

## *Holy Gifts for the Holy* *December/January - Focus on Proskomedía !*

### *Focus-*

Aiding youth in developing a better understanding of the progression of the Divine Liturgy beginning with proskomedía.

***Discussion*** - Ask the youth what it means to “prepare”. The answer we are looking for is to “get something ready to be used”. Ask them, “What are some things that they prepare or get prepared for?” Allow time for discussion. Choose one of the actions listed for further discussion (example – preparing for a test). On a white/chalk board begin by asking the youth why they prepare for something. Then proceed to take the chosen action and list the steps used in the preparation.

State, “There are many ways in which we can prepare for the Liturgy. The priest, the altar servers, and the people must all prepare in different ways. Just as we listed the steps in which we prepared for (insert the action from the previous discussion), can you explain all the different ways in which preparations are made for the Divine Liturgy?” Allow time for discussion. Guide the youth through the various preparations.

Ask them, “How do you personally, or how does your family prepare?” Following discussion touch upon the fact that from Great Vespers we should be spiritually, mentally and physically preparing for Divine Liturgy. These preparations should not be a burden or a chore but a “joyful anticipation” of being with our Lord, worshiping Him and becoming recipients of Holy Communion.

Explain that the “preparation” prior to the Divine Liturgy is called the *Proskomedía*. The *proskomedía* specifically refers to the preparation of the holy gifts by the priest. However, His Beatitude Metropolitan Constantine encourages us to make every action prior to the Liturgy; dressing, washing, praying – our personal prayer or *proskomedía*.

*Note: The proskomedía is also known as the prothesis or proskomide.*

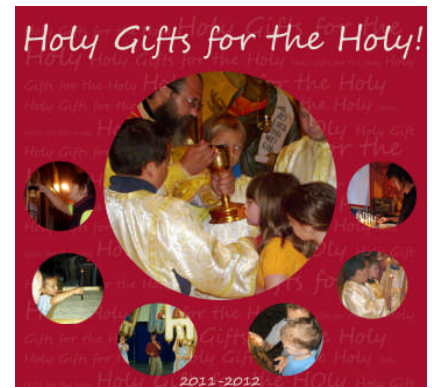
### *Look/Listen -*

Encourage the youth to participate in the service of Great Vespers on Saturday evening. Ask them to pay attention to the service and discover how this is a preparation for Divine Liturgy. Encourage them to arrive early for Divine Liturgy to *look* around them and take note of what is being done in the church prior to the start of the service. Your parish may pray the service of Matins (Orthros) or the Hours. Ask them to pay special attention to what may be going on behind the altar. Advise them to listen to the words of the Divine Liturgy, is there anywhere within the liturgy where we use words that prepare us for communion?

### *Activities -*

Using a piece of poster board, write Divine Liturgy at the top and then divide the paper into thirds with a marker. On one the left side of the poster write, Proskomedía, in the middle write - Liturgy of the Word and on right, Liturgy of the Faithful. Discuss with the youth that the Divine Liturgy is broken into three main parts. Today you will be discussing the first part, the Proskomedía.

If possible, arrange with your priest to show the youth the items used during the proskomedía and to show them where it takes place, the Table of Oblation (preparation). The Table of Oblation is behind the iconostas to the left. It represents the cave in which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born. Your priest may give a blessing to allow the youth to “peek” in the deacon door to see the table.



You may set up a table in the nave (main area of the church) on which your priest can show a mock demonstration of the proskomedia. If your priest is unable to aid in this presentation, the Orthodox Church in America provides a step-by-step explanation with photos that you can share with the youth. (<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-divine-liturgy/prothesis>)

There is also an excellent video on youtube which shows the proskomedia. ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_H3cJxC0sE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_H3cJxC0sE&feature=related)) It is from the Greek tradition (which is why the prosphora may look different from what is used in your parish) but it is in English and will aptly show your youth the service of the proskomedia.

Here is a second video, also from the Greek tradition. <http://www.stgeorgegreenville.org/Services/Proskomede/ProskomideModem.html>

Ask your youth to provide a list of family and friends (living and deceased) of whom they would like to have remembered during the proskomedia. These lists may be given to your priest.

Allow time for discussion following the presentation or video. If your priest is not present, keep track of any questions you cannot answer to present to him at a later date.

**Terms:**

**Diskos/paten** – round elevated plate that holds the prosphora

**Spear** – small liturgical knife with a speared head used to cut the prosphora

**Spoon** – liturgical spoon used to give communion to the faithful

**Star/asterisk** – metal cross that is used on the diskos to hold the holy cloth

**Chalice** – Liturgical cup used to hold Holy Communion

**Sponge** – used to clean and dry the chalice

**Icon of the Nativity** – place above the Table of Oblation

**Table of Oblation** – table of preparation used during the proskomedia or preparation of the holy gifts

**Aer and veils** – clothes used to cover the holy gifts

