

WEEK 12: LITURGY - LITANY OF CATECHUMENS

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

GOALS

What is a catechumen?
Why do we pray for catechumens?

LESSON

Lesson on the Litany of Catechumens

What is a litany?

A litany is a series of requests that are prayed by the priest or deacon. After each of these requests, we sing, "Lord, have mercy." Does anyone remember hearing "Lord, have mercy" sung during a service?

Do you ever ask your parents for help with something?

Do you hope that your parents will help you?

We also ask God for help - sometimes for ourselves and sometimes for other people.

What is a catechumen?

A catechumen is someone who wants to be baptized and become an Orthodox Christian like you and me! Do you remember your baptism? If you don't, you were probably baptized as a baby or when you were very little. If you do remember your baptism, you were a catechumen with your parents before you were baptized.

What are the Holy Mysteries?

The Holy Mysteries are also known as the sacraments. Some of our sacraments are confession, baptism, and Holy Communion.

Deacon: *Catechumens, pray to the Lord.*

Choir or Chanters sing, “*Lord, have mercy*” after each petition

Deacon: *Believers, let us pray for the catechumens;
That the Lord will have mercy on them,
Instruct them in the word of truth;
Reveal to them the Gospel of righteousness;
Unite them to his holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
Save them, have mercy on them, help them and keep them, O God, by your grace.
Catechumens, bow down your heads to the Lord.*

Choir or Chanters: *To you, O Lord.*

Priest, in a low voice, says the Prayer for the Catechumens:

Lord, our God, dwelling on high and beholding things below, who for the salvation of mankind sent forth your only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, look down upon your servants the catechumens, who have bowed their necks to you; and count them worthy in due time of the waters of regeneration, the forgiveness of sins and the garment of incorruption; unite them to your holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and number them among your chosen flock.

(Aloud) *That they also with us may glorify your all-honored and majestic name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages.*

Choir or Chanters: *Amen.*

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The litany of the catechumens is a prayer that we break up into small sections and ask God for the protection and guidance of the catechumens - in our parish and everywhere. After each of these requests, we sing, “Lord, have mercy.” Let’s practice singing “Lord, have mercy” again.

When we are trying to do something we’ve never done before, we like it when others pray for us or help us in some way. Have you ever cleaned your room all by yourself? It can be a lot of hard work, can’t it? Would you like it if someone offered to help you? The catechumens in our parish are learning a lot of new things and they appreciate it when we help them too.

We also say prayers for the person who is teaching the catechumens about God. Usually a priest is the one who teaches the catechumens. Do you remember what catechumen means? (Someone who wants to be baptized) Why do you think it's important to pray for the person who is teaching others about God? (We want everyone to learn the correct information and not anything that's wrong - so we ask God to help guide the teacher)

Deacon: *As many as are catechumens, depart; catechumens, depart; as many as are catechumens, depart. Let not any of the catechumens remain. As many as are believers, again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.*

Choir or Chanters: *Lord, have mercy.*

Deacon: *Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by your grace.*

Choir or Chanters: *Lord, have mercy.*

Deacon: *Wisdom.*

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Do your parents let you cook your own food on the stove? (No.) Why do you think they tell you that you're not allowed to use the stove? (Because it's dangerous for us) Will your parents let you use the stove when you're older and have been taught how to use it? (Probably so, but you're not ready for it yet though.)

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1ST - 2ND GRADE

GOALS

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WEEK 12: LITURGY - LITANY OF CATECHUMENS

3RD - 5TH GRADE

GOALS

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LESSON

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A catechumen is someone who has heard about Christ and has said they want to be baptized. Before they are baptized, catechumens are given instruction to prepare them for being Orthodox Christians. They cannot receive Holy Communion until they have been either baptized or chrismated first. When you are baptized as a baby, it is the responsibility of your godparents and parents to teach you about our faith.

What are the Holy Mysteries?

The Holy Mysteries are also known as the sacraments. They are both visible and invisible, meaning that we see one thing but recognize that more is going on than what we simply see with our eyes and hear with our ears. Some of our sacraments are confession, baptism, and Holy Communion.

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When we are trying to do something we’ve never done before, we like it when others pray for us or help us in some way. Have you ever washed all the dishes on the counter for your parents before? It can be a lot of hard work, can’t it? Would you like it if someone offered to help you or tell you the best way to do it? The catechumens in our parish are learning a lot of new things and they appreciate it when we help them too.

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Do your parents let you drive a car yet? (No.) What are some of the reasons why you're not allowed to drive? (Because I'm not tall enough to see the road and touch the pedals on the floor, I haven't learned all the safety rules of the road, my parents don't even let me stay home by myself yet!) Will your parents let you drive a car when you're older and have been taught how to use it? (Probably so, but you're not ready for it yet though.)

We do the same thing for the catechumens. They are not ready for everything yet and so they participate in some things, but not everything yet. We also do our best to pray for them and help them whenever we can so they can learn more about being an Orthodox Christian.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

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LESSON

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When we are striving for something we have never done before, we appreciate when others pray for us or help us in some way. We want to make the best choices and have the strength to keep working towards our goal when we become worn out from all the hard work we've done. There are many temptations in the world to distract us from God and those who are not Orthodox Christians yet do not have the same supports as we do to help us battle these temptations. We pray on behalf of the catechumens and try our best to support them.

We ask God to have mercy on the catechumens because we know how difficult it is to work towards something we've never done before.

We also ask God to guide the person who is teaching the catechumen. Most of the time, a priest is the one teaching the catechumens, but sometimes a specially designated teacher instructs a catechumen. Is it important to know about a subject before you teach someone about it? (Yes! We make sure we know the topic super well before we try to teach it to someone else!) Do you want the person who is teaching you something to teach it to you correctly or with mistakes and wrong information? (We definitely want to learn it the right way the first time!) This is why we also pray for the person who is teaching the catechumens.

Additionally, we pray that the catechumens will be baptized "in due time." The Church is gentle and wise. We recognize that everyone is unique and different. Oftentimes, there is a recommendation for how long a catechumen's time of preparation should take, but there is also the ability to say - this person needs less time or this person needs a little more time to prepare.

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Catechumens are in need of support from all of us, not just from those who teach them. This is why we include these special requests to God on their behalf during the Presanctified Liturgy in Great Lent, which is their final stage of preparation before Baptism. We always desire to help anyone around us who needs a helping hand in any way and recognize that we are all at different stages of our spiritual development.

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HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

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LESSON

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