

WEEK 9: ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

What is almsgiving, fasting, and prayer?
Why do we give alms, fast, and pray?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Bible, handouts, pencils

Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 86-100

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 56-62

ALMSGIVING

Matthew 6:1-4

What do you think the term almsgiving means?

Almsgiving is providing money for the poor, as well as, caring for others who need help for whatever reason. The most important part here is our inward motivation when giving to others. Are we doing it so we can get something out of it for ourselves or are we helping because we genuinely care and want to help others?

The Pharisees fasted, prayed, and gave alms - but they did it outwardly, in order to be recognized by others for doing a good job. Jesus instructs us to help others, pray, and fast as quietly as possible. If someone sees you doing these things, that's fine, but we don't purposely try to show off in a boastful way.

PRAYER

Matthew 6:5-15

Again, we do not want to purposely put a boastful spotlight on ourselves while praying, but our goal is to eventually get to the point where we are praying all the time. Prayer is

our conversation with God as we thank Him for all that He has provided for us and also to seek guidance or comfort from Him.

Jesus provides us with a very specific prayer to say in this chapter. It is a prayer we all know well - the Lord's Prayer. This prayer and the Jesus Prayer (*Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner*) are both prayers we have memorized and can use at all times.

FASTING

Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting is not the Orthodox version of a diet. Yes, there are guidelines when it comes to fasting, but we fast in order to learn self control - we can't have everything we want whenever we want it. We also eat less expensive foods while fasting in order to give the money we didn't spend on ourselves to someone who needs it more than us. It is not easy going to a restaurant and choosing a cheaper, meatless meal instead of our normal favorite dish on a fasting day. Even better yet, is choosing to eat at home instead of going out for dinner that evening.

We live in a world now where we are constantly bombarded with advertising that tells us to buy everything we want. There are consequences to giving in to our every desire. Can we realistically afford to buy everything we want at the store, each and every time? Is it healthy for our body or soul to eat everything that looks and sounds yummy to us?

Jesus instructs us to take care of ourselves and others through almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. As we put all three of these into practice in our daily lives, we always work towards having an inner change of heart when we give to others, pray, and fast.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6 : 9-13

**GLORIFYING
GOD**

Our Father who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy Name.

Thy kingdom come;

Thy Will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

**FOR
OUR
NEEDS**

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

Directions - Your teacher will separate you into groups to work on the following activity together. Our hope is that the discussion within your group will provide each of you with some support from your friends as we approach the upcoming Nativity fast.

ALMSGIVING List some ideas of how you could realistically help others during the Nativity fast and also Great Lent.	PRAYER What is your favorite prayer? Why?	FASTING What is one of your favorite fasting meals when you eat at home? What is your favorite meatless meal when you go out to eat?

WEEK 9: ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

What is almsgiving, fasting, and prayer?
Why do we give alms, fast, and pray?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Bible, handouts, pencils, timelines, tape, scissors, and Pascha at the Duck Pond

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ALMSGIVING

Find and read: Matthew 6:1-4

What do you think the term almsgiving means?

Almsgiving is providing money for the poor, as well as, caring for others who need help for whatever reason.

What are some examples that you've seen someone else do to help others or have done yourself?

PRAYER

Find and read: Matthew 6:5-15

Prayer is our conversation with God as we thank Him for all that He has provided for us and also to seek guidance or comfort from Him. We develop our relationship with God through prayer.

Jesus provides us with a very specific prayer to say. It is a prayer we all know well - the Lord's Prayer.

FASTING

Find and read: Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting is not the Orthodox version of a diet. Yes, there are guidelines when it comes to fasting, but we fast in order to learn self control - we can't have everything we want whenever we want it.

We fast from certain foods on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year, as well as, during the four fasting periods: the Nativity Fast, Great Lent, the Apostles Fast, and the Dormition Fast.

We also refrain from eating at all before the Divine Liturgy in order to prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion.

PASCHA AT THE DUCK POND by Mother Melania

Read the book to the students.

Tape the picture of each animal to the white board, leaving space to write the characteristics of each character below them. How would you describe Rigid Rooster's personality? How would you describe Capers the Cat? How would you describe Henry Hamster? How would you describe Charity the Church mouse?

Which animal had the most impact on everyone else? Which animal did all the other animals love? Why?

Jesus instructs us to take care of ourselves and others through almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. As we put all three of these into practice in our daily lives, we are actively working towards having an inner change of heart. We become more like Charity the Church Mouse - showing kindness, mercy, care, and love to everyone around us.

Fasting teaches us self control - we can't have everything we want whenever we want it. We also eat more simply and less expensive foods so we have money to give to people who have less than us. **Prayer** teaches us to thank God for all that He has provided us and also to seek comfort and guidance from Him. We also think about others as we pray for them as well. **Almsgiving** teaches us to care for others.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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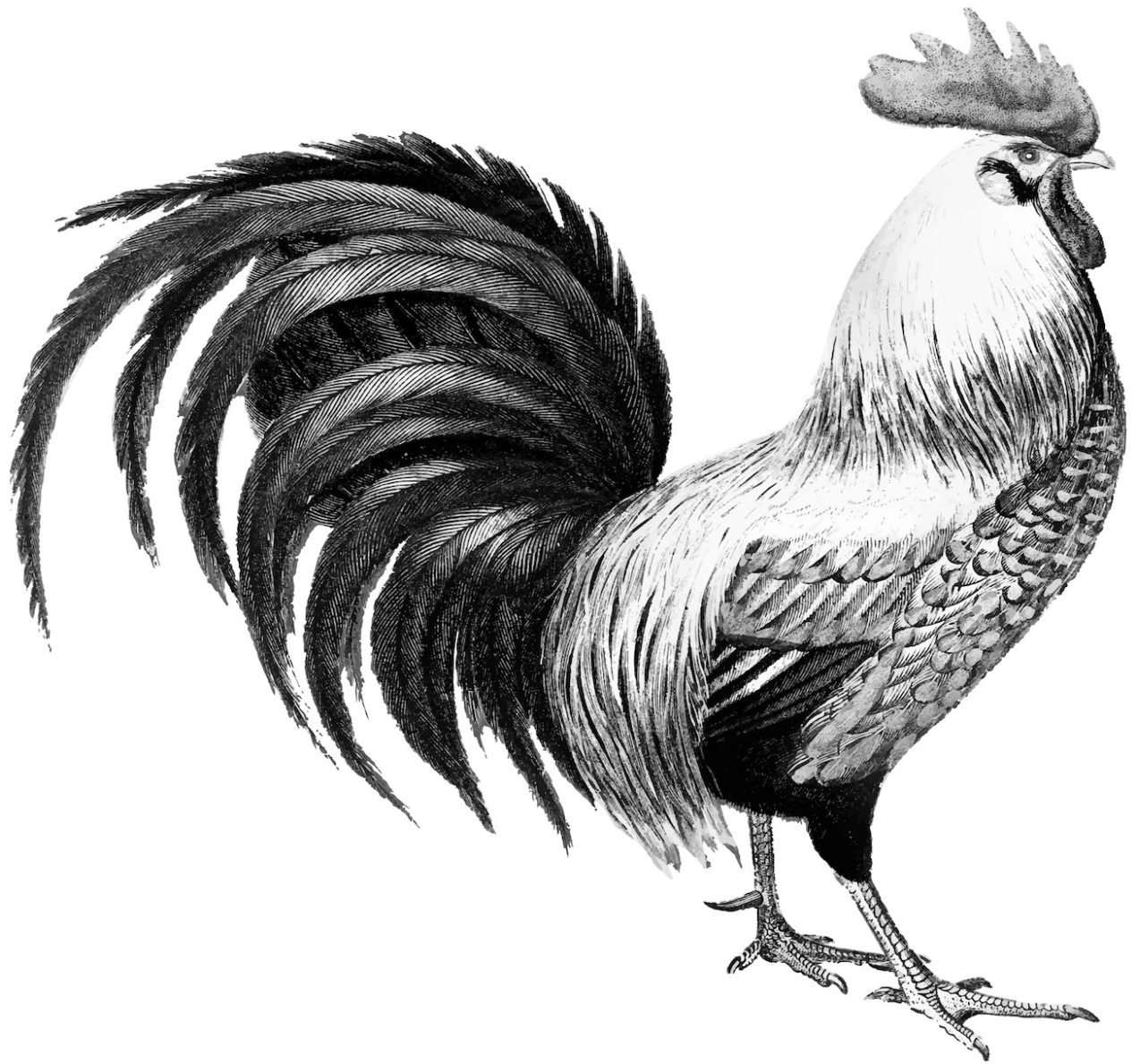


Image: Freepik.com

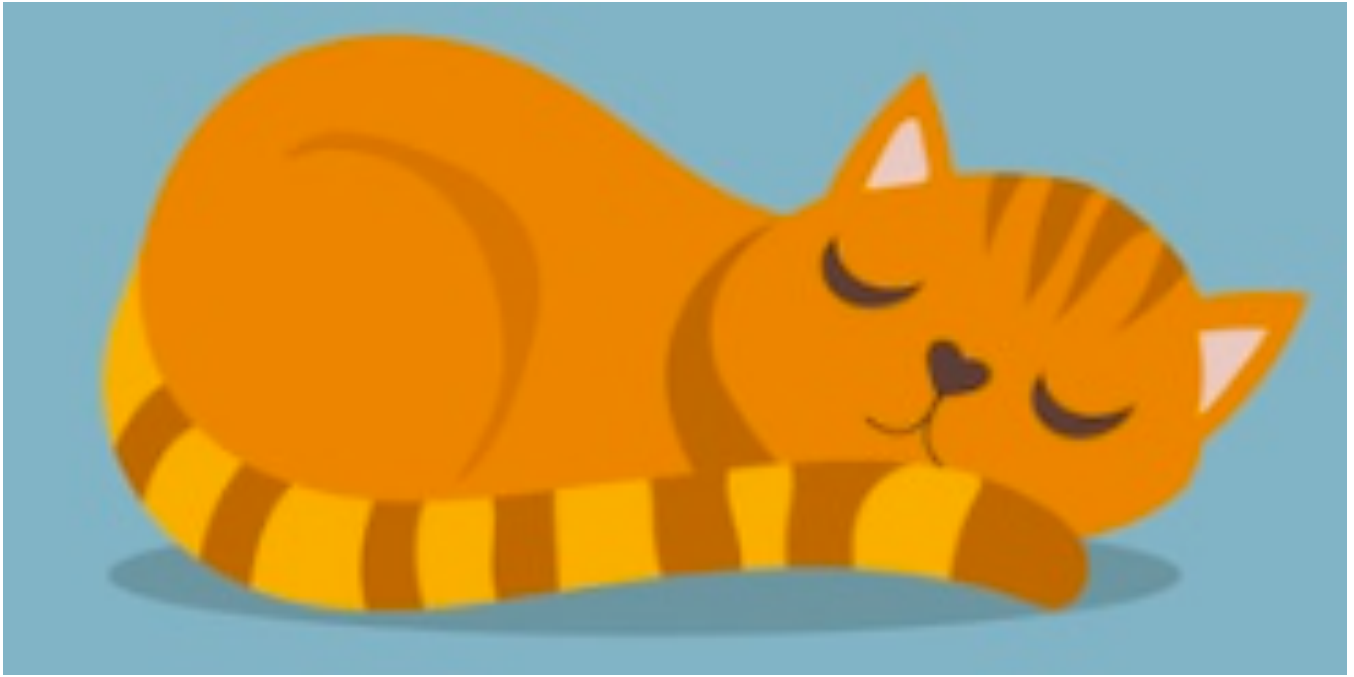


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WEEK 9: ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING

3RD & 4TH GRADE

GOALS

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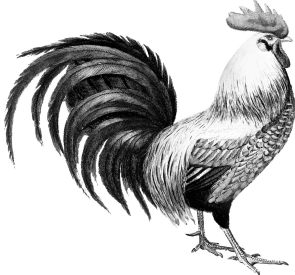
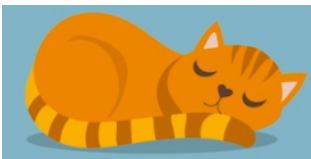


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MATTHEW 6: ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING

PASCHA AT THE DUCK POND by Mother Melania

Directions: After reading the story, discuss which animal had the greatest impact on all the others. Why? Next, write the characteristics of each animal from the book using the word bank below. Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting transform us on the inside and help us to learn kindness, mercy, and love for one another.

RIGID ROOSTER	CAPERS THE CAT	HENRY HAMSTER	CHARITY THE CHURCH MOUSE
			

self centered

caring

loving

strict

thankful

follows rules

doesn't try hard

physically weak

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1ST & 2ND GRADE

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CLASS ROUTINE

Continue routine - move photo, light candle, venerate icon, prayer before beginning lesson

ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING

Read "Pascha at the Duck Pond" by Mother Melania

Jesus taught us that we should take care of people who need help, say prayers, and fast. We take care of others as one of the ways we show love to them. Can you give me some examples from the book when Charity the Church Mouse helped someone else? We say prayers to thank God for all that He has given us and also when we need help. When did the animals say prayers together? Do you know fasting means? Fasting is when we don't eat certain foods, like meat. Our parents teach us how to fast at home on Wednesdays and Fridays, before going to church on Sunday mornings, and during certain times of the year.

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Continue practice singing, "Lord, have mercy" in multiple languages

*If you have time, you can do the helping hands craft

HELPING HANDS CRAFT

Directions: Trace one hand from each child. Let them cut out their hand and write their name on it. Glue everyone's hands together on a large piece of construction paper. Then cut out one heart and glue it on top of all the hands. Brainstorm together how we can help our moms, dads, and grandparents. Write their ideas on the heart. Then hang up their project on the bulletin board in the hallway.



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PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

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