

Holy Gifts for the Holy *April - Focus on the Senses and the Liturgy*

Focus– Introduce the students as to how their five senses involve them more fully in the Divine Liturgy.

Discussion - (Preparation for discussion - Needed items: five white poster boards, markers, paper, pens, and copies of Andreas Houpus' blog. For younger children - gather needed materials for the "[Way We Worship](#)" activity.) Start off the session with an overview of the senses. Inform the participants that you will spend one minute on each sense. Provide them with something to write with and on. (In preparation, you may want to place a few "scents" in different places in the room.) Explain that during each minute you will instruct them to focus on one sense. They must write down what they notice only using that sense during that time. (For younger children – you may want to only do 20-30 seconds per sense and discuss immediately following each observation.)

When the exercise is completed – Go sense by sense and ask them to share their observations. Ask them the following questions: *What was it like to focus on only one sense at a time? Did you notice or experience the space differently than you have in the past? Now that you have completed the exercise do you feel more aware of your surroundings? Do you feel more connected to our group and this discussion?* (It may be beneficial to conduct this exercise in the church building.)

When the discussion has come to an end, for young children conduct the activity from [Orthodox Christian Education blog](#). For teens begin as follows: *In the past several sessions we have been studying the Divine Liturgy and all of its different parts. Our focus has been on what things mean and how to involve ourselves in the liturgy, mainly through prayer and observation. We cannot only focus on the nuts and bolts aspects of the liturgy. Worship in the Orthodox Church is meant to involve the full person. To do this you must involve all aspects of the person which would include not just their intellect but all of their senses. The engaging of the full-person - body, mind and soul is what brings us into full participation in the Liturgy.*

At this point, give each participant a marker. Ask them to go to each poster board and write down at least one way they use that sense during the Liturgy. Give them a few minutes for this exercise. When completed, allow time to discuss each board and the examples that were written.

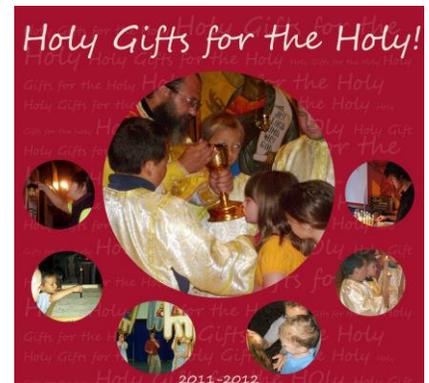
At this point pass out the copies of Andreas Houpus' blog, Use of the Five Senses in the Liturgy - <http://ekekraxa.blogspot.com/2008/11/following-are-notes-that-i-put-together.html>. After reading the blog, allow time for discussion and Q & A.

Look/Listen/Feel/Taste/Smell -

Ask the youth to focus on a different sense each week during the Divine Liturgy. Have them keep a "senses" journal to record their observations and feelings about how their senses enhanced their participation in the Liturgy.

Activities -

- Create "Divine Liturgy and the Senses" Journals. Allow the youth time to decorate their journals. Provide them materials to add photos, icons, or items in their journals.
- Soon we will be entering Holy Week. Ask them to add entries in their journals for each service of Holy Week.



- Senses Collage – Have the youth take photos during the Divine Liturgy each week that capture the use of the five senses. Have them either add the photos to each of the poster boards they created during the session or create one large collage for all of the senses. Display these collages in the parish hall. They may also add the photos to their journals.
- Teach the youth to make incense for the church. The incense can be used during the Divine Liturgy. They may also make some for their own homes. The website [Scents of the Earth](#) provides a detailed How To for making incense. For our purposes, you want to make the *Non-combustible Loose Incense and then make it into Pellets*.
- Teach the youth how to make hand-dipped beeswax candles. Here is a wonderful video on Youtube entitled [The Candle Room](#) about St. Michael Skete that makes candles. (Download *Beeswax Candle How To*)
- If you have not already conducted a prosfira baking session – conduct one now!!
- Ask your priest if the youth can make floral arrangements for the tetrapod, side altars, and/or for in front of the icons of Christ and the Theotokos. The arrangements may be made the entire month, for one Sunday or for Pascha!
- Purchase copies of “Senses” issue #42 from Little Falcons. An Orthodox Magazine for children. Give a copy of the magazine to all the children in the parish between the ages of 5-12.

The following activities are provided by the Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

- Make a collage of how we can glorify God with our five senses both inside and outside of church? Use magazines, things in nature, or anything you can find to create the collage.
- With teenagers, discuss the following section of the post-Communion prayer by Symeon Metaphrastes: “Cleanse my soul, hallow my thoughts, make firm my knees and my bones as well. Illumine my five senses and make my entire being vigilant...protect me from every deed and word that corrupts the soul.” How and why do we need to be vigilant with our five senses?
- Get a Bible with a concordance and look up words for each of the senses and pick a passage or two to learn—you can focus on a different sense each week. With young children who can’t look up passages themselves, pre-select short passages and have them draw a picture of it, write it at the bottom of their drawing, and—if possible—have them commit it to memory.

Note: If you utilize the incense, candle, prosfira or flower activities – take the time to explain to the youth how all of the items and the act of making them are a gift back to God and are an important part of making the worship of the Church the “work of the people”.



