Session Five

Session 5 - Prophets of Faith

OBJECTIVE

Children will become aware of the role as modern day prophets, preparing the way for Christ in their own lives and those around them. They will see how people of faith have continued through centuries to hear the Word of God and live by what God requires.

PREPARATION

To prepare for this session, it will be helpful to review the history of Prophets and Prophecy in Scripture. <u>Christ in the Old Testament</u>, by Niko Chocheli is to be used in this session. It would be helpful to read it ahead of time. Also, review the Orthodox Study Bible 2008, "The Prophets" on page 1113 and "John the Baptist" on page 1330.

For the "Clothes Pin Prophets" craft project, you may want to pre-cut a number of felt pieces from the pattern provided to help out younger members of the group.

You may also familiarize yourself with the following scripture verses which help us to understand how the prophets prepared the way for Christ:

Matthew 3:1-3 – John the Baptist calls for repentance Jeremiah 1:6 – Jeremiah is chosen as a Prophet Isaiah 11:6-9 – Prophecy of Christ as a child restoring relationships from the Fall

MATERIALS NEEDED

Stuffed animals, blindfolds for half of the group, obstacles such as chairs

Man to act as John the Baptist, preferably your parish priest

Costume: tan animal fur-like material, leather belt, locust, honeycomb

Snack to make insects: cleaned celery stalks, raisins, peanut butter, cut licorice laces Christ in the Old Testament, Niko Chocheli

Orthodox Study Bible 2008

4 inch flat clothes pins with head (1 -2 per person)

Photo copy of Prophet pattern (1 per person)

Felt (black, grey, brown, blue, green, yellow)

Yarn (grey, brown black)

Google eyes (2 per prophet)

Gold pipe cleaners

3 inch mini craft sticks

Sharpie marker (to draw mouths and other features)

Scissors (must be able to cut felt)

Tacky glue

PROPHETS OF FAITH

Icons of the prophets as well as their story (www.goarch.org, go to online chapel) Magnet strips (1-2 packages to cut up into small pieces)
Other craft materials to make accessories
Table covers

OPENING PRAYER Trisagion (Thrice Holy)

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You our God, Glory to You!

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us. Cleanse us from all impurities and save our souls, gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

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

All Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Your is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

ICE Breaker – Jungle Journey

You will need blindfolds for half the children. Set up by placing stuffed animal around the room in random order. Set up a maze with chairs and other large objects, but bypass the animals. The kids will form pairs and trios, one of which will be blindfolded. Participants that are not blindfolded will lead the others to the animals with just their voices. Those who can see can give verbal directions, but cannot touch their partner. The objective is for the blindfolded student to find all of the animals with the help of their group. Each group should go one at a time. If you have time, you may repeat the activity with different children being blindfolded.

Discuss

What methods did you use to find the animals?

When leading others, what did you do to communicate loudly and clearly?

Read Isaiah 11:6-9 – What is this passage saying about these animals?

Who is the child that the Prophet Isaiah is talking about? How has God used you to lead others?

PROPHETS OF FAITH

STATE (paraphrase in your own words)

"Be Prepared" is a popular motto in America. The Boy Scouts, Red Cross, Armed Forces, and many other groups have used the phrase. It is also a good motto for us as Christians. In fact, there are people in God's history that came **heralding** that message to the world. These people are known as **Prophets**. We all must not only heed the words of the Prophets of Faith, but also abide by them, as the People of Faith before us.

DISCUSS (accept all answers and reflect back)

Why would anyone use this motto? (As a warning, to make people aware, to tell the nation that danger could be coming, etc...) To the Boy Scouts, "Be Prepared" encourages them to be prepared for life—to live happily and without regret, knowing they have done their best.

For what do we need to be prepared? (Anything, really! Something unexpected to happen, difficulties, enemies, terrorists, people who want to hurt us or take our freedom away, a had storm or situation, etc...)

Was the message of the Prophets the same as these groups? (Yes & No) If you said no, raise your hand. Good! If you said yes, raise your hand. Good! Both answers are right! God gave the Prophets words to say to His people. The main message is that He was sending His Son into the World. The Prophets told people to get ready for Christ's coming. Along with that message, Prophets warned the people to trust in the Lord and beware of their enemy.

Why would God want to speak with His people? (to build up the people of God, guide them in Truth,to gather the faithful,to restore Israel (God's chosen people), to assure them of what and Who was to come, etc.)

STATE (paraphrase in your own words)

God prepares His people for restoration and fulfillment as promised. The Prophets were foreseers of Christ. We hear about them first in the Book of Genesis.

In the Old Testament, Moses' record begins in Genisis 12 with the calling of Abraham whose descendents become Israel, God's Chosen People, from where we see Prophets rise. All of this comes after the Creation, the fall, the flood, the Rainbow (New Covenant), and the Tower of Babel. We have Prophesy of Christ through all of these events.

So, who are the Prophets? Amos was a shepherd. Ezekial was a priest. Daniel was a nobleman. They came from all backgrounds. What they did have in common was their commitment and obedience to God. Because of their faithfulness they were

PROPHETS OF FAITH

given a special gift, the gift of **prophecy**. They were like microphones speaking God's Words, telling of things to come. When we want to be heard, we speak loudly or use a microphone. So, whose voice was heard through the Prophets? God's!

Let's walk through this book together and see what the Prophets foretold. (Be sure they can all see <u>Christ in the Old Testament</u> as you read. You may want to have them each read a page and then pass the book around)

DISCUSS (accept all reasonable answers)

What message were the Prophets were relaying? (It's all about the coming of Christ into the world! They were telling people thousands of years ago to live well, according to God's command)

What were some of the famous New Testament stories that the book showed that were prophesied in the Old Testament (The messiah riding on a donkey, baptism in the Jordan, Virgin Birth, Christ's Suffering)

After seeing the comparisons between the Old and New Testaments what have you learned about our history as Christians? (As Orthodox Christians, we know that we are the remnant, the Chosen People of God who are descendants of the righteous, those descendants of Abraham. We can trace our roots right back through the centuries. These verses from scripture show our connection to Family Tree of the Faithful that we did earlier)

BIBLE READING (Distribute bibles to each child and help them to find the verse)

For instance, Orthodox Christians commemorate as the last of the Prophets, the Forerunner (meaning that he came before Jesus Christ) and Baptist (that Jesus baptized Christ) John. His main message confirmed those of the Prophets before him.

Matthew 3:1-3 (NKJV) - "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! For this is He who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'

So, if we were asking Saint John the Baptist the following questions, what do you think he would say? (Begin asking the questions...and then, have him come in the room from behind the kids and answer.)

Who are you and where did you come from? As he gets closer to the group, "I am the one calling out in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord!" (Matthew 3:3, John 1:23) How is this so, how do we know? Then have him continue in his own words: This is what Isaiah said. He was a Prophet before me who foretold my part in pointing to Him who is Christ. What do you mean to make straight the way? I am warning the people to BE PRE-PARED to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

PROPHETS OF FAITH

How do you know that He is Lord and Savior? I heard a voice from above confirm it! I accept Him as King and Lord! I baptized people with water and He baptizes with the Spirit. I know I am not worthy of tying the laces of His sandals, but He asked me to baptize Him also in the Jordan. And when I did, I heard the voice from above proclaim Him as "Beloved Son."

Did you do anything to prepare to receive Him? From the time I was in my mother's womb, I had excitement about Christ. I leapt in her womb when the Virgin Mary visited my mother, Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-55)

How has this affected your life? All that I do, I do to tell about Christ. Even in what I fill myself with. Look—locusts and honeycomb. Care for a snack? (Look for "Eww effect" while eating) My Lord has nourished me and filled me so that I have strength to do His work. Here is enough to share (bring out snacks).

So, it seems you were fasting, then correct? Yes. Fasting helps us be filled whith what God plans to nourish us with, instead of food.

Did all Prohets fast and live this way? Well, we can look directly at the True Prophet, Christ Himself. Moses foretold this, as it is written in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 18:15); then in the New Testament (John 1:45; Acts 3:19-26), Christ is called Prophet after people see the miracles He performs. He is the prototype—even of people who lived on the earth before He did as Man. We only pray His will be done on this earth! Know that He will be with you, and use you to speak for Him from here.

Discuss (John the Baptist will ask)

I have some questions for you.

Do you think I am different than you? Why or why not?

What can you do that I did?

Can you be a Prophet, too? (Jeremiah 1:6 — Then I said, "O Lord and Master, behold, I do not know how to speak for I am a youth. But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all whom I send you, and whatever I command, you shall speak")

What do you think God would say to you and your friends and families? Church and home community?

If you could, and God asked you to, would you begin a news show called The Daily Prophet? What do you think you would be saying?

The most important thing that you need to know is that your life is for God to use! He still wants and needs you to proclaim the Glory of His Kingdom. Know that all of the Saints and Prophets and I will be with you, just as Christ is with you always! Be the voice crying in the wilderness, telling of the Glory of God!

PROPHETS OF FAITH

STATE (paraphrase in your own words)

Well, what an amazing experience we have had with your visit! It is true that Icons are like windows. We can look at your icon and it is as if you are standing beside Christ, proclaiming His Kingdom!

ARTS AND CRAFTS - Clothes Pin Prophets

Today we will be making clothes pin prophets. I will show you some icons of the prophets and you can choose which one to make. There is a pattern for the basic robe and then you can add accessories to make them each look like, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, etc. Wait until I give directions before starting.

STATE (Paraphrase in your own words)

The prophets were chosen by God to be His mouthpiece to his people. They told of things to come and prepared the way for Christ. We may see ourselves as too young to be prophets, but each and everyday we prepare for Christ to come into the lives of others. Your challenge is to be God's megaphone and herald the message of the Holy Spirit as a true modern day prophet.

CLOSING PRAYER

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner; for thou hast proved to be truly even more venerable than the Prophets, since thou was granted to baptize in the running waters Him Whom they proclaimed. Wherefore, having contested for the truth, thou didst rejoice to announce the good tidings even to those in Hades: that God hath appeared in the flesh, taking away the sin of the world and granting us great mercy.

Apolytikion of the Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner

O Master and God, Father almighty, Lord, and only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit, one divinity and power, have mercy on me a sinner, and save me, your unworthy servant, in any way you know; for you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer for All Times, by St. Mardarios

EXPANDED IDEAS

Ask for the blessing of your parish priest to produce a monthly *The Daily Prophet* for your church community, addressing things God may need us to hear in our generation.

Go on a church tour to find the icons of the Prophets. Learn about the strengths they had; then, look them up in the Bible to find out more details about them.

Role play other Prophets to bring them to life and learn from them. This would require research and studying what they did and what God asked them to do for Him.

Teach using the song *The Prophets of Old*, its lyrics, and the further resources available from Gigi Shadid. To order, visit www.gsquareproductions.com

PROPHETS OF FAITH

Add a section of discussion about the way modern people share the Word of God. Perhaps see a portion or a full, live production of the musical "Godspell"; then use the song, *Prepare Thee the Way of the Lord* for fun activity music.

GLOSSARY

Herald – To signal the approach of: foreshadow

Messiah – The Christ, the anointed one of God. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, fulfilling all the promises made by God to His Chosen people.

Old Testament – A collection of canonical books originally written in Hebrew and relating to the history and spiritual development of Judaism from the beginning to the times of Christ.

Prophet – Descriptive title give to accepted spokespersons of God (or their opposites, "false prophets"); a PERSON who speaks in the name of God and/or fore-tells the future, especially the coming and mission of Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (See Dt. 18:18; Acts 28:25)

Prophecy – The words of the Holy Spirit as spoken by the Prophets

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Old Testament Introduction, Vol. II: Prophetic Traditions by V. Rev. Paul Nadim Tarazi (SVS)

The Appendices of the Thompson Chain-Reference Bible has very helpful charts, maps, lists, and other resources that condense the information in wonderfully organized ways.

For an easy-to-understand print partner on the Prophets, visit http://www.biblestudy.org/prophecy/minor-prophets.html.

SPECIAL NOTES

Contact your parish GOYA Advisor to invite GOYANS to assist at the next meeting

ARTS AND CRAFTS - Clothes Pin Prophets

SUPPLIES NEEDED

4 inch flat clothes pins with head (1 -2 per person)

Photo copy of pattern (1 per person)

Felt (black, grey, brown, blue, green, yellow)

Straight pins to hold pattern to felt

Yarn (grey, brown black)

Google eyes (2 per person)

Gold pipe cleaners

3 inch mini craft sticks

Sharpie marker (to draw mouths and other features)

PROPHETS OF FAITH

Scissors (must be able to cut felt)

Tacky glue

Icons of the prophets

Magnet strips (1-2 packages to cut up into small pieces)

Other craft materials to make accessories

Table cover

DIRECTIONS

Cover the table to catch any glue

Distribute Materials

Look at icons and decide on a prophet, such as Moses or John the Baptist, etc.

Glue a craft stick on to back of clothes pin just below the head

Cut clothes pattern out of felt

Wrap the bottom portion of the back around clothes pin and glue to the front like a robe

Wrap front of robe around the back of the clothes pine and glue to wrap around tight

Cut yard or felt to make a belt and tie around front of clothes pin

Wrap sash over the shoulder of the clothes pin and across the front and glue (like a deacons stole)

Glue on eyes, hair beard, and eyes

Draw in a simple mouth

Add a staff, 10 Commandments or other accessories to indicate which prophet you are making

Glue on a magnet to the back

FAMILY NOTES - Prophets of Faith

Today your child(ren) learned that the mouthpieces of God were the Prophets of Faith. They communicated to God's people and foretold of the coming of Christ. They talked with "John the Baptist" about his role in preparing for the Messiah. They also made clothes pin prophets to put on your refrigerator. To find out more about what they learned, ask the following questions:

Who were the prophets and what did they do?

What are some of the stories that they foretold?

How can we be modern day prophets?

MODELS OF PROPHETS OF FAITH IN JANUARY

- (3) Prophet Malachi
- (7) Synaxis of St. John the Prophet and Forerunner

PROPHETS OF FAITH

ACTIVITIES

Have a Prophetic/Old Testament Movie Night as a family. You can choose from Prince of Egypt, Joseph King of Dreams, The 10 Commandments, etc.

The prophets prepared the way for Christ. Put together a gift bag/basket of items to welcome someone preparing to come into the church (either by baptism or Chrismation). This may include an Orthodox Study bible, an icon of the patron saint of your parish, a prayer book, a church directory and note from your family welcoming them as part of the parish family. It is the thought that counts, not the money.

Welcome a visitor to the church that you have never met. Invite them to sit with your family at coffee hour or at church the next Sunday. You may want to include them at lunch after church.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For parents, a book to learn more about the prophets is <u>Old Testament Introduction</u>, <u>Vol. II: Prophetic Traditions</u> by V. Rev. Paul Nadim Tarazi. The kids read through the book, <u>Christ in the Old Testament</u>, by Niko Chocheli. It has beautiful illustrations and side by side text of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Both titles are available through the Saint Vladimir's Seminary Bookstore at www.svspress.com.

SESSION 5 PRAYERS

OPENING PRAYER Trisagion (Thrice Holy)

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You our God, glory to You!

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us. Cleanse us from all impurities and save our souls, gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

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

All Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

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 trespasses, as we for-

PROPHETS OF FAITH

give those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Your is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner; for thou hast proved to be truly even more venerable than the Prophets, since thou was granted to baptize in the running waters Him Whom they proclaimed. Wherefore, having contested for the truth, thou didst rejoice to announce the good tidings even to those in Hades: that God hath appeared in the flesh, taking away the sin of the world and granting us great mercy.

Apolytikion of the Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner

O Master and God, Father almighty, Lord, and only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit, one divinity and power, have mercy on me a sinner, and save me, your unworthy servant, in any way you know; for you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer for All TImes, by St. Mardarios