

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSIONS LESSON PLAN

OUTLINE OF LESSONS FOR TEACHERS (WITHOUT 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

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’s 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 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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MISSION SUNDAY LESSON

Theme: Sharing Our Faith

Focus Region: Turkana, Northwestern Kenya

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.”

Introduce the Orthodox Christian Mission Center:

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. They strive 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

What does the Bible say about sharing our faith?

- “As the Father sent me, even so I also send you.” (John 20:21)
- “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 and become part of the Body of Christ, means we are called to join Jesus’ mission of redemption.

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 offer Himself as a sacrifice.
- Jesus came 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.

Jesus’ 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. Jesus assures us in the verse, “These things I have



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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).

How did Jesus love us?

He humbled himself. He was obedient to God’s will and plan for our salvation. Like Christ, we are called to be humble, obedient, and to love one another.

THE TURKANA: A STORY OF FAITH

Introduction:



The Turkana people of northwest Kenya are pastoral, nomadic, and move 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 had been active in this region since 2007 and was invited to send a mission outreach team in 2010.

Watch the Video: Turkana

As you watch, look for these key details:

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

Discussion after the video:

1. 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. How has the life of the Turkana people changed? Spiritually? Physically?



In October 2024, His Grace Neofitos of Eldoret and Northern Kenya and an OCMC team celebrated the first ordination in Turkana. 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 as a deacon during the Divine Liturgy.



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TURKANA EVANGELISM TEAMS



The Turkana people have accepted the Christian faith through the Holy Spirit, but someone needed to bring the message to them. They understand that their neighbors may also become Christians if someone brings the Good News to them. Through a grant from OCMC, fifteen catechists are being trained to serve five Orthodox villages and ten unreached villages. There is an urgent need for missionaries who can train more catechists in a year-long program.

Discussion:

What is our duty as Orthodox Christians to the rest of the world? Expand the circle of “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29).

Ask, “Who is my neighbor?” Are we called to share the Good News with them? Do we want to give them the opportunity to believe?

Do we need to support those who go as missionaries? Are we called to go ourselves?

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is currently active in 33 countries and 36 diocese. We work to establish lasting relationships with hierarchs and leaders in jurisdictions around the world. By opening and maintaining these pathways, we can identify and support missions in areas where the people have not heard the Gospel or are a minority in their region and have little or no resources or opportunity to share their faith.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are there so many places in the world where people don't know Jesus and His love?
2. Why don't more people become missionaries and go to places where people don't know about God?

Challenge/Call to Action: What Can You Do to Share Your Faith?

We can participate in this work by praying for missionaries and other people to come to know Christ and by supporting mission work in places like Turkana and around the world.

Examples of Ways to Share Your Faith:

- Lead the collection of money during Lent with the OCMC coin boxes.
- Host a Coffee/Fellowship Hour as a fundraiser for the work in Turkana.
- Pray for a missionary, take their prayer card home and keep it on your altar.
- Participate in a local mission project. Help with a shelter or soup kitchen.
- Bring a friend to church (share your faith).



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- Welcome visitors. There are many new people coming to our church, some are families with children like you. What could you do to make them feel welcome?
- What other ideas can you think of?

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for the willing hearts who have gone to Turkana, and for the receptive communities who are embracing the faith. Lord, show me how I can be part of this great mission work and share my faith with others.

Additional Possibility:

Ask the Lord how He wants you to be involved. Perhaps you can make Psalm 67 (66 LXX) part of your prayer rule, along with an unreached people group.



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