

**ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST
(OUTSIDE KERALA REGION)**



CLASS - IV

**ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST**

TEXT BOOK CLASS - IV



**FOR
STUDENTS OF
OUTSIDE KERALA REGION**

Published by
OSSAE (Outside Kerala Region)
Regional Head quarters
St. Thomas Orthodox Theological Seminary
Brahmni P.O., Kalmeshwar,
Nagpur - 441501
INDIA

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ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST

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(OSSAE - OKR)
(English)

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FOREWORD

I introduce this book to the students and teachers of Class IV with much pleasure and satisfaction; while the learners find the lessons more informative, the teachers feel their task easily done.

The present volume is the result of hard work of the past few months. The basic principles of this text book are the following:

1. The teachers as well as the children should not be over burdened. We have limited the lessons to 25, because none of the Sunday School units may get all the 52 Sundays.

2. From Class-III onwards, the lessons are distributed among various disciplines like Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Faith of the Church, Worship, Patristics and Current topics. Each class will have some lessons from each of these branches.

3. We have put more emphasis on continuity and progress of thought as per the age of the child. The lessons are more child centered.

4. The language is kept as simple as possible so that the stuff is intelligible to the learning capacity of the children.

5. We have included a lot of exercises at the end of each lesson. The class room should become a place where the teacher and the children work together. The children should have fun in learning; arouse their intellectual curiosity and establish a commitment to Christ at first and then to the Church.

It is advised that Hymns and Prayers which are given as Lesson 22 may be taught in the beginning Classes itself.

I would like to thank those who have contributed the lessons (see the list) and Dr. Ipe Varghese especially for his continuous work behind this text book. Fr. T.J. Joshua has gone through the script page by page and has given his invaluable advices. Prof. Jacob Kunnathu (CMS College, Kottayam) has checked the language. I am thankful to Fr. K.V.Thomas and the executive committee of the OSSAE for giving us the permission to publish the book at Nagpur itself.

This book is sponsored by the Bangalore District of Out side Kerala Region. I express my hearty thanks to Fr. Saji Thomas, President of it, Mr. P.K. George, its Secretary, Mr. K.C. Thomas (the former Secretary) and all the members of the committee of Bangalore District for their generosity.

With prayers I am presenting this text book for the students of Class IV. Our efforts will be successful only when they use it and when the teachers help them to understand the lessons.

*Nagpur
Christmas 2006*

*Fr. Reji Mathew
(OKR Director)*

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*My greatest pleasure
is to be with God*

Journey of Israelites from Egypt to Canaan



STORY OF MOSES

(Exodus 2 - 4)

Last year we learned the story of the sons of Israel: Joseph and his brothers. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt and settled there when Joseph was the Prime Minister of Egypt.

Birth and Childhood of Moses

Years passed; the Hebrews (Israelites) grew in numbers and in power. At this time, Egypt got a new Pharaoh (king). This king became afraid of the Hebrews. He and the elders decided to suppress them. The new Pharaoh ordered every new born Hebrew male-child to be killed. Moses was born during this time. His mother hid him for three months. But it was not possible to continue in that way as the child grew up. She put him in a papyrus basket and kept it among the reeds on the bank of



river Nile. His sister stood at a distance and watched what would happen to the child.

Then, Pharaoh's daughter came to the river for a bath. She found the child and felt pity on him. She took him out of the basket. But she found it difficult to look after the child. Moses' sister came and told Pharaoh's daughter that she can bring a nurse for the child. Then she brought the mother. His mother acted as a nurse for the child and brought him up. When the child had grown up, she gave him back. Pharaoh's daughter took him as his son and named him 'Moses'. This means *drawn out of water* (Ex. 2:10). Moses grew up in the palace enjoying all the luxury and pleasures. He stayed in the palace for 40 years.

Moses leaves the Palace

Moses saw that his people, the Israelites were doing forced labor in Egypt. He loved his people and wanted to help them. One day he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one who was hitting the other "Why do you strike your fellow Hebrew?". He was stunned by the answer he heard "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" The other day news went to Pharaoh's ears and Moses fled to the neighbouring land of Midian. There he married Zipporah, daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian. A son was born to Moses and he named him Gershom. The word 'Gershom' means that "I have been an alien residing in a foreign land". Moses stayed at Midian till the age of 80.

God chooses Moses to deliver Israelites

The Israelites cried out to God during their slavery in Egypt and God took notice of them. One day the Lord appeared to Moses at Horeb, the mountain of God. He appeared to Moses in a burning bush. The bush was blazing; but it was not consumed. The Lord said “ I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and fertile and in which the Canaanites now live” (Ex. 3:8). God also said to Moses: “Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country” (Ex. 3:10).

Moses was not confident to handle this huge task. Then God asked him to throw his staff to the ground. He did it and it became a snake. He took it by the tail and it turned to be staff in his hand. Again he was asked to put his hands inside his cloak. When he took them out it became white like the hands of a leper. He was then asked to put his hands back in to the cloak. When he took out this time, his hands became normal. God asked him to use these signs in Egypt, so that his people will believe him.

Moses again complained that he was slow to speak because he was stammer. God asked him to take along his brother Aaron to assist him. Moses went back to Egypt along with Aaron. They met the elders of the Israelites and Aaron spoke to them all the words that God had spoken to Moses. Moses performed the signs God had said. The people believed. They bowed down and worshipped the Lord.

The ways of God are not known to men. He drew Moses out of water and prepared him to be the leader who will later lead his people out of Egypt. He was brought up by the Pharaoh’s daughter. He had to flee from Egypt for

his life. But he came back as a man blessed by God. He gave him power to perform miracles and gave him support through Aaron. God has a purpose behind the life of each of us. He blesses us and enables us to understand that purpose and live our life successfully.

Verse for Memorization

God said to Moses, "Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground." Exodus 3:5.

(Students are expected to use a separate note book for writing question-answers, other exercises and doing the activities. Good News Bible - Today's English Version [The Bible Society of India] is used for all references in this book).

Questions:

1. Why did Moses flee from Egypt?
2. Where did God appear to Moses for the first time?
3. Write the signs given by God to Moses so that his people will believe him.
4. What was the task God entrusted upon Moses?
5. Why did God ask Moses to take Aaron with him?

Fill in the blanks

1. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt when Joseph was there.
2. The king of Egypt was known as.....
3. The king of Egypt was afraid of the Hebrews because the Hebrews,and
4. The name Moses was given by

5. Moses stayed in the Egyptian palace foryears and God appeared to him when he wasyears old.

Activities

- List out the songs related to Moses, which are used in the Holy Qurbana and other prayers. Try to sing those songs.
- Give a few examples of famous people, who were chosen by God for big purposes.
- Read the following references and write down the promises which God gave to Moses to strengthen him.
 - Ex.3:12
 - Ex.4:14-15
 - Ex.4:17
- Choose the correct meaning of words given in Group 'A' from Group 'B'.

Group A

- Moses
- Gershom
- Horeb

Group B

- the mountain of God.
- drawn out of water
- I have been an alien residing in a foreign land

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for giving us this day. We are happy that you care for us. We pray for our Sunday School. We pray for.... (pray for each student by name). We pray for our teacher. God, protect us and guide us always. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LESSON - 2**THE ISRAELITES OPPRESSED****(Exodus Ch.5)**

The Israelites had to suffer much under the Pharaoh Ramses-II. They prayed to God for deliverance. God chose Moses and sent him to Pharaoh seeking liberation of the Israelites, out of Egypt. As Moses had difficulty in speaking, God gave Aaron to help him.

The Israelites remembered the words of Jacob on his death bed: “God will be with you, and will bring you again to the land of your fathers” (Gen 48:21). They were anxiously waiting for that day.

Moses goes to King Pharaoh

The condition of Israelites in Egypt was worse than that of slaves. They had to work on mud and straw to make bricks. They worked hard to complete the number of bricks they were asked to make daily. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and requested him to give three days for Israelites to go to the wilderness and celebrate the festival of God. But Pharaoh did not agree. His mind became harder and he ordered the supervisors to make the Israelites work harder.

Israelites used to get the supply of straw regularly for making bricks. Pharaoh ordered that from now on they will not be supplied with straw. He said, “Let them go and collect it; but they should make the same number of bricks as they used to make previously”. Pharaoh wanted them to work all the

time so that they didn't have time to think or pay any attention to the words of Moses.

Pharaoh makes the lives of Israelites miserable

The supervisors started beating the Israelites for not making the required number of bricks. The Israelite leaders went to Pharaoh and complained; but his mind was hard and he drove them back to work. On the way out they met Moses and Aaron and complained that now their suffering has become worse and that it was because of Moses and Aaron.

Moses went and prayed to God. In his prayer, he said that Pharaoh is mistreating his people and God has not done anything against that. There the



Lord said that he will free his people from the slavery of Pharaoh. Lord said “I will bring you to the land that I solemnly promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as your own possession. I am the Lord” (Ex. 6:8). Moses said this to the Israelites; but they were not in a position to believe him because their spirits were broken by cruel slavery.

Then God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh with Aaron and to tell him that the Lord wanted him to release his people. He also said that he would make Pharaoh’s heart hard and He would multiply His signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him the commands of the Lord. Then Aaron threw his staff down and it became a snake. Pharaoh summoned his men and the magicians of Egypt did the same trick. But the snake from Aaron’s staff swallowed all other snakes. Pharaoh’s heart was still hard as Lord had said.

However, the worst times for Pharaoh and Egypt was just round the corner; but Pharaoh did not realize that. He thought he was powerful and he could keep the people of the Lord as slaves for ever! He did not realize that no one can stand in front of the power of God.

We should be careful when our heart becomes hard and we become selfish; when we do not listen to the word of God and make the helpless suffer. King Pharaoh learned this lesson in the hard way; but it was too late and the whole nation suffered along with him.

Verse for memorization:

“I also made my covenant with them, promising to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they had lived as foreigners” Exodus 6:4.

Questions:

1. How did Pharaoh oppress Israelites?
2. What was the miracle performed by Aaron?
3. What assurance did Jacob give to his sons on his deathbed?

Fill in the blanks

1. Israelites had to work onandto make bricks.
2. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and requested him to give three days for Israelites to go to the wilderness and

Who said to whom and when?

“I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession”.

Activities

1. From Gen. 37 and previous lesson, find out the place where the Israelites lived before they came to Egypt and how they happened to live in Egypt.
2. Show the location of Egypt in a world map.
3. Learn the name of the Orthodox Church in present Egypt.
4. Learn the abbreviation of the Old Testament and New Testament books used in the Bible reference system.

Prayer

Our gracious Lord, we praise you for you are merciful. Lord, help us to listen to your words and keep them. Lord, help us so that we don't become a cause of trouble to others. Help us to receive your blessings. In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON - 3

TEN PLAGUES

(Exodus 7-12)

God has his own plan for every individual and society. We should listen to God's message and live accordingly. Some times people behave so foolishly and we find them moving from one failure to another. May be that is the time you need to stop and get back to God earnestly. The Israelites under the leadership of Moses could get back to God; but Pharaoh, the King could not do that.



The Plagues

God sent a warning to Pharaoh through Moses. But Pharaoh never bothered to listen to the demand of God and he did not release Israelites for worshipping God. One after another disasters hit Egypt. The following were the plagues sent by God on Egypt:

- (i) **Blood:** The waters of Egypt turned to blood. Nile became red and it became stinking.
- (ii) **Frogs:** The whole country was filled with frogs. That came from the river and flooded the houses and everywhere in Egypt.
- (iii) **Gnats:** The dust turned to gnats and that filled Egypt on animals and humans alike.
- (iv) **Swarms:** Swarms of flies came to Egypt and the land was ruined.
- (v) **Livestock die:** The Egyptians lost their horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep and goats.
- (vi) **Boils:** Boils came upon Egyptians; humans as well as animals.
- (vii) **Hail:** Hail was rained on the land of Egypt.
- (viii) **Locusts:** Locusts came upon all the land of Egypt and covered the whole land and the land became ruined.
- (ix) **Darkness:** Dense darkness fell all over Egypt for three days.
- (x) **Death of the firstborn:** Every firstborn in the land of Egypt was killed.

Each time the plague hit the country, Pharaoh gave the false promise to Moses that if the plague is removed he will release Israelites from Egypt. Moses prayed to the Lord to remove the plague. But, when the country was relieved from the plague, Pharaoh hardened his heart and never let the people go.

Israelites spared from the tenth plague

The Lord instituted the first Passover to save the Israelites from the tenth plague. Moses passed God's message to the elders of Israelites. They were asked to select sacrificial lambs for Passover and slaughter them. Then they were to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood of the lamb and mark the sides and top of the door frames. Lord passed through all the houses in Egypt and struck down the first born; but He spared those houses where the doors were marked with the blood of sacrificial lamb.

When the tenth plague hit the country, Pharaoh permitted Moses to take his people out of Egypt.

The Lord commanded Israelites to continue the observance of Passover even after reaching the Promised Land, to commemorate their freedom.

When God sent plagues to Egypt, Pharaoh asked his magicians to repeat them using their magic. The magicians could perform only a few plagues. They understood that the God of Israel is the real and powerful God.

We do not know what life has kept in store for us. Listen to God in the midst of disasters, He will hear our cry. Revenge is for God. He will take revenge for your oppressors as he has done on Egyptians and on Pharaoh.

God asked the Israelites to put the sacrificial lamb as a sign of protection. Now, we have a sacrificial lamb to protect and save us: that is Jesus Christ, who shed His blood on the cross.

Verse for memorization:

“You must celebrate this day as a religious festival to remind you of what I, the Lord, have done. Celebrate it for all time to come” Exodus 12: 14.

Questions:

1. What was the tenth plague ?
2. Why was the festival of Passover instituted?
3. Who is the sacrificial lamb for all ?

Fill in the blanks

1. When the magicians could not perform the plagues with their magic, they understood that God of is the and God.
2. Pharaoh permitted Moses to take his people out of Egypt, when thehit the country,

Activities

1. Sing the song "God's love is so wonderful.....".
Encourage all the children to participate.
2. Name some of the natural calamities that had happened recently which took the lives of many people.
3. Ask the children whether they have listened to the Old Testament reading before starting Holy Qurbana. Teach the children that every Sunday there is a reading from one of the first five books of Old Testament. Also tell the students about readings during the Holy Qurbana: from the Acts of Apostles, from the letters written by St.Paul and from the Gospels (*meaning of the word 'Gospel' is 'Good News'*).

Prayer

Loving God, We thank you for keeping us and helping us to overcome all the difficulties in life. God we are your children. Always guide us in your ways. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

LESSON - 4

DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT

(Exodus.12:30-51)

We learned about the miseries the Israelites had to undergo in Egypt. They lived in Egypt for 430 years. When they prayed to God to save them from the miseries and hardships; God chose Moses and sent him to Pharaoh to release his people. Pharaoh did not listen to the word of God and refused to send the people.

*Ex. 13 : 21*

Then God sent plagues one by one upon Egypt. When the tenth plague hit Egypt, the Egyptians lost their first born. Pharaoh and all Egyptians woke up in the night. There was a loud cry in Egypt and there was no house in Egypt without a death. But the houses of the Israelites were spared: God rescued His people from this disaster.

Pharaoh realizes the power of the God of Israelites

Pharaoh realized the power of God, though very late. He called Moses and Aaron in the night and said "Get out, you and your Israelites ! Leave my country; go and worship the Lord, as you asked. Take your sheep, goats, and cattle, and leave. Also pray for a blessing on me." (Ex. 12:31-32).

Israelites leave Egypt

The Israelites left Egypt in the same night in a hurry. That was for the Lord a night of vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. That same night is a vigil to be kept for the Lord, by all the Israelites throughout their generations. (Ex. 12:42).

They were about six hundred thousand men and women and children are not numbered. It was a huge group of mixed crowd of men, women and children and flocks and herds. The people baked bread from the dough before it was leavened and they traveled from Rameses to Succoth.

Observance of festivals

The Israelites came out of slavery from Egypt in the month of Abib. Lord instituted the festival of unleavened bread for this month. Every year, the Israelites observe this festival for seven days and they eat only unleavened bread during that period.

Consecration of the firstborn also was instituted by God as the memory of the deliverance from slavery through the tenth plague. God commanded Israelites that all the first born of the livestock should be set apart for Lord and sacrificed and every firstborn male child should be surrendered to God (Ex 13: 11-16).

By the strength of His hands the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt. Even today the festival of Passover and the festival of unleavened bread remind them of this. Believe in the mighty strength of God and that will give us confidence to face any situation in our life.

Verse for memorization:

The Lord said to Moses: “Dedicate all the first-born males to me, for every first-born male Israelite and every first-born male animal belongs to me.” Exodus 13:1,2.

Questions:

1. Name the month in which the deliverance from Egypt happened?
2. Name the festivals instituted by God for Israelites when they were delivered from Egypt. How did they celebrate those festivals?

Fill in the blanks

1. The festival of Passover is observed during.....
2. Consecration of the firstborn was instituted by God as the memory of from slavery through the tenth plague.
3. The Israelites lived in Egypt for.....years.
4. The Israelites observed the festival of unleavened bread for.....days.

Activities

1. Discuss the festivals of Passover and unleavened bread in our church. Compare it with that of the Passover of Israelites.
2. Match the items in Group 'A' and 'B' and briefly describe each of them. Encourage the students to stand up and say few sentences about the these celebrations.

Group A

- a. Christmas
- b. Easter
- c. Good Friday
- d. St.Thomas day
- e. Pentecost

Group B

1. Resurrection of Jesus
2. Jesus was crucified
3. The day on which the disciples were filled with Holy Spirit.
4. Day on which the relics of St.Thomas were transferred to Edessa.
5. Birth of Jesus

Prayer

(please include special points to be remembered in the prayer.)

Our dear God, you heard the prayers of Israelites in their difficult times. God we know that you guide your people and look after their needs. We thank and praise you for all your blessings upon us. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

LESSON - 5**CROSSING THE RED SEA****(Exodus 14)**

Israelites came out of Egypt and started their journey through the wilderness. This journey was filled with ups and downs, miracles and disasters. When the Israelites approached the Red Sea during their journey, they were again in trouble. They saw their enemies advancing from behind and in front of them was the sea.

Lord guides the Israelites in their journey

When the Israelites started their journey from Egypt, it was God who guided them. The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light. Thus, they could travel by day and by night (Ex. 13:21). During the journey, they camped near the Red Sea.

Now Pharaoh became hard in his heart again. He and his officials felt sad about freeing off the Israelites who were their slaves. Pharaoh called his army and followed the Israelites on six hundred chariots. The Israelites saw them and they saw death approaching. They asked Moses "Weren't there any graves in Egypt? Did you have to bring us out here in the desert to die?" They had forgotten the power of their God; even their great deliverance from the miseries in Egypt. They were so terrified and cried out to the Lord for help.

The Lord answered their prayer. He told Moses what to do, so that the Egyptians are defeated.

Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid! Stand your ground, and you will see what the Lord will do to save you today; you will never see these Egyptians again. The Lord will fight for you, and there is no need for you to do anything." (Ex. 14:13-14). The angel of God moved behind the Israelites and the pillar of cloud also moved behind. The cloud became darker and that blocked the Egyptians from advancing further and reaching the Israelites.

God makes Dry Land in the Sea for the Israelites

Upon God's command, Moses stretched his hand over the sea. A strong east wind came and divided the water and a dry land appeared. The Israelites marched through the dry land in the midst of the sea, with water standing like a



wall on their right and left. The Egyptians followed them into the sea in their chariots. Immediately after the Israelites crossed the sea, Moses once again stretched his hands over the sea and water flowed back in. Water covered Pharaoh's army and not a single one could escape.

The Israelites praises God

The Lord saved the Israelites from the brink of death. They saw the Egyptians lying dead on the sea shore. They praised the power of Lord, they believed in God and his servant Moses.

That day Moses saved all the Israelites because of his faith in God. They became a great nation later. The hand of God was strong and he saved his people from death. The Lord had lifted a young child out of water long back. He made him a great leader and gave him the power to divide the waters. Moses is one of the greatest leaders who lived on earth.

Verse for memorization:

“On that day the Lord saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians.”

Exodus. 14:30.

Questions:

1. How did God guide the Israelites during their journey from Egypt?
2. How did the Israelites crossed the Red Sea?
3. How did the Lord save the Israelites from the Egyptian army that followed them?

Who said to whom and when?

1. “Did you bring us out because there were no graves in Egypt?”
2. “The Lord himself will fight for you; and there is no need for you to do anything”.

Activities

1. Show the Red Sea in an ancient as well as in a new map.
2. Discuss the effect of tides in the sea; Can they create dry patches of land such as seen in this story?
3. Sing any one of the following songs or any other song praising God’s mercy and salvation:
 - (i) I will sing of the mercies of the Lord
 - (ii) Sing to the Lord a mighty song

Prayer

Dear Loving God, help us to read the Bible and understand your messages everyday. Lord help us to lead our lives in the path you show us. In the name our Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

LESSON - 6

JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

(Exodus 15:1-16:3)

The Lord guides the Israelites in the desert

The Israelites started their journey from slavery in Egypt to the land of Canaan, the land that was promised by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This was called the Land flowing with milk and honey. But they did not know



about what was awaiting them during the journey. The wilderness ahead and hurdles in front, till at last they got a life of freedom!

It was a great journey in history: the whole Israel community moved with their entire family, their livestock, animals and other possessions. The Lord led them through the desert towards the Red Sea in the initial part of the journey. The easier way was through the land of the Philistines. But it was possible that they might have to fight with the Philistines and that might discourage them in the initial part of the journey forcing them to go back to Egypt.

The Israelites spoke against Moses and the Lord at every possible instance of a set back in their journey. But Moses knew that the hand of God was with them. These people who had seen the ten plagues on the Egyptians often forgot that God would save them from all the dangers. In every adverse situations, the Israelites could experience the guidance of God.

The Israelites praise God

After crossing the Red Sea the Israelites sang a song of praise for the Lord (Ex. 15:1-18). Prophetess Miriam (Aaron's sister) started singing and dancing along with other women. She led them and sang: "Sing to the Lord, because he has won a glorious victory; he has thrown the horses and their riders into the sea" (Ex. 15:21). Let us examine how the Lord guided His people in difficult situations.

Bitter water turns fresh (sweet)

Moses led the Israelites to the desert. They traveled three days in the desert without finding water. Then they arrived at Marah and found water; but it

was bitter and they started grumbling again. But on Lord's command, Moses put a certain piece of wood into the water and the water became fresh. They continued the journey and came to Elim. There they found 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees- a rare sight in the desert. They camped at Elim. On the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure, they reached Sin, a desert between Elim and Sinai. There was no food and again they started to grumble against Moses and God.

It is interesting to compare our life with the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness. We feel happy when we enjoy the blessings of God. But the moment we see a tough situation, we forget that the hand of God is there too with us. When God guides us we should always pray and rely on Him and need not to have any fear or doubts. We need God's guidance in joyful situations as well as in painful moments. That gives us peace of mind.

Verse for memorization

“Faithful to you promise, you led the people you had rescued; by your strength you guided them to your sacred land” Exodus 15:13.

Questions:

1. What is the name of Aaron's sister?
2. Israelites started their journey from Egypt. Which was their destination? Mention the specialties and importance of that place.
3. Why were the Israelites taken to the Red Sea through the desert that was a longer route?
4. How did Moses turn bitter water into fresh water?
5. Why was Marah known by that name? (Refer Ex.15:23)

Fill in the blanks

1. From Egypt, Lord led the Israelites through the desert towardsin the initial part of the journey.
2. Israelites traveleddays in the desert without finding water. Then they reached at.....and found water.

Activities

1. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees in Elim. We see later that Jesus had used these numbers. Can you say where?
2. Ask if any of the students know how to dance. If yes, encourage the student to make a few steps for a song praising God.
3. Tell the students to write a few sentences about the leadership of Moses.
4. Compare God's works for the Israelites at Marah and during the wedding at Cana (by Jesus Christ).

Prayer

(The exams may be approaching. Pray for the students who are appearing for the examinations. Specially pray for the senior students who appear in Std 10, 12 and competitive examinations).

Dear God, we thank you for your love and care. You saved your people from Egypt and guided them in all their difficulties. Lord, be with us and help us in all the difficulties. This we pray for the glory of the Triune God. Amen.

LESSON-7

HEAVENLY MANNA AND WATER FROM THE ROCK

(Exodus 16:1-17:7)

God loved his people, the Israelites. He loved them in spite of their grumbling. The hand of God was always there with them. Miracle happened one after another. And that made them continue their journey through the desert.

God provides food in the desert

In the previous lesson we learned that the Israelites reached Sin, a desert between Elim and Sinai. There was no food left with them. They complained to Moses and Aaron and grumbled against God. They spoke against God for delivering them from Egypt (Ex.16:3). Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now I am going to make food rain down from the sky for all of you. The people must go out every day and gather enough for that day. In this way I can test them to find out if they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to bring in twice as much as usual and prepare it" (Exodus. 16:4-5).

God promised to give them meat in the evening and bread in the morning (Ex.16:8). In the evening quail came up and covered the camp. Thus the Israelites got their share of meat in the evening. In the morning, dew lay all about the camp, and when the dew evaporated, there on the surface of the desert were fine flakes and this was bread from heaven. The Israelites called this food manna. It was like coriander seed, but white, and it tasted like biscuits made with honey. Moses asked them to gather an omer (*about 3.5 liters*) for each

person. Some gathered more, some gathered less. But when they measured with omer, they found that every one got the same one omer.

However, some people tried to keep it for the next day, disobeying God's command; and they found that it had gone rotten with full of worms. Moses got worried as he saw people disobeying God's instructions.

God's command to observe Sabbath

On the sixth day each of them were allowed to gather two omer of manna. They would not get it on the seventh day, because it was Sabbath, the day of the Lord. Still some of them went to gather Manna on the seventh day, but did not find any. Then Lord said to Moses, "How much longer will you people



refuse to obey my commands ? Remember that I, the Lord, have given you a day of rest, and that is why on the sixth day I will always give you enough food for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day and not leave his home” (Ex. 16:28,29).

God provides water from the rock

From Sin they came to Rephidim. They did not have water there to drink. People grumbled again. Moses prayed earnestly to God. On God’s direction he went to a rock nearby in the presence of the elders of Israelites. He struck the rock with his staff and water came out. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord with us or not?” (Ex. 17:7).

Israelites win a war with Amalekites

At Rediphim, the Amalekites came on war with the Israelites. Moses sent Joshua with selected men to fight the war. Moses climbed a hill nearby with Aaron and Hur. He kept his hands raised and Israelites started winning. They started losing when his hands came down. Aaron and Hur supported his hands so that the hands were up till sunset. Thus the Israelites won the war. Moses also built an altar there, which he called Yahweh-Nissi (the Lord is my banner).

“When God is with me, what can man do against me?” This journey goes on. And we realize the power of God in each step of this journey. For a moment let us look at that infinite power and bow our heads in prayer.

We shall learn the remaining part of the journey of Israelites next year.

Verse for memorization

“The Israelites ate manna for the next forty years, until they reached the land of Canaan, where they settled” Exodus 16:35.

Questions

1. What was the food provided from heaven for the Israelites?
2. What were the instructions given by God along with food?
3. How did the Israelites get water in the desert at Rediphim?
4. How did the Israelites win the war against the Amalekites?
5. What is the importance of Sabbath?

Fill in the blanks

1. Moses produced water from the rock at
2. Moses sentwith selected men to fight the war with Amalekites.

Activities

- (a) Teach the students how they should respect the Lord's day (Sunday).
- (b) Choose matching words or sentences from the bracket for the following sentences.

(Seventh day, Manna, Lord is my banner, Massa and Meribah)

1. This food was provided to Israelites in the desert.
2. Sabbath (Lord's day)
3. Israelites got water from rock at this place.
4. Yahweh - Nissi

- (c) Recollect the important events since the Israelites started their journey from Egypt:
- (i) The Israelites were allowed to go out of Egypt by King Pharaoh after the tenth plague hit Egypt and killed their first born.
 - (ii) God guided the Israelites during their journey.
 - (iii) At the Red Sea Israelites saw that the Pharaoh's army followed them to attack.
 - (iv) Israelites crossed the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army died in the water.
 - (v) At Marah, God turned bitter water into fresh water.
 - (vi) Camp at Elim, an oasis in the desert.
 - (vii) At Sin (the desert), the Israelites grumbled against God for they had no food to eat.
 - (viii) God provided manna and quails.
 - (ix) God provided water from a rock at Rephidim.
 - (x) The Israelites won the war against Amalekites.

Present this in the form of a drama where the teacher takes the students for a walk in the church premises and dramatize the activities at different places. The teacher may plan it in advance. Stickers with names Egypt, Red Sea, Marah, Elim, Sin-the desert and Rephidim written, may be pasted at different places before the Sunday school classes start.

Prayer

Almighty God, our Father, enable us to experience you in all the walks of our life. Help us to be sincere and faithful in our life. Strengthen us with your Holy Spirit to face all difficulties in our lives. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

TEACHINGS OF JESUS

The history of mankind has given many a teachers to the world. Socrates was the greatest teacher of ancient Greece. Confucius was the most learned teacher of China. India had a lot of teachers who wrote the Upanishads and other great books. But none of these could get so many disciples as Jesus. He was the greatest teacher who ever lived on this earth. Unlike the above mentioned teachers Jesus had not undergone any systematic training for teaching. The content of his teaching was also different from the other teachers of the world. Let us see his specialties as a teacher.

Jesus, the Heavenly Teacher

The ability of Jesus to understand the scripture and to teach lessons out of it was visible even when he was a boy. When he was 12 years old his parents took him to the Temple of Jerusalem for a festival. After the celebrations his parents went back along with other people who came on a pilgrimage. But in the evening his parents realized that Jesus was not accompanying them. They were very much disturbed and went back to Jerusalem. What they saw there was surprising: Jesus was sitting in the middle of a group of teachers and he was debating on theological matters with them. Actually the Scribes and the Rabbis were the people who had completed training for teaching the scripture. They were the official teachers of Judaism. Normally the ordinary people did not have any access to their philosophical circles. They were amazed that day to

witness the wisdom of the boy Jesus. He got it from no school or university, but from the heavenly Father.

Pharisees as wrong teachers

Jesus was not happy with the teachers of his day. He found the people of Israel “worried and helpless” (Mt. 9:36). His criticisms about the Pharisees were three:

- (i) they put heavy burdens on the hearers
- (ii) they did not practice what they taught
- (iii) their aim was not the glorification of God’s name

The Pharisees wanted their own glory, wealth and powers. They were like the false prophets whom we find in the Old Testament, who contaminated the Word of God for their personal glory, money and position. The aim of Jesus was nothing but the glorification of the heavenly Father. He wanted to bring ordinary people closer to heaven.

Parables of Jesus

Jesus taught his disciples mainly through stories. He could give them great ideas through common stories. These stories are called the Parables of Jesus. A parable is a story, in which an idea of the Kingdom of God is compared to some thing known in our daily life. Jesus took examples from the world and of all kinds of people to teach the secret of the Kingdom of God. They are the following:

1. Agrarian Parables : Sowing the seeds, pruning of vine, harvest.
2. Fishermen’s stories : Fishing the people, the net which contains all.
3. Shepherds’ world : Door of the sheep, shearing of sheep.

4. Household themes: Father and two sons, Father and children sleeping.
5. Women's world: Salt, lamp, stitching old rags.

Once, the disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables. Jesus answered: "You have been given the secret of the Kingdom of God, But the others, who are on the outside, hear all things by means of parables," (Mk. 4:11). So, one who wants to learn the secrets of the Kingdom of God can get them through the parables of Jesus.

Kingdom of God as the message of Jesus

The central point of the teaching of Jesus was the Kingdom of God. To elaborate the details of the Kingdom of God, Jesus taught many parables. The parables of the Lost Son, the Ten Virgins, the Good Samaritan and of the Workers in the Vineyard teach us different aspects of the Kingdom of God. These were attractive stories which motivated the hearers to keep good values in their life. Some times Jesus used allegories instead of stories. For example, once Jesus said: "I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean and bear more fruit" (Jn. 15:1-2). This leads us to think more about our responsibilities as branches of the vine tree, which is Jesus himself.

Be students of Jesus

Have you ever tried to learn from Jesus? When God asked Solomon to ask for a blessing he sought the wisdom of God. It is the most important thing which we need on this earth. What we learn in schools, colleges and universities may bring us good jobs and money. The information which we get from TV

channels and websites may fascinate us. But unless we get the wisdom of God we can not succeed in our life. The greatest leaders of the world were people who learnt from God. The twelve disciples of Jesus followed him everywhere just to hear from him the secrets of the Kingdom of God. St. Paul also became a disciple of Jesus after his conversion. Let us also try to learn from God.

Verse for memorization

“Devote all your time to studying the Lord’s commands and thinking about them. He will give you the insight and wisdom you are looking for”. (Bara Sirach 6:37).

(Note : The verse for memorization is taken from Bara Sirach; which belongs to the Deutero - Canonical books. You may read more about this in Lesson - 20)

Questions

1. When did Jesus express his ability to teach?
2. What were the mistakes of Scribes and Pharisees?
3. What is meant by a parable?
4. Give five areas from which Jesus took his parables?

Match the words between the two groups below:

Group A

Great teacher of Greece

King Solomon

Most learned teacher of China

The central theme of parables of Jesus

Group B

Kingdom of God

Socrates

Wisdom

Confucius

Choose the correct answer from the bracket and complete the sentences.

- (a) Jesus compared Pharisees with(great leaders, false prophets)
- (b) Jesus' first preaching was at(the Synagogue of Nazareth, Mount Olive)
- (c) We cannot succeed unless we get the.....(Wisdom of God, knowledge from TV)

Activities

1. Explain to children the meaning of the Parable of the Vine (St. John 15).
2. Discuss the ways and means by which the children can learn from Jesus.
3. Ask the students to search and find out the parables of Jesus from the Gospels (as a home assignment; each student may be asked to search from any one of the Gospels.)

Prayer

God, we thank you for your special way of teaching us through the parables of Jesus. Help us to know you better and grow in you. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

LESSON-9**GOD LOVES YOU: A SON LOST AND FOUND****(St.Luke 15:11-32)**

Do you know how much God loves us? God loves us a lot. Jesus tells a story to make us understand this.

The Parable of the lost son

A man had two sons. One day the younger son demanded his share of his father's property. The father gave it to him. After a few days the boy left home with the money. He spent his money lavishly. When all the money was spent, there was a famine. He did not have any money to buy essential items. He had to take up the job of looking after pigs. But there was nothing to eat and he even thought of eating the food given to pigs.

Son repents his actions

When he had nothing to eat and was helpless, he thought about his father's house. He realized that he had become poorer than his father's servants. He repented of his sin and decided to return home and ask his father to employ him as a servant. He got up and went to his father.

Father receives his son with joy

Before the boy reached home, his father saw him. He was filled with compassion for him. He ran down the road and reached his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.



The boy said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son”(Lk. 15:18).

But the father called for a robe of honour and put it on him. He was also given a ring and new sandals to show that he was fully accepted as a son. The father prepared a feast so that everyone could share his joy.

When the elder son came back from the field, he saw the celebration in the house. He became very sad and he complained about celebrating the arrival of his younger brother who wasted his father’s money. The father said to him, “My son, everything I have is yours. But we have to celebrate and be glad,

because your brother was dead and he is alive again; he was lost and now is found.

Loving God the father

We are God's children. God loves us all the time. He loves us even while we are doing wrong. He hates our sinfulness but never stops loving us. He forgives when we truly feel sorry of our sins and return to Him. Whenever we commit sin, God our father becomes sad and He awaits for our repentance. Some people say: "I do not commit sin, then why should I confess sins?" See what the Bible says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us" (I Jn. 1:8). Rom 3:10 and 3: 23 also tell us the same. Confession will lead us to get God's acceptance. Those who do not confess will feel guilty and lack peace of mind which may even cause various diseases. Confession has great effect on the mind and body.

We should not have the attitude of the elder son. If our brothers and friends go in the wrong path we should pray for them and try to correct them. When they become good we should love them without showing any hatred.

Verse for memorization

"I tell you, the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents" St Luke 15:10.

Questions

1. Why did the younger son return to his father?
2. What happened when the son returned to his father?
3. What is the consequence of sin if we don't confess it?
4. Why is confession important in our lives?

True or False

1. We can commit sin since God loves us. (True/False)
2. The attitude of the elder son is correct. (True/False)
3. The father refused to accept the younger son when he returned home. (True/False)
4. God the father and angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner repents and turns to God. (True/False)

Who said to whom and when

1. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son".
2. "My son, everything I have is yours. But we have to celebrate and be glad, because your brother was dead and he is alive again; he was lost and is found".

Activities

1. Briefly narrate the parables of lost sheep (Lk. 15:4-7) and parable of lost coin (Lk. 15: 8-10).
2. Ask the students to share the experiences of great joy in their lives.
3. Discuss the importance of repenting our sins and confessing them. Prepare the students for the same.

Prayer

Loving Lord Jesus, remind us of our sins. Please forgive our sins and accept us as your good children. Amen.

LESSON 10

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR: THE GOOD SAMARITAN

(St.Luke 10: 30-37)

Jesus gave out two basic requirements for men to enter the Kingdom of God: love God, and love your neighbour.

We all have friends and neighbours. Do we help our friends and others when they are in need? Through the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells us how some one can love others and become a good neighbour.



The story of a traveler

Jericho lies about twenty kilometers north-east of Jerusalem. The road between these two cities is isolated and infested with robbers. A man was traveling down this road from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way robbers attacked him, took everything he had, and severely wounded him. They left him in his helpless state alongside the road.

While he was lying there alone, a Jewish priest came that way. He looked at the man, but walked past him on the other side of the road. Then a 'Levite', one of those officials who assisted the priests in the temple, came along. He also did not look at the wounded man.

The Good Samaritan

Then a Samaritan came riding a donkey. When he saw the wounded man he went over to him. He gave him some first-aid, cleaned his injuries with oil and wine and bandaged them. The Samaritan put him on his own donkey, took him to the nearest inn and stayed with him till next day morning. He had to continue his journey then. So he gave the innkeeper some money and told him, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spent".

From this story, Can you say, which of these three was a good neighbour to the wounded man?

Love and help others

Most of the time, our love is restricted to our close friends, family members, relatives, people from our locality and own race. This is not what God expects from us. We should love and help others who are in need-irrespective of their family, status, and place they belong to. Nobody can love God without

loving others. God is looking at us. He sees what we have done and what we have failed to do.

Verse for memorization

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ St. Luke 10:27.

Questions

1. What are the basic requirements for entering into the Kingdom of God?
2. Who helped the wounded man ?
3. Who is a good neighbour?

Fill in the blanks

1. Jericho lies about twenty kilometers northeast of
2. Nobody can love God without

Activities

1. Ask the students to narrate any incident where they got help from others or they gave help to others.
2. Dramatize the parable of Good Samaritan.
3. Locate Jerusalem and Jericho in a map.

4. Match the statements in the following groups. Mark your answers in the table given below.

Group A

1. Levite
2. To enter in the Kingdom of God
3. A city located at 20 kms northeast of Jerusalem
4. Love others

Group B

- a. To love God
- b. Jericho
- c. An official who assisted the priests in the temple
- d. Love God and love others.

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|
| Group A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Group B | | | | |

Prayer

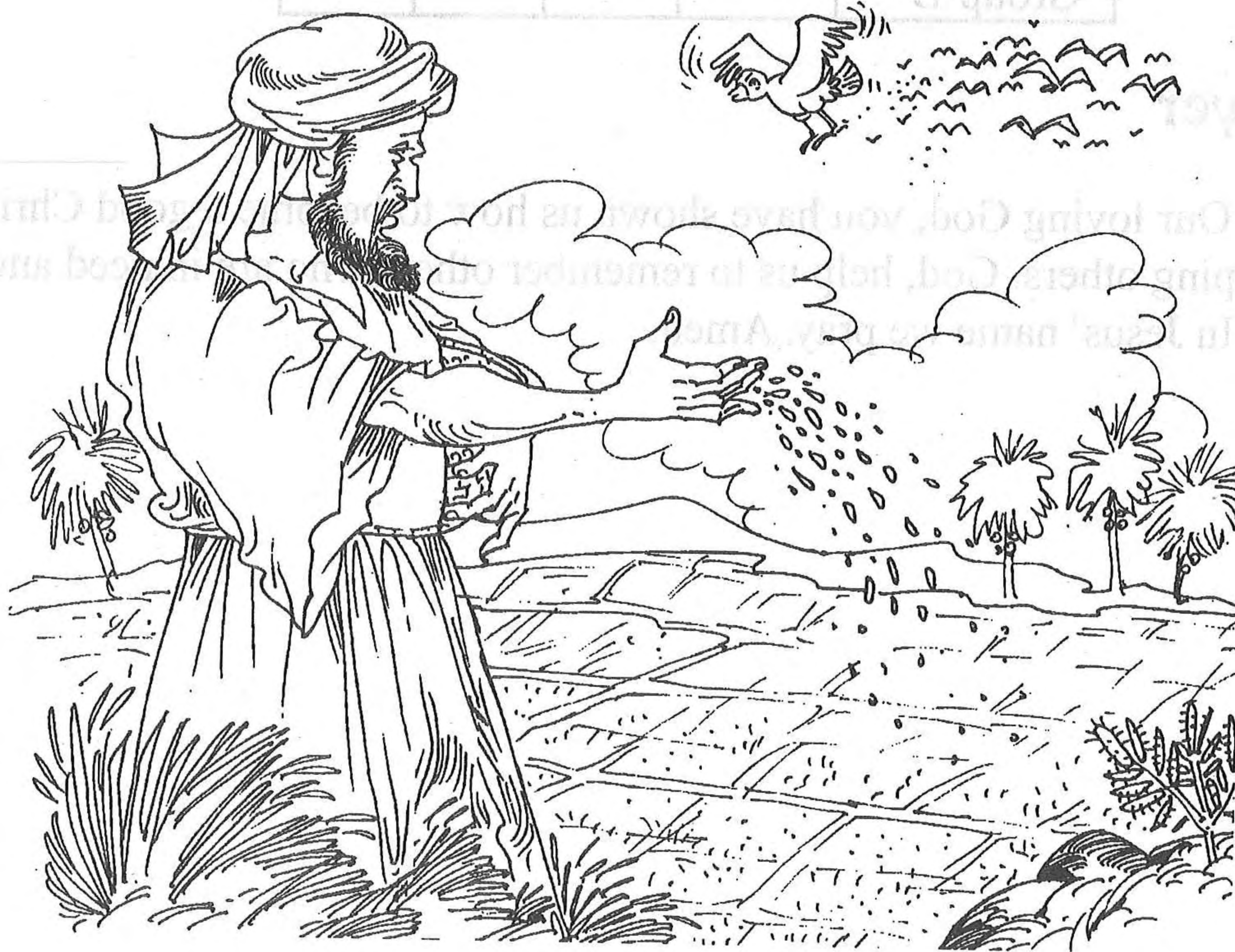
Our loving God, you have shown us how to become a good Christian by helping others. God, help us to remember others who are in need and help them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LESSON-11

HEAR THE WORD OF GOD: THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

(St Mark 4 1-18)

All of us hear the word of God. Our parents, teachers and elders also teach us many good things. How many of us correctly understand and follow these teachings. What is to be done so that the teachings we receive produce good results? Jesus, the great teacher, tells us a parable about this.



Story of the Sower

A farmer went out to sow his seeds. As he was scattering the seeds, it fell at different places:

- (i) Some seeds fell on the path; the birds came and ate it up.
- (ii) Some seeds fell on the rocky places. There was very little soil. But when the sun came up, they withered because they had no root.
- (iii) Some seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked the plants. So they could not bear any grain.
- (iv) Some seeds fell on good soil, and they came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty or even a hundred times.

Meaning of the story

Jesus explained the meaning of the parable to his disciples. He compared the seed with different types of people:

- (i) Some people are like seeds that fell along the path. As soon as they hear the Word, Satan comes and takes away the Word that was sown in them.
- (ii) Some people are like seeds sown on rocky places. They hear the Word with joy. But they cannot face any problems and would give up quickly.
- (iii) Some people are like seeds that fell among thorns. The worries in life and desires for other things in them do not allow the Word to grow and give fruit.
- (iv) Some people are like good soil. They accept the Word and live accordingly; and produce a grand crop.

We should understand that Satan is always working in the world in different forms. Sometimes we are more interested in watching TV than attending a prayer fellowship. Some children give more importance to games than attending worship. If we keep such attitudes, we cannot become good fields for the

Word of God; lessons about God will not grow in us and we cannot become children of God.

God cannot work in us if we do not prepare our hearts to receive Him. We should become like the good field, which has been sowed properly and made ready for the seed to grow well. We should give importance to Christian qualities and also remove bad qualities from us. Then we can grow in the Word of God.

Verse for memorization

“Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here are on earth”
Colossians 3:2.

Questions

1. How can we keep ourselves ready to receive the Word of God?
2. What happened to the seed that fell on good soil?
3. What is the message you understand from the parable?
4. What are the difficulties faced by a Christian in growing in the Word of God ?

Activities

1. Discuss with children the importance of coming to the church before the Holy Qurbana starts. Congratulate those who reached the church on time.
2. Ask the children to give a few examples where Satan tries to divert their minds from God.
3. What happened to the seed in the parable we learned today? While sowing, the seed fell at different places as given in Group X (given below). Choose the matching answer from Group Y. Group Z gives the types of people

whom Jesus compared with seed. Match the statements of Groups X, Y and Z and fill in the table.

| Group X | | Group Y | | Group Z | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|--|---------|--|
| 1. | Some seeds fell on the path. | A | The seed came up, grew and produced good crop. | P | People who hear the Word with joy. But they cannot face any problems and would give up. |
| 2. | Some seeds fell on the rocky places. | B | The thorns grew up and choked the plants. | Q | People who hear the Word. But, Satan comes and takes away the Word. |
| 3. | Some seeds fell among thorns. | C | The birds came and ate them up. | R | People who accept the Word and live accordingly. |
| 4. | Some Seeds fell on the good soil. | D | They grew, but withered when the sun came up. | S | People who receive the Word. But, the worries in life and desires for other things in them do not allow the Word to grow and give fruit. |

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|
| Group X | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Group Y | | | | |
| Group Z | | | | |

Prayer

Our merciful Lord, help us to read and hear the Word of God properly and lead our lives in your path. Help us to produce good works in our lives. Amen.

LESSON-12

BE VIGILANT: THE TEN VIRGINS

(St. Matthew 25: 1-13)

When your teacher announces about an examination but does not give the date, you all study well and prepare for it. The teacher may conduct the exam any time. Similarly, all Christians await the second coming of Jesus Christ. No one knows when Christ will return. To emphasize the need to be vigilant always, Jesus narrates the story of the ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom.

Parable of the ten virgins

This is a story about a wedding. In the times of Jesus, there was a custom of virgins waiting to receive the bridegroom. In the story, ten virgins waited for the bridegroom. Out of them, five were wise and the remaining foolish. All of them had lamps. But the foolish ones did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars, along with their lamps. After long waiting, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

The bridegroom came at midnight, at the most unexpected hour. All the girls woke up and trimmed their lamps. Then the foolish ones realized that they did not have enough oil. They said to the wise, 'Give us some oil; our lamps are going out'. The wise ones said, 'No, there may not be enough oil for both you and us, you go and buy from outside'. When they went out for oil, the bridegroom arrived. The girls who were ready with the lamp went in with him to the wedding banquet and the door was shut. When the others returned with oil and prayed,

‘Lord, Lord open to us’. The bridegroom replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I do not know you’(Mt. 25:11).

The need to be vigilant

When Christ ascended to heaven, the disciples were promised that ‘the same Christ who was taken up into heaven will return’ (Acts 1:11). We do not know anything about how or when He will arrive (2 Pet. 3:10). We should be watchful and prepared to receive him.



The wise girls took enough oil along with their lamps. They went to receive the bridegroom with lighted candles. The foolish were careless. Had they been vigilant, they would have made everything ready to receive the bride.

Here oil stands for faith and good deeds. Just waiting for Jesus Christ is not good enough; we should be vigilant and be prepared to receive him.

Verse for memorization

“Be on your guard, then, because you do not know the day or the hour”
St. Matthew 25:13.

Questions

1. Which are the two groups of people in this parable?
2. Why did the girls with extra oil not lend some oil to the others?
3. What is the message of this parable?

Fill in the blanks

1. In the parable of ten virgins, oil stands for anddeeds.
2. We should be and to receive Jesus.

Who said to whom and when

1. 'No, there may not be enough oil for both you and us, you go and buy from outside'.
2. 'I tell you the truth, I do not know you'.

Activities

1. The teacher may read Lk. 19:1-9 loudly in the class (only once).
Tell the students to listen carefully.
Now ask the students to arrange the following sentences (which are based on the paragraph read) in correct sequence.
 - Zacchaeus climbed on a tree to see Jesus.
 - I will give half of my belongings to the poor and pay back whatever I have cheated.
 - People said Jesus is going to a sinner's house.
 - Jesus said salvation has come to this house today.
 - There was a rich tax collector named Zacchaeus in the city .
 - Jesus asked Zacchaeus to come down because he wanted to visit his house.
 - Jesus went to Jericho.
2. Dramatize the story of the ten virgins.

Prayer

Lord our God, help us to grow in faith, to complete the works you expect us to do and prepare ourselves for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LESSON -13**USE YOUR GIFTS: STORY OF THE TALENTS****(St. Matthew 25: 14 –30)**

Jesus taught very important principles and ideas through simple examples. He told the parable of the talents while teaching about the Kingdom of God. The parable of the talent is very significant. It helps us to succeed in our practical life and also help us to convey the message of God to others in the best possible way we can.

A Master distributes the Talents

Before going on a journey, a master called his servants and distributed responsibilities to them, according to their potential. He gave five talents of money to one servant, two talents to another and one talent to the third. Then he went away.

The servant who got five talents went off and traded with them, and he made five more talents. In the same way, the one who got two talents made two more. But the one who received one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money there.

Master settles the account

After a long time the master returned and came to his servants to settle the account. The man who had received five talents brought the other five also and said, "Master, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more". His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come

and share your master's happiness". The man who utilized his two talents also received the similar appreciation from the master.

Then came the man who received one talent. He said, "Master, I knew you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and hid your talent in the ground". Saying this, he returned his talent to the master. The master became very angry. He called that servant a wicked and worthless man (Mt. 25:26-28). He took the talent from him and put him outside into darkness.

Our duty

Talents represent spiritual gifts and opportunities given to us, taking into account our natural abilities, intellect and background. We all are servants of God. All of us have received some types of talents from God. It can be in the form of wealth, ability to sing, to dance, to speak, to write, to have good character, interest in science, arts and sports, and many things like that.

God expects us to be faithful to Him, by effectively utilizing the talents and trying to improve them for His glory. Then he provides us more. God will return to us to receive his possessions. Not using our talents will be a cause of condemnation.

Note: Talent is a weight used by the Hebrews. The weight of one talent was 3000 shekels (approximately equal to 75 pounds or \$1000).

Verse for memorization

"So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us". Romans 12:6

Questions

1. In the parable of talents, how many talents did the master give to his servants?
2. What did the servants do with the talents?
3. What do you understand from the parable of the talents?

Fill in the blanks

1. Talents represent and..... given to us taking into account our natural abilities, intellect and background.
2. The parable of talents help us to succeed and also help us to to others in the best possible way we can.

Who said to whom

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness”

Activities

1. Ask children to identify their abilities and special skills and how far they utilize them.
2. Give a chance for the students to perform their special skills (sing, act, dance *etc.*)

Prayer

Dear God, help us to find out our hidden talents and use them in the most effective way towards helping others and glorifying your name. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

LESSON-14

BE HUMBLE: THE WASHING OF FEET**(St. John 13: 1-20)**

We have been learning the teachings Jesus in the last lessons. Sometimes Jesus taught lessons through the way of his life itself. The best example for this was the washing of the feet of disciples by Jesus. He did this just to answer a debate among his disciples. The question was: Who was the greatest among them? The Jews used to have a seating arrangement according to their positions in the society and according to their relationship with the host. The one who sat at the right hand side of the chief guest was considered to be the greatest.



Jesus washes the feet of disciples

When the feast of Passover approached, Jesus made arrangements to celebrate the Feast (Lk. 22: 7-13). The disciples prepared the Passover meal in the upper room of Mark. According to Jewish custom, the feet of the guest were to be washed before the feast. The master appoints a slave to do this job and provide water in a vessel and a towel to wipe. That day there was no such slaves to wash the feet and the disciples were thinking: Who would do this mean task? Anyway it was not their duty, they thought.

When all sat to dine Jesus rose from his seat, stripped off His outer garment, and tied a towel round his waist. He took water and began washing the feet of the disciples and wiping them with the towel. But Peter was not comfortable with this unusual thing. When Jesus came near Peter, he said, "You shall never wash my feet" to which Jesus answered "If I do not wash your feet, you will no longer be my disciple". After washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus said "I, your Lord and Teacher, just washed your feet. You then should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you" (Jn. 13:14-15).

Greatness through service: a Leadership quality

Through the above example Jesus wanted to teach his disciples how humble a person could become. Man is the crown of God's creation. Humility is one of the noblest qualities that all of us should possess. Jesus Christ has shown us the way to love others. We all should have the attitude of Jesus Christ. The whole life of Jesus was an example for humility. He chose a humble place for his birth in this world.

St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Philippians how marvelous this example of Jesus was: “He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant.. . . God raised Him to the highest place and gave him the name that is greater than any other name” (Phil. 2:6-9).

The obedience and humbleness of Jesus should be the model for us. The teaching of Jesus was always that: “if one of you want to be great, he must be the servant of the rest, and if one of you wants to be first, he must be your slave” (Mt. 20:26-27). Service can be sincerely practiced only out of God’s love. However, in the present world of selfishness and luxury it is very difficult for many people to understand that greatness can be achieved by service. Leaders influence others with their special qualities. But for the followers of Christ, it is His love and service that has influenced the most. We learn this from the story of Mother Teresa. Sister Agnes (which was her former name) was born in Albania. She came to India and served in the streets of Kolkota. People called her ‘the mother of the poor’. Mother Teresa believed that she was doing the work of Jesus Christ. There are many other great men and women who were influenced by the humble life of Jesus.

Verse for memorization

“For the Son of Man did not come to be served; He came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people” St. Mark 10:45.

Questions

1. How did Jesus put his teachings into practice?
2. Where did Jesus and His disciples assemble for the Passover feast?
3. What did Jesus say about those who wanted to be the first?
4. Who is known as “mother of the poor”?

Select suitable answer from the bracket and complete the sentences.

(Obedience and humbleness, servant, God’s love, Humbleness, creation, great, by serving the poor)

1.is one of the noblest qualities that all of us should practice.
2. We can do the work of Jesus.....
3. Service can be sincerely practiced only out of
4. Theof Jesus should be the model for us.
5. Man is the crown of God’s
6. If one of you want to be....., he must be theof the rest.

Activities

1. Arrange a visit to a nearby destitute home or a charity institute of similar nature. Discuss how you can help them (by bringing your old good cloths, by giving them some food etc..). Such a visit may be planned involving all the students in the Sunday School unit.
2. Discuss how you can practice humbleness in life. List out some occasions.

3. Identify certain good qualities which you expect from a good leader. Ask the students that they should cultivate these qualities to become a good leader.
4. Strike out the odd word from following lists
 - (a) Peter, Paul, John, Thomas
 - (b) Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Leviticus, Numbers
 - (c) Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost
 - (d) Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Revelation, Malachi
 - (e) The Acts, Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, Philipians
 - (f) John, Philemon, Mark, Mathew, Luke

Prayer

Our Loving Lord Jesus Christ, you came to this world to serve others. You taught us to serve others as you did. Lord help us to lead a humble life and serve others and thus glorify your name. Amen.

Whenever you give
something to others,
give it with a smiling face

CHRISTIANS AND RULERS: PERSECUTIONS OF CHRISTIANS

(Read St. Matthew 24:9-14)

We hear in newspapers and other media about violence against Christians in some places. In the history of Christianity, we learn that Christians had faced difficulties from those who did not accept Jesus as God. Jesus had foretold the disciples that his followers would be persecuted very soon (Mt. 24:9).

Persecution from Jews

The early church initially faced opposition from the Jews. St. Stephen was accused of speaking against Jews and the Jews stoned him to death (Acts 7:54-59). St. Stephen was the first martyr (*a person who dies for the faith*) of the Christian Church. Persecution by Jews increased after Stephen's death; to escape this many followers fled to distant places. They spread the gospel to many Jews and gentiles and converted them to Christianity.

Persecution by Roman Emperors

The Roman emperors started persecution in the year A.D 60, which lasted till the time of Emperor Constantine in A.D 311. The persecution was started by an emperor called Nero. A great fire devastated Rome in A.D.64. It is said that Nero himself had set the fire. But he fixed the responsibility of the fire on the Christians. Nero started the persecution and killed many believers. It was during this persecution that St. Paul was killed by a sword and St. Peter was crucified. Their martyrdom is observed in the church on June 29. Another Emperor called Trajan continued the persecutions in the first century.



The persecution was severe during the reign of other Roman kings too. Some of them were Domitian, Septimus Severus, Decius, Valerius and Diocletion who ruled in the second and third centuries. Their intention was to annihilate Christians at any cost.

Main Reasons for Persecutions

The Romans viewed the Christians with suspicion, and they feared the growth of Christianity. The main reasons for the persecutions were as follows:

- (i) Romans had temples and they worshipped idols. Christians did not have any idols. So they were considered as godless people. Moreover, Christians refused to worship Roman emperors. The emperors thus turned against the Christians.
- (ii) As the number of churches was less, Christians met in houses for prayer and worship. These were interpreted as secret meetings against the state.

The Romans did not like the fast growth of Christianity and they considered it as a threat to them.

- (iii) The early Christians refused to join the Roman army. So they were termed as non-patriotic.
- (iv) The words of the Lord, “this is my body, this is my blood” were said in the Holy Eucharist by the Christians. Some people overheard it and accused Christians of being cannibals.

Impact of the persecutions

The persecutions helped in the growth of our church. The impact of the persecutions can be summarised as follows:

- (i) The persecutions helped the Christians to confirm their faith and spread Christianity in the entire inhabited world.
- (ii) It improved the unity among Christians.
- (iii) A lot of literature based on Christianity was published during this period. This helped others to understand the actual Christian faith and eliminate all their doubts about Christianity.
- (iv) The strong faith of the Christians even up to the extent of facing death in the name of Christ without any hesitation was greatly admired. This improved the status of Christians among others.

The persecutions were aimed at eliminating Christianity. But with each persecution the church had grown in strength and faith. The firm faith and unwavering hope in the life after death of the martyrs had greatly inspired and encouraged members of the church.

Verse for memorization

“If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.” Romans 14: 8

Questions

1. What was the reason for the persecution of Christians by Roman emperors?
2. What was the impact of persecutions on Christians?
3. Give few names of Roman emperors who persecuted Christians.

Fill in the blanks

1. We observe June 29 as the memorial ofand.....
2. The became the greatest inspiration for the whole Christian community.
3. The first martyr of the early church was.....

Activities

The teacher should bring a church calendar and show the pictures of the Bishops to them. Learn the names of the Metropolitans in connection with their dioceses (especially the name of the diocesan Metropolitan to which your Sunday School belong to). Study also the names of those serving important ministries in the church

Prayer

Lord we remember those martyrs who gave their lives in your name. Lord, help us to grow in your faith. We pray for those who face difficulties in your name in different parts of the world. Strengthen our faith so that we shall boldly face the trials and tribulations which come in the path of our faith. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

CHRISTIANS AND RULERS; PERSIAN IMMIGRATION

St. Thomas the disciple of Jesus Christ came to India in A.D 52 and preached the gospel of God. The people who became believers of Christ by the work of St.Thomas came to be known as St.Thomas Christians. The St.Thomas Christians in south India (Malankara) had their own typical way of life and practices. They remained as an autonomous community under the leadership of Archdeacons who had the title 'the Arch deacons of the whole of India'. The Christians had a very cordial relationship with people of other religions.

The Persian Church

The Persian church founded by St.Thomas was one of the important churches, which had grown as an independent church outside the Roman Empire. The church in Persia is known in history by different names such as East Syrian Church, Babylonian Church etc.

In the early centuries, there existed good trade relations between India and Persia (area consisting of parts of present Iran and Iraq). Persians came to the south Indian coast with a variety of items and returned with cosmetics and other valuable items from there. Let us see how the Persian Christians established relations with the Indian church.

First migration of Persian Christians

In the previous chapter we learned about the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire by their rulers. In a similar way, the Christians in the Persian church also faced severe persecution. Around the year AD 345, a group of around 400 Persian Christians comprising of women and men (including priests) came to India under the leadership of a merchant called Thomas of Cana (Knaï Thoma). Scholars believe that they left Persia to escape the terrible persecution of King Saphore-II (A.D 309-379). The Persian immigrants came to Kodungallur in Kerala and settled down there with the permission of King Cheraman Perumal. The native Christians welcomed the Persian Christians and provided all help and support for their settlement.

The Persian connection of Indian Church

The Persian immigrant Christians had helped the Indian church (St. Thomas Christians) to come into close contact with the Persian church. Later Persian Bishops began to visit the Indian church.. The liturgical language of the Persian church was Syriac. The close interaction of St. Thomas Christians with the Persian churches gradually resulted in the accepting of some of the East Syrian liturgical forms of worship in the Indian church. Later the St. Thomas Christians came to be known as Syrian Christians.

The Persian immigrants tried to avoid close contacts with the native St. Thomas Christians as they wanted to remain as a separate community among the Christians of Kerala. They tried to avoid even inter-marriage with people outside their community because they wanted to keep their racial purity.

Second Migration of Persian Christians

In A.D.823 a group of Persian Christians came to Kollam under the leadership of merchant Sabrison. There were two Bishops in the group namely

Mar Sapor and Mar Aphrod. At that time King of Kollam was Sthanu Ravigupthan. He and the native Christians welcomed the Christian group. They were provided with all facilities for settlement. Both the Bishops were very pious and they performed many miracles. People considered the two Bishops as saints. After their death, churches were built in their names in areas around Kollam and Kayamkulam. This group of Persian Christians mingled with the local Christians and they were assimilated into the Malankara church. These Persian Christians have significantly contributed towards the growth of the Malankara church.

The relationship between Indian and Persian churches continued till the arrival of the Portuguese in to the Indian region.

Verse for Memorization

‘Respect your father and your mother’ and ‘love your neighbour as you love yourself’ St. Matthew 19: 19

Questions

1. How did St. Thomas Christians come to be known as Syrian Christians?
2. Give a short account of the migration of Persian Christians to India.

Fill in the blanks

1. The head of the St. Thomas Christians in the early centuries was known as.....
2.was the leader of the Persian Christians who migrated to India in A.D.345.
3. The title of the supreme head of Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church is
4. The Bishops who came to Kollam from Persia in the year A.D 823 were.....and

Activities

1. Study the maps of ancient and present Persia and locate the sea route of merchants from Persia to South India through the Arabian Sea.
2. Discuss certain traditions which are followed by the Malankara (St. Thomas) Christians. For eg. Margamkali pattu, rituals connected with the marriage ceremony, special attractions of festivals (perunal) in the churches etc. Ask the students to observe them carefully when they attend any such functions.

Prayer

Lord help us to stay in harmony with the society. Lord help us to work for the good of the society and the growth of our church. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHRISTIANS AND RULERS: SPECIAL RIGHTS TO KERALA CHRISTIANS (COPPER PLATES)

We often hear about awards and citations like '*Padmabhushan*', '*Arjuna award*' etc. given to persons and groups recognizing their contributions in various fields. Such awards are given only to deserving people.

The early Christian community in Kerala enjoyed a respectable social standing. The Archdeacons (heads of the church) acted as the religious, social and political leaders of the community. The Christians were very loyal to the local rulers. The local rulers had very high appreciation about the loyalty of the Christians and Christians could enjoy a high social status similar to that of their high caste Hindu brothers.

Special Rights to Christians

The St. Thomas Christians had certain privileges, which were granted to them by the local rulers. In this lesson we learn about three copper plates (*Cheppedu*) on which special rights and privileges were inscribed and awarded to St. Thomas Christians by the kings of the then Chera dynasty.

(i) The Copper Plate granted to Thomas of Cana

In the previous lesson, we learned about the arrival of Persian Christians in Kerala. King Kochera Perumal, the then ruler of the Chera country (a part of Kerala) issued a copper plate to the group of Christians. Thomas of Cana, the merchant leader of the group was privileged to receive this. They were given tax

free lands, a town namely *Mahadeva* as a gift and many other privileges of social status. All these were inscribed in the copper plate.



(ii) **Copper Plates issued to Kollam Tharissa Church**

King Sthanu Ravivarma had issued two sets of copper plates to the Orthodox Church at Kollam in the year A.D.849. The word Tharissa (Thrissa in East Syriac) means Orthodox. The first set consisted of three plates and the second set had four plates. Through these copper plate grants the king of Venad permitted the Christians to enjoy seventy two privileges. The church in Kollam was built in the ninth century. The copper plates reveal the special social status enjoyed by the Christians at Kollam.

(iii) Copper Plate to Iravikorthan

This copper plate is a document which records the rights and privileges granted to a Christian merchant called Iravikorthan by Emperor VeeraRaghava. Iravikorthan was a leading business man in the capital city of Mahodaya (Thiruvanchikulam). By the copper plate grant, Iravikorthan was recognised by the Emperor as the leader of a merchant guild called manigramam. It is assumed that the grant was made in 13th or 14th century.

Significance of Copper plates

The copper plates are very important in the history of the Christians in Kerala. They prove the status of our forefathers in the society and speak of their significant contributions to the society in the past.

Note: The copperplate grants are presently kept at the Headquarters of Indian Orthodox Church at Devalokam, Kottayam and at Headquarters of Marthoma Church at Thiruvalla.

Verse for Memorization

“But you are the chosen race, the King’s priests, the holy nation, God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light” 1 Peter 2:9

Questions

1. Which are the copper plate grants received by Syrian Christians?
2. What is the significance of copper plate grants in the history of our church?

Fill in the blanks

1. Thechurch at.....have got copper plate grants from King Sthanu Ravivarma
2. King Kochera Perumal gave the town named.....to the Christians through the copper plate grant given to the merchant leader.....
3. The copperplate grants prove the of our forefathers in the society and speak of their to the society in the past.

Activities

1. Discuss the awards/prizes that students get in their schools.
2. Check the awareness of students on some of the awards given to people by the nation (eg. Padmabhooshan, Padmashree, Njana peeda, Arjuna etc..). List out a few of them and discuss. Also discuss the awards given by our church to its members for their distinguished service in different fields.

Prayer

Our Lord Jesus Christ, help us to grow as good children and become good citizens so that we will be able to do valuable things to our church, society and nation. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen

WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

Modern people give much emphasis to science. For almost everything, they seek laboratory proofs. They may perhaps ask: Can you prove that there is a God? The answer of a saint would be the following: No one can prove or disprove the existence of God. But through many centuries people believe in God. This can be explained in the following manner.

Creation reveals God's existence

Many of you go for excursions every year. You might have watched the sun rise and sun set and you might have gone to see a mountain or an ocean. But have you ever spent some time alone to think about the origin of those things? Simple things like a watch or a dictionary do not come into existence by chance. If an intellectual planning is necessary for them, how much more such planning is there behind this complex and beautiful universe! Mutual support of plants and other beings on this earth, order in the movement of planets and that of galaxies all seem to refer to an intelligent designer whom we call God.

Everything in this world has a cause

Each and everything that we see today has a cause behind it. For example a seed is the cause of a plant and the cause of that seed is another plant, which produced it. If we trace the causes back and back, we may come to a stage where there will be no more any earthly cause. Thus we come to the conclusion

that the original plant or seed or in case of human beings the original ancestral parents came in to existence through the initiative of a superpower whom we call God. So God is called the uncaused cause of everything. Some scientists believe that this world originated with an explosion and is expanding from that moment onwards. Even this 'big bang theory' does not give an explanation for the origin of those elements or gases with which that explosion took place.

We are oriented to experience the Supreme Power

People who lived in all ages and all places used to be sensitive to the presence of God. The only difference was in their way of explaining this and the manner in which they worshipped God. This points to the fact that there is an innate orientation in human creation to search for God. This can be compared to the orientation of a new born child of a human being or an animal to come to and suck the breast of its mother.

Jesus Christ is the proof for the existence of God

The greatest proof for the existence of God is Jesus Christ. He was born before 2000 years to show that God exists and that God loves humanity. Jesus Christ revealed God through his words and activities. Though he died through crucifixion, he was raised from the dead by divine power. The early Christian community, particularly the disciples, experienced and witnessed that resurrection. Christ's resurrection is the greatest reference to God's existence, and to His call to believe in Him.

People believe in God not because somebody else proves beyond doubt that God exists. Their faith in God is based on certain experiences in life. God will exist even when certain theories of science will be disproved. A good example of this will be the latest theory regarding Pluto. For seventy years people believed that Pluto was a planet. But today scientists say it is no more a planet. Faith is

generated in us when God reveals himself in one way or another. God is communicating to us through the church, the Bible, nature, experiences in our life, or through the people who believe in him. So faith is basically our trust in God as a response to His self-revelation.

Verse for memorization

“How clearly the sky reveals God’s glory ! How plainly it shows what He has done!” (Psalms 19: 1).

Questions

1. How God communicate with us in our daily life?
2. Write the important event the life of Jesus Christ which is the greatest reference to God’s existence.

Choose the correct answer and fill in the blanks

1. Jesus Christ revealed God
(using media, by quoting others, through his words and activities)
2. is basically our trust in God as a response to His
(self-revelation, crucification, faith, love)
3. We should live inand obey theof God.
(life, faith, knowledge, commandments, believe)

Activities

Quiz time.

Ask the following questions to the students. If they do not know the answer tell them to refer the Bible or read the references given in bracket.

- (a) Who is the mediator between God and humankind? (2 Tim. 2:5)
- (b) Name the last book of Old Testament.
- (c) The first married couple given in Bible (Gen. 3:6)
- (d) The parents of John the Baptist (Lk 1:5)
- (e) Where did Noah's ark come to rest? (Gen.8:4)
- (g) Who is known as the father of the faithful?
- (h) The mountain where from Jesus ascended into heaven (Mt. 28:19)
- (i) Who is the Apostle of India?

(The Teacher may add more simple questions from the lessons already covered in previous classes)

Prayer

Lord God, we believe in you. We believe that you came to this world to save us from our sins. Help us to have faith in you always. God help us to live a new life in you. Amen.

GOD LOVES THIS WORLD



See how beautiful this world is! God has created stars, the seas, mountains, valleys, etc. Do you love this world? Most of the people are afraid of death, because they want to live more on this planet. To be away from this earth and from our parents, relatives and friends for ever may be a painful experience. But at the same time we know that life in this universe is also a difficult thing. The news channels bring us news about earth quakes, floods and hurricanes. They make us conscious about the pain of people who live in the areas of war, famine and other human tragedies. Dangerous diseases like HIV/AIDS or cancer may create fear in us. So to conclude, both life and death are fearful experiences. Why is this so? Is there not a God, who knows all these things?

God has a plan about the world

We have already learned that God created this world. He has a definite plan about the universe, which he designed with his own fingers. Even the Scientific inventions are parts of God's plan. We may not understand all his plans and ways most of the time. Some times human beings try to do things according to their logic. But it often ends in utter failure.



The best example for this is what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. They did what was forbidden for them; they ate the fruit of the *Tree of Knowledge*. As a result they deserved death. They put themselves away from God. Immediately God thought of a greater danger. There was a second tree in the Garden of Eden called the *Tree of Life*. If Adam and Eve ate the fruit of this tree too, then they would receive eternal damnation. Therefore God sent them away from the Garden (Gen. 3: 23).

Such things happen in our lives too. Sufferings in our life does not mean that God has forsaken us. Rather God trains us through failures and sufferings. This is like what we experience at home. Our parents put a lot of rules and regulations. All these are for our good. Sometimes we may not understand this and we consider certain things as punishment. But they will help us eventually.

God is merciful towards human beings

We learned the story of the Israelites. They had much sufferings in Egypt. They had to lead the life of slaves. They were considered as foreigners and were oppressed by the rulers of the land. The Israelites thought God had forsaken them. But we



have seen how they were freed from bondage. God chose a man called Moses to be His instrument. Moses bargained with the Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt and God performed a number of miracles just to warn the people of that country. At last, the Israelites were made free. God accompanied them till they reached the Land of Canaan.

We can read another example of God's love in the book of Prophet Jonah. He came to the land of Nineveh and preached the Word of God. Jonah told them that God would punish them. Hearing this, the people of Nineveh repented. God had compassion for the people, and he decided not to punish them (Jon. 3,4).

Jesus Christ revealed the love of God

God's love towards the world is best revealed in the birth of Jesus. St. John says in his Gospel: "For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die, but have eternal life" (3:16). The birth of Jesus shows God's mercy and care for human beings, even though they turned away from him by committing sins. Jesus lived with the poor, the sick and those who were not loved by the world. Even the sinners were loved by Jesus. He loves all of us, individually. He knows us personally.

When we are asked of people who love us, we think of our parents and friends. But Jesus loves us more than them. Jesus knows our names and he knows our talents. He knows when we are sick and when we are ridiculed by others. Even when we fail in examinations, Jesus is with us. He is the one who wept along with Martha and Mary of Bethany when their brother Lazarus died. (Jn. 11:35)

We are asked to respond to God's Love

God expects from us two things as response to His love towards us.

They are the following:

We should love God from our heart: We should be grateful for his love and care. We should not put our trust in anybody else other than God. He can do miracles which your parents can not do. He will be with you when your friends leave you alone. He will be at the side of your bed when you lie down with pain or sickness. Those who love God pray to him and obey His commandments. They will read the Bible regularly and they will go to Church on Sundays. When they are sad they will seek God's companionship.

Secondly, we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Some people think that to love God is to hate people who don't understand the love of God or who don't pray in the way in which we do. This is wrong as per the teaching of Jesus. Those who love Jesus will not hate other people. He is the God who prayed for those who crucified him. His prayer was the following: "Lord, be merciful to them for they do not understand what they are doing". We also should have the same attitude.

Verse for memorization

"God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with him" (1 John 4:16).

Questions

1. Why did God send Adam and Eve away from the Garden of Eden?
2. How can you know that God loves this world?
3. Why did Jesus come to this world?
4. What are the two responses of the people who are loved by God?

Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The two trees of the Garden of Eden were..... and
- (b) Moses was an of God when He saved Israelites.
- (c) Even theare loved by God.
- (d) Those who love God will not..... other people.
- (e) Jesus prayed: "Lord be merciful to these who.....
.....what they are doing".

Activities

1. Tell the children a story of a devoted man or woman who loved God in spite of serious illness or failures in life.
2. Bring an example of hate towards people of other religions from the latest news and ask the children not to follow such examples.
3. Do you remember God's creations of each day? (Gen 1.1-27)

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Creations</u> |
|------------|------------------|
| Day 1 | |
| Day 2 | |
| Day 3 | |
| Day 4 | |
| Day 5 | |
| Day 6 | |

Prayer

Dear loving God, You created us and are taking care of us. Lord we thank you for your love and care. Lord, help us to reflect your love in our life; in all our activities and attitude towards others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LESSON -20**PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES****The Bible contains the Word of God**

We read the Bible at home everyday. Bible has the Word of God. It is one of the oldest books in the world. The Bible is almost two thousand years old. The Bible has two parts: The first part is called the Old Testament and the second part is called the New Testament.

Between these two there are seven other books, which are known as Deutero-Canonical books. These books are not included in the Bible produced by the Protestant Churches. However, the Orthodox and Catholic Churches accept them in the Old Testament part and hence their Old Testament has got 46 books. The Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the New Testament.

The Bible is in a sense the book of the Lord. It contains the voice of God in human language. It is written by people who were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God (2 Tim 3:16,17). Despite various attempts to destroy the Bible, it still remains as the most popular book in the world. The popularity of Bible shows the important place it occupies in the society and in personal lives.

The Bible explains God's creation of this wonderful world. His intention behind the creation of human beings and what God desires us to do are explained in various books of the Bible. It covers all the phases of human existence. It gives the account of God's work among the people.

Bible in our Lives

We use several portions of the Bible in the Holy Qurbana, other sacraments and in various prayers in our worship. In our worship we begin the prayer with the 'Kauma'. The words in it, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory, hosanna in the highest", are taken from Isaiah 6:3. The song *Ninnal Sthuthiyodu rajamakal...* (See the royal daughter stand...) refers to Psalm 45: 9-10. Similarly all the songs and prayers we use during our worship have got a Biblical basis.



Some books of the Bible were written as back as four thousand years. But still their contents are relevant for us. The language of the Bible may be old but it does not contradict the basic facts of the universe. The Bible is even more important in our personal lives. The importance of the Bible lies in the way we use it. We should have the following practices:

- (i) Consider the Bible as the foundation of the Christian faith. The Bible is God's Word and our faith is built upon it.
- (ii) Read the Bible regularly. We should read and study the Bible meditatively as God is talking to us through it. The time we spend reading the Bible is the time spent with God.
- (iii) We should manage our lives according to God's Word. We should understand God's message and practice it. Reading the Bible without practising it does not give any progress in our spiritual life. There is much to learn and practice from the stories, parables and life histories given in the Bible.

- (iv) We should rejoice in God and praise His name always. We should try to share with others the happiness of being a child of God.

Reading the Bible Regularly

The Bible has changed the lives of many people. It provides hope and assurance for eternal life. It brings comfort in difficult situations. Reading the Bible regularly is very important in our Christian life. It helps us to know God, to grow in faith, to change our life and way of thinking, to attain more wisdom and to get equipped to serve God.

We see the power of God in the Bible. We should believe that what he has done for others, He can do in our lives also.

Verse for memorization

“Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path”. Psalm 119:105.

Questions

1. How should we make use of the Bible in our personal lives?
2. Reading the Bible regularly helps us a lot. How?

Activities

1. Ask the students whether all of them have personal copies of the Bible.
2. Recite a Bible Pledge in the Class like the slogans of OVBS.
 - Love The Bible
 - Read The Bible
 - Meditate on The Bible
3. Complete the following crosswords with the names or authors of books in the Bible. The number of letters in each word is given in brackets.

Across

1. This gospel was written first (4).
3. The Bible is called theof God (4).
4. This book contains the songs of David (6)
5. He wrote most of the letters in the New Testament (4)
8. Author of the fourth gospel (4)

Down

1. Author of the first five books in the OT (5)
2. He led the Israelites after Moses (6)
6. This book gives the works of the apostles (4)
7. This gospel contains the song of St.Mary (4)
8. God allowed Satan to test this man (3)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
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| | | | 5 | 6 | | 7 |
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Prayer

God we thank you for the Bible. Help us to understand it, use it daily and practice its teachings throughout our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LESSON-21**HOW TO PRAY?****What is prayer**

Everyday we pray to our Almighty Father. We pray at home, at church and at places we visit daily. Let us learn more about prayer today.

What is prayer? Prayer is our conversation with God. Prayer is the basic requirement of spiritual growth. We need food, water and air to live and grow physically. Similarly we get power through our prayers. Nobody can lead a spiritual life without prayer. Prayer is the time we spend with God. We talk to God and listen from God. We can keep a constant relationship with God through prayers.

Contents of prayer

Prayer is time to submit ourselves to God and seek his grace and protection. Mainly there are three parts for every prayer. They are the following:

a) Praising God: Praise is the highest form of communication with God. We praise God not because He needs it but because we have to understand and accept God's power through praises and thanksgivings. Praise comes as a result of accepting the situation as it is: accepting God as Almighty, accepting that everything runs as per God's plan and accepting the present as God's will for us. Praising involves both gratitude and joy. St. Paul says 'Be joyful always; pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

b) Repenting of our sins:

Repentance is a basic requirement of prayer. We are given a new life through baptism. But in this world we are likely to commit sin and keep ourselves away from God. As children we may do or say many things which are against the will of God. We make our heavenly father unhappy with our wrong intentions and doings. As the father of the prodigal son, God also waits for our return to His love. Prayer is the right time for repenting and confessing our sins.



c) Seeking God's help: We can seek God's help to face the difficulties in our life. As a father who fulfills the requirement of his children, God also knows our requirements and He provides us what we need. Therefore we can also ask God our Father for His help just like the children do at home. However, our prayers should not be self centered. We should pray for others too. We read in James 5:16, "Confess your sins and pray for one another, that you may be healed".

When to pray

We must spend as much time as possible in prayer. On Sundays and many other occasions we assemble in church to praise our Lord and pray to Him. In Psalm 119 we read, "I praise you seven times a day". Therefore our spiritual fathers taught us to pray seven times a day. Normally in our houses we

have to pray twice in a day, ie. in the morning and in the evening. All the members of a family have to sit together, praise God through songs, read the Bible and pray in the beginning and end of a day. In addition to this we should practice to pray before our meals, before undertaking special tasks, while visiting others, while visiting sick people etc. We should be thankful to God for everything and we should leave everything in the hands of God.

How to pray

Regarding public prayer Jesus says 'When two or three people are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them'. In St. Mathew 6:6 we read, "But when you pray, go to your room close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. And your Father who sees what you do in private will reward you". This is Jesus' teaching about private prayer. Therefore we should find some time to stay alone in prayer every day.

You may be sitting when you read the Bible or meditating on God's words. But you have to stand up while praying and using the prayer books. And you have to bow down three times whenever you recite the trisagion (*Holy art thou O God...*) and the Nicene Creed. Regular prayer will enable us to remain in constant relationship with God our Father. In the present world there are many things which tempt us and keep us away from God's presence. A prayerful life is very important for us to remain as God's children.

Verse for memorization

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask in prayer".

St. Matthew 21:22.

Questions

1. What should be the content of a prayer?
2. Which are the occasions of prayer?
3. How should you pray?

Fill in the blanks

1. Prayer is the right time forandour sins.
2. is the highest form of communication with God.
3. We should beto God for everything and we should leave everything in the

Activities

1. Learn by heart the prayers for the following occasions.
 - (a) Prayer before and after eating food
 - (b) Prayer while entering the church
2. Make a list of persons, groups or events you ought to remember in your daily prayers.
3. Ask the students to make prayers of thanks for all types of care and blessings they receive from God

Prayer

(Jesus taught us how to pray. We should thank God for all His gifts in the nature and in your personal and social life. Make simple prayers. The prayers given in the book may be used as a guide. Prayer should be a daily affair and it should be the response from the heart.)

Pray as per the guidance given.

LESSON -22

HYMNS AND PRAYERS

PRAYERS

1. Prayer before going to bed (Karunayulla Daivame...)

O merciful God, the voice of our prayer knocks at your door; grant all the needs of your devotees. We call upon you, O God, to assist us in our weakness; O Good one, hear the voice of our supplication, and grant our petitions in your mercy.

हे करुणाकर प्रभु ! तेरे द्वार पर हमारे विनय का स्वर खटखटाता है ।
तेरे इन उपसर्कों की माँगों को ठुकरा न दे ।
हे प्रभु ! हम निर्बल दास तेरी दुहाई देते हैं । हमारी मदद करे । हे अच्छे प्रभु! विनय
स्वर सुनकर कृपया हमारी माँगे दे दे । आमेन ।

2. Prayer to The Holy Trinity (Shudhamulla Pithave...)

O Holy Father, guard us by your sacred name. O son of God, our Savior, protect us with your victorious cross, O Holy Spirit make us worthy temples of your holy habitation. O Lord, our God forever shelter us under your diving wings at all times, forever. Amen.

हे पवित्र पिता ! तेरे पवित्र नाम के निमित्त हमारी रखवाली करे । हे रक्षक पुत्र तेरी
जय स्लीबा से हमें छिपा ले । हे पवित्रात्मा ! तेरे दिव्य निवास के लिए हमें तेरा मंदिर
बनावे । हे परमेश्वर प्रभु ! हमें तेरी ईशता के पंखों के नीचे हमेशा छिपा रखे, हमें अनुग्रहित
भी करें । आमेन ।

HYMNS**Communion of the Mother of God (Ninnal Sthuthiyodu Rajamakal...)**

See the royal daughter stand,
Halleluiah vu halleluiah,
Glorious queen at - Thy right hand.
Barekmor kuriealaison

Thy father's folk and home leave thou
Halleluiah vu Halleluiah.
The King desires thy-beauty now,
Barekmor kuriealaison

Thou whose praise the church doth sing
Intercession for us bring
Unto Him thine only son
That He may not mercy shun

Peace the bright archangel brought
Hailing Virgin Mary fair
Favoured is Thy blessed lot
Thou the holy Lord shall bear, Barekmor

Like a ship did Mary bear
Glory, laud and honour be
Him the captain and the Lord
God supreme of all the world
Moriyo rahemealain nuva darain

By the cross O Jesus Lord
By thy mother's praying word
Take from us and from our path
Punishments and Thy rods of wrath.

खडी महिमा से राजकुमारी
हाल्लेलूयाह, हाल्लेलूयाह ।
और रानी थी दाहिनी ओर
राजकुमारी ! सुन ले तू,
भूल जा जन और अपना पीहर,
ताकि राजा चाहे तव सुन्दर रूप
बारेकमोर । बारेकमोर ।

भक्तजनों से मानित मरियम,
करना बिनती हम सब के हित,
जिसने तुझ से जन्म लिया,
अपने सुत से कर तू बिनती,
हम सब पर वह कर ले कृपा,
स्तौमन कालोस, कुरियेलाइसोन ।

प्रमुख स्वर्ग दूत ने दी थी,
राजकुमारी को शुभ शांति,
सुनाया उस को यह संदेश
मेरा प्रभु है तेरे संग
तुझ से वह लेगा अवतार
बारेकमोर । बारेकमोर ।

गर्भ में धरा पोत समान,
पालन कर दिया आदर,
है संरक्षक वह पोत-पति,
समग्र सृष्टि का नाथ वही,
करके कृपा प्रभुवर तुम,
करना मदद हमारी तुम,
सुन ले प्रभुवर यीशू हमारे
क्रूस तथा माँ की बिनती से,
हम से दंड हटाना दूर,
हटाना क्रोध की छडी भी दूर ।

LESSON-23

WE INHERIT THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Fathers of the Church

We consider the teachers of the church who interpreted the Christian faith through their life, speeches and writings as the Fathers of the Church. Their acceptance by the early Christian Church, their holiness, and their commitment to the Christian faith till the end of their earthly lives are important to decide their authenticity. We usually categorize them according to the chronological order and also according to the language which they used. According to the first order, we can categorize them into three: 1. Pre Nicene Fathers 2. Conciliar Fathers 3. Post Conciliar Fathers.

The Fathers who lived after the time of the Apostles and before the Council of Nicea (A.D.325) are called Pre Nicene Fathers. Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage and Origen were among the most important fathers of this period. A few of them were closely related to the apostles and they are called "Apostolic Fathers". Almost all of them taught in the context of persecution of Christians under Roman Emperors. Their teachings strengthened the faith of the Christian community and protected it from the heretical teachings within the church.

Conciliar Fathers are those who lived and served during the three ecumenical synods held at Nicea, Constantinople (AD 381) and Ephesus (AD 431). Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom,

Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and Ephrem are the most important fathers of this period. Most of them contributed much to the development of the Nicene Creed, which we use now, and also various doctrines especially that of the Holy Trinity.

Some of the Fathers who served after the period of the Councils are Jerome, Maximums the Confessor, Severius of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh and Gregory Palamas.

Writings of Church Fathers

Many of the Church Fathers have written commentaries for almost all the books of the Bible. They fought against the heresies like Gnosticism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, Adoptionism, Modalism, etc and interpreted true faith of the church in the context of the challenges in their age. There is a consensus among these fathers regarding the fundamentals of the faith. A study of these fathers, known as Patristics or Patrology helps us to grow spiritually and to address various challenges of faith we face today.

Fathers of the Orthodox Church in India

There are many Fathers Orthodox Church. Parumala Baselius Geevarghese Thirumeni and Father of such modern made great church in many fields. detail about them



Parumala
Geevarghese Mar
Gregorios Thirumeni



Vattasseril
Geevarghese
Mar Dionitius
Thirumeni

who belong to the Malankara Thirumeni, Vattasseril Thirumeni, II, Paulose Mar Gregorios V.C.Samuel are some luminaries. They have contributions to our We shall study in later.



Baselius
Geevarghese - II
Thirumeni



Fr. V.C. Samuel

True Fathers of all generations are our guides in spiritual growth and faith formation. They gave beautiful interpretation to the Christian faith and helped the Christian community to overcome various challenges of their times. They continue to help us also to distinguish the truth and fallacies in the understanding of faith and thus to lead an authentic Christian life today.



Paulose Mar Gregorios Thirumeni

Verse for memorization

“God is able to give you more than you need so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause.”
2 Corinthians 9:8.

Questions

1. Whom do we consider as the fathers of our church?
2. How are the church fathers categorized?
3. What are the contributions of the church fathers?
4. Name some of the fathers of Indian Orthodox Church.

Fill in the blanks

1. Patristics is the study of.....
2. Church fathers fought against
3. The three ecumenical synods are.....
and.....

Activities

1. Ask each student to write a paragraph or prepare a brief speech about any one of the following subjects.
 - (a) The Orthodox Church in India (b) The Bible
 - (c) Sunday School (d) Holy Qurbana (e) Prayer

(This time can be utilized to teach the students how to write or make speeches of their own)
2. Unscramble the letters to find the names of the disciples.

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| (i) AHMTSO | (vii) NRDWAE |
| (ii) DJEU | (viii) MSEAJ |
| (iii) TPREE | (ix) ETHATMW |
| (iv) HPIIPL | (x) HONJ |
| (v) INSOM | (xi) EJSMA |
| (vi) TOHMEWLORAB | (xi) EUDJ |

Prayer

Our loving God, we thank You for keeping us in the true faith. Help us to remain in your faith in all the situations in our life. God we pray for India and for those who are serving for the glory of your name at the different places. Protect them and help them in their service. In the name of Triune God, we pray, Amen.

LESSON-24**APOSTOLIC FATHERS**

In the Old Testament we read how God helped the Israelites in their difficulties. God sent prophets and anointed kings for guiding and helping people. In the New Testament we read many letters written by St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John and St. James to different Christian churches on many occasions. Similarly, we find people who were chosen by God to lead His people in the later periods.

In the previous lesson we have learned about fathers of the church in general, In this lesson we are going to learn more about Apostolic fathers.

Who were Apostolic Fathers?

The Christian community was initially spread out over the Roman Empire. The early Christian community in the Roman Empire had faced various difficulties like severe persecution by the rulers, problems of heresies and opposition from the Jewish community. The book of Acts, letters of St. Paul and other writings give a detailed account of such problems.

During and after the time of the Apostles, the problems faced by the Christians became more severe. God raised up some people to continue the work of the apostles and to strengthen and help Christians in their faith. These people, known as apostolic fathers, were the disciples or close associates of

the apostles. Their teachings were based on the authority of apostles. They wrote letters to churches in different places.

Purpose of letters by the Apostolic Fathers

The Christians during those days faced severe opposition from the Jews. It was necessary to show the Christians as a church with its own identity and purpose. The writings of the apostolic fathers helped to improve the identity of the Christian community and spread the faith and belief of Christians among others.

The letters written by the Apostolic Fathers were meant for the Christians in their difficult times. The purpose of these letters were:

- (i) To keep the Christians in true faith during persecutions and to give them necessary guidelines on matters regarding Christian life and faith.
- (ii) To encourage the Christians to grow in the Spirit of God.
- (iii) To prepare them to face sufferings boldly.
- (iv) To resolve problems in certain churches.

Following are known as the Apostolic fathers:

- (i) Mar Clemis of Rome (Clement)
- (ii) Mar Ignatius of Antioch (Ignatius the fiery (nurno))
- (iii) Hermas
- (iv) Polycarpus of Smyrna
- (v) Barnabas
- (vi) Papias of Heiropolis
- (vii) Unknown author of Didache (Didache means teaching of the Apostles)

It is assumed that these letters were written during A.D 70 -140. The church has given much importance to these letters and the early church used

many of these letters during worship along with books of the New Testament. These letters were considered as the continuation of the teachings of the apostles.

Verse for memorization

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith: be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13.)

Questions

1. Who are the Apostolic Fathers?
2. What were the purposes of their letters?
3. Give the names of the Apostolic Fathers.

Fill in the blanks.

1. Mar Ignatius of Antioch is known in the church history as.....
2. Didache means.....

Activity

Sing “Paul, the Blessed Saint.....”. Discuss the meaning of the song on the basis of heresies spread in the early church.

Prayer

(Sunday School Day is approaching. Pray for all the Sunday Schools of our Church and especially for the students, teachers and people holding different portfolios of Outside Kerala Region).

Lord, we thank you for guiding us in Your way through our teachers, parents and church fathers. Teach us also to carry on the duties given to us by you. Amen.

SANCTITY OF OUR MIND AND BODY

If the plain glass in the windows of your house is full of dirt, you will not be able to see the outer world through it. When your mirror is covered with dust and dirt, you cannot see your face clearly. Sanctity and purity in mind and body are important for a proper vision of life and also necessary for a healthy living.

Purity of mind

Just as we use garbage bags in our houses, we need a garbage bin for our mind also. We should remove each and every evil thought from our mind everyday and keep it pure. According to our Lord's teaching, "Blessed are the pure in heart, because they shall see God" (Mt. 5:9). All kinds of actions develop from thoughts. It is said that thought leads to action, action to habit and habit to character and character to destiny. It is extremely important to avoid seeing evil through pictures in T.V and internet because they can pollute our minds and lead us to evil thoughts, actions and habits. Hatred, jealousy, envy, greed, cruelty, telling lies, etc make our minds impure and suppress many good works. Good and useful words and deeds come from a pure mind.

Sanctity of the Body

God has given us not only a mind and soul but also a body. Our actions take place with the help of our body. Evil actions of all kind will pollute our body and mind. Using drugs, alcohol and smoking are totally against the sanctity

of our body. Touching any body part of another person with an evil eye and permitting others to touch our body with the same intention are also against the sanctity of body. Keeping our body healthy and clean through proper washing and exercises is also an important responsibility.



When you find that you have a bad friendship, try to correct your friend and bring him/her to the right path. If it is difficult for you to correct your friend in your limits, it is better to leave the friendship before it spoils you. Wrong friendships are one of the main causes for spoiling our character.

Help of God for the sanctity of mind and body

God is the ultimate source of purity and sanctity. When we are in contact with God through prayers we will be free from impurity of mind and body. When we seek Christ's help by repeating small prayers in our mind, He will help us conquer evil passions and temptations. Those who receive Holy Qurbana with proper preparation find it easy to keep the sanctity of body and mind. Filling our minds with the teachings from the Bible will also be helpful. Above all the Holy Spirit who started residing in us from our baptism helps us to retain the sanctity of mind and body.

Verse for memorization

“Obey the Lord, be humble, and you will get riches, honour, and a long life.” Proverbs 22 : 4

Questions

1. What are the benefits of maintaining the purity of mind and body?
2. How can we use T.V and internet without violating the sanctity of mind?
3. How can we avail the help from God to maintain the sanctity of body and mind?

Fill in the blanks

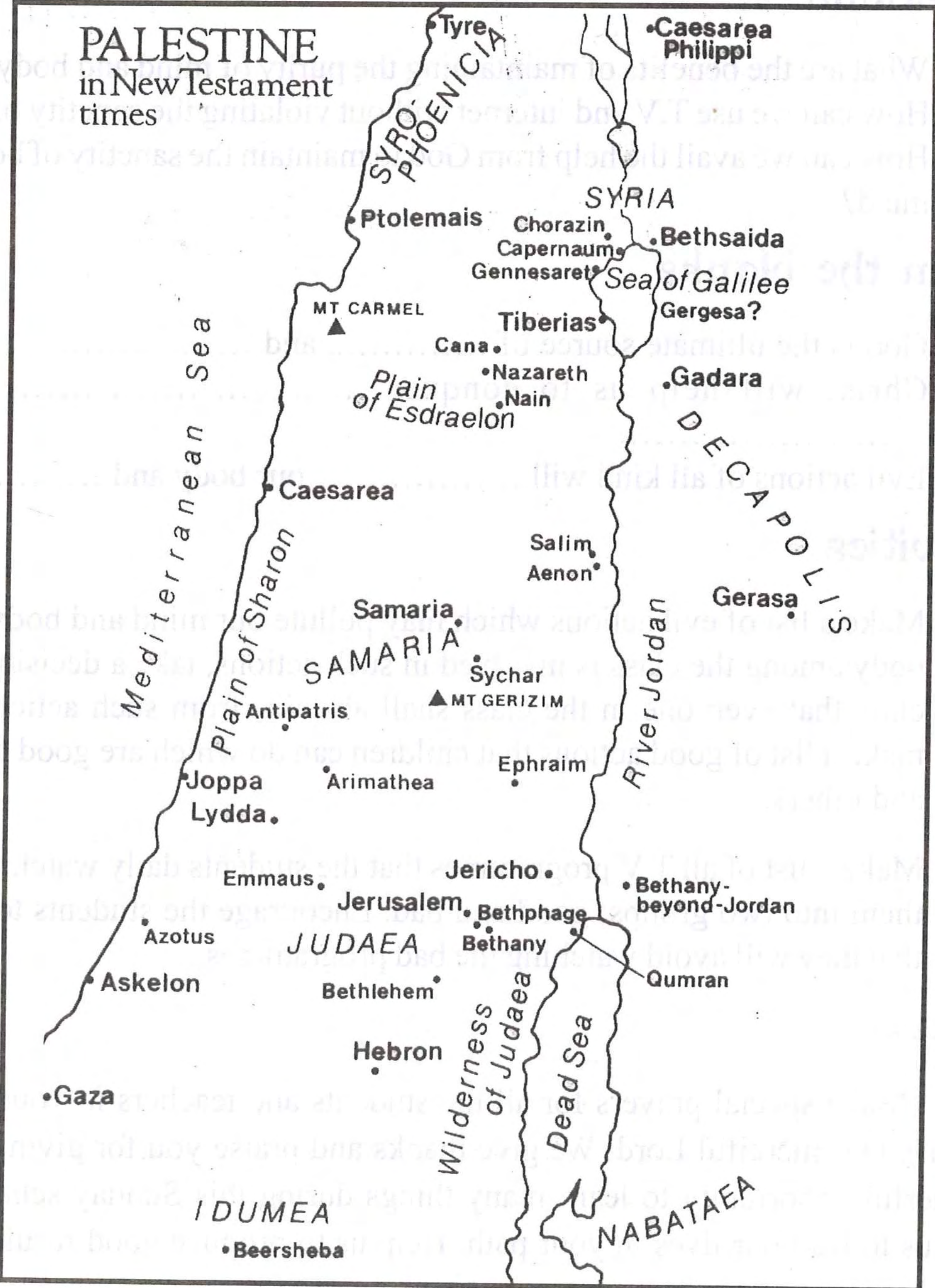
1. God is the ultimate source of and
2. Christ will help us to conquer and
3. Evil actions of all kind willour body and

Activities

1. Make a list of evil actions which may pollute our mind and body. If any body among the class is involved in such actions, take a decision in the class that everyone in the class shall abstain from such actions. Also make a list of good actions that children can do which are good for them and others.
2. Make a list of all T.V programmes that the students daily watch. Divide them into two groups; good and bad. Encourage the students to decide that they will avoid watching the bad programmes.

Prayer

(Make special prayers for all the students and teachers in your sunday school). Our merciful Lord, We give thanks and praise you for giving us this wonderful opportunity to learn many things during this Sunday school year. Help us to lead our lives in your path. Help us to produce good results in our lives. Amen.





OSSAE (OKR) CLASS 4 TEXT BOOK