

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



CLASS - 5

COMING OF JETHRO AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

(Ex. 18: 1-27 ; Deut 1: 9 -18)

In the previous class we learnt the story of Moses and the liberation of Israelites from Egypt. The Lord guided them in the journey through the wilderness (Ex.13.21, Ex. 16 4-5, Ex. 17.7) by providing all their needs and doing many miracles for their welfare. Later Moses selected Joshua and they won a war with Amalekites (Ex.17: 8ff). Now we shall learn about the remaining part of the journey.

Jethro, the priest of Midian

Moses' father-in-law was Jethro and he was the priest of Midian. Jethro heard all the good news of Moses bringing Israelites out of Egypt and he praised the Lord. He came down to meet Moses with his daughter Zipporah (Moses' wife) and Moses' sons Gershom and Eliezer. When Moses heard of this he went out from his tent to meet his father-in-law. He bowed down and kissed Jethro. Each asked the other's welfare. Jethro became happy and he offered sacrifices to God. Aaron and other leaders of Israel joined him. They ate the sacred meal after the sacrifice.

Division of Labour in Israel

The next day Jethro saw Moses settling disputes among people. Moses was busy doing that from morning till night. Jethro realized that Moses and the people of Israel wasted a lot of time in this activity. He told Moses that it was difficult to do this task alone. That will burn him

out as well as wear out the people who wait all the day. Jethro gave a good suggestion. He asked Moses to choose capable men from the people and appoint them as leaders. Some of them could lead thousands, some others could lead hundreds and a third group could lead tens. They must be God fearing men who can be trusted and who cannot be bribed.

These selected leaders will serve as judges and resolve all small issues of the people. They will bring only disputes of serious nature to Moses. That will make it easier for Moses and his people. Moses took the advice of Jethro and implemented it that way. After that Jethro went back home. Thus Moses divided his job and delegated that to the selected leaders of people.

Division of Labour as a good Management Skill

Even today the example shown by Moses is valid. The growth of a community depends upon the leadership quality of those who sit at the top. If the leaders want to do all the jobs personally without other's help and co-operation, it may lead to a difficult situation. But if the leader knows how to make use of the talents of each individual and to exploit the available resources, it will produce better results. So to say the division of labour and sharing of responsibilities is a good management skill taught by Moses, the greatest leader of Israel. He knew that each individual was different with various talents. He tried to put their efforts together for a single goal and he could achieve the target. Even in our Church let us follow this model: ask everyone to be engaged in the making up of the kingdom of God according to his strength and abilities. God will guide us with His wisdom.

Verse for Memorization:

"You should teach them God's commands and explain to them how they should live and what they should do" Exodus 18:20-21.

1. Answer the Questions

- a. What was the suggestion Jethro gave to Moses?
- b. Name the sons of Moses.
- c. Whom did Joshua and the Israelites defeat?
- d. What are the three qualities for a judge?

2. Match the following

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| a. Jethro | 1. Moses' son |
| b. Joshua | 2. Priest of Midian |
| c. Zipporah | 3. Leader of Israel |
| d. Eleazar | 4. Moses' wife |

3. Fill in the blanks

- a) "You must not be partial in _____; hear out the small and great alike; you shall not be _____ by any one, for the _____ is God" (Deut 1:17).

4. Activities

- a) Discuss the various responsibilities of the Vicar, Sexton, Trustee, Secretary and other office bearers of the Church. Also discuss how the household affairs can be divided among the father, mother and children.

b) Discuss the responsibilities of students/children in school and at home. Ask the students to list them out and check themselves whether they carry out these satisfactorily.

c) **Cross word**

Across

1. Moses father-in-law
3. A person who assisted Moses.
4. One of Moses' sons
7. Jethro was the priest of this place
9. Book in the Old Testament which gives the details of the journey of Israelites from Egypt to Canaan.
10. Father of the faithful (7)

Down

1. Leader of Israel after Moses
2. A quality which old children should possess
5. The liberator of Israel
6. Another son of Moses
8. Moses' wife
11. Israelites crossed this sea during their journey to Canaan
12. Israelites ate this food in the desert

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Prayer

“Dear and loving God, You are the one who helps us in our daily lives. Teach us also to develop a helping and sharing mind for the welfare of humanity.”

PEOPLE OF GOD**AT MOUNT SINAI**

(Exodus 19)

In the third month after the Israelites went out from the land of Egypt, on the very same day, they came to the desert of Sinai. They camped in the desert in front of the mountain. Their stay at Sinai is a long story in the Bible. They camped eleven months at the foot of the mountain (Ex. 19:1 and Num. 10:11). The Most significant event of this period is the reception of the Ten Commandments.

God's promise to Israel

God called Moses from the mountain and Moses went up to Him. God told Moses "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I lifted you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (Ex. 19:4). There God told that if Israelites keep their promise to God and listen to Him, He will make them a holy nation among the whole world. Moses came down and summoned the elders of Israel and conveyed the message of God. The people answered together that they would follow all the commands of God who saved them from Israel.

Then God decided to come to Mount Sinai in dense cloud and to talk to Moses in the presence of people. Thus the people could hear the Lord talking to Moses and they would always believe in Moses. The people were asked to purify themselves for the next two days and to come down to Mount Sinai on the third day. They were warned not to go up on the mountain or touch the edge of the mountain; if any one disobeyed he must meet death.

On the third day in the morning there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn. Moses brought the people to the foot of the mountain on the third day. Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace and the whole mountain shook violently. Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain and he went up.

God asked Moses again to go down and talk to the people so that they strictly obey the rule of not touching the mountain. And God wanted him to come back to the mountain with Aaron. Moses went down and warned the people again as God commanded him to do.

This entire preparation demanded by God from the people of Israel was to make sure that Israel was a Holy and obedient people. God could enter in to a covenant only with such people. The experiences at Mount Sinai affirmed that they were something special to God, who said: "... you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).

God's Covenant with his People

Yahweh wanted a covenantal relationship with his people always. When there was the flood God made a covenant with Noah and the flood was stopped. The rainbow was a sign of this covenant. In a covenant there are two parties and both the parties have to make promises; then only the covenant become valid. In God's covenant with Moses God said; "You shall be my special nation". In reply to this the people said; "All that God has spoken we will do".

In the book of Jeremiah, God said; "I will maintain my covenant with Jacob's descendants and with my servant David. I will choose one of David's descendants to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Jer. 33:26). The birth of Jesus was a fulfillment of this

covenant. Therefore whoever believes in Jesus enters in to a covenantal relationship with God. The Holy Qurbana is a new sign of our covenant with God (Lk 22:20). Those who are baptized and has received the communion are indebted to do their covenantal agreements with God. They have to fulfill the pledges which they take on baptism.

Verse for Memorization:

Exodus 19:5-6 “And now, if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then you will be my special possession out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine, and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’

1. Answer the question

- a) What was the Promise of God to Moses?
- b) How did the people prepare themselves to approach the Lord ?
- c) What was the purpose of God behind His revelation on Mount Sinai?
- d) What do you mean by a covenant?
- e) How do we enter into a covenantal relationship with God?

2. Fill in the blanks

- a) Israelites were traveling from Egypt to the promised land of _____
- b) You will be to me a kingdom of _____ and a holy _____
- c) People agreed to follow all _____ of God
- d) God wanted Moses to return to the mountain with his brother _____

3. Say whether the following statements are True or false

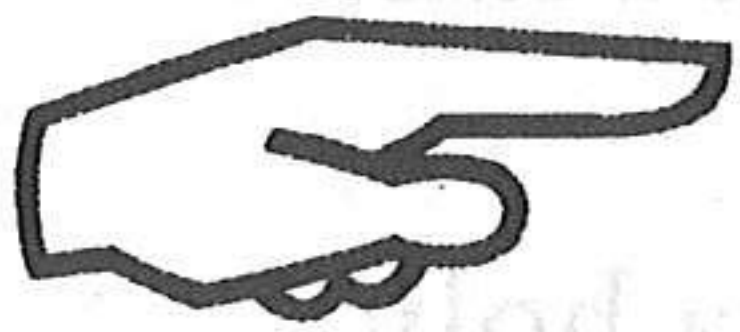
- a. God appeared to Moses in the desert of Sinai
- b. Moses was accompanied by Joshua on mount Sinai
- c. Whoever touches the mountain of Lord shall have eternal life
- d. The land of Egypt was the land of slavery for Israel
- e. God descended on mount Sinai with thunder showers and lightning

4. **Activity:**

- a. Draw a picture of Mount Sinai with cloud and lightening and God speaking to Moses.
- b. Discuss the importance of repentance and confession before receiving Holy Qurbana

5. **Prayer**

“Almighty God, our Father, You are the Holy God, who also wants His creation to be Holy. Help us to lead our lives in Holiness and purity, Amen.”



Behave towards
everyone as if receiving
a great guest.

- Confucius

THE TEN GOLDEN RULES

(Ex.19:16 - 20: 21)

In the last chapter we saw how God appeared to Moses in Mount Sinai. People were asked to purify themselves to hear from God. People stood at a distance from Mount Sinai, as told by Moses. They saw lightning and heard the sound of thunder from the mountain. They trembled with fear. The people did not see God for He was invisible. But they felt the presence of God through the heavy cloud, lightning and earthquake. Then God called Moses to come up and talk with Him in the cloud.

God gave his ten commandments to Moses for the people of Israel. He wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to Moses (Dt. 5: 22b).

The Ten Commandments:

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

6. You shall not murder

7. You shall not commit adultery

8. You shall not steal

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

10. You shall not covet your neighbour's house or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

The importance of the Ten Commandments:

The Ten Commandments are a brief summary of certain basic rules of behavior, given by God. These commandments are also known as "Decalogue" in Greek, which means 'ten words'. Jesus Christ agrees with the young man who summarizes the Ten Commandments into two: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Lk. 10:27).

The first four commandments state our duties towards God; idolatry was a great evil when Moses was leading the Israelites. Therefore Yahweh is strictly warning them against this sin. If we put anything in the



place of God, it can become an idol; money, power, lust and craze for fashion all become idols. So we have to know that in heaven, above earth and under the earth we have nothing more valuable than God. We should possess a good relationship with Him. By swearing we can not have the good connection; it will be another sin (Mtt. 5:33-37).

The last six commandments of the list given to Moses include our duties towards fellow human beings. The fifth Commandment is the only one which has a conditional clause. It is the duty of the children to obey their parents and God will count it and it will become a blessing for them. Rest of the commandments are to be kept in our social relationships. We live in a world where theft, murder, false witness and aggression on women have become so common. The selfish people do all these for their well being and pleasure. But God sees them all as sinners.

No nation or community or school or family can lead a happy orderly life without good rules. Even individuals should be disciplined with good rules. The social, cultural, religious rules and bindings develop the personality of an individual.

Verse for Memorization:

“I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”
Exodus 20:2-3.

1. Answer the Questions:

- a) How did the people of Israel feel the presence of God?
- b) Ten Commandments can be summarized in to two; which are they?
- c) What is the uniqueness of the fifth commandment?
- d) What is modern idolatry?
- e) What are the social implications of the Ten Commandments?

2. Fill in the blanks

- Ten commandments are also known as _____
- God gave his ten commandments to the people of _____
- You shall not give false _____ against your neighbor
- Ten commandments are a brief summery of certain basic _____ of _____ given by God
- You shall have no other _____ before me

3. Choose the correct answer from the bracket for the following questions.

(Sinai, Ten, Sabbath, Holy, Moses, Everest, Genesis, St. John)

- To whom were the Ten Commandments given
- How many commandments were given to Moses
- Remember the Sabbath day to set apart as _____
- The first book of New Testament
- On which mountain were the Ten Commandments given
- According to the Decalogue which day is to be keep holy

Activity:

Help the students prepare a Chart of the Ten Commandments and ask them to exchange among the students and to paste it in front of their study table.

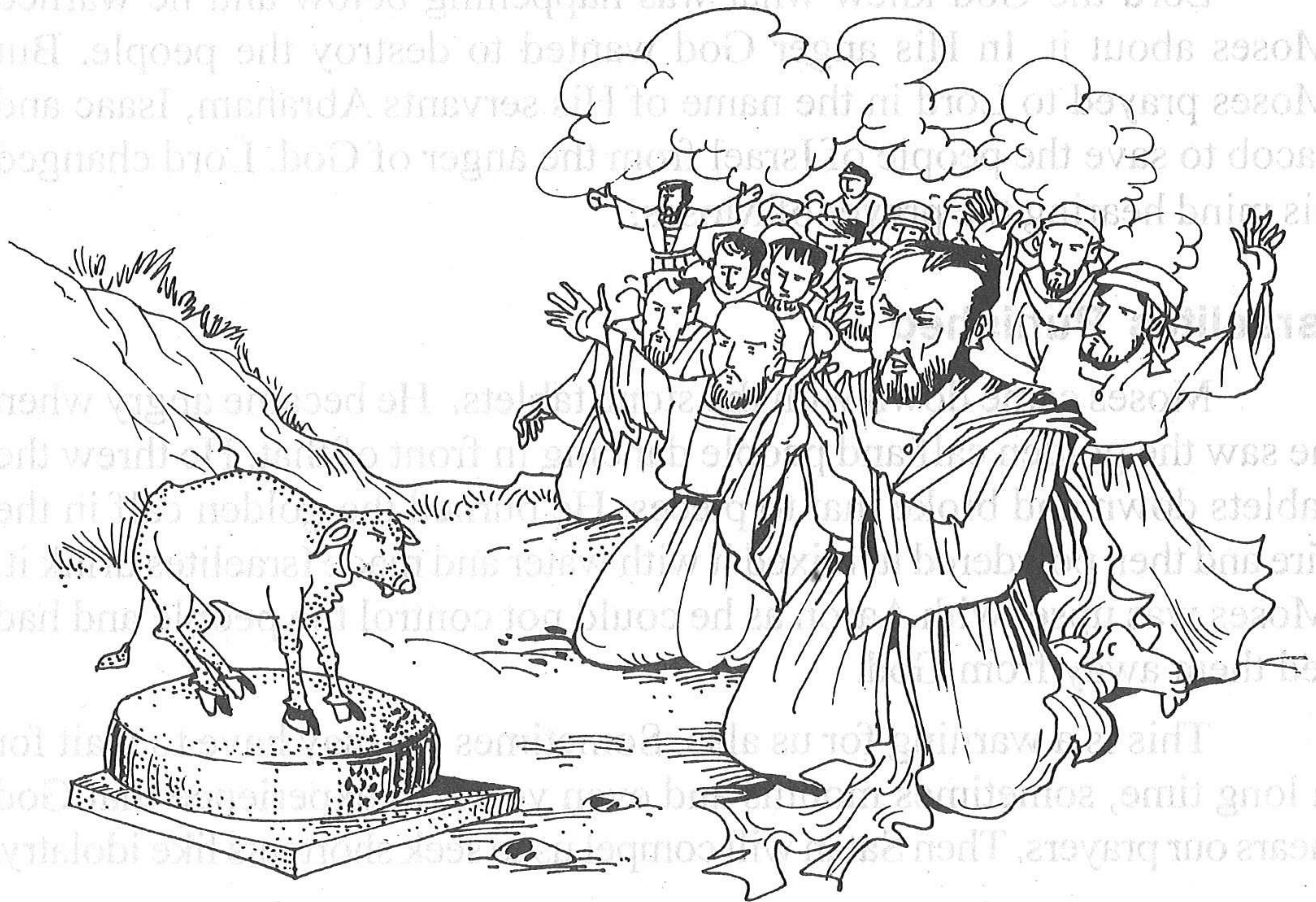
Prayer

“Dear God, You are our creator and Master. We thank you for all the beautiful gifts that you have given to us. Enable and strengthen us to obey your Commandments and to accomplish your will, Amen.”

THE GOLDEN CALF

(Ex. 32: 1-35; Deut. 9: 6-29)

Moses was with God for forty days and forty nights in Mount Sinai. It was an old practice to fast for forty days and forty nights before all important events in life. The prophets did it usually and even Jesus Christ followed this discipline just before his Public Ministry. Moses remained on the mountain without eating bread or drinking water. God gave him the rules and laws for the people in detail. God himself wrote the Ten Commandments on two stone tablets and gave that to Moses.



Israelites worship Golden Calf

People got confused while Moses was away. They came to Aaron and told him that Moses was the person who brought them out of Egypt and now they don't know what had happened to Moses. They became impatient and they wanted to know if God would lead them. They asked Aaron about the long absence of Moses and they compelled him to find an immediate solution. Under this tremendous pressure Aaron asked the people to bring their gold earrings. He made a golden bull-calf out of it and gave that to the people as their god. Then Aaron made an altar in front of the bull-calf and sacrificed animals on it. Then he declared a feast day for god on the next day. People got up early on the morning of the next day and brought offerings for their new god. They ate, drank and danced in front of the golden calf.

Lord the God knew what was happening below and he warned Moses about it. In His anger God wanted to destroy the people. But Moses prayed to Lord in the name of His servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to save the people of Israel from the anger of God. Lord changed his mind hearing the prayer of Moses.

Israelites Punished

Moses came down with the stone tablets. He became angry when he saw the golden calf and people dancing in front of that. He threw the tablets down and broke that to pieces. He burned the golden calf in the fire and then powdered it, mixed it with water and made Israelites drink it. Moses was upset with Aaron as he could not control the people and had led them away from God.

This is a warning for us also. Sometimes we may have to wait for a long time, sometimes months and even years, to experience that God hears our prayers. Then Satan will compel us to seek shortcuts like idolatry.

Don't fall into such traps. The Lord is watching us always. Even in darkness, sickness and sufferings He is with us.

Moses went back to the mountain and prayed to God. God sent a disease on the people because they made the golden calf. So Moses made atonement for their sin and people mourned before God taking off their ornaments from their body as a mark of their penitence.

God commanded Moses to bring two more stone tablets in a wooden box. Lord wrote the Ten Commandments again on the stone tablets and gave that to Moses.

Rebellion against God is always punishable. God expects complete trust from his people. In our difficulties we may feel God is away. But he will not totally abandon us. He is a faithful God.

Verse for Memorization:

"I, the Lord, am a God who is full of compassion and pity, who is not easily angered and who shows great love and faithfulness." Exodus 34:6.

1. Answer the following questions

- Why was Moses late on the mountain of Sinai?
- Why did the Israelites make and worship the golden calf?
- How did Aaron make a Golden Calf to worship?
- What did Moses do when he saw the idolatry of Israelites?

2. Fill in the blanks

- With the gold earrings Aaron made _____
- Aaron declared a feast day for _____ on the following day
- Lord wrote the _____ again on the stone tablets

3. Activity:

- a) Enact the conversation between Moses and the people when he became angry.
- b) Write down the things that God doesn't want in us from the following alphabets.

G - Greed

C-

O-

A- Anger

L-

L-

D- Deceit

F-

E-

N-

Prayer:

“Father, let us not be deceived by worldly things. Let us not set up our own idols, that divide us from your loving presence. You and you alone should be the first place in our lives and not our families or our worries and pleasures. Father, help us to be faithful to you always.”

JOSHUA, THE SUCCESSOR OF MOSES

(Ex. 17:9-13; Num. 27: 12 – 23; Deut. 31:1-7)

Joshua, son of Nun, was already selected by God as the new leader after Moses. He was full of the spirit of wisdom and Moses had placed his hands on him. He was commissioned by Moses as his assistant before Eleazer, the priest, and the community of Israelites. Eleazer was the son of Aaron, who was ordained as a new priest at the time of Aaron's death. Then Moses delegated some of his authority to Joshua as God asked him to do so.

Death of Moses

Israelites continued their journey and they were in the deserts of Moab. As God commanded, Moses went to Mount Nebo. The Lord showed him the land of Canaan from there and said to him, "This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said; 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it, but you will not cross over there."

Moses died there in the land of Moab at the age of 120. But his eye sight was good and he was a man of strength physically and mentally till his last day. Lord Himself buried him near Beth Peor, in the land of Moab. The Israelites mourned for Moses for 30 days in the deserts of Moab.

Joshua, the new leader

As Moses approached the time of his death, the Lord instructed him to designate Joshua as his successor (Num 27:12–23; Deut 3:23–28). He

was the man who served as Moses' servant during the wilderness journey" (?Ex. 24:13; Josh 1:1). He was from the tribe of Ephraim and his previous name was Hoshea. Moses renamed him as Joshua which means "Yahweh is Salvation" (Num 13:16).

After Moses died, the Lord spoke to Joshua at length. He gave him courage and appointed him as the leader of His people. The Lord assured Joshua that the divine presence would accompany him as it did to Moses (Josh 1:5). Lord promised him that he will be able to lead the nation to the land that was promised to their ancestors. That territory extended from the wilderness in the south of Lebanon in the north, river Euphrates in the east and Mediterranean Sea in the west. Then Lord asked him to get ready and cross the river of Jordan.

Joshua instructed the leaders of the people as commanded by God to be ready to cross Jordan within three days. The leaders of Israelites promised him that they will obey him, just as they obeyed Moses.

God chose Joshua to succeed Moses because of his commitment to God and to God's Commandments. He perfectly obeyed Moses and his words. The book of Joshua explains how Joshua faithfully carried out the commands of Moses as he executed the double task of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land and putting them in possession of it.

Verse for Memorization:

The Lord said; "Be strong and brave! Don't be afraid and don't panic, for I, the LORD your God, am with you in all you do." Joshua 1:9.

1. Answer the Questions:

- a. From where did Moses see the Promised Land?
- b. Which was the tribe that Joshua belongs to?
- c. What type of a man was Joshua?

- d. Who buried Moses at Beth Peor?
- e. How many chapters are there in the Book of Joshua?

2. **Activity:**

a. **Cross word**

Across

- 1. Name the river that God asked Israelites to cross
- 4. The holy mountain
- 5. Son of Noah
- 8. Promised land

Down

- 1. Who was the successor or Moses?
- 2. One of the twelve tribes
- 3. The biggest river
- 6. Desert where the Israelites mourned for Moses.
- 7. Father of Joshua.

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8						

- b. Ask the children about some of the good religious and social leaders
- c. Discuss with the children the qualities of a good leader today

Prayer:

“Loving God, You raised Moses from among your people to deliver the Israelite from the Egyptians and to lead them into the Promised Land. Help and guide our leaders so that your Kingdom is established in this world. Amen.”

LESSON - 6

INVASION OF JERICHO

(Josh. 1-6)

The Israelites spent forty years in crossing the desert, after starting from Egypt. God was with Joshua and he told him how to cross river Jordan. As per God's commandment, the priests went in front with the Ark of Covenant and the people followed them at a distance.



Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of covenant was a wooden box, which was covered by a lid called Mercy Seat. There were two winged-creatures on it standing face to face. The priests offered the sacrificial blood in between them on the Day of Atonement. In the Covenant box there was a golden urn containing Manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the stone tablets engraved by God with Ten Commandments.

When the priests who carried the Ark of Covenant touched their feet on water, Jordan stopped flowing (Josh. 3:13). Water piled up on the upstream. Water in the down stream flowed down to Dead Sea and a dry land appeared in front of Israelites and they walked across the river. To remember the blessings. God asked representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel to take twelve stones from middle of the river and to keep them as a souvenir for their future generations; when their children would ask them about the stone, they had to narrate the whole story of crossing the river Jordan (Josh. 4:1-10).

After crossing Jordan, they camped at Gilgal, east of Jericho. They celebrated the festival of Passover there. The next day they ate the food grown in Canaan for the first time. The Manna stopped falling from the next day.

Joshua captures Jericho

Before entering the city Joshua sent two spies to get information about Jericho. They stayed at the house of a lady by the name Rahab. The king of Jericho got this news and sent his people to capture the spies. Rahab was intelligent and she saved the Israelite spies. They went to the hill side of the country, stayed there for three days and came back to Joshua with all the information they gathered.

The city of Jericho was well protected by a wall around it. Its entrance was shut tightly as there was the fear about the attack from Israelites. But the Lord was with Joshua and he got clear instructions how to go about taking over Jericho. Seven priests carried the Ark of the Lord and marched along blowing their horns. The armed troops marched ahead of them and the remaining forces went behind as rearguard. They marched around the city wall like this for six days. On the seventh day they marched around the city wall seven times early in the morning. On the seventh round the priests blew the horns and the army gave a loud battle cry as per Joshua's instruction. The wall collapsed and the Israelite army captured the city of Jericho. They burned the city and killed all living beings there. But they saved Rahab and her complete family.

The strong walls of Jericho collapsed before the mighty power of God. Israelites honoured the Ark as the symbol of God's presence and showed that all the victories are from God. Rahab and all her kindred were saved for they believed Lord.

Verse for Memorization:

“It was faith that made the walls of Jericho fall down after the Israelites had marched round them for seven days.” Hebrews 11:30.

1. Answer the questions

- a. How many years did Israelites wander in the desert?
- b. How did Israelites cross the river Jordan?
- c. How did Israelites conquer Jericho?
- d. Why did Israelites save Rahab and her family?
- e. What are the contents of the Ark of the Covenant?

2. Match the following

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| a. Passover | 1. Food |
| b. Jericho | 2. Gilgal |
| c. River | 3. Wall |
| d. Manna | 4. Festival |
| e. East of Jericho | 5. Jordan |

3. Activities:

- Ask the children to draw a picture of a city and its wall
- Help the children locate places like the city of Jericho, the river Jordan and the Dead Sea in the map.
- Discuss about cities in India where city walls or forts can be seen.

Prayer:

Almighty God, bless us and strengthen us to stand against all kinds of evil so that the poor and needy are safeguarded. We submit ourselves as your instruments in this world. Amen.

LESSON - 7

PEOPLE OF GOD IN CANAAN

After the fall of Jericho, Israel continued their attack and conquered the neighbouring countries one after the other under the leadership of Joshua. God was with them and he handed over all those kings to Joshua.

Division of the Land of Canaan

The people were divided into twelve tribes, as descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. This newly acquired land was divided among these tribes of Israel. But the Levites were allotted no separate territory. They



were dispersed among the other tribes, because they were the attendants of the tabernacle and had to perform all the priestly duties for the tribes. But the two sons of Joseph - Manasseh and Ephraim - were counted as two tribes, so making up the number of the tribes to twelve.

Israelites also designated cities of refuge. These were places where the people who had difficulties in their life could survive. For example, if a man accidentally killed some one, he could be given asylum in these cities (Josh 20: 1-9)

Leaders of Israel after Joshua

Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten. He was buried in the hill country of Ephraim (Josh 24: 29-30). Israel worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime. And it continued the same way till the elderly men, who had experienced firsthand what God had done for Israel, were alive. A new generation grew up that had not personally experienced the Lord's presence. They did evil before Lord by worshipping Baal and other gods. They also got into immoral ways and they fought among themselves. The LORD was furious with Israel and handed them over to robbers and enemies.

After Joshua there was no central leadership for the Israelite tribes for a long period. The tribes had often to fight for their existence against the attacks of outside enemies. But God raised charismatic leaders from time to time when various tribes faced a common danger to their existence. These leaders are known as Judges. In the book of Judges we read about seven major Judges and many minor judges. The Major Judges were Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. These Judges were hero-liberators and they were individually chosen by God for a specific mission.

Deborah was the only lady among the major judges (Judg. 4: 4ff.). She was a mighty warrior. Jephthah was an upright judge. Once he took an oath before God; he would sacrifice the very first object he finds after defeating Ammonites. It happened so that he had to sacrifice his daughter, who received him when he defeated the enemies (Judg. 11:34-40). Samson was a giant and nobody could stand against his physical power. He defeated the Philistines with his strength. The enemies always wanted to know the secret of his might; but the Lord prohibited him from revealing it. But he forgot this before his lady love Dalila (Judg. 16:4-24). Due to his foolishness he revealed everything to Dalila and she betrayed him to the Philistines.

Social Life of Israelites

The social structure within these village communities was basically an egalitarian one. Several extended families constituted the population of one village. They consumed or bartered what they produced by agriculture, the pasturing of flocks and the essential crafts they made by their hands. If a family or village suffered the loss of a crop due to bad weather other members of the tribe came to their aid by donations and support. Decisions were made and disputes were settled by consensus in a council formed by the heads of the elders of the families.

By their hard work and cooperation they made Canaan, a land which flowed with Milk and honey.

Verse for Memorization:

“The LORD made them secure, in fulfillment of all he had solemnly promised their ancestors. None of their enemies could resist them.”
Joshua 21:44 .

1. **Answer the questions:**

- a. Why the Levites didn't get a separate territory for themselves?
- b. Who were the sons of Joseph?
- c. Who were the major Judges of Israel?
- d. What did Israelites do when a man had a loss of crop?
- e. Describe briefly the story of Samson.

2. **Fill in the blanks**

- a. _____ were the priestly tribe of Israel
- b. After the fall of _____ Israelites continued the conquering
- c. Joshua died at the age of _____ and he was buried in the hill country of _____
- d. God raised _____ leaders from time to time

3. **Match the following**

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| a. Levites | 1. Idol |
| b. Baal | 2. Dalila |
| c. Cities of refuge | 3. Priestly tribe |
| d. Samson | 4. Asylum |

4. **Activity:**

Discuss the duties of the major judges of Israel and compare them with those of the judges of our courts.

Prayer:

“O most gracious Father, enlighten and guide us in our spiritual journey until we reach your Holy Kingdom. Lead us in the darkest hours of our life and help us to see you in those difficult situations. Amen.”

JOSEPH OF NAZARETH - A JUST MAN

(Matt. 1: 18-2:21)

In this lesson we are going to study about Joseph of Nazareth, who brought up Jesus Christ, our Savior. The word *Joseph* means *pious*. He and his wife Mary (St. Mary) are good examples from whom we can learn how to face difficult situations in the life patiently, calmly and prayerfully

Joseph, a Carpenter

Joseph was a descendant of the great king David of Israel. He belonged to Bethlehem in Judea kingdom and settled in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. His profession was carpentry. The Greek word for carpentry is *tekton*, which covers the making of yokes, plows, threshing boards, benches, beds, boxes, coffins, boats and houses.

There are only a few references about Joseph in the Bible. His Davidic lineages are explained in St Mathew (Matt. 1: 2-10) and St. Luke (Lk. 3: 22-35) and in Mtt. 1: 20 the angel of God calls him "Joseph, son



of David”. His name is mentioned in the birth and childhood narratives of Jesus both in St. Mathew and St. Luke. Joseph is last mentioned in the search for boy Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:41). Here he is referred to as Jesus’ father.

Righteous man

We hear the name of Joseph when the birth of Jesus is described. Mary, mother of Jesus was engaged to Joseph. But before they were married, she found that she was going to have a baby. This was quite an abnormal situation. When Joseph came to know of it he thought of divorcing Mary quietly. As he was a just man and always did what was right, he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly. While he was thinking of it, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: ‘Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son and you will name him Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins’ (Lk. 1: 20,21). Joseph did what the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Joseph took Mary also with him to Bethlehem for enrolment even though the presence of a woman was not required for the census declared by Augustus Caesar, he did not want to leave Mary alone in that circumstance. Both Mary and Joseph traveled a long way from Nazareth in Galilee down to Bethlehem in Judea. Even after the birth of the child Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt just to protect the child with the mother. This also shows his care, concern and compassion for them.

Why Joseph is called a “Just Man”?

The above incident reveals Joseph’s character. He was kind, wise and compassionate. He devoted his life to the righteous standards. However, there are two reasons for God to call Joseph a “Just/ Righteous Man”.

a) Faithful observation of the Law of Moses (Torah) : Joseph observed all the laws of Moses faithfully. He circumcised the child on the eighth day. He dedicated the baby at the Temple and offered sacrifices for Mary. He made annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem for Passover. He observed all Jewish ordinances and feasts. We read in the Bible that Jesus grew and became strong and he was full of wisdom (Lk. 2:51). Jesus learned the scriptures and could speak eloquently. It was through Joseph that Jesus imbibed all these qualities. Joseph carried out the job of looking after Mary and Jesus faithfully and did all duties rightly.

b) Search for Divine Guidance during difficult life situations: Joseph frequently received guidance from God through his angels in his dreams. He was a man of deep piety. Following instructions of the angel of the Lord he accepted Mary as his wife. As guided by angel he took Jesus to Egypt to protect him from King Herod's evil plot. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph at Egypt and asked him to go back to the land of Israel (Matt 3:20). He respected God's commandments and implicitly obeyed them. Like Joseph we should also possess the fine quality of bringing unity in the family with the strength of the noble father. We should also observe the word of God faithfully and follow the divine guidance.

Verse for Memorization:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to those with whom He is pleased”. Luke 1:14.

1. Answer the Questions

- a. What does the Greek word *tekton* mean?
- b. Who did appear to Joseph in his dream?
- c. Why did Joseph go to Egypt with Mary and Jesus?
- d. Which are the two reasons for calling Joseph a just man?

2. **Fill in the blanks**

- a. Joseph was a descendant of _____
- b. Mary was conceived by the _____
- c. "You will name him _____", an angel of the Lord told Joseph.
- d. Bethlehem was in _____

3. **Activity**

Name the values, which we can associate with each alphabets of the name JOSEPH:

- J-
 O- Obedience
 S-
 E-
 P- Patience
 H-

4. **Match the following**

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Bethlehem | A. Gabriel |
| 2. Tekton | B. Place where Joseph lived |
| 3. Angel of the Lord | C. Place of David |
| 4. Nazareth | D. Worker in wood |

5. **Activities**

Remind the children of the story of Joseph of Egypt (Genesis) and ask them to remember his basic qualities, which they have to follow.

Prayer

"Our Loving Father, you guided and protected Joseph and Mary when they had difficulties in their life. Lord, fill us with your wisdom and understanding so that we can take right decisions always. Amen."

LESSON - 9

JOHN THE BAPTIST - A PROPHET OF GOD

(Mk. 1:1-18, Lk. 3: 1-18)

God called great prophets to foretell the coming of His son-Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was the greatest of those, the chosen one, and the precursor of Jesus Christ. He is known as the forerunner of Lord.

The Birth of John

John's father Zachariah was a priest and his mother Elizabeth also belonged to a priestly family. They both lived good lives and obeyed all laws and commands of the Lord. They were both very old and had no children. They were praying for a child and waiting for a reply.

One day when Zachariah was doing his service in the temple; Gabriel, an angel of Lord appeared to him and told him that God had heard his prayers and his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son. And the child should be named John. The angel told him that the child



would be filled with Holy Spirit. As Zachariah did not believe what the angel said he was made mute till the birth of John. John's birth was the fulfillment of what Isaiah had foretold (Isaiah 40:3). The name John meant *God is graceful*.

The preaching of John the Baptist

John lived in the desert. He wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. The word of God came to John in the desert and he went through out the whole territory of the river Jordan preaching: "Turn away from your sins and be baptized: and God will forgive your sins". He announced the people. "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bent down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

It was the time the Jews were waiting for the Messiah. They suspected that John would be the Messiah. John declared that he was neither Messiah nor Elijah nor the prophet, but was only a messenger who came to clear the way for his master.

Baptism of Jesus

John was baptizing people after they had repented; the baptism gave them the forgiveness of sins. His powerful sermon helped everybody repent their sins (Lk. 3:10-14). The common people asked John what they should do to keep themselves away from the wrath of God. He told them to share their shirts and food with those who had no shirt or food. When the tax collectors asked the same question, he told them to receive no bribes. And to the soldiers he said not to take money by force and not to accuse anybody falsely.

One day Jesus also approached John to get baptized. It was a perplexing situation for John (Mtt. 3:13-17); why should Jesus, the sinless

Son of God baptize? But Jesus persuaded him, because it was necessary for the fulfillment of the prophecies. As soon as Jesus was baptized, the spirit of God came down like a dove and alighted on Jesus. The voice of God the Father came from heaven, "You are my own dear son. I am pleased with you". John proclaimed: "This is the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).

The death of John the Baptist

Herod the Great had three sons; Archelaus, Antipas and Philip. Among these Antipas was the king of Galilee, when John was working. He had taken his brother's wife Herodias and kept her with him. He had done many other evil things. John reprimanded Herod on this issue and for that the latter put John in prison (Lk 3:20). Herodias wanted to kill John because he accused her for her sins. On the birthday of Herod Antipas, she organized a feast in which her daughter danced and pleased the father. Then Herodias asked her daughter to demand the head of John as a reward, and thus John was beheaded. He died as a martyr for justice and truth and courageously bore witness to God.

The purpose of John the Baptist's life was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ and also to show him as a Savior to others. He proclaimed to the world that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. While learning the story of John the Baptist we must examine the purpose of our lives. We must prepare ourselves as an instrument in the hands of God to bring others closer to Jesus as John the Baptist did.

Verse for Memorization:

"Whoever has two shirts must give to the man who has none, and whoever has food must share it" Luke 3: 11.

1. Answer the questions

- Name the angel, who appeared to Zachariah when he was in the Temple?
- For what was Zachariah made mute?
- Where did John baptize people?
- Who were the sons of Herod the Great?
- Why was John the Baptist beheaded?

2. Fill in the blanks

- John wore clothes made of _____
- John's food was _____ and _____
- John's birth was the fulfillment of what _____ had foretold.
- The name John meant _____

3. Who said to whom and when

- "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins."
- "You are my own dear son. I am pleased with you".

4. Activities

- Ask the students to dramatize the events which led to John's death.
- Let the students narrate important activities of a Christian Baptism.

Prayer

"Our gracious Lord, you were with us as with John the Baptist when he was in his mother's womb. Guide us and lead us also in your paths. Keep us, Lord, in your mighty hands always. Amen."

LESSON - 10**MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD:****A WOMEN, WHO SOUGHT
THE SALVATION OF HUMANKIND**

(Lk. 1: 26 - 38, Is. 7:10-14)

Today we are going to study about Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. God has promised salvation and restoration of the sinful world through His prophets. God has brought salvation through his own son Jesus Christ. According to his plan of salvation Mary a young and devoted woman was chosen to become the mother of Jesus. It was the time when the Jews were waiting for Messiah. Prophet Isaiah has foretold about the birth of Messiah: "The Lord Himself will give you a sign; a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will be named Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

Birth of Jesus Announced to Mary

We have already studied how John the Baptist was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth when they were very old. John was the gift of God and it was God who announced his birth through His angel Gabriel. The birth of Jesus was also announced in the same way.

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town called Galilee with a message to Mary. Her parents were Euakim and Hanna who were from David's lineage; these had a pious and prayerful life. Mary was very pious and devout. She was betrothed to a man named Joseph. The angel told her: "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you". Further, he informed her that God has been gracious to her and that she would become pregnant and would give birth to a child.

When Mary wondered how a virgin could become a mother without marrying a man the angel explained to her that the Holy Spirit would rest upon her and it was possible as in the case of Elizabeth. The angel said: "There is nothing that God cannot do". It was the highest honour ever to be offered a woman since the creation of the world.

Mary humbly accepted the message of the Lord by saying: "I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said" (Lk 1: 38). She devoted herself as a woman who sought the salvation of human kind. Mary has willingly submitted to the will of God and thus she became the Mother of God. She conceived her son through the Holy Spirit and for this reason she is still called Virgin Mary.

Mary visits Elizabeth

Mary visited her relative Elizabeth who was carrying John the Baptist. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She said in a loud voice: "You are the most blessed of all women and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me?" (Lk. 1:42-43). Mary answered this by singing an old song of praise (Lk. 1:46-56). She stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went back home.

Joseph and Mary brought up Jesus by giving him all attention and care both in physical and spiritual aspects. He was taught the scriptures and Jesus could quote from the Bible. It is written that Jesus grew and became strong. He was full of wisdom as God's blessings was always on him (Lk 2:40).

Mary and Jesus

We find Mary at the wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee where Jesus and his disciples were also invited. Mary noticed that wine in the

house had finished. She asked Jesus to do the needful. Jesus converted water into wine and helped the family to overcome the problem (Jn. 2:1-11). She was merciful to the needy.

When Jesus was crucified Mary stood at the foot of the cross. She was a loving and caring mother and she followed her beloved son Jesus till his last hour. Seeing his mother there Jesus told John, his beloved disciple, that she was his mother. And to Mary he said after showing John: "he is your son" (Jn. 18:26-27). After the death of Jesus Mary remained as a member of the group that gathered frequently to pray. Mary is given the highest place among the saints, even above all the Apostles, and we seek her intercession in our prayers.

Qualities that can be observed in Mary

1. She was a humble girl. The teen-agers have to acquire this quality of Mary.
2. She was leading a spiritual life. She was associated with the worship of her day and the elders of her community considered her as a model for other children.
3. She was "filled with the Grace of God", because God was pleased with her. Therefore we pray "Hail Mary, full of Grace...".
4. She was a virgin in all the sense. She was not polluted by the evil doings of the children of her age. She was keen in maintaining her bodily purity as well as her mental and spiritual purity.
5. She was concerned about the pains and sufferings of other people.

Verse for Memorization:

"With God nothing will be impossible" Luke 1:37.

1. Answer the questions

- a. Who were the parents of Mary?
- b. Which are the other names of Mary?
- c. What was the role of Mary in the first miracle of Christ?
- d. Explain the role of Mary as Mother of God.
- e. Which were the values that we have to learn from Mary?

2. Who said to whom and When?

- a. "For this reason the holy child will be called the son of God"
- b. "I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said".
- c. "You are the most blessed of all women and blessed is the child you will bear".

3. Activities

- a. Show the location of Nazareth in a map.
- b. Ask the children to learn by heart the Song of Mary.
- c. Write all the Bible references in the Old Testament related to the birth of Jesus Christ in a Chart paper and display it in the Sunday School hall (as a group activity).

Prayer

"Our loving Father, we know that you created all of us in your own image. Help us to keep the sanctity of our body, mind and soul. Amen."

LESSON - 11

MARY OF BETHANY: A WOMEN OF PRAYER

(Lk. 10:28-42, Jn. 11:1-27)

Today we are going to study about Mary of Bethany, who was a follower of Jesus Christ. She lived with her sister Martha and brother Lazarus. Their house was in Bethany, a small village, on the eastern side of mount Olive, nearly eight kilo meters east of Jerusalem; now this place is known as Al-Assaria). Jesus was a frequent visitor to their house and he loved them. Mary was an ardent follower of Jesus Christ and liked to listen to the teaching of Jesus.

We read of Mary only three times in the Bible and each time we find her at the Master's feet.

Jesus visits Martha and Mary

Once Jesus and his disciples came to Bethany and visited the house of Lazarus (Lk. 10:38-42). Martha, Mary's sister, welcomed them. While Martha was taking care of the household works, Mary sat down at the feet of the Lord and listened to his teaching. Martha complained to Jesus about Mary. But Jesus commended Mary in the most precious terms. "Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be taken away from her". Mary took a blessed choice; to be with God always and to seek His assistance in life.

The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus

Next we see Mary after her brother's death (Jn. 11:28-37). She was filled with grief and fell down at the feet of Jesus. At the death of Lazarus, Mary and Martha missed the Master in the hour of grief. Jesus arrived only four days after the death of Lazarus; Martha went at once to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. Jesus did not enter the village till Mary came out of the house and met him. As soon as she saw Jesus, She fell at His feet. She said, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died". Jesus was deeply moved and He wept. Then Jesus did a great miracle by raising up Lazarus.

Martha and Mary believed that Jesus could give life to the dead. Jesus confirmed their faith by saying, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (Jn. 11:25).

Jesus is anointed at Bethany

Finally, a few days before his death Jesus came to Bethany and the family prepared a feast for him (Jn. 12:1-8). Lazarus, who was raised up from the tomb was also there. When the feast was in progress, Mary took a pound of costly ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. The whole house was filled with sweet fragrance. The disciples became angry. Judas Iscariot was upset and he commented that the perfume could have been sold for a large amount and the money given to the poor. Jesus stopped their murmuring and said: "It is a fine and beautiful thing that she has done for me ... what she did was to pour this perfume on my body to get ready for burial. Now I tell you that wherever this gospel is preached all over the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Matt 26:13). Mary had witnessed the death of Jesus on

the cross along with the Mother of Jesus. Even when the disciples were afraid Mary could overcome her fears with her strong faith in Jesus.

Verse for Memorization:

“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies, and who ever lives and believes in me will never die” John 11:25.

1. Answer the questions

- a. Where was Bethany located?
- b. Who was the brother of Mary?
- c. What lesson do we learn from Mary’s story?
- d. How often did Jesus visit the house of Lazarus?
- e. “It is a fine and beautiful thing that she has done for me”.
What was it?

2. Fill in the blanks

- a. “Wherever this is preached all over the _____ what she has done will be told in _____ of her”.
- b. Jesus wept because of his love to _____

3. Who said to whom and when?

- a. “Mary has chosen the right thing and it will not be taken away from her”.
- b. “Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died”.

4. Activity

- a. Find out from the Bible how many were raised by Jesus Christ.
- b. Ask the students about the service of the Washing of the Feet (on Maundy Thursday). Compare both washings.

Prayer

“Our Lord Jesus, you comforted the sisters of Lazarus and raised him from death. We know also that you are the Resurrection and the Life and that we shall also be raised up on the Last Day. Amen.”

In your prayers

- *give thanks to God for his graces.*
- *pray for your friends, teachers, parents, brothers and sisters*
- *offer your problems before him*
- *pray for your studies*
- *ask for protection*
- *repent your mistakes and ask forgiveness*
- *promise God that you will not repeat the mistakes*

LESSON - 12

STEPHEN - A WISE AND FAITHFUL DEACON

(Acts 6-7)

In the history of Christianity we come across a number of martyrs who gave their life for the Gospel of God; a Martyr is a person who is put to death or persecuted for the sake of a great cause. Among them

Stephen is the first martyr and most of the Apostles followed his path. The name Stephen means Crown; Stephanos is its Greek form while in Malayalam we call him Punnoose.

The growth of the Early Church

After the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ the disciples used to meet in secret places for worshipping Jesus. At first it was a small group with about 120



people (Act. 1:15). But on the day of the Pentecost we see a large crowd storming from about 17 regions (Act.2:9-11); they received the Holy Spirit and the Apostles could communicate with them in a language that had been given to them.

The Apostles started preaching and teaching with boldness and a number of people believed in Jesus and joined them. Peter himself baptized 3000 people on a single day (Act. 2:41). Many miracles and wonders were being performed among the people by the apostles. When the congregation started growing up, the High Priest and the leaders of Judaism became extremely jealous of the apostles and they decided to take action against the apostles. They started persecuting the believers who joined the Church.

The Deacons of the Early Church

As the number of disciples kept increasing, the Church faced internal troubles also. There was quarrel between the Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora and the Jews of Palestine, for whom Hebrew was the mother tongue. As the apostles were busy with the preaching of God's word they could not get time to attend this matter. Hence they selected seven youngsters, who had the following three qualifications:

- a) they had a good reputation in their society
- b) they were intelligent and wise men
- c) they were filled up with the Holy Spirit

Stephen was one among the seven and he was known for his faith and leadership. Since he was richly blessed by God and full of power he performed great miracles and wonders among the people. But some men who were members of the Synagogue started arguing with Stephen and opposed him. As his speech and arguments were so powerful and based on scriptures that they couldn't refute. They arrested Stephen and brought him before the council. But it is written about Stephen: "His face looked like the face of an angel (6:15).

Stephen's Martyrdom

When Stephen was questioned, he answered in a long speech in which he quoted the examples of Abraham Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and others, he narrated their experience and explained how wonderfully God led them. He blamed the Jewish leaders and said "you are just like your ancestors: you too have always resisted the Holy Spirit. You are the ones who received God's law that was handed down by angels. Yet you have not obeyed it" (Acts 7:51-53).

When members of council listened to Stephen, they became furious. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw God's glory and Jesus standing at the right hand side of God. He said. 'Look I see heaven opened and the son of man standing at the right- hand side of God'. The members of the council could not tolerate what Stephen said and rushed to him, threw him out of the city and stoned him. Stephen called out: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice: "Lord! Do not remember this sin against them". He said this and died.

Thus Stephen became the first martyr in the history of Christianity. Saul, later known as Paul, was also present there and he was keeping the clothes of those who stoned Stephen. Stephen's strong convictions and faith in Jesus and his brave death touched Saul and he became a Christian leader.

Verse for Memorization:

"Heaven is my throne, says the Lord, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of a house would you build for me?" Acts 8:49

1. Answer the questions

- a. How many deacons were selected in the Early Church?

- b. Which were the three qualities of a deacon?
- c. What is the meaning of the name 'Stephen'?
- d. Who is a martyr? Name a few martyrs who are remembered in our church?
- e. How was Stephen killed?

2. **Say whether the following statements are True or False.**

- a. Stephen was one among the twelve disciples of Jesus.
- b. Nobody from India received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentacost.
- c. Stephen was a disciple of St. Paul.
- d. Stephen's speeches were full of New Testament quotations.
- e. Even today deacons are ordained to settle the quarrels within the Church.

3. **Fill in the blanks**

- a. Look I see _____ opened and the _____ standing at the right- hand side of God'
- b. The disciples received the Holy Spirit on _____
- c. "Lord, do not remember this _____ against them."

4. **Activities**

- 1. Help the students to describe the role of a deacon in our Church.
- 2. Ask the students to enact the trial of Stephen.

Prayer

"Our merciful Lord, help us to read the Bible and understand its messages everyday. Lord, give us your guidance and light every day and help us to follow your instructions. Amen."

LESSON - 13

APOLLOS - AN ELOQUENT SPEAKER OF THE SCRIPTURE

(Acts 18: 24-28, 1 Cor 1:12)

We have learned about the works of Apostles and Deacons in spreading the Good News of Jesus. In addition to the apostles, there were a number of evangelists preaching the word of God. They were going from place to place and were trying to affirm the believers in true faith. Today we are going to learn about one of them called Apollos, who was an eloquent speaker and a zealous missionary of that time.

Appollos was a Jew from Alexandria, the celebrated city of Egypt on the South East shore of the Mediterranean called after its founder, Alexander the Great. He had received baptism from John the Baptist and heard about Jesus from him. Later on he believed in Jesus Christ and started preaching about God. He had a thorough knowledge of the scriptures and he was a gifted speaker. His memory was so sharp that he could easily quote from any part of the Scriptures.

Religious Formation of Apollos

Initially his knowledge of the Christian ways was not so adequate. Hence he had been instructed in the way of Lord and thereafter he proclaimed the facts about Jesus with much enthusiasm. During these days Paul was also visiting various churches, preaching the word of God and affirming them in true faith. So both Paul and Apollos were instruments of God through whom the Gospel was spreading fast.

Apollos visited Ephesus after Paul departed from that place. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. There was a couple called Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who were the prominent members of the local Christian group. This Jewish family came out of Rome and the local Church met in their house only. Paul stayed with them for some time and he was engaged in the tent making job with Aquila and Priscilla. When this couple heard the speech of Apollos, they took him home and explained to him more correctly the word of God.

The Mission Work of Apollos

From Ephesus Apollos went to Achaia. The believers in Ephesus helped him by writing to the believers in Achaia, urging them to welcome him. He was a great help to the believers of that place. There debates and arguments were going on between the believers and the Jews regarding Jesus. With his arguments and proofs from the Scriptures Apollos convinced them in public debate that Jesus was the Messiah.

He visited various places like Paul and preached the gospel at Corinth in Achaia also. He had an important position in the hearts of the believers of Corinth. His sermons and teachings helped the church grow just as it happened during Paul's ministry there. Paul considered him as a co-worker and 'a partner'. Many people were attracted towards his eloquence and some of his followers in Corinth began to make a group after him.

This caused the community to divide after the names of Paul, Apollos, Peter etc. Situation worsened when the supporters of Paul and Apollos came face to face. Paul intervened at this instance and he told in his letter to the Corinthians: "Was it Paul who died on the cross for you? Were you baptized as Paul's disciple? After all who is Apollos? And who

is Paul? Then he said “We are simply God’s servants, by whom you were led to believe ...I sowed the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow (1Cor 3:5,6).

Even today some people make splits in the Church on behalf of their attachment to some Apostles, saints or even bishops. In some places, the people who work for starting a parish may think that they are the most important in the church. This is against the Bible, which says it is God who works and we are simply his instruments in this world. According to St. Paul it is not the Christian way to make groups within the Church, because we all stand for Christ, who was crucified for our salvation.

Verse for Memorization:

Paul said: “Neither he, who plants, is anything, nor he who waters, but God who helps the plant grow” 1 Cor. 3:7.

1. Answer the questions

- a. Where did Apollos come from and who was the founder of that city?
- b. Name some places where Apollos did his mission work?
- c. Who was Aquila and Priscilla?
- d. How was the relationship of Apollos with Paul?
- e. What was the problem of Corinth?

2. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Apollos had a thorough knowledge of _____
- b. Paul, Aquila and Priscilla were _____ by profession.
- c. Apollos proved from the scriptures that Jesus was the _____

3. Activities

- Mark the location of Alexandria, Ephesus and Corinth in a map.
- Help the children to make a drama in which they can appreciate each other by accepting the talents of others.
- Find Christian qualities, which we can find in Paul and Apollos

P-

A-

U- Upright

L- Love for Christ

A-

P-

O-

L-

O-

S- Scripture Knowledge

Prayer

“Our loving Father, we thank and praise you for all the talents which you have given us. Fill us with your wisdom and understanding so that we may be able to use our skills for the glorification of your name. Amen.”

LESSON - 14

THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD

In the lessons learnt so far, we have seen how God makes use of the human co-operation for his engagements in this world. This is not because He is incapable of doing things on His own, but because He wants to maintain the dignity of human beings. God created human beings above all other beings including the angels; human beings are inferior only to God (Ps. 8:5-6). Now that God wants to incorporate human beings in His divine plan and its execution, He selects people from everywhere and appoints them in appropriate places. Let us see the nature of the people, whom God called to build up His nation.

The Patriarchs

When Abraham was chosen God asked him to leave his country, his relatives and his father's home. Then Abraham lived according to God's guidance and principles. So did his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Joseph, his great grandson had many sufferings just because he was chosen by God for a definite purpose, to feed the Egyptians. He counted these sufferings neither as curses from God nor as occasions where God left him alone. Joseph said to his brothers who were ashamed of their cruelty to him; "Do not be upset or blame yourselves because you sold me here; It was really God who sent me ahead of you to save people's lives" (Gen. 45:5). See this is the right attitude of one who is called by His son/daughter.

The Kings

Sometimes God selected people to rule over the country on his behalf. The Judges like Samson and Jephthah were some among them; women like Deborah could defeat powerful enemies because of the power of God. The Israelite kings were also the “sons of God”. But some of them forgot the hand of God and thought what they did was their own achievement. These people went away from the path of God and failed in their duty. King David and Solomon were the best examples of the kings chosen by God. They obeyed God in all things and waited for God’s intervention, when there was a problem in their country. When they did something wrong, these people considered it as an occasion to get refined. See the prayer of David immediately after Prophet Nathan told him that he was not going to build the Temple: “You know me your servant. It was your will and purpose to do this; you have done all these great things in order to teach me” (2 Sam.8:20-21).

The Prophets

Prophets were a group of people who served the Lord as His companions as well as servants. Some of them were chosen even while they were in the womb of their mother (Jer. 1:4). Moses was a good example for the life of a prophet. He lived with his people and suffered with them. Prophets were the spokespersons for God. They shared the wisdom of God and asked the people to lead a good life. Sometimes they interpreted things like earth quakes, floods, famine etc. As per their guidance the Israelites fasted and gave due penalties. The prophets had a rough and tough life, and hid clothing, food and accommodation were not those of the others. Sometimes they were tortured and scandalized. But these did not consider the sufferings as means for renewal.

Sons and daughters of God

St. Paul, himself being an instrument of God, says; “All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children” (Rom. 8:19). That means the universe needs today sons and daughters to lead it. The Patriarchs like Abraham, Jacob and Joseph did it. God appointed Moses to deliver his people from the Egyptian bondage. The kings like David and prophets like Jeremiah were good representatives of God on this earth. In the New Testament also we see a number of people chosen by God like St. Mary, who bore the Son of God or St. Paul, who preached the Gospel around the world. Sons and daughters of God have the following qualities:

- a. They recognize the Call of God and submit themselves to God’s will.
- b. They follow the guidance of God in every step they take in their life.
- c. They would not count their gains and losses; they know that everything is as per God’s plan.
- d. They live not for themselves but for God.

Verse for Memorization:

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” Matthew 5: 44-45.

1. Answer the Questions:

- Why does God need human co-operation?
- What is the nature of human creation?
- Name a daughter of God from the period of Judges.
- Name some of the Patriarchs of Israel?
- What are the features of a son/daughter of God?

2. Fill up the blanks:

- "It was really _____ who sent me ahead of you".
- God created human beings _____ all other creations.
- "You did all these great things in order to _____ me".
- Jeremiah was called from his mother's _____.

3. Activity

- Make a list of the sons and daughters of lessons 8 to 13.
- Ask the students to mention some of the sons and daughters of God, whom they know.

Prayer

"Lord I know that you need me in this world. Make me clear in what ways I can be your instrument. Help me to live according to your Divine Call. Amen."

ST. THOMAS : THE APOSTLE OF INDIA

As St. Paul and others spread the Gospel of Christ in the Roman Empire St. Thomas, one among the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ came to India in A.D.52. He preached in India in the first century itself, when there were no Churches in the European countries. Therefore the Orthodox Christianity of India is proud of the fact that it conforms strictly to the faith and practices of the Early Church. Many scholars both from India and abroad have studied the history of Christianity of India. They maintain two traditions which strongly support the arrival of St. Thomas in India: (i) The South Indian Tradition and (ii) The North Indian Tradition.

(i) The South Indian (Kerala) Tradition

The Kerala tradition maintains that St. Thomas landed at Muziriz (Cranganore) and with his work people were converted at seven places in Kerala and churches were built at these places. Many historians support this tradition. The Christian community in Kerala was known as the St. Thomas Christians. The port where the Apostle landed and the places where he baptized different families and where he was martyred and buried are considered still



as part of this tradition. This tradition is preserved and kept alive by popular art forms such as *Margamkali Pattu*, *Ramban pattu* etc.

It is said that the first ever people converted by St. Thomas were from upper caste Hindu families called Kali, Kaliyankal, Sankarapuri and Pakalomattom. He established churches at seven places namely Kollam, Kodungalloor (Cranganore), Palur, Paravur, Niranam, Nilackel (Chayal) and Gokhamangalam. In addition to these he established one more church at Thiruvancode in Tamil Nadu, which is called the *Arapally (Half Church)*. After his work in Kerala, St. Thomas proceeded to the eastern coast of India. Some historians say that he went up to places like China. St. Thomas was killed by Tamil brahmins and he was buried at Mylapore (near Madras) in A.D. 72. His martyrdom is commemorated on 21st December.

(ii) The North Indian Tradition

According to this tradition the place where St. Thomas came was not the south-western part of India, but the North India, which covered even Pakistan and Afghanistan in those days. We have a number of references in the writings of ancient authors regarding this. The Apocryphal book 'the Acts of Judas Thomas' is considered as an important evidence by many authors. This book contains the story that a merchant called Habhan brought St. Thomas to the king Gondaphorous in India as if he was a carpenter. At that time the king wanted to build a palace and he gave a huge amount to Thomas for that purpose. However, our Apostle was a friend of the poor and he spent the whole money for them. Naturally, Thomas was put in prison and it was sure that he would be killed. But at this time a prince in the palace named Gad died. Just before his burial the prince rose up and explained what he saw in heaven: there was a golden palace with the inscription of king Gondophoros. The king was happy

not only to get back the life of the prince but also to know that he had a palace in heaven. Thus St. Thomas was released from prison.

The St. Thomas Christians of Kerala

Whatever be the debate about the place of the arrival of St. Thomas in India, it is an accepted fact that a community of Christians lived in Kerala from time immemorial. On the contrary the historians have no information about a Christian community in the ancient North-West India. An ancient book called 'The Doctrines of the Apostles' written in Persia around A.D 250 says that India and the countries around it received the Apostolic succession from St. Thomas. St. Ephrem, the famous poet of the Syrian Church had written in 4th century AD about our land which was purified by St. Thomas, the Apostle. *Cosmos Indicoplaestes*, an ancient merchant traveler of Alexandria who came to India around 525 A.D says: 'In the country called Male (Malabar), where pepper grows, there is a place called Kalliana (Kollam). There is a Bishop and many Christians'. There are many more evidences to support the fact that St. Thomas came to South India and that he is the Apostle of India.

Due to the colonization of India by countries like Portugal and England some of the the children of the ancient St. Thomas Christians of Kerala are now following both Catholic (Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara) and Protestant (Mar Thoma, CSI and Anglicans) traditions. However the Orthodox Church of India is the only one who follows the undivided history and faith of the Church founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Verse for Memorization:

Thomas said, "Let us also go that we may die with Him" St. John 11:16.

1. Answer the questions

- a. Which are the two traditions concerning the arrival of St. Thomas in India?
- b. Name the seven places where St. Thomas established churches?
- c. Narrate the story of the Acts of Thomas.
- d. Where do the children of St. Thomas Christians belong?
- e. Quote *Cosmos Indicoplaestes*.

2. Fill in the Blanks

- a. The martyrdom of St. Thomas is commemorated on _____
- b. _____ is an ancient travelogue.
- c. The followers of the Church founded by St. Thomas are called _____

3. Activities

- a. Teach the students a *Margamkali Pattu* with the help of a senior member of the parish.
- b. Make a skit as per the story of the *Acts of Judas Thomas*.

Prayer

“Lord we thank you for sending one of your disciples to India. Make us also good disciples so that we can propagate your Gospel in to all corners of this country. Amen”.

LESSON - 16

ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS IN INDIA

In an earlier lesson we have learnt that St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ came to India and established a Church here. The people who belonged to this Church were known as St. Thomas Christians. They continued as one church in Malankara till the arrival of Portuguese. Later, some of the St. Thomas Christians got separated from the mother church under various circumstances and they had founded either independent churches of their own, or they became part of the Catholic and other Protestant churches. The main reasons for such divisions were the intervention of Portuguese and the contact of St. Thomas Christians with the western missionaries. Our church is the only one which follows the ancient tradition and continues as the mother church for all these groups. Let us see where these children of St. Thomas who left the mother church are now.

Catholic Christians of India

Two groups of the Roman Catholic Church of India are splinter groups of the old St. Thomas Christians. They remain as two autonomous *rites (reeth)* under the Pope of Vatican. They are the *Syro-Malabar Christians* and the *Syro-Malankara Christians*.

a) Syro-Malabar Church

In the ancient days, the Church in Kerala was purely independent and their leader was called an Arch Deacon. Then there was no external interference of any kind. This system continued till the arrival of Portuguese in India. But since the arrival of Vasco de Gama in India in 1498 things

have changed. Gradually the Portuguese influence in India was increasing. The Roman Catholic missionaries who came from that land tried to bring the Malankara church into their fold. The famous Synod of Diamper (Udayamperoor Sunnahados) of 1599 paved the way for it officially. In that meeting a commendable number of St. Thomas Christians accepted the Roman Catholic faith.

Those who wanted to remain in their old Church protested the move of the Roman Catholic Church and assembled at a place called Mattancherry in 1653. They had gathered together around a cross, tied a rope on the cross and took a pledge against the Roman Catholic plot. Since the number of people who held the rope was many the cross bent down. Therefore this event is known in history as the *Oath of Koonen Cross*. The group of people who wanted to continue in the Catholic tradition established a new church under the supremacy of the Pope. This Church is called the *Syro-Malabar Church* and today the head of this church is a Major Arch Bishop.

b) Syro-Malankara Church

The next migration into the Roman Catholic Church happened in the 20th century. Mar Ivanios, a bishop of the Malankara Orthodox Church left our church because of certain personal motives and joined the Catholic Church in 1930. With the support of the Catholic Church by various means Mar Ivanios could gather a group with him. They have not joined the Syro-Malabar Community, which was already Roman Catholic in nature. But they continued as a separate group known as the Malankara Catholics or the *Syro-Malankara Church*. They continue their orthodox worship and traditions, but consider the Pope as their head. Recently, this Church also has been given the status of Major Arch Diocese. The Major Arch Bishop, the head of this church resides at Trivandrum.

Protestant Christians of India

Malankara church had close association with various western missionaries in the 19th century. Due to the allegiance of some of the St. Thomas Christians towards the Western and Protestant theology of the missionaries the Church was divided into following groups.

a) Malankara Marthoma Syrian Church

The contact of the Malankara Church with the CMS missionaries of England was very close. Some of these missionaries were appointed as teachers in our Old Seminary of Kottayam, which was established in 1815. These people started preaching against the faith and traditions of our church and some of our people got influenced by it. One of the teachers called Abraham Malpan was highly attracted by their protestant theology and he started editing the book of our Holy Qurbana (*Qurbana Thaksa*) and by doing this he got separated from the Church (1889).

During this period a deacon called Palakunnathu Mathew, a nephew of Abraham Malpan, made a visit to the Patriarch of Antioch and he got consecrated as a Bishop with title Mathews Mar Athanasius in 1842. After his return to Malankara he had entered in to a dispute with the Metropolitan of Malankara for leadership. But he failed in this attempt as the court verdict on the issue was against him. Then he started a separate Church with the title *Marthoma Syrian Church*. Its head is called Mar Thoma Metropolitan and his residence is at Tiruvalla. (The world famous Maramon Convention is conducted by the Marthoma Church every year in February).

b) Other Protestant Churches

A small group of the St. Thomas Christians joined the Church of the British missionaries called the *Church of England* or the *Anglican*

Church. Rev. George Mathen of Mallappally was their leader. In 1879 they formed a diocese for Travancore and Cochin. Later on in 1947 this Church got associated with protestant Churches founded by other European missionaries who worked in South India. These Churches were the Reformed Church, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Together they formed a single Church called the *Church of South India (CSI)* in 1947.

However, the converts who came from the lower castes wanted to maintain their identity and they got separated from the CSI in 1964 and they call themselves the *Anglican Church of India*.

Meanwhile the Marthoma Church itself was divided later in 1961 and a small group called themselves the *St Thomas Evangelical Church of India*.

Churches with Middle Eastern Roots

Among the St. Thomas Christians there are two small Churches, which still have their Middle Eastern traditions, even though they had separated from the mother Church. They are the following:

a) Malabar Independent Syrian Church (Thozhiyoor Church)

This is a small Church, which maintains the faith and traditions of the Malnakara Orthodox Church even after separating from it. In 1761 Mar Gregorios, a visitor bishop from Antioch, gave the Episcopal ordination to a priest called Kattumangattu Abraham with title Mar Coorilos. This incident took place without the consent of the chief of the St. Thomas Christians called Marthoma VI. He had started an Independent church in the Malabar area and it is known as *Malabar Independent Syrian Church* or *the Thozhiyoor Church*. This Church maintains the faith and traditions

of the Malankara Orthodox Church and there had been various occasions when both the Churches helped each other.

b) The Assyrian Church

(Chaldean Syrian Church of the East.)

This is a St Thomas community of Kerala who maintained the East Syrian (Persian) tradition. Their headquarters is as at Trichur and they have a few parishes in and around Trichur. The head of the church is Chaldean Metropolitan. He is under the Patriarch of the Chaldean Church in Baghdad (Iraq). Thus the St. Thomas Christians belong to eight denominations other than the Malankara Orthodox Church.

Verse for Memorization:

“Go to all nations and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit” St. Matthew 28:19.

1. Answer the Questions

- What was the basic reason for the division of the St. Thomas Christians?
- What is the *Oath of the Coonen Cross*?
- What do you mean by the Assyrian Church?
- When did the Church of South India formed?
- What is Maramon Convention?

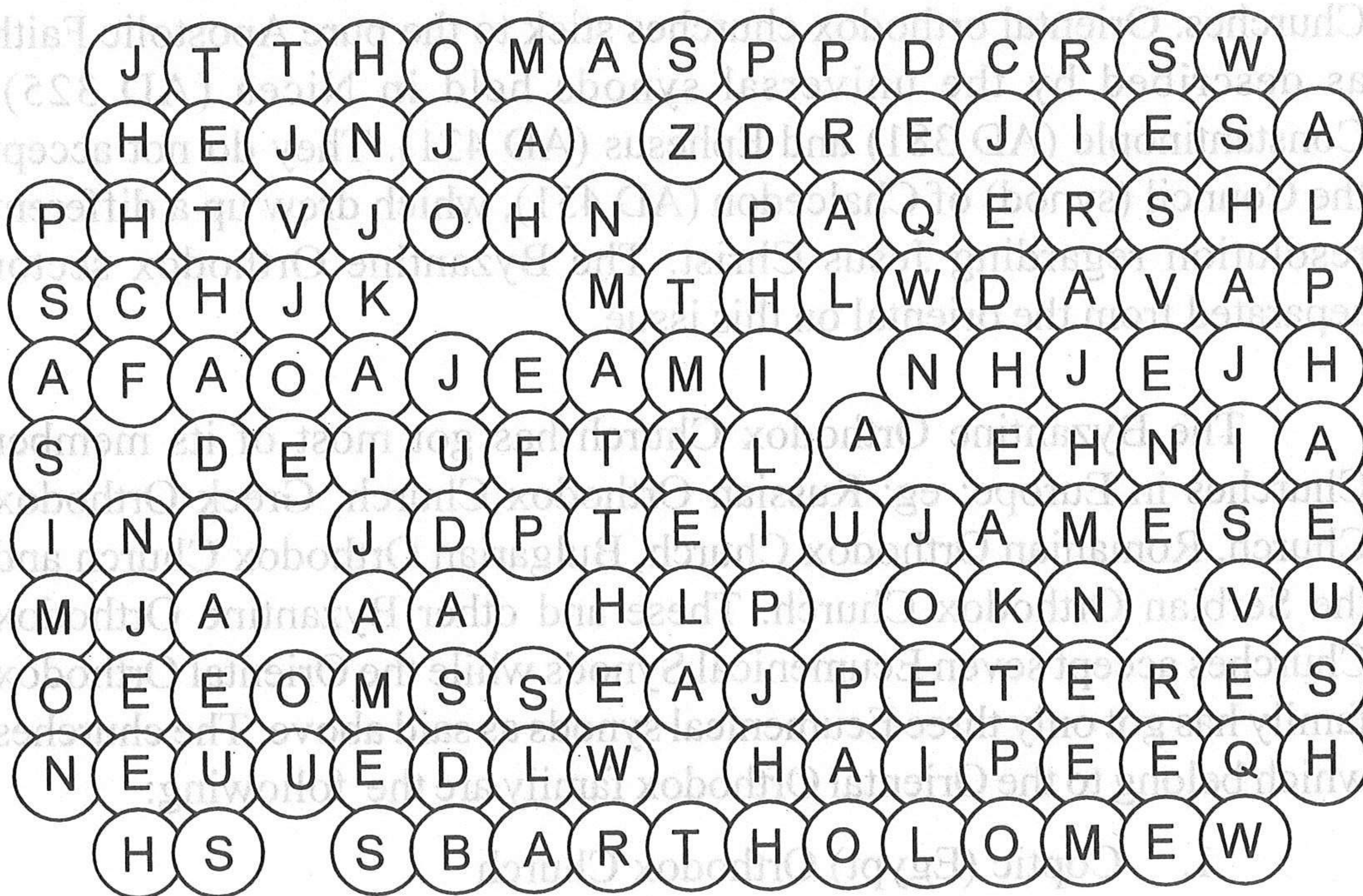
2. Fill in the blanks

- _____ edited the Qurbana Thaksa.
- The Synod of Diamper met in _____.
- _____ started the Syro-Malankara Church.
- The other name of Thozhiyoor Church is _____.

e. The original St. Thomas Christians are now in _____ denominations.

3. Activity

- a. Ask the children to make a table of the above Churches with their names, year of formation and the title of their leader and the place of his headquarters.
- b. Try to Identify the denominations of churches near to your house/home parish.
- c. Do you remember the names of the disciples of our Lord Jesus. Locate them from the crowd below. (Refer Mk.3: 16-19)



Prayer

“Lord, we thank you for sending your Apostle Thomas to India. We pray for the unification of all the St. Thomas Christians under the one and single Apostolic Faith.”

LESSON - 17

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

We have already learnt in the previous classes that the Christians around the world are known in three different groups as Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants. The Orthodox Church has got two families of Christians: Oriental orthodox Churches and Byzantine (Eastern) Orthodox Churches. Oriental orthodox churches stick to the pure Apostolic Faith as described by the universal synods held in Nicea (AD 325), Constantinople (AD 381) and Ephesus (AD 431). They do not accept the Council (synod) of Chalcedon (AD 451), which drew up a different resolution regarding Jesus Christ. The Byzantine Orthodox sector separated from the oriental on this issue.

The Byzantine Orthodox Church has got most of its member Churches in Europe: eg: Russian Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church. These and other Byzantine Orthodox Churches accept seven Ecumenical Synods while the Oriental Orthodox family has got only three Ecumenical synods as said above. The churches which belong to the Oriental Orthodox family are the following:

1. Coptic (Egypt) Orthodox Church
2. Syrian (Antioch) Orthodox Church
3. Ethiopian Orthodox Church
4. Armenian Orthodox Church
5. Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church
6. Eritrean Orthodox Church

1. Coptic Orthodox Church: Coptic Church (the word Copt stands for Egypt) is founded by St. Mark, one of the evangelists and the author of fourth gospel. He was martyred in A.D 68. The supreme head of Coptic Church is known as 'Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the see of St. Mark'. The present occupant of this throne is His Holiness Pope Shenuda III. The church had contributed much to the entire world of humanity through the deep-rooted monastic movement developed by St. Antony and St. Pachomios. The Catechetical School of Alexandria was a place of high scholarship.

2. Syrian (Antioch) Orthodox Church: St. Peter had started the church in Antioch as evident from the Acts of Apostles (Acts 11: 19-27, 14:21-26). The church had an ancient Catechetical School of Antioch and it was always engaged in theological debates with the theological School of Alexandria. In the ancient days it was a powerful Christian center along with Rome, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Constantinople. But later on it had become weak due to various reasons including the invasion of Syria by the Muslims. Now the strength of this church is less than two lakhs. Though the church is known as Antiochian, presently it is not stationed in Antioch, because of the socio-political situations. One group of the Orthodox Christians of India (Jacobites) claims the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch.

3. Armenian Church: Apostle Thaddeus and Bartholomew founded the Church in Armenia. Armenians are considered to be the successors of Japheth, the son of Noah (Noah's ark rested on Mt. Ararat in Armenia). In the beginning Armenia was a Christian country and the Armenian Orthodox Church was the national religion. But later on the country was divided into Persian and Greek empires. Since the arrival of the Turks the Armenians suffered great persecutions and during the First World War (1914-1918) two million Armenians were killed. In 1920

Armenia became a part of the Soviet Union and with the disintegration of it the country suffered a lot. The Armenian Orthodox Church has got four million people and the head of Armenian Church is called 'The Supreme Catholicos-Patriarch of Armenia'. His residence is at Etchmiadzin near the Armenian capital Yerevan. There is a second center of the Church under the Catholicate of Cilicia, which is situated at Antilyas in Lebanon.

4. Ethiopian Orthodox Church: It is believed that the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia was with the baptism of Eunuch from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40) by Apostle Philip. There was a very old Jewish colony in Ethiopia and even today the church follows some of the traditions of Jews. Till 1959 the Ethiopian Church was under the jurisdiction of the Coptic Patriarch. The designation of the supreme head of Ethiopian Church is Catholicos- Patriarch the first Patriarch was Abuna Basilios. The headquarters is at Addis-Abba. More than half of the population of Ethiopia belongs to the Orthodox Church, which was declared as a state religion by Emperor Hailie Selassie. After his assassination in 1974 the Church was divided and it is under tremendous pressure from the political developments of the country.

5. Eritrean Orthodox Church: This is a new member in the oriental orthodox family which was separated from the Ethiopian Church in 1993. The political problems within the country of Ethiopia divided not only the land but also the Church in to two: Ethiopian and Eritrean. Along with the Ethiopians this Church has its starting point in the arrival of the Nine Saints who fled during the persecution of the Byzantine Emperor after the Council of Chalcedon. Their divine service was in the *Ge'ez* language and it was only during the reign of Hailie Selassie they got a Bible in the *Amharez* language. The Church of Eritrea has its own Patriarch and is in communion with other Oriental Churches.

6. Malankara (Indian Orthodox) Church: The history of the Malankara Church begins with the mission of St. Thomas in India. The church had close relationship with the Persian church and later on with the Syrian Church. After the arrival of the Portuguese and other western missionaries the Church had contacts with the Roman Catholic Church and other European Churches. It is unfortunate that every foreign contact had its impact on this Church, because the original St. Thomas Christians are now divided into various small churches. The supreme head of the Indian Orthodox Church is the Catholicos, who has his headquarters at Devalokam (Kottayam) in Kerala.

Verse for Memorization:

“It was in Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.”
Acts 11:26.

1. Answer the Questions

- a. Which are the two branches of the Orthodox Church of the world?
- b. Name the churches in the Oriental Orthodox family?
- c. What is the major difference between the two families of the Orthodox Church?
- d. How many Oriental Orthodox Churches are there in the continent of Africa?
- e. Name some major Churches of the Byzantine Orthodox family?

2. Fill in the Blanks

- (a) The Apostles _____ and _____ founded the Church in Armenia.
- (b) Coptic Orthodox Church is the Church of _____
- (c) _____ was the founder of the Church of Antioch.

(d) _____ and _____ were two ancient theological schools.

(e) The head quarter of the Malankara Orthodox Church is at _____

3. Activities

- Make a table with three columns containing Names of the members of Oriental Orthodox Churches, their head quarters and the supreme heads of the churches.
- Bring a map of the world and find out the location/areas of Oriental Orthodox Churches.
- Prepare a chart depicting mother church in the center and other Christian churches (learned in lesson 16) around it. Do this as a group project.

Prayer

“Lord, we pray for all the Oriental Orthodox Churches and their members around the world. Help all the churches to have very good relationship between them and to have some common activities. Amen.”

*If you commit a mistake,
don't try to cover but accept it.
Your parents and teachers will
feel proud when you accept it.
And try not to repeat the same
mistakes.*

THE APOLOGISTS

The *Apologists* were Christian writers, who protected their faith during the time of severe persecution. During the first three centuries of the Common Era (CE/AD) every Christian had to reckon with the possibility of being put to death for their faith. The Christians had to face the fundamental Jews on the one hand and the Roman Emperors on the other. Even there were enemies within the Church. These were heretics who taught new theologies which were incompatible with the Bible and teachings of the Church. Since Christianity as a new religion of the Roman Empire had neither a constitution, nor a formal creed or a handbook of the doctrines at that time, the Apologists had to defend their faith before the persecutors and heretics. Their literary works are commonly called the *Apologetics*.

The Contributions of the Apologists

The important contributions of the writings of the Apologists were the following:

1. The Apologists tried to convince the government officials that they were not a threat to the Empire and thus to escape persecution.
2. The Apologists were good interpreters of the Bible. They had refuted the heresies of the Early Church like that of the Gnosticism.
3. The Apologists formulated some of the important doctrines of the Church.

The Great Apologists

It is difficult to write about all the Apologists. The first great Apologist was **Justin Martyr** (100-165 CE), who was put to death by the Roman Emperor. His great apologetic work was *the Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. His disciple and the great Syrian scholar **Tatian** combined the four Gospels, which is known as the *Diatessaron*. The Gospel readings we have on Good Friday is a sample of this; it contains the four versions of one event one after the other. **Irenaeus of Lyons** had a big debate with the Gnostics. The last mentioned distorted the faith of the *Orthodox Church* and they introduced new theologies. Irenaeus laid the foundation for a sound teaching about the Trinity. His famous work is called *Against Heresies*.

The next great Apologist was **Tertullian of Carthage**, who was a lawyer by profession. He wrote extensively against *Marcion*, a heretic. During this time there was a theological School at Alexandria in Egypt. **Clement of Alexandria** was a leader of this and he is known as the first Christian who produced a systematic treatise on Ethics, *The Tutor*. **Origen** also belonged to this school and he was a prolific writer. His commentaries about the Bible were famous theological works.

Apologetic Responsibility of the Church

Even today we have an apologetic responsibility. While our Church wants to maintain the ancient teachings of the *Orthodox Church* of the Apostles and Apologetics many heretical teachings misdirect our believers. Pentecostalism and New Age Churches are propagating beliefs which are *unorthodox* and therefore *heretical*. They may quote from the Bible, but many of their teachings are against the faith of the Early Church. Even the Gnostics and other heretics had a good knowledge about Biblical verses.

But once they had started to teach against the Faith and Traditions of the Apostolic Church the Apologists countered by producing new literature, in which they interpreted the Bible according to the need of the hour.

The life of Apologists is a lesson for us. We should not become prey to the heresies. Rather we have to defend our *Orthodox Faith*. A series of new literature is to be produced in the languages, in which our youngsters are well versed. Our theologians are doing a wonderful work in this regard. The *40 Reasons for Infant Baptism* written by H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios is a good apologetic work. A deep understanding about the writings of the Apologists will help you for taking up the apologetic responsibility of the Church. For this the writings of people like Irenaeus, Clement or Origen should be read.

Verse for Memorization:

“Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be accursed” Galatians 1:8.

1. **Answer the questions**

- a. Who are Apologists?
- b. What is a heresy?
- c. What is meant by Apologetics?
- d. What were the contributions of Apologists?
- e. Do we need Apologetics today? Why?

2. **Fill in the Blanks**

- a. Tatian was a disciple of _____
- b. *Diatessaron* was a combination of the _____
- c. The heretics distorted the faith of the _____

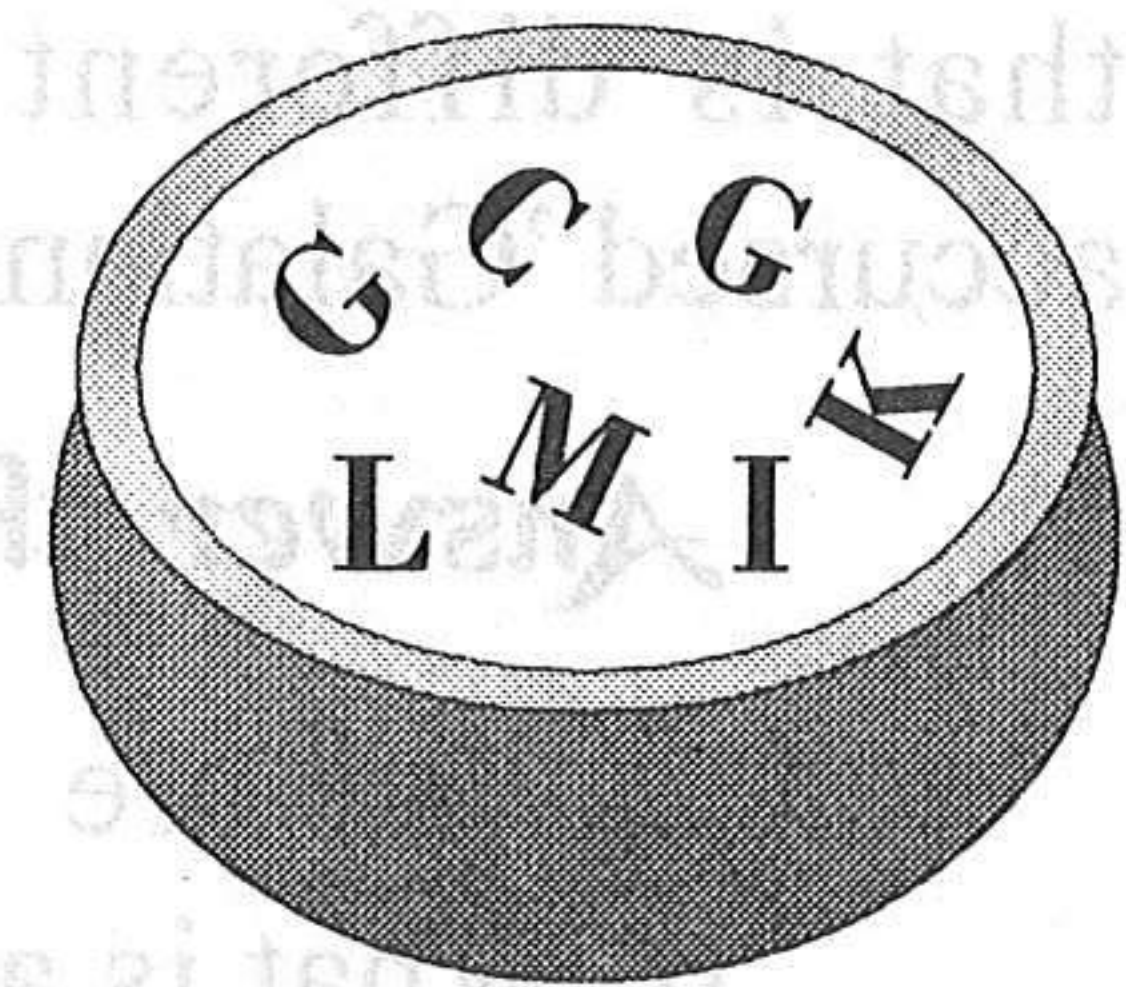
3. Match the Following

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ireaneus | a. Diatessaron |
| 2. Tertullian | b. The Tutor |
| 3. Justin Martyr | c. Against Heresies |
| 4. Clement of Alexandria | d. Lawyer |
| 5. Tatian | e. Dialogue with Trypho |

4. Activities

- Mention some of the important heresies spread today.
- Help the students to go through any of a short apologetical work of our theologians.
- The first letter of each word is missing in the following text. Find the missing word from the pot and make meaningful words. Now read the sentence. See; Its your slogan!

○	○	○	○	○	○
A	O	H	O	O	E
M	D	I	D	V	
	'S	L		E	
		D		S	



Prayer

“Lord help us not deviate from the faith of your Apostles. Guide us with your Holy Spirit so that we may not turn to heretical teachings. Amen.”

THE EDICT OF MILAN

The Edict of Milan (AD 313) marked one of the most distinct turning points in the history of Christianity. For nearly three hundred years, Christianity was perhaps the only illegal religion in Roman empire, which could withstand the continuous persecution both from the sides of the Jews and from the side of the Roman government. But from Constantine (306 CE onwards) Christianity became the official religion of the Empire. This was declared by Constantine through an official document called the Edict of Milan.

Persecution by Roman Emperors

Last year we learned that Christians had to undergo severe persecution from the Roman emperors. This was started by Nero in the year A.D.60 and was continued by his followers. Many believers sacrificed their lives for their faith in God. During this persecution St. Peter was crucified and St. Paul was killed. The worst period of Christian persecution was during the reign of Domitian and Diocletian. The latter ordered that the churches should be pulled down, Bibles and Christian books must be burned and all Christian worship should be stopped.

However, situation changed later. Diocletian appointed two of his assistants as *Caesars* in his Empire; Constantius Chlorus was in charge of the West and Galerius was in the East. On the death of Constantius his son Constantine was proclaimed as Emperor by the army. The last mentioned was attracted by Christianity and this had a lasting impact on the history of Christianity.

Conversion of Constantine

In A.D 312, Constantine had to face a severe battle at Milvian Bridge near Rome. After the battle, either he or his rival would rule in the western capital. The other would be dead. During this time he saw the sign of the Cross in the sky and in the night before the battle he had a dream. Christ bearing a cross appeared to him in that dream and told him: "in this sign you will conquer". He ordered to emblazon the cross on the standard of the army and to fight under that banner.

This gave him an outstanding victory over the pagan Emperor Maxentius; thus he became the ruler over Africa and Italy and the west. Constantine went into the field under his Christian sign and won the battle. This led to a great change from persecution to imperial favor. To commemorate his victory and conversion to Christianity he erected a statue of himself in the capital city of Rome bearing a cross, with an inscription that he had liberated Rome and the Empire from tyranny by the help of Christ and by virtue of the sign of the cross. Constantine founded a new Christian city called Constantinople and it became the capital of Roman Empire. Later Constantinople became a Patriarchate.

The Edict of Milan

Later Emperor Constantine and his eastern counterpart Emperor Licinus met at Milan and discussed issues related to the religious policies. They have issued a joint letter to be circulated among the governors and on 13th June 313 CE they declared that the Empire would be neutral with regard to religious worship. This is known as the Edict of Milan. The Edict of Milan officially removed all obstacles for practicing of Christianity and other religions. Thus all religions became legal within the Roman Empire. Actually the Edict was intended at first to legalize Christianity.

The Edict of Milan transformed the status of Christianity, as it initiated the period known by Christian historians as the time of the Peace of the Church. This gave Christians as well as Pagans the unrestricted freedom in all religious matters and all the citizens enjoyed the freedom of conscience. A Christian was no longer considered a criminal because of his faith. Thus Constantine became the first emperor who actually promoted and granted favors to the Church and its members.

Important Consequences of the Edict

Following were the important consequences of the Edict of Milan:

1. Sunday and December 25th were made public holidays.
2. Grants were given from the official treasury for church buildings and the support of the clergy.
3. The clergy were exempted from giving taxes.
4. The eagle sign of the Empire was replaced by the sign of a cross.
5. The Emperor started involving in the affairs of the Church actively to settle the problems of doctrinal disputes and divisions.

Thus Edict of Milan could be considered as a milestone in the growth of Christianity. The Church adopted a hierarchical system as in the Empire. The best example was accepting the division of the Empire as Dioceses in the Church also. The official dress of the priests and bishops also resembled those of governors and other officials. The Emperor himself was engaged in settling the interior problems of the Church. All the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon

were conducted by the Emperor of Rome. The last mentioned had its negative impacts also in the history of the Church.

What is ideal in every country is to get the freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and freedom of assembling for religious purpose. Indians can definitely claim that these rights are protected in the Constitution of India. As per this any religious group can be formed and it can grow in this land. But some of the modern political outfits threaten the minorities and they think that the freedom of religion is only for the majority religion. Technically speaking Christians can evangelize, construct churches, run educational institutions and start any kind of humanitarian works in any part of this country, which maintains basically a secular and democratic society.

Verse for Memorization:

1 Thes 5:15- "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all."

1. Answer the questions

- a. What is Edict of Milan?
- b. What are the events led to Edict of Milan?
- c. Write a short note on the conversion of Constantine.
- d. How the Edict of Milan help the Christians of that time?

2. Fill in the Blanks

- a. The Edict of Milan was issued by _____ and _____

- b. The Edict of Milan was issued in the year _____
- c. The new city founded by Constantine was called _____
- d. St. Peter and St. Paul were killed during the persecution of Emperor _____.

3. Match the Following

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Constantius | a) Lucius |
| 2. Domitian | b) Galerius |
| 3. Constantine | c) New Capital of Roman Empire |
| 4. Constantinople | d) Diocletian |

4. Activity

1. Help the students understand the religious freedom we enjoy in India.
2. Ask the children to draft an *Edict* of their own, which would ensure the freedom of worship, construction of Churches, freedom for conversion etc.

Prayer

“Lord we thank you for keeping us in a secular country. Lead us away from us all kinds of political oppressions and religious fundamentalism. Help our country and its people to have religious brotherhood. Amen.”

FEAST OF ANNUNCIATION, FEAST OF NATIVITY

The feasts related to the earthly life of Jesus are very important for us. These are called *Moronoyo Perunals* (Feasts related to our Lord). *Eldho* (Christmas), *Danaha* (Epiphany), *Mayaltho* (Entry of Jesus in to the Temple), *Sumoro* (Annunciation to Mary) *Kyomtho* (Easter), *Suloko* (Ascension of Jesus), and *Shunoyo* are the main *Moronoyo Perunals*. Let us learn more about the Feast of Annunciation and the Feast of Nativity in this class.

The Feast of Annunciation

This is the feast of the announcement of the birth of Jesus. This Feast is on March 25 of every year and there will be a Holy Qurbana in every parish on that day. Normally there will not be a Qurbana on Fasting days; but if a *Moronoyo Perunal* falls on a fasting day or even on a Good Friday, the priests have to celebrate a Holy Qurbana on that day.

The Biblical basis for the origin of this feast is the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel (Lk 1:26-38). There we read how Gabriel, an angel of God, appears to Mary and gives the announcement about the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The angel Gabriel says that the child which Mary is going to bear "will be the son of the Most High" and he "will reign over the house of Jacob for ever and his kingdom shall have no end. Two prayers, which we use daily are taken from this anecdote. They are the following:

a) *Hail Mary...*: The last prayer of our Quoma is formed out of the conversation between Mary and the angel and that between Mary and Elizabeth. The angel calls her "Hail Mary, full of Grace" and says "our Lord is with you...". Elizabeth says "you are blessed among you ...".

We add a plea at the end of the prayer so that Mary's intercession will help us just as the family of Cana experienced during the marriage.

b) *Magnificat* : The song of Mary (Lk 1:46-55) is called the *Magnificat* in Latin, declare the secrets of the announcement. We use this song as a prayer in our *Night Vigil (Rathri Prarthana)* every day. In her song Mary acknowledges the following facts:

1. The mighty one has done great things for her.
2. God's mercy extends to those who fear him from generation to generation.
3. God brings down the rulers from their thrones but he lifts up the lowly.
4. God fills the hungry, even when the rich are sent away empty handed.
5. God remembers His promises to the People of God, which he made during the time of Abraham and He fulfills them.

So when we observe the day of the feast of Annunciation to Mary we have to remember what God has done for the humanity and how He used a small girl as an instrument for fulfilling His promises to mankind.

The Feast of Nativity

The Feast of Nativity is on December 25 and it is called Christmas in English and *Yeldo* in Syriac. The Old English *Cristes Maesse* means the Mass of Christ. The earliest evidence for celebrations of Birth of Christ is from Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200 CE), who makes a comment about certain Egyptian theologians, who put the date of the Birth of Christ erroneously on 25 Pachon (20th May), thinking that the ninth month, in which Christ was born, was the ninth of their own calendar. The difference on the date of Christmas varied in antiquity from place to place and even today it is on Dec.25 for the majority, whereas for a part of Orthodox Christianity it is on January sixth (eg: Russian Orthodox Church).

Some special practices of Christmas

Right through the history we see the development of observing the Feast of Nativity of our Lord with special features. In the European countries the four Sundays preceding the Christmas are called *Advent Sundays* and they have special prayers and celebrations on those days. The decoration of the *Christmas Tree*, sending of *Christmas Cards*, preparation of *Christmas Cake* and the *Christmas Carol* make the festival more jubilant. The *Santa Claus* is none other than *St. Nicholas*, a Russian Orthodox bishop, who used to put small gifts in to the stockings of poor children during the Christmas. In spite of the bitter cold Winter of Russia, Nicholas came in the midnight quietly without being noticed by others, because he loved the poor and small children.

Special worship of Christmas

The special service for the feast of Christmas during the night is important for us. Since Jesus was born in the night we observe his birthday with a liturgical service in the night. On the day a procession around the Church is conducted before the Holy Qurbana starts. When the procession reaches the western side of the Church, people stand around a pit which is made in the shape of a Cross. Dry palm leaves used during the previous Palm Sunday is used for filling the pit. The priest read from the Gospel regarding the birth of Jesus and put fire in the pit in the middle of reading. Then the priest and the altar assistants followed by the the people walk around the fire and put frankincense (*kunthirikkum*) in it. It symbolizes the gifts offered by the three Magi (*gold, myrrh and frankincense*) in Bethlehem. During this occasion we sing the *Angelic Hymn* (How the angels and archangels.../ Athyunnathangalil Swargiya Malakhamar...).

Verse for Memorization:

“My heart praises the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Savior, for he has remembered me, his lowly servant.” Luke 1:46.

1. **Answer the questions**

1. What is a *Moronoyo Perunal*?
2. Which were the main contents of Mary's Song?
3. When do we use the *Magnificat* as a prayer?
4. Explain shortly the special worship of Christmas.
5. Name another feast, for which also we have a Night Vigil.

2. **Give the meaning of the following words:**

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| a) Magnificat | b) Night Vigil |
| c) Yaldo | d) Danaha |
| e) Christmas | |

3. **Activities**

- a. Ask the students to make a skit based upon Christmas.
- b. Sing a Christmas song.
- c. Give suitable words for each letter from the Christmas story

C	-	
H	-	Herod the Great
R	-	
I	-	
S	-	
T	-	
M	-	Magi from the East
A	-	
S	-	Salvation for all

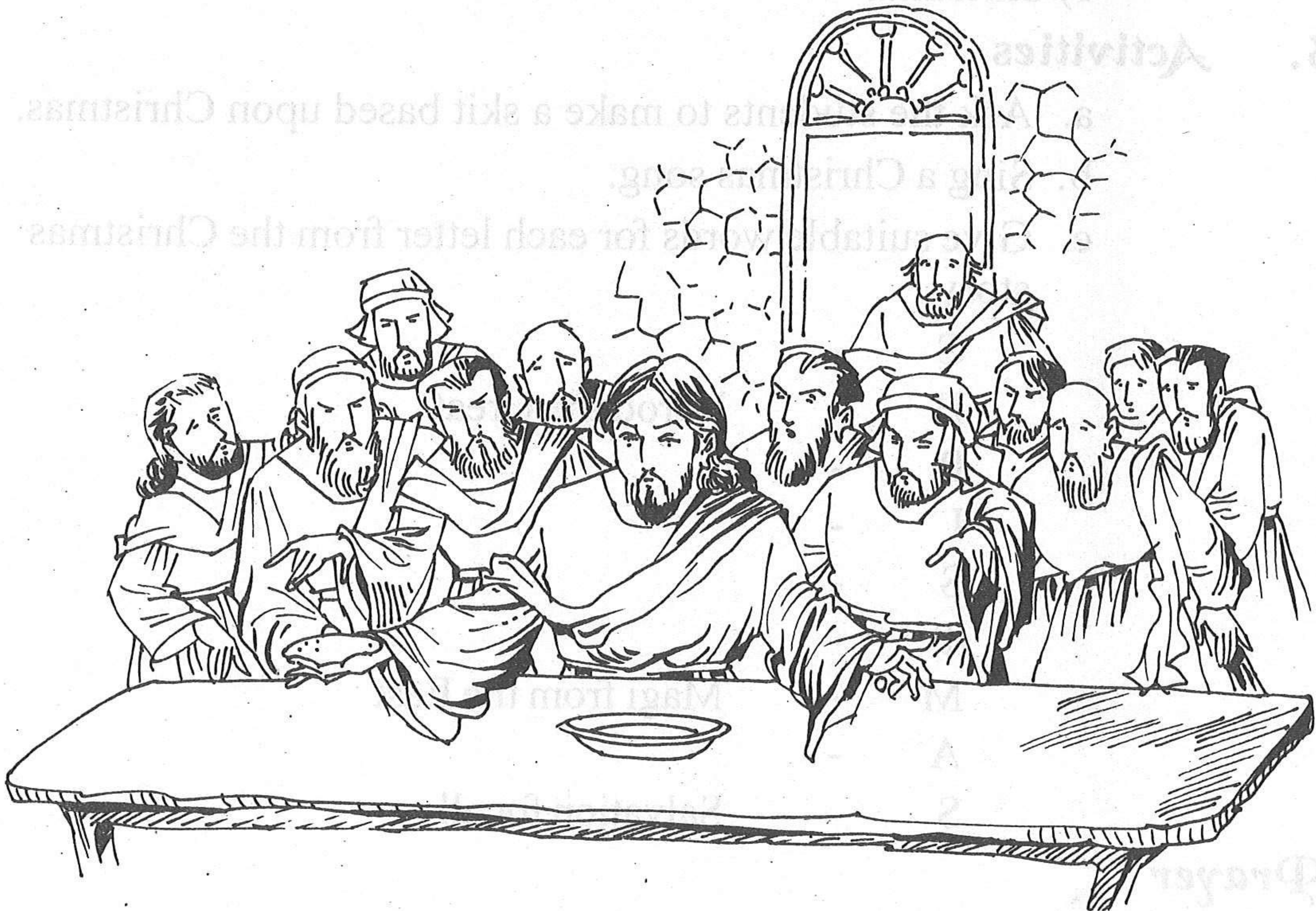
Prayer

Lord, we thank you for coming down to this world and for living together with us. Help us to follow your example and be humble and merciful to the poor. Amen.

LESSON - 21

INTRODUCTION TO SACRAMENTS

The Latin word *sacramentum* meant originally the oath of a soldier showing his allegiance to his commander; it was a sign of commitment to a higher authority. In this sense the Holy Baptism can well be called a *sacramentum*. The Syriac word which we use commonly is *Qudosho*, which means the *purification* or *sanctification*.



However, the Eastern Churches prefer the Greek word *mysterion*, which means “mystery”. It doesn’t convey a negative meaning of “something difficult to be understood” or “doubtful”: Rather it tells that the mysteries do not disclose their meaning to the unbelieving eyes. The believer, on the other hand, who participates in a *mystery*, will not be seeing or hearing something with the mind of a man, who is sitting in a theatre or before a TV. He experiences the event as it happens today and he believes that it is beneficial for his spiritual growth. Through the visible and symbolic acts of the Holy Mysteries a believer receives the invisible Grace of God, which is essential for his spiritual growth.

Salient Features of the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments)

While the Roman Catholic Church fixed the number of sacraments as seven in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 AD, the Orthodox Churches do not believe in a fixed number of mysteries. For example, in some lists of the Byzantine Churches the Burial Service is considered as a mystery. However, the general features common to all *sacraments* are the following:

1. There will be an act or word of Jesus as the foundation of every sacrament.
2. Only an ordained priest can handle a sacrament.
3. A symbolic service will be at the centre of a sacrament.
4. A sacrament is a means for receiving spiritual gifts by the Grace of God.
5. Sacraments like Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist provide *forgiveness* of sins.

The seven important sacraments are Baptism, Anointment with Holy Myron, Confession, Holy Communion, Marriage, Ordination and the Anointment of the sick. Even though almost all Orthodox Churches see

the seven sacraments as important, they are not considered them neither as the only mysteries or as the only seven separate sacramental occasions. Confession and Communion go together, while Baptism and Anointment of the Holy Myron are inseparable. Our whole life should be a sacrament before God.

Some sacraments are repeated while some others are done only once. For example, the sacrament of Confession is repeated whenever the believer wants it; but the sacrament of Ordination is once for ever. Similarly, baptism is compulsory for every believer whereas the sacrament of marriage is an optional one.

Baptism and Holy Eucharist

Baptism and Holy Eucharist are the most important among the Holy Mysteries. Baptism is a ceremony, by which we are initiated in to the Church. We baptize both children and the grown up people; these receive the Baptism, Anointment of Holy Myron and Holy Communion together. Baptism is important in the following respects:

- a. In Baptism we receive Jesus Christ as our saviour and we become a part of his body, the Church.
- b. Our sins are forgiven and we get a divine protection in this sinful world.
- c. We become heirs of the Kingdom of God and the children of light.
- d. We receive the Holy Spirit, who will guide us in our life and we get different gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Eucharist is the Queen of all Sacraments. It is instituted by Jesus just before his crucifixion. Taking the bread and vine in his hands Jesus said to his disciples: "This is my blood which is poured out for many, my blood which seal's God's covenant" (Mk. 14:24). The bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Jesus Christ, who was crucified

for our sins. Since it is a matter of faith the Holy Communion is given only to those who are baptized and to those who share the same faith. As a preparation for receiving the body and blood of Christ the believers have to confess their sins. St. Paul says: "If anyone eats the Lord's bread or drinks from his cup in a way that dishonours him, he or she is guilty of sin against the Lord's body and blood" (1Cor. 11:27). All the children above the age of 12 should make confession before the priest. The guideline for the Sacrament of Confession is given in the *Holy Qurbanakramam*.

Verse for Memorization:

"All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another." Acts 2:47.

1. Answer the questions:

- a) What does the word *quodosho* mean?
- b) What happens through the *Holy Mysteries*?
- c) What are the salient features of the Holy Mysteries?
- d) What happens in Holy Baptism?
- e) How can we prepare to receive the Holy Communion?

2. Fill in the blanks:

- a) We prefer the word _____ to _____.
- b) The Council of _____ fixed the number of sacraments.
- c) _____ should be a sacrament.
- d) _____ is the queen of all sacraments.
- e) Guidelines for the sacrament of confession is available in _____.

3. State whether the following is true or false.

- a) We give communion only to the baptized and those who share our faith.
- b) We can receive Holy Unction once in our life only.
- c) Marriage is a compulsory sacrament.
- d) Baptism, Holy Myron and Holy Communion are given together.

4. Activity

- a. Ask the students to explain what happens on the day of the House Warming.
- b. Prepare the Students for receiving Holy Communion on the following Sunday.

Prayer

“Our Gracious Father, we acknowledge that we have received the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Help us to use our talents for the betterment of the society and not for its destruction. Amen.”

HYMNS AND PRAYER'S

1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the

1 हे यहोवा हमारे प्रभु, तेरा नाम सारी पृथ्वी पर क्या ही प्रतापमय है! तू ने अपना विभव स्वर्ग पर दिखाया है। 2 तू ने अपने बैरियों के कारण बच्चों और दूध पिउवों के द्वारा सामर्थ्य की नेव डाली है, ताकि तू शत्रु और पलटा लेनेवालों को रोक रखे। 3 जब मैं आकाश को, जो तेरे हाथों का कार्य है, और चंद्रमा और तारागण को जो तू ने नियुक्त किए हैं, देखता हूँ; 4 तो फिर मनुष्य क्या है कि तू उसका स्मरण रखे, और आदमी क्या है कि तू उसकी सुधि ले? 5 क्योंकि तू ने उसको परमेश्वर से थोड़ा ही कम बनाया है, और महिमा और प्रताप का मुकुट उसके सिर पर रखा है। 6 तू ने उसे अपने हाथों के कार्यों पर प्रभुता दी है; तू ने उसके पांव तले सब कुछ कर दिया है। 7 सब भेड़-बकरी और गाय-बैल और जितने वनपशु हैं, 8 आकाश के पक्षी और समुद्र की मछलियां, और जितने जीव-जन्तु समुद्रों में चलते फिरते हैं। 9 हे यहोवा, हे हमारे प्रभु, तेरा नाम सारी पृथ्वी पर क्या ही प्रतापमय है।। (भजन संहिता 8)

Midnight Prayer: Awaken us, Lord from our sleep in the sloth of sin that we may praise you watchfulness you who watch and do not sleep; Give life to our death in the sleep of death and corruption, that we may adore your compassion, You who live and do not die, grant us in the glorious company of angels who praise you in the heaven, to praise you and bless you in holiness, because you are praised and blessed in heaven and on earth Father, Son and Holy spirit, now and always forever and ever. Amen.

रात की बिनती : हे प्रभु ! तू जो सदा सजग रहने वाला और निद्रा विहीन है, पाप लीनता से हमारी नींद को जगा दे, ताकि हम तेरे जागरण की स्तुति करे। अविनाशी एवं जीवंत प्रभु ! तेरी करुणा की वन्दना करने के लिए, मृत्यु और नाशरूपी नींद से हमें जिला दे। पिता -पुत्र पवित्रतात्मा रूपी करने वाले, स्वर्गीय दूतों के गणों के साथ निर्मलता से तेरी स्तुति करने के हमें योग्य बनावें। अब और सदा सर्वदा ही। आमेन।

HYMNS AND PRAYERS

Yachickendum Samayamitha

Come, the time of pray'r is here,

Come for pardon, have no fear :

'Tis the time to ask anew,

'Tis the time for mercy too.

See the holy priest ascend,

Mounting stairs which heav'n ward tend,

There the pure Qurban to raise

For whoe'er communicates.

Mercy here is full and free,

Come, beloved, come and see,

Give the kiss of peace divine,

Hearts sincere in love combine.

Let us now be reconciled

To each Heav'nly Father child,

So, before God's throne of grace

Find compassion on His face.

Lord, have mercy on us now,

Grant forgiveness as we bow,

Answer, Lord our earnest plea ;

Good art Thou-though frail we be.

Stand we all and sing we well,

Cry as one His grace to tell

Answer Lord, Our earnest plea :

Good art tho though frail we be.

गीत

प्रार्थना का समय है यह,
पाप मोचन समय है यह,
भजन कीर्तन समय है यह
प्रकट करुणा समय है यह ।

स्थित हो अत्युन्नत सीढ़ी पर,
सबसे आदृत से पुरोहित, (महापुरोहित)
पाने वालों के हित कारक (2)
आर्पित करते यह कुर्बानी ।

प्रिय भ्राताओं यह करुणा,
और दया की बेला है
शुद्ध प्रेम से मिलने की बेला,
शान्ति देने की यह बेला ।

दूरस्थ और निकट जनों के,
परस्पर मेल - मिलाप की बेला,
आओ भाई ! आओ सत्वर! (2)
करुणा की बिनती कर लें

उस प्रभुवर से हम सब मिलकर
करुणा की अब बिनती कर ले।
हे कृपाल ! कृपा करे।
हे दयालु ! दया करे।
प्रार्थना सुन प्रभु हमारी।

हम सेवकों पर तू कृपा करे।
बिनती कर लें हम सब मिलकर
बरस दया अब कमजोरी पर (2)
प्रभुवर ! तू है श्रेष्ठ सदा ही ।

DIDACHE: TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES

Last year we have examined the importance of the Apostolic Fathers, which include selected writings of the Early Church. We have seen there (Lesson 22) the importance of those writings in building up the faith of the Church and in maintaining the morale of the Early Christians during difficult times such as the persecutions. Among the seven writings of the Apostolic Fathers *Didache* deserves special attention.

What is Didache?

Didache is the small title used for an Early Christian document called *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. This might have been written before the end of the first century of the Common Era either in Antioch or in Alexandria. This ancient document was discovered by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nikomedia in 1873 in a library of the monastery of Constantinople.

The contents of *Didache* were considered to be the instructions received by the Twelve Apostles from our Lord, which they handed over to those who wanted to become Christians. There are only 16 chapters in this document and they can be divided in to five themes:

1. The Two Ways of Life and Death (1-6)
2. Liturgical rules regarding Baptism, Eucharist, Fasting and daily Prayers (7-10)
3. Disciplines regarding the apostles, missionaries and teachers of the Church (11-13)

4. Inner life of a Church (14-15)
5. Second Coming of Christ (16)

What is the significance of Didache for us?

You may be aware that the faith and practices of our Church are drawn from Bible and Tradition. By tradition we mean mainly the Early Christian writings like *Didache*. We do so primarily, because the contents of these give us explanation and additional information to what is said in the New Testament. Secondly, many of the religious practices, which we observe today, have reached to its present form during the period of these writings. They are Biblical based, but the details have been described by the Church Fathers through their writings. For example, we haven't got any instructions in the Bible regarding the procedure of baptism, even though the meaning of baptism is recorded in the Bible. For this we have to read *Didache*, which was written almost in the period of the New Testament books.

Some important teachings of Didache

Following are some of the important teachings of Didache:

1. The candidate for baptism (if it is a grown up person) have to fast one or two days prior to the baptism. The baptizer is also asked to fast for a day.
2. The Eucharistic communion (receiving the Qurbana) is meant only for those who are baptized.

3. Since Jews fast on Mondays and Tuesdays Christians have to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.
4. The last sentence of the Lord's Prayer (Thine is the kingdom, power and the glory for ever and ever) is not given in the Gospels. But this is available in the eighth paragraph of Didache.

Verse for Memorization:

“Keep away from profane and foolish discussions, which only drive people further away from God.” 2 Timothy 2:16.

1. Answer the Questions

1. Which are the main contents of Didache?
2. When was Didache written?
3. Where did this Early Christian document originate?
4. Why Didache is significant for our Church?
5. Mention some important teachings of Didache?

2. Fill in the Blanks

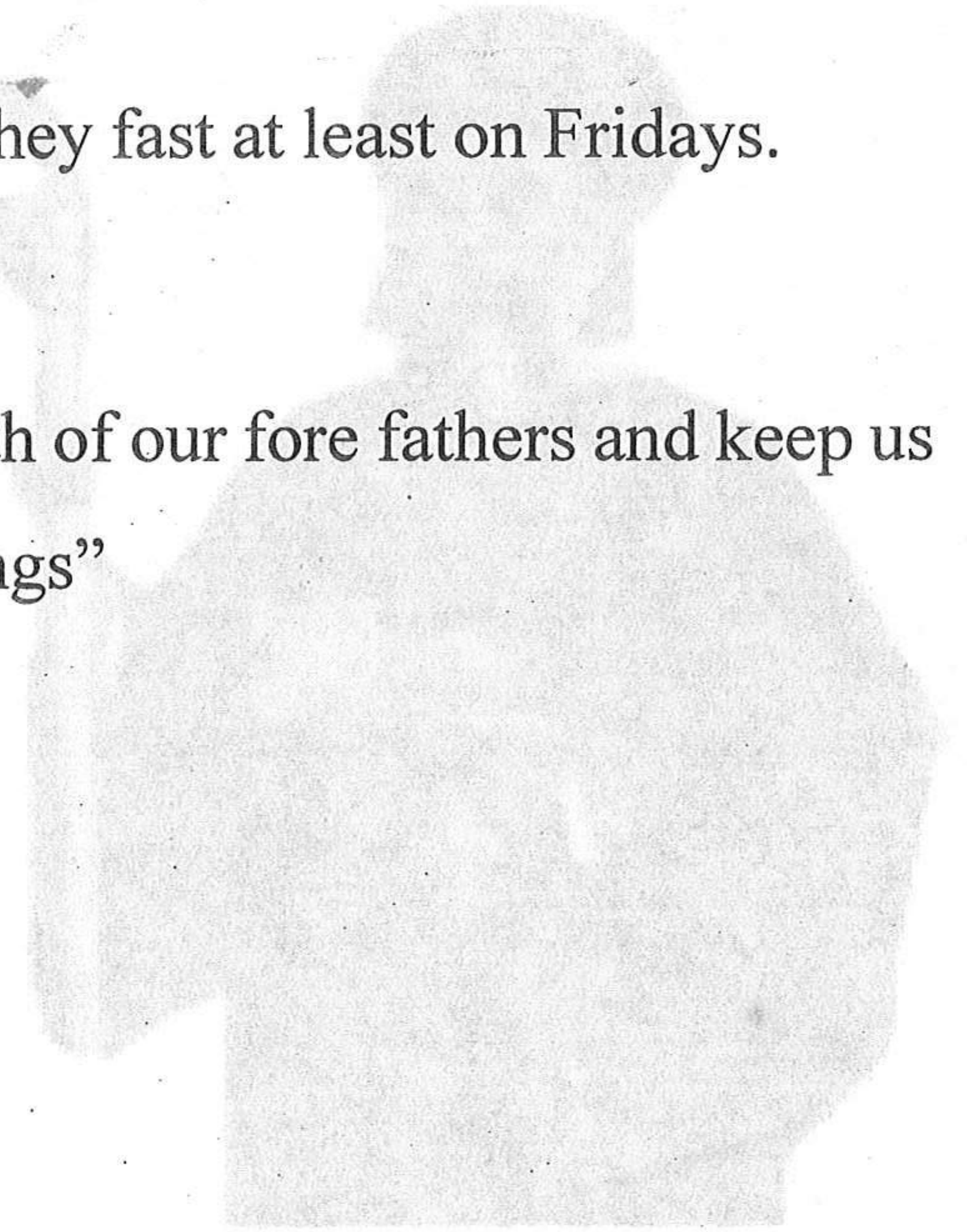
1. Didache means _____.
2. Didache was discovered by _____.
3. The Eucharistic communion is meant only for _____.
4. There are _____ chapters in Didache.

3. Activities

1. Make a revision of Lesson 22 of Class IV.
2. Compare the Lord's Prayer we use today with St. Matthew 6:9-13.
3. Ask the students whether they fast at least on Fridays.

Prayer

“Lord, help us maintain the right faith of our fore fathers and keep us away from all kinds of wrong teachings”



LESSON - 24

PARUMALA THIRUMENI



We see many churches and shrines built in the name of Parumala Thirumeni at many places where the members of the Orthodox Church reside. Lots of people visit Parumala Church where the tomb of Parumala Thirumeni is located and they spend some time there for meditation and prayers. What is the importance of Parumala Thirumeni in our Church?

There are many Saints belonging to different Christian communities around the world.

Our Church has a long list of saints including the Biblical personalities, teachers of the Early Church and the martyrs. However, Parumala Thirumeni is the first saint, who was canonically declared by our Church in 1947. He is first person of Indian origin declared as Saint in any of the churches in India.

Childhood

Parumala Thirumeni was born on June 15, 1848 at Mulanthuruthy, a place near Ernakulam. His pet name was *Kochaippera* and he was born as the youngest son of his parents Kochumathai and Mariam. His

uncle was a priest and this one was Thirumeni's guide and mentor. Unlike other children *Kochaippera* had many special qualities: he used to spend long time in prayers; he did not like costly dresses; never did he waste his time for unnecessary activities. His uncle realized the spiritual thirst of *Kochaippera* therefore he taught the boy Syriac language and all songs of our worship.

When young Geevarghese was infected with small pox and was in critical condition, he had a vision of St. Mary, who assured him an immediate healing. In that vision he was also advised to dedicate his life for God. He followed this advice and became a priest and chose the celibacy. He stayed at Vettickal Dayara, which was then a chapel of Mulanthurthy church. His ascetic discipline and prayerful life had attracted many people of that place.

As a Monk at Vettikkal Diara

Vettikkal was not a known place for many people. But after the arrival of Thirumeni it became a place of pilgrimage. He became a Ramban (monk priest) during his stay there. In 1875, for the first time in the history of Malankara Church a Patriarch from Antioch had visited Kerala. Ramban Geevarghese became a translator for the Patriarch because of his efficiency in the Syriac language. The Patriarch was pleased with his efficiency and prayerful life and wanted to consecrate him as a bishop. But Ramban Geevarghese wanted to remain as a monk throughout his life. Later on he had agreed to the wish of the Patriarch thinking that it was the will of God.

Bishop Geevarghese Mar Gregorios

Geevarghese Ramban was consecrated as Metropolitan on 10th Dec 1876 at the age of 29 years and was given the title Gregorios which

was the title of the Metropolitan of Jerusalem. In the same year a total of six Metropolitans were consecrated in our Church and Gregorios was the youngest of all. He was given the charge of Niranam Diocese and he stayed at Parumala. Henceforth he came to be known as Parumala Thirumeni. As per the desire of Parumala Thirumeni, all the six metropolitans spent 40 days in Vettikkal Dayara in Prayer and fasting for their spiritual strengthening.

It is impossible to give the life history of Parumala Thirumeni in a small lesson like this. We shall try to have a brief look to the important aspects in his life. Following are some anecdotes from his life, which prove his faith, truthfulness, patience, insight, foreknowledge and love for children.

Daily routine: His daily routine began at 4 AM. He followed a timetable in which prayer and meditation had more importance than other activities like conducting classes for deacons or carrying out administrative affairs.

Thirumeni had full faith in God and he entrusted all the requirements in God. He had no worry even on occasions when the Seminary faced acute shortage of daily needs. He used to say that “God says we need not worry about tomorrow”. There was amazing experiences on such occasions; seminary received help from unexpected sources.

In 1890, small pox the vital disease spread in Thumpamon area. Thirumeni visited the patients there, stayed there and made arrangements for the treatments. He stayed there till the contagious disease completely disappeared.

The life of Thirumeni was life of prayer, faith love and patience. During a reception on the occasion of consecration of Kunnukkurudy church (in Angamaly Diocese) some anti-social elements threw cow-dung on Thirumeni when the procession was passing through the market junction. Thirumeni averted an imminent violence by pacifying the leaders. Later on those miscreants came to Thirumeni and asked forgiveness and they have constructed a cross at the market place.

During another occasion, when the Karingachira parish decided to install a cross at Thiruvankulam (near Thrippunithura), thirumeni had visited the site and offered prayer. But there was a case against constructing the cross at that site since it was near to a temple. Thirumeni also got enlisted as a witness in the case and his statement was considered to be decisive. But during the trial thirumeni confessed that he offered incense at the site and the accused parish members were punished. There also the opponents came to thirumeni and offered an alternate site for erecting the cross and provided all the help also.

Major Contributions of Parumala Thirumeni

The major contributions of Thirumeni were the following:

1. He had made significant contributions in the field of mission work among the non-Christians. He strongly believed that all human being are equal before God. He worked for spreading the Gospel among the lower caste people.
2. He tried to uplift their Social condition and remove the curse of untouchability which existed during that period. He had also started schools at different places.

3. Parumala Thirumeni had written a book based on his Journey to the Holy Land, which is considered as the first travelogue of the Malayalam language.
4. Thirumeni was very particular that the priests of the Church should make serious studies. Parumala Seminary was a school for training the priests. The *Vaidika Sangham* was also founded by him.

Death and canonization

Parumala Thirumeni could foresee his death: He breathed his last on 2 November 1902, but he had predicted his death two days before.

On 2 November 1947 Parumala Thirumeni was canonized as saint by the Holy Episcopal Synod of Malankara Church. Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and Mar Baselius Geevarghese II, two of the stalwarts of the Malankara Orthodox Church in the 20th century were his disciples.

The life of Parumala Thirumeni has become a model and his life has been influencing many devotees. Now Parumala is a pilgrim centre for people of all castes and creeds. Historically speaking he is the Father of three groups of St. Thomas Christians: the Malankara Orthodox Church, Syrian Jacobite Church and the Syro-Malankara Church. We believe that he is in communion with God and that his prayers would help us.

Verse for Memorization:

“You beloved, build yourself upon your most Holy faith; Pray in the Holy Spirit; Keep yourselves in the love of God; Look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” Jude 20,21.

1. Answer the Questions

- a. Mention the incident which inspired Parumala Thirumeni to dedicate his life for God?
- b. Write few sentences about Parumala Thirumeni contribution in society ?
- c. Who was Parumala Thirumeni ?

2. Fill in the blanks

- a. Parumala Thirumeni was born at _____
- b. Parumala Thirumeni became a Metropolitan at the age of _____
- c. Parumala Thirumeni was Metropolitan of _____ diocese.

3. Activities

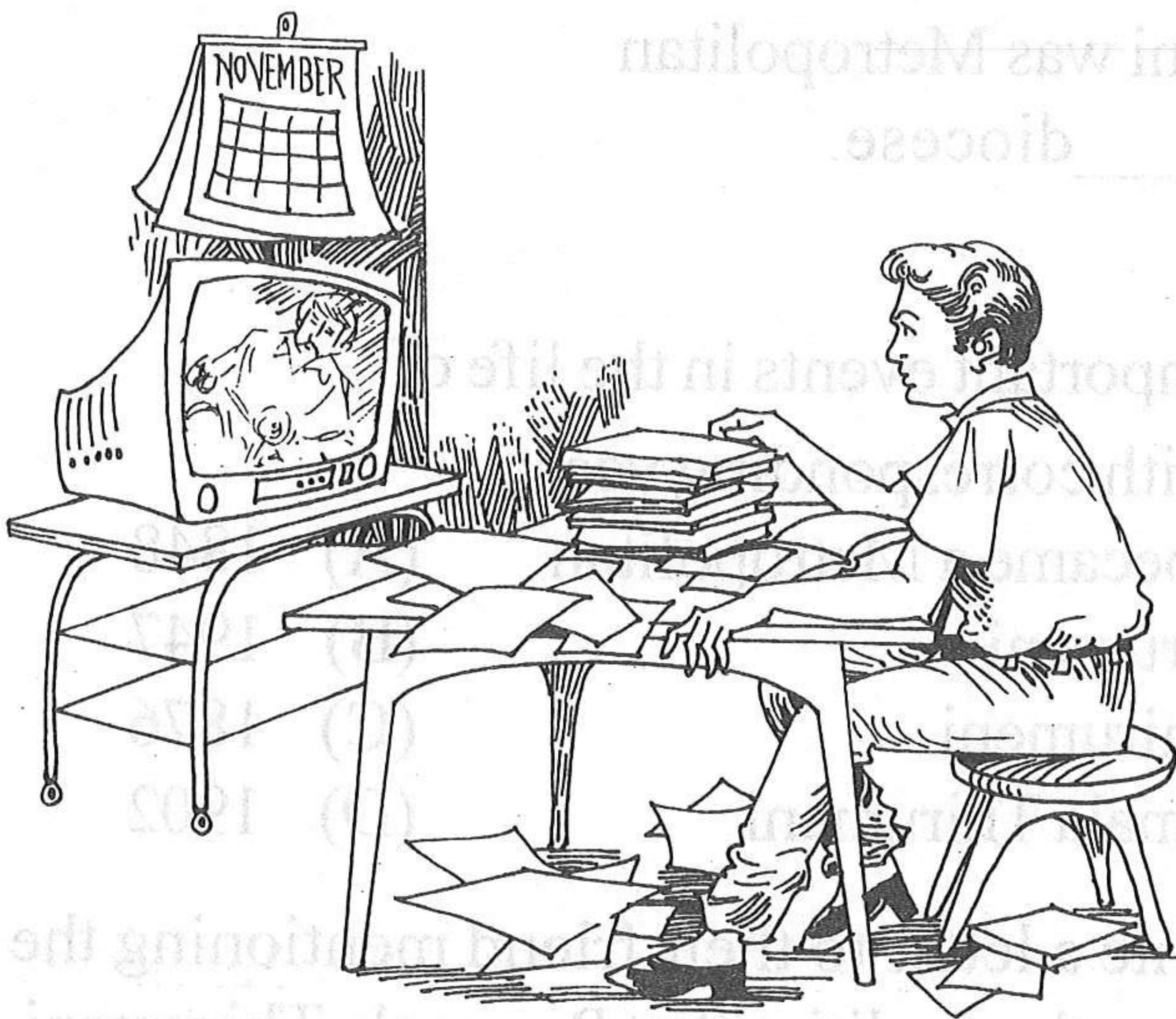
- a. Match the following important events in the life of Parumala Thirumeni with corresponding years.

(i) Parumala Thirumeni became a Metropolitan	(A) 1848
(ii) Birth of Parumala Thirumeni	(B) 1947
(iii) Death of Parumala Thirumeni	(C) 1876
(iv) Canonization of Parumala Thirumeni	(D) 1902
- b. Ask the students to write a letter to their friend mentioning the importance of following the qualities that Parumala Thirumeni had in his childhood.

IMPACT OF TELEVISION IN OUR LIFE

The second half of the 20th century will be remembered for the drastic changes that happened in the field of communication. Telephone has become an essential equipment for communication and mobile phone has changed the attitude of the people a lot. Television has conquered every family on this earth and today we can not think of a world where media is not involved. The arrival of computer and of course internet has made the universe a global village.

Tele Vision and its fascinating world



The first experimental service of Television was inaugurated in Delhi in 1959. In the beginning the screen was black and white; but with the invention of color Television everybody found the former useless. Also the Cinema industry was entering a new phase in its history because of the popularization of TV. In a country like India where films are very influential and their

audio-visual nature acts as a pervasive power in society, a film can communicate with its viewers faster than a book. Modern Indians prefer everything in its “live” form.

Television has various advantages like the following:

1. The news reading is an attractive item in the TV today; it is not just passing on of information, but we experience the events as if we are present in their location itself.
2. The documentaries teach us a lot about other countries and the culture of other people. Various art forms are introduced to a wider public. *Kathakali* is a good example; earlier it was performed within the temple campus and only a few people understood its meaning.
3. Advertising has become an industry today and the whole market depends much on the TV. A lot of people got jobs in this field also.
4. The entertainment that we get through seeing the moving pictures is far better and more effective than through hearing. Today cricket matches are important not only for the youth but also for people of all walks of life.
5. People who are involved in politics and social welfare get a wider audience today. The viewers can also involve in important discussions and debates by telephone voting.

Disadvantages of the Mass Media

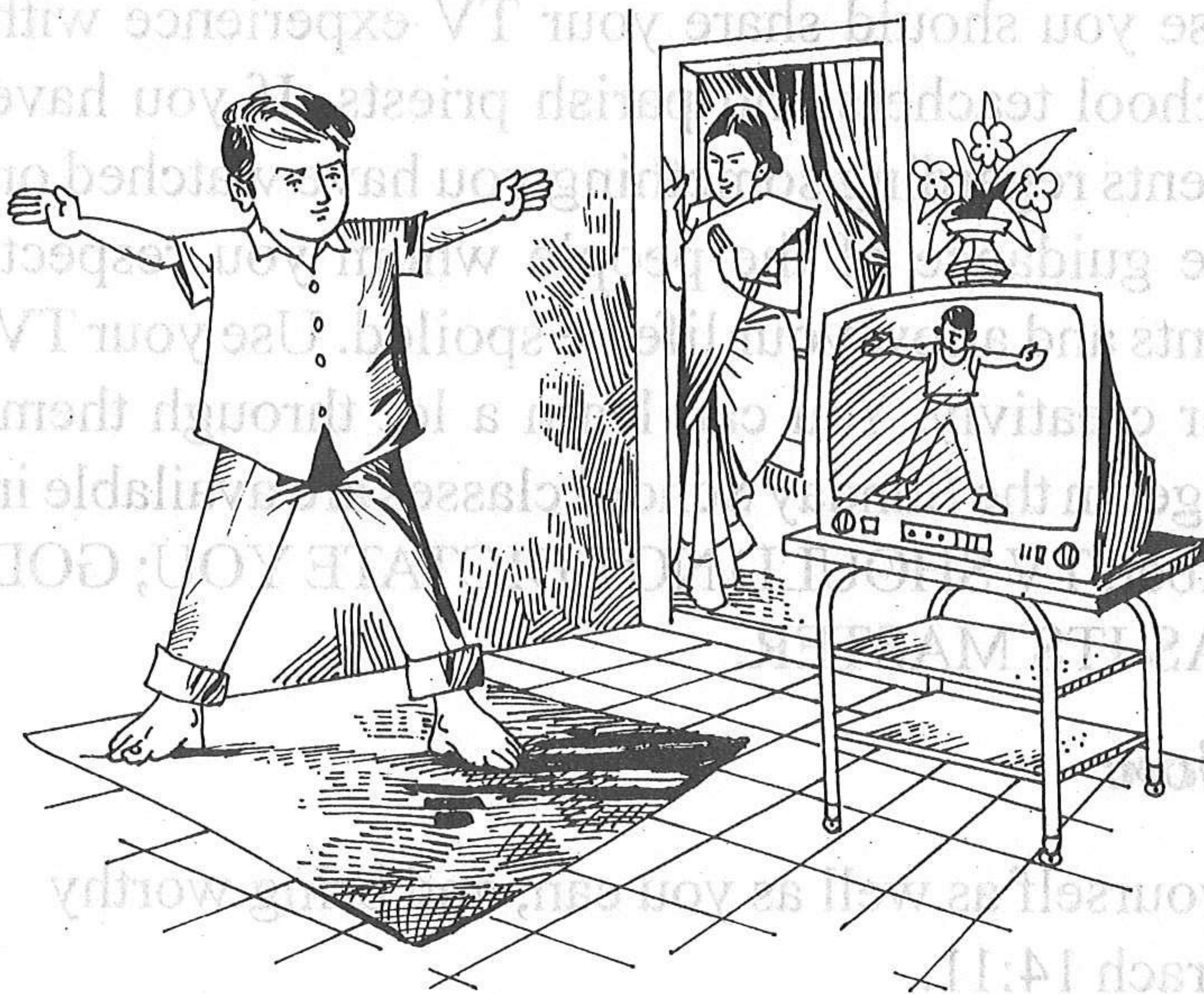
However, TV and Mass Media are not harmless for the youngsters. Due to the developments happening in the field of Information Technology we can not survive without “switching on” for a long time. Influx of numerous channels and the availability of the TV for 24 hours had changed the life style of modern man. Following are some of the disadvantages of Tele Vision.

1. Too much of using the TV affects our creativity; some people are addicted to it and they become lazy.

2. The studies of children will be affected if they watch TV continuously. Some children do not find enough time for their studies and some others can not concentrate while studying; even while sitting in the class room they will be disturbed.
3. Horror films and violent Cartoons would create a “fear complex” in the mind of children; some of the children would imitate the actors and would fall in to criminal tendencies. Depression has become common among children today and TV has a role in it.
4. The dignity of women is spoiled by most of the advertisements. Women are seen as a “commodity” for marketing any product. This would change our attitude towards women and bad instincts are developed in the young mind.
5. The dependence on TV would put us in a fascinating world, which is far away from the real life. Some children live in this fascinating world always and they are not ready to take responsibilities in life, which would be full of challenges, pains and even sufferings.

Responsible Use of the Media

How can we be responsible human beings in a world, which is in the grip of TV and the Mass Media? As the Book of Genesis says we are created in the Image of God and therefore we have to maintain the purity of our body, mind and soul. It should not be spoiled by our dependence upon the TV. As children our primary duty is to learn the lessons. We have to inculcate in us the values which uphold the family life and our creative involvement in the society in which we live. So we need enough time to interact with our family members, neighbors and classmates. Too much friendship with electronic equipments would make us anti-social.



Every individual is responsible for his own life. The parents can only provide the facilities and opportunities; children should have a healthy attitude towards their life and its responsibilities. Don't let the TV dictate you; you are the master and you should decide whether you want the

companionship of TV and how long you need it. Therefore finding a particular time for watching the TV is important. Children can watch TV after completing the daily homework and other assignments.

God has created us with the power of freedom. We can lead a life according to our wish; but we should remember that what we choose today would rule over us tomorrow. Therefore the selection of channels in TV is important in this context. It is as important as selecting your friends. The availability of a remote control should not be a "weakness" for the viewers. Avoid the violent and other evil films and concentrate more on news, documentaries and other useful channels. When you watch a film make sure that it maintains the values, which your parents and teachers taught you. If you find that a film is deviating from good things, stop it immediately. Don't take your food before the TV. For eating, you have a dining table and do it there only. The major reason for obesity, which is increasing in India, is watching TV with junk foods.

More than all these you should share your TV experience with your parents, Sunday School teachers and parish priests. If you have any questions and comments regarding something you have watched on TV, you should seek the guidance of the people whom you respect. Don't imitate the TV events and allow your life be spoiled. Use your TV, Video set and CD player creatively. You can learn a lot through them. Even the knowledge you get in the Sunday School classes are available in the form of CDs. Remember, TV SHOULD NOT DICTATE YOU; GOD HAS CREATED YOU AS ITS MASTER.

Verse for Memorization:

“My child, treat yourself as well as you can, and bring worthy offerings to the Lord.” Sirach 14:11.

2. Answer the questions

- For what will the 20th century be remembered for?
- When was the Tele Vision service introduced in India?
- What are the five advantages of TV?
- Can TV spoil us? Describe the ways in which TV affects our life adversely.
- Say three ways by which we can master TV.

3. Fill in the blanks.

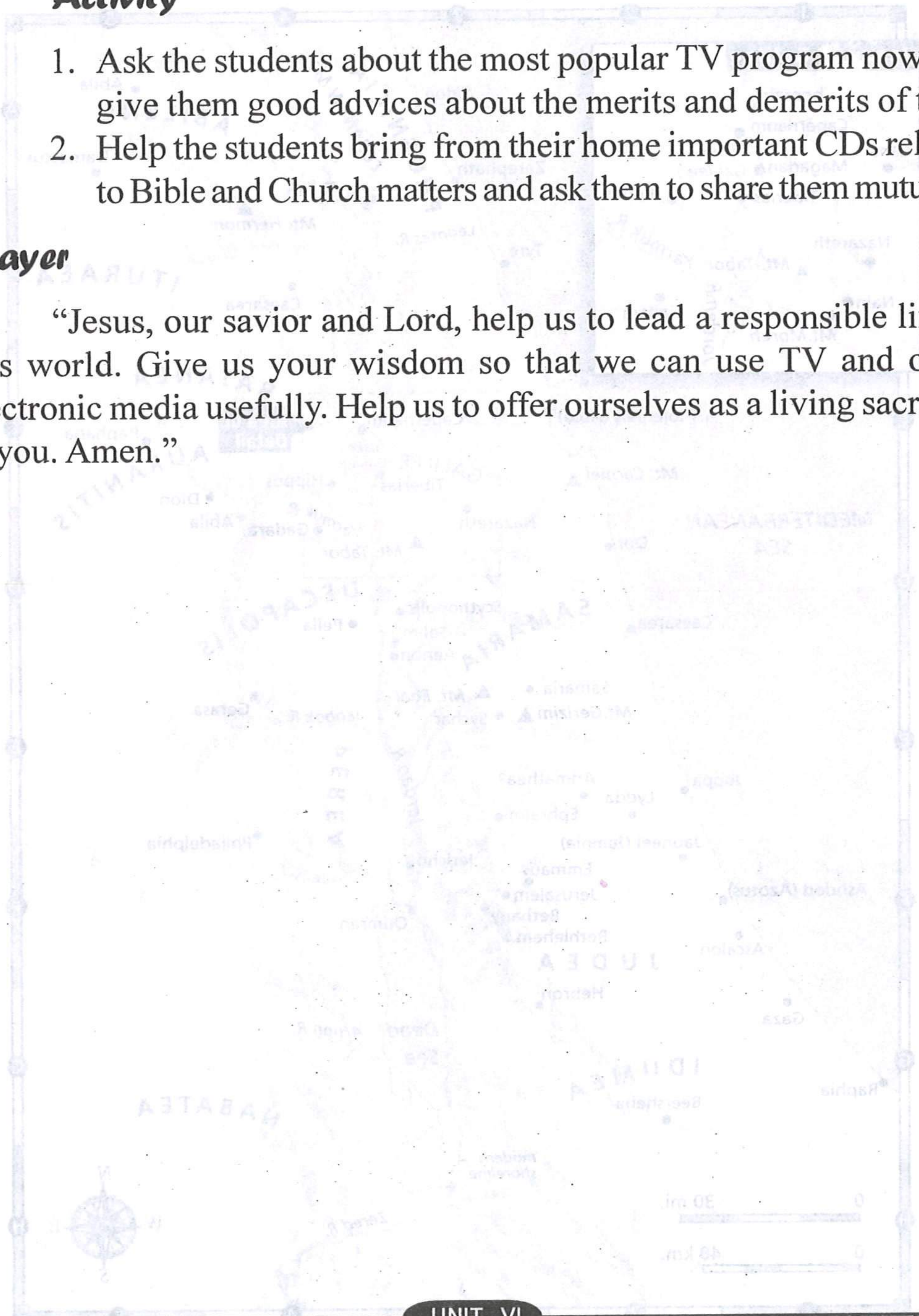
- God has created us with the power of _____.
- The dignity of _____ is spoiled by TV _____.
- The major reason for obesity is _____.
- Horror films create a _____ in the mind of children.
- You should seek the _____ of parents and teachers for a _____ use of TV.

4. Activity

1. Ask the students about the most popular TV program now and give them good advices about the merits and demerits of that.
2. Help the students bring from their home important CDs related to Bible and Church matters and ask them to share them mutually.

Prayer

“Jesus, our savior and Lord, help us to lead a responsible life in this world. Give us your wisdom so that we can use TV and other electronic media usefully. Help us to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to you. Amen.”



Palastine during the time of Jesus





OSSAE (OKR) CLASS 5 TEXT BOOK