

Leader Session Twelve: With Faith and Love

Main Ideas: Christ IS Risen! Each and every day of our lives through our faith and through the love we share.

Supplies needed: Copies of hymn “A New Commandment”, Participant Workbooks for each youth (This will be used during each session and should be kept with you after sessions are completed.)

(10 minutes) Later in the Session, there will be a discussion about faith. Depending on time, you can begin the Session with a short trust fall activity, or you may want to start in the text book, then do the trust falls during the section about faith.

(15 minutes) read the section about Love and have students will in the blanks from the psalms.

During the Divine Liturgy the priest calls us to receive Christ through Communion “with fear of God and with faith and love draw near.” In this final Session, we will talk about how we should also leave the Liturgy and go out into the world and reflect faith and love there.

Love

In several of our Sessions we learned about the Old and the New Testament. We learned that Jesus’s resurrection fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah. We learned that Jesus’s resurrection established Sunday as the Lord’s Day, making it even more important than the Old Testament Sabbath Day. In the Old Testament, many laws were given to the people by God. You might be familiar with the Ten Commandments that Moses gave to his people. Throughout the Old Testament (mostly the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) there are actually 613 commandments! While that might seem like a lot of rules, the Law was respected and even loved by the Hebrews. Most of us wouldn’t say we love, or even like, having rules, but there are times when we realize how important they are. Have you ever felt like you didn’t know what to do for a project in school and wished the teacher had given more ‘rules’? Can you imagine what the roads would be like if we didn’t have traffic laws?

The Ten Commandments that Moses received were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, a special golden box that held their most important possession. In the Psalms, King David writes about the goodness of the laws and the guidance that God had given. Read Psalm 18 (19): 8-11 and fill in the blanks below with the different words for ‘law’:

“The law of the Lord is blameless, converting souls;

The _____ of the Lord is trustworthy, making children wise;

The _____ of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The _____ of the Lord is bright, enlightening the eyes;

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring unto ages of ages;

The _____ of the Lord are true, being altogether just.

More to be desired are they than gold and a very precious stone,

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”



The Hebrews loved the law because they saw that it brought order to their world and when people followed it there was harmony between the people and with God.

[\(10 minutes\) Finish this section on Love. Students may want to sing ‘A New Commandment’ at the end.](#)

A New Commandment

During the Bridegroom Matin service on Holy Monday evening, we read from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Remember the Pharisees and Jewish leaders who were jealous that people were following Jesus? In the weeks leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection, they tried to catch Jesus saying or doing the “wrong” thing. They thought they could use the Law to trick Him.

“But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to Him, ‘You shall Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and will all your mind. This is the first and great command. And the second is like it: ‘You shall Love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Have you ever done something that was technically following a rule, but not with love? For example, Samantha’s parents have a rule that all toys need to be cleaned up before coming to the dinner table. When her mom says that dinner is almost ready, she grabs the toy her sister is playing with and throws it on the shelf. Technically she was following the rule, but she wasn’t acting with love. What could she have done differently to do both?

Remember that shortly before the Resurrection, Jesus instituted the first Communion with His disciples. After Judas left, Jesus gave His final teaching (knowing that Judas would not be with them) commandment for how they should go out into the world once He was longer with them.

“A new commandment I give to You, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13: 34-35

This commandment isn't just for the Apostles, it is true for all of us. Not only are we supposed to love one another, but when we show love to others, we are showing Christ to them. The best way to show others what a Christian believes is to show them love. We can't expect to join Christ in the joy of the Resurrection if we don't have love. Underline the word love every time you hear it in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”



[\(10 minutes\) read the story about Blondin below. You may want to do a trust fall activity here.](#)

Faith

Earlier we learned about Thomas and his doubts. We learned that our doubts and our questions can lead us to stronger faith in God, but ultimately we must believe in the Resurrection if we want to be part of it. In his podcast “Simply Orthodox” Dr. Bradley Nassif, an Orthodox professor of biblical and theological studies at North Park University, Dr. Nassif tells a story that helps us to understand how important it is to have faith.

“Perhaps the best way to illustrate the Session of St. Thomas is to share a story. About a century ago, there was a famous tightrope walker named Blondin. One day he decided to do a great feat in front of everybody, so he went to Niagara to cross the great waterfalls. The day came, and hundreds of people stood atop the mountain waiting for Blondin to do his trick. He put his tightrope on one side of the falls and then hooked up the other side. Down below was a loud and torrential waterfall with rocks at the bottom of the falls.

Needless to say, it was very dangerous. Blondin then picked up his balancing pole and began slowly walking across the falls as everyone waited quietly. He reached the side and slowly turned around to walk back. Everyone was as quiet as a mouse, but sure enough, Blondin made it. Everyone cheered. “Wow, what a walk! Great job, Blondin!”

Then Blondin did something unexpected. He turned to the crowd and asked them a question: How many of you believe I can take you across the falls with me?" he asked. "Yeah, you can do it!" they said. "Okay," said Blondin, and he walked over to a man who was standing there and he said to him, "Get on my back." "No way," said the man. "I believe you can carry me across the falls, but don't ask me to get on your back. Not me." Blondin went to several other people, asking the same question: "Do you believe I can take you across Niagara Falls safely?" "Yes," they replied. "Okay, get on my back." But no one would trust themselves to him. They believed he could do it. They believed he had the ability to do it, but would not entrust their lives to him.

Finally, one little 12-year-old boy perked up. "I believe you can carry me across the falls." "You do?" asked Blondin. "Yes, I do." "Okay, then get on my back." The young man got on Blondin's back. I don't know where his mother was at this time, but he got on anyway. Well, the young man entrusted his life to Blondin, and Blondin began to walk across the falls. Everyone was anxiously waiting as they went slowly to one side of the falls, and then back to the other side, very slowly, and they made it.

Well, this little story tells an important truth that fits well with the Sunday of St. Thomas. You see, the adults believed in Blondin. They had the head knowledge. They knew he could take them across the falls, but they were not willing to actually get on his back and let him take them across the falls.

The same is true for us. We, like Thomas, might believe that Jesus is the Son of God. We might confess the Nicene Creed, go to Church every Sunday, make the sign of the cross, say our prayers, and sing in the choir, but that is not enough to save us. We need to actually put our lives in Jesus' hands. We need to say to Jesus, "Lord, I believe in you, and I give you my heart. I entrust my whole life to you. I not only recite the Creed, I get on your back and trust you as my Lord and my savior. Like Thomas, I believe you are my Lord and my God."



So, just like we draw near to Christ in faith and love, we are to go out into the world with faith and love. We've seen and heard that without either one, we will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. But if we live our life with both, we can't go astray.

Christ IS Risen! Indeed He IS Risen!



**Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing Life!**