

Objective:

The students will be able to:

- Express that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is our guidebook to help us live united with Him now and forever.
- Explain how the Bible brings us the joyful message that Jesus has won salvation and eternal life for us.
- Organize previous knowledge about the Bible in a Venn diagram chart.
- Use the Bible to read and study a verse about how Jesus has won eternal salvation for us.
- Use the jigsaw method to teach classmates about how the Bible is God's revelation to man.
- Unpack the entire CF quote through the routes of Conversion, Repentance, Wisdom, Struggle, and Liturgy, finding scriptural references and personal examples to support the meaning.

Time:

Up to three 40 minute lessons

Materials:

- Bibles (enough for every 2 students)
- Chalkboard, chart paper, or white board
- Masking tape
- highlighters
- pencils
- crayons
- copied pages from the Orthodox Study Bible (1753-1755)
- CF theme quote
- 5 pieces of poster board
- magazines
- scissors
- glue
- post-it notes
- Divine Liturgy books

The Lesson Plan:

Opening

Gather the students around the icon corner for the opening prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, open Thou the eyes of my heart, that I may hear Thy word and understand and do Thy will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not Thy commandments from me, but open my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Thy law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom. On Thee do I set my hope, O my God, that Thou shalt enlighten my mind and understanding with the light Thy knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; that in reading the lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For Thou art the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from Thee cometh every good deed and every gift.

Amen. (St. John Chrysostom) Say the theme verse: ***The Bible fills us with eternal joy.*** Ask the students to share what they think this means. Write their ideas on the board.

Introduction

Pair off the students in your classroom. Ask the students what the Bible is. Give them several minutes to “think-pair-share” their answers with their partners. On a piece of chart paper, write the title, “What is the

bible?” Draw a Venn Diagram with the headings, “Old Testament” and “New Testament”. Ask the students to recall what they know about the Bible in general and each testament. Have the students share that information with a neighbor. Ask the students to write their ideas on post-it notes. *(These ideas can include specific books of the bible, specific stories, history of the bible, who wrote the bible, what the bible means to them, etc.)* Take a few minutes to allow the students to share with the class what they discussed with their neighbor and hang their post-it notes on the appropriate section on the venn diagram. *(In the Old Testament, there are books written by prophets, their scribes or persons not known to us. The New Testament was written by some of the Holy Apostles or their scribes or disciples. The Old Testament contains the history of God’s people and the foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus Christ into this world. The New Testament contains the Gospels, which tell us about Christ’s life on earth, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, the beginning of the Church, and the Epistles, the letters written to the early Christian communities by some of the Apostles and Revelation written by St. John, the Evangelist. These authors of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit. That’s why the Bible contains the Word of God.)* Make sure the students are clear on these points. (See the Venn Diagram example for reference.)

Content

- 1) Tell the students that within these books there are many stories and lessons for us, but one most important message. Have the partners turn to 1 John 5:11-12 (page 1703 in the Orthodox Study Bible). Assign students to read these verses. Discuss their meaning *(that Jesus has won salvation and eternal life for us! Eternal life means we will live forever with Christ in the heavenly kingdom. When we think about living forever because of Jesus’ victory over death, we are joyful.)* Continue to read 1 John 5:13. Discuss. *(The words in the Bible bring us this joyful message and proclaim it not just to us now, but to everyone who lived, and will live also, to the end of the world.)*
- 2) Ask the students to recall the story of Adam and Eve. Discuss how Adam and Eve rejected God and did not recognize their own sinfulness. What did God intend for the world originally? *(To be united to Him = Paradise)*. Though we were separated from God by sin, God loves each of His children and offered all of us the chance to be with Him again. How? *(God gave His Son, Jesus to come into this world. Jesus suffered for us and overcame death through the Glorious Resurrection. Through repentance, any of God’s children can turn to Him and accept salvation that Jesus won for us!)*
- 3) Hand each student the pre-copied pages from the Orthodox Study Bible: 1753-1755 (“The Bible: God’s Revelation to Man”). Have the students silently read the introductory paragraph at the beginning. Ask the students to summarize/discuss that paragraph with their partner. Now divide the class into groups of 3. Within the trios, assign each student a different subheading to read: “The Bible Reveals God”, “The Bible Reveals our Need”, and “The Bible Reveals Salvation”. Tell the students that as they are silently reading their assigned section, they are to “talk to the text” and jot down in the margins thoughts that come to mind, feelings that they have, and the “MVP, or their most valuable point”. After giving the students time to read their sections and “talk to the text”, have them regroup with their trios and take turns presenting/teaching their section by sharing their conversations with the text and the MVP.

Activity

- 1) Post the entire theme quote at the front of the room. Read it to the class: "The Bible is a scented garden, delightful, beautiful, it enchants our ears with birdsong in a sweet, divine, and spiritual harmony, it touches our heart, comforts us in sorrow, soothes us in a moment of anger, and fills us with eternal joy." Tell the class that the way that this quote can be true for us as Orthodox Christians is through five routes: Conversion, Repentance, Wisdom, Struggle, and Liturgy. Write these words on the board and take time to briefly discuss their meaning. *(Conversion – commitment to Christ and all of his teachings, Repentance – turning away from sin and asking forgiveness, Wisdom – knowledge, Struggle – deals with evil and resisting evil, Liturgy – contains passages from the Bible, rite of worship).*

- 2) Divide the class into five groups. Give each group a piece of poster board. Assign each group one of the routes addressed above (Conversion, Repentance, Wisdom, Struggle, Liturgy). Working within their groups, have the students find example scriptures, books from the Bible, and passages from the Divine Liturgy book to support their “route” to being filled with eternal joy. Have the students use their assigned “route” as the title for their poster and record their findings and thoughts on the poster. Have the students keep in mind HOW their “route” can be discovered in the bible through the complete CF quote above and what that “route” means to them personally. Allow the students to use drawings, magazine cut outs, scriptures, personal examples, etc. to illustrate their points.
- 3) Allow each group the chance to present their poster in front of the rest of the class. When all groups have finished with their presentations, post their work in the classroom as a reminder of the theme for the rest of the church school year. Remind the students that each of the posters represent how the Bible fills us with eternal joy.

Closing

Ask the students to share with a partner what they learned about the CF theme and what the Bible means to them: “The Bible fills us with eternal joy!” Remind the students that Jesus has won salvation and eternal life for us. The Bible brings us this joyful message and proclaims it not just to us now, but to everyone who lived, and will live also, to the end of the world. The story of salvation makes our own lives have meaning. Our lives have purpose because He lives. We see how we can be a part of His plan for salvation, and we come to know His peace and love. In knowing God, we gain eternal life. When we know God, we know eternal life and joy – eternal joy. The Bible offers us the chance to know God and eternal joy. Close with “The Lord’s Prayer” in the icon corner.

Optional Additional Activity

- 1) Have the students turn to pages 1757 – 1766 in their Orthodox Study Bibles, entitled, How to Read the Bible. Ask the students to read the first section silently. Take time to discuss this introduction.
- 2) Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group to read one of the following sections of the article: “Reading the Bible with Obedience”, “Understanding the Bible through the Church”, “Christ, the Heart of the Bible”, and “The Bible as Personal”.
- 3) Provide each group with poster board, markers, colored pencils, magazines, etc. to use in summing up their assigned section from the article in a visual display. After allowing appropriate time to organize, understand, and complete their poster, have the groups present their poster, teaching the rest of the class about the section they were assigned to read.