

## *Holy Gifts for the Holy* *February - Focus on Liturgy of the Word!*

### *Focus-*

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

### *Discussion -* Bring out your divided poster/white board from

December/January. 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 discussed the preparation for the Divine Liturgy the Proskomedia. Now we are moving on to the second part of the Divine Liturgy – the Liturgy of the Word.*” At this point either pass out the copies of the Divine Liturgy or Divine Liturgy for Children.

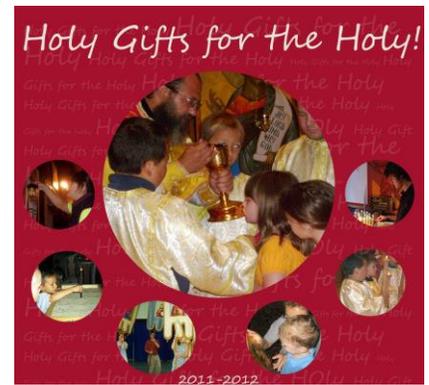
Give the children time to look through the liturgy stopping after the Litany of the Catechumens. For younger children you may need to guide them through the service or skip to this activity. *Ask them why they think it is called the Liturgy of the Word? Allow time for discussion.* Under the Liturgy of Word column on the white board, write “catechumens.” Ask the children if they know what the word catechumen means. A catechumen is someone who is learning/being instructed about the faith. They are normally people who have not yet been baptized or chrismated into the faith. *Ask them why this is important to our discussion. Convey to them that in the early church catechumens stayed for the first part of the Liturgy and then left for the second. Why do they think this was the practice? Allow time for discussion. Round up the discussion by explaining that the first part of the Liturgy –the “word” – contained all of the readings from the Old and New Testaments – the “Word” of God. The second part of the Liturgy began the preparations for the Eucharist (communion) and that catechumens were not yet able to participate. Thus, they were asked to leave and only the baptized faithful remained.*

*Have the students start at the beginning of the Liturgy and begin listing on the white board the sections of the Liturgy of the Word. 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: Blessed is the Kingdom, Great Litany, Antiphons, Small Entrance, Troparion and Kontakion, Prokiemenon, Epistle, Gospel, Litany of Fervent Supplication, Litany of the Catechumens.* Using some of the following resources over the next month – discuss each section of the Liturgy of the Word 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](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 Word especially during the Small Entrance, epistle and gospel readings. Explain that each week the Troparion, Kontakion, Prokiemenon, Epistle, Gospel and alleluia verse change. Have them pay close attention to what is being said and to take time to meditate on the readings and verses for the week. Ask them to take note of things they may not have

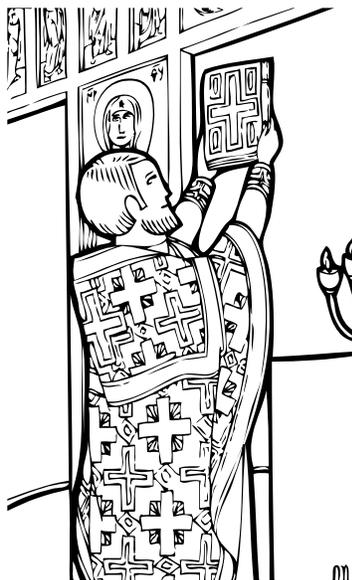
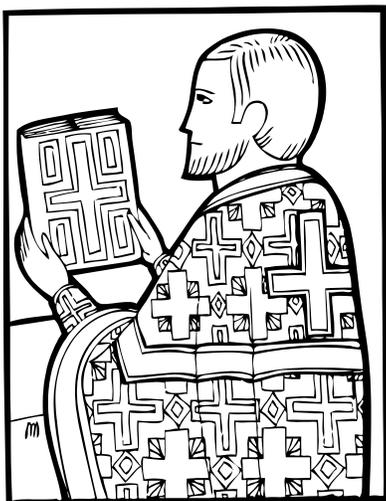


noticed before during the first part of the liturgy and keep to keep a list of their observations to bring to the next session.

### *Activities -*

There are several ways to engage the youth during the Liturgy of the Word. 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 – Review with the youth that a litany is a petition or request. 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*. Take each petition in the litany and have the youth write the petition in their own words and how that petition directly affects their lives. Ask them to view the litanies as a conversation between the God, people and the priest and to be active in that conversation each week.
- Epistle Readings – Ask your parish priest if teenagers in the parish could read the epistle during the next few months and if he can prepare them for being readers. Assign the readings ahead of time so that the teens can practice reading prior to their week.
- Gospel Readings – Ask your parish priest if the youth of the parish may hold candles during the gospel reading. Have him take time to prepare the youth prior to the first time, instructing them in the reasons for holding candles.
- In Your Words – Sometimes it is difficult for young people to understand the epistle and gospel readings. Each week ask them to explain the readings in their own words and guide them through the process. There are two good resources to aid in understanding scripture for young people:
  1. *Let us Attend!* Sunday's Gospel for young children - <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation/letusattend>
  2. *Orthodox Christian Bible Studies for Teens* - <http://www.orthodoxyouth.org/>
  3. *Orthodox Study Bible*
- 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/>
- For younger children allow them to create a gospel book out of their coloring pages. They can decorate the front and back of the book with jewels, paper icons and crosses.
- Utilize the line drawings(or locate photographs) of the Divine Liturgy to create a liturgical time line that can be displayed in your parish hall.
- Purchase three or five day church votive candles from your local supplier (attempt to purchase votives in plastic containers instead of glass). Allow the children to decorate the outside of the holders with paper icons, crosses, jewels, and ribbon. (Modge podge is the best adhesive for this type of project). They can use these candles during the reading of the epistle.



Artwork provided by  
Orthodox Church in America  
Department of Religious Education

