
Holy Week Retreat

Resources Book

A **Y²AM** Project

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Youth & Young Adult Ministries

Journeying with Christ

Lesson plans for a Holy Week Retreat

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SESSION ONE - SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

GOAL:

To learn about Saturday of Lazarus

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. scripture quote printed on paper
4. treasure: piece of cloth
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“O Christ our God, before Your Passion, You raised Lazarus from the dead to confirm the common Resurrection for all. Therefore, we carry the symbols of victory as did the youths, and we cry out to You, the victor over death, “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Amen.

Apolytikion of Saturday of Lazarus

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazaros had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you have heard me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that you did send me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him."

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and ask them to write down their answers. When they have finished writing, ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- If this was your last day on earth what would you do?
- *Now imagine, that you died and Christ called you back. **How would you continue living? Would that second chance change your life?***
- What is life really about? What is the goal of life?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What happened on this day?
 - Jesus raised (brought back to life) Lazarus.
- Who is Lazarus?
 - Lazarus is Jesus' friend.
- Jesus cried when He found out His friend died, why?
 - He was sad because Lazarus was his friend. Being fully God and fully man, Jesus lived among us and had family and friends just like we do. He was a real person with real feelings. He knows our hurt and pain because He also experienced it when He lived on earth.
- Why did Jesus raise Lazarus?
 - It shows us that we will also be raised when we die.
- Why does Holy Week start with this celebration?
 - It gives us hope that we too will be raised.

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: **piece of cloth** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. (**Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants**)

Life is a gift given to each of us from God. We are called to live according to God's commandments by loving Him and loving our neighbor. This is our true calling and vocation. We do not know when our Lord will call us to His Kingdom, so we must always be prepared. We can do this through prayer, reading the Bible, and going to confession, but the greatest way to live is to constantly choose love. Most participants will probably say that on their last day they will want to spend their time with family or at confession. What if we spent our lives living that way every day?

If we flip the scenario and are given a second chance at life, we have a fresh opportunity to live according to the greatest commandment: Love God and neighbor. Would you spend time doing what you wanted or what the Man that called you back wanted? Jesus is the Master over life and death. Would you want to follow Him and serve him? How would you do it differently? These

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

questions can re-orient us towards Christ and His call for us and allow us, with confidence, to go through the darkness of Holy Week and the dark moments in our lives. Now we can truly do anything without fear because we know that Christ has the last say.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to reorient your life towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“O Christ our God, before Your Passion, You raised Lazarus from the dead to confirm the common Resurrection for all. Therefore, we carry the symbols of victory as did the youths, and we cry out to You, the victor over death, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. ”

Amen.

Apolytikion of Saturday of Lazarus

SESSION TWO - PALM SUNDAY

GOAL:

To learn about Palm Sunday

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. scripture quote printed on paper
4. treasure: palm branch or cross
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“O Christ our God, before Your Passion, You raised Lazarus from the dead to confirm the common Resurrection for all. Therefore, we carry the symbols of victory as did the youths, and we cry out to You, the victor over death, “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Amen.

Apolytikion of Palm Sunday

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazaros, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazaros also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazaros out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.”

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and ask them to write down their answers. When they have finished writing ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- What is a burden to you? What is weighing you down?
Someone is coming to take those things away.
- How would you greet him or her? What would you do?
How would you respond?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What are the children doing in the icon?
 - Cutting and laying down palm branches to put down a “red carpet” for the King who is Jesus.
- Why is Jesus called King?
 - We know Him as the Son of God, but at that time the Jewish people saw the teachings and the miracles He performed and thought He could free them from the Romans.

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

- If Jesus is the Son of God and King why did he enter the city on a donkey, and not on a royal chariot with large horses?
 - He wanted to enter on a peaceful animal because He is the King of Peace, but He also showed that earth is not the Kingdom, it is Heaven that awaits us.
- The people were shouting, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,” where else do we hear this?
 - We hear this during Orthos and Divine Liturgy.

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: **a palm branch or cross** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. **(Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants)**

“Palm Sunday calls us to behold our King: Jesus (the Word of God made flesh). We are called to keep our eyes and hearts on Him not simply on palm Sunday as the One who came to us riding on a colt, but as the One who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist (Holy Communion), in every prayer and sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes to free us from all our fears and insecurities, ‘to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart.’ He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His death and Resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect union with Him. He is the King, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death. Palm Sunday calls us to better understand our King (Jesus) as the vanquisher of death and the giver of life.”

<https://www.goarch.org/palmsunday>

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“O Christ our God, before Your Passion, You raised Lazarus from the dead to confirm the common Resurrection for all. Therefore, we carry the symbols of victory as did the youths, and we cry out to You, the victor over death, “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Amen.

Apolytikion of Palm Sunday

SESSION THREE - SERVICE OF HOLY UNCTION

GOAL:

To learn about the service of Holy Unction

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. Holy Week books
4. treasure: cotton ball
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“Lord, have mercy on us, For in You we have put our trust; Be not exceedingly angry with us, Nor remember our many iniquities; But look upon us now as the Compassionate, And deliver us from our enemies; For You are our God, and we Your people, We are all the work of Your hands, And upon Your Name we have now called.”

Amen.

Hymn from the service of Holy Unction

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following hymn to the participants twice:

“At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him. And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners [to repentance].”

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Break participants into groups of two. Pass out a Holy Week book to each group and have them choose a prayer from the Holy Unction service. Ask participants the following questions and ask them to write down their answers. When they have finished writing, ask them to share their answers and facilitate a discussion:

- What stood out to you in the prayer?
- What themes did you find in the prayer?
- Would you read this prayer throughout the year if you were sick? Why?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What is Holy Unction?
 - A Sacrament where we are anointed with holy oil.
- When is this Service?
 - Wednesday of Holy Week
- What is so important about the oil?
 - The Greek word for oil is *eleon*, which also means mercy. Oil can heal physically (cuts and bruises), but it also heals spiritually. When we say Lord have mercy, we are asking God to have healing oil (mercy) on our souls.
- What is the difference between this oil and regular oil?
 - There are prayers said over the oil to make it holy. The Holy Spirit comes down over us and the oil and transforms us and it. Our lives are transformed because we see God in the oil through our prayers. The oil is transformed during this service to heal us spiritually.

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: **a cotton ball** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. ***(Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants)***

“The Orthodox Church has always viewed body and soul as inseparable, and for that reason has stressed the necessity for preserving both in good health. The Sacrament of the Holy Unction is a sacrament of faith for healing the sick and forgiving sins, with the most familiar celebration of the sacrament on Great Wednesday of Holy Week.”

The oil is blessed during this Sacrament, but being present during the service allows us the opportunity to encounter the third person of the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit in a real way through the prayers and Scripture readings.

<https://www.goarch.org/-/the-sacrament-of-holy-unction>

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“Lord, have mercy on us, For in You we have put our trust; Be not exceedingly angry with us, Nor remember our many iniquities; But look upon us now as the Compassionate, And deliver us from our enemies; For You are our God, and we Your people, We are all the work of Your hands, And upon Your Name we have now called.”

Amen.

Hymn from the service of Holy Unction

SESSION FOUR - WASHING OF THE FEET

GOAL:

To learn about the Washing of the Feet

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. scripture quote printed on paper
4. treasure: small Holy Water bottles
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened, ailing with avarice and to the lawless judges he betrays You, the righteous Judge. Behold, O lover of money, this man who because of money hanged himself. Flee from the greedy soul which dared such things against the Master. O Lord, who is good towards all men, glory to You!”

Amen.

Troparion of the Wednesday night Bridegroom service

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“When it was evening, he sat at table with the twelve disciples; Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "You are not all clean." When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Ask one participant to volunteer to have their feet washed. As a Youth Worker, you will wash their feet. Ask other participants to watch and sing: “A New Commandment I Give to You.”

When you have finished, ask the following questions and have participants write their answer on paper. Ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- What does it mean to become less, so that someone else can become more?
- What does it mean to be a servant and a leader?
- What was Jesus trying to teach through this act of washing His students’ (disciples) feet?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Why did Jesus wash the feet of the disciples?
 - To show them to give up their self-reliance and accept the gifts others have to offer. To prepare them for Eucharist (Communion).
- Why did Simon Peter not want his feet washed?
 - He felt it was beneath the Lord, the Lord should not lower Himself to touch the feet of another person.
- What example does Jesus show?
 - He shows that we must serve one another. He also shows us that we have things to learn from everyone who comes to us in faith and love, and to accept the kindness of others.

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: ***holy water bottles*** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. ***(Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants)***

“As Jesus washes the feet of His disciples, we have both a symbol of baptism and an example of service. As Christians, we are bathed and cleansed by Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Periodically, throughout our lives, we have "foot-washings" by our Lord through the Sacrament of Holy Confession. The only way for God to assist us in understanding that He dwells in our hearts and we are created in His likeness and image is to guide us in developing His unselfishness in us. To be a person that gives to others is not for God’s benefit, but for our own. He waits patiently for us to learn to give. The Lord puts forth many examples of humility and love throughout His life (seen in Scripture). One example of our Lord’s humility is washing the feet of His disciples. Leadership must also set the example of ministering with humility. ”

(<https://www.goarch.org/-/stewardship-jesus-washes-the-disciples-feet>)

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened, ailing with avarice and to the lawless judges he betrays You, the righteous Judge. Behold, O lover of money, this man who because of money hanged himself. Flee from the greedy soul which dared such things against the Master. O Lord, who is good towards all men, glory to You!”

Amen.

Troparion of the Wednesday night Bridegroom service

SESSION FIVE - MYSTICAL SUPPER

GOAL:

To learn about the Mystical (last) Supper

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. scripture quote printed on paper
4. treasure: printed Communion Hymn
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“Receive me today, Son of God, as a partaker of Your mystical Supper. I will not reveal Your mystery to Your adversaries. Nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas. But as the thief I confess to You: Lord, remember me in Your Kingdom.”

Amen.

Communion Hymn

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” And they were very sorrowful, and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me. The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Is it I, Master?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and ask them to pick one and write down their answers. When they have finished writing ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- What is it like to have a friend betray you? Can you relate to Christ's experience? In what way(s)?
- Have you had a best friend move away? What is that experience like?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What happened on this day? What is this meal?
 - With this supper, Christ begins the sacrament of Communion. Through receiving Communion we allow Christ to enter our bodies bringing us closer to God and His love and mercy.
- What is Holy Communion?

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

- Wine and bread that are blessed during the Divine Liturgy and are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ
- When is the bread and wine transformed?
 - During the consecration, when we kneel
- What makes Holy Communion so important?
 - We cannot live without food. We also cannot live without spiritual food. Christ began the Eucharist so that we may become closer to Him. Through partaking in Communion we are given forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: ***hymn verse*** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. (***Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants***)

“Christ’s greatest gift to us is the Eucharist (Communion). Through the Mystic supper we see themes of remembrance, thanksgiving, forgiveness, and community. At the Mystical (last) Supper in the Upper Room, Jesus gave a radically new meaning to the food and drink of the sacred meal. He identified Himself with the bread and wine: ‘Take, eat; this is my Body. Drink of it all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant’ (Matthew 26:26-28).

We have learned to equate food with life because it sustains our earthly existence. In the Eucharist, human food: bread and wine becomes our gift of life: eternal life. During the Divine Liturgy, the bread and wine are consecrated and sanctified (while we kneel), and become the Body and Blood of Christ. This change is mystical and sacramental and we partake of the true Body and Blood of Christ. Through this spiritual meal (Holy Communion), God enters into communion with our human life and He feeds humanity with His own being. We are allowed to get closer to Christ and have Him dwell in our hearts through preparing and receiving Communion. In the words of St. Maximos the Confessor, Christ, ‘transmits to us divine life, making Himself eatable.’ The Author of life shatters the limitations of our created-ness. Christ acts so that ‘we might become sharers of divine nature’ (2 Peter 1:4).”

<https://www.goarch.org/holythursday>

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“Receive me today, Son of God, as a partaker of Your mystical Supper. I will not reveal Your mystery to Your adversaries. Nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas. But as the thief I confess to You: Lord, remember me in Your Kingdom.”

Amen.

Communion Hymn

SESSION SIX - GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

GOAL:

To learn about the events at the Garden of Gethsemane

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. scripture quote printed on paper
4. treasure: flower (real or fake)
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

Amen.

A prayer of Christ in the Garden

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.’ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?’ he asked Peter. ‘Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.’ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!’

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and to write down their answers. When they have finished writing ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- Have you ever had an experience where you needed to pray, but it seemed like the hardest thing to do in that moment was to talk to God?
- **How can we overcome this?**
- Do we really want the Lord's will to be done in all circumstances?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What happened on this day?
 - Jesus goes to the garden to be alone and pray.
- What does Jesus ask in His prayer?
 - For the cup to be taken away
- What is the “cup”?

HOLY WEEK RESOURCE

- Dying on the Cross
- What does Jesus do in the Garden?
 - He listens to His Father, God, and asks for His will to be done.
- What does Jesus show us?
 - Jesus shows us His true personhood: He is fully God, trusting fully in God's will and fully human, not wanting to encounter the hard things in life.
- What makes it hard to pray?
 - We have many distractions in our lives. This is why Jesus went to the Garden. He wanted to talk to His Father and He needed to do that alone. We also need to take the time to be alone with God. We talk to Him (prayer), but we also need to be able to listen to him (silence).

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: **flower** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. ***(Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants)***

“Jesus is Son of God and full man and being fully man He accepted fully the human condition: to experience suffering and to learn obedience. He lived a truly human existence and assumed the role of a servant. Jesus is sinless and He allied Himself with the whole human race, identified with the human predicament, and experienced the same tests (Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 2:9-18). We can see another example of this in the Garden of Gethsemane. The sacrifice He was to endure (dying on the Cross) for the salvation of the world was imminent. Death stared directly at Him and its terrible burden and fear caused Him intense sorrow and pain (Hebrews 5:7). Instinctively, as man He sought to escape it. He found Himself in a moment of decision. In His agony He prayed to His Father, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt’ (Mark 14:36). His prayer revealed the depths of His agony and sorrow. It revealed as well His ‘incomparable spiritual strength (and) immovable desire and decision . . . to bring about the will of the Father.’ Jesus offered His unconditional love and trust to the Father. He reached the extreme limits of self-denial ‘not what I will’ - in order to accomplish His Father's will. His acceptance of death was not a resignation, but an act of absolute love and obedience. In that moment of decision, when He declared His acceptance of death to be in agreement with the Father's will, He broke the power of the fear of death with all its attending uncertainties, anxieties and limitations. He learned obedience and fulfilled the divine plan (Hebrews 5:8-9).”

(<https://www.goarch.org/holythursday>)

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

Amen.

A prayer of Christ in the Garden

SESSION SEVEN - CRUCIFIXION

GOAL:

To learn about the Crucifixion

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
 2. pens
 3. scripture quote printed on paper
 4. treasure: blunt nails
 5. *Bibles*
- (enough for each participant)*

OPENING PRAYER

*In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
O Christ our God who at all times and at every hour are worshiped
and glorified both in heaven and on earth, who are long in
patience, great in mercy and compassion, who love the righteous
and show mercy to sinners, who call all to salvation through the
promise of good things to come; receive our prayers at the present
time. Direct our lives according to your commandments. Sanctify
our souls. Purify our bodies. Set our minds aright. Cleanse our
thoughts and deliver us from all sorrow, evil and distress.
Surround us with your holy angels, that guarded and guided by
them, we may arrive at the oneness of the faith and the
comprehension of your ineffable glory. For you are blessed to the
ages of ages.
Amen.*

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ‘You have said so,’ Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, ‘Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?’ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus or Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, ‘Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: ‘Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.’ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ asked the governor. ‘Barabbas,’ they answered. ‘What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ Pilate asked. They all answered, ‘Crucify him!’ ‘Why? What crime has he committed?’ asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify him!’ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood,’ he said. ‘It is your responsibility!’ All the people answered, ‘His blood is on us and on our children!’ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.”

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Ask participants to stand in front of Christ on the Cross in the Church. Ask participants to read the following scripture: Psalm 22 to Psalm 31:5.

Next, ask the following questions and have participants write down their answers. When they have finished writing, ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- What is this Psalm about? What did you read?
- What stood out to you and why?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Why did Jesus allow the people to Crucify Him?
 - Jesus had to die because through the Cross, Jesus brought the joy and the good news of our eternal life.
- When have you experienced suffering or death in your life?
- What feelings have come about when you have experienced this taste of death?
- How can we overcome death?
 - Christ overcomes death through His own death. We do not have to be afraid when bad things happen because Christ experienced them and He was never abandoned by God. We too are never abandoned by God.
- Would you choose Christ or Barabas? Are there times in your life where you make a choice against Christ?
- Is it possible to choose Christ and Barabas at different parts of our lives?

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: **blunt nail** to each participant and teach on the lesson below. (**Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants**)

True love is sacrifice. True love is an action and not a feeling. Christ loves each of us. Period. No matter what we do, good or bad, wrong or right, He loves us. He shows this through hanging and dying on the Cross. Christ sacrifices His life out of His love for us. Love in its purest form is sacrifice. We are able to love because Christ first loved us. It is out of love that God became man and took on our form. Through the Cross, Jesus shows that He literally loves us to death. To cultivate love we must practice sacrifice; sacrificing in a way that we give of ourselves without asking for anything in return. This is exactly what Christ did for us on the Cross. Being filled with God's love, we are able to share it with others and live eternally.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to identify how we can reorient our lives towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

*In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. O Christ our God who at all times and at every hour are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth, who are long in patience, great in mercy and compassion, who love the righteous and show mercy to sinners, who call all to salvation through the promise of good things to come; receive our prayers at the present time. Direct our lives according to your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Set our minds aright. Cleanse our thoughts and deliver us from all sorrow, evil and distress. Surround us with your holy angels, that guarded and guided by them, we may arrive at the oneness of the faith and the comprehension of your ineffable glory. For you are blessed to the ages of ages. **Amen.***

SESSION EIGHT - HOLY RESURRECTION

GOAL:

To learn about the Resurrection

OBJECTIVE:

To identify how we can reorient our lives
towards serving God and neighbor

ESTIMATED DURATION:

30 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank lined paper
2. pens
3. scripture quote printed on paper
4. treasure: paper icon of the Resurrection
5. *candles*
(enough for each participant)

OPENING PRAYER

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

“It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, O brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life.”

Amen.

Doxastikon of Praises (for Pascha)

ACTIVITY 1: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the following scripture passage to the participants twice:

“After the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulcher. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you.’ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, ‘Hail!’ And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.’

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sum of money to the soldiers and said, ‘Tell people, “His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.” And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’ So they took the money and did as they were directed; and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. Amen.’”

ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING

10 minutes

Have participants enter a dark space and pass out candles to the group. Ask each participant to pray for something aloud and then light their candle, offering their prayer to God.

Ask participants the following questions and have them write down their answers. When they have finished writing, ask them to share and facilitate a discussion:

- What was your experience in the dark room?
- What was your experience once the candles were lit?
- How can prayer and light overcome darkness and light in our lives?

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What is happening in the Icon?
 - Jesus is pulling Adam and Eve up from Hades.
- Why Adam and Eve?
 - They were the first ones in. They disobeyed God by eating the apple.
- What makes the resurrection important?
 - We too can live eternally.
- How does light overcome darkness?

ACTIVITY 4: TREASURE & TEACHING

5 minutes

Pass out the treasure: ***paper icon of the Resurrection*** to each participant and teach on the lesson below.

(Reflect on the teaching rather than read it directly to participants)

“The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the center of the Christian faith. It is the central experience and essential preached message of the Church. Christ's Resurrection is the guarantee of our salvation. Together with His Ascension it brings to perfection God's union with us for all eternity. The Resurrection made possible the miracle of the Church, which in every age and generation proclaims and affirms "God's plan for the universe." The profound experience of and the unshakable belief in the risen Lord enabled the Apostles to evangelize the world and empowered the Church to overcome paganism. Christ, risen and glorified, fills us with incomparable hope. The Resurrection bestows illumination, energizes souls, brings forgiveness, transfigures lives, creates saints, and gives joy.

The Resurrection has not yet abolished the reality of death, but it has revealed its powerlessness (Hebrews 2:14-15). We continue to die as a result of the Fall. Our bodies decay and fall away. "God allows death to exist but turns it against corruption and its cause, sin, and sets a boundary both to corruption and sin." Thus, physical death does not destroy our life of communion with God. Rather, we move from death to life - from this fallen world to God's reign and eternal life.”

(<https://www.goarch.org/pascha>)

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP AND COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question.

- What is one way to reorient your life towards serving God and neighbor, through what you have learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

“It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, O brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life.”

Amen.

Doxastikon of Praises (for Pascha)