

Holy Gifts for the Holy *November - Focus on Liturgy (Work of the People)!*

Focus-

Bring your youth to a better understanding of what the Divine Liturgy is and why it is the *work of the people*.

Discussion -

This month, gather all ages of youth together to conduct the discussion. Ask, *"How do you help at home with chores or family work?"* Allow time for discussion. Then ask, *"Why do we have to do work as a family?"* Allow time for discussion. If you have older/younger siblings in the group, ask the older siblings how they help their younger siblings and vice versa.

If you have a white board, chalk board or large writing pad – write down the word *Liturgy*. Ask if they know what this word means. On the board “=” equate Liturgy with *Public Work*. Explain that the Church takes the definition of *Liturgy* one step further and considers it the *Work of the People*. Explain to the youth that during the prior month you asked them to “look” around them during the Divine Liturgy and take mental notes about what “work” was being done. Spend time listing their observations and discuss.

Equate the Church to their home family. Ask them if Christ’s Church is a family? After hearing answers, explain that we are a family through Christ and our Baptism/Chrismation. This connection brings us together in worship, prayer and fellowship.

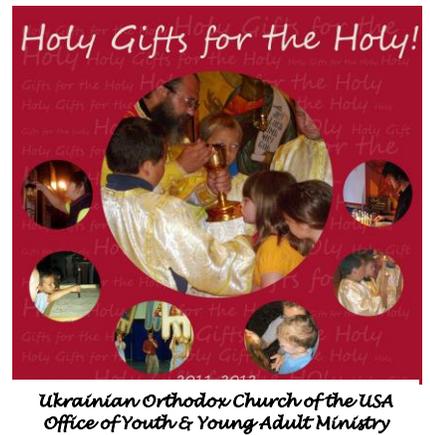
Explain that in the early church, the people brought the prosphora to the Divine Liturgy and would leave the offering in the back of the church. During the Great Entrance, the bishop would process to retrieve the prosphora and reenter to prepare the gifts. We still process with the gifts today but in most parishes the priest bakes the prosphora.

Look -

Encourage the youth to utilize all of their senses to be an active participant in the liturgy. On a piece of paper, have the youth write down how they can focus on being an active part of the "work of the Liturgy". This could include singing responses, lighting candles, reading the epistle, etc.... Remind them that they do not have to be in the church choir to sing, they can all light candles and many parishes print the epistle readings in the parish bulletin - they may follow along with the reader. Instruct them to bring the paper with them each week to the Divine Liturgy to remind them how they will be actively participating as a member of Christ's family - worshipping together.

At this time, you may want to allow the younger children to depart. Spend some additional time discussing with the middle school and high school youth how their prayer is an integral part of the worship of the church. Lead the participants to discuss times when it is difficult for them to focus during worship. Discuss that their struggles during worship are part of our human condition. These struggles are a part of our continued "work" to become holy and closer to God.

Ask them to discover ways to help them on their journey toward worship and prayer with their whole mind and heart. Convey that this is a life-long journey toward salvation and it will take "work" but that any hard work conducted in love provides great results! Our ultimate result is to live a holy life of repentance, serving God - hoping to attain eternal life with Him. Encourage them to be aware of their thoughts during the Divine Liturgy.



Activities -

Ask your priest to teach the youth to bake prosphora. The prosphora baked together may be used for the Divine Liturgy during the month. Invite the parents to be a part of the baking lesson. Ask families if they would be willing to bake prosphora for use in the Divine Liturgy. Ask your priest for a timeframe for when families should provide him with the bread. Prosphora may be frozen. Be sure to clearly mark the date it was baked on the freezer bag. Ask your priest to provide you with the recipe and directions to create copies for the families. Utilize the *Prosphora Baking Lesson* – from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Youth Department.



Be sure to emphasize with the youth that baking prosphora is holy work and should be prepared in a prayerful atmosphere.

Resources:

Prosphora Baking Website - <http://www.prosphora.org/>

Lesson on Baking Prosfora – *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Youth Department*

<http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/youth/youthworkers/sessions/prosphora>

