Eight ession

Session 8 - Weapons of Faith

OBJECTIVE

JOY Children will learn about the weapons of faith that will help them stay on a path towards Christ. They will learn to utilize spiritual gifts and weapons of faith like the people of faith who came before us.

PREPARATION

Prayer is always at the top of the list for preparing to embark on something new to speak with children about. During the Lenten season, attending or reading through the GreatCompline service is recommended. It is filled with wonderful reminders about how very powerful God is, and how helpless we are. Here is the direct link to the text:

http://www.goarch.org/en/Chapel/liturgical_texts/GREATCOMPLINE.asp

You may want to familiarize yourself with the following scripture verses which help us to understand the weapons of faith people of faith have by reading the following verse:

Ephesians 6:10-17 – Spiritual Warfare and Weapons of Faith Matthew 4:4 – Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness

MATERIALS NEEDED

Copies of Prayers (1 per person)

Copies of Family Notes (1 per person)

White board with erasable marker

Bible

Six targets made out of poster boards, trash cans, chairs or plastic hoops

Life size pictures of or the actual items: 2 belts, 2 boots, 2 breast plates, 2 shields,

2 helmets and 2 swords

One bean bag per child.

7 Day clear votive church candles. Ask your priest to order them if you use a different color at church (need 1 per person)

Multi-colored tissue paper

Modge Podge (to share)

Foam paint brushes

Paper plates

Scissors

Table cover

Sharpie

WEAPONS OF FAITH

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, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us and purify us from every stain and of Your goodness, save our souls O 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 the glory of your name.

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 Yours 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 - Targeting the Armor of Faith

You will need six targets made out of poster boards, trash cans, chairs or plastic hoops. On each target you will place pictures of one pair of the following items: 2 belts, 2 boots, 2 breast plates, 2 shields, 2 helmets and 2 swords. You will also need one bean bag per child. Participants are broken into two teams. The object is for each team to collect the entire Armor of God. Place the six targets in different places around the room with two of the same item inside. Each team will stand in line at a starting line and each player will take their turn trying to get a bean bag into the first target. Each person on the team will take a shot at the target until someone gets their bean bag in. When a team member gets the bean bag in, they will collect it and the team will move to the next target. If no one gets it, the last person will collect the bean bags and the team will try again. Each team will continue until they have collected each piece of the items. Both teams should start at different targets and then rotate through. When a team is done, they will sit down together with the items that they have collected.

WEAPONS OF FAITH

Discuss

What was the hardest part about trying to hit the targets? (Their distance, throwing the bean bag, etc)

Did it make it harder or easier because you had to work as a team to get an item before you could move on?

The targets and the items you collected each have special meaning, can you guess what that is? (Hitting the target means living a life in Christ. The items are the Weapons of our faith.)

STATE

As you can see each team has collected some unique items. I will need a volunteer from each team (or two volunteers from each team) and you will need your collection of items to hand to me. Everyone else can get a bible, sit down and look for Ephesians 6:10-18. When you have found it you can read along quietly. I will need one of the volunteers to stand still and the other one to read the verse out loud while we find out what these items are for.

BIBLE READING - Ephesians 6:10-11, 13-18 (NKJV) (Distribute bibles and help kids find the verse)

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.... Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

DISCUSS (paraphrase in your own words)

According to the verse, do we need to put on the armor of God? (to stand against the wiles of the devil and withstand evil)

Who can explain the meaning of the items? (Ex. Sheild of faith, helmet of salvation. Write them on the board)

What else does St. Paul tell us to do to protect ourselves? (Pray always, be watchful and pray to the saints)

So why to you think we need this armor and these weapons? (To be soldiers for Christ, to defend our faith and to reach our target)

Who are we fighting against? The Evil One

What are we fighting against? Sin (Amartia)

What are we fighting for? Our Salvation

WEAPONS OF FAITH

In Greek, the word amartia, means sin or missing the mark. When you sin in one way or another, it takes you off of the direct path to Christ. Just like throwing the bean bags in the targets, if you miss the mark, you have to start over. If a boat goes on the wrong course, it can be corrected, but there are waves and winds that keep fighting against your efforts to steer the right way. Boats have rudders, sails, and an anchor to keep it from getting into trouble.

When each of us was baptized, we became soldiers for Christ. Like any other type of soldier, we were given a uniform (our white baptismal garment), training (Sunday School and parents and God Parents), protective gear (our cross and the sacraments), and weapons to protect us. As people of faith we are given weapons of faith to guard and preserve our faith for the generations of faith to come.

As many of you know, we are on a journey as Christians. This is the journey of Great Lent and Holy Week. This can be a difficult journey of faith. We are faced with challenges, obstacles and temptations. We may be asked to do things that we have never done before. We may be asked to help people we have never even met. We may be asked to give up some of the food we eat to share with others who are also on the journey. We may even get thrown off of the path. This is a very important journey for Orthodox Christians. We are asked to prepare ourselves to walk with Christ through His last days, His death and His Resurrection.

DISCUSS (paraphrase in your own words)

Who can tell me when our Lenten Journey started?

For those of you who have been on it before, how long does it last?

Who can tell me what happens during Holy Week?

In addition to the spiritual armor we talked about before, what are the three weapons of faith that we need the most to get through this journey? (Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving)

STATE

Fasting seems like a funny kind of spiritual armor of faith. Many of us are fasting during lent by giving up certain foods. If you were a soldier or an athlete, abstaining from food seems like it would not help you to become stronger, but it does in a different way. We all know the story of Adam and Eve, it was a piece of food that held knowledge, which tempted them to ignore God's instructions. When Christ came to restore humanity back to communion with God, he too was tempted by Satan to eat, but he continued fasting. Christ told him, "It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but the word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4) When we are hungry we remember that we are dependent on someone else to provide for us, that someone is God. Fasting is the armor which helps focus on God.

Discuss

What is fasting? What is the Orthodox tradition of fasting?

How does fasting help us to face temptations? What kind of temptations do you face at school?

How does fasting work as armor of faith outside of Lent?

STATE

When we talked a few months back about super heroes and saints, we talked about superpowers. If you could have a weapon of faith that could be used as your spiritual superpower, you would want it to be costless, never need replacing and never could get lost, silently or out loud, could be used by one person or many, alone or with a crowd, what would you chose? **Prayer.** Prayer is the weapon of faith with connects us directly to God, to the saints, to other Christians and even those in the church triumphant, those that have passed away. Our prayers help to give us strength, protection, and comfort when we are in need.

Discuss

Why is prayer such an important weapon of faith? How can we use prayer when we have challenges in our life? Why is prayer so important during the Lenten season?

STATE

All of the weapons of faith have a specific duty. God loves us and has given us many gifts and talents, but not everyone has a calling to save the world. Some of us want to be football players, some of us want to be teachers and lawyers and doctors. **Almsgiving** is a way of giving some of our extra time and talents to those in need, to serve others. The point is not just to give something that you don't care about anymore, but to look at someone else who needs something and help them with that. Almsgiving is a weapon of faith given to us by God to keep us together as a community. To care for each other, just like in our game, you couldn't collect the prize without everyone doing their part.

Discuss

What are some ways that we can take part in almsgiving? Do you have to do something big, like giving someone a hundred dollars? How do you think you can find out about people who need some extra help? (ask your priest, teacher, or coaches to anonymously tell you about someone in need) What does it mean to pay something forward?

WEAPONS OF FAITH

ARTS AND CRAFTS - Votive Prayer Candles

Now that you have become familiar with some weapons of faith we can put them into practice. In order to assist in your prayers we are going to make a 7 day votive candle. When you do your evening prayers, ask your parents to light the candle. Make sure you always blow out the candle when you are not there. You can also use your candle to collect the light when you come home from the Resurrection service. You will be able to keep the light for the week.

STATE

Today we learned that the people of faith have weapons of faith to protect them from those things that challenge their faith. These weapons of faith, including prayer, fasting and almsgiving will help us complete our Lenten Journey, but are tools to help us to stay on target to grow closer to Christ every day of the year. Your challenge is for the next week to do something kind for someone in need without asking. You don't even have to tell them. Or, if someone does something nice for you, do the same thing for someone else, pay it forward.

CLOSING PRAYERS

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant. O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother; For Thou are blessed unto ages and ages. Amen.

Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

(sing together)

Lord of the Powers, be with us! For in times of distress, we have no other help but you. Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us! Amen.

Troparion of great Compline

EXPANDED IDEAS

Teach the children to sing the Troparion with the verses from Great Compline.

Offer the children one of each item discussed in the session as their personal Weapon of Faith. Get mini helmets, swords, etc. from a party store.

Have them create a movie or a skit where they use their weapons of faith to defend themselves against real life situations of temptation such as bullying at school. Show this to the community after church.

Ask the priest at your parish to schedule Great Compline, and encourage children to meet you there with their families.

WEAPONS OF FAITH

GLOSSARY

Almsgiving – Charity, something such as money or food given freely to the poor **Armor** - A defensive covering of the body. A quality or circumstance that afford protection

Fasting – To eat sparingly and abstain from some foods

Prayer – An address as a petition to God in thought or word

Righteousness – Describing someone acting in a manner according to divine or moral law, someone who is good according to God

Weapon – A means of contending against another

Great Compline – Service done during Great Lent which includes the Small Compline and the Canon of St. Andrew

SPECIAL NOTES

Next Session we will be using a clip from Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Make parents aware that the movie is PG-13. There will be some violence and grossness in the two "Leap of Faith" scenes that are shown, from Chapter 33 and 34 on the DVD. You might send out a note or an e-mail to let parents know. If it is a concern to any parents you can just leave that section out and work around it.

ARTS AND CRAFTS - Votive prayer candles

SUPPLIES NEEDED

7 Day clear votive church candles. Ask your priest to order them if you use a different color at church (need 1 per person)

Multi-colored tissue paper

Modge Podge (to share)

Foam paint brushes

Paper plates

Scissors

Table cover

Sharpie

DIRECTIONS

Pass out materials

Put your name on the bottom of your candle

Cut out pieces of tissue in a design you like

Paint Modge Podge on a small section of the candle and lay the tissue on top.

Tissue pieces should only slightly over lap. It will look best if the tissue is laid flat on the candle. Continue until the candle is covered.

Once candle is covered with tissue (sides only), cover with another layer of modge podge to give a finished look

Don't put tissue paper on the inside of the candle

The finished product should have a similarity to a stained glass window

WEAPONS OF FAITH

FAMILY NOTES - Weapons of Faith

Today your child(ren) learned that People of Faith have Weapons of Faith to help us to continue on a path toward Christ. They talked about the armor and weapons that God gives us to combat evil and to stay faithful found in Ephesians 6:10-18. To find out more about what they learned, ask the following questions:

What are some of the weapons of faith that you learned about?

What are some of the items that are around the house that you can use as reminders of these weapons?

What are the weapons of faith that are important during the Lenten Season as well as the whole year?

MODELS OF WEAPONS OF FAITH IN APRIL

- St. Mary of Egypt (1)
- St. George the Great Martyr (23)
- St. Mark the Apostle and Evangelist (25)

ACTIVITIES

Spend time together playing "Family Fear Factor." Using some of the weapons of faith your kids learned to give you confidence, face the fears of each of your family members.

Read through the stories of saints who had to face fear, such as St. Demetrios and St. Nestor or St. George.

As the old saying goes, "A family that prays together, stays together." In addition to praying before and after meals, start a family prayer time where you read the Small Compline all together.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Read <u>The Ladder of Divine Ascent</u> by St. John Climicus available at holycrossbookstore.com. For children, read <u>The Monk who Grew Prayer</u> by Claire Brandenburg, also available at holycrossbookstore.com.

WEAPONS OF FAITH

SESSION 8 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, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us and purify us from every stain and of Your goodness, save our souls O 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 the glory of your name.

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 Yours 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

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-hartedness, lust of power and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant. O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother; For Thou are blessed unto ages and ages. Amen.

(Sing together)

Lord of the Powers, be with us! For in times of distress, we have no other help but you. Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us! Amen.

Troparion of great Compline