

THE CHURCH PRAYS WITHOUT CEASING
All Time is Holy
Youth Group Session Five

Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry – Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
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Objective: To give the participants an understanding of:

1. Time is a gift from God who lives 'out of time'
2. Prayer happening somewhere at every moment of the day
3. The Liturgical, Festal and Church cycles

(The object of this lesson is to realize that our time is a great gift from God, who exists outside of time. The purpose isn't to memorize cycles or names of services, but to understand how the knowledge that they are happening can help us pray without ceasing.)

Craft: *The Church Clock* (at your discretion this may be done for all ages or just younger children).

Items Needed: Copies of worksheets and Time Schedule Game, pencils, bibles, lined paper, Paper icons or scenes of Liturgical life about 2-4 inches in size (you can cut these out of catalogs – you will need at least one icon of Christ for each child and 12 additional icons per child), wood circles from the craft store, mod podge glue, newspapers, an item that can be used as hands that would move on the clock. Prize for the Time Schedule Game winner (suggestion for this prize listed at the end of the session.)

Items in **blue** are notes for the Session Leader.

Related books for Session Leader's Reference:

A Beginner's Guide to Prayer – The Orthodox Way to Draw Closer to God
Michael Keiser. Conciliar Press. www.conciliarpress.com

The Orthodox Church A – Z

Fr. George Grube. Light and Life Publishing. www.light-n-life.com

Beginning to Pray

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom. Paulist Press. www.paulistpress.com

The Hours of Prayer

Children's Books – (This book although written for children is a good resource for all ages)

The Monk Who Grew Prayer

Claire Brandenburg . www.conciliarpress.com

Pre-Session Preparation

Undertake to do one of these two things:

1. If you have any clocks in your rooms take them down and do not replace them with anything.
2. Replace any clocks in the room with an inexpensive clock, from which you have removed the hands.

As participants enter the room, ask them to remove any watches or cell phones they have with them. Put them in a container and assure them that they will be returned after the event.

Give each participant a copy of the *Time Schedule Game* located at the end of this lesson. Intermittently ask them what time they think it is. You will have to keep track of the time on your master sheet. At the end of the lesson you will discuss who won and the concept of time.

Pre cut the paper icons.

Lesson

God lives in eternal time...the past, the present, the future, all are His, without passing away or being used up as our earthly time is. This is a very confusing idea for us, but all we need to understand is that, in God's hands, it makes sense and that we were created to be a part of this eternal life.

We know that we all are given time to live on earth. (It's much easier for us to understand this time: yesterday is gone, today is happening, and tomorrow will be here!) This time is one of God's most precious gifts to us, but we must remember that even though it is given to us to use, it still belongs to Him. Using our time in a way that is pleasing to God is one way that we pray without ceasing.

The Church helps us to understand that the gift of time is holy by dedicating special prayers and services to our hours and days. Our whole year follows a *cycle* of Feasts and fasts that help us live the important events in the life of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Most of us, and even most of our parishes, can't fully follow the daily cycle of prayer; we rely on monasteries to pray these services for us. We usually can, and should, try to follow the yearly cycle. When these Feasts come on days when we have work and school, we can ask our parish priest to help us find ways to celebrate them at home.

As we grow, we learn that certain times and certain places call for certain kinds of behavior. You don't act the same way in your classrooms as you do at a ball game. You don't act the same in church as you do hanging out at your best friend's house. You've learned this over the years, and now it comes naturally to you (well, maybe you still have to work at it a little bit!)

Learning about the yearly, weekly and daily cycles of the Church should help us to remember that all of our time is holy...whether we are using it to work, eat, study, play, sleep, or pray. As we think about this, it becomes much easier for us to try to behave as God wants us to: showing our love for Him by caring about others, sharing our talents, always doing the best we can, respecting His creation. And as this behavior starts to come naturally to us, we'll find ourselves getting closer to praying without ceasing!

The Daily Cycle (the Daily Office)

During the time of the New Testament, a day was divided into eight equal parts which matched the guard duties, or "watches," of Roman soldiers; each watch was three hours long. Starting at 6:00 a.m., the start of the day, these watches were called:

Watch of the 1 st Hour - 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.	Evening Watch - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Watch of the 3 rd Hour - 9 a.m. to noon	Midnight Watch - 9 p.m. to midnight
Watch of the 6 th Hour - noon to 3 p.m.	Cockcrow Watch - midnight to 3 a.m.
Watch of the 9 th Hour - 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.	Morning Watch - 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

These watches and hours are mentioned many times in the Bible. Read Mark 13:35; what times are mentioned? [Evening, Midnight, Cockcrow, and Morning.](#)

Can you figure out at about what time Jesus died? (Matt 27:45-50) 9th Hour

At about what time did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles? (Acts 2:15) 3rd Hour

This table shows how the Roman watches and hours came to match the daily cycle of prayer. (Over the years, times have been shifted a bit and some services may be combined) How many of these have you heard of? Have you participated in any?

Ancient Roman "Watch"	Our Modern Time	Liturgical Service	Theme
Evening Watch	6 - 9 p.m.	Vespers Complines	Creation/the Fall Start of new day
Midnight Watch	9 p.m. - midnight	Nocturnes	
Cockcrow Watch	midnight - 3 a.m.	Midnight	The Resurrection
Morning Watch	3 - 6 a.m.	Matins	Preparing ourselves for Christ
1 st Hour	6 - 9 a.m.	First Hour	the prayer of sunrise
3 rd Hour	9 - 12 a.m.	Third Hour	Descent of the Holy Spirit
6 th Hour	noon - 3 p.m.	Sixth Hour	Christ's Passion/ Crucifixion
9 th Hour	3 - 6 p.m.	Ninth Hour	The Death of Christ

(The Divine Liturgy is *not* considered part of the daily cycle because it goes beyond time and connects us to the eternal. It can be, and in monasteries and large cathedrals, usually is, celebrated every day and is usually served before the 6th Hour)

The Weekly Cycle

Just as every hour of the day is blessed with special prayers, every day of the week is dedicated to someone or something that helps us remember God's great love for us.

Sunday - the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

Every Sunday is a "little Pascha," a remembrance of the Resurrection. Each of the Tropars and Kondaks (special hymns) of the Divine Liturgy, teach about Christ's victory over death and His destruction of Hades. Pascha is the greatest Feast of the Church year; Sunday is the greatest day of the week. We must always try to keep this as the Lord's Day, attending Divine Liturgy and receiving Communion.

Monday - the Angels

On Monday, the Church asks us to remember the Bodiless Powers who serve God. We know many stories from Holy Scripture that tell us how angels give us important messages and protect us.

Tuesday - the Prophets, especially John the Baptist

When we say the Creed, we say that we believe that before Christ came to live on earth, the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets. The prophets tried to keep the Israelites true to God. They often *prophesized* the coming of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was the last of the prophets. Even though we read about his life in the New Testament, he is an Old Testament prophet because he died before the Resurrection.

Wednesday - Judas' betrayal of Christ; a day of repentance and fasting

Wednesday is the day that Judas betrayed Jesus to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver. Because this makes us remember the times we choose something above Christ, we fast as a sign of *repentance*.

Thursday - the Apostles, Church Fathers, and great Bishops, especially St. Nicholas

When the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles at Pentecost, the Holy Orthodox Church began. As the Church grew, the Apostles chose men to be bishops. Those men eventually chose others, and so on. All bishops of the Holy Orthodox Church today follow a line right back to the Apostles who lived with Jesus Christ. That's why we are "one holy, catholic, and Apostolic Church." We especially remember St. Nicholas, because he was a great Bishop who fought to keep the true teachings of the Church. We should always pray for our Bishops

to have the strength of their spiritual forefathers to lead the Church wisely. Do you know the names of your Bishops? ([Review your Eparchial Bishop, Prime Hierarch, and Patriarch](#)).

Friday - *Christ's suffering and crucifixion; a day of repentance and fasting*

Friday is the day that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified. Even as He suffered on the Cross, He showed His great love for man. For this reason we fast on Friday.

Saturday - *the Theotokos, and all the Saints; Memorial Saturdays when we remember the those 'fallen asleep in the Lord' – the departed.*

Do you remember why we pray to the Theotokos and the saints? ([Quickly review the last youth group session if needed.](#)) Saturday is when we also remember those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. What do you think that means – 'fall asleep in the Lord'? [This is a reference that our time on earth is over but we are not gone but asleep awaiting the second coming of Christ - when our bodies will be reunited with our souls at the great and fearsome judgment day.](#)

At this point review the day's work. Once you have reviewed the materials begin the craft. Explain that you are creating a Church Clock. Instead of numbers to tell the time you are using icons to depict different events with the Church year or week or day to remind them of what they could or should be praying for. You may provide different sets of the icons for the participants such as:

The Twelve Feast Days Clock with Christ in the Center

The Days of the Week Clock

The Hours of the Day Clock (the Church Hours that we learned about)

Have the participants choose their type of clock. Have them begin gluing the icons in the appropriate places on the clock. For example, if they chose the Twelve Feast Days they would start with the Nativity of the Theotokos at the 12:00 position and work their way around in order.

If you have given the option to stain the wood, this should be accomplished at the beginning of your session so that it is dry by the time that you need to glue. Once all of the icons have been glued on and the hands of the clock. Tell them that they can change the hands as necessary to follow the purpose of their clock and remind themselves about the Church's time.

For the Teenagers, take the time now to go over the Time Schedule Game. Whomever was the closest could win a Time Package containing a new fun clock, a copy of the services of the Hours and a Church Calendar.

Complete the day with some fun games and/or a meal.

Perhaps you could coordinate your session so that you could pray together one of the services of the Hours. Ask your Spiritual Father to help with this decision.

Time Schedule Game

You will be asked to estimate times through out your session. When asked, write down the time that you think it is at that moment. The real times will be revealed at the end of the session.

Time One _____

Time Two _____

Time Three _____

Time Four _____

Time Five _____

Time Six _____

Time Seven _____

Time Eight _____

Time Nine _____

Time Ten _____