

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSIONS LESSON PLAN

OUTLINE OF LESSONS FOR TEACHERS (WITH POWERPOINT)

Theme: Sharing Our Faith

Scripture: “As the Father sent me, even so I also send you.” (John 20:21) And “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15: 11-12).

Focus Region: Turkana, Northwestern Kenya

OBJECTIVES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Introduction – The Theme: Sharing Our Faith (3 minutes)

Today is Mission Sunday, and we will explore how the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) spreads the Orthodox faith worldwide by sending missionaries or providing financial support for mission work. Our lesson focuses on the Turkana people in Kenya, who received Christ in 2007 and are now sharing their faith with their neighbors who have not heard the message of God’s love and mercy.

Teach the Scripture Lessons (10 – 15 minutes with discussion)

Introduce the theme of Sharing Our Faith by discussing what the Scriptures say about sharing faith. Use the Scripture passages to explain that to enter into communion with Christ is to become part of the Body of Christ, involving us in God’s mission of redemption. God sent Jesus with a mission; Jesus also sends us with a mission.

KEY POINTS

Redemption

Explain the term “redemption.” Redemption refers to the work of Christ on our behalf, securing our deliverance from sin whereby He purchases us, He ransoms us, at the price of His own life, securing our deliverance from the bondage and condemnation of sin.



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Nations

Clarify that going “to all nations” means “to all peoples” (*ethne* in Greek), referring to all God’s people and creation rather than geographic areas.

Discussion Questions:

- To whom was Jesus sent?
- To whom does Jesus send us?
- How is Jesus’ mission our mission?

Illustrate the Work of Missions with the Example of the Turkana People (Embark on a Journey of Faith video 2:37 minutes, discussion 10 minutes)

Show how mission work is happening around the world today by sharing the story of the Turkana people using the PowerPoint presentation or printed text lesson. Discuss the elements of the story and how the lives of the Turkana people have changed.

Possible Responses:

- **Spiritual:** Hope, faith in a loving, caring God, salvation.
- **Physical:** Education, water (wells), etc.

Discuss

Why are the Orthodox Christians in Turkana are sending out catechists and evangelism teams.

Background Information:

A small team from the Mission Center traveled to Kenya in October 2024 and celebrated with the Turkana people the ordination of a new deacon. They held the liturgy outdoors, under a large tree, because there was no church. His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Eldoret studied theology in America and then returned to Kenya, where he was ordained a priest and then a bishop. He was elevated to the newly created Diocese of Eldoret and Northern Kenya just one year ago.

Explanation of Orthodox Christian Mission Center’s work (5 minutes)

Show a map where the Orthodox Christian Mission Center is active, highlighting the 33 countries and 36 dioceses. Explain that the OCMC sends missionaries from the United States to countries like Kenya, where they work with the hierarchs and local clergy to share messages of God’s love and forgiveness and build up the Body of Christ.



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Key Points:

- Discuss the challenges missionaries face in places that are difficult to reach due to war, instability, visa restrictions, extreme climates, and poverty.
- Highlight the importance of humility, obedience to God's will, and love for all people.

Challenge / Call to Action (5 minutes)

Ask the students how they can share their faith with others. Use provided examples to help them find ways to integrate sharing their faith into their lives and growth in Christ.

Actions:

- Pray for missionaries, catechists, and the work of sharing our faith.
- Distribute coinboxes and explain that the money will help people like the Turkana in Kenya.
- Encourage students to bring a friend to church.
- Encourage students to welcome new people, especially other families and children, into the church.
- Challenge the students to think of other ways to share their faith.



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SCRIPT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL POWER POINT

Slide 1 Title Slide

Slide 2 Prayer:

“God of truth and love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, hear our prayer for those who do not know You. Make us witnesses of Your goodness, full of love, strength, and faith—for Your glory and the salvation of the entire world. Amen.”

Slide 3 Introduce Orthodox Christian Mission Center and Mission Sunday

Today is Mission Sunday when all the Orthodox Churches in America pray for missions. The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is the mission organization for all Orthodox communities in America. OCMC strives to share God’s love and message of salvation to bring people into the fullness of life in Christ. Our lesson today is about the Turkana people in northwestern Kenya.

Slide 4 What does the Bible say about sharing our faith?

“As the Father sent me, even so I also send you.” (John 20:21) and

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15: 11-12)

To enter into communion with Christ, to become part of the Body of Christ entails joining God’s mission of **redemption**. To whom was He sent and what is it God sent Him is to do?

Slide 5 To Whom was Jesus sent:

- God sent Him into the world, to the human race that had fallen away from God.
- God sent Him to bring the message of God’s love and mercy and thereby restore us to the Father.
- God sent Him to offer Himself as a sacrifice.

Jesus came to offer himself to save us from sin and death; by His death, He destroyed death so that He could give us life. Do you remember the hymn we sing at Pascha? “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs, bestowing life.”

To whom does Jesus send us?

- To the world. To “all the nations”, “to all peoples” (Mt. 28:19), to “all creation” (Mk 16:15), to wherever there is someone He made who remains separated from Him and enslaved to a world without God.



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- Definition: **Nations (ethne)**: Clarify that going “to all nations” means “to all peoples” (ethne in Greek), referring to all God’s people and creation rather than geographic areas.

Jesus’s Mission is Our Mission

Sharing our faith with the world is done in love to bring joy and the fullness of life to others. It is central to living the Christian life. This is a daunting commission, and yet it is with hope, for Jesus assures in the verse, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:11-12).

Key Points:

Redemption: Explain the term “redemption.” Redemption refers to the work of Christ on our behalf, securing our deliverance from sin whereby He purchases us, He ransoms us, at the price of His own life, securing our deliverance from the bondage and condemnation of sin.

Slide 6 The Turkana: A story of introduction to and acceptance of the Christian message.

The Turkana people of northwest Kenya are pastoral, nomadic, moving in search of water and grazing land for their herds. Most had not heard of Jesus or the Christian message until the growing Orthodox Church of Kenya reached out to them. OCMC was invited to send a mission outreach team in 2010.

Slide 7 Video: As you watch, look for these key details:

The shaman’s (spiritual leader of the village) openness to the Gospel message

Slide 8

1. After the video, discuss. How did God use the shaman to bring the Gospel message to the Turkana people?
2. The shaman received a message that the visitors had crossed the river (he didn’t think they would do that) and he went to meet them. The water was a sign that their message was good.
3. *Discuss:* How has the life of the Turkana people changed? Spiritually? Physically?
Possible responses: Spiritual: hope, faith in a loving, caring God, salvation. Physical: education, water (wells), etc.



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TURKANA EVANGELISM TEAMS

Slide 9

First ordination in Turkana, with His Grace Neofitos of Eldoret and Northern Kenya and an OCMC team. Fr. Vladimir, who oversees four new Orthodox communities in Turkana, co-celebrated along with four other priests from Turkana. Bishop Neofitos ordained a young man from Turkana a deacon as part of the celebration.

Background information: A small group from the Mission Center and faithful traveled to Kenya in October of 2024 and celebrated with the Turkana people the ordination of a new deacon. They held the liturgy outdoors, under a large tree, because there was no church. His Grace Bishop Neofitos became the bishop to the newly created Diocese of Eldoret just one year earlier.

Slide 10 His Grace Bishop Neofitos ordained a new deacon as part of the celebration.

Slide 11 Evangelism Teams

- The Turkana are sharing the Gospel with ten villages that had not heard the Good News; they are learning now with appointed catechists and traveling priests. There is an urgent need for missionaries who can train more catechists in a year-long program.
- The Turkana accepted the Christian faith through the Holy Spirit, but someone needed to bring the message to them.

Slide 12 Introduce Where the Orthodox Christian Mission Center is active

Show a map where the Orthodox Mission Center is active, highlighting the 33 countries and 36 dioceses. Explain that the OCMC sends missionaries from the United States to countries like Kenya, where they work with the hierarchs and local clergy to build up the Body of Christ where people like the Turkana have never heard the Good News or struggle to survive.

Key Points:

- Discuss the challenges missionaries face in places that are difficult to reach due to war, instability, visa restrictions, extreme climates, and poverty.
- Highlight the importance of humility, obedience to God's will, and love for all people.

Slide 13

Who is my neighbor? Share the Good News with them, give them the opportunity to believe, support those who go as missionaries, go ourselves. Expand the circle of "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). Discuss.



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Slide 14 Call to Action: What can you do to share your Faith?

Ask the students how they can share their faith with others. Use provided examples to help them find ways to integrate sharing their faith into their lives and growth in Christ.

- Support the work of Missions with the OCMC coin boxes.
- Pray for missionaries and catechists who share the Good News with others around the world.
- Join the effort to support the work of Missions in your parish.
- Bring a friend to church (share your faith with your neighbor).
- Welcome visitors. Many new people are coming to our Church.
- What other way can you think of to share your faith?



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