

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA



# **Faith, Hope, and Love**

**Leader Edition**  
**with Instructional Notes**  
**for children ages 8-12**

**Created by Kira Senedak for Diocesan Church School Camp**

**Revised Natalie Kapeluck**

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# **Table of Contents**

## **Page**

<b>3</b>	<b>Leader's Guide Instruction</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Session 1: Faith, Hope and Love; What do they mean?</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Lesson Two: Tools of the Church</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Session Three: Tools of the Church- Sacraments</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Session Four: Examples of the Saints</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Session Five- Ways to Show Faith, Hope, and Love to Others and Ourselves</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>Session Six- Waiting for Heaven</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>Session Seven- Examples Today</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>Experiential Session One: Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>Experiential Session Two: Prayer Sticks of Faith, Hope and Love</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Experiential Session Three: Icon Prayer Boxes</b>
<b>42</b>	<b>Experiential Session Four: Faith - Little Miracles</b>
<b>45</b>	<b>Experiential Session Five: Hope - Holy Relics</b>
<b>48</b>	<b>Experiential Session Six: Love - Love Packages</b>

## Leader's Guide Introduction

Thank you for taking on the task of serving our youth! This curriculum aims to help the children understand:

- definitions of the words faith, hope, and love
- “tools” that the Church gives to us so that we can better understand the importance of faith, hope, and love
- examples from the lives of saints
- ways in which we can grow in faith, hope, and love in our daily lives

This curriculum is designed to be carried out in one lesson per meeting, but please feel free to adjust in response to the children. It may be used in a youth group or church school setting. If you find that they want more time to discuss a particular idea or lesson, others may be shortened or abbreviated, as long as the main understandings above are addressed. Participants can take turns reading the text to the group, or you may choose for them to read it to themselves if they need to adjust the pace.

Sessions are divided into two types: Traditional and Experiential. The first seven sessions are developed in a traditional format and the following six are set in an interactive format. It is suggested that the interactive session be interspersed or combined with the traditional session based on your discretion.

This leader's guide includes many suggested topics and activity ideas, and notes are in blue writing. Again, feel free to modify based on your youth and their maturity. Be sure to check with the your priest if any significant changes are made.

Most sessions require several copies of the Orthodox Study Bible, chart paper, post it notes, pencils. Some will also require colored pencils.

### General Notes and Suggestions:

Professional Development: You may be interested in reading more about the theme before and during teaching. The Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry and your parish priest can provide suggested readings to this purpose. Also, the commentary included in the Orthodox Study Bible can be very useful to your understanding of the content, as well as your students' understanding, and you are encouraged to pre-read the passages and commentary.

Modifications: This curriculum is written for the middle age level of youth, but the maturity and academic abilities of 8 to 12 year olds can vary greatly, as well as their familiarity with the topics being discussed. Although there are some specific ideas for modification listed throughout the curriculum, here are a few general suggestions:

- Modifying for younger students/lower abilities:
  - Paraphrase the Bible passages for students. It is important for our youth to become familiar with the process of finding specific passages and reading the language, but if you feel a particular passage will be far too difficult to understand you may want to put it in your own words. This may also be useful if you find the youth need more time working on a different section of the lesson.
  - Answer questions together. In most cases, the youth are given a space to explain concepts and main ideas after reading the Bible or learning about a saint. If you feel students may need more explanation, ask them to answer together using the white boards or large paper, and have them all write down an answer the group is comfortable with.
  
- Modifying for older youth/higher abilities:
  - Have youth read the Bible passages individually and paraphrase them in their own words to share with the group. You may also give a particular participant “homework” to read and prepare an explanation of a passage in order to begin the group discussion the next time you meet.
  - Allow youth to lead parts of the lesson. This works best if they know which part they will lead the meeting before, and if you are able to give them some suggestions or guidance on how to lead the discussion. Some youth may not be comfortable doing this, but positive reinforcement and encouragement may help them embrace the challenge by the end of your year.

Sensitivity: Sensitivity and empathy are key to any learning environment. Encourage youth to talk freely about experiences they have had as you discuss ways in which faith, hope, and love impact their lives. As facilitator of these discussions, it is important to remind the youth that everyone deserves our respect as images of Christ, and that God is the only judge. Keep an eye on all of the youth and be sure to address any unusual conversations with priest in case further discussion is needed.

## **Session One: Faith, Hope, and Love; What do they mean?**

*Objective: Youth will acquire a base knowledge of the virtues Faith, Hope and Love.*

### **Items Needed:**

Orthodox Study Bibles

pens/pencils

blindfolds (enough for half the participants)

Post-it notes

Begin the session in prayer with *Oh Heavenly King*.

Faith, hope, and love are probably words that you've heard before, but it's important to think about what they mean in our lives and in the Orthodox Church. The sessions in this workbook will help us to learn more about what these words mean and how we can make them important parts of our lives.

### **Faith (20 minutes)**

We'll begin with the word faith. What words can you think of that are similar to the word faith or would be included in the definition of faith?

have students brainstorm individually or as a group-possible answers may include trust, belief, knowing/knowledge, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Now let's take a walk! With a partner, you'll take a walk around the designated area. But, one of you will be blindfolded, and then you will switch. As you walk around the room, think about what it takes to be a good leader and what it takes to be a good follower.

Group participants in pairs, groups of three can work if there is an odd number. Explain the path they should take- safe, but not too easy as the exercise will be more meaningful if participants don't just walk in a circle. Be sure to demonstrate how to appropriately lead a partner (gentle touch, no running into things) and make sure blindfolds are comfortable.

When all youth have had a turn leading and following, discuss as a group how much faith they had to have in one another. Do any of the words they brainstormed before apply here and can they think of any new ones?

Be sure to highlight the fact that although we can't "see" God, just like we couldn't see our partner, He gives us signs and clues to know how and where to follow Him.

Write your group's definition of the word faith here:

Make sure it includes believing without seeing, and a relationship with God \_\_\_\_\_

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:6 *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*

What does this passage tell us about how important it is to have faith?

You can't have faith if you don't believe. For example, many people talk about the tooth fairy, but if we don't actually believe, it's just a simple story.

If there is time, older groups may be able to read all of Hebrews Chapter 11, or selected parts to illustrate individuals whose faith was rewarded.

### **Hope (15 minutes)**

1

The second part of the theme is hope. What are some things that you hope for?

-Encourage youth to think about things in the short term, as well as the long term (hopes for the summer or next school year, versus when they grow up).

-Have each youth choose one or two “hopes” and write them on post it notes, then stick them on chart paper labeled “Hope.”

-Allow participants time to share answers they are comfortable with. After they have shared ask them to think about the possibility or likelihood that what they have hoped for will come to be. Make two columns on the chart paper and have participants rearrange post-its based the categories “more likely to happen” and “less likely to happen.” Youth should only move their own post-its.

The Orthodox Study Bible defines hope as “an expectation of something desired through faith.” What does this mean?

We have to believe that it is possible in order to hope for it... it's difficult to hope for things to happen if we have no reason to believe that they will occur.

It also reminds us that “for Christians, hope is to ‘look forward to the Resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come.’” Because we believe and have faith in Christ’s death for our sins and the promise that we can get into heaven, we are able to hope for it.

This is our ultimate hope as Christians, and we yearn for it so strongly because we believe it is possible.

### **Love (15 minutes)**

The third part of this year's theme is love. We will learn about different kinds of love- the love you show to God, to your parents and friends, to strangers, etc.

The most important definition of love is given to us in John's first epistle (the same John who wrote one of the Gospels) in verse 1 John 4:8. Write that definition here:

God is love. Underscore the importance of this statement, God doesn't just show love or have love, He is love.

How important is love? In 1 Corinthians 13:13 Saint Paul writes to the people in Corinth saying, "*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."* This clearly tells us that love is the most important. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 to see why.

2

As you read, or at the end, be sure to emphasize the idea that just like faith without belief is an empty story, faith and belief in God are nothing if we don't show love. We can know all the laws of the church, have memorized scripture, go to church frequently, etc. but if we don't do these things with love, or use them as ways to make other people feel bad, we are missing the mark.

Love never fails!

There are different words for love in the Greek language and the Church uses them to show differences in types of love. The love that we show to others is also known as agape. This is the word for love that would appear if you were reading 1 John 4:8 in Greek...God is agape. Agape is love in which you do things for others to make them happy or comfortable. We are expected to show this love to anyone-family, friends, and strangers because all of those people are created in the image and likeness of God. The love between a husband and wife is called eros.

The love of friendship is known as phila. Take a look at John 15:13-15 to learn more about the love of friendship. In this passage, Jesus is talking to His disciples about their friendship. Even our Lord and Master spoke to these men as friends. This is important because He shows us that while servants follow others because they are afraid of what they will do or because they feel like they have no choice, friends listen to the leader because they want to.

You may want to have participants underline agape, eros, and phila. The last section may resonate with them. Ask them to think about what it means to be a true friend. You may choose to use post its again and share answers.

Challenge them to think about what it feels like when they feel like they have to do something a “friend” wants them to do even when they know it’s wrong. Remind them we still show love to everyone, but that doesn’t mean we have to stay close to someone who isn’t making us feel like a friend.

As you’ve seen, each of these words has its own definition, but they often work together. For example, in order to have hope that bad situations will turn out ok, you need to have faith that God can fix any problem. Throughout this workbook there will be lots of overlap, but you’ll see three symbols to help us know when we are talking specifically about faith, hope, or love. <sup>3</sup>



Faith



Hope



Love

### **Wrap up (10 minutes)**

Finish the class by having youth come up with questions about Faith, Hope, and Love. They can write them on chart paper, or one youth can be the scribe for the group. Post the questions somewhere in the meeting area so that as they are answered, they can be checked off. This will also provide an opportunity for your priest to address any questions that the group can’t answer.

## Lesson Two: Tools of the Church

The Orthodox Church gives us many tools to help us grow our faith, hope, and love. In our next two lessons, we'll take a look at some of these tools. Just like tools in a toolbox, a carpenter has to think about which tool is right for the job being done. Carpenters might also think about which tools they are already skilled in using and which ones they can learn to use more efficiently.

### The Bible (20 minutes)

One of the tools that the Orthodox Church encourages us to use is the Bible. Throughout the Holy Book, we find stories about people who show us examples of faith, hope, and love, as well as words from prophets, saints, and Jesus Christ Himself that can help us to understand these words.

Read the following Bible verses to learn more about each word. Fill in the blanks provided and summarize the verse in your own words after discussing with the class and your teacher.

Break participants into groups (no more than three) and assign one or two passages. Once each group has filled in the blanks and done their best to summarize, they can share with the full group. You may want to choose one to do together as a group first. Younger youth will need more direct guidance-and may need to do all of them together, or choose a few.

✝ Some of Jesus's disciples had been trying to heal a person and could not. When Jesus returned, they asked Him why they were unable to heal the person. Matthew 17:20 – *“So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”*

With strong faith and belief, anything is possible. Note that even the disciples' faith was lacking. That tells us how strong our faith must be.

✝ Once when Jesus was visiting the city of Jericho, He passed a blind man who was begging on the side of the road. As Jesus passed the man he yelled out “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Even though everyone told him to be quiet, the man kept yelling to show that he knew that this was Jesus and believed in His power. Mark 10:52 tells us what happens next- *“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.*

[The man didn't take any special medicine, but he was healed by his faith in Jesus \(even when others told him it wasn't worth it\). Also note that he got up and followed Jesus.](#)



The Psalter, or Book of Psalms is used in many ways within the Church. King David, who wrote many of the Psalms wrote Psalm 111 as an Alleluia, or praise song. This particular verse is commonly used as the Communion hymn on the feast day of saints. Psalm 11:6b-7 “A [righteous](#) man shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be [afraid](#) because of any evil report; his heart is prepared to [hope](#) in the Lord.”

[If you live a good and holy life, you will not be afraid that anything will keep you from entering heaven. You will be able to hope on the Lord because you know you have done the best that you could do and repented for your mistakes.](#)



Psalms 119-133 are known as odes of ascent. That means to climb up. They were often repeated by the people of Israel when they traveled great distances to celebrate the major feasts. They are now part of the services of Great Lent as we make our “journey” to Pascha. You may have heard Psalm 129 sung at Presanctified Liturgy (Read the whole psalm to see). Psalm 129:6b-7a “My soul [hopes](#) in the Lord. From the morning watch until night. From the morning watch until night, let Israel [hope](#) in the Lord. For with the Lord there is mercy.”

[Hope is ceaseless. All day we hope because we know the Lord will have mercy on us.](#)



Psalm 143 was written by David as he prepared to fight Goliath. Goliath was arrogant and didn't have faith in God. Psalm 143:1-2 “Blessed is the Lord my God, who trains [my hands](#) for battle, my fingers for war; He is my mercy and my refuge, my [helper](#) and my deliverer, my protector in whom I [hope](#).”

[Sometimes we must defend ourselves and others against those who try to fight against God and the Church. David puts his hope in the Lord because he has faith that the Lord will protect him. This also helps us to understand that he is not going into battle to prove how strong or brave he is, but because it is what God wants him to do.](#)



In his first epistle, John reminds his audience that God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus into the world. Even though God knew that people would crucify Jesus, He sent Him so that He could conquer Satan and allow us into heaven. 1 John 4:11- *“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*

God isn't asking us to do anything that He wasn't willing to do. He loves us continuously, and even gave His Son Jesus, to show how much He loves us.



In his first epistle John tells his audience that it is not enough to just love God. 1 John 4:20- *“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.”*

It's very clear that it is not good enough to say we love God or to love only those we like. Be sure to emphasize the idea that a brother is everyone-not just biological relatives.



When asked which of the commandments was most important, Jesus answered the people, speaking about love. Mark 12:29-31 *“Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

No other rule or law comes before loving God and everyone else. For example, if you follow all the fasting rules, but you become cranky and snap at others because you're hungry-you're not following this commandment.

## **Prayers and Hymns (20-25 minutes-including time to draw)**

The many prayers and hymns that we sing and recite at home and in church help us to grow in faith, hope, and love. Think about it, it's hard to be mad at someone or make a choice that wouldn't please God if we are saying a prayer, or singing a song from church in our head. Practicing prayers and songs until we know them by heart can be like putting on armor for battle. We know that people and things in the world will try to lead us away from God, but the armor of prayer can help us to ignore those things, or to fight against them if we must.

Take a look at the prayers below. You may recognize many of them from your daily prayers at home, from church services, or from prayers at camp.

Place the symbols for faith, hope, or love below the prayer to show which word you think the prayer connects to. You may add more than one symbol, and be prepared to explain why you chose each symbol.

Older youth may be able to make inferences about the meanings of the prayers, while younger ones may simply look for the words faith, hope, and love. Encourage them to identify where they have heard these prayers before.

Participants can also take time to decorate and "illuminate" the borders of the prayers. As they do this, provide some of the background info next to each.

### Third Prayer by St. Makarius the Great

Master, Lover of Mankind, having risen from sleep I hasten to You. Through Your Loving-Kindness I strive to do Your work and I pray; Help me at all times and in everything, delivering me from every evil of the world and every attack of the devil, leading me into your Eternal Kingdom. For you are my Creator, the Giver and Guardian of all that is good. All my hope is in You and I glorify You, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Saint Makarius was well known for his powerful prayers. He became a very holy monk and led many away from sin and closer to God.

Hope is referenced at the end of the prayer-he has faith that everything good come from God, so he puts all of his hope in him as well. Many say this as part of morning prayers (we do at camp too).

### A New Commandment

A new commandment I give to you that you love each other, even as I have loved you. By this all men will know, that you are my disciples, if you have love for each other.

(John 13:34-35)

This hymn will likely be familiar to most students, but they may not know that it is a passage taken directly from the Bible, with phrases repeated. Everyone will know who the followers of Christ are, when they love others in the manner that Christ loves- everyone receives unconditional love.

### Daily Prokimen for Tuesday – 7<sup>th</sup> Tone

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD,  
AND WILL SET HIS HOPE ON HIM.

Verse: Hear my voice, O God, when I pray to  
You.

There are many prokimens assigned to specific days and occasions. This one is listed in our UOCCP prayer books for Tuesday mornings.

The righteous who attempt to live a life pleasing to God out their hope in Him- not in men, money, power, etc.

### Magnification of the Holy Trinity

My hope is the Father, my refuge is the Son,  
my shelter is the Holy Spirit. O Holy Trinity  
Glory to You.

This prayer was written by Saint Ioannikios. He began his life as a shepherd, served in the army, and then became a monk. His prayers for others were powerful. He is said to have repeated this short prayer in between verses of the Psalms. Remind students to listen for it at evening prayers.

## The Symbol of Faith

I believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages.

Light of Light, true God of true god, begotten, not created, being of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became Man;

Who was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried;

And on the third day He rose from the dead in accordance with the Scriptures;

And ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father;

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; and His Kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen,

The creed, or symbol of faith, tells everything that the Orthodox Faith believes. Words of the fathers and saints can guide us, traditions can help us to practice the faith, but these statements are set in stone as the beliefs of the Church.

### **Wrap Up (5-10 minutes)**

Finish up any tasks. Remind participants that the Bible, as well as prayers and hymns, are tools that need to be used appropriately and carefully. Anyone can pick a phrase from the Bible or say a prayer, but it's important to look at the whole passage of the Bible and the meaning of the prayer to be sure they are being used correctly. A priest or bishop can also help us to know which prayers and which passages will be most helpful to us when we need them.

Consult your list of questions-have you found any answers or thought of any new ones? They should focus on about Faith, Hope, and Love, but may also be related to other topics of discussion that have come up during class.

## Session Three: Tools of the Church- Sacraments

Objective: Present the concepts of the Sacraments relevance in everyday life

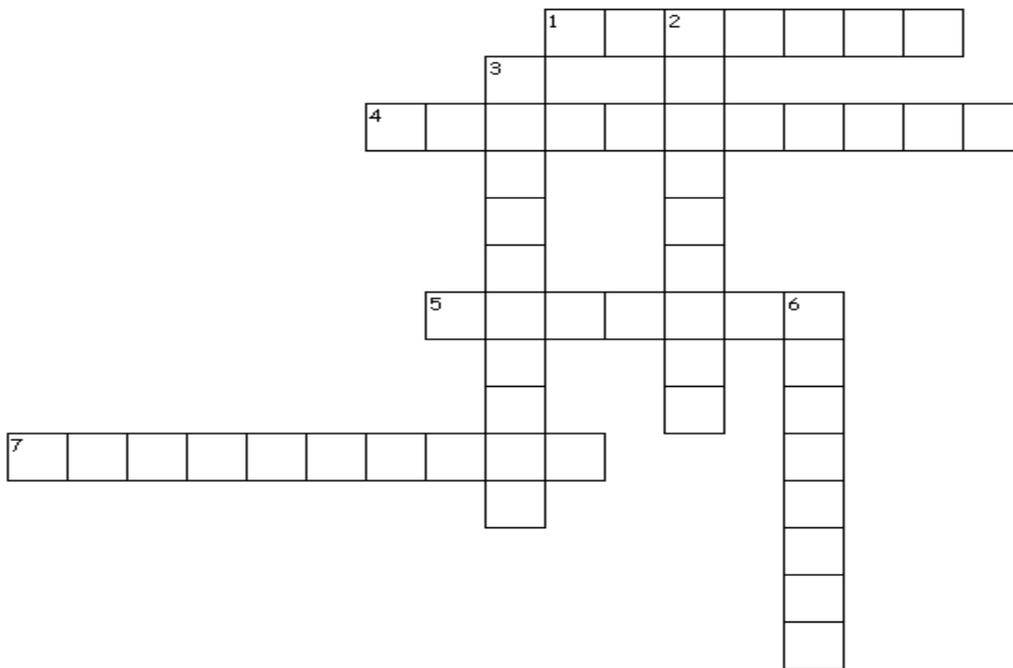
### Needed Items:

Several copies of Consistory Prayer Book

Photos of the Sacraments or Teaching Pics from Orthodox Christian Education Commission

### 10 minutes

The Orthodox Church believes that every act that is part of our life in the Church can be considered holy or sacramental, although there are seven sacraments that are usually recognized. See how many you can name, then share with a partner.



Across

1. Usually celebrated during Holy Week people receive both physical and spiritual healing through the anointing of holy oil. [Unction](#)
4. The gift of the Holy Spirit is received by being anointed with holy oil called chrism. [Chrismation](#)
5. Christians "put on Christ" after washing away their sins. This often happens to infants, but can happen at any age. [Baptism](#)
7. The act of telling the sins you are sorry for to God and asking for forgiveness. [Confession](#)

Down

2. The Holy Spirit is called down to turn water and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ during the Divine Liturgy. [Communion](#)
3. In this sacrament men become deacons, priests, and bishops through the laying on of hands. [Ordination](#)
6. The uniting of a man and woman as husband and wife. [Marriage](#)

[Make sure everyone has correct answers before moving on.](#)

Some sacraments are done once in a lifetime, such as baptism, but others like communion and confession can happen daily. Participation in all of these sacraments requires faith, hope, and love. In each sacrament, God blesses and sanctifies, or makes holy, some aspect of our lives that we know about, but can't see. [Have your "teaching pics" of the sacraments ready for use during the following reading and discussion.](#)

### **15 minutes- Marriage and Confession**



#### **Marriage**

The sacrament of marriage is a good example of the idea that sacraments cause a change that can't be seen, but that we know is true. For example, when a husband and wife are married, we have faith that God has blessed their relationship to each other and to Him in a special way, even though they don't look particularly different after the ceremony. Other than their wedding rings, they haven't changed physically from the beginning of the ceremony to the end. They don't magically look alike, or have a halo, or anything else like that. But we know that through the actions of the wedding ceremony, they have been changed. We hope that together they will be able to help each other get closer to the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than each working alone. Love is obviously an important part of marriage too. Not only does the couple have love for each other, they now share their love for God and help each other make that love even stronger.



·MARRIAGE·



#### **Confession**

[Although the weight of sin isn't usually visible, it can certainly have physical effects. To help the youth understand the need to unburden themselves through confession, complete the following activity, modifying as needed. Participants who are willing can pair up with a partner. One partner will](#)

climb on top of the other “piggy back” style. For this activity, the youth do not need to go anywhere, but just stand still, feeling the weight on them. Have several youth who chose not to be part of the piggy back exercise read from the Consistory prayer books in the section devoted to preparation for confession . If any students need to stop, they can return to their seats. At your discretion, pause the reading and have participants put their partners down and have a youth read the Prayer of Absolution found below. Another modification would be to have several bags with heavier items in them that participants can take turns holding for several moments.

Most of you have completed your First Holy Confession. You know that confession is a sacrament in which we tell our sins to God to take responsibility for them. Then we talk to God about how sorry we are that we did not follow the rules and guidelines He has asked us to follow. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable to tell others what we have done wrong, but going to confession is like taking a big weight off of our shoulders. And remember, the priest is there to guide us, not to judge us or to tell others about our sins.

At the end, the Priest says the Prayer of Absolution and God erases those sins that we are truly sorry for. Taking away those sins gives us another chance to start over with a clean slate, trying to do what God wants us to do, and not just what we want to do. This sacrament gives us great hope because God doesn't give us just one chance to get it right, or even two chances, but we can have as many chances as we need. We see in the prayer read at the end of our confession that God forgave even Peter who pretended not to know Jesus when He was being crucified. This gives us hope that we can be forgiven too.

### *The Prayer of Absolution*

*May God who pardoned David through Nathan the prophet when he confessed his sins, and Peter weeping bitterly for his denial, and the woman weeping at His feet, and the publican and the prodigal son, may the same God forgive you, (Name) all of your sins through me a sinner, both in this world and in the world to come, and set you uncondemned before His dreaded judgment seat. Have no further care for the sins that you have confessed depart in peace.*

May Christ through the prayer of his holy Mother and of all the saints have mercy upon us and save us for He is good and loves mankind.

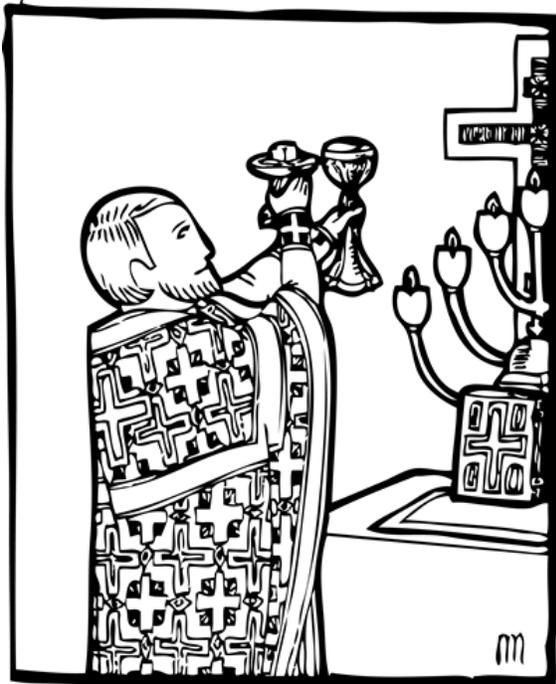


### **Communion (10 minutes)**

Communion is also called the Eucharist, which means *giving thanks*. Jesus gave us the example of giving thanks during His last supper with His disciples. Read Luke 22:19-20 and fill in the blanks below:

“And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My Blood which is shed for you.’

We see in this passage that Jesus set the example by giving thanks and asked us to continue in remembrance of Him. In communion, again our faith tells us that a change has happened even though it’s hard to see. Bread and wine go into the chalice, but during the Divine Liturgy, the priest asks the Holy Spirit to come down and turn them into the body and blood of Christ. When we come to the chalice to receive communion, things may not look different, but our faith tells us that God can make anything possible.



Can you fill in the blanks of this Communion Hymn?

Receive the Body of Christ

Taste the Fountain of Immortality

Alleluia,

Alleluia,

Alleluia

## Ordination (15 minutes)

13

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Each youth will take a turn placing their hands (gently) on the shoulders of another member of the circle. With their hands on the person's shoulders, they must say the name of the person they are tapping, followed by their own name. The player who was tapped now must choose another participant, place his/her hands on their shoulders and say the name of the person they have tapped, followed by their own name, then the person who tagged them. This continues until everyone has been tapped. The last person will have to name every person in order (as best they can). When everyone has had a chance, return to seats and read the following about the laying on of hands in ordination.



### Ordination

If you've attended any Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church, it's pretty easy to tell who is leading the service. Everyone has an important role in the services-singing, praying, lighting candles, etc. are all necessary, but to make sure that things follow the proper order and time, a priest, bishop, or sometimes a deacon or reader leads the service. Because these jobs are so important, readers, deacons, priests, and bishops go through special training and are given their jobs through the sacrament of ordination.

A special element of ordination in the Orthodox Church is the laying on of hands. The bishop must lay his hands on the person being presented for ordination. This is taken from the example of the Apostles. As they traveled around the world teaching others about Jesus and the Orthodox Faith, they realized that when they left to travel to a new city or country, they needed to leave a leader in charge to lead services, teach others, and answer questions.

*"Therefore brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*  
-Acts 6:3-4

The Apostles needed help, and laid hands on those who were worthy to lead. Although the bishop does the laying on of hands in an ordination, everyone present chants "Axios, Axios, Axios!" This means that we agree that the person being ordained is worthy of the job.

Connect the game with the laying on of hands by the Apostles. This is how the church ensures that people can't pretend to be part of the church without following the process prescribed by Apostles.

### **Wrap up 10-15 minutes**

Revisit questions if necessary. As part of the next session, participants will be performing a short skit based on the lives of the saints. Have participants spend a few minutes today previewing the options and characters so that they can start thinking about props and costume items they may have at home.

## **Session Four: Examples of the Saints**

Objective: Convey how the saints embody faith, hope and love

Needed Items:

Pre-printed lives of saints

The lives of the saints can teach us a lot about faith, hope, and love. In today's lesson, you'll learn a little bit more about saints whose faith was tested, but they still showed strong faith, hope, and love towards others. Each group will study the life of a saint, and prepare a small skit to teach the others about their life. After the performances, fill in the boxes below with information about how each saint may have shown their faith, hope, and love in their life.

Each group should choose the life of one saint to perform (there will be extras). Leaders may choose the saint or give the choice to students. Each skit should be about 5-7 minutes when performed. Make sure that all youth have a role- participants can take turns narrating if you need extra parts, and most stories have roles that can be held by multiple individuals like soldiers. It is probably easiest if narrators read the life of the saint from the text provided in the supplemental materials, while others silently act out, but the participants may decide to add "lines" at your discretion. When all groups are ready to perform, groups should gather in one common spot. Leaders should decide if it is easier to have a discussion about each saint and take notes as a whole group at the end of each skit, or if it's easier to go back to classrooms to wrap.

Skit Preparation (roles, props, etc.)- 20 minutes

Skit Performances- 25 minutes

Wrap up and notes in workbook- 25 minutes

Skit #1

Saints Name:	
	
	
	

Skit #2:

Saints Name:	
	
	
	

Skit #3

Saints Name:	
	



## **Session Five- Ways to Show Faith, Hope, and Love to Others and Ourselves**

**10 minutes** [Review the prior session, especially if you have new participants \(finish discussion on lives of the saints from last lesson if necessary\)](#)

In this session we will learn a little more about showing faith, hope, and love to others. We'll take a look at some situations where faith, hope, and love can help us. We'll also talk about our own faith, hope, and love towards ourselves, which we don't always think about.

In the following scenarios, you'll be asked to think about ways that faith, hope, and love can be useful. Think about the tools the church has given us to show faith, hope, and love. Also think about the lives of the saints that we discussed. What would they do? Use the symbols below as you brainstorm answers.

**20 minutes** [You may want to have participants work on these with a partner. When finished, review answers together as a class.](#)



Faith



Hope



Love

**Scenario #1:** You are worried about a friend whose family member is very sick. You know that your friend loves their family member, and you don't want anything bad to happen. How could faith, hope, and love help this situation?

[Faith- with God all things are possible, if God wants this person to be well again, have faith that He can heal anyone](#)

[Hope- because we have faith that God can heal them, we can have that they will be well. We can also hope that if they do not get well or fully recover, it is because God will bring others closer through that family member. More people will be praying and working together as a family to help them during this time. If older children go into the possibility of death, you may also want to suggest the hope of the Resurrection-we know that even if it is God's will that the person die, the promise of heaven has been given to us so we have the hope that the family member is now with God instead of suffering here on Earth.](#)

[Love- we can pray for them and give small gestures or offer to help to show our love for the friend and their family. Whether it is simply a hug or kind message,](#)

or actions like bringing food for the family, participating in a fundraiser event for the disease if this applies, etc.

**Scenario #2:**

You made a mistake-you went to Holy Confession, but kept something you were embarrassed about to yourself. You know that you should have mentioned it during your confession, but you were worried that the priest would be mad or would tell your parents. How could faith, hope, and love help in this situation?

Love- It's really important to remember that the priest is there to help you. You are talking directly to God when you confess. The priest can help you to talk about what sin is and give you guidance after your confession that will help you to avoid those sins in future. He is not there to judge you or to tell your parents. He is there because he loves every member of the church and wants to help them.

Faith- God can do anything-He can forgive even the most embarrassing of sins. Remember that Jesus forgave the man on His right at His crucifixion. The man was a murderer, but when he asked Jesus to remember him in heaven, he was forgiven. Thinking that there is something God won't forgive us for is actually a lack of faith in His power.

Hope-Confession is our chance, again and again to get things right. Because we have faith that God will always forgive us, going to confession lifts our burden and gives us hope that we will do better.

**Scenario #3:** You love your siblings, but sometimes they make you really mad, really really mad. Even though you have asked them many times to stay out of your things, you find something missing again. You know that it's not the worst thing in the world, but for some reason you are ready to scream! How could faith, hope, and love help in this situation?

Love- God doesn't tell us that we have to love others only when they love us back. It can be tough, but showing them love (which can include asking your parents to help) is always the right answer.

Faith- Know that God has given you a great gift by having a sibling. You always have people who are part of your team, even when it doesn't feel like it.

Hope- Think about the times when you really enjoy being with your siblings, to help you calm down during the times when it's not as easy to think positively

## **Our own Faith, Hope, and Love**

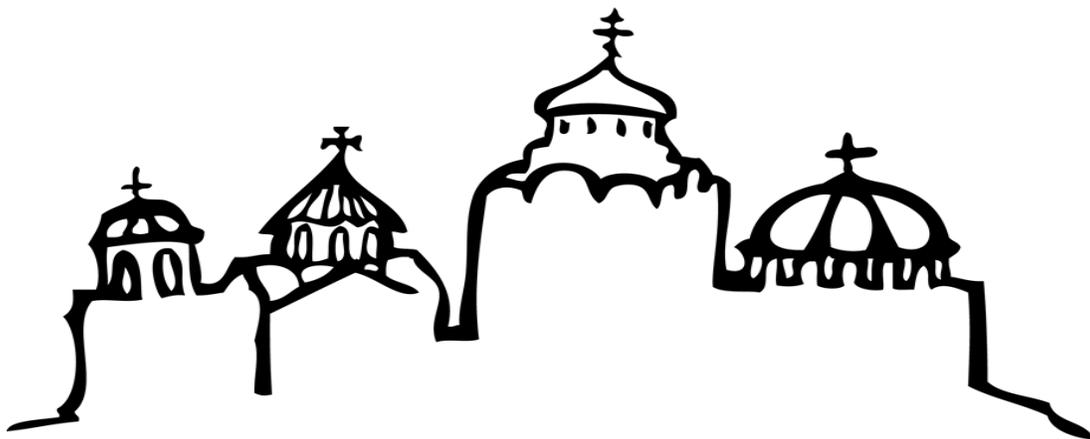
10 minutes – some students may find this easy, while others may have a lot of difficulty-just encourage them to give it a try. It might be a good idea to have your priest visit each class for a few minutes so that they can answer questions and give guidance. Participants may or may not want to share.

### **Faith**

What questions do you have about your Orthodox faith? What do you wonder about that could be explained by the church?

Who will you ask to get your questions answered?

What tools have we talked about that could help you? Think about the prayers we've learned about, the Bible passages we've studied, the sacraments, lives of the saints, etc.



## **Hope**

[5 minutes](#)

Hope is not just something that's nice to have. Being truly hopeless means that we don't believe that anything is possible with God, or that He has the power to change things. It's like putting a wall up between you and God.

Take a minute to make a list of things that make you hopeful, and remind you of God's power. Think about people, places, and things in your daily life and the tools that we learned about last week. It's important to keep these things in mind for times when you might feel down or not so hopeful.

[Again, this might be harder for some than others, and some students may be more eager to share than others. Take their lead, but encourage them to try.](#)

## **Love**

[5 minutes](#)

As we've mentioned, it can be really easy to love those who are nice to us, but what about those who are more challenging. Think of a person, or group of people that you would like to try harder to show love to. Who is it? What tools can you use to help you?

## **Session Six- Waiting for Heaven**

Objective: We can reach heaven through faith, hope and love

Needed Items:

White board or chart paper  
markers (dry erase or regular)  
Orthodox Study Bibles  
masking tape or sidewalk chalk

10 minutes- begin the session with chart paper or white board in two columns. Place the question "What is our goal as Christians?" at the top of one column and "How do we achieve that goal?" on the other. Youth can write answer in the columns, or on post it notes and place them on the paper. Discuss answers then proceed in workbook.

Work in groups to fill in the blanks of the following Bible verses.

15 minutes-This can work in partners or groups of three. Now that they have had some practice, older participants should be able to accomplish all four, but younger ones may still need to be assigned one or two passages then share their answers with the group.

*"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."* 2 Peter 3:13

*"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;"* John 10:27-28

*"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."* 2 Corinthians 5:1

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life."* John 6:47

The goal of every Christian's life is to join God in heaven. No matter what we do here on Earth, the most important things are to prepare for heaven and live a life that shows God we want to be with Him. What does this have to do with faith, hope, and love? Let's read 1 Thessalonians 5:8 to find out.

The people in Thessalonica had been asking about what would happen when Jesus comes again. They came up with a lot of “what ifs” and “maybes” and a lot of things that didn’t really answer the question. In one of his letters, Saint Paul tells them not to worry so much about what exactly will happen on that day, because God hasn’t told us. We don’t know the answer yet! Instead, Paul tells them that we do know that God has told us what’s important if we want to go to heaven with Him on that day. Rather than guess what might happen, he tells them to get ready for that day.

*“But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.”*

What does it sound like Saint Paul is asking the people to prepare for?

Battle? War? We shouldn’t be lying around, just waiting. We should be preparing, practicing, training

20 minutes- Completing the challenge- prior to the session, use masking tape or chalk to mark off a narrow path on the ground. It should also be curvy or jagged, not straight. Students will take turns walking the path. They must stay on some part of the path at all times, if they step out they need to start over. If a little competition helps, time participants.

After every person finishes, return to seating area and discuss the questions below before participants answer them in their own words.

How difficult was it to stay on the path? What might have made it easier? What might have made it more difficult?

If people cheered, did that help? What if something unexpected was thrown in their path?

If you stepped off and had to try again, how did that feel?

What if the path was really long, would they have been more careful about not falling off?

This was just a short exercise, but the Church teaches us that getting to heaven is like running a race. And because it takes our entire life, it's more like a marathon, not a sprint. As we read above, Saint Paul tells us not to sit back and wait for Jesus to come to us, we need to get ready and run to Him. How could faith, hope, and love help us in this journey?

[5 minutes-wrap up and consult question list from beginning of packet.](#)

## **Session Seven- Examples Today**

Finish any Sessions that might need more time, or have your priest visit if you and the youth have questions that need to be answered.

The session for today should focus on the images found in the supplemental materials packet. Youth can pass them around, or you can look at each one as a group. See if participants can make connections to faith, hope, and love for each picture.

Faith- Many pictures show individuals taking significant risks by showing their faith. Those who stand in the way of the police put themselves in physical danger. Those who travel as missionaries also face greater risks to their health, and sometimes their lives also.

Hope-Those who engage in any of the actions shown here must have Hope. Their faith is strong and they are able to Hope in the fact that these actions will bring them closer to God and to Heaven.

Love-those standing as witnesses in front of the police are demonstrating their love for God. Many prayed for those who were the oppressors. Christians protecting those of other beliefs show that while they do not share the same faith, they recognize that everyone was made in the image and likeness of God and that our brothers and sisters are not just our biological brothers and sisters. Missionaries travel very far to show the love of Jesus to others.

We've talked about many ways that we can show faith, hope, and love in our daily lives and looked at the lives of the saints for inspiration. There are also many people who we can look to as examples today. After looking at some of the images your teacher has and discussing with your class, make a list of new thoughts about faith, hope, and love.

We hope when you get home you'll tell your family and friends, at home and at church, what you learned this week. What are the top three things you learned?

1. Please make sure that participants take a few minutes to do this, it will help them to communicate more clearly when they arrive home.

2.

3.

## **Experiential Session One: Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love**

**Objective:** Introduce the saints who bear the name of the virtues

**Summary:** You will teach the lives of Saints Sophia and her Daughters and the participants will be creating or illuminating an icons of the saints.

Needed Items:

- Life of St. Sophia and her Daughters

Simple story may be found here:

<https://oca.org/saints/lives/1999/09/17/102638-martyr-sophia-and-her-three-daughters-at-rome>

Full story may be found here:

<http://www.st-sophia.com/st-sophia/>

- Icon of Saint Sophia and her Daughters

provided courtesy of Archangel Icons

- White board or chart paper
- markers
- Smaller copies of icon of St. Saint Sophia and her Daughters  
(purchased mounted icons, icon prints)
- frames with mattes, mattes or wood plaques



Note: depending on the project you choose you will either need stickers, floral gift wrap of differing types, modge podge, jewels, etc..)

Preparation: Acquaint yourself well with the life of St. Sophia and her Daughters. The more easily you can relay there story without the need to read, will make the story more engaging for the participants. Highlight certain passages you may want to relay.

Choose the type of project you want to provide for the participants. You may order from Archangel Icons, a mounted print of the icon. There are three means for illuminating these icons:

1. Double Mounting - Purchase a slightly larger wood plaque. decopage the floral papers onto the larger plaque. Glue the icon onto the large plaque. Participants may add additional adornment to the larger plaque once the two are attached.
2. Decopage Icons - Purchase wood plaques. Print a copy of the icon provided by Archangel Icons on your home printer. Using Modge Podge, decopage the icon to the wood. Allow to dry partially. Participants may now illuminate the icons with appropriate stickers, jewels, etc.
3. Icon Prints - Purchase frames with mattes. Print high quality copies of your icons. Take the mattes out of the frames and allow the participants to illuminate the mattes with appropriate stickers or verses from the Tropar of the saints.
4. Canvas Prints - If you are ambitious - you may try the photo to canvas crafting technique. You may find directions for this process at <http://www.thisheartofmineblog.com/2013/08/30/transfer-image-canvases/>

Begin the session in prayer.

### **Story of Saint Sophia and Her Daughters - 15-20 minutes**

Ask the participants if they know anything about St. Sophia and her daughters. Allow them time to respond. Begin to relay the story of the saints. Ask one or more of the participants to be the scribe. They will note important points on the white board/chart paper.

Items to make note of in the story:

- The ages of Saints Faith, Hope and Love. Ask the participants who there is the same age as one of the saints. Have the scribe note this.
- St. Sophia was a single mom. She and her husband were very faithful Christians. When he died, she continued to raise their daughters in the

faith. Do the participants think this was easy? Discuss what it would have been like to be a single mom in the time of St. Sophia.

- Ask the participants why the local community found St. Sophia and her daughters so interesting? Lead them to an answer b/c they had never seen a family so devoted to God. Why was this unusual?
- Ask the participants why would the governor be so interested in the saints? Answer: If they could attract so much attention in the community, they may inspire others to become Christians.
- St. Sophia prepared her daughters on the journey to the emperor, knowing they would probably be martyred. How do our parents sacrifice and prepare us for the world today? Is it easy for our parents to raise us as Orthodox Christians?
- How do the saints inspire you with their devotion to God?
- How do Saints Faith, Hope and Love demonstrate the virtues of their names?

Note: With this age group, be sensitive to your descriptions of their martyrdom. There is not a need to go into great details. The general idea of their trials will be enough for them.

Allow time for open discussion

### **Icon Creation - 30 minutes.**

Guide the participants through the icon project. While they are working. Write the Tropar of St. Sophia and her Daughters on the white board/chart paper.

Close the session by praying the Tropar together and sharing in a meal.

### **Troparion — Tone 4**

The Church celebrates and rejoices / In the feast of the three daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love / And their Mother Sophia, named for her wisdom: / For in them she gave birth to the three godly virtues. / Now they eternally behold their bridegroom, God the Word. / Let us rejoice spiritually

in their memory and cry: / O our three Heavenly Protectors, / Establish, confirm and strengthen us / In Faith, Hope and Love.

### **Troparion — Tone 5**

You blossomed in the courts of the Lord / as a fruitful olive tree, / holy martyr Sophia; / in your contest you offered to Christ the sweet fruit of your womb, / your daughters Faith, Hope, and Love. / Together with them intercede for us all.

## **Experiential Session Two: Prayer Sticks of Faith, Hope and Love**

Objective: Promote faith, hope and love through prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Summary: The youth will be creating and exchanging prayers stick for a predetermined time.

Pre-preparation: Ask youth to bring one or two photos of themselves that they will not mind having used in a project.

Needed Items:

Popsicle Sticks ( wider sticks craft sticks are preferred)

Laminate and laminator or clear contact paper

Photos of your youth or a camera, computer and printer

Permanent Markers

Copies of Elder Porphyrios Quote

Printed prayer

Begin the session in prayer.

Ask the participants why we pray for others. Allow time for discussion.

Here is what Elder Pory tells us about praying for others.



*Prayer for others which is made gently and with deep love is selfless and has great spiritual benefit. It brings grace to the person who prays and also to the person for whom he is praying. When you have great love and this love moves you to prayer, then the waves of love are transmitted and affect the person for whom you are praying and you create around him a shield of protection and you influence him, you lead him towards what is good. When He sees your efforts, God bestows His grace abundantly on both you and on the person you are praying for.*

He then adds,

*But we must die to ourselves. Do you understand?*

We cannot pray properly without humility. This is essential. Our own wisdom is never sufficient. The personal advice we give to others is not the secret. In prayer we seek God's grace. His grace comforts and heals. "

Allow the participants time to discuss this passage.

Explain that in addition to our already established daily prayers we will be praying for someone else in our group. They will be making prayer sticks. These sticks will have a photo and the name of the person they for whom they are praying. Each month, they will be asked to return their prayer sticks and they will be redistributed amongst the group. Once you have prayed for someone, your name will be placed on the back of their stick. At the end of the year, your stick will be returned with all of the names of those who prayed on their behalf.

Pass out the needed items and begin creating the prayer sticks. Ensure that the participants print their names clearly on the front of the stick. Attach a copy of the Prayer for Others with a piece of yarn or string to the middle of the stick.

Place the stick in a bag or bowl and have the participants pick out a stick.

### ***Prayer for Others***

Save, O Lord, and have mercy on Thy servant(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Deliver him (her, them)

from every tribulation, wrath and need,

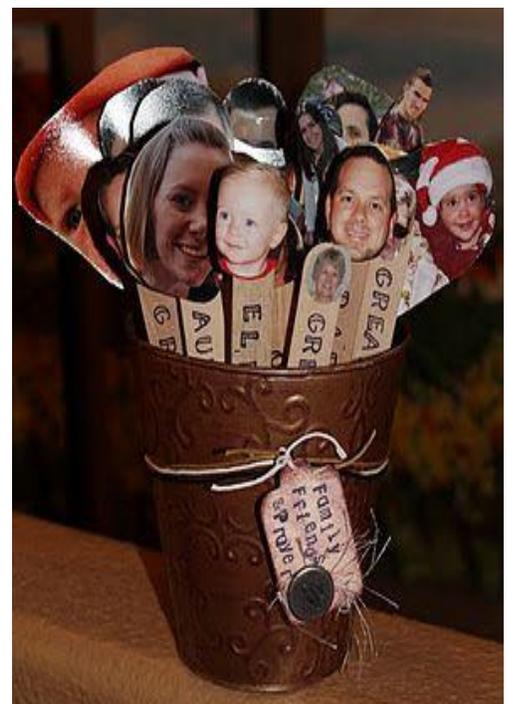
From every sickness of soul and body,

Forgive him (her, them) every transgression, voluntary and involuntary,

And do whatever is profitable for our souls

Complete the session in prayer and a meal.

Additional resource: How to Properly Pray for Someone  
<http://www.orthodox.net/articles/pray-for-someone.html>



## **Experiential Session Three: Icon Prayer Boxes**

Objective: Provide participants opportunity to inspire faith, hope and love in their lives and the lives of others.

Summary: Participants will be creating travel dyptich icon prayer boxes. They will make one to keep for their own use and one to be given to an individual that they think is in need of some faith, hope and love.

Needed Items:

- Empty Altoid tins

these may be purchased already empty on Ebay or you can purchase them in the local story and use the mints!

- Paper Icons

You can print these but may also be easily obtained by requesting parishioners to donate old prayer cards or catalogs such as Light and Life

- Printed prayers to fit one side of the Altiod tin (suggested prayers: Lord's Prayer, O Heavenly King)
- Modge Podge
- Scrap booking paper
- scissors
- craft paint brushes
- small gift bags and tissue paper



Preparation:

View the provided website to see examples of the finished product.

<http://homeindouglas.blogspot.com/2011/06/icon-prayer-shrines.html>

Begin the session in prayer.

Explain to the participants that they will be creating a travel icon prayer boxes. These can be used on a daily basis in their icon corners at home, placed in

their lockers at school, carried in their back-packs or used for trips and vacations.

Show them a completed travel icon.

Allow the participants time to choose their icons, prayers, and scrap booking paper.

Have them begin by gluing the interior items first. Then allow them time to cover the entire exterior of the tin.

If you have any jewels left over from prior projects, allow them time to bejewel the exterior.

Explain that they can write specific prayer requests to store in their prayer boxes.

Spend some time in discussion with the youth as to whom they may gift their second icon box.

Once completed, have the participants write a short note to their prayer box recipient to be placed inside of the box. The note could read as follows:

*Dear Friend,*

*This prayer box was crafted with love for you. My prayer is that it will help to bring you hope in times of need and faith in times of prayer.*

Grant time for the participants to wrap their gifts.

Close the session in prayer and a meal.

## **Experiential Session Four: Faith - Little Miracles**

Objective: Expose participants to the service of the Lesser or Greater Blessing of Water and the ongoing miracle of Holy Water.

Summary: Many of our youth have never participated in the blessing of water. It is a beautiful and interactive service. It would be ideal to place this session during the Feast of Epiphany. If it is not possible to coincide with the feastday, consult with your priest to discuss when he may be able to join you and celebrate the service of the Lesser Blessing of Water.

The participants will also be able to take home their own holy water in their own holy water containers.

Needed Items:

Text for the appropriate service

Explanation of Epiphany

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/epiphany>

Holy water bottles (purchased or created)

Pre-preparation: Familiarize yourself with the article by Fr. Hopko on Ephiaphy and the supplemental article about holy water (<http://stmaryofstamford.org/holywater.html>)

Determine if you will purchase holy water bottles or have the participants create their own. There are several sources to purchase the holy water bottles. To create them you will need the following:

- clear sports water bottles
- paper icons (or laminated)
- modge podge
- self-stick foam letters

- water that has been left open to the air for at least three weeks. An open water bottle would be easiest.
- Holy water from the prior year.

Ask your priest if there are any ways that the youth may participate in the service such as holding candles, banners, etc. Also inquire if he will speak to the youth prior to the service concerning what will take place and the importance of holy water. You can also arrange for him to have a Q & A with the youth following the service.

You may want to split this session into two parts based upon your decision to either purchase or make your holy water bottles. If you choose to have the youth make them, schedule a session prior to the service. You or your parish priest can have a discussion about the upcoming service and the importance of holy water while the youth are working on their bottles.

If conducting a pre-service session - begin in prayer.

Ask the participants if they believe in miracles. Allow time for answers. Tell them you are about to show them a little miracle. Show them the regular water that has been sitting out. It should be a bit cloudy or beginning to form algae. Ask them if they know why this happens. Then show them the holy water. Ask them if they can guess how old the water is. Tell them that they could easily drink the holy water - you can even drink some yourself. How is this possible? This is a good opportunity to begin the discussion concerning the blessing of water and epiphany.

Ask the participants how else holy water is used in their life. Indicate that holy water can be a part of their everyday life. They can drink a bit of holy water every day, use their holy water to "bless" items in their home, etc.

Allow them time to choose their icons and letters to make their holy water bottles. Complete the session in prayer - possible singing the Tropar of Epiphany.



A smooth sided bottle is best for the letters and icons to adhere. Ensure to direct participants to hand wash their holy water bottles.



## **Experiential Session Five: Hope - Holy Relics**

**Objective:** Enlighten youth about the existence and understanding of Holy Relics.

**Summary:** In this session you will be presenting tangible connections to the faith through holy relics.

**Needed Items:** Holy Relics (every parish should have relics in their Antimens or in their altar. If possible, ask your priest to show the antimens and any additional relics that the youth may actually see and venerate).

Photos of Holy Relics

If possible, a lock of someone's baby hair or a piece of memorabilia belonging to a specific famous person( a photo of the memorabilia can also work).

**Pre-preparation** - Discuss this session with your priest. Having your priest's input and possible participation in explaining Holy Relics and Myrhh-streaming icons would be ideal.

Begin the session in prayer.

Ask the students if they have ever kept a memento of a person that meant a lot to them. If you have the lock of hair or piece/photo of memorabilia - show this to the participants. Ask them, why do people keep mementos of love one's or famous people?

Ask them if they know what relics are. The definition of relic is:

relic

1. noun - an object surviving from an earlier time, especially one of historical or sentimental interest.  
synonyms: artifact, historical object, ancient object, antiquity, antique  
"a Viking relic"
- o a part of a deceased holy person's body or belongings kept as an object of reverence.  
synonyms: remains, corpse, bones;  
cadaver  
"a saint's relics"

Have the participants ever heard of or seen holy relics of the church? Give participants time to relay their experiences. Explain where relics come from and why they are important. Main points to include:

- Holy relics are usually from saints of the church
- Holy Relics include whole or parts of their body, remnants of their clothing or articles such as pieces of the Life-giving Cross
- Holy Relics may be completely incorrupt or may be just bone
- St. John Chrysostom tells us, "God left us the relics of the Saints wishing to guide us in the same zeal they had."
- Relics are known to perform miracles
- The veneration of saints is vital to the life of the Holy Orthodox Church, because the existence of saints affirms that it is truly possible to fulfill the Christian vocation — to become conformed to the image of Christ — because every Christian is called to be a saint, for Christ commanded us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. *Sister Ioanna, St. Innocent Religious/Monastic Community*
- The veneration of saints' relics and their frequent incorruption affirm that the physical world indeed does have the potential for being transfigured and resurrected, as it participates in the restoration of humanity to the beauty of the Divine Image and Likeness. *Sister Ioanna, St. Innocent Monastic Community*

Ask the participants if they know where they may encounter Holy Relics. The following should be touched upon:

**Antimens** - On the altar table one always finds the **antimension**. This is the cloth depicting Christ in the tomb which contains the signature of the bishop and is the permission for the local community to gather as the Church. "Antimension" means literally "instead of the table." Since the bishop is the proper pastor of the Church, the antimension is used instead of the bishop's own table which is, obviously, in his own church building, the **cathedral**—the place where the bishop has his chair (*cathedra*).

The antimension usually contains a **relic** (normally a part of the body) of a saint which shows that the Church is built on the blood of the martyrs and the lives of God's holy people. This custom comes from the early Church practice of gathering and celebrating the eucharist on the graves of those who have lived and died for the Christian faith. Usually, a relic of a saint is embedded in the altar table itself as well." *The Orthodox Faith Vol II. Worship, Fr. Thomas Hopko.*

If you are able to show your youth the antimens of your parish, do so now. Inform them whose relics are contained within the antimens. If you are unable to show them your parish antimens, show them a photo of one and tell them whose relics are contained within your parish's antinemns.

- Make a pilgrimage to venerate Holy Relics - If you live close to where relics are housed, plan a trip for your youth to visit.  
Incorrupt saints in the United States are:  
St. Herman of Alaska  
Holy Resurrection Church  
Kodiak, Alaska  
  
St. John (Maximovitch) the Wonderworker  
Holy Virgin Cathedral  
Geary Boulevard  
San Francisco

St. Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre  
St. Tikhon's Monastery  
South Canaan, Pa.

St. Raphael of Brooklyn  
Antiochian Village  
Ligonier, Pa.

You may also contact sister Orthodox parishes in your area to inquire if they have any special reliquaries that you may bring your youth to venerate.

It is also important for youth to learn the holiness and sanctity of the Holy Relics. Take time to teach and discuss the proper way to venerate.

Allow time for open discussion and questions. Ask how Holy Relics inspire hope in those who are blessed to venerate them.

Close the session in prayer and a meal.

Additional Resources :

[http://www.sfsobor.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=151&lang=en](http://www.sfsobor.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=151&lang=en)

Holy Relics - American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church

<http://www.acrod.org/readingroom/saints/relics>

Why Relics? - St. Innocent of Irkusk Orthodox Church

<http://stinnocentchurch.com/whyrelics.html>

## **Experiential Session Six: Love - Love Packages**

**Objective:** Provide youth with the ability to share love with others who may be experiencing physical pain or loneliness.

**Summary:** Your youth will assemble and deliver Love Packages to sick, elderly and shut-ins of your parish and/or local community.

### **Needed Items:**

Copies of the provided quotes  
Gift Bags  
Small gifts (see list of suggested items)  
Card stock or construction paper (or ready made cards)  
Markers  
Stickers  
Tissue Paper  
Names of recipients for Love Packages  
Prayers for the sick  
Optional Items: flowers, magazines



**Pre-preparation:** Discover the names and address of the sick, elderly and shut-ins of your parish. Also determine one or more local senior centers or elderly care facilities. You may either purchase the needed items for the bags, take your youth shopping as a part of the session and/or place a list in you parish bulletin requesting donations. Place all of the gift items on a table.

Begin the session in prayer.

Present the quotes provided to the participants. If possible, break them into two groups. Give each group one of the quotes. Ask them to discuss what the quotes mean and how it applies to their life.

"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

"—1 John 4:12-19...

## Mark 12:30-31 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[b]</sup> There is no commandment greater than these.

Ask each group to present the conclusions of their discussion

Convey to the group that one important way to show love to your brother is by reaching out to those who are sick and alone. Individuals who often fall into those categories are our elderly. Explain how they will be giving love to the shut-ins, elderly and sick of your parish by creating Love Packages. Give details that Love Packages will consist of small gifts and cards that you will deliver as a group. Discuss each person on the list if possible. Tell the youth a little bit about each person. Ask if the participants know the person being named. If they do, ask them to relay something about them.

Provide a printed list with the names of the individuals to be visited. Ask each participant make a card for each individual on the list or break up the list and have participants make one card on behalf of the group for all to sign. Encourage them to be creative!

Once the cards are complete, allow the participants to "go shopping" and place a predetermined amount of items in a gift bag. Depending on the number of participants and recipients they may have the opportunity to fill one or several bags or work as small groups to fill the bags.

If visiting an elderly center or care facility, call ahead and ask how many bags to bring or make several "group bags" for a ward or a group of individuals to share. When making cards for individuals that are unknown to you and your youth, encourage them to make non-specific but considerate cards.

Choose a date to make your deliveries. If you have a large group of youth or recipients - you may need to break up into smaller delivery groups or plan two days to deliver.

You may want to take a few moments to discuss with youth what it is like to visit someone who may be very ill. Convey that people of any age or physical health just want to be love, listened to and treated with respect. Don't be nervous! Just be yourself!

Provide your youth with the list of individuals being visited. Ask them to pray for them on a regular basis.

Complete your session in prayer and a meal.

**Prayer For Love**

Christ my God, set my heart on fire with love in You, that in its flame I may love You with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul and with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself, so that by keeping Your commandments I may glorify You the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Amen.

Prayer for the sick

O holy Father, heavenly Physician of our souls and bodies, who hast sent thine Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to heal all our ailments and deliver us from death: do thou visit and heal thy servant N., granting him release from pain and restoration to health and vigor, that he may give thanks unto thee and bless thy holy Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.