his wealth behind and he will be buried only with his garment. St. Paul sighed in his heart and said to himself, “What do I have to do then with the money of this temporary world which I shall leave naked?”. He looked to his brother and said to him “My brother, let us return for I do not ask you for anything even for what is mine”. While they were returning, St. Paul left his brother until he came out of the city. He found a grave where he stayed praying for three days for the Lord to guide him to what pleases Him. His brother searched for him and when he did not find him, he was exceedingly sorry for what he had done.

God sent St. Paul an angel who took him out of this place, and walked with him until they reached the eastern inner wilderness. He stayed there for seventy years, during which he saw

no one. He put on a tunic made of Palm tree fiber. The Lord sent him a raven every day with a half loaf of bread.

When the Lord wanted to reveal the holiness of St. Paul and his righteousness, he sent His angel to St. Anthony the great, who thought that he was the first in the wilderness. The angel said to St. Anthony “There is a man who lives in the inner wilderness, and the world is not worthy of his footsteps. By his prayers, the Lord brings rain and dew to fall on the earth and causes the flood water of the Nile to come on time”. When St. Anthony heard this, he rose immediately and went to the inner wilderness, a distance of one day’s walk. God guided him to the cave of St. Paul. He entered, and they bowed to each other, and sat down talking about the great things that happened. In the evening the raven came bringing a whole loaf of bread. St. Paul said to St. Anthony, “Now I know that you are one of the children of God. For seventy years, the Lord has been sending to me everyday half a loaf of bread, but today the Lord is sending your food also. Now go and bring me back in a hurry the tunic that Emperor Constantine had given to Pope Athanasius.”

St. Anthony went to St. Athanasius, and brought the tunic from him and returned to St. Paul. On his way back he saw the soul of St. Paul carried by the angels up to heaven. When he arrived to the cave, he found that St. Paul has departed from this world. He kissed him, weeping, and he clothed him in the tunic that he asked for, and he took his fiber tunic. When he wanted to bury him, he did not know how to dig his grave, but two lions appeared to him, shaking their heads as if they were asking permission to dig his grave. He knew that they were sent from God. He gave them the permission to dig and they dug the grave with their claws, according to St. Anthony’s direction. He then, buried the body and went back to the Pope to tell him what happened. St. Athanasius sent men to bring St. Paul’s body to him. They spent several days searching in the mountains, but they could not find the place of his grave. The Saint appeared to the Pope in a vision and told him that the Lord did not allow to reveal his body, so do not trouble the men, send and bring them back.

Pope Athanasius used to put the palm fiber tunic on three times a year during masses. At one time, he went to tell them about the holiness of the owner of that tunic. He put it over a dead man, and the dead man rose up instantly. The news about this miracle, spread all around the land of Egypt.

What do we learn from the life of St. Paul?

1. Money should never be a cause for a fight with others in the life of a Christian (Luke 6:19-20, Hebrews 13: 5).
2. God can take care of his children anywhere and at all times as he took care of St. Paul and sent him his food every day (Luke 6:25-26, Deuteronomy 1:31, Isaiah 40:11).
3. Although St. Paul lived all his life alone, his story became known to all of us for many years after his death because God wants us to learn from the life of his saints and take their example in our life.
4. The soul of St. Paul was carried to heaven by the angels, which is the ultimate reward of the saints, and the people who love God (Revelation 3:21).

- ❖ How many years did St. Paul live in the wilderness?
- ❖ Why did St. Paul go to the wilderness?
- ❖ What was his cloth made of and what did he eat?
- ❖ Who came to visit him?
- ❖ What did St. Paul ask St. Anthony to bring to him?

Conclusion:

If we love God more than anything in the world, we will be able to spend long time with him without feeling bored. St. Paul was able to spend 70 years of his life with God only because he loved God and enjoyed His company more than anyone else.

Applications:

- ❖ Give seeds or half a piece of bread every day for one week to the birds outside of your house as the raven took care of St. Paul in the wilderness for 70 years.
- ❖ Use the intercessions of St. Paul in your prayers this month.

6- The Philippian Jailer

Objective:

- ❖ The child should learn to trust the Lord, who will care for him in the worst situations and use him to save other people.

Memory Verse:

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31)

References:

- ❖ Acts 16:16-34,
- ❖ “The Book of Acts” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “I place my soul into Your hands”, “To whom shall I go” – Book of Songs and Praises

Introduction:

Ask the children about St. Paul and St. Silas. You may have to introduce St. Silas as a partner to St. Paul in his journey to call people to the true God and stop praying to idols.

Lesson Outlines:

1. St. Paul and his helper St. Silas went to a town called Philippi and were telling people the good news that Jesus came to save them and He was crucified and resurrected after three days. Many believed them and were baptized.
2. Satan didn't like to see the children of God succeed, and tried to stop them by a trick. There was a slave girl in the town who was using the devil to work as a fortuneteller. Her masters earned a great deal of money from the people who came to ask her.
3. When she saw Paul and Silas, the devil in her could not stay calm. So she followed them crying with a loud voice “These men are the servants of the most high God, who proclaimed to us the way of salvation.” Paul and Silas didn't like to hear this coming from a woman that was demon possessed testifying for them then fortune telling against God's orders.
4. Day after day she annoyed them like that. One day Paul could not take it any more and he turned to her and said to the devil in her “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” The devil immediately left her and she could not tell fortunes to the people anymore.
5. When her masters could not get any money from her work they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the judges. They told the judges that these people are foreigners who are teaching people against Rome and Caesar. The judges tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods and threw them in jail. They ordered the jailer to keep them securely.
6. The jailer put them in the basement of the jail where there were no windows and locked their legs on the stock so they can't even move and locked several doors behind him. They

were in severe pain. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

7. Suddenly there was a great earthquake and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed and their legs were free from the stocks. The jailer, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.
8. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." It was very dark and the jailer took a torch in his hand and went down and found all the doors opened and all prisoners loose but no one escaped as Paul said. He started thinking quickly how Paul knew that he was about to kill himself even though there were floors, walls, and darkness between them and who Paul knew that none of the prisoner escaped. He fell down trembling before Paul and Silas and brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
9. So they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." He took them the same hour of the night to his house and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized and he rejoiced, having believed in God with his entire household.

- ❖ What is the name of the city Paul and Silas went to?
- ❖ Who was Silas?
- ❖ How did the fortuneteller get her money?
- ❖ How did it help her?
- ❖ What did the fortuneteller do to Paul and Silas?
- ❖ Why did that annoy Paul?
- ❖ What did he do to her?
- ❖ How did her masters punish Paul and Silas?
- ❖ What were Paul and Silas doing in the middle of the night?
- ❖ Does our church have midnight prayer?
- ❖ Did you attend one?
- ❖ What happened to the jail doors?
- ❖ Why do you think the jailer believed in the God of Paul and Silas and asked them what to do?
- ❖ What did he and his family do to become Christians?

Conclusion:

Our behavior and faith attracts non-believers to Christianity. So, we should help others to know Christ through our good attitude and kind behavior. We have to care and show love towards non-believers.

Applications:

- ❖ When I have trouble from other people, I should pray for them to be saved like the jailer.
- ❖ I should thank and praise the Lord in every situation even if it is a bad one and He will turn it to be good for His Glory.

7- Daniel and the Priests of Baal

Objectives:

- ❖ To familiarize the students with the story of Daniel and the priests of Baal.
- ❖ To learn how God protects His children in the midst of all hardships.
- ❖ To trust that God will always take His children to triumph.

Memory Verse:

“You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you” (Daniel 14:38)

References:

- ❖ NRSV with apocrypha Bible (English)
- ❖ The second canonical (Deuterocanonical) books (Arabic)

Introduction:

Chapter 14 in the book of Daniel is part of the hidden books that was not included in the protestant translations of the Bible. The Coptic Orthodox Church believes in the missing two chapters in the book of Daniel (chapter 13 and 14). Chapter 13 tells us the story of Susanna whom Daniel helped to save from death. Chapter 14 includes the story of Daniel and the priests of Baal. All the stories in the book of Daniel have one great theme demonstrating God’s support, protection and leadership to triumph to those who love and worship Him faithfully.

Lesson Outlines:

(Chapter 14 of the Greek version of Daniel: Daniel and the Priests of Baal)

When King Astyages was laid to rest with his ancestors, Cyrus the Persian succeeded to his kingdom. 2 Daniel was a companion of the king, and was the most honored of all his Friends. 3 Now the Babylonians had an idol called Baal, and every day they provided for it twelve bushels of choice flour and forty sheep and six measures {A little more than fifty gallons} of wine. 4 The king revered it and went every day to worship it. But Daniel worshiped his own God. So the king said to him, “Why do you not worship Baal?” 5 He answered, “Because I do not revere idols made with hands, but the living God, who created heaven and earth and has dominion over all living creatures.” 6 The king said to him, “Do you not think that Baal is a living god? Do you not see how much he eats and drinks every day?” 7 And Daniel laughed, and said, “Do not be deceived, O king, for this thing is only clay inside and bronze outside, and it never ate or drank anything.” 8 Then the king was angry and called the priests of Baal {Gk [his priests]} and said to them, “If you do not tell me who is eating these provisions, you shall die. 9 But if you prove that Baal is eating them, Daniel shall die, because he has spoken blasphemy against Baal.” Daniel said to the king, “Let it be done as

you have said.” 10 Now there were seventy priests of Baal, besides their wives and children. So the king went with Daniel into the temple of Baal. 11 The priests of Baal said, “See, we are now going outside; you yourself, O king, set out the food and prepare the wine, and shut the door and seal it with your signet. 12 When you return in the morning, if you do not find that Baal has eaten it all, we will die; otherwise Daniel will, who is telling lies about us.” 13 They were unconcerned, for beneath the table they had made a hidden entrance, through which they used to go in regularly and consume the provisions. 14 After they had gone out, the king set out the food for Baal. Then Daniel ordered his servants to bring ashes, and they scattered them throughout the whole temple in the presence of the king alone. Then they went out, shut the door and sealed it with the king’s signet, and departed. 15 During the night the priests came as usual, with their wives and children, and they ate and drank everything. During the night the priests came as usual, with their wives and children, and they ate and drank everything. 16 Early in the morning the king rose and came, and Daniel with him. 17 The king said, “Are the seals unbroken, Daniel?” He answered, “They are unbroken, O king.” 18 As soon as the doors were opened, the king looked at the table, and shouted in a loud voice, “You are great, O Baal, and in you there is no deceit at all!” 19 But Daniel laughed and restrained the king from going in. “Look at the floor,” he said, “and notice whose footprints these are.” 20 The king said, “I see the footprints of men and women and children.” 21 Then the king was enraged, and he arrested the priests and their wives and children. They showed him the secret doors through which they used to enter to consume what was on the table. 22 Therefore the king put them to death, and gave Baal over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple. 23 {Daniel Kills the Dragon} Now in that place {other ancient authorities lack [in that place]} there was a great dragon, which the Babylonians revered. 24 The king said to Daniel, “You cannot deny that this is a living god; so worship him.” 25 Daniel said, “I worship the Lord my God, for he is the living God. 26 But give me permission, O king, and I will kill the dragon without sword or club.” The king said, “I give you permission.” 27 Then Daniel took pitch, fat, and hair, and boiled them together and made cakes, which he fed to the dragon. The dragon ate them, and burst open. Then Daniel said, “See what you have been worshiping!” 28 When the Babylonians heard about it, they were very indignant and conspired against the king, saying, “The king has become a Jew; he has destroyed Baal, and killed the dragon, and slaughtered the priests.” 29 Going to the king, they said, “Hand Daniel over to us, or else we will kill you and your household.” 30 The king saw that they were pressing him hard, and under compulsion he handed Daniel over to them.

{Daniel in the Lions’ Den} They threw Daniel into the lions’ den, and he was there for six days. 32 There were seven lions in the den, and every day they had been given two human bodies and two sheep; but now they were given nothing, so that they would devour Daniel. 33 Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judea; he had made a stew and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field to take it to the reapers. 34 But the angel of the Lord said to Habakkuk, “Take the food that you have to Babylon, to Daniel, in the lions’ den.” 35 Habakkuk said, “Sir, I have never seen Babylon, and I know nothing about the den.” 36 Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown of his head and carried him by his hair; with the speed of the wind {Or [by the power of his spirit]} he set him down in Babylon, right over the den. 37 Then Habakkuk shouted, “Daniel, Daniel! Take the food that God has sent you.” 38 Daniel said, “You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you.” 39 So Daniel got up and ate. And the angel of God immediately returned Habakkuk to his own place. 40 On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. When he came to the den he

looked in, and there sat Daniel! 41 The king shouted with a loud voice, “You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!” 42 Then he pulled Daniel {Gk [him]} out, and threw into the den those who had attempted his destruction, and they were instantly eaten before his eyes.

Conclusion:

God will never let his children down.

Applications:

- ❖ Prayer was the most important secret of Daniel’s strength and God’s support to him.
- ❖ Start with the student a spiritual notebook to develop the habit of prayer every morning and recording it in the notebook. This is a good way of developing spiritual practices.
- ❖ Give the children homework to memorize....” Holy...Holy...Holy” from the Agpia.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

(Starting with the Coptic New Year)

Week 2- The Miraculous Deeds of St. Mina and his Martyrdom

Week 3- Parable of the Soils

Week 4- The Discovery of the Cross by Empress Helene

Week 2- The Miraculous Deeds of St. Mina and his Martyrdom

Objective:

- ❖ The children, after studying the lesson about St. Mina, should be filled with love for Christ so they reveal their faith without fear when they are asked about what their religion is.

Memory Verse:

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10)

References:

- ❖ Acts 6,7; Romans 8, 2; Corinthians 11; Hebrews 11,12
- ❖ “The Spiritual Values of Nayrouz Feast”
- ❖ “The Introduction of the Book: Martyrdom in Christianity”
- ❖ Synaxarium, the 15th Day of Hatour
- ❖ A special pamphlet from St. Mina Monastery

Introduction:

Use the picture of St. Mina with candles lit before it for this lesson. What is the meaning of the word “martyr”? Mention the names of five martyrs. Why did governors kill Christians? What is the name of the saint you see in this picture?

Lesson outlines:

St. Mina is a great and famous martyr. Several churches carry his name and many saints were named after him. Before Pope Kyrillos VI (Cyril 6) was ordained, his name was Protopriest (Hegumen) Mina, and St. Mina was his beloved Patron Saint. That is why he established a monastery carrying his name in the same region where the martyr lived.

St. Mina was born at a village near Menouf in about 250 A.D. His parents were pious and filled with love for Christ and the church. They brought him up in the way of holiness and worship, so he became a blessed young man who loved prayer and who was fond of the word of God. He longed for the life of monasticism, as he desired to devote his whole time to worship.

When he became a young man, he joined the army and was an honest soldier. He always remembered God’s words: “Be faithful unto death”. He was strong and brave. He performed his duty quite well and precisely. He served his colleagues sincerely. That army was under the leadership of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian who hated Christians. Diocletian was a pagan. He worshipped idols. He gave an order that Christian Religion was forbidden and he compelled all people to worship him!

- ❖ What is the name of your Martyr?
- ❖ Where was he born?
- ❖ What was his job?

- ❖ What is the name of the Roman Emperor at that time?
- ❖ What was the order he made?

One day, when St. Mina was standing with his colleagues the soldiers, an officer came so they stood to attention and saluted him. The man read the Emperor's order in a serious way threatening that he would kill any Christian soldier. What did St. Mina do? Would he deny Christ for fear of death? No, as the verse says: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" Then what should he do? He was perplexed... He said to himself, "I must be faithful to Christ". He prayed to the Lord and his heart became filled with a strong desire for monasticism. "This is the only solution. I shall go to the desert and there I shall worship my Lord in calmness. This has always been my desire", he thought. He went back to his house... took some clothes and books and left for the desert after raising a long prayer. When he arrived at Mariout near Alexandria, he lived in a cave and continued worship and spiritual reading for five years.

- ❖ What is the name of the Emperor?
- ❖ What was the solution that the Lord guided St. Mina to?
- ❖ How many years did he spend in the desert?
- ❖ What was the verse that the Lord commanded him to follow?

While he was praying and reading the Gospel, the verse came back to his mind, "Be faithful unto death". Then, he must remain faithful to Christ even if he were exposed to death... he thought... "For the sake of Christ, I must not fear death"... he prayed, and then he went to Mariout to declare his faith as Christian. He decided to reveal his faith even if he faced death... He entered the city... He was a stranger... They asked him what his religion was and they took him to the governor and the following talk ran between them:

- Is what I heard about you true?
- + Yes sir! I am a Christian.
- Do you know the meaning of these words?
- + I know it well...it means death, but to us, death is a great gain as through it we go to heaven where Jesus sits. Didn't He promise us saying: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life".
- These are superstitions...Jesus is in heaven! Jesus is God! Deny Him immediately!
- + Your attempts will go in vain, Sir. Jesus is my Lord and my God.

The governor grew angry. He raised his voice saying: Take him away and cut off his head immediately. The soldiers attacked him and took him to the martyrdom place where they cut his head off as he was repeating the blessed verse "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life".

- ❖ What made St. Mina leave the desert? The children here act the dialogue between the Saint and the governor.

St. Mina is called the wonder worker as his pure body made many miracles before and after its burial. When they came to bury him, the camel stood in the place where he used to live. They tried to remove the body but they could not. They beat it but it did not want to move. Then they knew the secret. The martyr wanted to be buried here. One day, a shepherd was taking care of his sheep in that region. The shepherd was walking before the herd singing a hymn on his flute. He suddenly looked back and found that a sheep had run away and made for Mariout Lake. The shepherd was disturbed. He ran after him. He was afraid lest the sheep should fall into the lake. The sheep ran and the shepherd ran. The sheep fell into the lake and the shepherd could pull it out quickly. The sheep was shabby, but he was well. What is this? It is St. Mina's blessing. Many people still intercede with him and recite the verse "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life".

- ❖ The conversation between St. Mina and the emperor is important so it must be presented in a vital way when you tell the story. Two boys can act this.
- ❖ When you speak about St. Mina's martyrdom, do not speak in detail so that you may not emphasize the apparent defeat, but concentrate on the victory of the saint over death and emphasize his miraculous deeds.
- ❖ Explain that when the saint went to the desert, he was not afraid. There is no doubt that he prayed to God who led him to the desert and to martyrdom.

Conclusion:

As their hearts were filled with faith in eternity, they faced death with such courage that astonished the unbelievers who, for that reason, became Christians, and in this way the blood of martyrs was the greatest preacher.

Applications:

- ❖ It is better to write these questions in the children's notebooks and ask them to answer them at home:
 - ❑ What is the name of St. Mina's town?
 - ❑ What was his job?
 - ❑ What did the emperor's circular state?
 - ❑ What was the verse that motivated St. Mina to martyrdom?
 - ❑ What was the miraculous deed that revealed St. Mina's blessings?
- ❖ If a non-Christian person asks you about your religion say, "I am Christian". Do not be afraid.
- ❖ Pray three times everyday and say, "O Lord, I will be faithful until death. Give me the crown of life as you gave it to St. Mina".

Week 3- Parable of the Soils

Objective:

- ❖ To learn the story of the parable of the soils
- ❖ To learn to apply what we here is church, Sunday school and the Bible in our life.

Memory Verse:

“But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”
(Matthew 13:8)

References:

- ❖ Matthew 13
- ❖ “The Gospel of St. Matthew” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

We come every Sunday to church and listen to the word of God in the sermon, the Bible and in Sunday school. What do we do with what we listen to? For example, do you remember what was last week’s lesson about? What did we learn from the previous lesson and how useful is it for us?

This week we are going to learn about the Lord’s description of those people who listen and apply what they hear in their daily life and those who listen and forget or do nothing with the word of God.

The servant should prepare pictures of the different types of soil.

Lesson Outlines:

One day the Lord Jesus was surrounded with great number of people. So, He went into a boat and sat and all the people gathered at the shore to listen to Him. He then told them a story about a sower (farmer) who went out to throw seeds in the ground to grow into good crop. Some of the seeds fell by the wayside and the birds came and ate them. Some fell on stones, so they immediately burned when the sun came down because the plants did not have deep roots. Other seeds fell in the middle of thorns and the thorns surrounded the seeds and shocked it. And finally some fell on a good ground and a good crop grew and the fruits were 30, 60 and 100 fold from the good soil.

- ❖ Why did Jesus Christ go into the boat?
- ❖ What is the other name to the farmer?
- ❖ How many types of soils the Lord mentioned?

When the Lord finished His parable, the disciples came and asked Him about the meaning of this parable. The Lord Jesus Christ then explained its meaning saying that the seeds are like the words of God. When the devil comes and takes the word of God away from us is similar to the seeds that fell on the wayside and the birds ate them. Some people when they hear the word of God they become happy and like it for a short time. But when they are in trouble they immediately forget what they heard. This

is like the seeds that fell on the stones and did not have deep roots. The third type of people is like the seeds that fell among the thorns. These people although they listen to the word of God, yet they are very busy with things of this world (like computers, TV, movies, games). These people have no time to do anything with the word of God. The last type is the best type, which listens to the word of God, remembers it, obeys it and acts on it daily. This is similar to the seeds that fell on the good ground and produced fruits 30, 60 and 100.

- ❖ What kind of people is like the wayside?
- ❖ What kind of people is like the stony soil?
- ❖ What kind of people is like the thorny soil?
- ❖ What kind of people is like the good soil?
- ❖ What is the numbers of fruits the good soil yielded?

Conclusion:

We inspire to be like the good soil. So whenever we listen to the word of God or any lesson we have to use it and apply. So if I hear a lesson about obedience to the parents then, I have to be obedient to my parents and if I hear a lesson about communion then I have to take communion...etc. This is what the children of God do. We would like to be a good soil because this is the type that Jesus Christ liked the best.

Application:

- ❖ We need to read the Bible every day to get the seeds (the word of God).
- ❖ Try planting seeds at home in a good soil, water it and see what happens.

Week 4- The Discovery of the Cross by Empress Helene

Objective:

- ❖ Our pride in the cross and how we hold fast to it

Memory Verse:

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14)

References:

- ❖ The Synaxarium

Introduction:

The servant should prepare three crosses, one of them is painted red and the others are painted black. The Red Cross would represent the Lord’s cross on which the Divine blood was shed. A cross can be made of palm leaves. The servant should start by asking the children: What is the name of the feast, which we celebrate on the first of Tute and on the 17th of Tute? On the 28th of September every year, the church celebrates the feast of the discovery of the Cross, which is the topic of this lesson.

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord arranged that the persecution of the Christians would come to an end by the hands of King Constantine, who worked for the good of the church. He gave his mother a great amount of money and sent her to the Holy Land to build churches and monasteries.

Queen Helene was 80 years old when she went to Jerusalem to search for the Cross upon which Christ was crucified. At first she failed to find it. But she knew that the Jews had put a mound of dust on the place where Christ’s tomb was and that they had built a pagan temple on it. She gave orders that the temple should be destroyed and the mound be removed. During digging, they found the tomb of the Savior and three crosses and some nails near it. They brought a sick woman who suffered from a dangerous disease for a long time and put the first cross on her but she was not healed. They put the other cross on her but she did not recover but when they put the third cross on her she was healed at once. When they put the same cross on a dead body of a man, he was brought back to life. In this way, Queen Helene could recognize the Lord Christ’s cross and she was very pleased to discover it. She built a church there and that day on which she discovered the cross became a feast in the church. That was in the 4th century.

- ❖ Why did Queen Helene search for the cross?
- ❖ Where was the cross found?
- ❖ How did they know that it was Christ’s cross while it was found with two other crosses?
- ❖ Let us say together: “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

The Servant should also explain to the children the meaning and symbols of the sign of the cross when we cross ourselves. We say “In the name of the Father” and we place three fingers together as the sign of the trinity on the forehead and then move down below the chest and say “the Son”. This a symbol that God the Son was incarnated, took flesh and became man and came down from heaven to earth as Jesus Christ. Then we move our fingers from the left shoulder to the right shoulder and say “and the Holy Spirit,” to indicate that that we are transferred from the left side of God when we sinned and were living in darkness to His right side where we became His children. This is through the cross on which our sins were removed. Then we close by saying “One God Amen” to indicate that God the Father, God the son Jesus and God the Holy Spirit are all one God but these are His attributes.

Conclusion:

The sign of the cross is a source of power and protection to all of us. It is also the source for healing and comfort. Whenever we are in need of strength and confidence we cross ourselves with the sign of the cross.

Applications:

- ❖ Arrange the words of this verse: God - Christ - forbid - cross - that - I - except - in the - of our - boast - Lord - should - Jesus - But.
- ❖ Make many types of crosses: draw them and color them and bring them with you to Sunday School. Hang one of them in the place where you pray.
- ❖ Make the sign of the cross before you go to bed and when you get up, before you eat, before doing any thing and when you walk in a dark place.
- ❖ Crosses are the best prizes to be given on that day.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

Week 1- Samson and The Lion

Week 2- Parents Love: David and Absalom

Week 3- Love for our Neighbors: Ruth

Week 4- God Cares for Pope Athanasius the Apostolic

Week 1- Samson and The Lion

Objective:

- ❖ To recognize the potentialities of the great power of God in our life.

Memory Verse:

“Out of the eater came something to eat” (Judges 14:14)

References:

- ❖ Genesis 13- 16
- ❖ “Judges” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

- ❖ Review the previous lesson.
- ❖ Ask the students: who is the strongest man they know? And why is he strong?

Lesson Outlines:

There was a pious man called Manoah. He was married but had no children. While his wife was praying to the Lord to give her a son, the place was suddenly filled with light, “And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (These words should be recited calmly, deeply and seriously) (Judges 14:3-5).

Then the angel disappeared...Manoah’s wife came to herself. She ran to her husband in the field. The husband wondered what made his wife come to him. He was worried and said “Is it well with you?” She said, “It is well... the angel of God appeared to me and said...” The man was amazed and then he “prayed to the Lord, and said: O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born” (Judges 14:8).

- ❖ What is the name of the man?
- ❖ Why was his wife praying?
- ❖ What did the angel speak to her about?
- ❖ Why did Manoah pray?

One day, Manoah was in the field. His wife was at another place caring for cows and milking them...Suddenly she saw the angel standing near her...She ran to call her husband...Come quickly...the angel has come...The man went quickly with her. They bowed to him saying:

- Sir, you said to my wife what shall we do with the child?
- + Your wife must not drink wine and your son's hair must not be cut. Your son also must not drink wine, as he is a Nazirite.
- What does a "Nazirite" mean seer?
- + It means that he is chosen by the Lord to rescue the people of God from the Philistines.
- What is your name sir?
- + My name is "a name of wonders"; do not ask about my name.
- Allow me to offer you a sacrifice.

Manoah took a young goat, slew it and put it on fire...To their surprise -Manoah and his wife - they saw the angel of the Lord go up towards heaven in the flames. They threw their faces downwards on the ground. When the angel disappeared, they rose to pray and thank the Lord.

Nine months later, Samson was born. They brought him up in the fear of God and taught him how to pray and how to read...The boy grew up...What is the thing that characterized Samson in his appearance and made him different from his companions? (His long hair) What does this mean? In fact Samson was dedicated to God as a Nazirite - that is why the Lord gave him a brave heart and wonderful powers. He was very strong. One day he was walking with his parents in a place full of grapes and suddenly a lion appeared to them and it was roaring (How does a lion roar? Have you seen the lion? I think it is terrible) -What was to be done? Manoah was afraid and his wife was afraid. Samson said to them, "The Lord will fight for you, do not be afraid...He ran to the lion and got hold of its head...Manoah was worried about his son Samson...His wife screamed...Keep away from the lion, Samson, do not do that...The lion will devour you...O Lord help us...Samson was able to get hold of the head of the lion...He managed to get hold of the lion's jaws...The lion made a vain attempt to devour Samson but could not. Samson cried, "The Lord fights for you... O Lord, help me to kill this lion". He was able to separate the jaws and destroy the mouth of the lion. The lion fell dead and Samson threw it to the ground. Manoah and his wife were amazed at the great power of Samson. They all knelt down and thanked God. They went their way then they came back safely.

What is that? The lion was still on the ground... What is there in its mouth? Many bees bringing out honey...Samson stretched out his hand and took some honey...They all ate honey and Samson said, "Out of the eater came something to eat". And the Lord made Samson rescue his people from their enemies.

- ❖ Explain the value of the vow (solemn pledge -being a Nazirite -dedication) in the life of Samson.
- ❖ Emphasize the following feelings: the humility of the people, the woman's amazement at seeing the angel, how Manoah and his wife were afraid of the lion, Samson's courage, Samson's parents joy when the lion was killed and how they thanked God for the food that came out of the lion's mouth.

Conclusion:

Samson's mother was barren and the Lord gave her the ability to give birth to a child. This shows how God can give those who ask Him for good things.

Manoah was a symbol of simplicity. When he knew that the angel appeared to his wife, he prayed asking for the angel to appear to him to teach him what to do. When he realized that it was the Lord that appeared to him he was afraid he might die.

Applications:

- ❖ Ask the children to solve these questions in the class:
 - ❑ What is the name of the enemies of the people of God in the days of Samson?
 - ❑ How was Samson born?
 - ❑ What does this statement mean, “Out of the eater came something to eat?”
 - ❑ Complete: The power was with so he killed the lion.
 - ❑ Complete: The eater is and the thing to eat is
- ❖ Conversations make the story lively when you present it. Let the children act it.

Week 2- Parents Love: David and Absalom

Objective:

- ❖ Love for parents.

Memory Verse:

“And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2)

References:

- ❖ 2 Samuel 15 -18
- ❖ “The Second Book of Samuel” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

Start the lesson by asking the children the following questions: Who are those who love you? Do you also love them? How do your parents feel if you are injured?

Lesson Outlines:

Brief the students about the beginning of the misunderstanding between David and Absalom:

1. The disobedience of Absalom to the orders given by David his father.
2. His attempt to kill his father: Absalom wanted to be king.
3. Some people gathered around Absalom and declared that he would be king.
4. David and his servants fled to the mountain.

- ❖ What is the name of David’s son?
- ❖ What did the Devil say to Absalom?
- ❖ Did he obey him? Whom do you obey? Whom do you love?

David prepared an army to fight Absalom...The people said to David: Do not fight with us because our enemies want to kill you. David said, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom” (2 Samuel 18:5). David’s army defeated Absalom’s army. Absalom fled to a place full of many trees. While he was riding his mule under the trees, his long hair stuck with the branches of a tree and he could not escape death. The captain of the army ordered a soldier to kill him but the soldier said “Haven’t you heard the king say: Be gentle with Absalom? He will grieve if he hears of his death as he loves him”. The captain of the army aimed arrows at Absalom and killed him.

- ❖ Whose army won victory?
- ❖ What did Absalom do?
- ❖ What was David’s commandment to the soldiers?
- ❖ How did Absalom meet his end?

Let us say together: Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.

David stayed in the palace all the day. He was anxious about his son Absalom. A soldier arrived and told him that David's army won victory. David asked if Absalom his son was well. David was very sad when he learned of the death of his son.

- ❖ What happened in the battle?
- ❖ Who was killed?
- ❖ What did David do?
- ❖ What does the verse say?

Conclusion:

The parents are the most forgiving and loving people out of all the people that surround us and we get to know. They support us at time of sorrow and time of joy. They are always there for us whenever we need them. Therefore, we owe them love, respect and honor.

Applications:

- ❖ Read 2 Samuel 15 –18.
- ❖ Obey your elders and your parents.
- ❖ Obey, honor and respect your parents.
- ❖ Is my conduct at home different from my conduct in the church?
- ❖ Study the fifth passage of the 6th hour prayer.

Week 3- Love for our Neighbors: Ruth

Objective:

- ❖ Love for neighbors

Memory Verse:

“Your people shall be my people and your God, my God” (Ruth 1:16)

References

- ❖ The Book of Ruth
- ❖ “The Books of Judges and Ruth” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “The women of the Holy Bible”

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson with the students and revise all the memory verses from the previous lessons. Ask the children where is the book of Ruth in the Bible? How many books are in the Old Testament and in the New Testament? Why is the book was named after Ruth?

Lesson Outlines:

“Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion--Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband” (Ruth 1:1-5). Poor Naomi was sad and was left all alone. She determined to go back to her motherland when she heard that the Lord blessed the people by giving them a good harvest.

- ❖ What is the name of the man? His wife? His two sons?
- ❖ Why did they leave the land? Where to?
- ❖ What are the names of the two wives of the man’s sons? Did they have any children?

Orpah and Ruth did not leave Naomi. She said to them: “Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me” (Ruth 1:8). But the two girls did not want to go to their mothers, as they loved Naomi. When she asked them to go back home they wept and said to her: “Surely we will return with you to your people” (Ruth 1:10). Naomi said: “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?” (Ruth 1:11). At last Orpah agreed to go back to her people, kissed her mother-in-

law and went back to her people. Naomi said to Ruth: “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law” (Ruth 1:15). But Ruth refused saying “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me” (Ruth 1:16,17). When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more. She was pleased because Ruth showed a deep love and that she would go with her. Then both went together to Bethlehem in the land of Canaan where Naomi had been living before.

- ❖ What is the name of the girl who went back to her people?
- ❖ Who held fast to Naomi? Why?
- ❖ Let us say together: “your people shall be my people, and your God, my God”
- ❖ How did the Lord want the family to treat one another?
- ❖ What thing can you participate in to make your family Happy?
- ❖ Do you cooperate with the members of your family at home?

Conclusion:

Ruth rejected Paganism and believed in the True God. It is believed that Ruth did not read any books about Jehovah before she knew Naomi. Naomi was her mother in law and her eternal book that filled her way with light.

Emphasize the wonderful reward that the Lord gave to her because she held fast to Him bravely, sincerely and powerfully.

Applications:

- ❖ Put a note beside the things you can make to help others.
 - ❑ Visiting a sick person.
 - ❑ Keeping the house clean.
 - ❑ Caring about little children.
- ❖ Read a chapter from the Book of Ruth.

Week 4- God Cares for Pope Athanasius the Apostolic

Objective:

- ❖ Having confidence in God's care of us as he made us Christians.

Memory Verse:

"The Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9)

References:

- ❖ "Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa" (The Precious Gem), Part I, Pages 298-313
- ❖ "The story of the Coptic Church" Iris H. Al-Masry, Part I, Pages 186-249
- ❖ "The Life of Athanasius the Apostolic" Kamel Saleh Nakhla

Introduction:

Start the lesson by asking the children the following questions: Who remembers the verse of last week? Then show the picture of ST. Athanasius and ask them: Whose picture is this?

Lesson Outlines:

We call St. Athanasius "The Protector of the Orthodox Faith" because he was a great Patriarch and he proved the truth of Christianity to the whole world. St. Athanasius' parents were pagans. (What does the word "pagan" mean?) His father was very rich but he died when Athanasius was still a child. His mother brought him up. She sent him to a Christian School in Alexandria, Egypt, to learn. He mixed with the Christian children and noticed how they played, talked and how they loved one another. He saw that they were calm and obedient. He watched them while they were praying to Christ. They asked him about his religion and he said that he worshipped idols and the boys told him that idols are not gods. Christ is God. Athanasius said: "This is true". The boys said, "Athanasius, be a Christian so that the Lord may be with you wherever you go". The hands of men make idols, so how do they worship them?

- ❖ Whose picture is this?
- ❖ What was his parent's religion?
- ❖ Where was Athanasius educated?
- ❖ What did his friends say to him?

One day, while the children were in the school, the bell rang. There was a long break then. The children ran out to play on the Seashore. At that time, the Pope was watching them from the window of his room but they did not notice it. The boys said to Athanasius "Let us baptize you and make you a Christian". Athanasius agreed because he loved Christ and desired to be baptized. They practiced the ritual of baptism: "I renounce you Satan..." He repeated it three times while looking to the west... Then he said, "I acknowledge You O Christ" three times while looking towards the east. Then

Athanasius played the part of the bishop and so on. Pope Alexandrous was happy because the children knew the ritual of baptism. He sent for them and they came and the following conversation took place:

- + What were you doing?
- We were playing, Your Holiness.
- + Which game were you playing? (The boys felt hesitant but he encouraged them)
- We were playing baptism ritual with Athanasius.
- + What is your name my son and who are you?
- My name is Athanasius... My mother worships idols but I want to be a Christian, your Holiness.

The Pope welcomed him and said to him, “May the Lord be with you”. The Pope was pleased with him. He noticed that he studied the ritual of baptism perfectly. He took him to his bosoms and anointed him with chrism. He asked his mother to leave him to stay with him at the Patriarchate as a deacon. The mother agreed...Athanasius prayed and studied the Gospel and became a talented preacher. Then, according to Pope Alexandrous’ will, the bishops and the people chose him a patriarch and they blessed him by saying: The Lord be with you.

- ❖ What were Athanasius and his friends doing on the seashore?
- ❖ Where did Athanasius study the rites of baptism?
- ❖ What made Athanasius love Christ?
- ❖ How many church sacraments are there?
- ❖ What was Athanasius’ parents’ religion?
- ❖ How did Athanasius become Christian?
- ❖ What was the church post (order) that Athanasius received?
- ❖ What is the title given to Athanasius? Why?

Explain that when the Lord sees a glimpse of light in the life of a man, he does not deprive him of his grace, as he desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge or the truth, “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth” (Isaiah 42:3).

The Sacrament of baptism is essential in attaining salvation as by it we become Christ’s children, and through the Holy Chrism with which we are anointed, we get the guarantee of the Kingdom and we abide in Christ, live in Him and bear fruit.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Although Athanasius was young, he was very strong in the faith. He understood the faith and defended with courage even when the whole world was against him.

Applications:

- ❖ Read the gospel regularly.
- ❖ Mark right (3) or wrong (x) before the following:
 - Athanasius' parents were Christians.
 - God is pleased with the wicked boys.
 - Athanasius is called "The Protector of The Orthodox Faith".
- ❖ Encourage the children to memorize the first half of the creed.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Week 1- The Good Friendship: David and Jonathan

Week 2- Moving the Mokattam Mount

Week 3- Do not be Greedy: Aulogius the Stone Cutter

Week 4- Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law

Week 1- The Good Friendship: David and Jonathan

Objective:

- ❖ To choose good friends

Memory Verse:

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully” (Proverbs 12:26)

References

- ❖ 1 Samuel 18-20

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson by asking the following questions: What affected the life and attitudes of Athanasius when he was a child? What was the name of the Pope? Who remembers the verse? What is the name and title of our Pope the Patriarch?

Also ask your students: how many close friends they have? Why do they like their friends? What do you like to do with your friends? Does he always go to church and the Sunday School? What will they do if their friends do something bad?

Allow the students to talk freely about their friends and notice what kind of friends they have?

Lesson Outlines:

Jonathan rejoiced greatly because David killed the mighty Goliath. Saul, his father, was sad at first when Goliath despised the people and the Lord their God for forty days. Jonathan prayed to the Lord and said: “O Lord bring victory to our people”. When David stood before Saul and spoke to him after Goliath had been killed, Jonathan, the king’s son was present. Jonathan loved David and knew that he was a hero because of his faith and trust in the Lord.

- ❖ What is the name of King Saul’s son?
- ❖ Who killed the mighty Goliath?
- ❖ Why did Jonathan love David?

Jonathan looked at David’s face and felt that David was the only one who would be a sincere friend. Jonathan was the Crown Prince but he knew that the Lord chose David to be King and he did not envy him but he desired to be his friend all the days of his life. To show his love for David, Jonathan gave David his cloak and sword together with his bow and girdle. Jonathan loved David and wanted to give him everything. Do you love Christ? What would you give him?

Conclusion:

We have to bear in mind that Christianity means that Christ and I are close inseparable friends. I tell Him frankly about all the secrets of my heart, which He himself knows. I consult Him before I do

anything, and I cast all my anxieties on Him. I enjoy speaking to Him and living with Him and I desire to sit by His feet to listen to His voice.

Applications:

- ❖ Read 1 Samuel 18 –20
- ❖ Bring your friend with you to the church.
- ❖ Review with the students the first half of the creed (the homework from the previous lesson).

Week 2- Moving The Mokattam Mount

Objective:

- ❖ The power of prayer in calling God through faith

Memory Verse:

“The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:14)

References:

- ❖ “Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa” (The Precious Gem), Part 2, the 10th generation, Pages 344-348.
- ❖ The Wonder of Moving the Mokattam Mount

Introduction:

Sing with the students: “Through the intercessions of the Theotokos... [The Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil, Page 73]”. Ask the children to tell you a story about a miracle they know? Ask them if they know what is the meaning of a miracle?

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord performed a miraculous deed in the days of Caliph Al Moez where the Lord moved Al Mokattam Mount in Cairo, Egypt, to save the Christians of Egypt. History tells us that Caliph Al Moez had a Jewish minister who hated the Christians and who always despised Christianity and Christ. He was wailing for an opportunity to persecute the Christians.

One day, he sat with the Caliph and said to him: Christ said a verse in the Gospel, “if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20). Now let us test the Christians to see if this verse is true...Ask them to move The Mokattam Mount so that the air in Cairo may be purer and cleaner and its weather become milder. If the verse is not true, let us take their houses and possessions for ourselves, and drive them out of our country.”

- ❖ What was the name of the Caliph?
- ❖ Where can we find this verse “if you have faith as a mustard seed...?”

Al Moez was convinced and he sent for the Patriarch whose name was Anba Abram the Syrian. He said to him: “If the Gospel is true, move Al Mokattam Mount from its site or we will drive you out of the country”. The Patriarch was upset. He said to the Caliph: “Be patient with me for three days”. The Patriarch went back in grief. He wrote letters to all the people, priests and bishops of Egypt asking them to fast three successive days till evening and to pray Masses as the church was in danger. The Christians were upset and afraid. The old men and the children cried to the Lord. Mothers left their babes without food. All the people wept. The Patriarch shut himself up inside Al Moallaka (The Hanging) Church for three days without food or water. He kept raising hands and praying, “O Lord help us...O Lord, deliver us.” When the time was up, he slept and had a dream and

saw a vision. A very beautiful lady -the Lady Virgin the Mother of Light came to him and said; “The Lord heard your prayers and the people’s prayers. When you go out through the door leading to the market place, you will see a man carrying a big jar of water. This man will tell you what to do...” The Patriarch got up...He knelt down before the Lord and said: “Thank you Lord because you have heard our prayers”. The verse says...The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.

- ❖ What is the name of the patriarch?
- ❖ What did the Patriarch and the Christian people do?
- ❖ Who gave an order that the Mokattam Mount should be moved?

The patriarch went out and reached the place the Mother of Light told him about and found the man she spoke of. He got hold of him and brought him to the church and told him what happened. The man whose name was Simon the tanner (Shoe repairer) said: “The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace”.

At the appointed time, Pope Abram went to the Caliph’s palace and when the minister saw him he said: “Of course you have come to say that you cannot move the Mount. Pope Abram made the sign of the cross (Let us all make the sign of the cross) and said: “The Lord will fight for us, and we have only to be still”. Our Lord can do everything. He is God the Almighty. With the power of our Lord, the mountain will be moved.

The Caliph, the ministers, the statesmen, the captains and the nobles went out to see how the mountain would move. The Jew minister was sure that the Christians would be ashamed and disappointed. They will say to the mountain, “Move” and the mountain would not move.

Our Father the Patriarch stood up and besides him stood Simon the tanner. The priests, the deacons and all the people stood in rows behind them. After the mass, the patriarch and his people bowed down in worship then they stood up saying “Lord have mercy, (Keryeleison)”. A great earthquake took place and the Mount shook and moved. Then the Patriarch and the people knelt down again and the Mount moved again causing violent movements in the ground. This happened several times. The caliph and the leaders of the army were afraid and asked the Pope to stop praying so that the city might not be turned over.

- ❖ What does the verse say?
- ❖ What happened to the Mountain?

Al Moez the Caliph knelt down before the Patriarch and said, “I am a Christian.” Then he gave up the throne (Abdicated), and was baptized and lived as a monk. His tomb is there in the church of Abu Sefein up till now. His son Al Azeez became king after him.

- ❖ The children should know that the man who walks with God never fears anything. They should never perish and no one shall snatch them out of His hand. If God is with us, who is against us! He said; “I am with you always to the end of the age.”

- ❖ Show the children that the conversation between Al Moez and the Pope teaches us a good lesson; that is we must not be rash in giving our agreement to anything before we pray.
- ❖ Show the children how powerful prayer and fasting are. Prayer and fasting rescued Esther and her people and they also can rescue all the Christians.
- ❖ The children should know the truth of Christianity and the firmness of the Coptic Church during the persecutions and troubles she faced all over ages. She will always be firm as God is in her and so she will not be shaken.
- ❖ Always be prepared to defend anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence, and keep your conscience clear.

Conclusion:

Prayer is an effective means that changes our shape and renews our mind to become the children of God. Prayer and fasting are of a great benefit when we face problems and difficulties

Applications:

- ❖ Let us pray for the See of St. Mark (in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia...etc.).
- ❖ Concentrate on faith in the practical life feeling of peace in dark places and advise the children not to be afraid of exams.
- ❖ Answer the following questions:
 - ❑ What was the name of the Caliph?
 - ❑ What was the name of the Patriarch?
 - ❑ What does the word “Keryeleison” mean?
 - ❑ How many times do we recite it in the prayers of the Psalms?
 - ❑ Write the Title of the Pope in your notebook.
 - ❑ Write the Intercession in your notebook.

Week 3- Do not be Greedy: Aulogius the Stone Cutter

Objective:

- ❖ Satisfaction.
- ❖ Be thankful for everything we have

Memory Verse:

“If we have food and clothing with these we shall be content” (1 Timothy 6:8).

References

- ❖ “Aulogius the Stone Cutter” Al Saurian Monastery

Introduction:

If you have a toy would you share it with your friends? If you have a game would you ask for another? Do you know what is the meaning of being content?

Lesson Outlines:

Aulogius is a poor man. He cuts stones and his wage is one Denarii a day. But he loves to entertain strangers and wash their feet, give them what he has. Aulogius met St. Daniel; the protopriest (Hegumen) of Scetics. He entertained him, washed his feet and fed him. The saint was pleased with Aulogius, the poor man and prayed for three weeks so that the Lord might give Aulogius a lot of money. The Lord answered the saint’s prayer and Aulogius became rich as he found a treasure while cutting the stones.

Aulogius went to a distant country (Constantinople) and befriended the rich people and did not show love for the poor and the strangers. The saint was sorry for what he asked for and prayed that Aulogius would return to his first love and the Lord answered his prayer and Aulogius became a poor man once more and returned to his country. He loved the strangers. This happened after his property had been robbed and people threatened to kill him.

- ❖ Why did St. Daniel pray that the Lord would make Aulogius rich?
- ❖ How did Aulogius live?
- ❖ How did he get all that money?
- ❖ Where did he go with his money?
- ❖ What did he lose when he was in Constantinople?
- ❖ How did Aulogius go back to his first life?

Conclusion:

As children of God we need to thank Him for all what we have and share what we have with others whether they are friends, relatives or even people we do not know. Let us also be content with what we have and do not ask for more than our needs.

Applications:

- ❖ Save some of your pocket money and give it to the poor.
- ❖ Share your toys with your brothers and sisters as well as with your friends.
- ❖ Memorize the second half of the creed as a homework.

Week 4- Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law

Objective:

- ❖ To learn that the Lord Jesus heals us.

Memory Verse:

"For I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26)

References:

- ❖ Luke 4:38-41; Mark 1:29-34
- ❖ The Lord Jesus at the shore of Galilee, Louis Diamond Beirut

Introduction:

Start the lesson by asking the children the following questions: What was our previous lesson about? What does the verse say? Also ask the children what do you do when you are sick or someone you know is sick? Do you pray to God to heal you?

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus was teaching in the Synagogue. Andrew, Peter, James and John were with Him. When they went out of the Synagogue, Peter invited them to have dinner in his house. Peter's wife was busy preparing dinner for them, but she looked sad. Jesus said to Peter; "Your wife looks sad", and Peter said, "Yes, Lord, her mother is sick with severe fever, and her case is hopeless". But Jesus said, "I will heal her, and He said to Peter's wife: Do not be afraid. I will heal your mother, for I am the Lord who heals you". They found her lying in bed. Her face was red and she cried in pain, "Ah my head, ah my body". Jesus got hold of her hand and she rose at once and the fever left her. She served them and helped in preparing dinner for the guests.

- ❖ Who healed Peter's mother-in-law?
- ❖ What was wrong with her?
- ❖ What did she do when the Lord healed her?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: For I am the Lord who heals you.

The four disciples: Andrew, Peter, James and John sat with their Master around the table in Peter's house. They were very happy. Peter's wife and his mother-in-law thanked Jesus. They served Him and His disciples. They offered the best food in the house. The news of this wonderful healing spread. At sunset, many people came to Peter's house where Jesus was sitting. Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.

- ❖ How did Peter's mother-in-law express her thanks to Jesus?

- ❖ Why did the crowds come to Peter's house?
 - ❖ Who remembers the verse? I am
1. Speak about the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick and explain that when the priest prays for a sick man, this man is healed through faith.
 2. Explain the prayer of the Unction of the Sick and try to gather the children during the week to attend the prayer of the Unction of the Sick.

Conclusion:

God is the one who heals when we are sick. He may work through the doctor or the priest's prayer but after all He is the one who heals everybody.

Applications:

- ❖ Rearrange the following:
 - Lord -the -I -who - heals -am -you
 - If we have -be content - food and clothing- with these we shall
- ❖ Pray for (name) who is sick, this week, or ask our father the priest to come and pray for him and anoint him with the holy oil.
- ❖ Mention some Biblical verses, which the Lord Christ used in healing the sick people.
- ❖ Visit the children who are absent or sick this week...bear in mind that Jesus visited Peter and healed his mother-in-law. When you visit anyone, give him a present.
- ❖ Review with the students the previous lesson's homework- the second half of the creed.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

Week 1- The Child Jesus Enters the Temple

Week 2- Raising Jairus' Daughter

Week 3- Jesus Heals A Man Born Blind

Week 4- Angels, Ranks, Nature and Work

Week 1- The Child Jesus Enters the Temple

Objective:

- ❖ To learn obedience to the parents from the Lord Jesus.
- ❖ To grow in the spirit at a young age.

Memory Verse:

“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature” (Luke 2:52)

References:

- ❖ Luke 2: 39-52
- ❖ “The explanation of the gospel of St. Luke” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Introduction:

Sometimes we answer our parents rudely or refuse to respond to their requests. Other times we are not willing to listen to them or do what they tell us to do. As the children of God we should be obedient to our parents. The Lord in the Old Testament gave His 10 commandments to His people. The first four commandments were concerning the relationship between God and man and the remaining 6 were about the relationship of man with his fellow men. The first commandments in these 6 were regarding the obedience and the respect to the parents “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be longer upon the land” (Exodus 20:12). The child Jesus Christ was very obedient to His parents St. Mary and St. Joseph the carpenter. Although He was God, He respected and listened to what His parents’ request from Him. Check with the children if they memorized the Ten Commandments. If they do not remember them, they should memorize them for next week as homework.

Today’s story demonstrates how obedient was the child Jesus to His parents.

Lesson Outlines:

“His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’ And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:41-52).

- ❖ How old was Jesus at that time?
- ❖ Where was the child Jesus?
- ❖ Why was He in Jerusalem?
- ❖ Who was looking for Him?

St. Mary and St. Joseph were relieved when they finally found Him in the temple but they were amazed when they saw Him sitting with all the teachers and the elders. When St. Mary asked Him: “Son, why have you done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought you anxiously” (Luke 2:48), Jesus answered very politely and said that He was doing His father’s business. He meant that He was teaching as God has planned for Him on earth. He immediately went back with them to their home in Nazareth. So, Jesus was polite and respectful to His parents and He obeyed them on the way back.

- ❖ What did St. Mary say to Jesus when she found Him?
- ❖ How did Jesus answer her?
- ❖ Where did they go after that?

Conclusion:

We would like to be like the child Jesus Christ in all aspects but specifically, His obedience and respect to His parents. Also, the child Jesus had good understanding for the word of God. He was also curious about it and would question the teachers to clarify it more. We also like to increase in understanding the Bible and the church.

Applications:

- ❖ Count how many times this week did you obey your parents and how many times did you not.
- ❖ Make sure to read the Bible everyday to increase in understanding and wisdom like Jesus Christ did when He was only 12 years old.
- ❖ Prepare questions for Sunday school teacher or to the priest about things you do not understand in the church to find the answers to them?
- ❖ Gradually build the habit of asking about the things you do not know to increase in the knowledge of God and the church.
- ❖ Review the whole creed memorization with the students.

Week 2- Raising Jairus' Daughter

Objective:

- ❖ Christ's authority over the kingdom of the souls and the body.

Memory Verse:

"Do not be afraid, believe only" (Luke 8:50)

References

- ❖ Luke 8:42-56; Matthew 9
- ❖ "The Explanation of the Gospel of Luke" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ "The Gospel of Matthew" Fr. Marcos Daoud

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson and memory verse with the children. Ask them if they know of any miracle from the Bible and tell them that today we are going to talk about another miracle.

Lesson Outlines:

The Lord Jesus Christ healed many people because He desires to help all, young and old. Jesus had some friends who were fishermen, living near the Lake of Galilee. They owned ships. One day the sun was shining in the sky and the ships were in the middle of the lake. Jesus and the fishermen were on one of the ships. There was a large crowd of people on the shore. The people saw Jesus...the children rejoiced. The ship drew near the shore where the crowds were waiting for Jesus.

Then a man named Jairus arrived, an official in the local synagogue. He was in deep grief as his only daughter was dying. Many people knew Jairus as he had a high status in society. Jairus threw himself down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to go to his house as his daughter was dying. He begged Him to come and lay His hands on her and heal her. And Jesus went with him.

- ❖ What was the name of the man?
- ❖ What did he want Jesus to do?
- ❖ What did he do when he drew near Jesus?
- ❖ What do you do before you pray?

A man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Master any more". Jairus was sad but Jesus encouraged him and said: "Do not fear, only believe". When Jesus arrived at the house, He saw a large crowd and everyone there was crying and mourning for the child. When Jesus entered the house He asked them: What is all this noise and weeping for? Do not cry: the child is not dead. She is only sleeping". They all made fun of Him, because they knew that she was dead. Jesus ordered them all not to enter her room.

- ❖ Who told Jairus that his daughter died?
- ❖ What did Jesus say?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: Do not be afraid; only believe.

The Lord Christ did not let anyone go in with Him except the child's parents and three of His disciples. Jesus took the child by the hand and called out, "Get up, child".

The child began to breathe and move, her life returned and the child opened her eyes. She saw Jesus and Jesus helped her to rise and leave her bed. The girl got up at once. She smiled to Christ, to her father and to her mother. She threw herself between the hands of her parent. Her grief turned into great joy and the mother was very happy. People came and knew what happened. The girl's parents did not know how to express their thanks to Jesus...Jesus knew their thoughts and He turned these thoughts to another simple matter. He said to them "Give her something to eat". Jesus looked at her kindly and smiled to her expressing His kindness and love for her. Her mother prepared the food and Jairus said to the people; "Jesus is our Lord God indeed". Fear not, only believe.

- ❖ Who were the three disciples who were with Jesus?
- ❖ What did Jesus say to the girl?
- ❖ What did Jesus say to her father?
- ❖ Who can say the verse?

Conclusion:

The Lord Jesus is always responsive to those who call upon Him for help. His help can reach the level of a miracle if He feels that a miracle is needed. He helps to bring happiness and joy to the hearts of those who believe in Him and His power.

Applications:

- ❖ Begin each prayer by thanking the Lord for His steadfast love.
- ❖ Pray for (name) who is sick and visit him.
- ❖ Review with the children Psalm 91. Encourage them to use the psalm in their prayer by giving them prizes. Use Psalm 91 in times of troubles.

Week 3- Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

Objective:

- ❖ God's power of healing

Memory Verse:

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5)

References:

- ❖ John 9

Introduction:

Start the lesson by asking the children the following questions: Do you remember the miracles Christ performed (e.g., raising the dead?) Who are those people whom Christ brought back to life? Who remembers the verse? Who has seen a blind man who can see anything? Darkness...Open your eyes now. (The Servant asks about the things that the children can see).

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus was walking with His disciples in the streets of Jerusalem. They saw a blind man who was begging for food. All the people in the city knew this man. They knew that he was born blind. When the disciples saw him they had pity on him and asked Christ, "Why is this man blind? Whose sin was it that caused him to be born blind? His own or his parents' sin?" Jesus answered, "His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parents' sins. He is blind so that God's power might be seen at work in him... While I am in the world, I am the light of the world". After He said this, Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the spittle; he rubbed the mud on the man's eyes and said to him, "Go, and wash your face in the pool of Siloam". The man obeyed and many men led him by the hand and took him there.

- ❖ Why was this man born blind?
- ❖ What did the disciples ask Christ about?
- ❖ What was Jesus' answer?
- ❖ What did Jesus do to the man?
- ❖ Let us repeat together: As long as I am in the world...

The man washed his face in the pool as Jesus told him...the miracle was fulfilled...he opened his eyes and saw light for the first time...He saw the sun, the sky, the trees, the people, Jerusalem and the temple...he saw everything...He went joyfully home to see his family whom he had not seen since he was born.

All those who knew that he was blind rejoiced. All the neighbors, the relatives, and the friends who used to see him sitting at a corner begging were happy. They asked him, "How have your eyes

opened?” He answered, “A man named Jesus made some mud, rubbed it on my eyes, and told me: Go to Siloam and wash your face. So I went and as soon as I washed I could see”. “Where is He?” they asked. “I do not know where He went...I want to see Him to thank Him”.

- ❖ How did Christ open the eyes of the man who was born blind?
- ❖ When you are sick, what must you do?
- ❖ Who remembers the verse?

The Pharisees are a group of Jews who do not like Jesus. The Pharisees took the man and asked him how he had received his sight. He told them, “A man named Jesus...etc.” Some of the Pharisees said; “This man is a sinner”. The man who had been blind said to them; “How can a sinner open my eyes? How can a sinner do the mighty works of God? He is a prophet”.

They held a long discussion with him but they could not convince him. They drove him out and brought his parents. His mother and father came. The Pharisees asked them; “Is this your son?” They said, “Yes, this is our son”. “Was he born blind?” they asked. “Yes, he was born blind” they answered. The Pharisees said, “Then, how were his eyes opened?” And his parents said, “We do not know...Ask him, he is old enough to answer”. The Pharisees brought him again and asked him many questions and the man was annoyed, so he said to them, “I told you and you won’t listen... What do you want to listen to? Do you want to be His disciples?” They cursed him and threw him out of the synagogue. The man went out of the synagogue. He longed to see Jesus.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out. He found him and said; “Do you believe in the Son of God?” The man answered, “Tell me who He is, sir, so I can believe in Him”. Jesus said to him, “You have already seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you now”. “I believe, Lord” the man said, and knelt down before Jesus. At that moment, the man’s heart was filled with faith as he saw the Light of the world. He saw the Saviour and believed in Him.

- ❖ Why was this man born blind?
- ❖ How did the Lord open his eyes?
- ❖ Why were the Pharisees arguing with him?
- ❖ Why didn’t the man’s parents confess that it was Jesus that opened their son’s eyes?
- ❖ Explain what Siloam pool means and explain its benefit? (It stands for baptism)

Conclusion:

Sometimes we are blind to the presence of Jesus Christ in us and in our life. We do not know Him or we do not feel His presence. This is a worse kind of blindness than what the man born blind had. We pray and ask God to open our spiritual eyes so we can see Him and see His work in us.

Applications:

- ❖ Write notes on the miracles the Lord performed to heal the sick and to bring the dead back to life.
- ❖ Complete the following verses:

- As long as I am I am the world.
 - Fear only believe.
 - Bless the O my soul
 - I the Lord
- ❖ Pray this week and thank the Lord because He has given you senses and has deprived you of nothing and say: Lord, I thank You for the grace of sight...and the other blessings.
 - ❖ If you find a blind man in the street, help him to cross the street.
 - ❖ Let the children bring the Gospel of Matthew with them and let them read chapter five.

Week 4- Angels: Ranks, Nature and Work

Objective:

- ❖ The child should have a friendship with the angels. At this age the child feels more of their existence and has the understanding that the angels are invisible and they surround him. It is a good chance at this age to teach the respect of the church without much argument. Do not dwell on the powerful avenger of the angels but rather their love and care for us as they are God's messengers.

Memory verse:

“Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.” (Heb. 1:7)

References:

- ❖ Luke 2; Revelation 4:6-9; Ezekiel 1:5
- ❖ “Heaven” the late Bishop Youanis of Gharbia
- ❖ “The Cherubim worship You and the Seraphim glorify You” – the Liturgy Book

Introduction:

Ask the children about the icons of angels in the church. Why do we hang their icons in the church and what do we do on their feast days?

Lesson Outlines:

1. In the beginning God created the angels even before He created Adam and Eve. Their work is to worship God, carry His throne and carry out His orders. They all are very well organized and have chiefs. We name these chiefs Archangels.
2. We have seven Archangels named Michael, Gabriel, Rafael, Souriel, Sedakiel, Sarthiel and Ananiel. We always remember them in our prayers and the raising of incense and we ask their intercession on our behalf as they are pure and near to the Lord than us.
3. We have also the Cherubim and the Seraphim. The Cherubim have six wings each and they carry the throne of God. Because they are nearer to God they cover their faces with a pair of their wings, their legs with another pair and they fly with a pair.
4. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the forbidden tree, they were kicked out of paradise and God ordered the Cherubim to guard it.
5. In the old days the angels appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and a lot of God's loving people. They helped them, saved their beloved ones and lifted their hearts to see heavenly things. One of them was Jacob who saw a ladder from earth to heaven and the angels going up and down on it.
6. The angels are also very powerful. The angel of death, in one night killed all the first born in Egypt; man and animal, and spared all Moses people when they obeyed and painted their doorframe with the lamb's blood. Another angel, in one night, killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousands because their king did not respect the Lord. This happened when Elisha the prophet prayed for the people of God to be saved from them.

7. Shortly before Jesus was born, the angel appeared to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist and told him that he will have a boy even if his wife is too old for that. Then he appeared to St. Mary and told her the good news that she is going to be the mother of God.
8. When Jesus was born, the angels spread the good news; they appeared to the shepherds on the mountains and informed them. Then the angel appeared to Joseph and told him to flee with the child and His mother to Egypt.
9. You see from all that, God created the angels and because He loves us, He ordered them to serve us. Every one of us has a guardian angel who takes his prayers up to the Lord and helps him do good instead of evil. If we don't obey, our angel will become sad because he wants the best for us.
10. The church is called the house of the angels. When we gather to pray, all our angels come and take our prayer and songs to heaven. That is why we should not talk to each other inside the church so we do not make the angels sad. Also we have to dress up appropriately because the angels cover their beautiful bodies and faces in front of the Lord.
11. When the Mass is prayed there is a special angel assigned to guard the Altar. That is why you hear the priest at the end of the Mass saying "O angel of this sacrifice, flying up to the highest with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that He may forgive us our sins."

- ❖ Who created the angels?
- ❖ Do they have bodies like us that grow and die?
- ❖ How many Archangels are there?
- ❖ What are their names?
- ❖ What is the name of the angel who guarded the paradise after Adam and Eve were kicked out?
- ❖ How the angels appeared to Jacob?
- ❖ Do you know any other appearance we didn't mention today?
- ❖ What is the name of the Archangel who appeared to St. Mary?
- ❖ What is the name of the Archangel who rolled the stone from the tomb?
- ❖ What are the names of the angels carrying the throne of God?
- ❖ How many wings do they have? What do they do with each pair of wings?
- ❖ What is the name of the church? The house of
- ❖ What the priest says at the end of the Mass when he sprays the first hand of the dismissal water upwards on the Altar?

Conclusion:

Angels are spirits with no bodies. They obey and serve God and human beings according to the orders of the Lord. They do different things to help humans and they deliver messages between God and man. We are always surrounded by angels who keep our company.

Applications:

- ❖ When I pray, I will ask for the intercession of the angels for me.

- ❖ When I enter to the church, the house of the angels, I should only pray and sing in good order and voice. I should be dressed nicely and if I have beautiful hair I should cover it like the angels.
- ❖ If I have to serve as a deacon, I should be very careful moving around the Altar or talking to any one lest I annoy the angel of the Altar. I should enter only from the side doors and when I get out I get out with my face to the Altar.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

Week 1- Christmas: The Angels and the Shepherds

Week 2- John the Baptist: His Self Denial and His Evangelism

Week 3- David Kills a Lion and a Bear

Week 4- St. Hilaria

Week 1- Nativity Feast: The Angels and the Shepherds

Objective:

- ❖ The Joy of Christmas

Memory Verse;

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14)

References

- ❖ Matthew 1; Luke 2:8-14
- ❖ “Explanation of the Gospel of Matthew” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “The Child Jesus” Asad Leilah, Beirut
- ❖ “By the Manger” Christian Culture House

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson with the students. Prepare audiovisual aids about the Nativity scene. Sing with the students the following songs: O believers come with us... Silent night... Holy night... Start by asking the children: Where was the Lord Christ born? Who remembers the name of a king and prophet who was a shepherd in this city?

Lesson Outlines:

Bethlehem is a small town near Jerusalem. Rocks, valleys and mountains surround it. One winter dark night, this city was crowded with travelers coming from every city and village in the country, as the Roman Emperor Augustus wanted to enroll all citizens. So all went to be enrolled in their own town. The people obeyed the decree. Joseph and Mary came from Nazareth to Bethlehem. When they arrived at the town they were very tired. They did not find a place in the inn but the innkeeper looked at Virgin Mary’s face and saw that she was very tired. He tried to help her so he led her to the manger. It was not a good place but it was warm because of the cows’ breath and the smell of straw. In that place, the little Child Lord Jesus was born. His mother wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, as there was no place for them in the inn.

- ❖ What was the name of the town?
- ❖ Why was Lord Jesus born in a manger?
- ❖ How did the world know that Christ was born?
- ❖ Who were the first to receive the annunciation?

In that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. Why...So that the wolves and fierce animals might not come near their flock. At midnight something strange happened. What are these sweet songs? The shepherds heard a sweet hymn filling the sky. They heard these words: Glory to God in the Highest... They got up and opened their eyes. The light

that came from heaven shone on everything: the mountains, the flock and the people. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. When the bright light disappeared, the shepherds said to one another: Let us go to Bethlehem and see the child Jesus. The shepherds went quickly to the hills of Bethlehem... they arrived... they found the stable... they entered quickly and told Mary and Joseph about what the angels said. They knelt down before Jesus and gave Him their little presents and went out quietly and made for the place where their sheep were and they were glorifying God.

- ❖ Why were the Shepherds out in the fields?
- ❖ What happened at midnight?
- ❖ Let us say together, Glory to God...
- ❖ What did the shepherds do?
- ❖ Let us sing a hymn together: O Shepherds...

Conclusion:

The shepherds were very glad when they heard the news and they rushed to see the Babe and the Savior. We also have heard the good news, let us rejoice and be glade that the Lord has come for us to forgive us our sins and open the doors of paradise for us.

Applications:

- ❖ The children should cooperate in making the Nativity cavern under the supervision of the Servant. Children like to make caverns and such things elucidate the idea of Nativity.
- ❖ Encourage them to bring the components and parts such as: small statues of sheep, shepherds, a babe, a manger, straw, candles, etc.
- ❖ The children can act the events of the story.
- ❖ Write the verse in good handwriting.
- ❖ Read Luke 2

Week 2- John the Baptist: His Self Denial and His Evangelism

Objective:

- ❖ Concentrate on the greatness of the Baptist in his simplicity and self-denial.

Memory Verse:

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30)

References:

- ❖ John 3; Mathew 1
- ❖ “John the Baptist” translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ “John the Baptist” Kamel Saleh Nakhla

Introduction:

Review last lesson and verse and start discussion by asking the children the following questions: Who was older John the Baptist or Christ? How many months? What is the name of John’s father? What is the name of John’s mother? What did the angel say to the Priest Zechariahs about John?

Lesson Outlines:

John’s task was to prepare the people’s hearts to receive Jesus the Savior when He came. John warned them to keep themselves away from sin. He went to the wilderness (the desert) to prepare himself for this mission and to live with the Lord as we do when we pray.

- ❖ How often do you pray alone?
- ❖ Do you pray with your family?

When he was thirty years old the Lord spoke to him and sent him to preach. John wore prophet’s clothes. He was clothed with camel’s hair. He ate the food eaten by poor people (locusts, and wild honey). In those days the dried locusts were ground and kneaded with honey and baked as cakes... John did not mean to appear as a strange man before people... It is true that his appearance would be strange if he appeared in our churches nowadays but at that time he was preaching poor people who took care of weak slim sheep suffering from lack of food.

- ❖ When did John come to evangelize?
- ❖ What did he wear?
- ❖ What did he eat?
- ❖ Whom did he preach?

Many people gathered by the Jordan River to be baptized and John used to say: Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. The people heard, their numbers increased and they asked themselves: Is John a prophet?

The last prophet to appear among the people came four hundred years ago... but his words are like the words of the prophets. The people followed him... Some of them believed his words and said: The Savior has come. Others did not repent and John said to those: I warn you, repent; He who is coming after me is mightier than I... The people were surprised as John dared to speak to the crowd. So many people asked: Who is he? Where does he come from? Is he the promised Christ? He is a great preacher. They went to him and said: Tell us who you are... Are you the Messiah (Jesus Christ)? He said: No, but I prepare the way for the Messiah. When the people heard about Christ, they gathered around Him and loved Him. Some brothers went to John and said: Christ is there, teaching, baptizing and gathering disciples around Him. John rejoiced and said: I am very happy. He must increase and the kingdom of heaven is at hand because Christ will rescue His people. This is what I aim at. People were surprised at his answer and meekness.

Explain to the students the difference between the Baptism of John and that of Christ.

- ❖ Did John feel sad when he knew that the Lord Christ would work instead of him?
- ❖ What did he say to the people?
- ❖ Let us repeat together... He must... Who can complete?

Conclusion:

It is very important that we put others ahead of us if this is their place and work with them as a team for the good of everyone else, not to try to compete with them and show that we are better than them all.

Applications:

- ❖ Answer the following questions:
 - What was the mission of John the Baptist?
 - Why was he called the Baptist?
 - How old was he when he came from the wilderness?
- ❖ Read Matthew 14.
- ❖ Memorize the end of each prayer in the Agpia at home for prizes next week

Week 3- David Kills a Lion and a Bear

Objective:

- ❖ Victory comes by the power of God and through putting our trust in Him.

Memory Verse:

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1)

References:

- ❖ 1 Samuel 17
- ❖ “Explanation of Samuel” translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud

Introduction:

Review last lesson and verse and start discussion by asking the children the following questions: Who walked with God and won victory? Over whom did he win victory? Who remembers the verse? Was he a psalmist, a shepherd, a king or all of them? Who remembers his well-known psalm? Who can recite it?

Lesson Outlines:

David was a young cheerful shepherd. He cared for his parents’ sheep. He took them to the hills where birds and animals gather. He wore a loose bright colored cloak and held a staff in his hand. He put some small stones in a small purse. He carried a sling. When the sheep got away, he threw them a pebble and in this way the sheep returned to the flock. He used to sing while leading his sheep over the hills. He used to say: The Lord is my Shepherd... Let us say together...

He had a small harp... He used to sit and play it producing sweet melodies... He sang hymns and praised the Lord. He contemplated the sweet creatures of God. He listened to the birds and winds and said who created the heaven. There was a little sheep among the flock...it was a naughty sheep. It was playing and running...it ran away and was lost... David looked here and there searching for the sheep and he found the poor sheep between a lion and the mouth of a bear... He trembled but he remembered the power of God and that he could, with God’s help, rescue the sheep from the mouths of the lion and the bear. David ran towards them. He put his hand in his bag and took a small stone and threw it with his sling... The stone flew into the air and struck the head of the lion. The lion fell to the ground... David could kill the lion... The bear attacked him, but David held it by its chin and struck it and killed it... David killed the lion and the bear... and saved the sheep... The sheep was happy...it jumped up over David’s shoulders and hands saying Maa... Maa... David hugged it and kissed it and patted it and the sheep slept on David’s arms and David took it back to the flock.

- ❖ Describe how David saved the sheep from the mouths of the lion and the bear.
- ❖ What did you do for your brothers who did not come last week?
- ❖ What do you intend to do for them this week?
- ❖ Encourage your relatives and your friends to go to the House of God.

Conclusion:

Whenever, we face a hard situation or difficult time, God will always be with us and give us the strength to face the hard time and to triumph too.

Applications:

- ❖ Draw a picture of David while he sings hymns.
- ❖ Draw another picture of David fighting for the sheep.
- ❖ Review the end of each prayer in the Agpia. The homework that you assigned to the students last week

Week 4- St. Hilaria

Objective:

- ❖ Learn the life story of this saint
- ❖ Learn the life of prayer

Memory Verse:

“Happy are the people whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 144:15)

References:

- ❖ Coptic Synaxarium
- ❖ “Coptic Orthodox Book of Saints” Roxboro, Quebec, Canada

Introduction:

The life of the saints is a living example for all of us to learn how we should love God more than anyone or anything in the world.

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ St. Hilaria lived in a palace with her parents and her sister Theopesta. Her father, emperor Zeno of Constantinople, loved the church and brought up his daughters in the Christian faith.
- ❖ From her childhood, Hilaria always felt the love of God filling her heart. She loved praying and reading the Word of God. When she was eighteen years old, she suddenly disappeared from her father’s palace. Sadly, the emperor ordered a thorough search to find her but all efforts were unsuccessful. Finally he was convinced that she must have died.
- ❖ Hilaria had left the palace, cut her hair, disguised herself in men’s clothing and traveled to Egypt. She went to the Western desert to the monastery of St. Macarius. There, Hilaria met Abba Pemoah pretending to be a male. She told him about her desire to become a monk. She became a monk under the name Hilary. She wore the monk’s cloth and was assigned a cell in the monastery.
- ❖ After three years, God revealed to Abba Pemoah her true identity but he kept her secret. The monks thought that she was an eunuch because she didn’t have a beard and they called her “Hilary, the eunuch”
- ❖ Now Hilaria’s sister, Theopesta developed an illness that no doctor was able to cure. A man in emperor Zeno’s court advised him to send her to the elders of Scetics for the fame of their holiness was know in all the Roman empire. He sent her with many guards and loaded them with gifts to the monks at St. Macarius monastery.
- ❖ The monks kept praying for her continuously for many days then they called Father Hilary and asked him to add his prayers to theirs for the healing of the emperor’s daughter and to take her with him into his cave.

- ❖ Hilaria immediately recognized her sister, she took her into her cell prayed for her and anointed her with holy oil. With many tears, she kissed and hugged her just like two sisters who did not see each other for twelve years.
- ❖ After a few days, Theopesta was completely cured. The princess returned to her father in perfect health. She told her parents about Father Hilary, and how he kissed her, hugged her and healed her. Zeno was very happy but had some doubts about this monk. He sent to get Father Hilary to come and visit him.
- ❖ When the monks asked Hilary to go to the emperor, “he” wept bitterly asking them to spare “him” from the trip. The monks insisted because the emperor was a righteous man who loved the holy church and that it was improper to disobey him.
- ❖ When Hilary arrived at the palace, Zeno and his wife thanked him. Then they asked him if it was appropriate for a monk to kiss and hug their daughter. At that point, Hilaria asked the Emperor and the Empress to promise to let “him” return to the monastery if “he” tells them a personal secret. When they agreed, “he” told them about his true identity and that in reality “he” was their daughter Hilaria.
- ❖ Zeno and his wife were very happy to find that their daughter Princess Hilaria was still alive. Hilaria remained with them for three months then returned to her monastery.
- ❖ After five years of her return to the wilderness, she departed in peace. Our Coptic Orthodox Church celebrates her departure on the 21st of Toba.

Conclusion:

The Servants review with the children the following questions: Who was Hilaria’s father? What was the name of Hilaria’s sister? Which monastery did Hilaria go to? Who is Abba Pemoah? How was Theopesta healed? What did Hilaria asked her parents to promise?

Applications:

- ❖ Get the children to draw St. Hilaria dressed as a monk.
- ❖ Encourage the children to read the life stories of the saints. Distribute stories to them to read at home and summarize next class.

BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY TILL JONAH'S FAST

Use Filler Lessons (placed at the beginning of the book) until the Sunday before Jonah's fast.

LESSONS FOR JONAH'S FAST

Jonah's fast comes two weeks before the Great Fast on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. These lessons are for the Sunday before and the Sunday after Jonah's fast.

Week before Fast: Elijah's Prayer For No Rain

Week after Fast: Elijah and the Priests of Baal

Week before Fast- Elijah's Prayer for No Rain

Objective:

- ❖ We should stand firmly in defense of our faith

Memory Verse:

“As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word” (1 Kings 17:1)

References

- ❖ 1 Kings 17
- ❖ “Explanation of the First Book of Kings” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “Practical Contemplations of the Life of Elijah of Tishbe” Charles Mackintosh

Introduction:

Review last lesson and verse and start discussion by asking the children the following questions: who thinks that God answers his prayer? Does God always hear our prayers? Can you give examples?

Lesson Outlines:

King Ahab did wrong and acted wickedly more than all the kings before him. His wife Jezebel was the daughter of a pagan king. She brought her idols with her and built a great temple for the idols... Jezebel ruled with Ahab and brought him under her control and ordered all the people to kneel down before Baal. She killed all those who refused to worship it. Elijah was one of the true men of God. He did not worship the idols but he always prayed to God and used to say, “O Lord reveal Yourself to those wicked people”.

- ❖ What is the name of the king?
- ❖ What is the name of his wife?
- ❖ What is the name of the man of God?
- ❖ What will you say to a man who asks you about your religion?

Elijah was filled with courage and asked the guards to let him enter the palace as he decided to meet the king. He met the king and said to him, “As the Lord the God of Israel lives...” Ahab was furious. There would be no rain so there would be no sowing, nor reaping. There would be no food. There would be a severe famine. Ahab's men knew that Elijah was a prophet by his clothes. But how was this prophet saved? Surely Jezebel would kill him. Ahab did not believe Elijah's words. Days passed. The sun rose daily as usual but it was very hot. The land became dry... the plants were dry. People waited for the dew of the night but there was neither dew nor rain... Animals did not find food to eat. The crops that belonged to the poor and the rich went bad and were damaged in the fields.

There was famine. People thought that if they worshipped the idol and offered it their prayers and sacrifices, rain would fall. They offered prayers and sacrifices “O idol listen to our prayers”, but rain did not fall. We know who listens to our prayers. To whom do we pray? People began to suspect the power of the idol. Then these stones are not gods because they do not hear us. King Ahab and his wife were angry. They asked: Where is the man that has brought this horrible message and prevented the rain from falling? Search for him... compel him to change his mind and if he refuses, kill him. He said these words to his men... Ahab searched for Elijah everywhere but he could not find him because the Lord said to Elijah, “Hide yourself from the king and the queen”.

Explain that the prophet or the priest conveys the words of God to all people even the king. He does not fear any man.

- ❖ What is the name of the prophet?
- ❖ What is the meaning of the word “Prophet”?
- ❖ What did the Lord say by Elijah’s mouth?

Let us repeat the Divine words together “As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word”. Who can recite these words?

Conclusion:

It is very important that we understand the Bible and the word of God. It is our duty then to defend the word of God and the faith whenever the situation requires.

Applications:

- ❖ We have to always pray with the faith that our prayers will be heard.
- ❖ If anyone asks you about your religion do not be afraid, but say bravely, “I am Christian”.

Week after Jonah's Fast- Elijah and the Priests of Baal

Objective:

- ❖ The Lord answers the prayers of his children the saints.

Memory Verse:

“Hear me, O Lord, hear me” (1 Kings 18:37)

“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5: 16)

References:

- ❖ 1 Kings 17,18
- ❖ “Explanation of the First Book of Kings” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “Practical Contemplations of the Life of Elijah of Tishbe” Charles Mackintosh

Introduction:

Use a picture showing the Lord answering Elijah's prayers as when he ordered the sky not to rain. Show another picture when he asked for rain to fall. Start discussion by asking: What is the name of the King? His wife? What is the name of the Lord's prophet? Who remembers the verse?

Lesson Outlines:

There was no rain on the whole earth for three years and the state in the country was horrible. Many people died because of the famine. Where was Elijah? Ahab and Jezebel searched for him everywhere but they could not find him. At last, Ahab decided to leave his palace and go out to search for water. He took with him one of the great officials of the country. He was a pious man named Obadiah. Ahab went one way but there was no water. While Obadiah was walking on the road he saw a man coming towards him... he knew him... The man was Elijah. Obadiah knelt down before him and said: Is it you my lord, Elijah? Where are you going my lord? And Elijah answered bravely: To Jezebel the wicked woman. Obadiah said: She will kill you. Elijah said: I am not afraid... the Lord said to me, “Go and present yourself to king Ahab” and I have to obey the Lord. Obadiah told King Ahab that the prophet was coming. Ahab was surprised and said, “Then I shall arrest him”, he thought. Elijah arrived and this dialogue ran between them:

- Is it you, you trouble of Israel?

+ I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father's house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baal.

- Why have you come?

+ I have come to declare to the people that there is only One God.

- The idols are the gods.

+ No, the Lord is God. I want you to send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets who eat at Jezebel's table. Let your

prophets call on the name of their gods and I will call on the name of the Lord...the God who will send fire is the True God...Ahab agreed.

- ❖ How many prophets belonged to Baal?
- ❖ How many prophets belonged to Jezebel?
- ❖ What was the agreement held between Elijah and Ahab?

So all the people met at Mount Carmel. Elijah went up to the people and said: I am the only prophet of the Lord still left, but there are 450 prophets of Baal. Bring two bulls, let the prophets of Baal take one, kill it, cut it in pieces, and put it on the wood...but do not light the fire...I will do the same with the other bull. Then let the prophets of Baal pray to their god and I will pray to the Lord, and the one who answers by sending fire - he is God. The people shouted their approval. Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal: Choose a bull and prepare it first. Pray to your god but don't set fire to the wood. They took the bull that was brought to them, prepared it, and prayed to Baal. They shouted: Answer us Baal; answer us Baal. The king and the people were watching them without saying a word... Will the fire come down? The fire did not come down. At noon it was very hot and the prophets of Baal shouted more loudly: Answer us Baal, Answer us Baal. But there was no fire and the sun was about to set. Baal did not answer them in spite of their loud shouts. Elijah started making fun of them: Pray louder. He is a god. May be he is daydreaming or relieving himself or perhaps he has gone on a journey ...or maybe he is sleeping, and you have got to wake him up. So the prophets prayed louder, and cut themselves with knives and daggers until blood flowed, but no answer came...fire did not come down.

Then Elijah said to the people: Come closer to me. And they all gathered around him. Then he set about repairing the altar of the Lord. He took twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes named after the sons of Jacob. With these stones he rebuilt the altar for the worship of the Lord. He dug a trench around it. Then he placed the wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said: Fill four jars with water and pour it on the offering and the wood. They did so, and he said, "Do it again", and they did. "Do it once more", he said...and they did. The water ran down around the altar and filled the trench. (What does this stand for?) At the hour of the afternoon sacrifice the prophet Elijah approached the altar and prayed, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove now that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant and have done all this at your command...answer me, Lord, answer me... The Lord sent fire down and it burnt up the sacrifice, the wood, and the stones, scorched the earth and dried up the water in the trench. When the people saw this, they threw themselves on the ground and exclaimed: The Lord is God; the Lord alone is God. The prophets of Baal were perplexed. Elijah ordered: Seize the prophets of Baal, do not let any of them get away.

The people seized them all, and Elijah led them down to the river and killed them so that they might not mislead the people and hamper the work of God. Then Elijah said to king Ahab: Now, go and eat...I hear the roar of rain approaching.

Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel where he bowed down to the ground, and prayed...he was waiting for rain to fall...Elijah said to his servant "Go and look towards the sea". The servant went and returned saying: I did not see anything. Seven times in all Elijah told him to go and look. The seventh time he returned and said: I saw a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, coming up from the sea. So the Lord fulfilled his promise.

Elijah ordered his servant: Go to king Ahab and tell him to get into his chariot and go back home before the rain stops him. In a little while, the sky was covered with dark clouds, the wind began to blow and heavy rain began to fall. The Lord answered the prayer of his servant Elijah and everything was wet because of rain.

- ❖ What does the number “3” stands for?
- ❖ What does the Number “7” stands for?
- ❖ How does the Coptic Church practice the Sacrament of Baptism?
- ❖ What happened to the prophets of Baal?
- ❖ What usually happens to wicked people?
- ❖ How was Elijah’s prayer effective?

Conclusion:

Elijah was like us and he prayed fervently that it might not rain and it did not rain on earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. This indicates the power of prayers when it is with a strong faith and according to the will of God.

Applications:

- ❖ The children write the Litany (Prayer) of Salvation and study it: “Pray for the salvation of the world, and of this city of ours, all the cities, districts, islands and monasteries”.
- ❖ The children pray for the members of the family so that they may all live for the Lord.

LESSONS FOR THE GREAT FAST PERIOD

Week 0: (Preparation week) - **Elijah is taken up to Heaven**

Week 1: (Surrender to the Heavenly Father) - **God Cared for Daniel when he Fasted (I)**

Week 2: (Sunday of Temptation) - **God Cared for Daniel when he Fasted (II)**

Week 3: (Sunday of the Prodigal Sun) - **The Uncction of the Sick**

Week 4: (Sunday of the Samaritan Woman) - **Mary and the Fragrant Oil**

Week 5: (Sunday of The Sick of Bethesda) - **The Power of Christ Before and During the Crucifixion**

Week 6: (Sunday of The born blind) - **The Power of Resurrection**

Week 7: (Palm Sunday) - **No lesson**

Week 8: (Resurrection Sunday) – **No Lesson**

Week 0- Elijah is taken up to Heaven

Objective:

- ❖ To teach the children to love the kingdom of Heaven
- ❖ Concentrate on how Elisha obeyed Elijah and how much he loved his service.

Memory Verse:

“Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord in His sanctuary. Praise Him in his mighty firmament (Psalm 150:1)

References:

- ❖ 2 Kings 2
- ❖ “The Life of Elijah” translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- ❖ “Practical Contemplations on the Life of Elijah” Charles Mackintosh

Introduction:

Use a picture showing Elijah taken up to heaven Start discussion by asking: What is the name of the prophet who ordered heaven not to rain and it did not rain and then he prayed and it rained? Who remembers the name of his disciple?

Lesson Outlines:

One day the Lord said to Elijah, your mission now is complete. Elisha will continue your service and I will take you up with me. Elijah rejoiced but he was afraid Elisha might stick to him and become sad if he knew that he would leave him. Elijah desired to stay along so he said to Elisha: My son, I am going on a journey...stay here. But Elisha asked him: Where to? Elijah said: To Bethel. (Bethel means the Lord’s House... Children write down in their notes) Elisha said: Father let me come with you. I cannot leave you. He insisted on going with Elijah so Elijah was obliged to take him with him to Bethel. On their way to Bethel he advised him: Take care of your service and be honest till death. Elisha was sad because Elijah would be taken away from him.

Though the road was rough and they walked for three or four hours, Elisha endured all that because he loved Elijah his master. They reached Bethel. There was a School for Prophets at Bethel. A group of prophets who lived there went to Elisha and asked him: Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today? “Yes, I know” Elisha answered. “But let’s not talk about it. Do not increase my grief. I want to benefit from the teaching of my master before he is taken away”.

- ❖ Who was Elijah’s disciple?
- ❖ What was Elijah’s advice to him?
- ❖ Do you do your homework or do you neglect it?
- ❖ Do you obey your parents?

Later, Elijah said to Elisha “I am going to Jericho...stay here”. But Elisha said, “Never, I will not leave you...I will come with you”. Then, fifty men followed them to the Jordan hoping to see Elijah while being taken up to heaven. They arrived at the River Jordan...Elijah wanted to cross that river but how?

He remembered the miracle of splitting the Red Sea in the days of Moses and the River Jordan in the days of Joshua...so he took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water was divided and he and Elisha crossed to the other side on dry ground. They praised the Lord saying, “Praise the Lord...” But the prophets could not cross the river. Elijah laid his hand on Elisha’s shoulder and advised him as what he should do in his service then he tested him by saying: What do you want me to do for you before I am taken away? And Elisha said: Let me inherit a double share of your spirit as in receiving this I will be successful in performing my message. Elijah said to him: If you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you.

Suddenly a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire came between them, and Elijah was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind. Elijah’s cloak fell from him on Elisha. The chariot went quickly up to heaven. Elisha looked and cried, “Father, father”...but the chariot disappeared. In grief, Elisha went back, wept and prayed saying, “O Lord, I have lost a precious thing...losing an army could be endured but losing Elijah could not be endured”. The Lord comforted him saying: Be comforted. I will be with you as I was with Elijah and I will bless the people through you...” Elisha took courage and thus the God of Elijah was also the God of Elisha.

- ❖ Who witnessed Elijah while being taken up to heaven?
- ❖ How was he taken up to heaven?
- ❖ What did Elisha ask Elijah to give him?
- ❖ What was Elijah’s answer?
- ❖ How did Elisha go back home?
- ❖ Who comforted him?

Conclusion:

Elisha was a very good disciple of Elijah and he was very obedient to his teacher. Therefore, God gave Elisha double the spirit of his teacher and was with him as He was with Elijah.

Applications:

- ❖ Write a paragraph of three lines on a comparison between the ascension of Elijah and the Transfiguration of the Lord of Glory (Mark 9).
- ❖ Encourage the children to study their lessons and do their homework and not to postpone what should be done today till tomorrow.

Week 1- God Cared for Daniel when he Fasted (I)

Objective:

- ❖ Encourage the children to fast starting at a young age

Memory Verse:

“Give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you”
(Daniel 1:12-13)

References:

- ❖ Daniel 1: 1-20;
- ❖ “Explanation of Daniel” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “O Sing unto Him Who was crucified” the Book of Midnight Praises (Psalmody)

Introduction:

Ask the children about the kind of food we eat during the different fasts. Ask them if we can eat chocolate or ice cream. Avoid asking them about milk or meat as some of them at this age are ordered by their parents, their doctors or have permission from their father of confession to have them.

Lesson Outlines:

The song we just sang is talking about three young men, and now we will learn their story along with a fourth man who was with them. This man is Daniel and the three young men are Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael. The four of them were Israelites. They were captured as slaves during War and were sent to Babylon, a city in a far away country, in order to serve the king of Babylon.

In Babylon, the four men lost hope of returning back to their families and friends. For that reason, they clung close to each other and became good friends with each other, and faithful servants to God. They had faith that God would protect them and take care of them wherever they may go, as long as they follow God’s words and keep His commandments. In this manner, they spent their time in Babylon in prayer and fasting.

Out of all the other captives, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were selected to receive physical education, knowledge of the language of the Land of Babylon, and other important sciences in a three-year program. The king sent orders that they be provided with plenty of food that they may look stronger and in a good healthy condition. He also appointed an officer from his court to supervise over these men in their diet and education, and then to present them before the king at the end of the program.

When they were offered the king’s food and drink, they chose to only eat from the vegetables, beans, and drink from the water presented to them. They refused to enjoy the meat and the wine along with their fellow classmates. They did not eat from the meat or drink from the juices and the wine because they contained things that the God of Israel forbade them to eat from, for example, the eating of meat and blood of scavenging animals and birds.

- ❖ How did Daniel and his friends end up in Babylon?
- ❖ What were the names of his three friends?
- ❖ What were they selected for?
- ❖ Whose food and drink were they supposed to eat and drink from?
- ❖ Why did they eat vegetables, beans and drank water and refused to eat meat and drink wine and juices?

When the supervising officer noticed the kind of food these men were eating, he was afraid and begged them to eat from everything that was presented before them, otherwise; they would look pale and weak before the king, and the king would then punish him for not taking good care of them. During this time, God had put favor in the eyes of the officer towards Daniel. So, Daniel asked the officer to test him and his friends for ten days with the kind of food they were eating and see how they would look like in ten days. At the end of the ten days, the officer was amazed at how strong and healthy Daniel and his three friends looked. He was even more amazed when he compared them to their classmates, who ate from the meat and drank from the wine. He found that Daniel and his three friends looked better than the rest of the group. Encouraged, the officer agreed to allow them to continue their vegetable and bean diet. Notice that Daniel and his friends were eating the same kind of food we usually eat during the fast.

As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the three years, the king interviewed them, and among all the men who were part of the three-year program, none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. From then on, they began to serve before the king.

When the king had examined them, he found them ten times better in all matters of wisdom and understanding than all the magicians and astrologists, who were in all his kingdom, especially Daniel, who had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel lived a very long life in the courts of this king and three other kings who followed him. God also showed him visions of the future and the return of the captives (prisoners of war) of God's people to their land and rebuilding His temple. He also prophesied of the coming of Christ and the spread of Christianity.

- ❖ How do you compare their food with our fasting food?
- ❖ Did God take care of them and give them favor with the officer? Did he accept their request?
- ❖ Did that affect them? Good or bad?
- ❖ For how many years did they do that?
- ❖ How many days do we fast? Is that longer than they did?
- ❖ When the king examined them, how many times better than their classmates did he find them?
- ❖ What extra knowledge did God give Daniel?
- ❖ Where did he live since that time?
- ❖ Did he live a short life?
- ❖ What did he prophesy and tell the future about?

Conclusion:

The children should feel God's care for them during times of fasting. Fasting does not hurt our health, but it strengthens our Spirit and our self-control over our bodies. They should know that fasting and eating food different from other children's food does not make them any less than the others. When we fast and stop eating a lot of things we love, God gives us strength and supports us.

Applications:

- ❖ Pray that God gives you wisdom and faith to know how to fast and to believe that God will take care of you as you fast and learn to abstain from the delicacies of this world and have self control. God watches over you and protects you.
- ❖ Even if you eat different kinds of food than your friends, and even if others joke about your food, you should always remember that God is the one taking care of your health just as He took care of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. You should only obey the Word of God, and fast and pray so that God will give you strength. Those around you who do not accept the kind of food you eat should not affect you. You should only care about what God wants you to do, and learn how to obey Him.

Week 2- God Cared for Daniel when he Fasted (II)

Objective:

- ❖ The children should know that God cares and supports them when they pray.
- ❖ They should learn to take praying seriously, and make it a habit in their everyday life.

Memory verse:

“Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you” (Daniel 6:16)

References:

- ❖ Daniel 6: 1-28
- ❖ “Explanation of Daniel” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “Where he leads me” or “Watching us” the book of Songs and Praises

Introduction:

Ask the children about Daniel and his three friends. What happened when they fasted? Ask them if they pray and how many times a day.

Lesson Outlines:

As we learned from the previous lesson, Daniel lived in four kings’ courts and the kings loved him. One of them appointed Daniel and two others as governors. Daniel was the best out of the three because God was with him. The king started telling them that he intends to make Daniel the only Governor all over his kingdom. The other two governors envied Daniel and they tried to find a mistake in his work but they could not. They tried to find anything strange in his behavior, and his daily routine but could not except for his believe in God, not idols.

They ganged together and planned a plot against Daniel. They went to the king and told him “we want you to be the top of all the gods and humans. You should sign a firm law that for thirty days no one can ask any man or God except you. And, whoever disobey, let him be cast into lions’ den.” The king loved the idea and signed the order.

Now when Daniel knew that the order was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom before.

The people gathered around and saw Daniel praying through the opened window. They gathered some witnesses and went to the king telling him that Daniel broke his law and prayed to another god, and therefore he should be cast into the den of lions. When the king heard, he was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him from the punishment.

But these people were determined and told the king that the law, which he himself signed, cannot be changed. So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the lions’ den. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” A stone was laid on the mouth of the den and stamped with the king’s stamp.

- ❖ How many governors were appointed with Daniel?
- ❖ Why they envied him?
- ❖ What was the new law they came up with?
- ❖ Did it stop Daniel from praying?
- ❖ How many times a day he prayed?
- ❖ How many times a day you pray?
- ❖ What was the punishment for praying to any god but the king?

When the king went back to his palace, he felt very sad and couldn't eat or sleep that night. Early morning, he went sadly to the lions' den and cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel saying "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

To his surprise, he heard Daniel answering "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel out of the den. So Daniel was taken out of the den, and no injury whatsoever was found on him. And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and he cast them into the lions' den.

The king made a decree in his entire kingdom that his people should respect and fear the God of Daniel above all who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Daniel was promoted and lived a very long life in the courts of this king and other kings who followed him. God also showed him visions of the future and the coming of Christ and the spread of Christianity.

- ❖ Did the king hesitate to carry his orders? Why?
- ❖ What happened to Daniel in the den?
- ❖ What happened to the evil people in the den?
- ❖ What did the king write to all his people?
- ❖ Did Daniel live a short life?
- ❖ About what he prophesied and tell the future?

Conclusion:

God hears the prayer of His children and deliver them from troubles. He protects and cares for them in the worst situations. Even if the evil people gang against them and plot evil plots and appeared to be working, God will send His angels to help and deliver.

Applications:

- ❖ Make sure we pray every day in the morning and before we sleep.
- ❖ We also have to learn how to pray from the Agpia prayers.

Week 3- The Unction of the Sick

Objective:

- ❖ To understand the importance of the Holy Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick.

Memory Verse:

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15)

References:

- ❖ “The True Physician” by H.G. Bishop Moussa
- ❖ The sacrament of church 5-Uncion of the sick by Bishop Mettaos.

Introduction:

Whenever we are sick we need to go to the doctor and we also need to call the priest to pray for us. God works through both of them for the healing of the body and soul.

Lesson Outlines:

I. The Sacrament

The Unction of the Sick is a sacrament in which the priest prays seven prayers on the sick people and then anoints them with the Holy Oil. It is referred to in Arabic as “Kandeel” because the priest used to use an oil lamp “Kandeel” with 7 “oil-lamps” each of which is lit at the beginning of each prayer. Now the priest just uses a dish with oil in it and 7 pieces of cotton, arranged in the shape of a cross, which are lit at the beginning of each prayer.

- ❖ Why seven prayers?
 - “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘these things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead’” (Revelation 3:1).
 - Seven: complete (perfect) number: The perfect Spirit (Holy Spirit) of God. It descends on the oil and sanctifies it for the healing of those anointed by it.
- ❖ Who established this Sacrament? Christ!
 - “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8)
 - “Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them: The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Luke 10:8-9).

- ❑ “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).
- ❑ That’s whom Malachi prophesied about saying: “But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings” (Malachi 4:2).
- ❑ The Apostles ministered this sacrament: “So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:12-13).
- ❑ St. James stressed on the importance of this sacrament: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15).

II. The Importance of Confession before the Unction

- ❖ “And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:15).
- ❖ The main purpose of the sacrament is the healing of the spirit. If the spirit is ill, the body will also be ill. If the spirit heals, the body may heal. Hence, the church teaches that it’s more important to seek spiritual healing first (repentance and confession), then the body may heal.
- ❖ “Afterward Jesus found him (the sick man who stayed 38 years at the pool) in the temple, and said to him: See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (John 5:14). This means that the main reason of his sickness was his sin.
- ❖ Also, when the friends brought down the paralyzed man from the roof, the first word that Christ told him was: “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you... Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house” (Matthew 9:2, 6). Again, Christ revealed that the true cause of his sickness was his sins.

Therefore, it is very important to seek the healing of our spirits before the healing of our bodies.

III. The Importance of the Priest’s Visit

- ❖ “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15).
- ❖ There is no objection to seeking medicine and the doctors, but equally important (or even more important) is seeking the priest (church).
- ❖ A sick person should ask the priest to come and officiate the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, so that he may be granted healing from God. But he **MUST** have faith that God is able to heal him “And the prayer of faith will save the sick”.
- ❖ It is very erroneous for a person to seek the Unction without faith, relying entirely on medicine, and denying the power of God. When King Asa was ill, he did not seek God, but the physicians; what happened to him? “And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but

the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign” (2 Chronicles 16:12-13).

- ❖ On the other hand, King Hezekiah cried to God when he was ill: “In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.' " Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, "Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David” (2 Kings 20:1-6).
- ❖ There are many people who had faith and received healing. For example, the two blind men (Matthew 9:28), the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:50), the child possessed by demon (Mark 9:23), the paralyzed man (Matthew 9:2), the woman with bleeding condition (Luke 8:48).
- ❖ The Church does not reject medicine, for most medicine is a product of the herbs that God has created for the benefit of mankind. “For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Timothy 4:4).
- ❖ God has spoken through Jeremiah when the people did not seek their health, reprimanding them: “For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; astonishment has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people” (Jeremiah 8:21-22). He commands them to use the balm (herbs) and the physicians to keep their health.
- ❖ God has commanded us to honor medicine and physicians: “Honor a physician with the honor due unto him for the uses which you may have of him: for the Lord has created him” (Son of Sirach 38:1). “The Lord has created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them” (Son of Sirach 38:4). “My son, in your sickness be not negligent: but pray unto the Lord, and he will make you whole. Leave off from sin, and order your hands aright, and cleanse your heart from all wickedness. Give a sweet savor, and a memorial of fine flour; and make a fat offering, as not being. Then give place to the physician, for the Lord has created him: let him not go from you, for you have need of him. There is a time when in their hands there is good success. For they shall also pray unto the Lord, that he would prosper that, which they give for ease and remedy to prolong life” (Son of Sirach 38:9-14).
- ❖ God has commanded Hezekiah, King of Judah to use these remedies: “Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover” (Isaiah 38:21).
- ❖ The Priest’s visit to the sick person to minister the Unction freely (Matthew 10:8), is a living proof of the “living Body of Christ”, where if one member suffers the whole body suffers with it (1 Corinthians 12:26). It is also a nice gesture from the church that it cares about each member, a gesture that is not easily forgotten.
- ❖ The best time for administering the Sacrament is in the early morning, as everyone is fasting, and the sick person should take communion after the sacrament. The sick person will receive

three Sacraments together. All Sacraments are preceded with the Sacrament of Confession and are completed with the Sacrament of Eucharist.

- ❑ Baptism: If Adult – will confess first, be baptized, and receive Communion.
- ❑ Unction of the Sick – confess, get anointed, and receive Communion.
- ❑ Matrimony – confess, be joined, and both receive Communion.
- ❑ Holy Orders – confess, be ordained, receive Communion at end of ordination liturgy.

IV. The rite of the Anointing

The priest anoints the sick person with the oil in the shape of a cross:

- ❖ On the forehead: this is the region of thoughts and senses.
- ❖ On the chest: where the heart is: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).
- ❖ On the hands: they are the tools of labor.
- ❖ God is blessing the person’s thoughts, senses, heart, and labor. He is anointed in the Name of the Trinity, who sanctifies everything.
- ❖ Everyone else is anointed afterwards, in the same manner, if they are fasting.
- ❖ Any condition that prevents a person from Communion prevents him/her from being anointed (e.g. a woman during her period).
- ❖ Anyone not baptized cannot be anointed.
- ❖ The sick person is to continue anointing himself/herself for seven days in the same manner, and with faith that he will be granted healing.

V. How should the sick person prepare and do before, during, and after the sacrament

- ❖ Must have faith in God’s healing power.
- ❖ Must have faith and trust in the priest who will minister the Sacrament as he has faith in the physician that will administer his treatment.
- ❖ Must confess before the Unction, and take Communion afterwards.
- ❖ He (as well as all who will attend) must be fasting, as much as he can: 9 hours if possible, or less with absolution of the father of confession.
- ❖ Must be clean.
- ❖ Must promise God to live with Him and serve Him as did Peter’s mother-in-law (Matthew 8:15) and Mary Magdalene (Mark 15:4) when they were healed.
- ❖ Must thank God after recovering.

VI. Why Don’t the Sick Receive Healing (Sometimes) After the Sacrament

- ❖ Lack of faith. God cannot heal someone who has no faith: “Now He did not do many mighty works there (Nazareth) because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58). For that reason, Jesus asked everyone before He healed him, “Do you believe?”

- ❖ If you lack faith, but want to have faith, ask God for it, like the father of the possessed child: “Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).
- ❖ Unworthiness to be healed, because of lack of repentance: “Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Indeed we do come to You, for You are the Lord our God” (Jeremiah 3:22).
- ❖ The sickness may be for death, which is the “greatest” healing of all bodily diseases. The sickness of death cannot be healed neither by medicine, nor by the Unction. The Church asks God to heal the sick, but submits her will to Him, so that in the prayers of the Unction, the priest prays: “Grant your servant recovery. Forgive him what he has done. If you have commanded that he remains (in his sickness) for a time, grant him help so that he may endure and not murmur, (and if You have commanded to take his soul, let that be in the hands of the angels of light, who will save him from the demons of darkness).
- ❖ The sickness may be for discipline, which God will remove when He sees that it has performed its function, as an example Job’s sickness for seven years and Miriam, Moses’ sister’s leprosy for seven days (after Moses prayed for her) (Numbers 12).
- ❖ The sickness may be for a reason we don’t understand. St. Paul’s sickness for life, though he prayed about it many times: “And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Despite the fact that the handkerchiefs that he used for treatment of this disease, was used to cure the sick, God still left that sickness in St. Paul: “so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them” (Act 19:12)

Conclusion:

The Lord is the True Physician of our souls. He heals all our illnesses through His Holy Sacrament of Unction of the Sick. We must prepare ourselves with repentance and a strong faith and we will be healed.

Application:

- ❖ Pray for anyone you know who is sick.
- ❖ Make sure the children attend one of the prayers of the Kandeel or show them a tape of one.
- ❖ Start preparing the students to memorize the Pascha Hymn ” To Thine is the Power...the Glory...the Majesty...”

Week 4- Mary and the Fragrant Oil

Objective:

- ❖ To learn that our love for the Lord should be clear in our actions
- ❖ To avoid criticizing others as Judas did

Memory Verse:

“And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil “ (John 12:3)

References:

- ❖ John 12:1-10
- ❖ The Holy Week Book- introduction (Arabic version)

Introduction:

Prepare a picture to demonstrate today’s lesson. Review the previous lesson and verse with the students and ask them: How can we show our love to Jesus Christ?

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus Christ was a close friend of Lazarus, Martha and Mary who were brother and two sisters. He used to like their home and find comfort and rest in it. Many times He went and visited them and spend long time with them. He loved them all and made a great miracle when He brought Lazarus His friend back from death. Lazarus died for 4 days but Jesus Christ brought him back from death and he was alive again. Ask the students if any one knows the story of raising Lazarus from death?

After this great miracle, Jesus went to visit Lazarus, Mary and Martha again and their house was full of people. They all came to see Jesus and see Lazarus after he was raised again from death. They made Him a big supper that Martha prepared and the “Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said: Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said: Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always” (John 12:3-8). Jesus did not mean that we do not take care of the poor or that He did not care for them but He meant that we should not forget God as we care for the poor.

- ❖ Who were Jesus’ friends?
- ❖ What miracle happened to Lazarus?
- ❖ What did Martha prepare for Jesus?
- ❖ How did Mary express her love for Jesus Christ
- ❖ Who wanted to sell the fragrant oil? Why?

Conclusion:

There are many ways that we can show our love to God. For example by being obedient to His word and doing the things He asks us to do in the Bible, by showing love to others and our family, or by taking care of the sick people, etc. Mary showed her love by sacrificing the expensive good smelling oil to wash the feet of Jesus Christ and wiping them with her hair. Jesus Christ appreciated what she did very much and commended her for it. The same wit us, if we show our love to Jesus Christ He will appreciate it and give us a reward on earth or in heaven.

Applications:

- ❖ Think of something you like to do to show your love to Jesus Christ and come and share it with the class next week.
- ❖ Distribute “Henoot” to the students in small quantities to remember the lesson during the week.
- ❖ Review with the students the hymn “ to Thine is the power..the glory...the majesty..”

Week 5- The Power of Christ before and during the Crucifixion

Objective:

- ❖ To learn that even when Jesus Christ was going through trial and pain of the cross, He was still powerful.

Memory Verse:

“Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43)

References

- ❖ Matthew 27
- ❖ “With Christ in His Passions, Death and Resurrection”

Introduction:

Teach the students this song “To You is the power...” from the book “Praise the Lord,” or the Pascha book. Ask the children: How many of you attended the Pascha prayers and the Good Friday last year? Do you remember how did they pray and how did the church look?

Lesson Outlines:

The Servant gives his children an idea about the Holy Week so that they may participate in the church prayers.

- ❖ The Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem on Sunday to be kept there till the day of slaughter as the case was with the Pascha Sacrifice (a lamb), which stood for Him.
- ❖ On Monday, He was in the temple teaching, discussing, and answering questions. The priests asked about His authority -the story of the fig tree.
- ❖ On Tuesday, He was in the temple. The parables and the signs of the end of the world (Matthew 24:22-25, Luke 21 and Mark 12,13).
- ❖ Wednesday: First, the plot (the priests) (Matthew 26 and Mark 14). Second, the agreement with Judas Iscariot.
- ❖ The Jewish Passover (on Thursday). Christ eats the Passover with His disciples. His prayer for His passions. At night He prayed with His disciples in Gethsemane while Judas was plotting against Christ. An angel came to strengthen Him saying: “Power be to you”. The Jews arrested Christ and the disciples ran away.
- ❖ The Judgment: Caiaphas, Annas, Pilate and Herod and how it happened: The procedures of crucifixion, the story of the two thieves and Christ’s answering one of them. Truly I say to you...(Matthew 26:2-27; Mark 14,15).

The children should fully understand that all what Jesus did was for and to save us from the punishment of sin which the Lord hates.

Conclusion:

Although Jesus Christ was going through suffering He was very powerful during His trial in front of Caiaphas, Pilate and that they were not able to find anything wrong He did. When He was on the cross He had the power to promise the thief that he will be with Him in Paradise. The heaven became dark and strong wind was blowing when He was on the cross indicating His power on nature. All these things indicate the power of the Lord even when it appeared that He was under man's authority.

Applications:

- ❖ The children read Luke 24.
- ❖ Ask the children to participate in the Holy Week and prepare by reading the Pascha book.
- ❖ Review with them again the hymn of “ to Thine is the power...the glory.....the majesty...”

Week 6- The Power of Resurrection

Objective:

- ❖ The Lord Christ breaks the punishment of death.

Memory Verse:

“He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:6)

References:

- ❖ Matthew 28; Luke 24
- ❖ “With Christ in His Passions, Death and Resurrection”

Introduction:

Prepare some cardboard and help the children to draw wings for angels and a circular plank to represent the door of the Holy Tomb. Also help them to sing some resurrection hymns and perform a play. Also ask them if they had read Luke 24 and review it with them.

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ The Resurrection of Christ from the dead on the third day (Sunday at dawn) is a fulfillment of the ancient prophecies. He rose to raise us with Him in victory over sin.
- ❖ When the women went to the tomb, they did not see the Lord inside it. Peter and John went there and they saw nothing but the shrouds.
- ❖ The Lord told Mary Magdalene to tell His disciples about His resurrection.
- ❖ Mary rejoiced and ran to announce the good news.
- ❖ Jesus rose from the dead to raise us with Him, so He who does not rise from sin, does not benefit from resurrection.

The Servant draws the children’s attention to the power of resurrection so that they may understand that Christ who was crucified and despised won victory when He rose from the dead. The children will feel that the Lord is Mighty.

- ❖ How many days did the Lord stay in the tomb?
- ❖ Do you believe the soldier’s words that the body was taken away? Why?
- ❖ Who rolled the stone?
- ❖ Who was the first to announce the good news? (Children should write these questions in their notes).

Conclusion:

O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? This is the voice of victorious Jesus. Do you follow His example and repeat these words with Him to win victory over sin? The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was a victory that He granted to us through His resurrection. We also live again eternally after we die, if we do good deeds during our life and stay away from sin.

Applications:

- ❖ Teach the children to greet one another by the Resurrection greeting: Ekchristos Anisty... Alithos Anisty...
- ❖ Take part in distributing the feast gifts among the needy.

LESSONS FOR THE PENTECOST PERIOD
(Fifty days after Resurrection)

Week 1: The Lord is the Good Shepherd

Week 2: The Feast of St. Mark: His Evangelism

Week 3: Do Good to those who Offend You: David and Saul

Week 4: Show Respect for the Handicapped: David and Mephibosheth

Week 5: The Holy Family's Flight to Egypt

Week 6: Almsgiving: Elijah and the Widow

Week 7: The Apostles' Courage and Heroism before the Courts of Law

Week 1- The Lord is the Good Shepherd

Objective:

- ❖ The children should know that God is caring for them and their needs. They should listen and obey the word of God from the Bible and the church.

Memory Verse:

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalms 23:1)

References:

- ❖ John 10:11-14
- ❖ “Explanation of the Book of Psalms” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “The Lord is my shepherd” the book of Songs and Praises

Introduction:

Ask the children about the work of a shepherd, the relationship between him and his sheep, and how does he defend them if a wolf attacks? Read with them John 10:11-14.

Lesson Outlines:

The shepherd is the man who tends sheep and moves them around from one grazing ground to another to feed them good grass and water. Although all the sheep would look alike for us, the shepherd sees them as individuals; every one of them has a personality of his own because God created them individually. If the shepherd does not care about the sheep, they will scatter and get lost. The wolves will also eat them. The good shepherd will take care of the sheep; protect them from the wolves, and from hurting themselves. The shepherd knows every one of them and even gives them names. He tends to the sick and the weak and even carry the weakest on his shoulder to rest.

The shepherd carries with him a strong staff and a long thin bamboo stick. He uses the staff to defend the sheep from the beasts, and the stick to tap the sheep that do not obey him and want to go astray. The sheep also follow the shepherd everywhere he leads them to and they recognize his voice when he calls on them. They don't follow anyone but their shepherd. They love him because he cares for them and their needs even though the shepherd taps them with his stick sometimes to keep them from doing the wrong things that can end up hurting them.

From the song and the Bible reading we know that “The Lord is my shepherd.” So, our Lord Jesus Christ is our shepherd and we are the sheep. He takes care of us, feeds us the best food (His body) and the best drink (His blood). He sacrificed Himself on the Cross for us to save us from the wolf (the devil). He expects us to obey and follow His voice (in the Bible) and walk in His path, just as the sheep follow wherever their shepherd leads them. If we are weak He carries us on His shoulder, but if we don't obey, or if we go astray He uses His stick to bring us back to Him. But He never hurts us. He uses His staff (the Cross) against our enemy (the devil) who tries to sneak in among us and devour us.

- ❖ Why does the shepherd carry both a staff and a stick?
- ❖ Why does he carry a sheep on his shoulder sometimes?
- ❖ What happens if a sheep decides to go on its own way and goes astray?
- ❖ Does the shepherd know the sheep from one another?

The Lord is the good shepherd, and from His goodness and love to us, He sends us other shepherds in our lives to guide us and direct us when we go astray. Our parents, our Sunday School Servants, our fathers of confession, our priests and our bishops are the shepherds in our life. God gave them power, knowledge, wisdom, and experience that they may have authority to help us in our lives and shepherd us as God would shepherd His own sheep. As our shepherds, they love us and attend to our needs both physical and spiritual. Our parents provide us with our food, drink, and clothing. They care for our health and well being. Our priests and bishops provide us with spiritual food, words of wisdom, and show us the true Christian principles that we should live our lives with. Because of their love, compassion, and care, the least we could do is give them the honor and respect that they deserve. We must listen to their advice and obey them because in obeying them we are obeying God Himself.

My parents take care of my body needs since I was in the womb of my mother. They taught me how to live a good life and defended me. They carried me on their shoulders when I was a baby; spent endless nights next to my bed when I was sick and disciplined me when I misbehaved. They prayed for me and taught me how to pray and fast. They did all of that because they love me.

God also sends me the Sunday School Servants who teach me how to sing, pray, read the bible, behave in the church, and congregate with other children. They tell me stories from the Bible, how to cling to good kids, and to avoid the wolves (bad friends). The bible says that bad friends corrupt and destroy the good children of God. Moreover, my servants arrange for retreats to give me good spiritual food for the soul, and to teach me that to be a Christian is really to belong to the church and to be friends with the people around me in church. Remember that we are one body in Christ.

God also sends me His priests and bishops. They pray for me and take care of my spiritual needs like confession to cleanse me from the filth of my sins. When I was a baby they baptized me and anointed me with Myron. They shepherd me now and will continue to shepherd me in the future. It is through them and their blessing that I receive communion, the unction of the sick when I am sick, and the blessings of the union of marriage when I grow up.

You see how God is so good. He is The Good Shepherd who takes care of all our needs and sends us other shepherds throughout our lives to take care of us. That is why we should not worry at all because we are in good hands if we trust in God, His church and our parents. Remember Jesus says in the gospels that we should never worry about what we eat and what we drink. Look at the little birds, God provides them the food they need. If God gives food and shelter for the little birds flying in the sky and to all of his creation, don't you think He will take mighty good care of you? After all, He even gave you His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ to save you from the death of sin and Satan. Remember that our God is a caring God. When things get bad, just trust in Him, and He will take care of the rest. He is our good Shepherd.

- ❖ Who is our Good Shepherd?
- ❖ Whom does He shepherd us through?

- ❖ What good things did our parents do for us when we were young and what do they continue to do for us now and until we get older?
- ❖ What good things have our priests and bishops done for us?

Conclusion:

Trust in God and His love and care. He is the good shepherd who will lead you all your life if you follow Him with all your heart and respect the people whom He sends to care for you.

Applications:

- ❖ Write a list of all the Characteristics of the good shepherd.
- ❖ Find picture of Christ the good shepherd and bring it to class next week.

Week 2- The Feast of St. Mark: His Evangelism

Objective:

- ❖ The child should be proud to be a Christian. He/she should realize what God did for us through St. Mark. God equipped and sent St. Mark to teach the Word of God and the Way of Salvation that we may know the Way, the Truth, and the Life in Jesus Christ because He cares for our eternal life.

Memory Verse:

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

References:

- ❖ Mark 1:3; 16:14-20
- ❖ “Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ “The Story of the Copts” Iris El-Masri
- ❖ “My Orthodox Church” the book of Songs and Praises

Introduction:

Ask the children about St. Mark. How is St. Mark drawn in an icon or a picture? In his picture, we usually see a lion next to him, a lighthouse behind him, and a book and a pen in his hand. At the end of the lesson we'll know why!

Lesson Outlines:

St. Mark was born in Cyrene, a town in North Africa. He was a young child when savage desert gangs raided the city, and his family lost their fortune. They moved to Jerusalem, where he witnessed the Lord Jesus' miracles with his own eyes. He was one of the seventy apostles sent by the Lord to the surrounding towns, and he was also the nephew of St. Barnabas.

In the house of his parents, the Last Supper took place, and the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples. His uncle Barnabas took him in his missionary trip to Europe, but Mark left him and went to his birthplace in North Africa to preach Christ to them. Then, he came to Egypt and arrived at the first Egyptian city on the coast, which is Alexandria.

Alexandria was the biggest port in Egypt with its famous lighthouse (one of the seven wonders of the old world). It was a culture center with a famous school of knowledge and the biggest library in the world. Scholars from all over the world would come to Alexandria to work and to learn and gain more knowledge. For that reason, Alexandria sheltered people from many different nationalities and religions. Alexandria was adorned with beautiful temples and places of worship of different religions and idols. St. Mark was saddened by the spread of idols all over the city and became determined to preach the Word of God to a people that were blind to the true religion of Jesus Christ.

Tired from a long walk, St. Mark's shoe strap was ripped off. He stopped by a shoe repairing shop to fix it. When the shoemaker was sewing the strap together, the long needle slipped from one hand through the leather and pierced his other palm. He cried with a loud voice “O, One God”.

Immediately, St. Mark realized that God was opening a door for him to start spreading the Good News of Christ. Filled with the Spirit of God, St. Mark spat on the ground and made a clump of clay and filled the shoemaker's wound with clay making the sign of the Cross on his palm. In a miracle, God healed the shoemaker's wound, and his hand became healthy again.

The shoemaker was amazed and asked St. Mark how he did that. St. Mark started explaining to him that the one God he mentioned is Jesus Christ in whose power and name, he was healed. The shoemaker took the apostle to his house and after hearing more about Jesus, he and his family asked St. Mark to baptize them.

- ❖ Who was his uncle?
- ❖ What happened in St. Mark parent's house in Jerusalem?
- ❖ Why do we say the Great city of Alexandria?
- ❖ How did Anianus' hand get hurt, and how was it healed?
- ❖ What did he do when his hand was healed?

Christianity spread fast in Alexandria and St. Mark ordained the shoemaker St. Anianus a bishop. He also ordained three priests and seven deacons to help him. St. Mark left them and went to Venice and Rome in Italy where he joined St. Paul and helped him many times in his missionary work. St. Paul, in one of his letters, asked for St. Mark by name to be sent to him to help him.

He returned back to check on the new Christians of Alexandria. To his delight, he found them so great in number that they built a church near the shore. The Christians asked him to write all what he knew and saw in a book to educate their children, and he wrote for them the Bible book named after him, The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Gospel starts with "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" like the roar of the lion. He listed all the events, which he saw with his own eyes. For that reason our church names him the "Beholder of God." St. Mark also wrote for them the Liturgy that later became known as the "Cyril Liturgy." We still use it during fasting days and parts of it during regular days.

St. Mark's success in preaching Jesus Christ angered the idol worshippers. During the feast of their god "Serapis" (the bull) which coincided with the feast of the Resurrection they dragged St. Mark from the church, wrapped a rope around him, and dragged him on the rocky roads behind a horse. At the end when he was totally bruised and bleeding, they threw him in prison. The Lord appeared to him in a glorious scene with His angels, eased his pain, and strengthened him. The Lord told St. Mark that he will be with God in heaven and will join the hosts of angels the very next day.

The next day, the mob tied the robe around his neck and dragged him until he died, and his head was separated from his body. These savages tried to burn the body but God sent a severe unusual rainstorm that sent them home running and it quenched the flames prepared to burn the body of the precious St. Mark. The Christians then came, took his body and his separated head and boxed them separately. They buried them under the Altar of the church in Alexandria.

St. Mark came to Egypt in the year 61 AD and was martyred in the year 68 AD. He is considered our first Pope and Patriarch, and Anianus followed him as our second Pope in an unbroken series with our Pope Shenouda the Third being the 117 Pope.

The Head of St. Mark is still treasured in his cathedral in Alexandria in a box with a golden 3-D icon cover. Ask to see the box when you visit this church in Alexandria. The Body was taken to Venice, where the Italians built a great church in his name. The body was later partially returned with the help of Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, and it is now buried under the Altar of his new Cathedral in Cairo. You can also visit this Altar when you visit Cairo.

- ❖ Why do we draw a lion next to St. Mark? A lighthouse behind him?
- ❖ What book did he write?
- ❖ Why do we call him the Beholder of God?
- ❖ Who is our first Pope? And the second? And the 117?
- ❖ Where else did St. Mark preach? And with whom?
- ❖ Do we still use his liturgy? When?
- ❖ How was he martyred?
- ❖ Who cared for him when he was traveling and preaching? How do you know?
- ❖ Who cared for him when he was suffering?
- ❖ Where is his head now? And his body?
- ❖ Why do we love St. Mark that much and we hear about him more than any other apostle?

Conclusion:

God glorifies His saints, opens the doors for them to spread His Word and supports them in the worst hours of suffering and pain with His beautiful appearance and encouraging strength.

Applications:

- ❖ Find out how many chapters are in the gospel of St. Mark?
- ❖ What do the first and last chapters talk about?
- ❖ Search for which gospel was written first out of the 4 gospels.

Week 3- Do Good to Those Who Offend You: David and Saul

Objective:

- ❖ To love everybody, even those who offend us or wish to harm us.

Memory Verse:

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21)

References

- ❖ 1 Samuel 24
- ❖ “Explanation of the First Book of Samuel” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ Sporting Stories and Tales from the Holy Bible part 7 Beirut.

Introduction:

Did you ever have a fight with somebody or an argument? How did you feel after the fight and how did you resolve it?

Lesson Outlines:

David was in a similar situation when king Saul was jealous of him because he was becoming more popular when he killed Goliath and won many wars. Also Saul started feeling that the Lord was with David and started to leave him. So, Saul tried to kill David several times. Saul led an army and went out to search for David to kill him. During the search Saul slept in the cave where David used to sleep and where David and his men used to hide themselves. David came into the cave and found Saul sleeping. It was easy for David to kill Saul at that time and remove his continuous threat to him. Yet, David did not do that because David was a man of God and his heart was loving and kind like the heart of God. Instead, David cut off the end of Saul’s cloak while he was sleeping without disturbing his sleep. When Saul woke up not knowing what happened while he was asleep, David ran after him when he went out of the cave and told him what he did. Saul wept because David did not harm him and he said to David: “You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil and the good Lord said: Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”.

- ❖ The servant draws the children attention to the necessity of showing love to all people, not only our relatives or brothers but for those who curse us and harm us, as what happened with the Lord Christ.
- ❖ Draw their attention not to differentiate between Christians and non-Christians in the kind of treatment. There is a story about a child who was struck by another boy who threw stones at him. The child hurried to his house and brought an orange and gave it to the boy who struck him and said that the church says: overcome evil with good.

Conclusion:

As children of God we should love all people even those who do not love us and those who want to harm us. When some body offends us we should return the offense with calm forgiveness and show that person that we still love him.

Applications:

- ❖ Ask the children to write Luke 6:27-31 in their notebooks and to read 2 Samuel 21.
- ❖ Read 1 Samuel 14 with the family.
- ❖ Review the first three passages of the 3rd hour prayer.
- ❖ Give a gift or send a postcard to a friend who has offended you.
- ❖ Recite the passages of the 6th hour prayer “You who on the sixth day and at 6th hour...”. These should be printed and distributed or the children copy them from the canonical Hours Prayers book. The Servant encourages the children through competitions. The children should use them in their prayers at home.

Week 4- Show Respect for the handicapped: David and Mephibosheth

Objective:

- ❖ Showing respect for the handicapped

Memory Verse:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink” (Romans 12:20)

References:

- ❖ 2 Samuel 21

Introduction:

Ask the children: If you see a blind man among the cars in the street what will you do for him? Who will be pleased with you when you do that?

Lesson Outlines:

Jesus is very pleased with us when we help an old man or handicapped. Do you remember David the Shepherd? He became a king after the death of Saul. We know that Saul was an evil man and wanted to kill David, but David loved all people. One day, he said to his servants “Is there anyone left of Saul’s family? If there is, I would like to show him kindness”. The servants said, “Your majesty, do not forget that King Saul wanted to kill you, and now you want to show kindness to his son”. David said, “It is true that Saul wanted to kill me but he was a King and I have to show kindness to the King’s son. I want to give him money”. The servant was surprised but he obeyed the King.

- ❖ What was David’s job?
- ❖ What was the name of the king before him?
- ❖ Give an example to show that David was a good-hearted man.
- ❖ Who remembers a verse about love?

The servants searched for Saul’s descendants and asked many people. Have you seen anyone from the house of Saul? The King wants to show kindness to him. They found a man named Mephibosheth...Saul’s son...he was hiding himself...He could not walk as he was lame...The King’s servants said to Mephibosheth: “The King wants to see you”. Mephibosheth was afraid. He said to the servants, “Go and tell the King that Mephibosheth is a kind-hearted man and does not want to kill you as his father did and I did no evil to be punished for”. The servants said, “King David wants to show kindness to you for the sake of Saul your father”. Mephibosheth said, “But Saul, my father hated David and David wants to show kindness to me for his sake. This is impossible and hard to believe!” The servants said, “King David is a kind hearted man. He sticks to the words of God. He reads the Scriptures and keeps the verse: If your enemy is hungry, feed him...

(The Servant repeats the verse) so he decided to care for you as the Lord commands. Mephibosheth said to the servants “I cannot walk”. The servant said, “We will carry you” and they carried him to David. Thee servants were very tired because of the long distance. The servant said to David: “Do you want to show kindness to this man whose father was your enemy? Give him some money and let him go his way. It is enough for him to be kept alive”. David said, “He is lame... who would care for him? He cannot walk and he can do nothing by himself. Who would serve him? Some of my servants will serve him and he will eat at my table”. The servants said, “He will cause you many troubles”. David said, “Haven’t you read the Scriptures: Open your mouth for the Speechless?” The same should be done for the lame and others.

David gave orders that Mephibosheth would always sit at the Royal Table beside him and that he would live in one of the royal palaces. Mephibosheth bowed down before the king and said to him, “I am your servant”. David said to him, “Do not fear... You will be honored and you will live with me all your life”.

- ❖ Why did David want to show kindness to Saul’s son?
- ❖ What is the name of Saul’s son?
- ❖ What is the verse that David obeyed when he showed kindness to Saul’s son?
- ❖ What did the servant say to David in secret?
- ❖ What did Mephibosheth do when he was brought to David?

The children act the conversation that ran between the king and the servant, and between the servant and Mephibosheth.

Conclusion:

We need to take example of King David and the Lord Himself who were both very kind to the handicapped and the sick. The Lord Jesus has performed many miracles and healed them. As his children we should show kindness and help the handicapped just as king David did to Mephibosheth.

Applications:

- ❖ If you see a lame man crossing the street, take hold of his hand. Do the same with a blind man.
- ❖ Read 2 Samuel 15.
- ❖ Help any handicapped that needs help and do not annoy the dumb.
- ❖ Study the fourth passage of the canonical hours prayer of the 6th hour.

Week 5- The Holy Family's Flight To Egypt

Objective:

- ❖ Honoring the Virgin St. Mary

Memory Verse:

“Rise take the child and His mother, and flee to Egypt” (Matthew 2:13)

References:

- ❖ Mathew 2:13-23
- ❖ “The Virgin Theotokos” Sanctification house (Beit al Takrees), Helwan
- ❖ “The Virgin Mary” St Mark church, New Cairo.

Introduction:

Show children the icon of the Virgin St. Mary, the icon of the Holy Family and her flight to Egypt. Ask the children to carry the icon and celebrate it by the end of the lesson and sing the hymn, “O Virgin the Mother of Light”. Use a map to show the long trip that the Holy Family took to Egypt and describe some of these blessed places and describe the churches and monasteries built there. Review with the children: Who was the king who ordered his soldiers to kill the children in Bethlehem? Who came to Egypt with Jesus when they fled from Herod? Who went to the church of St. Mary at Zeitoun? Why do people go there? How many feasts of St. Mary does the church celebrate?

Lesson Outlines:

A strange sight, an old man and an innocent young mother carrying the Lord Jesus on her shoulder, left the city without taking anything with them except little food. This small modest group walked by night calmly and without fear because Jesus Christ was with them. Emmanuel was carried on the shoulder of His mother who was walking in the desert on her way to Egypt following the command of the angel to Joseph the carpenter “Rise take the child and His mother, flee to Egypt”.

- ❖ Why did the Holy Family flee to Egypt?
- ❖ Who appeared to Joseph in a dream?
- ❖ What did the angel say to Joseph?

The Holy Family walked on her way to Egypt, they arrived at Farama near Al Areesh. They did not enter the town but they spent their night outside it. On the second day they continued their journey to Zagazig, and from Zagazig they went to Miniet Ganah near Samanoud, then they entered the city of Samanoud. Then they left Samanoud and went to Al-Borolous and Deir El-Maghtass, then they continued their journey to the Valley of Natroun, and from there they made it to Upper Egypt to

Meir, and to Buk, and to Timsahya and to Al-Koussya. At last they settled near Kuskam where the Monastery of Al-Mouharrak stands now.

- ❖ What was the first town they arrived at?
- ❖ What was the last town the Holy Family arrived at?

They returned by the same route to Old Cairo where the Holy Family settled in the place of the church of Abi Sirga. Then they journeyed to Al-Mattarya where the tree of the Virgin is, then they left for Mostorud. They continued their journey till they were back in Palestine after the angel had informed them of the death of those who sought the child's life. They withdrew to the district of Galilee where they stayed in a quiet place. He went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what did the prophet speak might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene".

- ❖ Where did they go when they returned to their country?
- ❖ What do you know about the tree of the Virgin in Al-Mattarya?
- ❖ What did the angel say to Joseph in a dream?
- ❖ Where did they stay in Palestine?
- ❖ Who remembers the verse?

Conclusion:

The Lord Jesus came to Egypt and blessed her people as the prophet Isaiah said, "Blessed be Egypt my people" (Isaiah 19:25).

Applications

- ❖ Teach the children the hymn Shere ne Maria...
- ❖ Give them pictures of St. Mary.

Week 6- Almsgiving: Elijah and the Widow

Objective:

- ❖ To teach the students that almsgiving and helping others are very important.

Memory Verse:

“The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22)

References:

- ❖ 1 Kings 17
- ❖ Stories and Tales from the Holy Bible part 8, Beirut
- ❖ Stories from the Old Testament, Beirut

Introduction:

The Servant reviews what the children have studied about the life of Elijah in previous lessons.

Lesson Outlines:

Recall the story of Elijah when he met king Ahab. He warned the king that the famine would continue for a long time. The Lord sent Elijah to the brook of Cherith. The ravens fed him and he drank water from the brook. The Lord sent him to Zarephath to a house where a widow lives with her son. When Elijah arrived, the widow was gathering firewood to make fire to bake a loaf of bread, as she had nothing except a handful of flour and little oil. She would eat the loaf of bread with her son then wait for death. The prophet asked her to bring him food and a drink of water. The widow told him her story... Elijah said to her; “The bowl will not run out of flour or the jar run out of oil before the day that the Lord sends rain. The widow obeyed...her faith was deep...The God of Elijah fulfilled his promise.

Elijah stayed for a long time in the widow’s house, and bowl of flour was never empty nor was her jar. There was always flour in the bowl and oil in the jar enough to feed them all. The Lord blessed the woman and Elijah spoke to her every day about the Lord.

- ❖ Where did Elijah go when the brook dried up?
- ❖ What was the widow doing?
- ❖ What did Elijah ask her to do?
- ❖ What was her reply?
- ❖ The children act the conversation that ran between Elijah and the widow.

Conclusion:

The Lord did not neglect Elijah when the land dried up, so you must not fear anything when the world becomes full of troubles. The Lord blessed the bowl of flour and the jar of oil by the hand of Elijah. He can also bless our life and every thing that our hands extend to.

Applications:

- ❖ Always give alms, as it is one of the foundations of worship.
- ❖ Share with others the toys, sweets and the food you have.

Week 7- The Apostles Courage and Heroism before the Courts of Law

Objective:

- ❖ To demonstrate to children the Christian Courage

Memory Verse:

“For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)

References:

- ❖ Acts 4

Introduction:

Start the discussion by reviewing last week’s lesson and verse and then ask the following questions: When did the Holy Spirit come down upon the disciples? How many disciples were they? Who remembers three of them?

Lesson Outlines:

One day, Peter and John went together to the temple at 3:00 O’clock in the afternoon (= 9:00 O’clock in the morning) to pray. At the door of the temple, they found a man begging. He was lame from birth. He stretched his hand out to them hoping to take something from them. Peter looked at the man; and instead of giving him money, he healed him in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth “Rise and walk”. Peter held the man by the hand and helped him to get up. At once his legs became strong and began to walk for the first time in his life. The man walked then began to jump happily. He did not want to leave Peter and John...but he stuck to them and went with them into the temple. He walked and shouted happily and praised God because he healed him.

- ❖ What are the names of the two apostles?
- ❖ Who used to sit at the gate of the temple? Why?
- ❖ What did the two apostles give him?
- ❖ Why did the man stick to them?

The news of this miracle spread and everyone who saw him asked: How was he healed? People gathered around Peter and John and the lame man who was healed. Peter preached to them so that many might be brought to the church.

While Peter and John were teaching the people some men came and arrested the two apostles and put them into prison, thinking that if the apostles spent a night in prison, they would be silent and stop preaching. The next morning the Jewish leaders, the elders, and the servants of the law gathered. They made the apostles stand before them and asked them many questions and they answered bravely:

- What is your name?
- + Peter, a Christian
- What is your name?
- + John, a Christian
- How was the lame man healed?
- + In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified and God raised Him from the dead on the third day and there is salvation in no one else. (The leaders were amazed and their mouths were open and their eyes were gazing).
- What was your job?
- + We were fishermen.

The Leaders sent them out, and started discussing among themselves. What shall we do with these men? How did courage come to these two simple men? They must stop preaching. What shall we do with the lame man who was healed? He is standing with them as a proof of the truth of the miracle. We must threaten them and warn them. The leaders called them back in and told them that under no condition were they to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus. But the two apostles said: We cannot obey this order. You yourselves judge which is right in God's sight, to obey you or to obey God. For we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard. The Lord is with us and we are not afraid of threats. The leaders were annoyed and they set Peter and John free because they feared the people who loved them. Peter and John went back to the other disciples and told them what happened. They prayed together so that the Lord might give them courage and power to speak about the Lord Jesus in public.

The children act the conversation that ran between the leaders and Peter and John, and recite the verse: "For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved".

Conclusion:

The apostles did not fear anything and were able to do miracles because they knew God is with them and supporting them. They were certain that men cannot harm them except through the will of God. They were courageous and strong in confessing the faith with no hesitation or shame. We should take example of our fathers the apostles and their courage.

Applications:

- ❖ Answer the following question: What is the secret behind the courage of Peter and John?
- ❖ Bring St. Mark's Gospel with you next week and read chapter 7:1-23.
- ❖ Pray for the ministers and the spread of the word of God.

THE APOSTLES' FAST PERIOD

Use Filler lessons (at the beginning of the book) between the feast of Pentecost and the second week of July.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

Week 2: The Feast of the Apostles: John the Evangelist and the Thief

Week 3: The Priesthood

Week 4: Entertaining the Strangers: Anba Pachomius and His Faith

Week 2- The Feast of the Apostles: John the Evangelist and the Thief

Objective:

- ❖ John's love for sinners
- ❖ This love is the outcome of his love for Christ and his service

Memory Verse:

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” (Hebrews 13:7)

References:

- ❖ The Precious Gem (Al Khareeda Al Nafeessa) - Part I

Introduction:

Start the discussion by reviewing last week's lesson and verse and then ask the following questions: What do we celebrate today? How many disciples did Christ have? How many apostles did Jesus send? What are the names of some of them?

Lesson Outlines:

The beloved John was one of Christ's disciples. What was his job before he became a disciple? He followed Christ to the cross. The Lord Jesus asked John to take care of his Mother St. Mary. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the coming down of the Holy Spirit John went out to preach the word of God. He spoke to people about Christ who loves us, died for us and redeemed us. One of those whom he preached to was a wicked young man who repented and received faith by the hands of John. One day John wanted to go to another town so he took the young man to a priest and asked him to care for the young man and teach him how to pray.

John stayed away for a long time and he became old and moved with difficulty. One day he went back to the first town to visit the people there. He met the priest and asked him about the young man. The priest bowed his head and was ashamed. John asked what happened to the young man and the priest said that the young man died. John was sorry for the man and said: “What a loss! When did he die?” The priest said, “I mean that he died in sin. He is now a chief of a gang of robbers”. Old John was very sad and wept saying: “Ah! My dear beloved son! Where are you now?” The priest said: “He is in this town but he goes out at night to rob and steal”. John went out immediately leaning on his staff. He searched for the man everywhere. He prayed: “O Lord have mercy on that man...Save him...You left the ninety nine on the mountain and went out to search for the lost sheep...I am searching for your lost son. It was night, the moon and stars were in the sky and John walked in the dark. He forgot that he was weak and old when he was searching for the man. He prayed while he was searching for the man.

Finally he found him. When the man recognized John he ran away. Old John ran after him...he fell down many times and stood up again to run...he lost his breath...he cried...My son have mercy on my old age. The boy was deeply affected and stopped running. He came back to John and wept. He bowed down and said: “Father, I have sinned. Will Jesus accept me when I come back to

Him...now?" John said: "Of course...He loves you and wants you to return". The man confessed his sins and said I repent. The man repented and became a saint. He always attended the Divine Mass and received the Holy Communion. He never returned to sin.

The Servant chooses two children to tell this story of repentance. Let them repeat the verse and the hymn.

Conclusion:

The love of Christ teaches us to love others as He loved us. Jesus loved us in all conditions even when we were sinners. His love to us saved us and freed us from sin through the incarnation and death of His son Jesus Christ. This is the same kind of love that Jesus asked us to direct toward each other and this is the love that St. John had for his son in the spirit.

Applications:

- ❖ Test yourself: Do you neglect prayers and reading of the Holy Bible? Do you curse others? Do you swear? Go to confession and say: I have sinned, father forgive me.
- ❖ Write the places John traveled to and which he recorded in his gospel.
- ❖ Write the names of the places where John stayed with Jesus during his service on earth.
- ❖ Ask the children study the passage of the 9th hour prayer "You who tasted death by the flesh at the third hour..."
- ❖ Ask the children to use them in their prayers and study them by heart. They should be printed and distributed or let them copy them. The Servant should encourage them through competitions.

Week 3- The Priesthood

Objective:

- ❖ To understand the institution of the priesthood and where it comes from.
- ❖ To learn about the role of the priest and the ranks of priesthood in the church.

Memory Verse:

“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 2:7)

References:

- ❖ “The Sacrament of Priesthood” H.G. Bishop Mettaos, Abbott of El Syrian Monastery.
- ❖ “Priesthood” H.H. Pope Shenouda

Introduction:

Ask the children the following: What do you know about the army? Are there ranks? What are they? Why do the ranks exist? What do the leader teach their soldiers? What do they fight against? What are their weapons? Let the children know that we are soldier in an army too; that is God’s army. And God’s army also has ranks, so that we, the soldiers, can have guides to teach us and be our help us to fight our spiritual enemy.

Lesson Outlines:

St. John Chrysostom said about Priesthood, “The work of the priesthood is done on earth, but it is ranked among heavenly ordinances. And this is only right, for no man, no angel, no archangel, no other created power, but the Paraclete Himself ordained this succession, and persuaded men, while still remaining in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels.”

A priest is not only the person who offers Mass and hears confessions. He is “A man of God” and “A man of prayer.” He is not a distant figure. He is often with people in times of joy and sorrow. While the priest must continue to be a man of God, a man of prayer and a leader, all the people are the people of God. They are called by God to work for the kingdom.

He is called to witness to and proclaim God’s love for the world. The Mass, which is the apex of this proclamation, is central to the life of a priest.

For Jesus, love of the neighbor follows automatically from love of the Father. The priest must be one who walks with people, working with them and involving them in the work for the Kingdom; helping them and being helped by them. His heart must be with the poor, the sick and the needy. He must work for justice and support those involved in this ministry.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as head of the church and therefore the one on whom the whole body of the church depends and as “High Priest of the good things that have come” (Hebrews 9:11), chose a number of men and named them apostles. By the authority that was vested in Him, He commanded them to go forth and baptize people everywhere and teach them to observe His commandments. They were given the power to forgive sins or withhold forgiveness and to work signs and wonders in His

name. They were consecrated for special tasks, to be mediators between Christ and His Church through the exercise of priestly functions.

The Sacrament of Priesthood is a holy sacrament through which the bishop lays his hand on the head of the elected candidate, so that the Holy Spirit will descend on him and grant him the priestly order.

The word (Ooab) in Coptic, meaning priest is derived from the Coptic word (ethoab), meaning saintly or righteous. Hence “Ooab’ is given to the priest to signify that he is a righteous man, adorned by holiness and purity.

I. Institution of Priesthood

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament when He chose the twelve apostles, and consecrated them for ministry, “He called His disciples to Him, and from them He chose twelve whom He named apostles” (Luke 6: 13).

Only for them He said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 9,20).

II. The Honor of Priesthood

Priesthood is a great honor as it is a consecration of the work with God for the salvation of the souls of the people of God, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1,2). In simple words, priesthood is:

- ❖ A divine call.
- ❖ A divine choice.
- ❖ An appointment by the Lord.
- ❖ A selection by the Lord.
- ❖ A consecration.
- ❖ A stewardship.

III. Ranks of Priesthood

There are three ranks in Priesthood:

- ❖ The order of Deacons: Deacons are servants.
- ❖ The order of Priests: Priests are teachers.
- ❖ The order of Bishops: Bishops are overseers and shepherds.

A. The Deacon:

Our teacher St. Paul specified the requirements of a deacon, in his First Epistle to Timothy (3:8-13): “Likewise deacons must be: reverent, holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience, ruling their children and their houses well, should be tested first and then proved and found blameless, so they can be ordained” (1 Timothy 3:10).

B. The Priest:

He is the intercessor in the Holies of Holy for the congregation. He is a teacher who teaches the people the word of God and leads them to the way of God, virtues, mysteries of the religion, and explains the rites and details the word of truth, “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 2:7).

He pastors his children compassionately, visits them with tender care and love, as he is zealous for the salvation of the souls of his people and leading them to Christ, as his salvation is related to their salvation.

- ❖ His commandment includes:
- ❖ To teach by good example and inspiring sermons.
- ❖ Caring for the congregation as a father.
- ❖ Offer faithful service .
- ❖ To work for achieving the food of eternal life which does not perish.
- ❖ Continuous growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ He must escape from the love of money which is the source of all evil deeds.
- ❖ He must avoid envy, unkindness, pride, hypocrisy, boasting and false witnessing.
- ❖ He must love God and all creation with all his heart & soul.

C. The Bishop:

The bishop is described as an overseer and pastor, pasturing the congregation, teaching them and keeping them in the church and Faith. Lord Jesus practiced this work as He was wandering through cities and villages teaching, guiding and visiting people who were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. In the hymn of virtues, they ask God to dwell upon him with the following virtues:

1. Love
2. Hope
3. Faith
4. Purity
5. Celibacy
6. Peace
7. Wisdom
8. Righteous
9. Meekness
10. Patience
11. Endurance
12. Asceticism

The responsibility of the bishop is before the throne of God.

- ❖ What does the priest do in the liturgy?
- ❖ Why does he do it?

Conclusion:

Priesthood in the New Testament is a Biblical reality and a ministry ordained by our Lord Himself. Our Lord is our High Priest, on earth and in Heaven. He granted the priesthood to His disciples and those ordained by them.

St. John Chrysostom said about Priesthood: “It is to priests that spiritual birth and regeneration by baptism is entrusted. By them we put on Christ, and are united to the Son of God, and become members of that blessed head. Hence we should regard them as more august than princes and kings, and more venerable than parents, for the latter begot us of blood and the will of the flesh, but priests are the cause of our generation from God, of our spiritual regeneration, of our true freedom and sonship according to grace”.

Applications:

- ❖ Ask the children to pay attention to the role of Abouna in the liturgy and in their lives.
- ❖ What role does he play in my life? Do I, the soldier of the Lord, look to him for guidance and training in my battle with the spiritual enemy?
- ❖ Invite the priest to come and talk to the students in Sunday School so that they feel closer to the priest.

Week 4- Entertaining the Strangers: Anba Pachomius and His Faith

Objective:

- ❖ To learn how to entertain strangers.

Memory Verse:

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so” (Proverbs 3:27)

References

- ❖ Luke 10:30 –37
- ❖ “The Paradise of the Monks” Page 35
- ❖ Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 25 (about the way of the Christian life is not the way of selfishness and self-love. What are the obstacles that stand in our way?)

Introduction:

Ask the children: What would you do if you see a new stranger kid in the church or at home? Do I refrain from helping those who annoy me? Anba Pachomius accepted faith because of the good treatment.

Lesson Outlines:

His father was from Upper Egypt. He was a pagan. One day Pachomius joined the army and became one of the king’s soldiers. While they were traveling and they were suffering greatly, some Christians from Isna met them and brought them food and drink. Pachomius asked, “How do those people show kindness to us although they do not know us?” He was told that those people were Christians and they do that to please the Heavenly God.

When Pachomius heard these words, he made up his mind to become Christian and help the needy if he had the chance to do so. God arranged that the king defeated his enemies and gave orders that his soldiers would go each to his home. Pachomius went back and was baptized. Three years later he became a monk and lived with St. Palamon. St. Pachomius established a monastic system called: “The Coenobitic System”.

- ❖ What did Pachomius worship?
- ❖ Whom do you worship?
- ❖ What did the Christians of Isna offer?
- ❖ What made Pachomius receive faith?
- ❖ How did he live after receiving faith?
- ❖ What is the name of the Monastic System, which Pachomius established?

Conclusion:

Christians show their love to God and others through their good treatment and kindness. They attract others to Jesus and to Christianity through their love and kindness. We as the children of God should behave nicely, kindly and generously with strangers and with those who annoy us.

Applications:

- ❖ Try to offer an act of love to all the kids you meet and play with.
- ❖ Welcome any new child coming to your church
- ❖ Share your belongings even with strangers.
- ❖ Visit your brothers who are absent.

LESSONS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

Week 1: Pictures and Icons

Week 2: The Transfiguration

Week 3: The Feast of the Virgin Mary: Her Departure

Week 4: David and Goliath

Week 1- Pictures and Icons

Objective:

- ❖ Pictures in the church, incense and candles in the Orthodox churches and prayer as incense before the Lord

Memory Verse:

“Let my prayer be set before You as incense” (Psalms 141:2)

References:

- ❖ Genesis 8,21; Psalms 141,2; Jeremiah 44,21; Ezekiel 8,11; Malachi 1,11
- ❖ Revelation 5,8,3,4; Galatians 3,1
- ❖ “The Precious Gems” (Al Kharida Al Nafeessa), Page 384
- ❖ “The life of the Orthodox Prayer”

Introduction:

Show the children the censer, incense, coal, candles, and icons in the church. Encourage them to go to church, to love it and study its systems and rites.

Lesson Outlines:

The pictures remind us of the saints. The Lord loves incense in the church. The prayer is counted as incense before the Lord. The candle in the church is a means of honoring saints. Before the Icon is put in the church, special rites are performed which are called prayer of dedication during the Divine Mass. After the bishop prays over it and anoints it with the Holy Chrism (with which the baptized are anointed), the bishop breathes onto it the breath of the Holy Spirit. In this way the Holy Spirit sanctifies the icon and works in it for the healing of the sick and answering the prayers. By this ritual being performed the Icon becomes holy and should be respected. So we must show respect to the saint of the Icon.

- ❖ Why are icons put in the church?
- ❖ What are the rituals of dedicating the icon?
- ❖ What is the difference between pictures and icons that we see in the church and the other pictures?

The censor is made of the base that contains the burning coal (like St. Mary when she carried Jesus Christ in her womb) and the cover, which is a symbol of heaven. The incense carries the prayers to heaven. The cover is surrounded with three chains that unite at the top in one small cover to resemble the trinity, which is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God...Amen. The small balls in the chains make sound when shaken to attract the attention of the people in the church to the prayers.

Conclusion:

Pictures, icons and incense are all important in our church to feel that we are surrounded with saints and their prayers for us. We can also take example of the lives of these saints and their good virtues.

Applications:

- ❖ The servants encourage the children to devote a certain place at home for prayer (it may be in the child's sleeping room).
- ❖ They can place a small table in their room and put a Holy Bible on its top together with church pictures. This should be their favorable place of prayer.
- ❖ Homework-memorize..” We magnify you the mother of the true light...”

Week 2- The Transfiguration

Objective:

- ❖ To demonstrate the power and the glory of God in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ To show that Jesus Christ is the true God.

Memory Verse:

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear Him” (Matthew 17:5)

References:

- ❖ Matthew 17:1-7

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson and the verse with the children. Help the children to have a true image of the Lord when He was transfigured, through means of illustration. Let them put this picture in front of them in every prayer so that they may feel that they are in the presence of the Lord and stand with submission before the Lord.

Ask the children: What can you see in this picture? Who are the three persons? Who is in the middle? Who received the Ten Commandments?

Lesson Outlines:

One day Jesus said to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things...and be killed and on the third day rise... They grieved because of these words. Jesus took with Him three of His disciples... who knows their names? ...He led them up a high mountain apart. As they looked on, something amazing happened: Jesus' face was shining like the Sun, and His clothes were dazzling white...He appeared in His glory before the disciples...Moses and Elijah (who went up to heaven alive in a chariot of fire) also appeared and they spoke with Christ.

- ❖ How many disciples did Jesus have?
- ❖ How many disciples did Jesus take with him on the mountain?
- ❖ What are their names?
- ❖ What was Christ doing on the mountain? (Praying)
- ❖ What happened to Him?
- ❖ Who went up to heaven alive?

Peter and the other disciples were amazed to see that scene and he said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. I will make three tents here: one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. He was still speaking when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said: This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased, listen to Him”. When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were filled with awe.

- ❖ What did Peter say?
- ❖ What did the disciples hear?
- ❖ What do these words mean?
- ❖ Mention the verse.

Then Jesus came and touched them saying “Rise and have no fear”...and when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. The disciples bowed down to Jesus then they came down the mountain and this beautiful scene remained in their minds all the time.

- ❖ Why was Jesus transfigured before them?
- ❖ What did the Father say from heaven?
- ❖ What did Peter say?

Conclusion:

In the transfiguration Jesus Christ showed St. Peter, St. James and St. John His glory as a God to strengthen their faith that Jesus Christ is God Himself. This story is mentioned to us in the Bible also to give us the strong faith that Jesus Christ is God.

Applications:

- ❖ Complete the following:
 - Peter said to our Lord: It is well we are
 - A voice from the cloud said:
- ❖ Pray every morning and every evening.
- ❖ Draw a picture of the Lord Christ in His glory.
- ❖ Kneel down before the sanctuary when you imagine the glory of Christ.
- ❖ Review with the students the beginning of the creed.....” We magnify you the mother of the true light...”

Week 3- The Feast of the Virgin Mary: Her Departure

Objective:

- ❖ God honors those who love Him.

Memory Verse:

“For, behold, hence forth all generations will call me blessed” (Luke 1:48)

References:

- ❖ “The Virgin Mary” Page 38
- ❖ The Synaxarium, 21st of Tuba, 16th of Mesra
- ❖ “The Virgin Mary, the Mother of Light” New Cairo (Misr al Guideeda)

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson with the children. Ask the children what they know about St. Mary? If they know that she lived in the temple since she was a little child, ask them what were the names of St. Mary’s parents? Bring a picture of St. Mary and place it in front of the students during the lesson.

Lesson Outlines:

After the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, the virgin was in the house of John the Beloved. We can imagine how the virgin told John about Christ’s life on earth when He was a child, a sweet atmosphere and blessed stories.

When her time to depart was near and she knew it, the disciples and some virgins came. Jesus Christ, together with angels from heaven, came to receive her soul after she had blessed the disciples.

St. Thomas the apostle was not present when she departed. He came after she had been buried and he heard a voice saying: Hurry up to receive the blessing of the body of the Pure Mary. He saw the body and kissed her. Later, when he met the disciples, they told him that she departed but St. Thomas did not believe this news. They went together to her tomb but they did not find the body and the disciples were astonished. St. Thomas told them how he saw the body rising up to heaven among the hymns of the angels. The disciples asked God to show them that scene which St. Thomas saw. They remained fasting for fifteen days and the Lord showed them the scene on the 16th of Mesra.

After the departure of the Lady Virgin, the Lord answered the prayer of anyone who interceded with her. Moreover, the virgin appeared to many people. On the 2nd of April 1968 the Lady Virgin, the Mother of Light appeared many times in the Church of Zeitoun (Zeitoun means Olives) in Cairo and this appearance was associated with two things:

1. The spirit of faith in God and in the saints, spread and many people repented.
2. Wonders and miracles happened to many people. May her intercession be with us all. Amen.

Conclusion:

The Lord Jesus Christ has honored His mother when He was alive and before His death on the cross, He asked St. John to take care of her. He also honored her after her death by taking her body from the earth. We also have to learn to honor our parents as Jesus Christ honored His mother.

Applications:

- ❖ Study: “Through the intercession of the Theotokos...” and recite it in your prayers this week.
- ❖ We must honor Christ’s mother: by keeping her picture at home to remind us of her holy life, by naming the churches after her name, by asking for her intercession at the end of each prayer because her prayers are acceptable, etc.

Week 4- David and Goliath

Objective:

- ❖ Explaining how the Lord cares about His people and how powerful He is.

Memory Verse:

“You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts” (1 Samuel 17:45)

References:

- ❖ 1 Samuel 17
- ❖ “Explanation of the First Book of Samuel” Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- ❖ Stories and Tales from the Bible, Beirut
- ❖ The Dictionary of the Holy Bible
- ❖ “The Life of David” F.B. Mayer

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson and verse with the children. Start by asking the following questions: What did David do to the lion and the bear? Who remembers the verse? Prepare a picture showing David defeating Goliath.

Lesson Outlines:

David had seven brothers; three of them were men of war. These were the older brothers. There was a fight between people of Israel and the people of Palestine.

- ❖ Who was the king of the people of Israel at that time?

Saul prepared his army and gathered his men to fight. The two armies faced each other. One army stood on a mountain one side and the other army on a mountain on the opposite side. Days passed by and the two armies did not have the courage to fight. One day, Saul’s men trembled in fear when a champion came out from the camp of the Philistines whose name was Goliath. He was very tall and wore bronze armor that weighed about fifteen pounds and a bronze helmet. He carried a bronze javelin slung over his shoulder. A soldier walked in front of him carrying his shield. He was walking proudly (Describe how he walked). Goliath stood and shouted at the Israelites: Who dares to fight me? Choose one of your men to fight me. If he wins and kills me, we will be your slaves; but if I win and kill him, you will be our slaves. Goliath challenged the Israelites every morning and evening for forty days. No one of King Saul’s men dared to challenge him. What then? Is there a way out?

- ❖ With whom was that war?

- ❖ What is the name of that giant?

One day David got up early, left someone else in charge of the sheep, took the food and went to find out how his brothers were doing. He hoped to hear good news about the army, as he loved his people. He saw Goliath speaking rudely and vexing the soldiers. He also made fun of the Israelites and their God. David was not afraid of him. King Saul had promised to give a big reward to the man who would kill Goliath. The king would also give him his daughter to marry and would not require his father's family to pay taxes. David said: "Who is this heathen Philistine to defy the army of the Living God?" The soldiers gathered around David the brave boy. David's brothers heard David talking to the men and they were angry with him and said: What are you doing here? Who is taking care of those sheep of yours out there in the wilderness? David said calmly: My father is anxious about you and he has sent me to see if you are well and I have brought you food and I left the sheep with a guard". One of the soldiers ran to Saul and said: There is a young man in the camp who is not afraid of Goliath. Saul said: Bring him to me. David came and stood before Saul and this conversation ran between them:

- + David: Your Majesty ...No one should be afraid of this Philistine! I will go and fight him.
- Saul: No, how could you fight him? You are just a boy and he has been a soldier all his life!
- + David: I am sure of the power of God. The Lord is more powerful than any Amalek. I have killed lions and bears. The Lord has saved me from lions and bears; He will save me from this Philistine. Let me go and fight him and rescue the people.
- Saul: Go, and the Lord be with you, but you have to wear the tools of war... a coat of armor, a helmet, etc.

David wore his armor but he could not walk because he wasn't used to wearing it. So he took it all off and he was sure that the Lord would help him.

- ❖ Why did David go to the camp?
- ❖ What did he see?
- ❖ Was he afraid? Why?
- ❖ Who told Saul about David?

David took his shepherd's stick and then picked up five smooth stones from the stream and put them in his bag. With his catapult ready, he went out to meet Goliath. Saul's soldiers watched David while he was walking towards the Philistine and they were afraid. On the other side the Philistines were laughing. A little boy was coming to fight their hero. David drew near Goliath... Goliath laughed loudly as he saw David without a sword. He said to David: What is that stick for? Do you think I am a dog? Come on and I will give your body to the birds and animals to eat. David steadily and bravely walked towards Goliath and said: You are coming against me with sword, spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the Israelite armies, which you have defied. This very day the Lord will put you in my power. I will defeat you and cut off your head. Then the whole world will know that Israel has a God, and everyone here will see that the

Lord does not need swords or spears to save His people. Goliath started walking towards David again and David ran quickly towards him. He put his hand into his bag and took out a stone, which he slung at Goliath. It hit him on the forehead and broke his skull, and Goliath fell face downwards on the ground. And so without a sword, David defeated and killed Goliath with a catapult and a stone. David's men shouted loudly. David ran to him, stood over him, took Goliath's sword out of its sheath, and cut off his head and killed him.

The Philistines were afraid... their hero died... they ran away... Saul's men ran after them and took their belongings... Thus the Lord rescued His people by David's hand. David carried Goliath's weapons to his own tent and carried his head to Jerusalem.

Let the children act the conversation that ran between King Saul and David, and between David and Goliath and recite the verse.

Conclusion:

David did not save his people with a sword or a spear but with the power of God as he took refuge in the Lord. With a small sling, David could kill Goliath. Thus by using very simple tools you can win victory with the grace of God.

Applications:

- ❖ Write down the differences between David and Goliath.
- ❖ Encourage the children to pray for the enemies of the church and for her peace and safety.
- ❖ Review with the students “ We magnify you the mother of the true light...”

**LESSON OF THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER
BEFORE THE COPTIC NEW YEAR**

Week 1: God Cares For Gideon in His Wars

Week 1- God Cares for Gideon in His Wars

Objective:

- ❖ To know that God gives us a great power when He is with us.

Memory Verse:

“If God is with us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

References

- ❖ Judges 6,7

Introduction:

Review the previous lesson and the verse with the children. Prepare a picture that shows how God cares for His people.

Lesson Outlines:

Gideon was a great man who had a great personality. He is one of the great men of the Old Testament. He lived in the 10th century B.C. He was one of the Ancient People. At that time they had powerful enemies called the Midianites. The Midianites enslaved them and were cruel to them. The ancient people suffered a lot. They sowed and leaped and the Midianites came upon them in severe attacks like locusts. They looted them and killed them and the people ran away in great horror, as soon as they saw them. The people of God built tombs, strongholds and caves to hide themselves from their enemies who stole their crops and animals. This situation continued for seven years during which the people of God suffered severely. What should be done? Would they fight the Midianites? They had no army. Should they build up an army? They had no king, no chief, nor a leader. Everything caused sadness. What should be done? They cried to God from the bottom of their hearts: “You brought our fathers out of the Land of Egypt and gave them victory over Pharaoh. O Lord, save your servants. We are in deep grief. Come and deliver us”. They prayed every day, in houses, in meetings, and everywhere. They prayed the Lord to save them from their enemies...Did you not say to us, “The Lord will fight for you?”

- ❖ What is the name of the enemies of the Ancient people at that time?
- ❖ What did they do?
- ❖ Why did they not fight the people?
- ❖ What did they decide to do?

The seven years passed. One day, a young man called Gideon was threshing some wheat secretly so that the Midianites would not see him. He worked hard but he looked here and there out of fear. “Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him:

The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor! Gideon said to Him: O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles, which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. Then the Lord turned to him and said: Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you? So he said to Him: O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house. And the Lord said to him: Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man” (Judges 7:11-16). Gideon did not believe himself...was he in a dream or was he in the real world? He was sure that he was not dreaming and began to think.

- ❖ Who appeared to Gideon?
- ❖ What did he say to him?
- ❖ What was Gideon’s reply?
- ❖ What did the angel say to him?

Then Gideon said to the angel, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You. And He said: I will wait until you come back. So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. The Angel of God said to him: Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the Angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said: Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face. Then the Lord said to him: Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die. So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites” (Judges 7:17-24).

- ❖ What was the sign that the Lord showed to Gideon?

Gideon went back home. He was amazed and happy...He told his family, his neighbors and his relatives about what happened. All people knew that the Lord chose Gideon. They rejoiced. They all asked him about the story and he related it over and over again saying: “Pray and thank the Lord. Gideon blew the trumpet...people gathered...He asked them to go with him to fight. They all said, “We shall go with you and the Lord is with us. Gideon divided them into groups...The number was very great...They were 32,000 men...Well, victory is surely ours. The Lord said to Gideon:

- + No. This is not good.
- Do you want a greater number, Lord?
- + How many soldiers are there?
- 32,000 of the best men

+ Is the army ready?

- Yes, Lord.

The men you have are too many for me to give them victory over the Midianites. They may think that they had won by themselves and so, give glory to themselves. Announce to the people, "Anyone who is afraid should go back home".

Gideon said so to the men...Alas! All men except 300 men, returned. Gideon was sad and worried...but the Lord promised him victory. Have you forgotten the verse that says: "If God is with us, who is against us?"

O Lord, where can we find weapons? Take the three hundred men and divide them into three groups...Let each man have an empty jar and a lamp. When you blow the trumpet let them all break the jars and shout, "For the Lord and for Gideon".

Will this suffice, my Lord? The men are few and this is not a weapon...I am afraid I may be defeated. Have you forgotten the verse, "If God is with us, who is against us?"

Gideon was ashamed. He took courage, as he was sure that the Lord was with him...He went out with the troops. He blew the trumpet. They broke the jars while they were shouting...For God and for Gideon... The Midianites ran away ...They won victory and the Midianites were no longer a threat...and the Israelites lived in peace.

- ❖ Observe emotional situations and explain them. Involve completely in the situations, such as the sad state of the people of God – Gideon’s amazement when he saw the angel of the Lord - Gideon’s modesty, humbleness and submission to the Lord’s call - His amazement when he knew the means of victory - Their happiness and joy when they won victory.
- ❖ Explain that the Lord can give victory to his people by a simple weapon (remember the story of David and Goliath).
- ❖ Give the conversation in detail such as the conversation between the angel and Gideon, and the conversation between Gideon and the people as a repetition to the story.

Conclusion:

The Lord blesses the little that we offer and saves us. Let us offer Him our effort, and the little that we have and He will bless them and make us victorious and successful in every good work.

Applications:

- ❖ Write the answers to these questions in your notebooks as homework for next week:
 - ❑ What is the name of the enemies of the ancient people in the days of Gideon?
 - ❑ What was the sign that the Lord gave Gideon?
 - ❑ What was the verse that Gideon kept reciting?
 - ❑ How many men took part in the fight?
 - ❑ What are the weapons that were used in the fight?
 - ❑ Complete the following:
 - o The Lord delivered his ancient people from..... by.....
 - o Gideon won victory by.....men.....and.....

- ❖ Recite the prayer of Thanksgiving, which suits this lesson: “We thank the beneficent and merciful God...” So the children begin to study it and use it in their prayers. Please distribute copies to the children and later arrange competitions for memorizing it.