

Publican and Pharisee

WEEK 13 - Three Discussions and Two
Activities:

Sunday's Epistle and Gospel Readings,
Desire to Change, Festal Hymns, and
Prayer Activity

OPENING PRAYERS:

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen
Glory to thee, our God, glory to thee!

Prayer to Holy Spirit

O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Trisagion Prayer

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Before Study

Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart that I may hear thy word and understand it and so fulfill thy will. Amen.

DAILY LESSON / ACTIVITY: See pages below. For each topic, please note **Parent roles, **notes**, and **(child responses)**.**

Prayers

Before and after each lesson, please say a short prayer in front of an icon according to your family's prayer rule or the following, taken from the red St Tikhon's Prayer Book:

CLOSING PRAYERS:

"Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb: for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

Pray to God for me, O holy [name of your patron saint], pleasing to God, for with fervor I run to thee, swift helper and intercessor for my soul.

O Lord, save thy people and bless thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries, and by virtue of thy Cross preserve thy habitation.

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos: ever-blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim; without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of thy most pure Mother, of my holy guardian angel, of [name of your patron saint], of [saint(s) of the day], and of all the saints: save me, a sinner. Amen."

Day 1: Talk About Sunday's Epistle & Gospel Readings

*Recommended for
ages 6-12*

Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture: “O Lord my God, enlighten my mind with the light of the understanding of Thy holy Scripture, and teach me to do Thy will.”

Parent Explains: “Today’s epistle was written by St. Paul to St. Timothy. It is one of the books (or letters) in the New Testament of our bible.”

Parent or older child may read aloud from 1 Timothy 4:9-15. [Click here for OCA website link.](#)

Parent Asks: “What the author of this Sunday’s epistle talking about?”

Possible Answers: (St. Paul writes to tell St. Timothy to pay attention to his way of life, seeing St. Paul as an example of godly living. He mentions his own suffering is for the sake of his belief in Christ. St. Paul encourages Timothy to study the bible. Even when St. Paul was being persecuted or tortured, God was still with him.)

Parent Asks: “How does the message of this epistle apply to our lives?”

Possible Answers: (St. Paul and the saints of the Church are wonderful examples of living according to God’s teachings. The scriptures and the teachings of the Church bring us closer to God. When we have faith in Christ Jesus, we can focus on Him, enduring suffering and temptations from the devil.)

Parent Explains: “This Sunday’s gospel was written by St. Luke. It is one of four written accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, found in the New Testament of our bible.”

Parent or older child may read aloud from Luke 19:1-10. [Click here for OCA website link.](#)

Parent Asks: “What happened in this Sunday’s Gospel reading?”

Possible Answers: (Jesus shares a parable about two men and how their behavior was good and bad. Boasting about the good deeds negates any good about them. A sinful tax collector who admits his sins is humble and more godly than someone who does good things and is mean. Jesus encourages His followers to be humble. God will reward those who sincerely repent of their sins.)

Parent Asks: “Why is this important for us now, living in the 21st century?”

Possible Answers: (If we compare our lives to others, we end up judging them which is wrong. If we want to follow Christ, we will be merciful and kind to others, repenting of our sins. God will “reward” us according to our pride or humility.)

“Zacchaeus becomes an example for us of the power of making a serious change to follow God. He didn’t just want to repent and say, “I’m sorry,” and keep doing what he was doing. Zacchaeus truly made up for his past deeds. If we make a mistake, God wants us to apologize and do things differently. That makes Him happy, and makes our life more enjoyable for us! When we open the door to our heart, Jesus can help us make the choice to do good things as Orthodox Christians in our daily lives.”

Day 1: Talk About Sunday's Epistle & Gospel Readings

*Recommended for
ages 3-7*

Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture: "O Lord my God, enlighten my mind with the light of the understanding of Thy holy Scripture, and teach me to do Thy will."

Parent Explains: "This Sunday's gospel was written by St. Luke. It is one of four written accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, found in the New Testament of our bible."

Parent or older child may read aloud from Luke 19:1-10. [Click here for OCA website link.](#)

Parent Asks: "This week's reading in church presents a parable from Jesus describing how two men go to pray in the temple. They go to the same place, do the same thing, but it's clear we need to observe how they pray - in completely different ways. How did each man pray to God?"

Possible Answers: (Pharisee: to tell God how great he thinks he is. Publican: to ask for forgiveness, repent of his sins.)

Parent Explains: "The Pharisee talks about himself, thanking God he is not like other people. The Publican talks about himself but barely lifts his head, because he's so sorry he hasn't lived according to His teachings and commandments."

Parent Asks: "What Does This Mean For Us? We might point out the faults of others because "we know better." We might judge them because we know something they don't know. Where does God fit into these types of behaviors and social interactions?"

Possible Answers: (He doesn't. Gossip and lies aren't Christian. Being inappropriate isn't godly behavior.)

Parent Asks: "The reality is, we're called to bear within us the love and mercy of God towards everyone we meet. When we are kind and merciful to others, we can be like God. When we're forgiving of others, we're usually more forgiving of ourselves when we make mistakes! In this way, we experience God's love, being like Him more and more every day. How do we measure ourselves in comparison to God?"

Possible Answers: (Read the bible with our family to understand God's commandments--are we following them? Come to church and receive the Eucharist--are we acting like the Body of Christ? Listen to the hymns and teachings of the Orthodox Faith--are we acting like we love God and others? Learn how our patron saint lived like God--are we living the way they did?)

Parent Explains: "We have the choice to be like the Pharisee or the Publican. It's up to us to figure out which is the right way to live. Humility means being patient with ourselves and others, asking God for help. Let's do a self-reflection. *Ask the following questions for children to think of their answers internally. The goal of an honest self-reflection is to help the children see themselves like the Publican, considering how they might want to make changes in their spiritual life, especially during Great Lent.*

Church Services

When we come to church, do we arrive on time, pay attention, and not talk? (child thinks about his or her answer)

How well would you say you're offering your best to God during church services?" (child thinks about his or her answer)

Day 2: Talking About a 'Seeing Ourselves'



Parent Explains: “Glory to Jesus Christ!” (Glory forever!) “It’s easy to judge others. Seeing their mistakes and pointing out their faults can become second nature for us if we’re not **careful with our thoughts and words**. Jesus Christ reminds us that God is the only One to judge, and **we are to repent** of our sins. If we truly want to repent, it means we need to **be honest with ourselves.**”

“Looking in the Mirror, what do you see?” (Yourself) “What if we’re comfortable in our way of life, the friends we have, our pet, the belongings and stuff we have in our bedroom, and how we act in school? Shouldn’t we be happy and just live our life? Why should **we want to change?**” (child answers)

“There’s Always Room to Grow. What if our present way of life has **opportunities to become better** Orthodox Christians? Are we living according to Christ’s teachings or a version we’ve created for ourselves justifying our behaviors? **Healthy self reflection** gives us a chance to consider **our thoughts and actions**, deciding if our behavior and routines are godly or godless.”

“Seeing Our True Self. The reality is, there’s always **space for improvement**. When we desire to be with God, we can see where we’ve fallen short, and where we can **draw closer to Christ**. **Repentance is a gift** from God allowing us to be self-aware, affirming the progress we’re making with God’s help, and to honestly see where more time, effort, and **prayer is needed.**”

“The Joy of Repentance. Our lives as Orthodox Christians aren’t supposed to be sad or miserable. Christ came to **bring us new life!** The lives of the saints are examples and proof of God’s love. They found **true joy and freedom** through repentance.”

“God’s Mercy. Our repentance leads to the excitement and **radiance of Pascha**. Turning from the darkness of the devil and sin leads us to a **life illumined** by the light of Christ’s resurrection. We are **invited by our Lord** to repent, so we can **live with the joy of Pascha** every day of our life.”

Day 3: Festal Hymns

1) Parent Asks: "What is the troparion (tro-par-ee-ohn) and kontakion (kon-tahk-ee-ohn)?" (Theme songs for each feast, celebration, or saint. These hymns describe what or who we're celebrating and how this event or saint is important to our lives as Orthodox Christians). "Last week the troparia and kontakia, plural, were in Tone 3. What tone do you think we'll hear this week?" (Tone 4)

These are celebratory hymns, rejoicing in God's mercy and wonders. Feel free to add them to your mealtime or daily prayers!

2) Read or sing together, then discuss:

Sunday Troparion - Tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

Triodion Kontakion - Tone 4

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee!
Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears!
Let us cry to our Savior:
"Have mercy on us, //
O only merciful One!"

3) Parent Asks: "What do the hymns teach us about today's commemoration?"

Possible Answers: (The Pharisee was prideful about his religious activities, boasting to God. By comparing himself to the sinful Publican, the Pharisee was not godly. The Publican repented of his sins and humbly begged for God's mercy. Jesus Christ is the Savior, restoring the faithful to communion with God the Father.)

Parent Asks: "How can the message of the hymns apply to our lives?"

Possible Answers: (We should do what God teaches, but should not boast about them. Praying to God, asking for compassion and remission of our sins is good for us. Our prayer, "Have mercy on us" reflects a desire to grow closer to God. When we say "Only Merciful One!" we profess our belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior.)

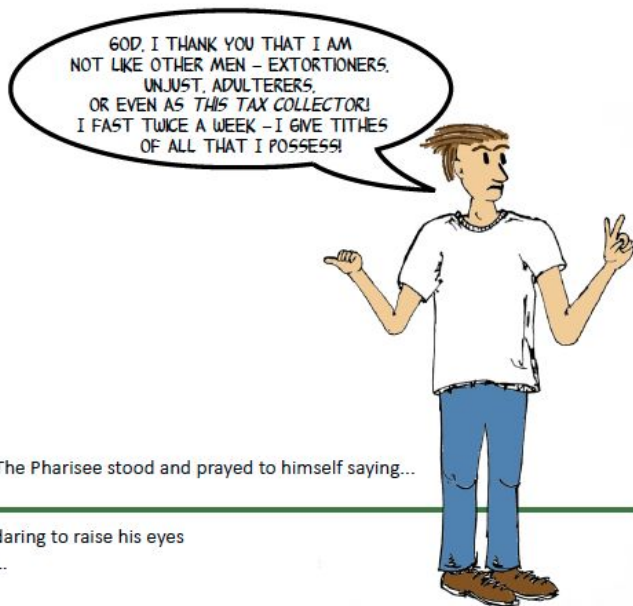
Parent Asks: "In life, there might be moments where we are inclined to think highly of ourselves or condemn someone else because we feel they are not doing things correctly. This type of emotional response might feel justified, but it's not for us to be critical of others and how they live.

We are called to bow our heads in prayer, thinking of our own actions, asking God to forgive us for our sins, and to guide us on the path to Salvation."

Day 4:

Two Ways of Praying

THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE



The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself saying...

The tax collector was far off, not daring to raise his eyes to heaven, beat his breast saying...

Parent Explains:

Today's gospel lesson presents two different ways we can approach prayer.

Put a check mark next to the statements which are true, based on what each character says and does. Then, consider how each character speaks *and* acts.

Whose actions and prayer do we want to use as an example for when we are in church or praying to God at home?

The Publican

What does he say?

- is honest about his sins
- talks bad about others
- asks God for forgiveness
- tells God he's good
- expects God to help him

How does he say it?

- with humility
- with anger
- calmly
- honestly
- with a desire to change

What does he do?

- makes excuses
- beats his chest in anger
- lies to God
- boasts about his deeds
- wants God to forgive him

How does he do it?

- asks God for mercy
- weeps for his sins
- humbly bows his head
- kneels before God
- prays for healing

The Pharisee

What does he say?

- is honest about his sins
- talks bad about others
- asks God for forgiveness
- tells God he's good
- expects God to help him

How does he say it?

- with humility
- with anger
- calmly
- honestly
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What does he do?

- makes excuses
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How does he do it?

- asks God for mercy
- weeps for his sins
- humbly bows his head
- kneels before God
- prays for healing

The Pharisee is a good / bad example for me to follow.

The Publican is a good / bad example for me to follow.

Day 4/5: Prayer in Your Life

Parent Explains:

Think of situations in your life where you might be tempted to compare yourself to others. (*here are some ideas, or you can use your own experiences.*)

Name a scenario, and under the title, draw a picture showing how you can be kind and loving towards others in that situation.

The next time you find yourself in that scenario, remember this drawing, praying to Jesus, "Lord, have mercy" to help have a peaceful and loving feeling in a moment which might be difficult. This prayer can help you focus on God, asking for His help.

The Publican's prayer is just like one we sing and say in Church all the time: "Lord, have mercy!"

We can learn from the Publican that looking at ourselves, and trying to be good is very important.

If we make comments or judge others, we're not doing what God wants.

(Lord, Have Mercy on Me.)

Scenario: _____

- At Sports Practice
- At Church
- In the School Hallway
- With Your Friends
- At A Family Holiday Gathering
- In Class
- On the Internet
- At the Family Dinner Table
- At the Doctor's Office
- At the Grocery Store
- Hearing the News
- Playing With Your Siblings