
OBJECTIVE

To have each family member understand that Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life and through Him we can journey to salvation.

PREPARATION

The committee leading this activity should review and use the *Preparing for the Family Night* checklist in *Appendix B* to plan for the event.

Session leaders should allocate sufficient time to prepare, familiarizing themselves not only with the session but also with each of the following Bible passages: John 14:6, Isaiah 42:16, 2 John 1:4–6, and Deuteronomy 11:18–19. In addition, look over any prayers that will be used so that you are comfortable with them as well. If theological questions arise during preparation, the leader(s) should schedule a meeting with the parish priest so that the lesson is fully understood before the session.

On the day of the session, allow time to organize the materials.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For the Whole Group

- Copies of prayers and/or prayer services (*for all participants*)
- Flip chart, masking tape, and markers
- *Family Time: Opening Activity* handout (*see p. 149*)
- Blindfolds (*1 for every 2 people*)
- Poster board (*1 per family*)
- Set of markers or Crayons (*1 per family*)
- *Family Time: Closing Activity* handout (*see p. 150*)
- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Family Night: Taking It Home* handouts (*see pp. 151–152*)

For Children's Break-out Session

- Prize for opening activity
- Blank piece of construction paper (*1 per child*)
- Crayons or markers
- Title and text for pictures (*see pp. 137–138*)
- Glue sticks

For Teenagers' Break-out Session

- *Case Scenario* handouts (*see pp. 141–144*)
- Magazines
- Two pieces of flip chart paper
- Tape
- Pens/pencils

For Adults' Break-out Session

- *Personal Reflection* handouts (*see pp. 147–148*)
- Pens/pencils

OPENING AND CLOSING PRAYERS

We recommend that as a parish family you begin and end your evening with a worship service or prayer. We have included a Small Compline service in Appendix A to reproduce and distribute for all to participate. If you choose a different service, make every effort to have the text available for everyone. For

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alternative prayer time, teach the families this beautiful psalm. It is important to take a few minutes as a group to review the meaning of this psalm so that all can be active participants when praying. Consult with your parish priest for guidance in this.

God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. —**Psalm 67**

OPENING ACTIVITY: FINDING YOUR WAY (15–20 minutes)

After the opening prayers, give each family a Family Time: Opening Activity handout. Begin the discussion when most of the families have completed the task.

DISCUSS (Look first to the children for answers and reflect back.)

- How did it feel to be blindfolded?
- What made it difficult?
- How did we find our direction—our way?
- In the Bible, Jesus says, “I am the **way**, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). What do you think He meant by this? (Allow several people to answer before beginning the opening remarks.)

OPENING REMARKS (Paraphrase in your own words.)

Very good answers! Before we move on, I want to make sure you remember what Jesus said. Let’s all read it together:

Write John 14:6 on a flip chart or project on the wall for all to see. Have everyone recite the passage in unison. If you like, have a quick contest to see who can recite it the loudest—the adults or the children.

Jesus states, “I am the Way.” This statement gives us direction, a goal, and a destination. By following “the Way,” we bypass the numerous “dead end” streets and wrong turns of our daily human life. Jesus directs us through the changes, potholes, and rough terrain by lovingly guiding us along the way. He teaches us **He is the Way** to a new life full of faith, peace, love, forgiveness, and healing. **He is the Way** to transform our life from a mere existence to a life in God. This is what we will be exploring today: how we can follow the Way, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Before we move on, let’s see who remembers what Jesus said. (Say the following and allow participants to fill in the blanks.)

Jesus said to him, "I am the _____, the _____, and the _____. No one comes to the _____ except through _____."

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS (45–60 minutes)

Three age-appropriate break-out sessions are offered on the following pages. These may or may not work for your parish, depending on the number of families that participate. If you are not able to break into three groups, keep participants together and adapt one of the sessions to best meet your needs.

- Children's Break-out Session—Following Christ (pp. 135–138)
- Teenagers' Break-out Session—Walking in Truth (pp. 139–144)
- Adults' Break-out Session—Show Me the Way (pp. 145–148)

Transitioning smoothly from one activity to the next is critical when leading a session, especially for young children. For this reason, make sure to know exactly where each group is going for the break-out sessions and who is leading them. Give clear instructions and proper support so the lessons can begin promptly.

Please note that the children's and teenagers' groups will vary greatly in age, as well as in developmental and spiritual levels. If there are many children, it would be best to split the preschoolers through 2nd graders into one group and the 3rd through 6th graders into another. Likewise with the teenagers, split the junior high and high school students into two groups when appropriate. However the groups are arranged, make sure that all the young people are fully engaged in the lesson. For more specific information about the developmental needs of children and teenagers, see the *Guidelines* published by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.youth.goarch.org). Above all, always be certain there is enough adult supervision to ensure that the young people will be safe and supported in their learning.

CLOSING ACTIVITY (15–20 minutes)

Reassemble the participants back together as families. Give each family group a Family Time: Closing Activity handout. Have them follow the instructions on the handout, and when most families are done (they can continue at home if necessary) begin the wrap-up discussion.

DISCUSS (Look first to the children for answers and reflect back.)

- What did you learn today?
- What are you going to do as a family when you get home?
- Does anyone remember the passage about Jesus we learned earlier? (Repeat as a group.)

WRAP-UP (Paraphrase in your own words.)

Our life is constantly being pulled in many directions. We feel overwhelmed at times and even lost. As Christians, we are called to follow Jesus Christ as the Way. With Him, there is hope and direction. He is the path to eternity. This path isn't an easy one to follow and at times we might be tempted to try an easier path but we must stay straight on the path of

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Christ. Remember that no matter how difficult it may seem, Christ will be right there with us. Let Him lead the Way; after all, as He said, “*I am the way ...*” (*John 14:6*).

AS FAMILIES PREPARE TO LEAVE

- Remember to close with a short worship service or closing prayer.
- Don't forget to give families the *Family Night: Taking It Home* handout.
- Let them know when the next Family Night is scheduled.
- Enlist families to help you clean up (*rotate monthly*).
- Thank them sincerely for their attendance and participation.

FOLLOWING CHRIST

CHILDREN'S BREAK-OUT SESSION

OPENING ACTIVITY: SIMON PETER SAYS

How many have played the game Simon Says? Great! We are going to play a slightly different version. In the Bible, one of the apostles was named Simon, but Christ changed his name to something that means “rock.” Does anyone know who that was? Peter. So instead of saying “Simon says,” I will say “Simon Peter says.” As you know, you have to pay very close attention to me because I will try to trick you. I may say, “Simon Peter says turn around.” What should you do? Start turning around because Simon Peter said to. Then I say, “Stop.” What should you do? Keep turning because Simon Peter didn’t say to stop. If I say, “Simon says jump up and down,” what do you do? Don’t do it—because only Simon said to, not Simon Peter. For the person who is left standing, there will be a special prize. *Take them through a series of different commands for the game. Start slowly and progress to faster and trickier. Give the prize to the last person standing.*

DISCUSS (*Allow all to share and reflect back.*)

- What was hard about this game?
- What was easy about this game?
- Was it hard to listen?
- Did the thought of the prize keep you motivated?
- Could you focus if you were talking or thinking about something else?

STATE (*Paraphrase in your own words.*)

Sometimes it is difficult to pay attention. We may let others distract us, or we may not pay attention because we don’t want to follow directions. When there is a reward, it is easier to focus perhaps just for a short time. For example, pretend our mom said we can go to the park and get ice cream if we clean our room. We would all start cleaning really quickly so we could get the reward immediately. It is nice to be rewarded, but hopefully we don’t do things only for rewards. Sometimes the greatest reward we can receive is knowing we did the right thing—not because we are going to get a prize but because it was right. What are some examples of rewards that you can’t buy? (*Depending on the ages of the children, this may be difficult to brainstorm. Help them out with some examples, such as the feeling you get when you do well on a test, when you help your grandmother with a task, etc.*)

Christ has promised us a great reward. Does anyone know what it is?

Christ promises that we can live with Him forever in Heaven.

How do we get this reward?

We get this reward by following Christ and following His way. It is difficult to remember that this reward is out there because there are many other things pulling us and promising to make us happy (like toys, clothes, or television). These are immediate rewards but all these worldly rewards can not even begin to compare to the prize God has waiting for us in heaven if we only follow Him.

How do we follow the Way? Does Christ help us?

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BIBLE PASSAGE: ISAIAH 42:16

Let's see what we can find in the Bible about how Christ helps us follow Him. We are going to read a passage from the book of Isaiah. This is from the Old Testament, which contains stories that happened from the time God created the earth until just before Jesus was born. Let's read what it has to say.

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

STATE (*Paraphrase in your own words.*)

We read, "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them." Remember earlier today with your families when you did the walk blindfolded. Your family member guided you to safety. This is what God does for us in our life.

"I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth." Have you ever been walking in your house when it was dark? It is difficult see where you are going. In life, it can be difficult to see what the right choice is when you are trying to follow God, but He will help us see the way we are to walk. How about walking in the woods? If there isn't a path, it can be very hard to get through; God is there helping to clear the path for us as we walk through life.

We read, "These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." What does forsake mean? It means to abandon or leave. So, God will not leave us when we walk on His path. He will always be with us. How does this help us? (*Allow children to answer before proceeding*)

I AM THE WAY PICTURES

Pass out paper and crayons or markers to the children. Also pass out the cut passages from the handout and have the children glue them to their papers. Have them draw a picture entitled "Following God" showing all that they have learned today. If you have time have each child share their drawing, and then proceed with the following wrap-up.

WRAP-UP (*Paraphrase in your own words.*)

There are many different rewards available to us during this life. But the greatest reward we can earn is the reward that comes from living a life with Jesus. To do this we must follow Him in all that we do. We must always remember that Jesus is there to lead us along the path and help us along the way—He is the Way!

Close with the following prayer (teach children how to do a full or half prostration at the end of each line):

*Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are the God of my salvation;
on You I wait all the day. —Psalm 25:4–5*

CHILDREN'S PICTURE TITLE
(copy and cut so there is one per child)

Following God

Following God

Following God

Following God

Following God

CHILDREN'S PICTURE TEXT

(copy and cut so there is one per child)

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

– Isaiah 42:16

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

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– Isaiah 42:16

WALKING IN TRUTH

TEENAGERS' BREAK-OUT SESSION

OPENING ACTIVITY: CASE STUDIES

Divide the young people into 4 groups (if you have fewer young people eliminate one of the scenarios), and give each group one of the case scenario sheets. Give groups 5–10 minutes to discuss their scenario, and then have each group report back to the whole group.

STATE (*Paraphrase in you own words.*)

Daily we are faced with many choices, many paths to walk down. When we picture making the right choices, we may picture doing our homework, saying no to drugs or alcohol. But choosing the wrong path may be doing nothing at all. We may think we aren't doing anything bad, but, as we saw in some of these scenarios, sometimes our lack of action is the wrong path. It would be easier to not say things—to go with the flow—but being a Christian is not about going with the flow. It is about walking in truth and love. Let's see what the Bible says.

DISCUSSION (*allow some of young people to share their answers*)

- Is the right thing always the easiest?
- Is it always clear what is right and wrong?
- How can you keep focused on what is right?

BIBLE READING: 2 JOHN 1:4–6

I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

DISCUSSION (*Allow some of young people to share their answers.*)

- How do we walk in truth?
- How do we walk in love?

STATE (*Paraphrase in you own words.*)

We walk in truth by following the commandments and loving all. If we keep our focus on this the right path becomes clear, but it is not always the easy path to walk on. It is not always easy to keep our focus, especially in today's society. Our judgment can be clouded by a million different things in our environment. When we are confronted with choices, the best way to make a sound moral decision is to ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" or "What would Jesus want me to do?"

ACTIVITY: TROUBLED TIMES

We are handing out magazines to each of you. They are regular magazines that you might buy at the grocery store. Look through them and find images that represent things that distract us from walking in truth and things that help us walk in truth. When you find these

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images, cut them out. You have five minutes to do this. Then we will gather back together as a group to tape them on our paths and you can share one or two that you chose.

DISCUSSION (*Allow some of young people to share their answers.*)

- What do you notice about the distractions from walking in truth?
- What do you notice about the things that help us walk in truth?
- Which was easier to find images for?

WRAP-UP (*Paraphrase in you own words.*)

Every day we are bombarded with distractions meant to take us away from the path to God. A momentary diversion or a single, judgment made in haste may seem inconsequential, but they add up, pulling us farther and father from the way of the Lord. These distractions may give us immediate pleasure or recognition, but they will not matter when it comes to eternity. For eternity, there is only one Way! His Way!

Close with the following prayer:

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your loving-kindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

—Psalm 25:1–11

GROUP 1: CASE SCENARIO

Your good friend has broken up with his/her significant other. Their separation was mutually agreed upon and came about as a result of several minor differences. You have always had a good relationship with your friend's "ex." He/she approaches you and indicates a desire to remain friendly, which you readily agree to. Several days later, your circle of friends begins to bad-mouth the "ex" for no apparent reason.

Since you are friends with this person as well, what do you do? Is this a difficult choice? Why or why not?

What if they are talking about something hurtful this person did to the other friend?

What if you are not friends with the "ex." Is it still okay to talk about him/her or let others talk about him/her? Why or why not?

Consider your life now. Are there situations similar to this that you have been in? How can you work to make the right choice in comparable situations?

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GROUP 2: CASE SCENARIO

A new student arrives on your campus. Most everyone seems to ignore this person because he/she appears shy and awkward. The new student's look and behavior doesn't really "fit in" with the style of you and your friends. Making an effort to befriend this person may seem strange to your friends. One day in the cafeteria you see this person sitting alone. You have an opportunity to introduce yourself and welcome the new student to the school.

What do you do? Is this a difficult choice? Why or why not?

What if there are rumors about a sketchy past that caused this new student to be kicked out of his old school?

What if the person came and asked to sit with you and your friends?

Consider your life now. Are there situations similar to this that you have been in? How can you work to make the right choice in comparable situations?

GROUP 3: CASE SCENARIO

A GOYA overnight retreat is scheduled for the coming Friday night. You have been registered for the event for over a month. Although you do not attend church regularly, you are attempting to get more involved so as to learn more about the Orthodox Church. A day before the retreat, the most popular person in school unexpectedly invites you to their birthday party, which will be on the same night as the retreat. Most every “cool” person in school will be at the party. Going to this party would greatly increase your own popularity.

What do you do? Is this a difficult choice? Why or why not?

What if the person who invited you to the party was not popular and didn't have many friends? Would this change your decision?

Consider your life now. Are there situations similar to this that you have been in? How can you work to make the right choice in comparable situations?

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GROUP 4: CASE SCENARIO

You have recently completed a unit in Church School on prayer. Special emphasis was given to the importance of praying before meals. One day while shopping at the mall with several non-Orthodox friends, your group stops at the food court for a lunch break. Once at the table, the others begin to eat immediately while chatting about the great purchases made thus far. You sit in silence wondering how a short, silent prayer and crossing yourself will appear to your friends. You now know praying before a meal shows gratitude for the food you are about to eat. However, you wonder what your friends will think about a public display of faith.

What do you do? Is this a difficult choice? Why or why not?

What if you are with your Orthodox friends?

What if you do it and one of your friends asks you why you did that? What would you say?

Consider your life now. Are there situations similar to this that you have been in? How can you work to make the right choice in comparable situations?

SHOW ME THE WAY

ADULTS' BREAK-OUT SESSION

STATE (*Paraphrase in your own words.*)

Jesus is the Way, and we need to follow Him to salvation. To do that, we take a step on the path, and then we take another step, keeping our eyes on Him with every step we take. It can be hard enough to keep this focus for ourselves, but how do we do it with children? How do we help them take their first steps on this path? How do we help them learn to keep their focus so that every step they take in their life they take with Christ as their destination?

Take the next 10 minutes to think about this focusing on the following passage from Deuteronomy, chapter 11, verses 18–19. If you don't have children (be it your own, nieces, nephews, godchildren, etc.) in your life, think about other people that are in your life. Although you might not be charged with their spiritual formation, think about how you can witness your faith to them. When you are done, we will discuss as a whole group.

Pass out pens and the Personal Reflection handout found on pages 147–148. When the time has passed, bring the group back together. Read the passage one time aloud, and proceed with the discussion questions below.

BIBLE PASSAGE: DEUTERONOMY 11:18–19

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be immovable before your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

DISCUSS (*Allow all to share and reflect back.*)

- What did you think about the first part of this passage?
- What did you think about the second part of the passage?
- What are some of the barriers we face?
- How do we overcome them?

WRAP-UP (*Paraphrase in your own words.*)

St. John Chrysostom said, “Fathers and mothers: go and lead your child by the hand into the Church.” This is our commission as parents. We aren't called to lead them to church then drop them off and go home. We must go in with them. Even more important, we must bring the church back into our homes and walk with Christ in all that we do. By walking with God at every moment of our day, we present a witness not by our words but by our actions to those around us. So, go take your child's hand, look towards Christ, and take your first step—but don't stop there. Keep looking and walking towards Christ each and every moment of your day.

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Close by praying the following psalm:

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your loving-kindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

—Psalm 25:1–11

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be immovable before your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Look closely at the above passage. For each sentence in the passage, consider the following:

- What are you being asked to do?
- How are you currently doing this in your life?
- How can you further these commissions?
- What barriers keep you from these tasks?
- How can you work on these?

FAMILY NIGHT: TAKING IT HOME

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” —John 14:6

I AM THE WAY: FINDING THE TRUE KEYS TO HAPPINESS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

BY EVA KOKINOS

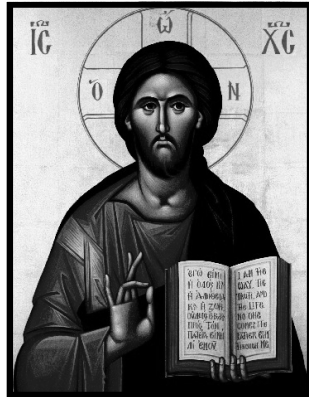
Have you bought the latest fitness DVD? Have you picked up the latest issue of Oprah's magazine? Have you purchased that magic weight-loss pill that gives you a wonderful figure and a perfect life? Lately, we have been taught that the keys to a happy life lie in riches, power, self-indulgence, magic products, and greed. If you take a look at MTV or even shows like *Desperate Housewives*, our society has become one where each person looks out for "Number 1." Why should I do ANYTHING if it doesn't benefit me? The road to being happy and successful is lined with products, gadgets, advice, and those we push aside to get what we want.

But where does that lead us? Ultimately, we notice that those who try to reach the highest for power, money, and fame often fall the hardest. Temporary joys, solutions, and luxuries become hurdles and road blocks to the true path of joy and contentment. This is where we, as Christians, were given the most wonderful blessing: the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, through His teachings, life, and resurrection, becomes the star that guides us to our true path of happiness and fulfillment.

We all have received advice or suggestions on how to live a better life. Time and time again, we are being sold or convinced about the quickest and most innovative techniques to "live life to the fullest." But, there always seems to be a new and improved product just around the corner. Unlike these trends and fads which come and go, Jesus offered us teachings which are eternal and are consistent throughout the Holy Scriptures. For example, Jesus did not just hand out a "magic pill" which made people feel better about themselves and others. But, He did teach us about how to love God and love one another. He did teach us how to take care for those who are less fortunate than we are. He also taught us how to pray and keep ourselves spiritually fit and healthy. There are no products on any "infomercial" which can offer us substantial results like the lessons of Jesus Christ.

There is nothing worse than taking advice from someone who does not live according to those same suggestions. Typically, we lose trust in that person and their advice. Christ, to use a cliché, practiced what He preached. Christ's actions,

coupled with His teachings here on earth, are a clear picture of how each of us can obtain a life of peace, joy, and love. For instance, Christ taught us in the Gospel of Matthew that the greatest commandment is to love God and to love each other. Jesus Christ did not just teach this lesson, but He lived and preached by this lesson. This is why we read that Christ broke bread with the sinners as well as the righteous. This is why Christ performed many miracles before the eyes of the people. Furthermore, you see Jesus Christ embracing His mission to die on the cross, resurrect, and give us the gift of eternal life because of His love for the Father and all humankind.



Finally, Christ is our ultimate example of self-sacrifice and unconditional love through His crucifixion and resurrection. The fact of life is that nothing comes easily. Society is always trying to find the quickest, easiest way to make money, get a beautiful body, and cater to our own personal needs. Our culture teaches us that it's best to focus on what we want rather than do for others. But people quickly realize that all blessings come through sacrifice and hard work. The path to salvation was paved by Christ's sacrifice. Jesus Christ did not just resurrect but had to endure humiliation, torture, and betrayal. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection serves as our opportunity for inheriting eternal life and becomes the ultimate lesson in humility, obedience, and unconditional love of ALL humanity.

The bottom line is this: the way to happiness, and the way of Jesus Christ, is love. Jesus Christ shows us the way through His light. It is out of love that Christ offered us the word of God and teachings of prayer, fasting, charity, and humility. It is love that Jesus Christ expressed through "walking the walk and talking the talk." In other words, Christ shows us the way to happiness and righteousness by living the way He preached. And of course, Christ shows us the way to glory and happiness through His crucifixion and resurrection. Je-

sus's sacrifice shows us what can be endured and achieved through love.

So what is our call to action? Finding our way in this life means to continue learning about Christ, as well as learning about other things. We are not perfect, and we have a great deal to learn about life. We can learn through the Holy Scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers, and attending the holy services of our Church.

Finding our way through Christ means we must not only call ourselves Christians but we must BE Christians. We must not only tell people what we believe. Orthodox Christians must be a walking Gospel. Our actions should teach, inspire, and motivate as much as our words do. Therefore, we can step up in our parishes, jobs, families, and schools to witness our faith, volunteer to work, teach Sunday School, or be a youth advisor.

In addition, we must take action and find our way through Christ by living for God and for each other rather than just for ourselves. We are a community of faithful, and we share this beautiful life with many other human beings. True success and acclaim comes through hard work, faith, and working for the good of others. So, we are called to find our way through Christ by being a servant rather than pushing our way to the top. We can serve our co-workers, our communities, our schools, and our families through our time, labor, talents, and resources.

The end result of finding the path of happiness through Jesus Christ becomes one of love and inclusiveness rather than the cutthroat world of selfishness and greed. We never need to follow movie stars, music stars, sports stars, or television stars if we follow our own star. Just as the wise men were led to Christ, we should find our way through the darkness by the shining light of Jesus Christ.

—Eva Kokinos is a graduate of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and serves as Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: CREATE A GAME

You don't need a to run out and buy a board game to have a night of family fun. Create your own! Here are some easy and sure to please games that everyone in your family will enjoy with a decidedly Orthodox twist.

- Charades—On small pieces of paper, have everyone write down several favorite Bible stories or church events (or anything else you would like to act out). Fold them and put them into a hat. Have each family member pick one and silently act out what is written down. Family members cannot guess on their own card.
- Pictionary—Same as above but draw pictures instead of acting. You could also add items you see in church or anything else you want.
- Hum-a-Hymn—Write down a list of familiar hymns from the church. Have family members pick from a hat and hum away while the other members try to guess the hymn.

PRAY TOGETHER

God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. —Psalm 67

FAMILY CHALLENGE

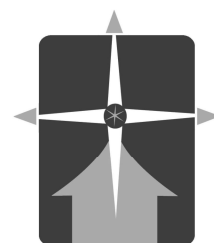
With the beautiful spring weather, we challenge you to take a hike as a family. The hike can be as simple as a walk in a beautiful park in your town or perhaps a bit more involved (think hiking through the forest or mountains). If you choose the more involved route, make sure you prepare yourself properly, taking note of safety precautions. Regardless of where you go, bring a compass, Bible, food, and anything else you may need to protect you from the elements (sunscreen, bug spray, first aid kit, etc.). Once you're out and about have everyone in the family notice how well the compass guides you. Take time to break and read Psalm 104. Reflect on what a beautiful world God gave us to live in as we walk in His way.

MORE ON THE WAY

... that my ways were directed ...	Psalm 119:5
... teach us His ways ...	Isaiah 2:3
... a still more excellent way...	1 Corinthians 12:31

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- *The Orthodox Way* by Kallistos Ware, published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- *Way of Life: Introducing Your Child to the Orthodox Faith* by Anna Marie Guidus-Mecera published by Orthodox Christians Education Center.
- *Logos: The Orthodox Word Game* available from logosgame@aol.com



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