



Sunday After Theophany

WEEK 9 - Five Family Discussions:

Sunday's Epistle and Gospel Readings,
Troparion and Kontakion "theme songs,"
WCYD Lesson: Being a Light to the World



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: The Light Has Dawned!



Parent Asks: “What feast did we celebrate last week and what was it about?” (Theophany, Epiphany, Jesus’s baptism by St. John in the Jordan River) “What did St. John say to people before Jesus came to him to be baptized?” (Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.) “What does Jesus say when He begins preaching?” (Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!) “What does it mean to repent?” (to turn away from sin, to turn back toward God)

Parent Explains: “Glory to Jesus Christ!” (Glory forever) “The great feasts of Christmas and Theophany have come and gone. **Now what?** Pascha is still a few months away, but the **message from our Lord** today is clear: **“Repent!” It’s Time for Action.** Jesus speaks in very direct terms when He begins His earthly ministry. Like the rising sun showing our surroundings, Christ’s command to “Repent!” provides context and **meaning for everything we do.**”

“What if that silly comment was actually an insult? Or that observation, was it more of a judgment? And that sense of determination, is it really a lack of humility? We know we sin. It’s what we do with that knowledge that determines **our path to salvation.** Do we allow **the light of Christ** to illumine (and guide) our thoughts and deeds?”

“**Repent.** Seeing our sins for **what they really are** means we’re willing to place our life within the light of Christ. **Healthy self-awareness** helps us identify what needs to **change in our life**, and the positive aspects to nurture and rejoice in God’s mercy, as He transforms our repentance into a meaningful and **joyous life in Christ.** **Sin No More:** Our restoration to **communion with God** is not a sad or miserable experience--that’s what the devil wants us to believe. Instead, **an encounter with God frees us** from the devil’s constant distractions and temptations.”

“**Jesus’ mercy enlivens our souls**, like the sun warming the earth. It uproots sin, breaking down the walls separating us from God, other people, and our true selves. **The Kingdom is at Hand:** The reality is **we can’t save ourselves.** Only Jesus can. Our repentance allows God to be the Physician--doctor--of our soul, healing our brokenness. **Repentance** is an ongoing process. Turning to Christ, we can be transformed from within, making **lasting changes** to our very being. **Living in His Light**, we can experience a **foretaste of His Kingdom.**”

Day 2: Read and Talk About Sunday's Epistle & Gospel Readings

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. It is one of the books (or letters) found in the New Testament of our bible. It is one of four written accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, found in the New Testament of our bible.

Parent or child may read aloud from Ephesians 4:7-13. [Click here for OCA website link.](#)

Parent Asks: "What the author of this Sunday's epistle/apostol talking about?" (*Possible Answers:* St. Paul teaches that God blesses every person with unique gifts and talents. God's grace is freely given to everyone. Christ descended to earth to redeem humanity from sin and death. Christ is perfect God and perfect man. Christ freed those who were dead, raising them by His resurrection.)

Parent Asks: "How is the message of this epistle apply to our lives?" (*Possible Answers:* We are called to be saints - members of Christ's holy Church. Each of us has received unique blessings and gifts from God. Christ became man, to restore our relationship with the Father, allowing us to experience His divinity as God. As we grow in our knowledge of God, we will more fully serve Him.)

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

Parent or child may read aloud from Matthew 4:12-17. [Click here for OCA website link.](#)

Parent Asks: "What took place in this Sunday's lesson?" (*Possible Answers:* St. Matthew records that Christ left Nazareth after St. John was put into prison, settling in Capernaum. Christ's arrival in Galilee fulfills a prophecy of Isaiah, who said that there would be a great Light beyond the Jordan--the area of Galilee.)

Parent Asks: "Why is this important for us now, living in the 21st century?" (*Possible Answers:* Christ's earthly ministry is also for us. Repentance is vital for our relationship with God. We have been baptized and chrismated. Now we are to live as Orthodox Christians following Christ's teachings. Being good and doing what's right are important in our daily lives. As Orthodox Christians, prayer for ourselves and others and glorifying God is our means of having a relationship with God.)

Day 3: Festal Hymns

For a refresher, you may review these sung during our Divine Liturgy, streamed on Sunday, from minute 31:05-34:45 via YouTube.



1. Parent Explains: **Troparion** (tro-par-ee-ohn) and **Kontakion** (kon-tahk-ee-ohn) are theme songs for each feast, celebration, or saint.

Kontakion is a separate hymn expanding on the ideas proclaimed in the Troparion, where the last line is used as a refrain--repeated phrase--sung during some services. Both hymns describe what or who we're celebrating, and how this event or saint is important to our lives as Orthodox Christians. These are celebratory hymns, rejoicing in God's mercy and wonders.

2. Read or sing together, then discuss:

Troparion – Tone 6 (Pl. 2)

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thine most pure body.
Thou didst capture Hell, not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

Troparion – Tone 1

When Thou O Lord was baptized in the Jordan the worship of the Trinity was made manifest,
for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee and called Thee His beloved Son.
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ, our God, who hast revealed Thyself and has enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

Kontakion – Tone 6 (Plagal 2)

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race.
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life and the God of all.

Kontakion – Tone 4

Today Thou hast shown forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises.
Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O unapproachable Light.

3) Parent Asks: “What do the hymns teach us about the resurrection?”

Possible Answers: (The Angels guarded Christ's tomb after the Crucifixion, just as they are with us right now. The Theotokos loved her son even when He died, and Christ visited her after the Resurrection. Christ was really dead, and He really did Rise and is alive. Christ saved everyone with Himself when He conquered death. God is Life for all people, dead or alive, because He loves everyone.)

4) Parent Asks: “How can the message of the hymns apply to our lives?”

Possible Answers: (The angels are always our guardians, in life and death. Christ loves us enough to raise us from the dead; He has done hard things for us, and we need to live by that example. Eternal life is a gift from God to all people.)

Day 4: Talk About Sunday's Lesson and What it Means for Us

Parent Explains: "In the lesson we heard from the bible this Sunday, Jesus begins his earthly ministry after being baptized in the River Jordan. Why did Jesus preach?" (Beginning His teachings for what His followers should do. His message was for people to repent and love each other. He wanted people to be closer to God the Father)

"Christ left his earthly 'home town' of Nazareth and went northwest to the region of Galilee, to a town called Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee. We can remember that God works in our lives in the way that's best for us. Even if our life is ordinary we are still special and blessed in the eyes of God. God's grace and love for us doesn't diminish. Ultimately, whatever we do with our blessings and talents from God will provide for us a path to Salvation through His Son: Jesus Christ."

"A Prophecy Fulfilled - Christ leaving Nazareth may not seem like any big deal, but it actually was when considering what the Prophet Isaiah had written centuries earlier: 'There would be a great light in the lands beyond the Jordan - Galilee, the region of the Gentiles.' - Isaiah 9:2. Does it ever seem God works on a different schedule or time-table from what we want or expect? That's because God is God...and we're not. We might know what we want to happen in our life, but remember, we can't always see the big picture or the perspective which God has for our life: today, tomorrow, and every day until we die!"

"How can we stay in touch with God?" (Prayer!) "Why is prayer important?" (*Possible Answers:* Prayer is our means of building a relationship with God - placing our trust in Him. Prayer reminds us to rely on God for guidance, and His direction in our lives is needed. Our lives are the means we have to grow closer to God, ultimately to be with Him in Paradise after we die. God will help us discern what is the right path for salvation.) "Christ's decision to settle by the Sea of Galilee teaches us that He specifically chose to dwell among the marginalized, rather than with those who claimed to be better than other Jews."

"The Time to Repent - The gospel reading for this Sunday says that Jesus began His ministry with a very important word: 'Repent!' Why is repentance important for us as Orthodox Christians?" (*Possible Answers:* We need to place Christ at the center of our lives. When we fall--or sin, God's grace allows us to be restored to communion with Him through repentance. It's important to ask for forgiveness from God, both in confession and in our daily prayers. By repenting, we humbly ask God to help us make lasting changes in our behavior. God loves us so much, that He is willing to wash away our sins so we can be with Him in heaven.)

"Being Orthodox Christians doesn't mean we just say, 'Sorry!' when we do something wrong. It means we also need to make a real effort not to do those sins again. None of us *want* to sin. But there are times when our sins may occur because of temptations from the devil, or lapses of common sense, or because of behaviors we've learned, or actions we don't even realize separate us from God. When we do realize we've sinned, repentance is God's blessing for us to do what is necessary to be reunited to His love. We only need to turn to God for forgiveness and repentance is the means of being reunited back to God. The love of God is never-ending."

Day 5: Being a 'Light to the World'--'L2W'

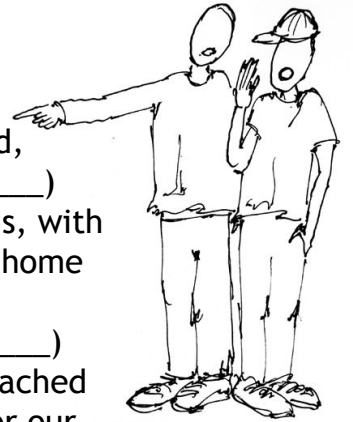
Parents read the scenario (4 total). Then, families talk about each child's answers:

1. **In the Hallway at School** - The bullies are at it again, laughing at your classmate who they tripped, spilling books and notebooks across the floor. *What can you do--WCYD?* (I can _____)

"As Orthodox Christians, students can help the victim of bullying, either in the moment or afterwards, with a kind word, reporting the incident to teachers or parents/guardian, and especially with a prayer at home for both the bully--to soften their heart--and the victim--for healing and consolation."

(By doing that I'm being a Light to the world because _____)

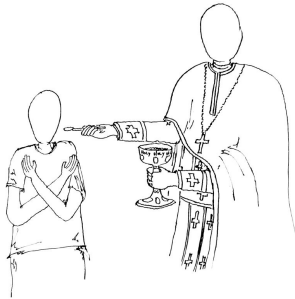
"By helping victims of bullying, we resemble Jesus Christ Himself, who during His earthly ministry reached out to those less fortunate with words of compassion and or acts of mercy. By speaking to teachers or our parents, we show our integrity that we're not going to be silent--like the Levite or Priest in the parable of the Good Samaritan--when faced with the needs of others."



2. **For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death and confess His resurrection.** - I Corinthians 11: 26 and the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy.

(By receiving the Eucharist, I become a Light in the world because _____)

"The Eucharist is our spiritual nourishment and food to help us live each day centered on Jesus Christ. It gives us the strength to call out to God when tempted by the devil, praying to the Theotokos and saints for wisdom and discernment. By receiving the Eucharist - Christ's Body and Blood - we accept a most precious gift through God's grace, restoring us to unity with God Himself. WCYD? Fast from at least midnight (both of food and any behavior which is contrary or distracts from God), say the pre-communion prayers before liturgy, receive the gift of the Eucharist for the remission of our sins, give thanks to God after receiving the Eucharist, and allow God to guide us each day of our life."



Day 5: Being a 'Light to the World'--'L2W'

Parents read the scenario. Then, families talk about each child's answer:

3. At the Super Market - A senior citizen is struggling to not drop her grocery bag while crossing the parking lot. WCYD? (I can _____. *Possible answer:* ask in a loud voice if the person needs or wants help, offering to carry their items to their destination. Before leaving, smile and wish them a good day.)

“How is this being a Light to the world?” (By doing this I’m being a Light to the world because _____.)
“Offering to help those in need allows us to think beyond our own needs and see how we can be compassionate to others. It might be as simple as helping someone across a busy street or parking lot, or picking up something they dropped. Helping others without expecting anything in return also allows us to be like Christ.”

4. I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life. - John 8:12. (These words of Jesus inspire me because _____.)

