

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA



**Church Camps  
Religious  
Theme 2005**

*Resource Material*

**“HOLY THINGS  
FOR THE HOLY”  
What we see when  
we go to church**

Prepared by the Office of Missions and Education,  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada  
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## **UOCC Church Camps Theme 2005 "Holy Things for the Holy"**

### *Forward*

Christ is in our midst!

The following is resource material for the fourth annual Church Camps theme for our UOCC Ukrainian Orthodox camps and summer programs. This year's theme, "Holy Things for the Holy", follows in series with the earlier themes "Jesus Christ", "Mary the Mother of God", "The Holy Apostles", and "Saints: Heroes of the Faith". This year's theme is designed to introduce children and youth to some of the things that they see when they are in church.

You will find the material divided up into ten lessons, one for every weekday of a two-week camp session. If your session runs for one week only, this material could be presented in the morning and evening to cover all lessons. The lessons of Week One look at the meaning of the vestments that a priest wears, while Week Two focuses in on some of the items commonly used in our services. Each lesson contains a Scripture reading, a short teaching, and suggested discussion themes for children under 12 years old and 12 and older.

It is my hope and prayer that you find this resource material prove valuable for the religious education portion of your camp's programming. May our children come to understand that true holiness is found in a heart that is totally committed to a living relationship with the living God; out of such a heart, the whole world can be sanctified.

Fr. Andrew Jarmus, Director  
Office of Missions and Education,  
Winnipeg, 2005

# UOCC Church Camps Theme 2005

## “Holy Things for the Holy” What We See When We Go to Church

*Resource Material*

### Week One: Vestments

MONDAY OF WEEK 1
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**"Pidryznyk" / "Stykhar"**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 61:10,11

(The first part of this reading from the Prophet Isaiah is what the priest says as he is putting on the pidryznyk)

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

**Teaching:**

When a priest serves the Divine Liturgy and other services, he wears special clothes called vestments. It was God who taught us that His priests should wear vestments. They are a sign of the special work that priests do when they serve. There are five pieces to the vestments, and this week, we will look at each of them and discuss what they teach us.

The first vestment that the priest puts on is called the "pidryznyk". This vestment is basically the same as the vestments worn by an altar server or a deacon, which is called a "stykhar". The only difference is that the pidryznyk is made of a lighter material because the priest has other vestments that go on top of it.

St. Paul says that "all those who have been baptized in Christ, have been robed in Christ." When we are baptised, the priest wraps us in a special white cloth called a "kryzhmo". This cloth is symbolic of the teaching of St. Paul, that when we are baptized we are wrapped in Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ protects us, wraps His loving arms around us, and keeps us close to Him.

The "pidryznyk" or "stykhar", symbolizes the kryzhmo that we are wrapped in at our baptisms. As the priest puts the pidryznyk on, he is reminded that he must serve in the same spirit of innocence and purity as someone who is newly-baptized.

## **Discussion Themes**

### **Under 12 - Giving our best to God.**

One of the things the priests vestments teach us is that we should always give our best to God. The reason for this is because God deserves nothing less. For example, when we go to church we take the time to make sure that we are clean, that our hair is brushed or combed and that we are wearing nice clothes. Does God care how we look when we come to church? Not really, He will accept us in whatever we wear and however we look. The point in all of the preparation is that we should care how we look.

If we were going to meet the Prime Minister or the Governor General, we would certainly want to look our best. The same should be true when we go to worship God in his holy house. We take this extra time to get ready because we love God and we want to show how special He is in our life.

Dressing up for church is one way that we can give God the best that we have. Let's think about other ways that we can give our best to God, to show Him how important He is in our lives.

*(some examples: working hard at school, being a true friend, paying attention in church, respecting our parents)*

## 12 & Over - Preparation for Prayer

How many of you do sports, or play an instrument or do something like dancing or gymnastics? Before starting any these activities, you have to do a warm-up. The warm up gets our bodies ready for the work that we have to do so that we do it safer and in a better way.

In the Orthodox Church, we believe that the same idea holds true for spiritual activities, like worship. We said that a priest has to strive to serve in the same spirit as someone who is newly baptized. This is not an easy task. A priest has to prepare himself to serve with special prayers and fasting. This preparation helps the priest to serve with more awareness of what he is doing; it helps him put his worldly cares and interests away, so that he can focus on his work right then and there -- leading people in worship.

Likewise the laity also need to prepare themselves to worship God. Sometimes we hear people say, "I don't get anything from our services." A big part of what we "get out of" a service depends on what we are putting into it. Are we actually praying the service, or simply saying the words? Are we placing our attention on what is happening in church, or thinking about what we're going to do when we get home? To really and fully put ourselves into the service, we have to prepare ourselves before hand -- that is we have to "warm up" spiritually. Let's think about some of the way the Church has as "warm up" spiritually, and what these things might do for us.

*(some ideas: fasting, private prayer at home, come to church early for some quiet time before the service)*

<b>TUESDAY OF WEEK 1</b>
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### **Epitrachil (Stole)**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 40:12-15

(God teaches the Israelites how to ordain Aaron and his sons to serve as priests.)

"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they

may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

### **Teaching:**

The second vestment put on by the priest for serving the Divine Liturgy is called a stole or in Ukrainian an "epitrachil". This is worn around the neck and hangs down the front of the priest. When a deacon serves, he wears a similar vestment called an "orar"; the difference is that the deacon's orar is longer and straight, and is worn only hanging over the left shoulder. When a subdeacon servers, he also wears an orar, but it is worn crossed over both shoulders. All of these vestments have a similar symbolism.

As the priest he puts the epitrachil on, he says "Blessed is God, who pours his grace upon his priests, as precious oil upon the head, which ran down upon Aaron's beard, down to the hem of his robe." These words remind us of the Bible reading that we just heard about how Aaron and his sons were blessed to serve as a priest by being anointed with oil.

The epitrachil is the main vestment that the priest wears whenever he serves. The priest never celebrates a service without wearing his epitrachil. This vestment reminds us that it is God's blessing that gives the priest the authority to celebrate the services. A priest does not serve on his own authority, but because God has called him and blessed him to perform this service.

### **Discussion Themes**

#### **Under 12 - Signs of authority**

A priest is not the only person who wears of has something special to show that he has the right to do his work. What are some other people who have special clothes symbols that show they have the right to do their work?

*(some examples: a police officer has a badge; a letter carrier has a uniform, a fire fighter has special equipment)*

Just as we would not be able to say that we were a police officer or a doctor without having something to show that we really were one of those things, a person cannot just say that they are a priest. Caring for people's souls is very important work, and it must be done with respect, care and preparation. And by people who have been called to this ministry by God. It is through this special vestment called an epitrachil that we know that

someone has actually been called and blessed by the Church to do this very important and special work.

### **12 & Over - Don't do anything without it.**

We said before that priest may not serve any of the divine services without wearing his epitrachil. This is the main symbol of his authority, given to him by God, to conduct his priestly ministry. The epitrachil, then, is a physical symbol of a spiritual truth: it is God's grace which allows the priest to do his work. It is not the priest who gives himself the power to serve. All comes from God.

There is also a lesson here for all of us. In every step we take, we must always walk with God. It is the grace of God -- his unselfish love for us -- that allows us to walk through life in a way that is faithful to His teachings. If we try to take care of our life on our own, without God, we will sooner or later find out that by ourselves we do not have the strength and wisdom needed to get through life with peaceful hearts. This strength and wisdom come from God, and the inner peace that we need is a result of having a real, living relationship with God.

What are some of the ways that we can stay aware of how important it is to keep God in our lives?

*(some ideas: pray regularly, study the Faith, hang up icons in our rooms, go to church)*

<b>WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 1</b>
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### **"Poyas" (Belt)**

#### **Scripture Reading: Psalm 18:31-33**

(This passage from the Psalms shows how God strengthens His people so that they can do His work)

"For who is God, except the Lord? and who is a rock, except our God? It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places."

## **Teaching:**

Have you ever seen weightlifters at sporting events like the Olympics? They lift such tremendous amounts of weight, that when the bar is over their heads, you can see it bend in their hands. This kind of sport is very dangerous, and is not done without special equipment. One of the most important pieces of equipment that weightlifters wear is their belt. This belt supports his back, making it easier to bear such heavy loads when he is lifting.

Serving the Lord is also a serious matter. St. Paul says that "it is an awesome thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). When we pray it is very easy to get distracted by other thoughts: what we will be doing next, who we talked with earlier in the day, what's on TV tonight, and other distractions. Before we know it, we're not really praying anymore! We are speaking the words, but not really understanding what we are saying.

Priests are not different from anyone else. They also have to struggle with distractions, and keep themselves focussed on their work of leading the people in worship. A priest needs all the strength he can get to do this work properly. The belt that the priest wears symbolizes shows that the strength to carry out his service comes from God. Just as the belt of a weightlifter helps him or her to carrying the heavy weight, so God helps the priest carry out his responsibilities in worship, and preaching, and every other part of his priestly work.

## **Discussion Themes**

### **Under 12 - Asking for help.**

There are times in life when we all can use a little help. We cannot always do things by ourselves. What are some of the things that we might need help with in our lives?

*(some examples: preparing a meal, getting ready for church, packing for a trip)*

It is okay to ask for help when we need it. This is true whether we are talking about things like packing or making a sandwich, and it is especially true about things like dealing with things that we are afraid of or unhappy about. We can talk to our parents about these things, or to another adult that we know it's okay to talk to, and also we can ask God to help us. God might not take the thing away, but He will give us the courage, strength and understanding that we need to deal with our problems in a proper way. We have to always remember that God loves us deeply and is always ready to help us when we put our trust in Him.



## **12 & Over - Bearing the burden**

Jesus teaches that anyone who wants to be His disciple must be ready to take up a cross in life, just as Jesus Himself did. As Christians, we will probably not carry a literal cross, like Jesus, but we will have our own struggles to deal with. This is a very important teaching. There are some people in the world who think that being a follower of Christ will protect them from any kinds of sorrow or hardships. The Bible shows us that this is not the case. In fact, the one thing that we can be certain of as Christians is that we will have to deal with difficult times in our lives.

Attitude is everything when we face hard times. It is easy to say that we believe in God when everything is going well, but the real test comes when we face troubles. Do we really trust God? Do we sincerely believe that He is with us, that He cares for us, even if we don't "feel" Him there? These are lessons about ourselves that we learn only in times of struggle. God will not let us down. The important thing is that we don't turn away from Him when things get tough... especially if the struggle is going on and on, with no end in sight. At all times, and in all places, God is holding us in His hands. This can be an anchor of hope for us.

Discuss ways that we can keep remembering that God is with us, even in difficult times.

*(some ideas: pray; read the Bible; read the lives of the Saints -- very important because many went through tremendous struggles and kept their faith; turn to someone for help - God ministers to us through other people)*

<b>THURSDAY OF WEEK 1</b>
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### **Poruchi (Cuffs)**

#### **Exodus 15:6 and Psalm 118:73**

(The priest recites these Bible verses as he is putting on the cuffs or "poruchi")

"Your right hand, O Lord, has been glorified in strength..."

"Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding and I will learn Your commandments."

## **Teaching:**

The two short Bible quotes for today's lesson are said by the priest as he puts on the next part of his vestments. In each of these two quotes the most important words "Your hands". The cuffs that the priest wears are called "poruchi", or "narukavnyky" they remind us of the ropes that were used to tie Jesus' hands when He was arrested and crucified.

When the priest puts on the poruchi it means that he is joining himself to the work of God. We believe that when a priest serves, it is really Jesus Himself serving through the priest. When the priest blesses the people, it is Jesus who blesses them through the hand of the priest. When the priest celebrates the Holy Mysteries - the Sacraments - it is Jesus who is truly serving through the service of the priest.

This is a very important teaching, and it helps us to stay humble. Our greatest work in life is not done because we are really smart or strong or courageous. The greatest things we will ever accomplish are the things that God is able to do through us, when we open our hearts to Him.

## **Discussion Themes:**

### **For all children -**

Have the priest show the children how he holds his hand when he is blessing. Show them how the positioning of his hand makes the letters IC XC. This shows that the priest does not give a blessing on his own authority, but in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Next show the children the proper way to cross themselves. Review with them the symbolism of the hand position. Thumb, index and middle fingers together representing the Holy Trinity, ring finger and "pinky" together representing the two natures of Christ -- Divine and human. As we touch our heads, we are asking God to give us wisdom. When we touch our shoulders, we are asking for His strength. As we touch our chest, we pray that God fill our hearts with love. In other words, all of the most important things that we need in life come from God.

## **Phelon**

### **Scripture Reading: Psalm 132:7-9**

(The priest recites the last part of this Psalm reading as he is putting on the phelon.)

"Let us go into God's tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O Lord, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy."

### **Teaching:**

God promises us many blessings if we believe in Him, and if we try with all our heart and all our strength to live the life that He calls us to. This is not easy work. There are many things that can get in the way of living a good Christian life. We always have to remember that the most important thing in our life is our faith in God. Nothing else will help us through life's ups and downs like our faith will help. The important thing is that we take our faith seriously, and make a real effort at living it the best we can.

Many people say they are Christians, but the real test comes in how we are living our lives. The Bible teaches us that the first time the words "Christian" is used when speaking of Jesus' followers, it is used by non-Christians. In other words, there was something about the faithful that outsiders could clearly see was connected to the life and teachings of Jesus. The early Christians did not just say they followed Christ, they lived this belief every day, in very open ways.

When we commit ourselves to our Christian life in this way, God wraps us in His blessings. This is the meaning of the phelon. It shows us how God wraps us in His blessings when we dedicate ourselves to Him. In this way, the phelon represents how a human being can be changed by God's Grace.

## Discussion Themes:

### Under 12: Ready for action

At the beginning of a hockey or football game, when the players come out of their dressing rooms, all suited up with their uniforms and pads, you know they are ready for action. In a similar way, with all of his vestments on, the priest is ready to serve the Divine Liturgy. Each piece of vestment reminds him of something that he needs -- something that God gives him -- so that he can do this work to the best of his ability. Let's review the vestments that we talked about this week and see if we remember each one:

Stykhari -- *(Symbolizes the purity of someone who has just been baptized.)*

Epitrachelion -- *(The most important sign of the priest's authority to do the services.)*

Poyas -- *(Symbolizes the strength of God, which the priest needs to serve the services properly.)*

Poruchi -- *(Reminds us that it is not the priest who is working, but God hands working through the priest's hands.)*

Phelon -- *(Symbolizes how God wraps those who believe in Him in His love and blessings.)*

### 12 & Over: Becoming Like God

For many centuries great thinkers have asked the question: "What is the meaning of life?" For the Orthodox Church, the answer to this question comes from the Book of Genesis, where we read about God creating the human race. In Genesis, we read that God made us in His image and likeness. This is what makes us unique in the universe; no other creature is made in God's image and likeness.

Our Orthodox Faith teaches us that the image of God are all those parts of our humanity that are similar to God that exist as possibilities in every person. The likeness of God, on the other hand, involves these traits as they grow and become active in our lives. The difference between the image of God and the likeness of God in us is like the difference between a seed and a full grown plant -- the seed contains all of the traits of that plant as possibilities, while in the full grown plant all of those traits flourish and grow for everyone to see.

In the Orthodox Faith, we believe that the meaning of life is to grow more and more into the likeness of God. This process is called "deification" or "*theosis*"; in Ukrainian it is known as "*obozhennia*". This growth is not possible on our own, just as a seed cannot grow into a plant without being cared for. It is God's grace, His blessings in our lives,

that strengthen us and help us to grow in His likeness.

Let's think about some of the things about human beings that are part of God's image in us.

*(some examples: creativity, compassion and self-sacrifice)*

How are ways that we can open ourselves to God's grace, nurturing our growth in His likeness?

*(some ideas: taking part in the sacraments; praying at home; reading the Bible; acts of kindness for others)*

## **Week Two: Things We See in Church**

### **MONDAY OF WEEK 2**

#### **Icons**

#### **Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:26, 27**

*(God creates the human race in His image and likeness -- the Greek word for "image" is "eikona", or "icon".)*

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

#### **Teaching:**

Icons are probably the best-known holy objects in our Orthodox Church. We believe that an icon is more than an ordinary picture, like a family photo or a celebrity's poster. We call icons "windows to heaven". When we look at an icon we are looking into a different world, a world where God's love fills all things and His will is rules supreme. Through their icons, the saints remind us that they are with us, always praying for us before God's throne.

When we come up to an icon, it is our practice to honor the icon with a kiss. We call this "venerating" the icon. When we look at a picture of a family member or friend, we feel good inside. This good feeling does not come from the paper or chemicals that make up the photo, but from the person that the photo shows us. This is the same way we understand venerating an icon. When we kiss an icon, we are not showing our love for the wood, or paint, but for the person that is in the icon.

Some people are uncomfortable with this, because they think it is like bowing before an idol. Our Church teaches that worshipping and venerating are two different things. Only God is worthy of being worshipped. But because of their great example, God's Saints are worthy of our veneration, in other words they deserve our respect, love and honour.

## Discussion Themes

### Under 12: The iconostas

Show the children the iconostas in your camp chapel (or show them a photo of the iconostas from your local parish) and go over the placement of the main icons. They are as follows:

Far left: St. Nicholas – symbolizing what true Christian giving is.

Left ("Northern") Deacon's Door – either an icon of an Archangel or a deacon.

Mother of God with Christ Child

Royal Doors – symbolize the gates of heaven; have icons of the four evangelists and/or the annunciation on them

Christ – on the right hand of the royal doors, just as we say in the Creed that Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father.

Right ("Southern") Deacon's Door – either an icon of an Archangel or a deacon.

Far right – icon of the patron Saint, or feast day, of the Church.

### 12 & Over: False gods

In the Bible God makes it very clear that He is the only one that we should put our faith in. In the Ten Commandments He says "You shall have no other gods before Me." In Bible times, most of the false gods that people put before the True God were actual idols -- statues of animals or people or mythological figures. Today, people might not bow down in front of golden statues of sheep, but we can still make false gods.

Any time we put our faith in something besides God, we have made it into an idol. Let's think about some of the things in life that we can put before God to try make us happy.

*(some ideas: popularity, money, athletic ability, "brains", good looks)*

We might get satisfaction from the idols that we create for a while, but sooner or later, we will realize that they do not work. In the end, we just become less happy and more frustrated. True happiness comes from God alone.

## TUESDAY OF WEEK 2

### Incense

#### **Scripture Reading: Revelation 8:3,4**

*(St. John's vision of heaven in the Book of Revelation shows an angel offering incense before God's Altar.)*

Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

#### **Teaching:**

Incense has been used in worship since the days of the Old Testament. God taught us that offering incense is a proper way of worshipping. In the last book of the Old Testament, God says that "in every place incense shall be offered in My name." (Malachi 1:11)

Incense symbolizes two things. First, it represents our prayers rising up to heaven, just like the smoke rises up from the censer. In the words of the Psalm we read, "Let my prayer rise in Your sight like incense." (Ps. 140:2)

Secondly, incense is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the prayer to the Holy Spirit called "O Heavenly King" we say that the Holy Spirit is of God who is "present in all places, filling all things." Just as the smell from the incense gets into everything in the church, including our clothes – and even our hair! – the Holy Spirit fills all things in the world with His presence.

#### **Discussion themes**

#### **Under 12: The Lord's Prayer**

Jesus teaches us how important it is to pray. He even gives us a special prayer that we use many times, both in our services and when we pray at home – this is the "Lord's Prayer". Let's say the Lord's Prayer together now.



*(Say the prayer with the children in Ukrainian, English or both languages.)*

There are many ways that we call on God. For example, we call him "Lord", and "Master". But what a great gift it is to be able to call on God as "Father". And it's important to understand that in the Lord's Prayer we don't say "My Father"; we say, "Our Father". This is really important too. Jesus wants us to know that if God is the heavenly Father of all of us, then we are all family. We have to stick together and love each other as brothers and sisters. What are some of the ways that we can show our love for each other as children of our Heavenly Father?

*(some ideas: lending a helping hand; respecting each other; forgiving one another; comforting each other when we are sad)*

## **12 & over: The Prayer Corner**

Church buildings are centers of the life of a parish. In the villages in Ukraine, this is very obvious, since the church is literally in the centre of the town. It is important for us to have places that allow us to focus on our spirituality. This is why the Orthodox Church uses all the senses in our worship. When we walk into a Church we know that we are entering a special and unique realm, God's realm, because we can see, touch and smell the differences from our daily experiences.

In our spirituality, we can also create a place like this in our homes by putting up a prayer corner. A traditional prayer corner is a triangular shaped shelf that would hang on an eastern corner of the house (either in the living room, or perhaps someone could have their own prayer corner in their bed room). Above the shelf would be icons of Christ and the Mother of God, with possibly other icons as well, like the icon of your patron saint. Sitting on the shelf would be a candle, your prayer book and/or Bible, and possibly a small incense burner for home use.

Just like the church building is for the parish, a prayer corner becomes a point of focus for our personal spiritual life. It is at the prayer corner that we say our prayers, or light a candle for someone who is in need. A prayer corner also serves as a very visible reminder of our spiritual life. It stands there like an open invitation to turn to God in prayer at any time of the day. The Prayer Corner, then, is one of the ways that we can bring the Faith home with us, and not let it be something that we just get into on Sundays only. What are some other ways that we can live our faith in our daily lives?

*(some examples: daily prayer; follow the fasts during the Church year; set aside some of our money for helping the needy and for supporting our parish; read the Bible)*

## WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 2

### Holy Water

#### Scripture Reading: Mark 1:7-11

*(St. John the Baptist baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River.)*

John the Baptist preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

#### Teaching:

Water is an important part of our lives. We know what happens to land when it get no water – it becomes a dry desert. If a person gets really, really thirsty, they start to feel sick. Three quarters of our world is made up of water. Likewise, three quarters of our bodies are water. Without water, there would be no life. Water is also an important part of our spiritual lives. Water plays an important part in our worship services. Our life as Christians begins through water, when we are baptized.

The water that we use to bless things is called "holy water". By blessing holy water we are offering it up to God, thanking Him for it, and asking Him to send a special blessing upon it. We then use this blessed water to bless other things in our lives. Throughout the year, we bless many things with water: our homes on the feast of Jordan; willows on Palm Sunday; baskets on Pascha; icons, crosses, and the list goes on. We ourselves can even be blessed by it, either by the priest sprinkling it on us, or by drinking it.

We Orthodox believe that the world is basically good, and is to be used to praise and glorify God. Blessing things with holy water is one of the ways that we show how much we love God's creation, and it is how we ask God for His blessings on the world around us.

## **For all ages:**

Have the priest celebrate the rite of the "Lesser Sanctification of Water", and with this holy water have him bless the camp.

**Note:** *Make sure the priest knows well ahead of time that you want to serve the Lesser Sanctification of Water, so that he is prepared to celebrate this service.*

<b>THURSDAY OF WEEK 2</b>
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## **Holy Oil**

### **Scripture Reading: John 12:1-3**

*(Mary, the sister of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead, anoints Jesus' feet with very expensive fragrant oil.)*

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

### **Teaching:**

In the Bible oil is used in many different ways. When Kings were crowned in Israel, blessed oil was poured over his head. The same would happen when a priest was ordained. In these services oil is a symbol of God's strength. People who serve God need Him to give them strength, if they are to do their work the best that they can.

Also, Jesus teaches us about the "Good Samaritan". He was a man who helped someone who had been attacked by robbers. Jesus says that the Good Samaritan put oil and wine on the man's wounds to clean and protect them. In this story oil is used for healing.

In the Bible times oil was made from olives. In the story of Noah's Ark, Noah knew that the waters that flooded the earth were going down when a dove came back to him carrying an olive branch in its beak. Through this olive branch Noah and his family knew that God was giving the world a second chance. This is a third symbol of oil: God offering us a new start in life.

All of these symbols are connected to holy oil. When we are anointed with holy oil we are asking God to bless us with strength and wisdom; we pray that He give us health of body and soul, and that His grant us the New Life that He promises to all who believe in Him.

## **Discussion --**

### **Under 12: The ways we use oil in our services.**

Explain the various ways oil is used during our services. Here are some examples:

- In the sacrament of Baptism, we are anointed with oil right before we are baptised.
- We are blessed with another specially prepared olive oil called "Chrism", as we are confirmed as members of the Church at the sacrament of Chrismation.
- At times when we are ill we can ask the priest to bless us with oil at the sacrament of healing called "Holy Unction".
- On feast days, we are anointed with holy oil that is blessed the evening before at a service called the "Litiya", during the Vigil or Great Vespers
- We use oil lamps in church, just like we use candles.
- When a new church is blessed, the altar is anointed with holy oil.
- When someone moves into a new home, we make crosses over the doors with holy oil.

### **12 & Over: "Lord, have mercy."**

In our services, we say "Lord, have mercy" again, and again, and again. None of us can boast that we are "worthy" of God's blessings. We all have faults, fears, doubts and regrets. All of these things get in the way of us living the life that Christ called us to. Even though we are not perfect, God is still ready to bless us. Why? Because He is merciful. When we turn to Him truly sorry for the wrongs we have committed and sincerely looking to mend our life, God in His mercy showers His grace on us.

In the language of the New Testament, Greek, the word "mercy" comes from the word for "oil". This might sound strange at first, but when we think about what oil symbolizes in our Faith it makes sense. By being blessed with holy oil we are asking that God give us strength and wisdom. We pray that He gives us the healing of body and soul, and we ask that He grants us the New Life in His unconditional love.

This is such a great gift and the way that we show how much we appreciate it is by repeatedly asking for it. We do not do this for God, but for us; it helps us stay focussed on how much we need God mercy in our lives. With this focus, we will always draw near to God in a proper and worthy manner. When we pray, we are not demanding things from God, but we ask humbly trusting in His mercy which never fails.

## FRIDAY OF WEEK 2

### **Prosphora**

*Note: This session will be most effective if you have prosphora loaves for the children to see.*

### **Scripture Reading: John 6:47-52**

*(Jesus calls Himself the "Bred from Heaven", which gives life to all who partake of it.)*

Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

### **Teaching:**

When we serve the Divine Liturgy we use a special bread called "prosphora". The word "prosphora" means "offering bread". This is the bread that we offer to God in the Liturgy. We ask Him to bless it a make it the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we receive in Holy Communion.

A bread with such a special purpose is made in a very special way. The dough is very

simple; it has in it pure flour, water and yeast. The yeast makes the proshpora bread rise; we use risen bread to show our belief in Jesus, who has risen from the dead.

We use five loaves of proshpora for the Divine Liturgy. This reminds us of when Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread. Each loaf of proshpora has a top half and a bottom half; these two halves show our belief that Jesus is both God and man.

Four of the loaves are stamped with the letters "IC XC NIKA", which stands for "Jesus Christ Conquers" - this is another way that we show our belief that Jesus is Risen and has conquered death. It is from one of these four loaves that we will bless the bread of Holy Communion. The fifth loaf has a stamp symbolizing the Ever-Virgin Mary.

Before the beginning of the Liturgy, the priest prepares the bread and wine in a special service called "Proskomedie". Using each loaf, the priest takes special pieces out of the bread which symbolize different people in the Kingdom of God. During the Proskomedie, the priest remembers our Lord Jesus Christ, His most-holy Mother the Ever-Virgin Mary and all the Saints, and he says special prayers for the living and departed members of the Church.

If you and your family want, you can give the priest a list of people that he can pray for during Proskomedie. Make sure that your list has the first names of everyone that you want the priest to pray for (because we always pray for people on a first-name basis).

Also make sure that you note whether the person is alive or deceased. The easiest way to do this is to draw a line down the middle of the paper and use the left side for the living and the right for the departed (make sure you put the words "Living" and "Departed" at the top of each side of the paper so the priest knows which is which).

### **Discussion -- for all ages**

Using five loaves of proshpora, have the priest actually go through the steps of preparing the holy bread for the Eucharist during Proskomedie. The priest should explain what is taken from each of the five loaves.

At the end, the priest can show how all of the Church is represented on the paten (the diskos): Christ, the Lamb of God in the centre, the Mother of God on His right side, the choirs of saints on His left, and the living and departed under them all. When we place the holy bread on the altar during the Divine Liturgy, it is like the whole Church is placed there, including ourselves.