

WEEK 18: PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR LITURGY

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

GOALS

What do we do to prepare for the Divine Liturgy?

LESSON

Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion: <https://stjohndfw.info/orthodox-faith/prayers/prayers-in-preparation-for-holy-communion/>

ASK FOR FORGIVENESS:

Have you ever had one of your brothers, sisters, cousins, or a friend who wouldn't share their really awesome toy with you? Did it make you feel a little sad that you couldn't play with it?

Have you ever had someone who yelled at you for something you did? Did it make you feel a little upset?

How do you think you make others feel when you yell at them, won't share you're really cool toys, or don't follow directions when you're told to do something? Do you think it makes the other person feel a little sad or upset too? You're right, it does.

When we hurt someone's feelings or are mean to them, we need to say, "Sorry," to that person. Another way of saying sorry to someone is to ask, "Will you please forgive me?" When we are upset with someone, we don't feel like playing with them - because we feel hurt or because we know we hurt their feelings. But if we ask for forgiveness and also forgive them, we can play together again, with joy.

Why do we say sorry or ask for forgiveness from others? We do it to show them that we recognize we were wrong and want to fix our mistake. All of us will make mistakes from time to time, but it's important to repair our mistakes with kindness and love - especially before receiving Holy Communion. When we seek forgiveness from others and forgive them as well, we receive Holy Communion with joy!

When you're a little bit older, you'll also have the opportunity to go to confession. This is when you will go to your priest and tell him the mistakes you've made and seek forgiveness from God. Confession is an important sacrament for us and helps us to heal from our mistakes or sins.

GOING TO VESPERS ON SATURDAY NIGHT:

Vespers in a short church service that we go to in the evening. On Saturday nights, we go to vespers in order to get ready for Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

HOLY COMMUNION PRAYERS:

There are special prayers we can say with our parents on Saturday night to get us ready for Holy Communion the next day, as well as, a few more prayers we can say with our parents before going to church on Sunday morning.

Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion:

<https://stjohnsfw.info/orthodox-faith/prayers/prayers-in-preparation-for-holy-communion/>

ARE YOUR CLOTHES AND SHOES READY?

Do you have clean clothes all ready to go in the morning for church? Do you know where your shoes are at so you don't have to go hunting for them when mom or dad say it's time to go?

I have a job for you next Saturday! I want you to look in your closet or drawers and make sure you have something clean to wear to church for Sunday. If you don't, go find them in your dirty clothes pile and put them on top of your washer. Then ask your mom or dad if you can help them wash a load of laundry to get ready for church.

I have one more job for you next Saturday. I want you to find your shoes that you're going to wear to church and put them where you will quickly find them on Sunday morning. We don't want to make our family late to church because we can't find our shoes!

FASTING:

Have your parents ever told you that you couldn't have something that you really wanted - like watching another tv show, eating more candy, or getting another thing you wanted from the store? That's pretty normal. Moms and dads know that too much of something is not good for their kids and they will put limits on how much their kids get.

God created each and every one of us. He's our Father too. God knows that even grown-ups need limits too, just like kids. This is why He tells us that we need to fast from time to time. Fasting teaches us that we can't have everything we want, whenever we want it -

because it's not healthy for us.

There are two types of fasting:

1. **Refraining from certain foods for a period of time:** Sometimes we don't eat meat and some other foods on Wednesdays and Fridays or for longer periods of time before certain feast days like Christmas and Pascha (Easter).
2. **Refraining from food altogether for a period of time:** Other times, we don't eat any food at all for a certain amount of time. One of those times is before Holy Communion. When we are preparing ourselves to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we don't eat anything before going to church. When we are little, our parents ease us into this type of fasting by giving us a simple and tiny breakfast before we go to church. Usually by the time kids start school, they have become pretty big stuff and are ready to wait to have any food until after church is over on Sundays.

REVIEW:

- Who can tell me something we should do to get ready for going to church on Sundays? (Let your students take turns telling you one of the things they learned today from above)
 - Who is going to check if they have clean clothes for church next Saturday?
 - What are you going to do if your clothes need to be washed for church?
 - Where are you going to put your shoes next Saturday so you can find them for church on Sunday morning?
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WEEK 18: PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR LITURGY

1ST - 2ND GRADE

GOALS

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How do you think you make others feel when you yell at them, won't share your really cool toys, or don't follow directions when you're told to do something? Do you think it makes the other person feel a little sad or upset too? You're right, it does.

When we hurt someone's feelings or are mean to them, we need to say, "Sorry," to that person. Another way of saying sorry to someone is to ask, "Will you please forgive me?" When we are upset with someone, we don't feel like playing with them - because we feel hurt or because we know we hurt their feelings. But if we ask for forgiveness and also forgive them, we can play together again, with joy.

Why do we say sorry or ask for forgiveness from others? We do it to show them that we recognize we were wrong and want to fix our mistake. All of us will make mistakes from time to time, but it's important to repair our mistakes with kindness and love - especially before receiving Holy Communion. When we seek forgiveness from others and forgive them as well, we receive Holy Communion with joy!

Pretty soon, you'll be old enough to go to confession. This is when you will go to your priest and tell him the mistakes you've made and seek forgiveness from God. Confession is an important sacrament for us and helps us to heal from our mistakes or sins.

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Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion:

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ARE YOUR CLOTHES AND SHOES READY?

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I have one more job for you next Saturday. I want you to find your shoes that you're going to wear to church and put them where you will quickly find them on Sunday morning. We don't want to make our family late to church because we can't find our shoes!

FASTING:

Have your parents ever told you that you couldn't have something that you really wanted - like watching another tv show, eating more candy, or getting another thing you wanted from the store? That's pretty normal. Moms and dads know that too much of something is not good for their kids and they will put limits on how much their kids get.

God created each and every one of us. He's our Father too. God knows that even grown-ups need limits too, just like kids. This is why He tells us that we need to fast from time to time. Fasting teaches us that we can't have everything we want, whenever we want it -

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REVIEW:

- Who can tell me something we should do to get ready for going to church on Sundays? (Let your students take turns telling you one of the things they learned today from above)
 - Who is going to check if they have clean clothes for church next Saturday?
 - What are you going to do if your clothes need to be washed for church?
 - Where are you going to put your shoes next Saturday so you can find them for church on Sunday morning?
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WEEK 18: PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR LITURGY

3RD - 5TH GRADES

GOALS

What do we do to prepare for the Divine Liturgy?

LESSON

Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion: <https://stjohndfw.info/orthodox-faith/prayers/prayers-in-preparation-for-holy-communion/>

ASK FOR FORGIVENESS:

How do you feel when someone isn't listening to you, yells at you, or doesn't want to play what you want to play? Do you feel frustrated, sad, or upset?

How do you think others feel when you aren't listening to them when they are talking to you, when you yell at them, or when you only want to play what you want to play? They feel just like you did when it happened to you. We also tend to feel a little distant from the person who was mean to us too. We don't necessarily want to be around them anymore, especially when they keep treating us poorly.

What do we do when we have not acted in a loving way towards someone else? We apologize. It's important for us to tell the person, "I'm sorry" or "Please forgive me" when we have hurt their feelings or made them mad. This is how we fix our mistakes. We seek forgiveness from them in an effort to repair our relationship with them. It's especially important to mend our relationship with someone before we receive Holy Communion.

Many of you have reached the age now that you can start going to confession. Confession is one of our sacraments and it is provided for our benefit so we can seek forgiveness from God for the things we know we've done wrong.

Part of preparing for Holy Communion is asking others to forgive us, as well as, going to confession regularly and asking God to forgive us.

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HOLY COMMUNION PRAYERS:

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Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion:

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ARE YOUR CLOTHES AND SHOES READY?

Have any of you ever had your parents tell you it's time to wake up and then you realize you can't find the clothes you want to wear or they aren't clean? Have you ever made your family late because you couldn't find one of your shoes?

We can avoid this problem each and every Sunday by taking a few minutes on Saturday to see if we need any clothes washed. If you need some clothes washed, ask your mom or dad to teach you how to load and start the washer so you'll be all set for the next day. Even better, ask everyone else in your house if they need something washed for church too before you wash your clothes.

Before you go to bed on Saturday, make sure you find your shoes and put them where you will immediately find them for church in the morning.

This is an easy way to help Sunday morning go much smoother and help your entire family make it to the church on time for the Divine Liturgy!

FASTING:

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REVIEW:

- Who can tell me something we should do to get ready for going to church on Sundays? (Let your students take turns telling you one of the things they learned today from above)
 - Who is going to ask everyone in your house next Saturday if they need something washed for church and ask your mom or dad to teach them how to start the washer?
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WEEK 18: PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR LITURGY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

What do we do to prepare for the Divine Liturgy?

LESSON

Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion: <https://stjohndfw.info/orthodox-faith/prayers/prayers-in-preparation-for-holy-communion/>

ASK FOR FORGIVENESS:

How do you feel when you're being ignored or someone is being nasty to you? Do you feel upset, frustrated, and sometimes sad? Do you find yourself feeling distant from the person and wishing things could be mended between the two of you?

How do you think someone else feels when you're ignoring them or being short and nasty to them? Do you think they feel predominantly the same way as when it's happening to you? Sure they do. None of us enjoy being treated rudely or meanly.

We should always attempt to apologize or seek forgiveness as we try to repair our relationship with the person we hurt. This applies to our brothers, sisters, cousins, parents, friends...and everyone else. There's a rift that develops between two people when they are fighting or mistreating one another. Until forgiveness is sought for the wrongs done, it's extremely difficult to have the same close relationship you once had with this person.

Christ wisely instituted the sacrament of confession for the healing of our spiritual ailments. As part of our preparation for receiving Holy Communion, it is vitally important that we seek forgiveness from those we have wounded, as well as, go to confession to admit and receive counsel for the wrongs we have committed against God. When we repent, we cease being separated from those we have wronged and from God. Only then can our health be restored and we can be reunited with one another again.

Holy Confession should be a regular part of our lives in Christ by now. It is impossible to evolve spiritually if we don't follow closely what we do and how we behave at all times. Confession offers us the possibility to correct these mistakes and receive forgiveness from God.

A Guide to Prepare Yourself for Confession: <https://stjohndfw.info/orthodox-faith/practical-faith/confession-practical-aspects/>

GOING TO VESPERS ON SATURDAY NIGHT:

Vespers in a short church service that we go to in the evening. Vespers is the first service for Sunday, followed by Matins and Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning. Oftentimes, we can also go to confession after vespers as well. The life of the Church is consciously set up to allow for us to have optimal opportunities to prepare ourselves for the sacraments and feasts throughout the year. We only need to take the time to participate in the daily life of the Church.

HOLY COMMUNION PRAYERS:

There are special prayers we can say on Saturday night to get us ready for Holy Communion the next day, as well as, a few more prayers we can say before going to church on Sunday morning.

**Note to teachers: Explain how this works (See link) and also explain that the pre-Communion prayers can be stretched over the weekdays to make things easier.*

Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion:

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ARE YOUR CLOTHES AND SHOES READY?

On Saturday, check to make sure you have clothes clean and ready for church the next day. If you need to wash clothes, make sure you do it earlier in the day instead of waiting until the last minute to get it done - and even better, ask everyone else in your family if anyone else needs something washed for church too.

Additionally, make sure that what you're planning to wear for Sunday is appropriate to wear in a church. We should wear modest clothing that does not invite people to stare at us. *(Note to teacher: Begin a discussion with your students about what is and is not appropriate to wear to church for boys and girls.)*

FASTING:

Have your parents ever told you that you couldn't have something that you really wanted or had to wait to get it? That's pretty normal. Moms and dads know that too much of something or not learning how to wait for something is harmful for their kids. Thus, they will put limits on how much and when their kids get something.

God created each and every one of us. He's our Father as well. God knows that even grown-ups need limits too, just like kids. This is why He tells us that we need to fast from time to time. Fasting teaches us that we can't have everything we want, whenever we want it - because it's not healthy for us. It also teaches us not to be attached to material things but to cherish more the things that are spiritual in nature.

There are two types of fasting:

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2. **Refraining from food altogether for a period of time:** Other times, we don't eat any food at all for a certain amount of time. One of those times is before Holy Communion. When we are preparing ourselves to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we don't eat anything before going to church. When we are little, our parents ease us into this type of fasting by giving us a simple and tiny breakfast before we go to church. At your age, you are ready to go without breakfast on Sunday mornings and wait to eat anything until afterwards.

REVIEW:

- Who can tell me something we should do to get ready for going to church on Sundays? (Let your students take turns telling you one of the things they learned today from above)
 - Don't forget to make sure your clothes are clean and ready to go for church next Saturday! Also, make sure you are wearing appropriate clothes for being in church.
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WEEK 18: PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR LITURGY

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

What do we do to prepare for the Divine Liturgy?

LESSON

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It is also important for us to attend Matins on Sunday morning as well. It's difficult for little children to stay quiet and still for both Matins and the Divine Liturgy, but as high school students, your attention spans are much longer and can begin attending both. Additionally, just like we are expected to arrive on time for school, a job, or even watching a movie at the theater, we should that much more put all of our effort into arriving on time for all church services.

HOLY COMMUNION PRAYERS:

There are special prayers we can say on Saturday night to get us ready for Holy Communion the next day, as well as, a few more prayers we can say before going to church on Sunday morning. These prayers do not make us “worthy” to receive Holy Communion, but actually show us how many ways we are unworthy. But God is good and allows us to partake of Him, unworthy as we are, for our healing.

**Note to teachers: Explain how this works (See link) and also explain that the pre-Communion prayers can be stretched over the weekdays to make things easier.*

Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion:

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Additionally, make sure that what you're planning to wear for Sunday is appropriate to wear in a church. We should wear modest clothing that does not invite people to stare at us.

(Note to teachers: Begin a discussion with your students about what is and is not appropriate to wear to church for both boys and girls.)

FASTING:

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REVIEW:

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 - Don't forget to make sure your clothes are clean and ready to go for church next Saturday! Also, make sure you are wearing appropriate clothes for being in church.
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