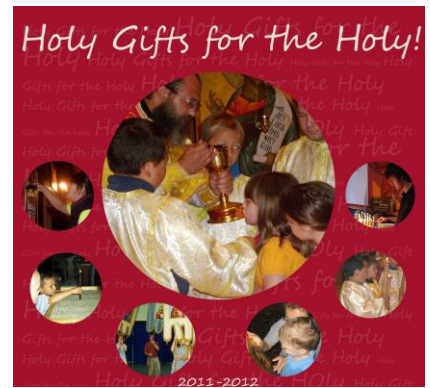


Holy Gifts for the Holy *March - Focus on Liturgy of the Faithful!*

Focus-

Further developing a better understanding of the progression of the Divine Liturgy by exploring the *Liturgy of the Faithful*.

Discussion - Bring out your divided poster/white board. Try to have a Divine Liturgy service book available for each participant. For younger children utilizing the *Divine Liturgy for Children* published by Orthodox Christian Education Commission is excellent for study and making notations. Begin by stating, *“Last month we focused on the Liturgy of the Word. Now we will begin to look at the third section of the Divine Liturgy – the Liturgy of the Faithful”* At this point either pass out the copies of the Divine Liturgy or Divine Liturgy for Children.



For take time to discuss the meaning of the word faithful. Utilize these materials from Thriving Family to accomplish the goal of understanding faithfulness.

<http://www.thrivingfamily.com/Family/Faith/2011/reflecting-gods-faithfulness.aspx>

You may find additional activities below for displaying a definition for “faith”.

Give the children time to look through the liturgy starting after the Litany of the Catechumens. For younger children you may need to guide them through the service or skip this activity. *Ask them why they think it is called the Liturgy of the Faithful? Allow time for discussion. Ask them, what does it mean to be faithful as a Christian based upon what they learned earlier concerning “faithfulness”?* Allow them time to provide answers that can be written on the white board. Words or phrases we are looking for may include: steadfast, reliable, promise keeper, true, keep your word, etc.

Explain that for the purposes of the church – The Faithful are those who have accepted Christ through baptism and chrismation and will stay steadfast in their commitment to Christ. This is why the catechumens (who we discussed last month) were asked to leave at a certain point. Why do you think that only the Faithful would be allowed to stay for this part of the Liturgy? (The answer you are looking for is that only “the faithful” can participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion and at this point we are declaring our faith and beginning the earnest preparation for the sacrament.)

The Divine Liturgy is not only celebrated by the faithful here on earth but also by the saints. Explain to the participants that we here are called the “church militant”. Ask what they think that means? (The answer we are looking for is that we are still fighting the fight as Christians.) Those who have already won the fight are called the “church triumphant”. All of the faithful of the church are together during the Divine Liturgy. Do you know what must be present for a Divine Liturgy to take place?(We are looking for the item “antimens”.) If they do not know, ask them if they know what the antimens are. Explain that in the early church, the Christians had to gather in secret because there were many people trying to persecute them for being Christians. For younger children, you can equate persecution to bullying. One of the most used places by the Christian were catacombs. These were underground caves where they would bury the dead. They would use rock or make table out of the rock that would be over those buried there to prepare communion. To commemorate the early church, the antimens contain relics of a saint. Ask if they know what a relic is. In this way a part of the church triumphant is always with us during the Divine Liturgy.

Round up the discussion by explaining that the last part of the Liturgy –the “faithful” – continued the journey toward the Eucharist. To be able to be considered one of the faithful, what would you do to reaffirm that faith

during the liturgy? (We are looking for them to say “recite the creed”). *Once the faithful have reaffirmed their faith, then they could move forward toward receiving the body and blood of Christ.*

Have the students start at the Litany of the Faithful and begin listing on the white board the sections of the Liturgy of the Faithful. For younger children, create the list for them and guide them through the process using photos of the sections or using the Divine Liturgy for Children book. Your list should include: Cherubim Hymn, Great Entrance, Litany of the Faithful, Kiss of Peace, Creed, Anaphora, Lord’s Prayer, Holy Communion, We Give Thanks, Let our Mouths be Filled, and Departing Prayers. Using some of the following resources over the next month – discuss each section of the Liturgy of the Faithful with the youth. Encourage them to discover how each section is relevant to them and how they are active participants.

- The Orthodox Faith: Volume II Worship by Fr. Thomas Hopko - <http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-divine-liturgy/fervent-supplication>. This resource is excellent and provides photos to accompany the text.
- Heaven and Earth: Divine Liturgy E-zine (student workbook and teacher manual) Greek Archdiocese Department of Religious Education http://www.light-n-life.com/shopping/order_product.asp?ProductNum=HEAV079
- Let us Attend! A Journey through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy by Fr. Lawrence Farelly

Look/Listen -

Ask the youth to pay close attention to what happens during the Liturgy of the Faithful especially during the Great Entrance, Creed and Anaphora. Ask them to take note of things they may not have noticed before during the second part of the liturgy and keep to keep a list of their observations to bring to the next session. In particular ask them to note when the bells are rung (this can be discussed at the next session).

Have the teenagers read the priests prayers during the Liturgy of the Faithful and discuss later how this might have enhanced their understanding of the liturgy.

Activities -

There are several ways to engage the youth during the Liturgy of the Faithful. Below are a few suggestions for your parish. With each action we are attempting to reaffirm that the Liturgy is the *work of the people*:

- Litany Conversations – Continue to encourage the youth in their “litany conversations”. In review, the priest is making a request on all of our behalf and we are affirming the request with *Lord Have Mercy* or *Grant it O, Lord*. Ask them to view the litanies as a conversation between God, the people and the priest and to be active in that conversation each week.
- The Creed – Ask your priest if the youth in the parish could chant or recite the creed during Great Lent. Prior to the first time, review with the older youth the main precepts of the Creed. You could allow the youth of all ages to create an “illuminated” creed. Purchase specialty paper from your local craft store that can be used in a printer. Print the creed on the paper. If you are able, allow the youth to choose their font before their paper is printed. Using paper icons, filigree stickers, ink stamps, etc – allow them to respectfully decorate their creed. When they are done you can have the illuminated creed framed to take home. You could also conduct this project with the Lord’s Prayer.
- Lord’s Prayer activity – Ask your choir director to teach the youth to sing the Lord’s Prayer. Arrange with your priest and choir director to have the youth sing the Lord’s Prayer during Divine Liturgy.
- For young children utilize the line drawings of the Divine Liturgy provided by the Orthodox Church in America to explain the different parts of the service. <http://dce.oca.org/resources/line-drawings/>. They may use the drawings combined with the drawings from the Liturgy of the Word, to create a Divine Liturgy Collage.
- Utilize the line drawings(or locate photographs) of the Divine Liturgy to ac line, displayed in your parish hall.

- It is Great Lent – encourage the youth who have already had their first Holy Confession to prepare for Holy Confession with the thought in mind that they are preparing also to receive Christ through Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy. Show them the Prayers in Preparations for Confession and Communion – as well, as the Prayers of Thanksgiving following Holy Communion. Encourage them to make these prayers a regular part of their preparation for Divine Liturgy.
- During Great Lent we utilize a different version of the Divine Liturgy – that attributed to St. Basil. The regular weekly Divine Liturgy used is attributed to St. John Chrysostom. Have the youth note the differences between the two liturgies. Learn about each of the saints and their influence on the Divine Liturgy. Younger children may draw “icons” of the two saints.
- Faith Activities from EHow.com:

Blowing in the Wind

- Give each child a kite and spend an afternoon flying the kites in the wind. When you get back to the church, talk about the wind. Like God, wind is hard to define because it cannot be seen even though the effects of it can be felt and seen when the kite is blowing in the wind. When God works in our lives, we cannot always see, define or prove God's presence, yet the results of our faith are visible in the life changes we experience.

What Is the Item?

- Place several random and common household items into a brown paper bag. Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. The children should put blindfolds on and take turns pulling items out of the bag and guessing what they are by feel only. They might know that an apple is an apple, yet they cannot prove it without sight. They simply have faith that they know what they are touching. Likewise, they will know a cotton ball when they feel it because they have had experience with cotton balls in the past and have faith that they are experiencing the same thing. Explain to the children that our faith in God is much like faith in understanding the items in the bag. While we cannot clearly see God, our experiences with God help us to have faith and identify God's working in our lives.

Faith and Knowledge

- Older children can play a game of faith and knowledge. Have the participants look at the statements of belief in the Nicene Creed and talk about which beliefs are based on faith, which beliefs are based on knowledge and which statements are based on both. The Blessed Augustine claimed that faith was different from knowledge insofar as it exists even in the absence of proof. Ask the children to talk about how they have faith in God's existence and action in our lives.

Trust Exercises

- Trust exercises are a wonderful way to demonstrate faith with children of varying ages. Younger children can stand blindfolded in a circle and pass a ball from person to person, talking about how they trust that the next person is there even though they cannot see them. Older students can fall backward into the waiting hands of classmates, trusting that their fellows will catch them before they hit the floor. After the exercise is over, the children can talk about how faith in God is trusting that God is there, even without being able to see God.

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