

Session Ten- Sunday: The Lord's Day

Main Ideas: Christ IS Risen- the celebration of Pascha continues throughout the year. Focus on Sunday as a weekly celebration of the Resurrection.

Supplies needed: Markers, colored pencils, Participant Workbooks for each youth (This will be used during each session and should be kept with you after sessions are completed.)

Preparation: Invite your choir director or priest to this session. Ask them to sing each of the tropars for the youth so they may hear each tone. If you are unable to have someone present, utilize a recording.

(10 minutes) Warm up activity. Set up a piece of chart paper with the question "What do plants need to grow?" As children enter the classroom, have them write answers on the paper. Go over a few before jumping into the work book.

(10 minutes) Have students take turns reading the information about Sunday. Keep an ear out for students who may not attend church regularly and might have questions or concerns- the goal isn't to make anyone feel bad about how frequently they attend, it's to focus on what makes going to church great.

"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! (Psalm 118:24)" We sing this verse from the Psalms on Pascha, but we don't just mean the day of Pascha itself. Every day is a gift from God. Now that we've seen how the church keeps celebrating Christ's resurrection in the weeks after Pascha, let's look at an example of how we remember that Christ IS Risen all year through. In this Session, we'll learn why Sunday is such a special day in the life of the church and how it connects to our theme.

In the Old Testament, the most important day of the week was Saturday, the Sabbath. The fourth commandment that God gave to Moses was to 'Remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy.' The Sabbath was considered the holiest day because when God created the earth, He rested on the seventh day after finishing His creation- the first Sabbath. The Jews rested on the Sabbath after a long week of working. But Jesus changed all of that through the power of His resurrection.



Jesus Rose from the Dead On a _____ Sunday _____

Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, and there is nothing that could be more important than Him saving those who had been waiting in the tombs and opening the Kingdom of Heaven to us.

Jesus Showed Himself to His Friends On a _____ Sunday _____

Not only did He rise on a Sunday, He showed Himself to His friends. The Gospels that describe the Resurrection tell us that Mary Magdalene and the other women came to His grave on Sunday morning and He greeted them. Jesus came into the room where His disciples had gathered later that evening so that they could see His risen body and see His wounds.

The Holy Spirit Came to the Apostles On a _____ Sunday _____

Remember that the Church began on Pentecost. As the disciples prayed and were guided by the Holy Spirit, they wrote down guidelines for living a Christian life in a book called the Didache (did-uh-kay). They said that Christians would come together for worship on Sunday morning, just like the Holy Spirit came down on a Sunday morning for Pentecost.

We celebrate the Resurrection every Sunday

Christ IS Risen every Sunday when we remember His Resurrection. He IS Risen every Sunday when we receive Him in Communion. He IS Risen every Sunday when the hymns of the church remind us of Mary and the myrrh-bearing women and the Apostles. Each Sunday we come to church to refill and recharge ourselves with the joy of the Resurrection.

One example of the connection between the Resurrection and the Divine Liturgy that we serve every Sunday are the Tropars and Kontakions, special hymns that are teaching tools in the first part of the Liturgy. We rotate through them, so every 8 weeks one of the following Tropars is sung in your church. See if you can find the connection to Pascha and the story of the Resurrection in each one.

(10 minutes) Consider breaking students into groups and having each one read one tropar, then summarize the connection to the Resurrection. Encourage students to underline or highlight the words that stick out to them and/or make notes in the margins.

Resurrectional Propers

Tone 1: When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,/ while the soldiers were guarding Your Most-Pure Body,/ You arose on the third day, Savior,/ granting life to the world./ Therefore, the Powers of Heaven cried to You, Giver of Life:/ Glory to Your Resurrection, Christ./ Glory to Your Kingdom./ Glory to Your Divine Plan, only Lover of Mankind.

Tone 2: When You descended to death, Life Immortal,/ You slayed Hades with the splendor of Your Divinity,/ And when from the depths You raised the dead,/ all the Powers of Heaven cried out:/ Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to You.

Tone 3: Let the heavens rejoice,/ Let the earth be glad./ For the Lord has shown strength with His arm./ He has trampled death by death./ He has become the First-Born of the Dead./ He has delivered us/from the depths of Hades/ and has granted the world great mercy.

Tone 4: When the women disciples of the Lord/ learned from the angel the joyous message of Your Resurrection,/ they cast away the ancestral curse and with gladness told the apostles:/ Death is overthrown. Christ God is risen,/ granting the world great mercy.

Tone 5: Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,/ co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,/ born for our salvation of the Virgin./ In His Good Will He was lifted up on the Cross in the flesh/ to suffer death/ and to raise the dead/ by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 6: The angelic powers were at Your tomb,/ The guards became as dead men,/ Mary stood by Your grave/ seeking Your Most-Pure Body,/ You captured Hades, not being tempted by it,/ You came to the Virgin, granting Life,/ Lord, risen from the dead,/ glory to You.

Tone 7: By Your Cross, you destroyed Death./ To the Thief, You opened Paradise./ For the Myrrh—Bearers, You changed weeping to joy./ Christ God, You commanded Your disciples to proclaim/ that You are risen,/ granting the world great mercy.

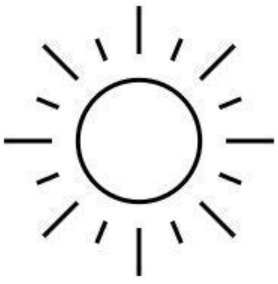
Tone 8: You descended from on high, Merciful One,/ You accepted the three-day burial/ to free us from our passions./ Lord, our Life and Resurrection: Glory to You.

In his book “Sacred Symbols That Speak,” Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris compares our hearts to a garden to explain why we should come to church as frequently as possible.

“Actually we have in our hearts ... a whole garden which needs watering at least once a week, namely, the flowers of faith, hope, love and forgiveness. These flowers become droopy at times and need reviving, which is one of the purposes of Sunday Worship.” -Fr. Anthony M Coniaris, “Sacred Symbols That Speak”

For our next activity, we are going to “grow” a garden like the one that Fr. Coniaris says is in our hearts. Some ideas have been provided for you, but you can add your own thoughts too. You can choose to use the “garden” that has been provided or you can use the blank paper to sketch your own. Label the flowers with the virtues of good behaviors that need to grow in your heart. The roots are a strong foundation of the church. Decide what helps you to grow your virtues and draw or label those as well. This is a chance to be very creative!

Virtues that grow when you attend church (Flowers)	History that provides a strong foundation for you & the church (Roots)	Ways that being in church could help you to grow in your faith (Sunlight, water, nutrients)
Faith	Jesus showed Himself to the women at the tomb and the Apostles on Sunday, revealing the Resurrection	Receiving Communion and Confession
Love	Sunday is The Lord’s Day- the Joy of the Resurrection	Hearing the Gospel as an example of what to do and what not to do
Patience	The Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles on a Sunday morning	Singing in the choir
Self-Control	In the Didache (did-uh-kay), the Apostles set aside Sunday for participating in Communion	Serving at the altar
Hope	Jesus shared the first Communion with His disciples	Listening to the sermon
Forgiveness		Lighting candles
Obedience		



Growing in Christ

