

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITH SAINT LUKE



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

We refer to Saint Luke as the evangelist because he wrote one of the four gospels. In Greek, gospel is evangelion. An evangelist is someone who brings the gospel (good news) of Christ to others.

In this icon, we see Saint Luke actively writing, using the materials available to him during his time. He was a well educated man and his writing reflects his knowledge.

1

GOAL

Review of the synoptic gospels and discuss the purpose of Luke's gospel

2

AT CHURCH

We listen to the gospel being read every Sunday during the Divine Liturgy.

3

AT HOME

Read the daily gospel reading as part of your family prayers or during dinner together



Gospel:
in Greek is "evangelion" ~ meaning "good news" of Christ



Evangelist:
Someone who brings the "good news" to others



Synoptic:
"taking a common view" in reference to Matthew, Mark, and Luke's gospels

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

We are going to focus on the Gospel of Luke in this lesson, but we are also going to quickly review Matthew and Mark as well.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels because all three of them focus on the life, teachings, and miracles of Christ. The Gospel of John is different from the others. His gospel is more theological - explaining to us who Jesus is and why He came.

With the synoptic gospels, each of the writers has a different goal or purpose when they begin writing because of their intended audience. An audience is the person or group of people you are addressing.

Matthew writes to share with the Jews about Christ. He focuses on letting them know that Christ is the Messiah they had long been waiting for and He is the fulfillment of all the prophecies.

Mark writes to the Gentiles (anyone who is not a Jew) about Christ. The Gentiles are not waiting or looking for a Messiah. Therefore, Mark shares



that Christ is the Son of God and focuses on the miracles of Christ in his gospel.

Luke opens his gospel with a dedication to a specific person, Theophilus (a Gentile). He is the only evangelist to write to an individual instead of a group of people. But...in this time period, the practice was to share any writings you received with others - either by showing them, telling them, or copying the writing and then giving a copy to someone else. So, St. Luke wrote directly to Theophilus, knowing he would share the gospel with those around him.

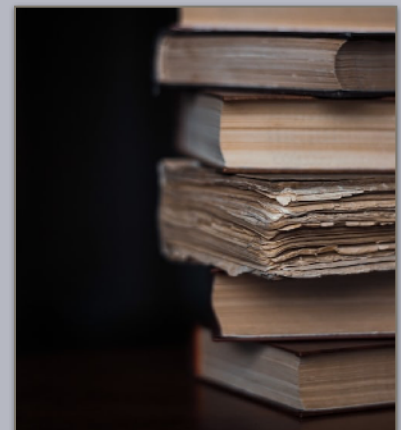
Luke also writes in the style of his period by including the rulers during the time of Jesus. This was how a historian would let the reader know the timeframe of the events shared in the writing.

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[The Remarkable Gospel of St. Luke](#) - Search the Scriptures Podcast

[Crash Course on the Gospels: Conclusion](#) - Search the Scriptures Podcast

The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pages 15 - 21



They did not have fixed years for writing the date like we do today and would place the event in the context of important people that everyone would recognize.

Luke places special emphasis in his gospel upon letting the reader know - Christ came to save the whole world. He especially came for the poor, the sick, the outcasts, those who feel like they are completely alone in the world.

Luke also includes more women in his gospel than any of the other evangelists, such as: Mary & Martha; Elizabeth & Mary, and Anna the Prophetess. He also emphasizes prayer - the gospel opens with Zacharias praying in the Temple and closes with the disciples praying in the Temple; the disciples approach Christ as He's praying; many prayers that we still use today come from Luke's gospel.

ACTIVITY

As a class, create a short story on the white board as you tell a person, real or fictional, about your church school program using the style of Saint Luke's historical writing:

Use Luke 1:1-5 and Luke 3:1-2 as guidance

- Include the name of the person you are addressing
- List any or all of the following in your story - your bishop, priest, deacon, church school director, and teachers (*Why are we doing this? Because this is how the historians would narrow the timeframe for when something happened - by listing well known people*)
- Then write a summary of the most memorable and important moments of our church school program - as both review for the kids and for us to learn what stood out most to them.

EXAMPLE:

It seemed good to us, having participated in the lessons we did, to share our experience with you, most beloved Fr. Joseph, that you may know with certainty those things in which you were told.

In the days of Metropolitan Isaiah, the bishop of the metropolis of Denver, there was a certain priest named Fr. Vasile. He had a vision for his church school program to be united under a central yearly theme. He reached out to Jennifer Hock and asked if she would assist him in this endeavor. With the help of fourteen devoted teachers, they implemented a church school program to learn about the Divine Liturgy the first year and then the gospels the subsequent years.

Our teachers instructed us in prayer, reading of the Word of God side-by-side with the icons of Christ's life, parables, and miracles. We enthusiastically listened as they shared how all of this applied to our lives today.

This is just an example. The kids will likely come up with something completely different. Our goal is for them to understand how Saint Luke is recording the time period in his gospel, as well as, for review and to learn their most memorable moments.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

AT HOME

FOR PARENTS

Illuminate our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy 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 Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen

- A Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture

Teach our children about the gospels:

Where can we learn more about Holy Scripture? Oftentimes Father Vasile will provide insight to each Sunday's gospel during his sermon. Ask your kids questions about Father's sermon or start a conversation on the way home about that day's gospel reading.

There are also several great commentaries on the gospels from - the Church Fathers, Saint Theophylact, Fr. Lawrence Farley, and Dr. Jeannie Constantinou. You can even listen to Dr. Jeannie's podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio in the car and then explain what you learned in the podcast with your kids during dinner.

HOME ACTIVITY #2

Find the daily [gospel reading on the GOARCH website](#) or app, and read it:

Choose one:

- To yourself each day this week
- To your family as they eat dinner each night this week
- During your family prayer time each evening this week

