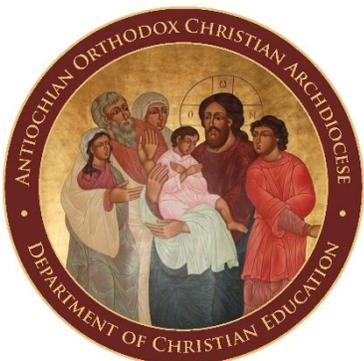




Like the Stars of Heaven

**A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
Junior High School**



[Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America](#)
[Task Force for Youth & Young Adult Ministry](#)
[Department of Christian Education](#)

© 2022

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Acknowledgements	5
Feedback.....	5
Lesson 0: Introduction to Genesis	6
Creation Icon: Day One of Creation.....	9
An Outline of the Book of Genesis.....	10
Lesson 1: Creation	11
Lesson 2: Expulsion	14
Icon: Expulsion from the Garden	17
Icon: The Expulsion from Paradise.....	18
Lesson 3: Sin and the Flood	19
Lesson 4: Babel	22
Tower of Babel Quiz.....	25
Map Bingo Printouts	26
Tower of Babel Text and Discussion Questions.....	33
Lesson 5: Abraham’s Covenant	34
Snap Inc. Terms of Service.....	38
Scripture Text and Discussion Questions.....	43
Anaphora of The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	47
Lesson 6: The Hospitality of Abraham	48
Icon: The Hospitality of Abraham/The Trinity	51
Lesson 7: The Sacrifice of Isaac	52
The Sacrifice of Isaac Typology Matching Cards	55
Katavasia of the Nativity.....	56

Lesson 8: Jacob, Esau, and the Birthright	58
Lesson 9: The Story of Joseph: Part I.....	61
Genesis 37, 39-40: Group 1.....	64
Genesis 37, 39-40: Group 2.....	67
Lesson 10: The Story of Joseph: Part II.....	70
Excerpt from “Sermon on Joseph the Most Virtuous”	73
Some Common or Challenging Questions About the Book of Genesis	77
General Teaching Strategies and Classroom Considerations	81

Introduction

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On behalf of our Christian Education Ministry, I am pleased to present this new curriculum for our church schools centered on the book of Genesis. When His Eminence gave us the charge to bring new vitality to our youth and young adult ministry, one of our first goals was to ensure our young people were given sound fundamental teachings in the Faith centered on the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We decided to create a pilot program of fifteen lessons on the Gospel of Matthew with the theme “Who do you say that I am?”

Having received very positive feedback from the churches that used the curriculum, we decided to continue providing lessons each year that corresponded to the Bible Bowl. This year we will focus on Genesis with the theme: “Like the Stars of Heaven.” Our goal is for all of our young people to gain a greater understanding of who we were meant to be as human beings, the impact the fall of Adam and Eve had on us, why we were in need of a Savior, and how God began to prepare humanity for the coming Savior. With so many competing messages in our culture about what it means to be human, we felt going back to the beginning of the scriptures was the best place to go.

I am deeply grateful to all who have worked so hard to bring this curriculum to fruition. Mrs. Anna-Sarah Farha, our director of the Christian Education Ministry, has done a wonderful job of keeping all of the many moving parts running together and coordinating our dedicated team. We have a truly amazing team of writers doing the lesson the plans and devoted priests serving as theological advisors. We also must thank Fr. Stephen De Young for providing the theological vision for the curriculum.

Our prayer is for this curriculum to be a helpful tool for our church schools to inspire our young people to live with a deeper commitment to Christ, struggle to regain the pristine beauty of the image and likeness of our Creator, and live in eternal joy shining as stars of heaven with the Saints.

With love and esteem in Christ,



V. Rev. Nicholas Belcher

Chairman of the Antiochian Archdiocese Task Force on Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Acknowledgements

Like the Stars of Heaven, A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum is the work of a dedicated team led by the V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Belcher. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals:

V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Belcher, MDiv, *Chairperson*
Anna-Sarah Farha, *Department of Christian Education*
Sandy Nelson, MA Curriculum & Instruction, MTS, *Editor*
Elaine Atherholt, *Editor and Layout*
Annunciation Press, *Logo Design*

Theological Advisors

V. Rev. Fr. Stephen De Young, PhD
Rev. Fr. Calinic Berger, PhD
Rev. Fr. Nicholas Long, MA

Curriculum Writers

Rev. Fr. Calinic Berger, PhD
Subdeacon Gregory Abdalah, DMin
Anna-Sarah Farha
Rev. Dn. Anthony Gilbert, PhD
Matthew Nelson
Sandy Nelson, MA Curriculum & Instruction, MTS
Gail Meena Malaniak, MEd
Kh. Gigi Shadid
Donna Starke, MEd
Kristina Wenger, MEd

Feedback

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH declared 2021 to be the [Year of Youth](#), and appointed a new [Task Force for Youth & Young Adult Ministry](#) for our Archdiocese. *Like the Stars of Heaven, A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum* follows the release of *Who Do You Say That I Am? A Gospel of Matthew Sunday School Lesson Plan* in 2021, which was a part of the initial work of the Task Force. Feedback on this curriculum and its design from those who use these lessons is appreciated. [Please share your feedback through this form.](#)

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Introduction to Genesis	Introductory Lesson	Genesis 1 and John 1	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God created everything from nothing. - Sin entered into the world because of our disobedience, but God loves us and saves us through Christ. 			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Genesis - the first “book” in the Bible; the beginning - Protoevangelium - the “first good news” 			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
Tablet/computer to display the Day One of Creation icon included in this lesson packet	Bible, one per student for the lesson extension Outline of the Book of Genesis printout, one copy per student (Optional) Print the Day One of Creation icon included in this lesson packet	Poster board, markers (colored), Post-It Notes in two different colors, pencils.	
Opening Prayer:			
Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord’s Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture . “Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Opening Activity: (10 mins)

Teacher intro to Genesis:

- Explain to your students that we will be learning about the Book of Genesis for the next several Sundays.
- Genesis is the first book of the Bible. The word “Genesis” (from the Greek) means “coming into being,” or “origin,” or more simply, “beginning.”
- Genesis is the introduction of God’s relationship with humanity.
- It will show us not only who God is but how our choices – for both good and ill – affect our relationship with Him and one another.
- In addition, Genesis is also known as the protoevangelium or “first good news” because God promises to rescue us from our sins and mistakes.
- Genesis has 50 chapters, which are organized into two main sections: Chapters 1-11 and Chapters 12-50. *(Distribute copies of An Outline of the Book of Genesis print out and read through it together as a class.)*
- Set expectations with the students that they should look for parallels to the life of Christ, i.e. demonstrate that Genesis is in fact the protoevangelium, as they read through Genesis during the upcoming lessons.

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

Prior to class:

Make a **K-W-L Chart** on the board or a poster board.

You may wish to use a poster board for this activity so that you can add to it during upcoming lessons, check off things that you all covered under “want to know,” and add to the **Learned** column when all of the lessons have been completed.

KWL Chart		
Know	Want to know	Learned

A: Initial part of lesson

Find out what your students **Know** about the Book of Genesis and what they **Want** to know about the Book of Genesis. Distribute pencils and three Post-It Notes of each color to each student. Draw their attention to the K-W-L Chart. (Some students might express surprise or sarcasm when they see a K-W-L chart being used in a Junior High class.) Explain that even though K-W-L Charts are often used for younger students, you are asking the students to humor you. This chart is a great way to organize a lot of information, even if it is “old school.”

Continue by discussing how there are probably several stories from Genesis that the students are familiar with, especially if they read these stories as young children. Now that they are older and can understand beyond the simple versions of the stories, we want to know what the students already know and what they want to know about the deeper meaning of the book of Genesis. Instruct students to write any three things they **Know** about Genesis on

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

the Post-It Notes of one color and stick them on the Know column. If students become stuck, then have them list the names of people in the Bible and tell you what they already know about them (Adam, Eve, Noah, etc.). Next, students will repeat the exercise by writing three things they **Want** to know about the Bible and specifically about the Book of Genesis on the other color of Post-It Notes. Assure the students that there are no wrong or bad questions.

B: Second part

Read through the notes as a class to familiarize yourselves with the content and questions. In this way, students will recognize and identify answers to their questions throughout the upcoming lessons.

Closing Activity: (5 mins)

Have the students look at the Day One of Creation icon (pull it up on your computer or tablet or point to it hanging on the wall). Let them discuss what they see.

Ask them why Jesus is in the picture. Explain that the story of Genesis is the story of the entire Trinity and not just God the Father. Also, remind them of the idea of the protoevangelium and say that Jesus is the one who will be sent to save us and that He was present from the beginning.

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Have the students compare Genesis 1 and John 1 to notice how they begin in the same way.

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.



Day One of Creation
Michael Kapeluck, Archangel Icons

An Outline of the Book of Genesis

<h1>Genesis: The Book of Beginnings</h1>							
God Dealing With All People (Chapters 1-11)				God Dealing With Israel (Chapters 12-50)			
Creation Ch. 1-2	Fall Ch. 3-5	Flood Ch. 6-9	Tower Ch. 10-11	Abraham Ch. 12-24	Isaac Ch. 25-26	Jacob Ch. 27-36	Joseph Ch. 37-50

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Creation	1	Genesis 1 & 2	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God is the creator. - This is a story of “Who” not “How.” - God created the world orderly. 			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Genesis - beginning - Stewardship - the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property 			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
Tablet/computer for watching a portion of this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzcbJxV7v9E (Opening 0:00-2:35)	Bible for reading Genesis Chapters 1 and 2, one per student	Sets of puzzles - some with the right pieces, some with the pieces mixed up with other puzzles. Journals, pens/pencils	
Opening Prayer:			
<p>Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord's Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture.</p> <p>“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”</p>			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Opening Activity: (5 mins)

Today, we’re going to look at the beginning of the beginning. Genesis is the first book of the Bible and literally means “The Beginning.” To begin, we’re going to watch a short clip from a TV Miniseries about The Bible. (*Watch the opening of The Bible miniseries [0:00-2:35].*)

What jumps out at you? How did they portray creation?
(*Guide the discussion to a place where **the story** of creation is being told.*)

Creation is a story, an incredible story, that helps us understand Who God is and what he did.

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Let’s pair off and read. (*Have the students pair off into groups of two. Give them copies of Genesis 1.*)

First, read Genesis 1 together. When you’re done, answer the question for the group: What are the overarching themes?

Ask:
(*Gather them back.*) What did you see?

All great stuff!

B: Second part

Genesis 1 can be divided into two groups that correspond to each other. Days 1-3, God creates all the “places”.

Day 1: God creates light and separates the light from the dark

Day 2: God creates the heavens and the seas

Day 3: God separates the seas and brings forth dry land

Now that the “places” are created, they’re all empty. Days 4-6, God fills them.

Day 4: God creates the Sun and the Moon and marks day and night.

Day 5: God creates the fish and the birds to fill the heavens and the seas.

Day 6: God creates vegetation and the animals and man to take care of it all...as we’ll hear in Genesis 2.

Let’s get back into our original pairs and read again.
(*Have the students pair off into groups of two. Give them copies of Genesis 2.*)

Ask:
What did you notice about the two stories?

- Are there similarities? Are there differences?
- What are they?
- Why do you think they are there?

(*Allow time for answers.*)

Sometimes, the fact that there are differences between the two accounts leads people to think that means the stories cancel each other out. Like God somehow got it wrong and had to correct things and write a second story. But why include two?

Remember - this is a story that helps us understand **WHO** God is, not a book about how He created. It tells us that He created everything, including us. This was done in an orderly manner, bringing order to chaos.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Closing Activity: (10 mins)

Divide into groups - give some groups puzzles that are missing pieces or mixed up, and give other groups puzzles that are complete.

You have 5 mins to put the puzzle together. Go!

Ask:

What worked?

What didn't work?

What were the struggles?

(Reveal that some of them were mixed up or missing pieces.)

It can be chaotic to work with a group on a puzzle. Not having everything we need makes that chaos even greater. But God overcomes the chaos and brings order to the world. Think of God's command to Adam in Genesis 2:15. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Man is created to work towards caring for the world that God has created.

Each week, we will have some time for journaling and, at the end of the semester, we'll take them home to remember things we've discussed. There will be one or two questions each time for us to answer in our journals and opportunities for us to share our answers if we're comfortable.

Ask:

How can I take care of God's creation? *(Allow time to share answers if comfortable.)*

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Stewardship Discussion:
 - What is stewardship?
 - What does it mean to be stewards of God's creation?
 - How do we live that? What action steps can we take to fulfill that command?

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Expulsion	2	<p>“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of you shall surely die.”</p> <p>Genesis 2: 16-17</p> <p>Genesis 3</p>	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High

Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)

Key Ideas in this Lesson:

- There are consequences to our actions.
- We are called to follow God’s commandments.

Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:

- **Commandments** - a mandate given by someone in authority
- **Consequence** - a result or effect of an action or condition
- **Responsibility** - the state or fact of being answerable, or accountable for something within one’s power, control, or management

To prepare for this lesson, you will need:

Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials
Tablet/computer to display the Expulsion from Paradise icons included in this lesson packet	Bible (Optional) Print the Expulsion from Paradise icons included in this lesson packet	Journals, pens/pencils

Opening Prayer:

Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include **The Lord’s Prayer** or the **Prayer Before Reading Scripture**.

“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments,

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

Opening Activity: (10 mins)

We’re going to start today with our journals.

Think of a time you did something you weren’t supposed to do - something you were explicitly told not to do but did anyway. Write it down. (*Give a minute or two, when everyone is done writing, go on.*)

Now underneath that, write down all of the things that happened as a result of your action. Anything you can think of. (*Give a few minutes to have them think and journal before going on.*)

Those things that happened as a result of our actions are called consequences.

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

The same is true in Scripture. In chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis, we heard all about Creation.

Ask:

Can anyone retell the story? (*Allow multiple participants to answer. Fill in the blanks as needed.*)

There was one thing that God said that was different from everything else He had said.

Ask:

Can anyone remember what that was? (*Allow time for answers: something along the lines of “don’t eat from that tree.”*)

Great! Genesis 2:16-17 says: “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’”

Ask:

What word jumps out at you? (*Allow time for some answers - eventually steer towards the word **commanded** if they don’t bring it up.*)

B: Second part

What are commandments? (*Steer the discussion to the definition: a mandate given by someone in authority.*)

God gave a commandment, Adam was explicitly told not to do something. What happens next? Let’s break into groups and see. (*Break into groups of three, give each group Genesis 3 and have them each act it out for the class.*)

Closing Activity: (5 mins)

Adam and Eve disobeyed God. What does that mean?

Not only did they disobey, they took it a step further and did not take responsibility when they were caught.

Ask:

What does it mean to take responsibility? (*Allow time for answers.*)

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

It means being in charge of what we’ve done. Sometimes it means we get credit for something good, but it also means admitting when we’ve done something wrong. This is not always easy, but when we do not take responsibility for our actions when we’ve done something wrong, the situation usually gets worse than if we admit what we did wrong from the beginning.

Ask:

What were the results of the actions of Adam and Eve to disobey God’s commandments and not to take responsibility for their actions? (All the curses)

Journal Time: Make available to students copies of the Expulsion from Paradise icons and instruct them to study the icons and then revisit the situation they wrote about earlier and reflect on the following questions:

- What would it have looked like to take responsibility for your actions?
- Would it have changed the outcomes?
- Moving forward, what does taking responsibility look like?

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Discussion question:
 - In Chapter 3, God issues a string of curses. Why does God do this? (Steer discussion to the fact that they are the consequence of Adam and Eve’s disobedience.)
2. Journal Time:
 - What is your response to consequences?
 - Do I always think of the consequences of my actions?
 - What does it look like to think through the consequences of my actions?

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.



Expulsion from the Garden
Michael Kapeluck, Archangel Icons



The Expulsion from Paradise
Nicholas Papas, Saint Demetrius Press

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Sin and the Flood	3	Genesis 4-9	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
- Sin starts small and then snowballs.			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intertwined - connected or linked closely - Jealousy - showing envy of someone or their achievements - Commandments - a mandate given by someone in authority - Laws - the principles and regulations established in a community by some authority and applicable to its people, whether in the form of legislation or of custom and policies recognized and enforced by judicial decision - Absolution - sacramental forgiveness of sins following the hearing of a penitent's confession - Reconciliation - the act of restoration between two or more people 			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
	Bible, one per student (Optional) <i>Red Pocket Prayer Book</i> , p.38	Journals, pens/pencils	
Opening Prayer:			
<p>Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord's Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture.</p> <p>"Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."</p>			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Opening Activity: (5 mins)

The Old Testament is a long story all about God’s relationship with His people. Like all stories, it builds on itself and continues along a clear path. What does that have to do with anything? It means that the stories we heard last week connect with the stories we’ll hear this week! The people are connected and their stories are intertwined (what does “intertwined” mean?).

Ask:

Who can remind us about what we talked about last time? *(Have kids retell the stories of Creation & Adam and Eve - prompt them as needed.)*

Today, we’re going to continue the story, this time looking at two brothers, the sons of Adam and Eve, and what happened to them.

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Let’s pair off and read. *(Have the students pair off into groups of two and read the Cain and Abel story with their partner, Genesis 4:1-16)*

Discussion Questions:

- How does the story of Cain and Abel connect to the stories we heard last week?
- How are Cain and Abel connected to each other? (Brothers)
- Did they get along? (No)
- Why not? (Cain was angry, God accepted Abel’s offering not Cain’s)
- What’s another word for why Cain was angry? (He was jealous)
- Do we ever get jealous? *(Allow time for answers.)*
- Does that jealousy ever lead to anything else? *(Allow time for answers.)*

Following Abel’s murder, sin in the world snowballed. Eventually, things got to the point where Genesis tells us that God was sorry He created mankind.

Whoa. That’s intense. Let’s pair off again and read what’s going on. *(Have the pairs read the story of Noah and the Flood, Genesis 6:1-8:22)*

Discussion Questions:

- Why did God flood the earth? (People stopped following His laws)
- Why was Noah chosen? (He followed God’s laws)
- What were the signs from God everything was ok? (Olive branch, Rainbow)
- Why is it important that God gave a sign that things were ok? *(Allow time for answers.)*
- What would you do with a reset? *(Allow time for answers.)*

People turned away from God - starting with Adam and Eve - and forgot to live according to His commandments. These are not suggestions, but laws.

Ask:

What’s the difference between laws/commandments and suggestions? *(Allow time for answers.)*

What we ultimately learn from the Noah story is that even when we think things are at their worst, we have a chance to turn things around and reset. We are lucky to have opportunities for confession, where we can come and ask God for forgiveness of our sins and get our own “clean start.” Just like with the Noah story, we have a prayer read over our heads at the end - the Prayer of Absolution - that sets us back on the path to live according to His commandments.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

B: Second Part

This is what the prayer says:

O Lord God, the Salvation of Thy servants, gracious, bountiful and long-suffering, who repentest Thee concerning our evil deeds, and desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live: Show Thy mercy upon Thy servant, (Name), and grant unto him/her an image of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and deliverance, pardoning his/her every transgression, whether voluntary or involuntary. Reconcile and unite him/her unto Thy Holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom also, with Thee, are due dominion and majesty: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

May our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, through the grace and bounties of His love towards mankind, forgive thee, my child (Name) all thy transgressions. And I, His unworthy Priest, through the power given unto me by Him, do forgive and absolve thee from all thy sins. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ask:

What themes do you see in those prayers? (*Steer conversation towards unity, reconciliation, restoration of community, and forgiveness.*)

Closing Activity: (10 mins)

God gives us other people as a gift. There are many stories throughout Scripture that remind us that we are created to be in relationship with other people. To live in community. In almost all of these stories - including when things go astray from that community - God is reminding us of this point and teaching us how to live with others. To remind us to love them and care for them.

Journal Time: How can we live out God’s commandments in our lives? (*Allow time to share answers if comfortable.*)

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Bonus Journal Time
 - a. Journal question: How do I prepare for confession? Optional: refer to the Red Pocket Prayer Book, p.38

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Babel	4	Genesis 11:1-9	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We cannot do it alone and for our own glory. - We don't survive without God. 			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
	Bible for reading Genesis 11:1-9 Tower of Babel Text and Discussion Questions print out, one copy per student Map Bingo and Jeopardy! printouts	Bingo daubers or small items to use as bingo chips. Journals, pens/pencils	
Opening Prayer:			
Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord's Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture . "Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Opening Activity: (10 mins)

Today, we’re going to start things off with an activity called Map Bingo. (*Go through one round of Map Bingo.*)

Ask:

What does it mean if we say someone is babbling? (*Not making any sense, making weird sounds like a baby.*)

Ask:

Does anyone know where this comes from? (*Allow time for answers.*)

It comes from a story in the Bible about a tower in a place that was named Babel. After the flood, people in Babel started to rebuild. They kept going and took things a little too far.

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Let’s break into groups and read the story of the Tower of Babel together and discuss the attached questions. (*Divide students into groups of four. Pass out copies of the story of the Tower of Babel with the discussion questions.*)

“Now the whole earth had one language and one [a]speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and [b]bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called [c]Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

Genesis 11:1-9 (NKJV)

(Bring the group back together and have them answer the discussion questions together.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the people wanted to build the tower that went so high?
2. Why do you think it was important for them to name themselves?
3. Why do you think God wanted to spread the people out?
4. Why is it important that we remember God?

Answers to guide the discussion forward:

1. To show that they could go where God lived on their own.
2. By giving themselves their own name, they thought they could survive on their own, without God.
3. So they would not think they could be too powerful on their own and, in turn, forget Him.
4. So we can give thanks to Him as the creator of all things - which we learned about four weeks ago.

B: Second part

The story of the Tower of Babel is an example of people trying to do things on their own for their own glory. Like the story of Noah, Babel reminds us how important it is to give thanks to God. God loves us and wants what is best for us, but we need Him to live.

Ask:

Can anyone think of something they tried to do by themselves and then needed to ask for help?

(Allow time for answers.)

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

God is always there, helping us. We need Him. This story reminds us of what could happen when we remove ourselves from God and don't accept His help. It reminds us that we need to live our lives in a way that accepts His love and gives thanks to Him always.

Closing Activity: (5-10 mins)

Journal Time: What are three things I need help with? Where can I get help with them?

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Tower of Babel Quiz

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Tower of Babel Quiz

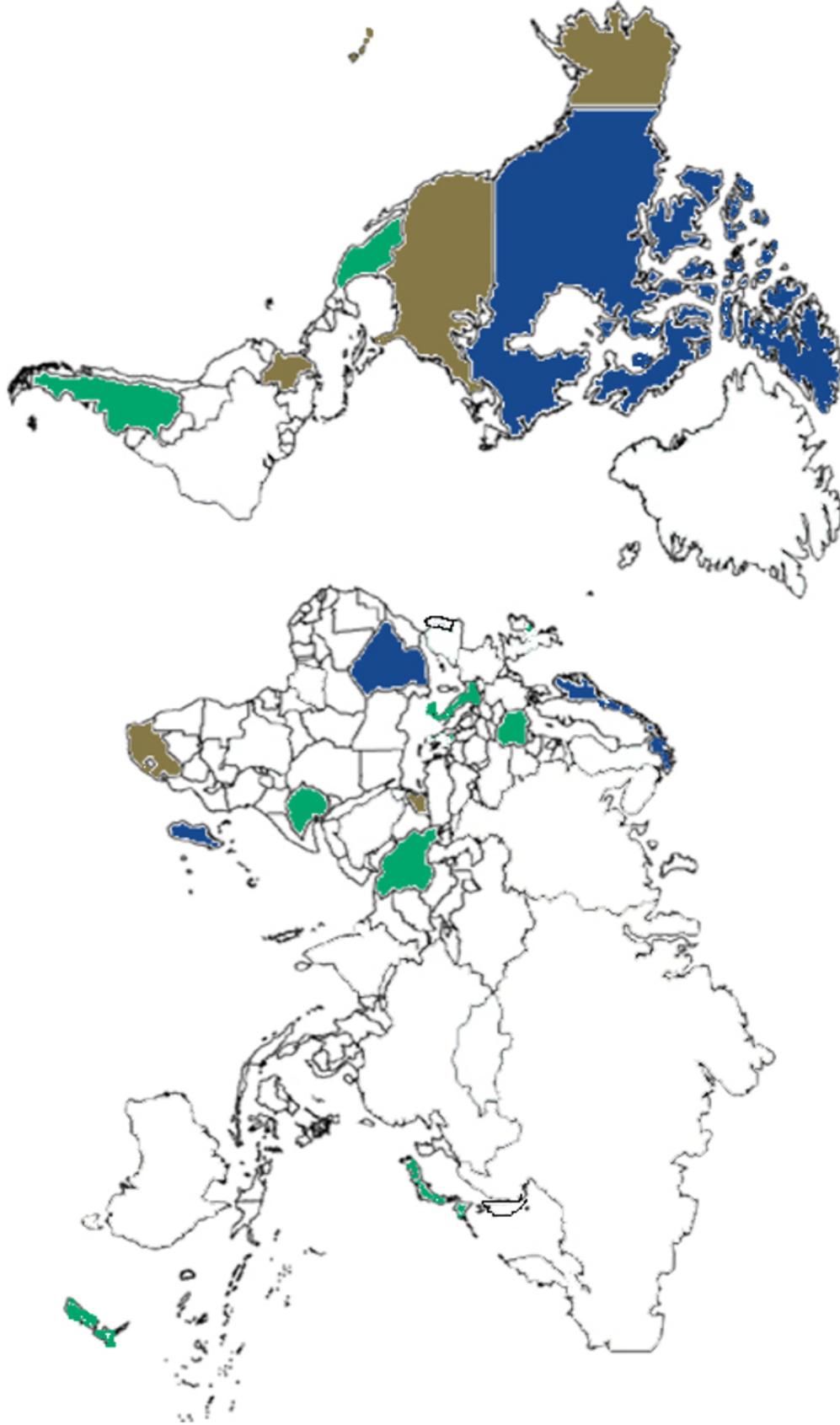
True or False: The Tower of Babel was the tallest ever.	True
Multiple Choice: Noah and his family wanted to build the tower because: A. It was a place for everyone to live after the flood B. They knew they could get great rent C. They didn't build the tower, that was last week's story D. None of the Above	C. They didn't build the tower, that was last week's story
True or False: People always had many languages.	False
True or False: The tower was called Babel because there were a lot of babies there.	False
True or False: God built the Tower of Babel	False
True or False: God destroyed the tower.	True
True or False: God confused the languages	True
True or False: God told people to build it	False
True or False: Men built the tower to reach heaven.	True
True or False: The tower was made of wood.	False

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

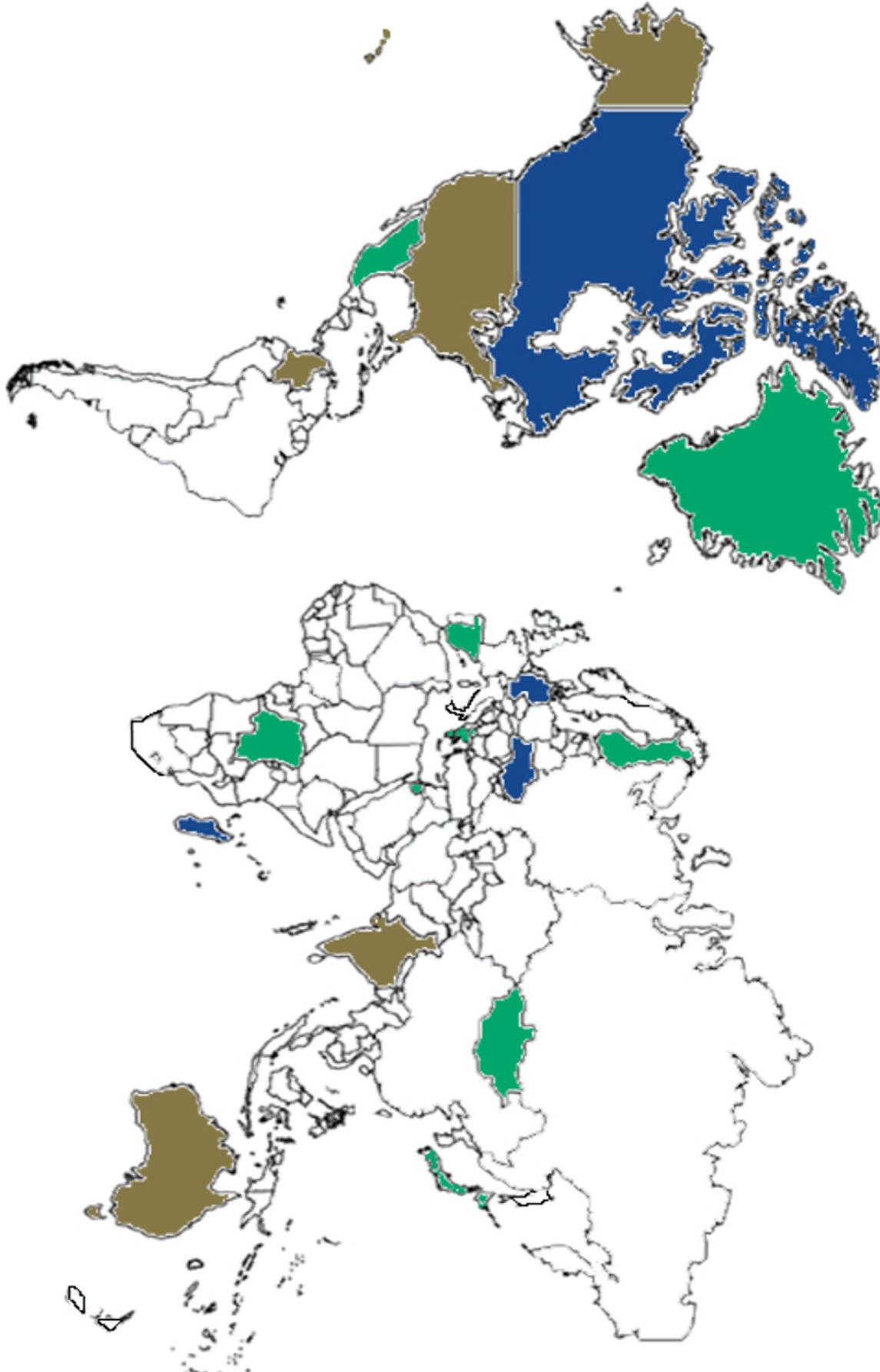
Map Bingo – Divide the group into 5 teams and give each team a different map and a board. Call out the name of countries for the teams to find that country on their map. If it is highlighted, they put a marker on their board. Bingo rules apply to determine winners.

United States	Canada	Mexico	Colombia	Greenland
Madagascar	Germany	United Kingdom	Poland	Brazil
Ethiopia	France	Italy	Norway	Argentina
Portugal	Spain	Greece	Ukraine	Algeria
Jordan	Syria	Russia	Finland	Nigeria
Saudi Arabia	Australia	China	Japan	Congo
Iran	India	New Zealand	Mongolia	South Africa

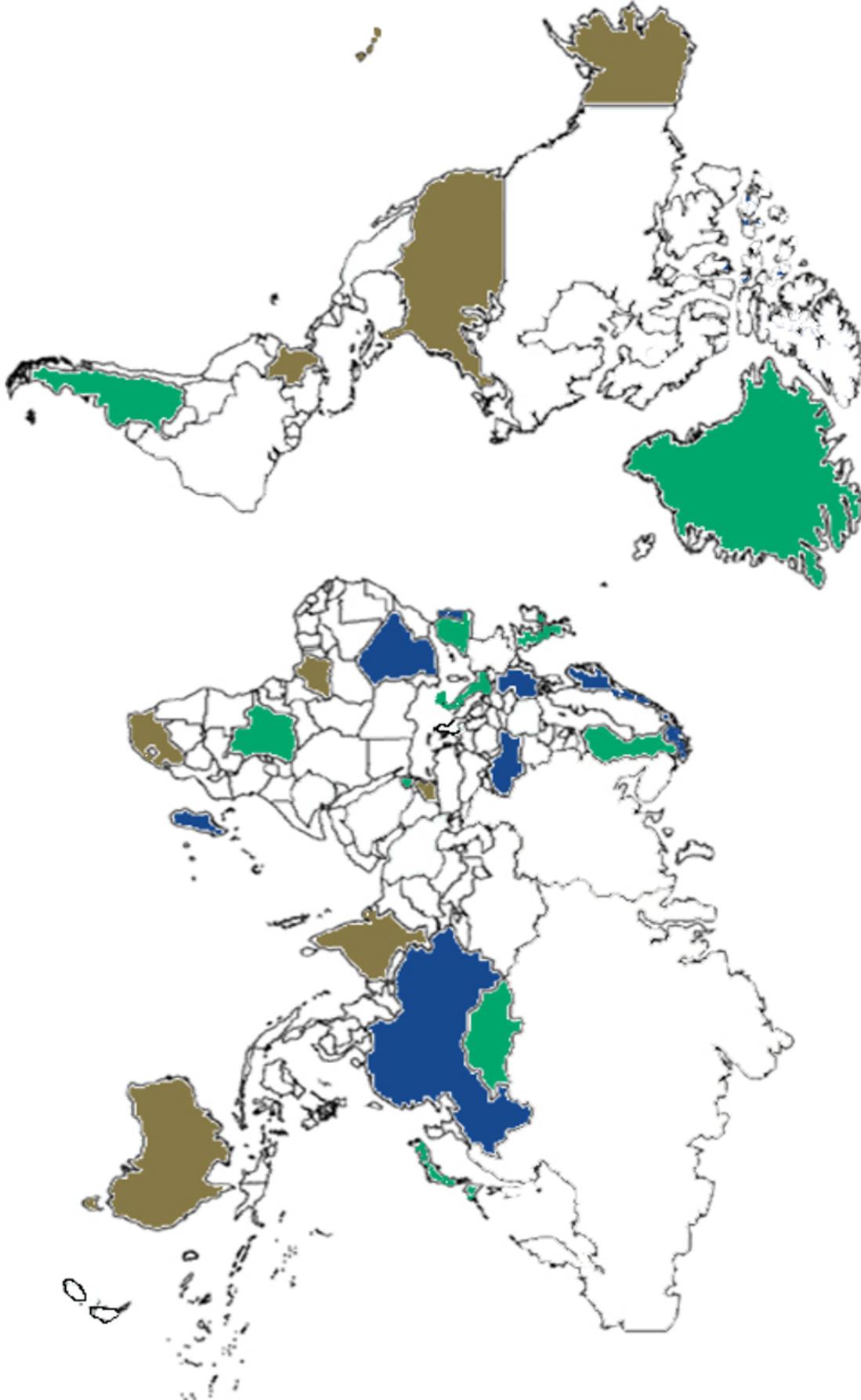
“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)



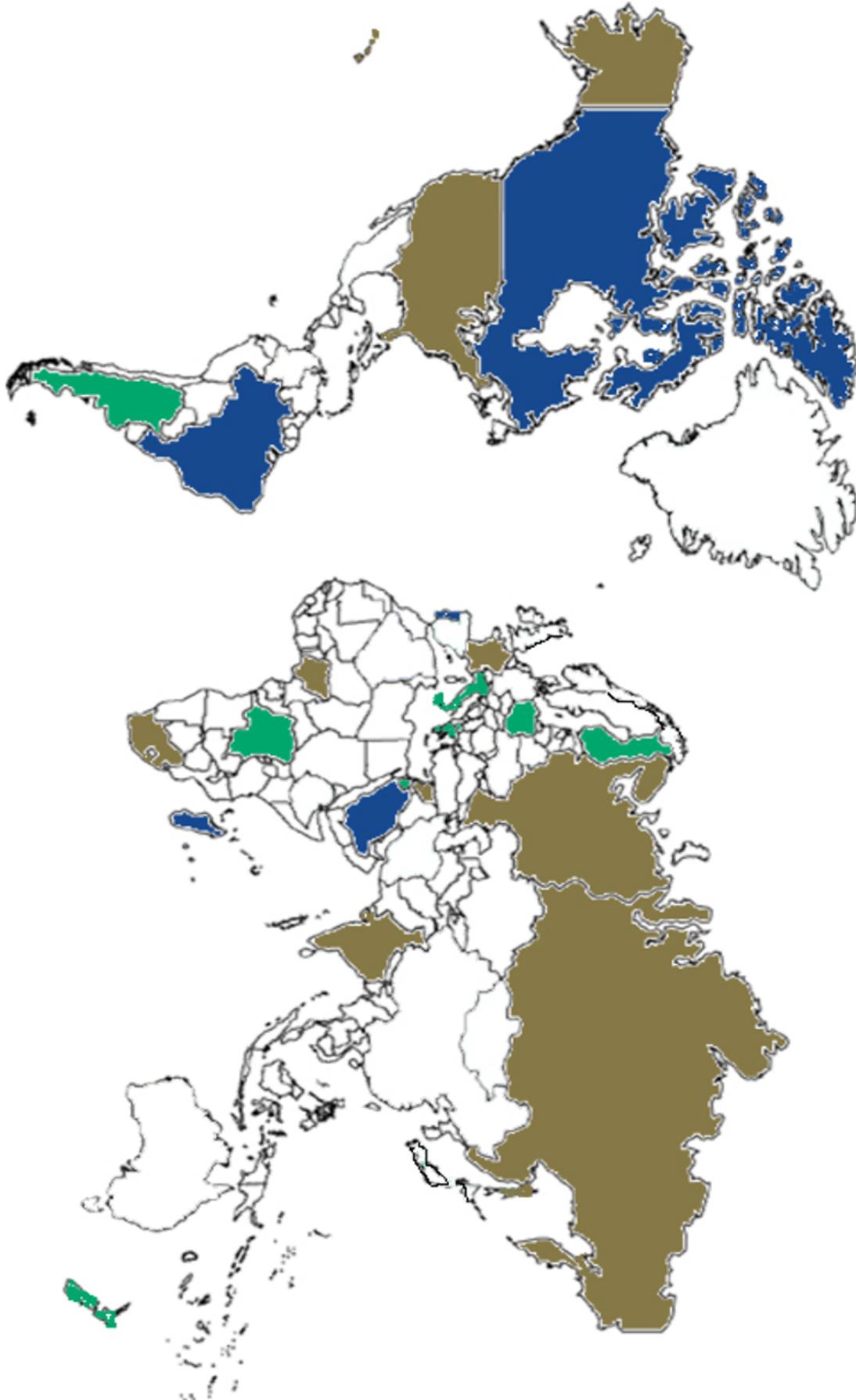
“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)



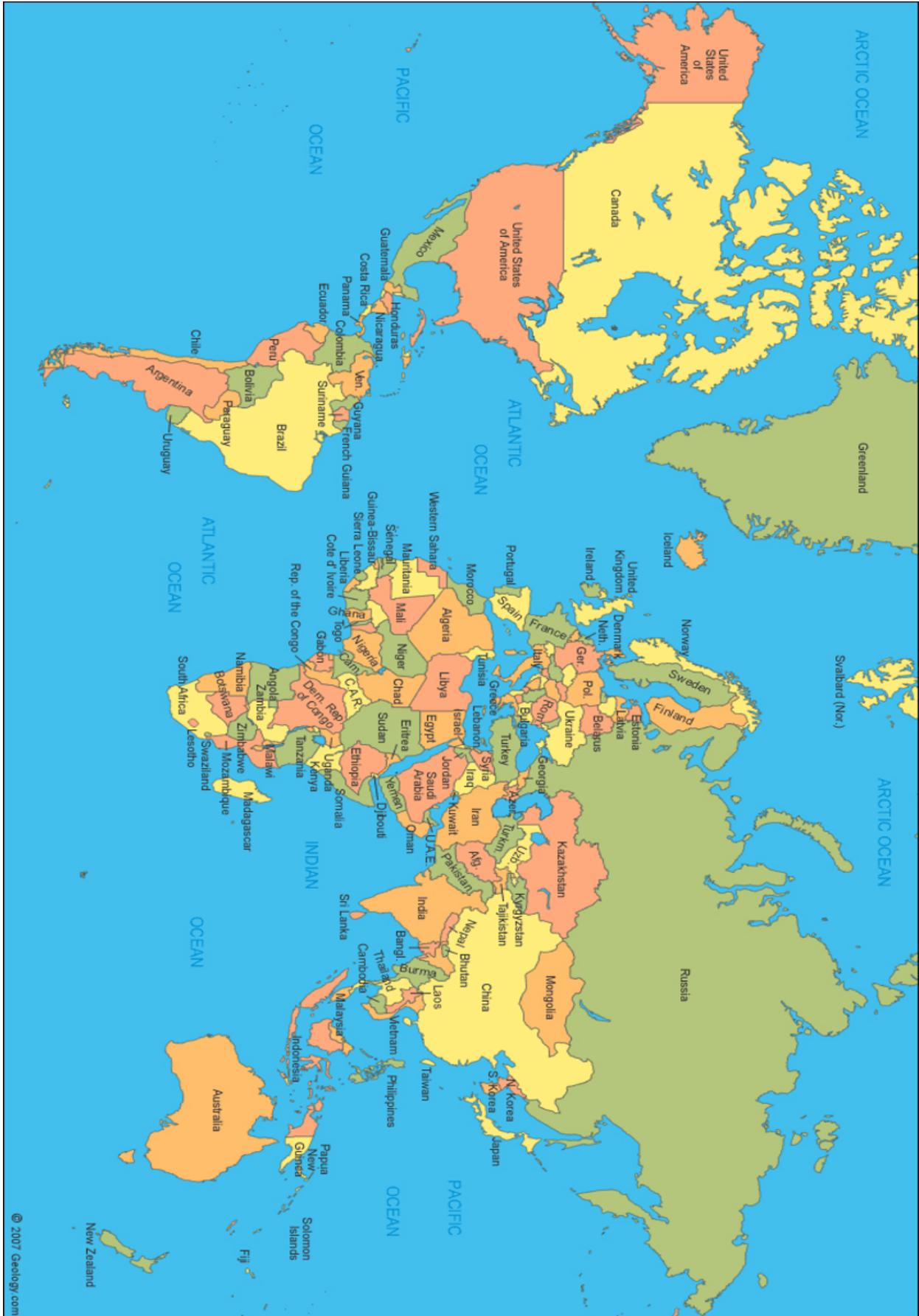
"Like the Stars of Heaven"
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)



"Like the Stars of Heaven"
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)



“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)



Tower of Babel Text and Discussion Questions

“Now the whole earth had one language and one [a]speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and [b]bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called [c]Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

Genesis 11:1-9 (NKJV)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the people wanted to build the tower that went so high?
2. Why do you think it was important for them to name themselves?
3. Why do you think God wanted to spread the people out?
4. Why is it important that we remember God?

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Abraham’s Covenant	5	Genesis 12:1-9 Genesis 15:1-21 Genesis 17:1-23	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
- Survival with God means that we trust in Him.			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
- Covenant - an agreement made between two people - like a contract. The difference between a covenant and a contract is that the people involved in a covenant are not equals, for example God and Abraham are not equals. The “higher” of the two members is the grantor of the covenant.			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
Tablet/computer to display Snapchat Terms and Conditions (Welcome and Sections 1-4 & 23) included in this packet	Snapchat Terms and Conditions (Welcome and Sections 1-4 & 23) included in this packet, one copy per student Scripture text and discussion questions printouts, one copy per student (Optional) From the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom printouts, one copy per student (Optional) <i>Red Pocket Prayer Book</i> , p. 85-91	Journals, pens/pencils	
Opening Prayer:			
Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord’s Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture .			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

Opening Activity: (5 mins)

Everything we sign up for these days comes with “Terms and Conditions.” Phones, televisions, subscription series, games, social media - the list goes on and on. Show of hands, how many of us read them before clicking “Accept”?

These “Terms and Conditions” are agreements between us and these companies that delineate their expectations of us while using their platforms and also delineate how they might use our information.

Take a minute to look at sections of one of these agreements. This one is for *Snapchat*. (*Pass out Snapchat Terms of Service.*)

Ask:

What jumps out to you from these Terms of Service? (*Allow time for answers.*)

From the outset, they state “We’ve drafted these Terms of Service (which we call the “Terms”) so you’ll know the rules that govern our relationship with you as a user of our Services. Although we have tried our best to strip the legalese from the Terms, there are places where they may still read like a traditional contract. There’s a good reason for that: these Terms form a legally binding contract between you and Snap Inc. (“Snap”). So please read them carefully.”

As far as *Snapchat* is concerned, you are still bound by these terms, even if you haven’t read them. In their mind, they are the position of authority because you are coming to them for the service that they provide. They “promise” to provide you with the ability to use their product and, in return, they expect you to maintain their standards.

This is a good metaphor to use when discussing a covenant.

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

(Divide the students into groups of three. Distribute the scripture text printouts.)

Group should read these three passages from Genesis together and then form answers to the following discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

- What was God’s covenant with Abram?
- What was the sign of the covenant?
- What does the covenant mean?

(Gather the groups back together and have them share their answers to the discussion questions.)

Answers to steer the discussion towards:

- Abram’s descendants will be in number like the sands of the seashore and be numbered like the stars of the sky.
- Abram is declared righteous by God.
- Circumcision as an offering to God.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Ask:

Why do you think it was important that there be some type of offering? (*Allow time for answers.*)

Offering is something that is important throughout the Old Testament. We are called to offer ourselves to God, too, just like Abraham. We have to struggle through finding out what that means.

B: Second part

Listen to lyrics of the hymn, “What Shall We Offer You, O Christ?”, from the Nativity service:

*What shall we offer You, O Christ,
Who for our sake has appeared on earth as a man?
Every creature which You have made offers You thanks.
The angels offer you a song.
The heavens, their star.
The wise men, their gifts.
The shepherds, their wonder.
The earth, its cave.
The wilderness, the manger.
And we offer You a Virgin Mother.
O Pre-eternal God, have mercy on us!*

Ask:

What is going on in this hymn? (*Guide the discussion to the idea that every key character of the story is offering something to Christ at His birth.*)

The hymn starts by asking the question for ourselves: “What shall we offer You, O Christ?”

Closing Activity: (10 mins)

Christ shows us what it means to offer Himself in His Crucifixion. We are shown what it means - it means that we are called to offer ourselves to others as an offering to God. This is something we see throughout the Divine Liturgy.

Ask:

What stands out from the Divine Liturgy as an example of this? (*Guide conversation to the anaphora/“Thine own of Thine own...”*)

Offering ourselves to others, then, becomes our answer to the question “What shall we offer Thee, O Christ?”

Take a few minutes to reflect on that in your journals.

Journal Time: What are ways I can offer myself to others?

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Pass out the prayers of the anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, or turn to p. 85-86 of the *Red Pocket Prayer Book*.. Break the group into pairs and have each pair read through the prayers with the following questions in mind:

- What stands out?
- What are the common themes throughout?
- What do they teach us about offering ourselves to others?

Bring the group back together to share responses to these questions.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

Snap Inc. Terms of Service

Effective: November 15, 2021

Welcome!

We've drafted these Terms of Service (which we call the "Terms") so you'll know the rules that govern our relationship with you as a user of our Services. Although we have tried our best to strip the legalese from the Terms, there are places where they may still read like a traditional contract. There's a good reason for that: these Terms form a legally binding contract between you and Snap Inc. ("Snap"). So please read them carefully.

By using Snapchat, Bitmoji, or any of our other products or services that are subject to these Terms (which we refer to collectively as the "Services"), you agree to the Terms. Of course, if you don't agree with them, then don't use the Services.

These Terms apply if you live in the United States or if your principal place of business is in the United States. If you live outside of the United States or if your principal place of business is outside of the United States, Snap Group Limited provides you the Services and your relationship is governed by the [Snap Group Limited Terms of Service](#).

ARBITRATION NOTICE: THESE TERMS CONTAIN AN [ARBITRATION CLAUSE](#) A LITTLE LATER ON. EXCEPT FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF DISPUTES MENTIONED IN THAT ARBITRATION CLAUSE, YOU AND SNAP AGREE THAT DISPUTES BETWEEN US WILL BE RESOLVED BY MANDATORY BINDING ARBITRATION, AND YOU AND SNAP WAIVE ANY RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN A CLASS-ACTION LAWSUIT OR CLASS-WIDE ARBITRATION. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO OPT OUT OF ARBITRATION AS EXPLAINED IN THAT ARBITRATION CLAUSE.

1. Who Can Use the Services

No one under 13 is allowed to create an account or use the Services. If you are under 18, you may only use the Services with the prior consent of your parent or legal guardian. Please be sure your parent or legal guardian has reviewed and discussed these Terms with you before you start using the Services. We may offer additional Services with additional terms that may require you to be even older to use them. So please read all terms carefully. By using the Services, you represent, warrant, and agree that:

- you can form a binding contract with Snap;
- you are not a person who is barred from using the Services under the laws of the United States or any other applicable jurisdiction—including, for example, that you do not appear on the U.S. Treasury Department’s list of Specially Designated Nationals or face any other similar prohibition;
- you are not a convicted sex offender; and
- you will comply with these Terms and all applicable local, state, national, and international laws, rules, and regulations.

If you are using the Services on behalf of a business or some other entity, you represent that you are authorized to bind that business or entity to these Terms and you agree to these Terms on behalf of that business or entity (and all references to “you” and “your” in these Terms will mean both you as the end user and that business or entity). If you are using the Services on behalf of an entity of the U.S. Government, you agree to the [Amendment to Snap Inc. Terms of Service for U.S. Government Users](#).

2. Rights We Grant You

As between you and us, Snap (and its licensors) is the owner of the Services, including all proprietary content, information, material, software, images, text, graphics (including any Bitmoji avatars that you may assemble using visual elements we provide), illustrations, logos, patents, trademarks, service marks, copyrights, photographs, audio, video, music, and “look and feel” of the Services, and all related intellectual property

rights. Snap grants you a worldwide, royalty-free, non-assignable, non-exclusive, revocable, and non-sublicensable license to use the Services. This license is for the sole purpose of using and enjoying the Services in a way that these Terms and our policies, such as our [Community Guidelines](#) and [Sounds on Snapchat Guidelines](#), allow. You may not use the Services in ways that are not authorized by these Terms. Nor may you help anyone else in doing so.

3. Rights You Grant Us

Many of our Services let you create, upload, post, send, receive, and store content. When you do that, you retain whatever ownership rights in that content you had to begin with. But you grant us a license to use that content. How broad that license is depends on which Services you use and the Settings you have selected.

For all content you submit to the Services, you grant Snap and our affiliates a worldwide, royalty-free, sublicensable, and transferable license to host, store, cache, use, display, reproduce, modify, adapt, edit, publish, analyze, transmit, and distribute that content. This license is for the purpose of operating, developing, providing, promoting, and improving the Services and researching and developing new ones. This license includes a right for us to make your content available to, and pass these rights along to, service providers with whom we have contractual relationships related to the provision of the Services, solely for the purpose of providing such Services.

We call Story submissions that are set to be viewable by Everyone as well as content you submit to public Services, like Public Profiles, Snap Map, or Lens Studio, “Public Content.” Because Public Content is inherently public, you grant Snap, our affiliates, other users of the Services, and our business partners all of the same rights you grant for non-Public Content in the previous paragraph, as well as an unrestricted, worldwide, royalty-free, irrevocable, and perpetual right and license to create derivative works from, promote, exhibit, broadcast, syndicate, reproduce, distribute, synchronize, overlay graphics and auditory effects on, publicly perform, and publicly display all or any portion of your Public Content (including the separate video, image, sound recording, or

musical compositions contained therein) in any form and in any and all media or distribution methods, now known or later developed. When you appear in, create, upload, post, or send Public Content (including your Bitmoji), you also grant Snap, our affiliates, other users of the Services, and our business partners an unrestricted, worldwide, royalty-free, irrevocable, and perpetual right and license to use the name, likeness, and voice, of anyone featured in your Public Content for commercial and non-commercial purposes. This means, among other things, that you will not be entitled to any compensation if your content, videos, photos, sound recordings, musical compositions, name, likeness, or voice are used by us, our affiliates, users of the Services, or our business partners. For information about how to tailor who can watch your content, please take a look at our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Support Site](#). All Public Content must be appropriate for people ages 13+.

While we're not required to do so, we may access, review, screen, and delete your content at any time and for any reason, including to provide and develop the Services or if we think your content violates these Terms. You alone, though, remain responsible for the content you create, upload, post, send, or store through the Service.

We, our affiliates, and our third-party partners may place advertising on the Services, including personalized advertising based on the information you provide us, we collect, or we obtain about you. Advertising may sometimes appear near, between, over, or in your content.

We always love to hear from our users. But if you provide feedback or suggestions, just know that we can use them without compensating you, and without any restriction or obligation to you. You agree that we will own all rights in any materials or items we develop based on such feedback or suggestions.

4. Additional Terms for Specific Services

Additional terms and conditions listed on the [Snap Terms & Policies](#) page or that are otherwise made available to you may apply to specific Services. If you use those Services, then those additional terms become part of these Terms. If any of the

applicable additional terms conflict with these Terms, the additional terms will prevail while you are using the Services to which they apply.

—

23. Final Terms

These Terms, including the additional terms referenced in Section 4, make up the entire agreement between you and Snap, and supersede any prior agreements. These Terms do not create or confer any third-party beneficiary rights. If we do not enforce a provision in these Terms, it will not be considered a waiver. We reserve the right to transfer our rights under these Terms and provide the Services using another entity, provided that entity upholds these Terms. You may not transfer any of your rights or obligations under these Terms without our consent. We reserve all rights not expressly granted to you.

Genesis 12:1-9, *Orthodox Study Bible*

God's Promise to Abram

Reader 1:

¹Now the Lord said to Abram, "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you; and in you all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed."

Reader 2:

⁴Then Abram departed as the Lord said to him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵So Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son and all their possessions and every soul they acquired in Haran, and they departed for the land of Canaan. Thus they came to the land of Canaan. ⁶Abram passed through the land to the place Shechem, as far as the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

Reader 3:

⁷Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your seed I will give this land." And there Abram built an altar to the Lord, who appeared to him. ⁸So he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. ⁹Then Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Genesis 15:1-21, *Orthodox Study Bible*

God's Covenant with Abram

Reader 1:

¹After these things the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield and will be your exceedingly great reward."
²But Abram said, "Lord, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus, the son of Masek, my domestic maidservant?"
³Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed, my household servant is my heir."
⁴And immediately the Voice of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but the One who will come from your own body shall be your heir."
⁵Then He brought him outside and said to him, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your seed be."
⁶And Abram believed God, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.
⁷Then He said to him, "I am the God who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

Reader 2:

⁸And he said, "Master and Lord, how will I know I will inherit it?"
⁹So He said to him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."
¹⁰So he brought all these to Him and cut them in half, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.
¹¹And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.
¹²Now around sunset, a trance fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.
¹³Then He said to Abraham, "Know for certain that your seed will be strangers in a land not their own, and will serve them; and they will afflict and humble them for four hundred years.
¹⁴Also, the nation they serve I will judge; and afterward, they shall come out with great possessions."

Reader 3:

¹⁵But as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace, buried in a good old age.
¹⁶Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the sin of the Amorites is not yet filled up."
¹⁷And it came to pass, when the sun went down, that there was a flame, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and lamps of fire that passed between those divided pieces.
¹⁸On the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "I will give this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates -
¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites,
²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,
²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Euaites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

Genesis 17:1-23, *Orthodox Study Bible*

Circumcision: Sign of the Covenant

Reader 1:

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am your God; be pleasing before Me and blameless. ²I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." ³Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ⁴"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be your God and the God of your seed after you. ⁸Also I will give you and your seed after you the land you are occupying as a sojourner, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Reader 2:

⁹Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is the covenant you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. It shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹²A child of eight days old shall be circumcised by you - every male child throughout your genealogy, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner not of your seed. ¹³He who was born in your house, and he who was bought with your money must be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be cut off from his people; for he has broken My covenant." ¹⁵Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai; but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; and I will bless him, and he shall become nations; and kings of peoples shall be from him."

Reader 3:

¹⁷Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his mind, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old and shall Sarah, who is ninety

years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" ¹⁹Then God said, "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him and will increase and multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve nations, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." ²²So God finished talking with Abraham and departed from him. ²³So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all those who were born in his house, and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him.

Discussion Questions:

- **What was God's covenant with Abram?**

- **What was the sign of the covenant?**

- **What does the covenant mean?**

From the Anaphora of The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

PRIEST: Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear; let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Oblation in peace.

CHOIR: A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise.

PRIEST: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

CHOIR: And with thy spirit.

PRIEST: Let us lift up our hearts.

CHOIR: We lift them up unto the Lord.

PRIEST: Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

CHOIR: It is meet and right to worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the Trinity one in Essence, and undivided.

PRIEST: Having in remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Session at the right hand, and the second and glorious Advent: Thine own of thine own we offer unto thee, in behalf of all, and for all.

CHOIR: We praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
The Hospitality of Abraham	6	“Then God appeared to him at the oak of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door during the noon hour.” Genesis 18:1	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. - Abraham encountered God through Christ just as we also do when we receive Holy Communion. 			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
<p>Trinity - the three persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Mystery - a reality that is not completely explainable but true</p>			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
(Optional) Tablet, computer, or screen/projector to display or project the Hospitality of Abraham icon included in this lesson packet	(Optional) Hospitality of Abraham icon included in this lesson packet, one copy per student		
Opening Prayer:			
<p>Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord’s Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture.</p> <p>“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”</p>			
Opening Activity: (10 mins)			
Share the Hospitality of Abraham icon with students and invite them to See-Think-Wonder (<i>Further instructions on how to do this can be found in the Teaching Strategies Document.</i>)			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

During this first look, it's best not to try to explain things to students or to start offering answers. Instead, simply note their observations and allow them to wonder aloud.

Lesson Instruction: (10 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Tell students that this icon (15th century, Andrei Rublev) is based on a scene from Genesis 18 which you are now going to read aloud.

Tell them that you want them to continue looking at the icon as you read aloud and see if they get some new insights or ideas as you read the story.

Read Genesis 18:1-8 aloud.

After you finish reading, invite students to share any new insights or ideas. During this time, ensure students notice how the icon corresponds to the story:

- The icon shows the **three spiritual guests** that visit Abraham.
- The **house** in the background is Abraham's house and the **tree branch** is the oak tree that is mentioned in the story. Together, these features place the scene in a real time and place.
- Similarly, the **cup** in the center of the table is the food that Abraham serves them. Though it's difficult to discern, it is a calf's head inside the cup. If they haven't already made this observation, direct students to notice how the cup reminds us of Christ's sacrifice through the image of the Eucharist.

If they didn't notice it already, re-read to them Genesis 18:1 which says that it was God appearing to Abraham.

Tell students that in addition to being a depiction of this moment in the life of Abraham, it is also a depiction of a spiritual reality, as this is what icons do. In this case, this icon is helping us to see and understand that Abraham was eating with God! The angelic nature of the three figures, their halos – all of these details point us to see that Abraham was the host to the divine.

B: Second part

Remind students that even though God is *one God*, He is *One in Essence, Three in Person*. This is called the Trinity.

Ask:

Does the phrase “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” sound familiar to you? How so? (*Allow time for answers.*)

Students might note:

- In our prayers, we end with “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”
- When we make the sign of the cross, we do so invoking the Trinity.
- In the Creed (“I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth ... and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God... and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life...”)

Tell students that the idea that there is one God who exists as One in Essence, Three in Person is a concept that even the most studied of theologians still can't wrap their minds around! We call this a mystery because it is a reality that is not immediately explainable, even though it is true.

And just like the Trinity itself is a mystery, so too is it a mystery that Abraham was able to eat with God. But he did!

Closing Activity: (5 mins)

Tell students that Abraham is able to have an encounter with God here. It is a mystery as to how this happens, yet it is true.

Ask students if they can think of any times that we as Christians have the same thing: an encounter with God that is

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

real but a mystery.

Direct students to specifically see that every week when we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We are having an encounter with God that is both real and also a mystery. In fact, we refer to it as a sacrament or “holy mystery.”

Journal Time: If you knew that you were going to be having dinner with God, what might you do to prepare yourself for that dinner?

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Study the icon of the Hospitality of Abraham further
 - There are some clues in the icon which show us what the Trinity is like:
 - The three figures’ bodies make the shape of a circle, representing the Trinity.
 - The colors of the middle figure’s clothing (red and blue) are the same colors we often use to depict Jesus in other icons. The blue represents His divinity and the red represents His humanity.
 - Similarly, the figure on the right wears blue (divinity) and green (new life) representing the Holy Spirit.
 - The figure on the left is depicted in blue undergarment that signifies divinity while the outer garment – in its translucence – signifies the unfathomable nature of the Father.
 - [Here](http://www.holy-transfiguration.org/library_en/lord_trinity_rublev.html) is a nice description of some other features of the icon.
(http://www.holy-transfiguration.org/library_en/lord_trinity_rublev.html)

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.



The Hospitality of Abraham / The Trinity

By Andrei Rublev - Public Domain,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=54421>

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
The Sacrifice of Isaac	7	Genesis 22:1-19	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
- Isaac is a type of Jesus.			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
- Typology - seeing people and events in the Old Testament as a foreshadowing of things that are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus and the Church			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
	Bible Print and cut out sets of The Sacrifice of Isaac Typology Matching Cards. You may want as many as one set per student, or you might have one set for a small group of students. Katavasia of the Nativity, one copy per student or group of students	Blank sheets of paper and drawing materials	
Opening Prayer:			
Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord’s Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture . “Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

Opening Activity: (5 mins)

Introduce students to the concept of Typology, which is a way that the Church understands Scripture. We see that specific people and events in the Old Testament foreshadow (or pre-figure) what is to come. We see that these things were always pointing us towards Jesus.

- **Adam** is considered a type of Jesus. Adam is the first human. Jesus is the true human who shows us what we are called to be. Adam was disobedient and brought death into the world. Jesus was perfectly obedient and brought life into the world (Romans 5:12-15).
- **Moses** put a bronze snake on a pole and lifted it up; all the Israelites who looked upon it were healed. So too, when Jesus is lifted up on the cross is healing brought to those who believe in Him (John 3:14-15).
- God provides **manna** to feed His people while they are in the wilderness. Jesus is the true manna given from the Father which brings life to the world (John 6:30-35).
- **Jonah** spends three days in the belly of the fish and then is spit out. Jesus is dead for three days then rises from the dead (Matthew 12:39-40).

Lesson Instruction: (15 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Tell students that you are going to read the story about Abraham and Isaac. Ask them to listen carefully to see if they can guess some of the typology that Orthodox Christians see in this story.

Read Genesis 22:1-19.

After reading, ask students to share their ideas. Help them to understand that the sacrifice of Isaac is understood as a *type* for the sacrifice of Jesus.

Then hand out the set of Lesson 7 Sacrifice of Isaac Typology Matching Cards. Have students match the cards from Genesis with their corresponding cards from the passion and resurrection of Jesus. You can make this into a game – seeing which group can complete theirs first – or you can say that each group has 3-5 minutes to try to make the matches.

Invite students to think with you about other key ideas that foreshadow Jesus.

- Isaac is given back to his father alive – pointing to the resurrection.
- Isaac is obedient to his father, even on his way to his own death just as Jesus was obedient to his father on his way to his crucifixion.
- Isaac was accompanied by two men (servants) just as Jesus was sacrificed between two men on the cross.

Ask:

Typology is an interesting thing to see and look for – but why do you think it might matter? (*Allow time for answers.*)

Some possible answers that you can help students recognize:

- Typology helps us to see the unity between the Old and New Testaments. It reminds us that there is one God and one plan of salvation which He was revealing and bringing about from the very beginning.
- Following Jesus’s resurrection, Jesus Himself made direct connections between Himself and people and events of the Old Testament. With two disciples on the road to Emmaus, we know that, “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:13-27). Those disciples said that while they heard Jesus explaining how he was present there in the Scripture (the Old Testament), “their hearts burned within them.” Typology helped them (and many others) come to know and recognize Jesus as the true Messiah.
- So too does typology now help us to understand who God is. Isaac’s willing obedience helps us to see and recognize Jesus’ willing obedience. God’s loving provision of the ram helps us to understand God’s loving

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

provision for us.

Closing Activity: (10 mins)

Tell students to imagine that they have to explain typology to someone who has never heard of it, but they can only do it as a drawing. Their task for the end of class is to draw a picture which illustrates either the typology of this story or something about typology in general. Tell them it can be a literal illustration or it can be more abstract/symbolic. (If students wonder what to do, tell them to pick at least one aspect of the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac and draw a picture which shows how that thing is fulfilled in Christ.)

This activity acts as both a reflective and creative way to make and secure meaning. Let students share and talk with each other as they do it. At the end, invite them to explain their pictures and the choices they made. *(You might consider hanging them on the wall or in the hallway after class.)*

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. Invite students to consider other places of typology from the Old and New Testament, as presented in the *Katavasia of the Nativity* (sung at Christmas). Share the **Katavasia of the Nativity** hymn’s text with them and ask them to look for/underline typological references that are made about the Theotokos.

If students are unaware of some of the references, use this as an opportunity to explore their meaning together – particularly looking at what the hymn points us to understand about Christ through the typological reference to His mother.

Background Resources for Teachers:

- For a brief pre-reading about typology, teachers might review this [“What is Typology?”](#) post from St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church.
- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson. In particular, questions may arise about how to understand God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son. This question is addressed there.

The Sacrifice of Isaac Typology Matching Cards

<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>“Take now your beloved son, Isaac, whom you love [...] and offer him as a whole burnt offering.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>Jesus is the Father’s beloved son.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>“So Abraham took the firewood of the whole burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>Jesus willingly carries his cross on the way to his own crucifixion.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>“Go to the land of Moriah [...] on one of the mountains I tell you.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>Golgotha (the place where Jesus is sacrificed) is one of the hills in Moriah.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>“On the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place far off.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>Jesus rises from the dead after three days.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>“Abraham bound Isaac his son hand and foot and laid him on the altar, upon the firewood.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>Jesus is nailed to the cross.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a whole burnt offering.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>St. John the Baptist sees Jesus and cries, “Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” (John 1:29)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The Sacrifice of Isaac</p> <p>“Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him a ram was caught in a thicket by its horns. So he brought it [the ram] for a whole burnt offering in the place of his son.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross</p> <p>God provides the sacrifice in the person of Jesus. Jesus wears a crown of thorns.</p>

Katavasia of the Nativity

Ode 1. Christ is born, give ye glory. /
Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him. /
Christ is on earth, be ye exalted. /
O all the earth, sing unto the Lord, /
and sing praises in gladness, O ye people, //
for He hath been glorified.

Ode 3. To the Son who was begotten of the Father /
without change before all ages, /
and in the last times was without seed made flesh of the Virgin, /
to Christ our God let us cry aloud: /
Thou hast raised up our horn, //
holy art Thou, O Lord.

Ode 4. Rod of the root of Jesse, /
and flower that blossomed from his stem, O Christ, /
Thou hast sprung from the Virgin. /
From the Mountain overshadowed by the forest Thou hast come, /
made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, /
O God who art not formed from matter. //
Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

Ode 5. As Thou art God of peace and Father of mercies, /
Thou hast sent unto us Thine Angel of great counsel, /
granting us peace. /
So are we guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, /
and watching by night we glorify Thee, //
O Lover of mankind.

Ode 6. The sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, /
like a babe from the womb: /
while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh, /
came forth from her yet kept her uncorrupt. /
For being Himself not subject to decay, //
He preserved His Mother free from harm.

Ode 7. Scorning the impious decree, /
the Children brought up together in godliness /
feared not the threat of fire, /
but standing in the midst of the flames, they sang: /
O God of our fathers, //
blessed art Thou.

Ode 8. The furnace moist with dew was the image and figure of a
wonder past nature. /
For it burnt not the Children whom it had received, /
even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb /
into which it had descended. /
Therefore in praise let us sing: /
Let the whole creation bless the Lord //
and exalt Him above all for ever.

Ode 9. A strange and most wonderful mystery do I see: /
the cave is heaven; /
the Virgin the throne of the cherubim; /
the manger a room, /
in which Christ, the God whom nothing can contain, is laid. //
Him do we praise and magnify.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
Jacob, Esau, and the Birthright	8	Genesis 25:32-33	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
- Esau values his own desires over the precious birthright that is his. We too as Orthodox Christians have a precious birthright in the Eucharist that we should not squander.			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
- Birthright: in ancient times, the inheritance of everything (wealth, power, etc) which was given to the eldest son			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
	Bible	Journals, pens/pencils	
Opening Prayer:			
Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord’s Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture . “Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”			
Opening Activity: (10 mins)			
Open by reading the two parables from Matthew 13:44-46. Discuss the plain meaning of these two parables: in both stories, the people were willing to part with everything they			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

had because they could gain something even more valuable in return. Their “all” was less important than the hidden treasure or the fine pearl. You could say they were “trading up.”

Divide students into pairs and ask them to “modernize” these parables by creating a scenario in contemporary times where someone might give away something that seems like a lot in order to gain something even more valuable.

These parables don’t need to be written out – they can just share the scenario (real or imagined) that they have imagined. After 3-4 minutes of brainstorming, invite students to share their ideas with the larger group.

Lesson Instruction: (20 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Explain to students that they are now going to read a story in Genesis about two twins named Esau and Isaac. As the older brother, Esau would be due the birthright from his father Isaac.

Explain to them what a *birthright* was and why it was so valuable:

- In this time, the firstborn son would inherit everything that belonged to his father. This means all of his father’s wealth – his flocks, cattle, servants, and place of power/standing. Isaac was exceptionally wealthy, so his oldest son Esau was due a great deal of wealth and power.
- But not only that, since Isaac was the son of Abraham, the birthright included all the blessings that God gave to Abraham. Esau was not only inheriting Isaac’s earthly treasure but all of the promises that God made to his father Abraham and his descendants.

Tell students that in this story, they are going to see that Esau is willing to trade his very precious birthright in order to get something else.

Before you read the story, ask them to predict the answer to this question: **What do you think Esau might have traded his very precious birthright for?** (*Invite students to supply answers. You can do this by having them share answers aloud, or by each writing their guesses on a sheet of paper. The latter works well if you have students who say they already know the answer; you can tell them to write their answer on the paper but not tell anyone.*)

Tell students you will now read the story and see if they guessed correctly.

B: Second part

Read the story from Genesis 25:19-33.

Celebrate any answers students provided that were correct, and point out with them the absurdity of trading a birthright for a bowl of stew! Unlike the parables from earlier, this time Esau has made a monumentally egregious trade! He traded something of high value for something trivial.

Tell students that through our Baptism and Chrismation as Orthodox Christians, we have a birthright as well – and it’s worth far more than even Esau’s birthright.

Our birthright is the ability to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus through the Eucharist during Divine Liturgy. Through the Eucharist, God promises to mystically dwell in us and we in him (John 6:56).

In fact, the prayers we pray in preparation for Holy Communion talk about how rich and valuable this gift is:

From St. Basil the Great’s Prayer in Preparation for Holy Communion:

“Grant that these Holy Gifts may be for me unto the healing, purification, enlightenment, protection, salvation and sanctification of my soul and body, and to the expulsion of every evil imagination, sinful deed or work of the Devil.”

Write each of the underlined words from the prayer on the board and invite students to consider what they mean:

- Healing – of soul and body

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

- Purification – the cleansing of our sin
- Enlightenment – the ability to see things truly, as God sees them
- Protection – from the Devil and his attacks
- Salvation and sanctification – becoming like God (theosis)
- Expulsion of evil – getting rid of our sinful habits and the work of the Devil

All of this is part of what we receive when we receive communion! No wonder we prepare to receive communion after prayer, fasting, and confession. And no wonder we honor and reverence the Eucharist when we approach it.

Closing Activity: (5 mins)

It's easy to judge Esau for despising his birthright. He did not value it as he should have, and was willing to settle for immediate satisfaction of a temporary desire over the enduring inheritance of his birthright.

But wait... I wonder sometimes, instead of being like the people in the parables who recognize the treasure and value it, if we are just the same as Esau. We too have this great birthright in the Eucharist, but how often do we find ways to de-value it – to choose temporary, trivial desires over true fulfillment?

Ask students to consider whom they want to be like: those who trade everything for the greater thing (e.g. parables), or those who trade the greatest thing for a trivial thing (e.g. Esau).

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. **Journal:** What kinds of practical things can you do in order to be less like Esau and more like the characters in the parables when it comes to recognizing the great treasure that God gives you?

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
The Story of Joseph: Part I	9	Genesis 37, 39-40	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God remained with Joseph and he remained righteous even during times of great suffering. - Joseph learns to use his gifts in the service of others, especially those in need. 			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
	Genesis 37, 39-40 text included in this lesson packet. Ideally, print enough copies for each student to have one.	Journals, pens/pencils (Optional) White, unlined paper; markers, colored pencils	
Opening Prayer:			
<p>Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include The Lord’s Prayer or the Prayer Before Reading Scripture.</p> <p>“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”</p>			
Opening Activity: (5 mins)			
Ask students to think about the origin stories of some of their favorite superheroes.			

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Ask:

In those origin stories, how do those superheroes first use their powers? How would we describe their use of those powers at the beginning of the story? Do they use them for good? For others? For themselves? With great skill?

In most origin stories, the superheroes are myopic or self-oriented at best and often even quite selfish. Examples: Ironman, the Hulk, Dr. Strange, Batman, Spiderman, Wolverine, etc.

Then ask students: **What about at the end of the story?** How do those superheroes use their powers then?

Ask students what has created this change in the superhero? What has made them become their true “heroic selves” by the end of their stories?

Students will land somewhere on the fact that it’s through trial, suffering, humility, and love that they become true heroes as they learn to serve others over themselves.

Tell students that today you will be reading about Joseph – a man who had his own kind of “superpower.” Joseph had a gift for prophecy and discernment. What we will see in this story is how he grows in his use of this gift, especially through a great deal of trial, and what the result is by the end of that process.

Lesson Instruction: (20 mins)

A: Initial part of lesson

Have students read the life of Joseph. Note, the Scriptural text for this lesson is lengthier than normal, as it involves 3 chapters from the life of Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-40).

To aid with time, there is an attached copy of the text which has been broken into two parts. This allows you to have one group of students read the first part (Genesis 37) and another group of students to read the second part (Genesis 39-40) at the same time (about 5 mins). After they read their assigned sections, pair students up with someone who read the other half. (*You can go around the room and number students “1-2, 1-2, 1-2.”*) For the next 4 minutes, have the students summarize the important plot points for each other so that they are all now aware of the story.

B: Second part

Based on what they read, engage students around the following questions:

- What was Joseph’s unique gift? (Prophecy and discernment)
- How did he use it at the beginning of the story? (Thoughtlessly. He was bragging and rubbing his father’s favoritism in their faces.)
- How does he grow in his use of his gifts? (With Potiphar, his discernment makes him a wise manager of Potiphar’s things. In the jail, we see him not only be a faithful steward of the responsibility given to him, but we also see him really caring about others. Ultimately, his gift for prophecy as well as his discernment about how to prepare for the future leads him to save the people of Egypt during the famine.)

Lead students to see that the trials Joseph faced – tragic and unwarranted as they might have been – were occasions for righteousness. Over the course of Joseph’s life, he became a righteous person because of, not in spite of, the terrible events of his life. By choosing to remain faithful and blameless before God, he went from being the boy who was father’s pet to the “hero” who (literally) saved all of Egypt and the surrounding nations (including, as we will see next week, the preservation of the line of Abraham). This is indicative of how God tries those He loves in order to refine their gifts and to lead them to salvation.

Closing Activity: (5 mins)

Journal time: What are some of the gifts that God has given to you? How can you use them *this week* in service to God and with love to your neighbor?

"Like the Stars of Heaven"
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Additional activity ideas:

1. The Righteous Joseph Comic Book. Imagine you are a comic book artist for a new character: The Righteous Joseph! If Joseph were a superhero, what would he look like? Draw his costume, his logo, and other features that might help people know what kind of hero he is.
2. Share the following two hymns about the Righteous Joseph with students. Notice how Joseph's "incorruptible crown" is given because God has seen his heart. Joseph remained faithful and righteous at all times.

Jacob lamented the loss of Joseph, But his noble son was seated on a chariot and honored as a king. For he was not enslaved to the pleasures of the Egyptian woman, But he was glorified by God, Who sees the hearts of men and bestows on them a crown incorruptible."

Kontakion, Great and Holy Monday

"Let us now add our lamentation to the lamentation of Jacob, and let us weep with him for the ever memorable and chaste Joseph, who though enslaved in body preserved his soul free from bondage and became lord over all Egypt. For God grants His servants a crown incorruptible."

Ikos, Great and Holy Monday

Background Resources for Teachers:

- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

Group 1

Genesis 37

Joseph's Dreams

1 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

2 This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate[a] robe for him. **4** When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: **7** We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" **11** His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, **13** and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

“Very well,” he replied.

14 So he said to him, “Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, **15** a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

16 He replied, “I’m looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?”

17 “They have moved on from here,” the man answered. “I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’”

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. **18** But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. **20** “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. **22** “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— **24** and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? **27** Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels[b] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. **30** He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”

31 Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.

32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

33 He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days.

35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites^[c] sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

Group 2

Genesis 39

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

39 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. **3** When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, **4** Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. **5** From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. **6** So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, **7** and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. **9** No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" **10** And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants were inside. **12** She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, **14** she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. **15** When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. **17** Then she told him this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. **18** But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. **20** Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, **21** the Lord was with him; He showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. **22** So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. **23** The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Genesis 40

The Cupbearer and the Baker

1 Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. **2** Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, **3** and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. **4** The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, **5** each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

6 When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. **7** So he asked Pharaoh’s officials who were in custody with him in his master’s house, “Why do you look so sad today?”

8 “We both had dreams,” they answered, “but there is no one to interpret them.”

Then Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.”

9 So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, “In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, **10** and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. **11** Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup and put the cup in his hand.”

12 “This is what it means,” Joseph said to him. “The three branches are three days. **13** Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. **14** But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. **15** I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.”

16 When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, “I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread.¹⁶ **17** In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.”

18 “This is what it means,” Joseph said. “The three baskets are three days. **19** Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh.”

20 Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: **21** He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand— **22** but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

23 The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
The Story of Joseph: Part II	10	“Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.’ And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.” Genesis 50:19-21	PK-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade 4th-6th Grade ✓ Junior High Senior High
<i>Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)</i>			
Key Ideas in this Lesson:			
- Joseph chooses reconciliation with his brothers rather than revenge when given the opportunity. Christ also chooses to reconcile with humanity “making peace through the blood of His cross”. (Colossians 1:20)			
Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:			
- Revenge - wanting to hurt someone because they’ve hurt you - Reconciliation - forgiveness in action; the return to relationship and a deeper bond as forgiveness takes place			
To prepare for this lesson, you will need:			
Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials	
Tablet/computer to play an audio version of the scripture passage from today’s lesson (Genesis 44-46): https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio	Bible If doing the extension activity, print out the St. Ephraim the Syrian Hymn	pencils/pens	

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Opening Prayer:

Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include **The Lord’s Prayer** or the **Prayer Before Reading Scripture**.

“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

Opening Activity: (10 mins)

Remind students of the key plot points of Joseph’s life so far:

- Favored by his father, betrayed by his brothers. His brothers sold him to merchants and told his father he had been killed by a wild animal.
- Served in Potiphar’s household and was made the #2 guy until Potiphar’s wife got angry with him and lied about him. Sent to jail.
- Put in charge of other prisoners in the jail because of his good management skills. Cares for and then correctly interprets the dreams of two other prisoners. Is promptly forgotten and remains in jail.
- Is called before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. He is able to recount, interpret, and then discern what should be done.
- Is made the #2 ruler in Egypt and helps Egypt navigate a famine because of it.

Now, tell students that you are going to pick up the story at its most climactic moment. Joseph’s brothers are about to come to Egypt because they are in desperate need of some of the food that Joseph wisely stored up for the famine. Joseph’s brothers don’t know that he is the Pharaoh’s #2 guy.

Ask students to imagine possible responses Joseph could have when he meets his brothers again. Have them write or share their responses. Keep a running list of those responses and hold on to them until the end of the story.

Lesson Instruction: (10 mins)

Tell students you are about to Read Genesis chapters 44-46 together as a class. Remind them that, just like in any story, the climax involves a “clutch moment” – a moment when the main character is confronted with a choice that determines whether things go one way or another for the rest of the story. Tell them to think of it as the moment when the outcome could be one thing or it could be a totally different thing depending upon how the main character acts. Tell them to listen for a part in the story that they think marks that “clutch moment” for Joseph, then begin reading.

Note: This is a very exciting passage, full of twists and turns, and might be a good time to employ an audio version of the text if you have speakers available. You can access an audio version at <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio>.

After reading, ask students to share what moment(s) they thought were “clutch” for Joseph. You may get different answers – that’s ok. As students respond, ask them *why do you think this was the clutch moment? What was the outcome because of this clutch moment? And how might the outcome have been different if he had responded differently?*

Let that lead you into conversations about revenge vs. reconciliation.

- Revenge - wanting to hurt someone because they’ve hurt you
- Reconciliation - forgiveness in action; the return to relationship and a deeper bond as forgiveness takes place

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Go back to the prediction list the students’ originally created and ask them to decide which ones were more focused on revenge and which ones were more focused on reconciliation. It’s likely that students will have predicted more “revenge” moments. Use that as an opportunity to discuss how revenge seems easier and can seem more satisfying for a minute.

Tell students that, as a result of choosing reconciliation, Joseph helped to not only save his family, but he actually preserved the promise that was given to Abraham all those years ago. By reconciling with his brothers and not only forgiving them but actually saving them (and their families), he participated in God’s promise that Abraham’s seed would be like the stars of heaven. He preserved Abraham’s line, and in so doing, he played an important part in the coming of the Messiah.

Closing Activity: (10 mins)

Read students Genesis 50:19-21 as you hand out the Lesson 10 Verse Illustration Cards.

Ask students to reflect on this verse and why it might serve as a keystone verse representing the life of Joseph?

Then ask students to consider this same verse – but to think of it as being said by Jesus instead of Joseph. If these words were coming from Jesus’ mouth...

- Whom might he be saying it to? (those who crucified him – all of humanity who rejected him)
- What might be ironic about it? (he actually is “in the place of God!”)
- What might he be referring to? (his death on the cross and how it “saved many lives”)
- How does Jesus continue to “provide for [us] and our children”? (the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Church)

Tell students that Joseph is a type for Christ. Remind them from Lesson 7 that typology is seeing people and events in the Old Testament as a foreshadowing of things that are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus and the Church. In this case, Joseph stands as a clear type of Christ. “In Him, all the fullness of was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making brace by the blood of his cross.” (Col 1:20)

To extend this lesson for additional time...

Ask students to consider other ways that Joseph is a type for Christ. The list is long! (See resource below for a quick refresher for yourself)

Also, if you have time, students might enjoy exploring the St. Ephraim the Syrian Hymn which poetically reflects on Joseph as a type of Jesus. You can invite students to circle/underline each time they see a typological reference.

Background Resources for Teachers:

- This blogpost from Priest Seraphim Holland with St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church outlines some key ways that Joseph is a type for Jesus.
<https://orthodox.net/redeemingthetime/2010/03/29/nb-joseph-the-all-comely-a-type-of-christ/>
- Teachers may want to consult the [Book of Genesis Common or Challenging Questions and Orthodox Christian Responses](#) resource prior to this lesson.

St. Ephraim the Syrian, Excerpt from “Sermon on Joseph the Most Virtuous” (Part I)
-translation by Fr. Ephraim Lash

*For just as the Lord was sent to us
from the Father’s bosom [John 1:18] to save us all,*

*So the youth Joseph from Jacob’s bosom [Gen 37:13-14]
was sent to enquire about his own brothers.*

*And just as Joseph’s harsh brothers,
as soon as they saw him approaching,*

*began to devise evil against him,
though he was bringing them peace*

*from their father, so the Jews also,
ever hard of heart, as soon as they saw*

*the Savior, said, ‘This is the heir [Matt 21:38],
let us kill him, and all will be ours’.*

*And just as Joseph’s brothers said,
‘Let us do away with him, and let us be set free*

*of his dreams’, [Gen 37:20] in the same way too
the Jews said, ‘Come, let us kill him and lay hold on his inheritance’.[Mat 21:18]*

*Joseph’s brothers, while eating,
sold him, slaying him in intent.*

*In the same way too the abominable Jews,
while eating the Passover, slew the Savior.*

*The descent of Joseph into Egypt signifies
the descent to earth of our Savior.*

*And as Joseph within the marriage chamber
trampled down all the strength of sin,*

*putting on the bright prizes of victory,
against the Egyptian woman, his mistress,*

so too the Lord, the Savior of our souls,

by his own right hand, descending into Hell,

*destroyed there all the power
of the dread and near invincible tyrant.*

*When Joseph had conquered sin
he was put in prison until the hour of his crowning;*

*so too the Lord, that he might take away
every sin of the world was placed in a grave.*

*Joseph in prison spent two whole years,
passing his time in great freedom [cf Gen 39:21-23]*

*while the Lord, as powerful, remained
in the tomb for three days, not undergoing corruption.*

*Joseph, on Pharaoh's order, was brought out
graciously from prison, as a true type,*

*when he easily interpreted the meaning of the dreams,
indicating the abundance of grain that was going to be;*

*while our Lord [Jesus Christ] was raised from the dead
by his own power, despoiling Hell,*

*offering to the Father our liberation,
proclaiming resurrection and everlasting life.*

*Joseph took his seat in Pharaoh's chariot,
having received authority over the whole of Egypt;*

*while our Savior, king before the ages,
ascending into heaven on a cloud of light,*

*took his seat with glory at the Father's right hand,
above the Cherubim, as Only-begotten Son.*

*When ruling over Egypt, Joseph
having received authority against his enemies*

*his brothers were brought willingly
before the tribunal of the one who had died through them;*

*they were brought to prostrate with fear and trembling
before the one who had been sold by them to death;*

*and with fear they prostrated before Joseph,
whom they had not wanted to be king over them.*

*But Joseph, recognising his brothers,
revealed them as murderers by a single word;*

*but they, when they realized, stood dumbfounded
in great shame, not daring to utter,*

*not having anything at all to say in their defense,
knowing exactly their own sin*

*at the moment when they sold him;
while he, who seemed to have been destroyed by them in Hades,*

was suddenly found to be ruling over them.

*So too on that fearful day,
when the Lord comes on the clouds of the air,*

*he takes his seat on the throne of his kingdom,
and all his enemies are brought bound*

*by fearsome Angels before the judgment seat,
all those who did not want him to rule over them.*

*For the lawless Jews thought then,
that if he were crucified, he would die as a human;*

*the wretches not being persuaded that God had come,
for salvation, to save our souls.*

*Just as Joseph said quite openly
to his brothers, making them fear and tremble,*

*'I am Joseph, whom you sold [into slavery],
but now I rule over you, though you did not want it'. [Cf. Gen 45:4]*

*So too the Lord shows the Cross
in an image formed of light to those who crucified him,*

*and they recognize the Cross itself
and the Son of God who was crucified by them.*

*Know how accurately Joseph became
a true type of his own Master.*

Some Common or Challenging Questions about the Book of Genesis and Orthodox Christian Responses

*Responses provided by V. Rev. Dr. Stephen De Young,
Pastor of Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church in Lafayette, Louisiana.
Fr. Stephen holds a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Amridge University.*

Lesson 1 Gen 1-2: Creation

How do Orthodox Christians respond to questions of creation or evolution?

The real answer is "in a number of ways." This question will come up, it came up when I taught this material to middle school kids. There are parents on either side of this issue who are liable to get heated if a version of either side is taught as "the Orthodox view." I think it's best to focus on the positive things that the text is teaching about where humans came from, what God has tasked us with doing, etc. and let things like how old the earth is, which Genesis really doesn't tell us, be. These questions can be a good opportunity, though, to talk about how God tells us the things that we need to know for our salvation. He doesn't necessarily answer all of our curious questions.

What is the Orthodox Christian view of a human being?

Hopefully this will come out of the lesson, in terms of talking about a human person as the image of God and the tasks that God has given men and women to accomplish in the world.

What about gender questions?

These will take a lot of different forms because a lot of kids will ask anecdotal questions about other kids at school who identify in various ways, etc. It's very important to offer them a positive response. Rather than criticizing other people or making political arguments, it's important to offer the positive teaching of the Church regarding men and women. Both men and women are equal before God in Christ. Men and women are biologically different and are called to work together in the world toward the goals of Christ's kingdom. Creation means putting things in order and then filling them with life. Men are called primarily to put things in order, but women participate with them in that effort. Women are called primarily to fill things with life, and men participate with them in that effort. A garden is full of life, but tended and in good order. Kids should focus on how to fulfill what God has called them to do and become the person God created them to be rather than on identifying as this or that thing or with this or that group.

Why is there *something* rather than *nothing*?

First, because it is "good" to exist. This is the response of God Himself to the created world, that it is good. It is better to be than not to be. Second, we have seen that human beings, uniquely, are made in the image of God, and meant to grow into likeness with Him. Third, human beings are to keep the Sabbath, which is a formal way of both imitating and worshipping God.

Are there other things human beings are meant to do, to fulfill their purpose?

1. "Be fruitful and multiply" (1:28) - yes, and this commandment seems to imply that reproductive procreation, and the male-female complementarity, are fundamental to human life. Love of each other and nurture of children are central to this.
2. "Fill the earth and subdue it" (1:28) - yes; just as God made and then *filled* the earth, so human beings are instructed to do likewise. Human beings have a responsibility for creation, moreover; "dominion" is the term that most translations use, but the fact of the matter is that 'ruling over' implies 'taking care of', power assumes responsibility. With the onset of rapid technological advance in the 20th c., this element of responsibility has become crucially important. We are stewards of the world and the environment.
3. Finally, in Gen. 2:15, God puts Adam in the garden "to tend and keep it." This phrase is important. The Hebrew verbs used here are actually better translated as, "to worship and obey," and they are used in only a couple other places in the Pentateuch, each time to refer specifically to the duties of priests in the Tabernacle. Human beings are meant to be the priests of creation, taking what God has given in nature and offering it back in worship and culture (art, civilization, etc.) .

Lesson 2

Genesis 3: Expulsion from Paradise

How can God, who is good, curse things?

Curse is more of a state of being than a magic spell. As God created things good, they all work together and cooperate to bring forth life and goodness in the world. When that balance and that order gets disrupted, it brings about a state of curse. So Adam is told that the ground is cursed because of him and it will no longer cooperate with him to bring forth food. It will be difficult and hard for him, because he has put himself 'out of order' with God and with creation.

Are people born sinful or evil?

No. Because of Adam, people are born in a weakened state, meaning that they are subject to the passions. Some passions aren't sinful, like getting hungry or tired or thirsty. Some of them, like pride or anger or greed, are sinful. Even the ones that aren't sinful can become sinful if we eat or drink too much or become lazy.

Lesson 3

Genesis 4-9: Sin and the Flood

Did Cain marry his sister?

Without getting into issues of evolution, etc. within the story being told in Genesis 4 and following, Cain would have married one of Adam and Eve's daughters, so yes. If it comes up in further questions, it can be pointed out that at that point people were much more genetically diverse so there would have been fewer genetic issues.

Lesson 4
Genesis 10-11: Babel and the Nations

Should we be making a connection between Babel and Pentecost?

That's a perfectly good connection to make. After the events of Genesis 1-11, God creates the nation of Israel as the vehicle through which he is going to redeem all the nations of the world and gather them back together into a new people, the Church. So the understanding of the preaching of the gospel in various languages at Pentecost represents the regathering of the peoples of the world in Christ. This time, humans aren't out to accomplish their own desires, but to serve and follow Christ together.

Lesson 5
Genesis 12: Promises to Abraham

Does the blessing of Abraham mean God shows favoritism?

I'm not completely sure in what sense you mean the question, partially because "favoritism" is a slippery term. So, for example, it's true that out of the hundreds of millions of people alive on earth during Abraham's lifetimes, God chose to reveal himself to Abraham and not all the others in the same way. There's only one woman in the history of the world, the Theotokos, who was chosen to be the mother of Christ. So, it is true that God calls each of us to different lives in different places at different times, not everyone is called to be a monastic or a missionary or a martyr. The key thing is that our salvation is found in fulfilling our own calling, not in wishing we had one that we think is more important or prestigious.

If this question was meant in terms of Abraham's descendants, then it may be based on a misunderstanding. Salvation and the knowledge of God was never ethnically determined. Most of Abraham's descendants were part of nations who descended into paganism (Moab, Edom, Ammon, Midian, etc.) Most of the population of Israel and Judah did likewise. Throughout the Old Testament, many of the Biblical heroes and heroines were not ethnically Israelites (eg. Caleb, Ruth, etc.) One particular genealogy extending from Abraham ended in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it's through Christ that people of all ethnic backgrounds find salvation.

Lesson 6
Genesis 18: Hospitality of Abraham

How is it that Abraham is eating with Christ if he hasn't been born yet?

This is kind of brain breaking for people, so this kind of answer has to be adjusted for the age level of the person asking. There are a bunch of other similar questions like about God walking in the garden of Eden, etc. where God appears in human form in Genesis and elsewhere in the OT which the fathers uniformly say are Christ. The core of the answer is that God doesn't relate to time the way that we do. St. Paul can call Christ the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, for example. So who Christ is is a sort of eternal reality that is only revealed to us when he is born from the Theotokos. There is a mystery here that we can't fully understand but just need to marvel at.

Lesson 7
Genesis 22: The Sacrifice of Isaac

Does God really want Abraham to kill his own son? What do we do with that?

He didn't; God knew exactly what would happen. This Bible study on this chapter might help:
<https://youtu.be/Ld2UvPUwRVI>

Lesson 8
Genesis 26-28: Jacob and Esau

If the prophecy was that “the older will serve the younger”, was it good, then, that Jacob deceived his brother to get the birthright?

There are also a number of questions related to this one in Genesis where people use trickery and deception and don't seem to be criticized for it, or are even praised for it. In general, in the Old Testament, trickery is acceptable if it is used to restore justice by a weaker party. So someone who is younger or weaker who has been wronged by someone older and/or stronger can use trickery to make things right again or re-balance the scales. Note that this is about trickery, not violence.

Lessons 9 & 10
Genesis 43-36: Joseph and His Brothers

How is Joseph considered a foreshadowing of Christ?

There are a number of ways. Joseph is rejected and betrayed out of jealousy by his brethren in the way that Christ came to His own and they received Him not. The brothers tell Jacob that his son is dead but he receives him back alive. Joseph descends to become a lowly servant but then is elevated to a position of rulership. After his ascension, Joseph forgives his brothers who wished him ill and provides salvation for them from the famine.

General Teaching Strategies and Classroom Considerations

Classroom Management

Establish Routines

Important for all ages, especially the youngest learners

Establish simple routines and procedures at the beginning of the year so students know what to expect. This is VERY important for the lower grades.

Ideas for Routines:

- Entering Class Routine: Greet students by name as they enter the classroom – even better if you can stand at the door while doing it! This not only helps ensure all students feel known and connected, but it can also shift students into a classroom mindset. If you tend to have a large number of varying students each week who may not all know each other (or whom you might not know), have some pre-folded "table tent" name cards and markers ready which students can write their names on and place by their seats. You can even make it fun each week by having them draw a different "favorite thing" next to their names each time (favorite sport, favorite food, favorite team, etc.)
- Opening Prayer: Always start class with a prayer either at the icon corner or before students sit down. We suggest you use the same prayer each time. Younger grades might especially want to use this as an opportunity to teach and reinforce *The Lord's Prayer*.
- Clearing the Room Routine: After crafts or activities, have students clean up after themselves to the best they are able at their developmental level. This gives them a sense of ownership of and responsibility for the space and materials. One fun way to do this is to play music in the background during clean up time. Challenge the students to see if they can have everything put away before the song ends. You could also invite students to look around the room and decide together if the space is "better than we found it" before they are dismissed.

Walk around the Room

Good for all ages.

It's tempting sometimes to stand at the front of the classroom, but challenge yourself to move around instead. It's ok to walk around the classroom (including walking behind students) and to even sit next to them. This helps you to be "present" to all students – and can help you spot and gently correct behaviors in the moment before they become disruptive.

Classroom Setup

Good for all ages.

If the option is available to you, consider exploring different ways to arrange your classroom furniture. Whether you have desks, chairs, or tables, different seating arrangements can really affect the dynamic of the classroom. Also, with older students especially, consider switching things up on occasion. It can positively affect the energy and expectation students feel when walking into the room.

- For discussion-oriented classrooms, you might try a roundtable or horseshoe approach (if smaller numbers) or group or pair pods (if larger numbers).
- For younger students, group or pair pods often help direct them towards the right amount of social interaction with each other within manageable boundaries.

Instructional Strategies

Prediction Strategies

Good for all ages.

Inviting students to predict what might happen in a story *before* reading or talking about it is one of the strongest things you can do to support comprehension – even if they get their initial predictions wrong! The act of predicting prepares them to listen closely for the “answer” when they later encounter it. Some ways to do this:

- Provide the title of the story and a few main details, then ask them to guess what they think might happen.
- Show pictures of the story and ask them to guess what the caption might be.
- For older kids, have them jot down their True or False answers to a quick 3-5 questions about the story before they read it. As you then read the story, have them note which ones they got correct. (You can even turn it into a game.)

In all cases involving prediction, the key is to explicitly return to those questions and their “answers” after you’ve read/shared the story together.

A note: The classroom setup itself can be a great place of “prediction and preparation”, too. You might pre-print all the icons connected to the Genesis curriculum and post them on the walls before beginning the first lesson of the curriculum. Over the course of the curriculum, invite students to reflect, discuss, or guess about the icons and what they are teaching as a way of preparing them for what they will encounter over the curriculum.

See, Think, Wonder - Discussion Strategy

Especially effective when viewing icons.

Before introducing an image (especially an icon), ask students questions designed to get them engaged, interested, and ready to learn about it.

- *What do you see or notice?*
- *What do you think might be happening?*
- *What are you wondering about?*

You can ask these questions out loud or have them jot down answers on paper. The important thing to remember is that this is a time for students to generate thoughts and not for you to correct them. Avoid the temptation to add what you already know; instead, keep the ideas flowing by asking, "And what else?"

Pair & Share Discussion Strategy

Especially relevant for 4th grade and up.

When you pose a question that you want students to discuss, have students first turn to their neighbor to talk about it in pairs. As students discuss, it's helpful to walk around the room and listen in. You might engage in quick little conversations with pairs, though be careful not to interject too much.

As the "pair" time comes to an end (or as the pairs' conversations begin to die down – whichever comes first!), then invite the pairs to share with the larger group. One way to transition into a large group conversation is to say aloud, "Please finish whatever you're saying to your neighbor and be ready to share out." Another way is to have a little bell or timer sound on your phone which signals the shift.

As conversations die down, ask the class, "What kinds of things did you and your neighbor talk about?" Phrasing the question to include "you and your neighbor" can be an especially helpful way to encourage shy or reticent students to share, as they are able to speak for their group rather than just for themselves. You might even call on specific students by name using this question – again, allowing them to speak on behalf of their pair.

You can adapt this as well:

- **Think-Pair-Share:** Teachers may want to add an additional layer of reflection to this strategy by asking students to either first think about or jot down their initial thoughts before pairing up. This helps students – especially those who might benefit from pre-thinking time – to gather their thoughts and prepare for discussion.
- **Think-Group-Share:** If your classroom is better arranged according to small groups rather than pairs, the same process can still work.

3-2-1 Reflection Strategy

Especially useful as a reflection piece at the end of a lesson.

At the end of a lesson, one quick and easy way to help students solidify connections by way of reflection on their own learning is to do a quick 3-2-1 check in. Students can respond verbally or on paper. You can also ask them to reflect individually or (especially if you have a larger group), they can share their responses with each other in pairs or groups.

Simply ask students to think about and share...

- *3 things they learned*
- *2 things they already knew*
- *1 thing they still wonder*

Key to this is to provide time for them to think about this before asking them to respond. Additionally, as you collect or listen to their responses, take note of some of the “I wonders” that you might want to address, clarify, or respond to in the next lesson. This can be a great way to build trust and continuity by remembering the questions they have.

Incentives

Games:

Good for all ages.

Have a game or two that you play at the end of class which incorporates what students learned in the day’s lesson. This can be as elaborate as a trivia game or as simple as “hangman” on the board using key words from the lesson.

One great way to capitalize on this as a formative learning tool is to have students create the questions themselves during or after the lesson. You might have sticky notes at each seat during class so students can jot down “questions and answers” they think of.

When doing games, it’s best to have them compete in teams (boys/girls, groups, pairs, etc.) rather than individually. Not only does this build positive energy and team-camaraderie, but it keeps students from feeling anxiety that can come from being “on the spot.”

"Like the Stars of Heaven"
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Stump the Priest:

Good for all ages, but especially great for middle grade students.

At the end of each lesson, let students decide which 1-2 "stump the Priest" questions from today's lesson that they will plan to ask their priest after class (perhaps in Coffee Hour). This could be part of your end-of-class routine each week. If it happens weekly, you might even keep a running tally of times that they are able to stump him. This can be a fun way for students to not only stay engaged with the lesson, but it can also build some positive, fun interactions between students and the clergy.

Gem Jar:

Especially for younger students.

Get a small 8 oz jar and put a marble in the jar when you see great behavior or a student does or says something worth recognition. If you have a larger jar, then you can give every student a marble for attendance (that will help them fill it quicker and motivate them to come.) Once the jar is full, you can celebrate the following Sunday with a special treat - like donuts, a game day, or whatever you think your class would be motivated by depending on their age.)

Reading Scripture Together

Locating Bible Verses:

Don't assume all your students know how to look up a verse in the Bible. Sending students to look up Scripture is a great time to help teach this skill! Rather than making it a race, be explicit in modeling and talking through the process for locating the verse(s). ["First, let's look in the table of contents for the name of the book... then let's look in the top corner to find the chapter... etc."]

If you all use the same Bibles together, consider also sharing the page number.

It's helpful to write the Scripture reference on the board as well.

“Like the Stars of Heaven”
A Book of Genesis Orthodox Sunday School Curriculum
The Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (AODCE)

Reading Aloud:

In a Sunday School setting, we encourage teachers *not* to require all students to read aloud, as students (even at higher levels) read at different levels and might feel self-conscious. Rather, invite students who are interested in reading aloud to do so. If you do ask students to take turns reading around the room, consider offering them a “pass” option which they can say instead when it comes to their turn.

Alternatives to Reading Aloud:

Consider listening to an audio version of the Scripture instead as students follow along. This is especially great for longer passages. Bible Gateway has a free and simple resource for this you might use (in a variety of translations):

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio>