Atmavinte Niravil - 6

ON THE PATH OF WORD OF GOD



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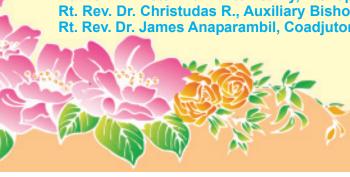
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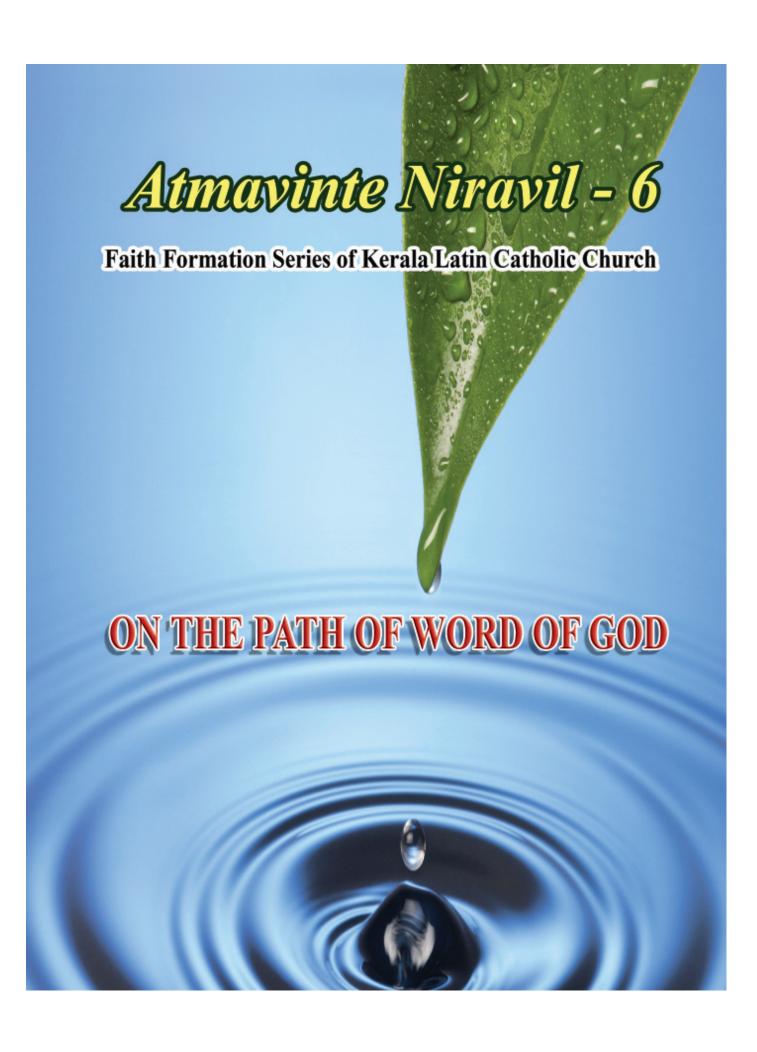
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MESSAGE

Preserving perpetually fresh the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to his apostles "go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15), the Church always holds in high esteem the Faith Formation, the essential element in the process of evangelization, as a means to keep alive the proclamation and transmission of the Word of God to the future generation.

Emphasizing the significance of catechetical ministry, St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation Catechesi Tradendae, exhorts: "Quite early on, the name Catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the Body of Christ" (CT 1). Catechesis enables the faithful to inculcate God's grace in their day today lives, to experience the invisible power of God through the celebration of the sacraments within the community and to bear witness to it with self-denial.

Noting the prime and vital role of the catechism texts in the Faith Formation process, KRLCBC's (Kerala Regional Latin Catholic Bishops Council) Commission for Catechetic took a bold step in forming these texts in vernacular language from standard 1 to XII in the year 2007. The content presentation of these texts are noteworthy and needs to be appreciated; its presentation is simple and elegant and used modern teaching techniques. Care has been taken to depict true beliefs along with the inclusion of the history of the Latin Catholic Church and the special characteristics of the sacraments. Sensing the need of the modern epoch, these texts are now translated into English, which further widens the scope of these texts. I pen down my sincere appreciation to the

catechetical departments of Archdiocese of Trivandrum and Diocese of Calicut for initiating this venture. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas, Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez and Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli and their colleagues who helped in translation, correction, DTP and page layout.

I extend my good wishes to all the children who desire to deepen their faith through faith formation. May you like Jesus grow and become strong, be filled with wisdom and the favour of God be upon you' (cf. Luke 2:40). Let God's light shine upon each one of you!

Trivandrum
1st May 2018
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

Archbishop SoosaPakiam M. President, KRLCBC Archbishop of Trivandrum



All those who believe in Christ are constantly called to deepen their faith through faith formation, the essential phenomenon that moulds a mature faith and enables the faithful to proclaim vigorously. Faith formation is indeed the prime and vital mission of the Church and therefore it is an essential moment in the process of evangelization (cf. *General Directory for Catechesis* 63; *Catechesi Tradendae* 18).

None in this cosmos remain as individual entities but as part and parcel of communities. As we are commissioned by Jesus "to go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15), we just cannot ignore our mission of being the proclaimers and protagonists of the Kingdom of God, which is based on truth and justice. As the members of Christ's community we are obliged to live an exemplary life according to the Gospel.

Faith formation text books play a vibrant role in the formation of faith in the lives of faithful. Taking into consideration the significance of text books in faith formation, KRLCBC (Kerala Regional Latin Catholic Bishops Council), Commission for Bible and Catechesis did a wonderful work of creating text books in vernacular language from class 1 to XII. Deeming it as the need of the time, the Commission translated these text books into English, which is coordinated by the catechetical departments of Archdiocese of Trivandrum and Diocese of Calicut.

At this juncture, I deem it fit to place on record my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas, Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez and Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli for their untiring works and leading role in carrying on this translation. I also thank all the translators for their strong will power and hard work. Hoping these text books would shape the characters of the students and teachers on the basis of gospel, I present these books happily for the use of everyone.

Kochi 1st May 2018 Feast of St. Joseph the Worker Bishop Joseph Kariyil
Chairman
KRLCBC Commission for
Catechetics

MESSAGE

"To begin with, it is clear that the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right. On the one hand, it is certainly a duty springing from a command given by the Lord and resting above all on those who in the new covenant receive the call to the ministry of being pastors. On the other hand, one can likewise speak of a right: from the theological point of view every baptized person, precisely the reason of being baptized, has the right to receive from the Church instruction and education enabling him or her to enter on a truly Christian life" (*Catechesi Tradendae* 14).

KRLCBC Commission for Catechesis, in its whole hearted efforts owning this mind of the Mother Church regarding catechesis, deemed it necessary to present the Catechism texts in languages more comfortable to the students. So, the translation of the current vernacular text into English and Tamil was included in the decennial plan presented in the Vallarpadam Mission Congress and BCC Convention as one of the primary objectives to be achieved. Moreover, constant plea from the part of students and their parents as well as the teachers necessitated this huge venture.

The great and praise worthy efforts invested by the Pastoral Ministry of Latin Archdiocese of Trivandrum under the direction of Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas and Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli and by the diocese of Calicut under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez towards the realization of this objective have been of immense worth. Their service to the formation of the new generation in the Latin Church of Kerala goes gratefully and proudly marked. This will go a long way to realize the specific aim of catechesis as St. Pope John Paul II says: "to develop, with God's help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful young and old... Catechesis aims therefore at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God's word, so that the whole of a person's humanity is impregnated by that word" (Catechesi Tradendae 20).

On behalf of the Chairman of the Commission for Catechetics and its members my heart overwhelms with great appreciation for and deep gratitude to all those who toiled to make this dream come true. May God bless them and reward them with the joy of seeing the new generations "to maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

Kochi 1st May 2018 Feast of St. Joseph, the Worker Rev. Dr. Joy Puthenveetil Srecretary KRLCBC Commission for Catechetics

GRATITUDE

The word Catechesis, derived from the Greek word 'katekhesis' means 'echo;' implying that as catechists, we echo the teachings of Christ and of the apostles. Catechism texts, playing a vital and inevitable role throughout the faith formation process, must be biblically, theologically and doctrinally reliable and infallible; thus enabling us to proclaim with Jesus, "My teaching is not mine but his who sent me" (John 7:16).

KRLCBC (Kerala Regional Latin Catholic Bishops Council), Commission for Catechetics was authorized to consolidate the contents and to formulate catechism texts for the usage of the faithful of Latin Catholic Dioceses in Kerala. The principal task of this commission was to review and evaluate the biblical and theological contents and doctrinal accuracy of the texts for children and youth; as a result of which catechism texts for standard 1 to 12 was formulated in Malayalam and implemented for usage since 2007. Taking into consideration, the dire need of the modern era, now these texts are translated into English for further usage.

With appreciation we place on record our sincere gratitude to Archbishop Soosa Pakiam M, the President of KRLCBC and Bishop Joseph Kariyil, the Chairman, KRLCBC Commission for Bible and Catechetics and Rev. Dr. Joy Puthenveetil, Secretary, KRLCBC Commission for Catechetics. We are indebted to the translators for their competence and hard work, especially Rev. Fr. Tony Hamlet A. for the translation of this text. We are also very thankful to all those who corrected the texts. A special thanks to Mrs. Reena Shabu, Mrs. Sahayamary Delvan, Ms. Francisca T and Mrs. Sophi Godfrey for DTP work, page layout and graphics and to Chackala printers.

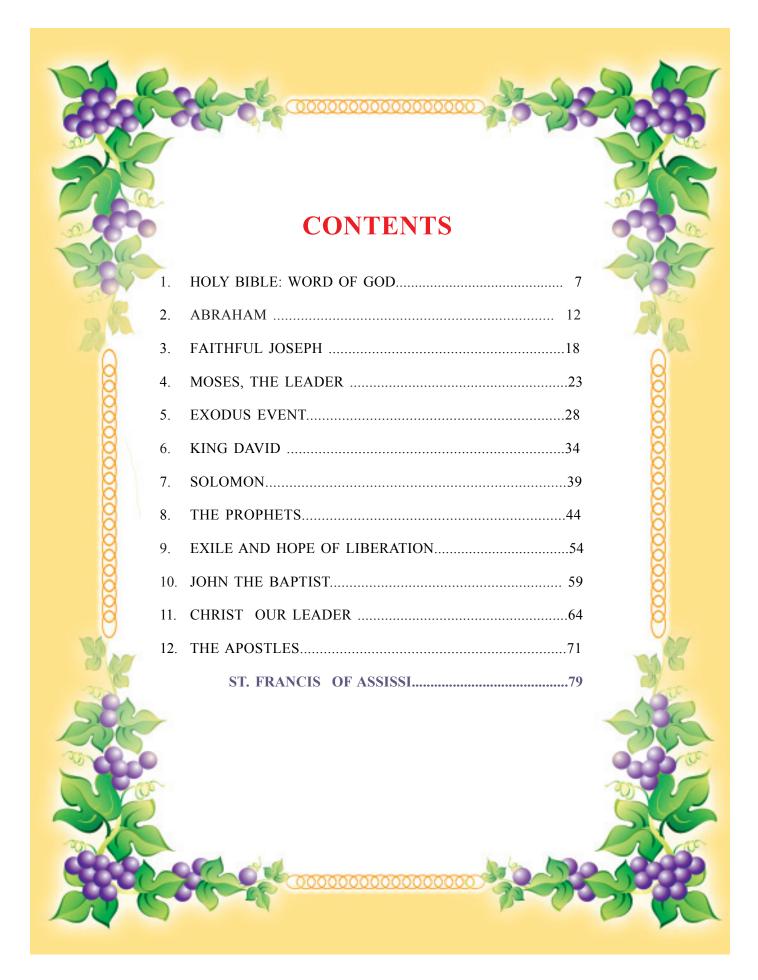
Bringing the entire nations to Jesus and assisting everyone to have a personal relationship with him will take place only when we, the faithful deepen our faith through faith formation, have a very personal relationship with him, which in turn strengthens us to proclaim genuinely the message of the Gospel with joy and courage; and thus attracting the entire people to him. Let the light of Jesus reflect through these texts and let everyone who use this text be enlightened by his divine light.

Trivandrum and Calicut

1st May 2018

Feast of St Joseph, the Worker

Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli



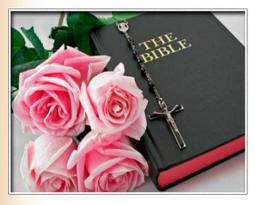


Lesson One

HOLY BIBLE: WORD OF GOD

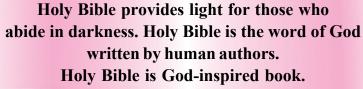


Thomas was an obedient and devoted boy. One day, while returning home after tuition, there happened to be strong wind and heavy rain. He was worried as he couldn't reach his home. By the time the rain stopped, it was too dark. He started to walk along the riverbed. As he was frightened, he cried aloud to God. All of a sudden, the moon that was covered with dark clouds, started to shed its light upon the earth. Overwhelmed with joy, he walked home singing praises to God.



Our life is a journey - a journey that is filled with number of hurdles, unpleasant experiences and misguiding evil powers. What will we do then? We have to turn ourselves to God the Father, who is ready to show the way even in the darkness. He always walks with us; talks with us. The Holy Bible contains God's words.







What is Holy Bible?

Holy Bible is a sacred book. It is the holy book of Christians. It is not merely a book like other books. It is the account of God's actions in the world and his purpose for whole creation.

Holy Bible is written through the constant assistance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit and accepted by the Church.

Holy Bible is the Word of God written by the human hands.

"The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

(Hebrews 4:12)

Holy Bible depicts the history of God's relationship with humans.

Bible means 'book.' The word 'bible' is derived from the Greek word '*Biblia*,' which means 'small books.' The word 'bible' is found for the first time in the writings of St. Clement.

Old Testament - New Testament

The Holy Bible has two parts:

- i) Old Testament
- ii) New Testament

Old Testament contains 46 books.

The content of Old Testament is the history of God's chosen race, the Israel.

New Testament is the fulfillment of Old Testament. It contains 27 books.

The content of New Testament is the salvation brought through Jesus, the Son of God.

Old Testament and New Testament combined together have 73 books.

Why do we need the Holy Bible?

In the modern world, we communicate our messages to our friends through letters, phone calls, emails, etc., which flourish and strengthen our friendships. Similarly Holy Bible enables us to deepen our relationship with God the Father, and we speak to God through Holy Bible.

It also teaches us to establish God's Kingdom deeply rooted in justice.



Holy Bible is a library that contains 73 books.

Holy Bible was written over a span of 1400 years by 40 writers.

Traditionally it is believed that
Old Testament was written in Hebrew language
and New Testament in Greek language.

Holy Bible was the first book ever printed in the world.

Johann Gutenberg from Germany was the first one to print the Holy Bible in the year 1456.

Holy Bible is considered as world's most printed, most translated, most widely distributed and most-read book of all time.

St. Clement named the sacred book as Holy Bible.

How to approach Holy Bible?

We have to approach it respectably.

We have to read it faithfully.

We have to grasp it carefully.

We have to receive it lovingly.

We have to live it loyally.

We have to proclaim it devotely.

Let us find answers

- 1. What is the meaning of the word 'Bible'?
- 2. How many books are there in the Holy Bible?
- 3. Where do you find the first usage of the word 'Bible'?
- 4. How many parts are there in the Holy Bible?
- 5. How do you approach the Holy Bible?

Let us sing together

God's word is Bible; God's inspired book is Bible.



Holy Spirit inspired written book is Bible. Have to faithfully and respectably read Bible.

God's loving message to humans is Bible; Lamp to the feet and light to the path is Bible.



Let us remember the Word of God

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).



God our loving Father,

give us the power to live according to your Word.



Let us memorize

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" (St. Jerome).



Lesson Two

ABRAHAM



In our day today life, we may come across people searching for jobs. We may also notice people migrating in and out of our country in search of jobs to fulfill their basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, etc.,



Before Christ, sometime around 2000 BC, there lived a nomad (wanderer) whose name was Abram. He was born in the city of Ur at Mesopotamia. He was the son of Terah. While staying and taking care of his sheep at Haran, God called him (Genesis 12:1-3).

The Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him. He reached the land of Canaan. It is in Canaan, God made a covenant with Abram: "I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:5).

The Lord said: "No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham" (Genesis 17:5).

The name 'Abraham' means 'Father of nations.'



Do you have brothers and sisters?

How interesting it is to play with them? Have you ever noticed a house without children?

Let us come across a family that has no children.

Abraham and his wife Sarah were at their old age. They did not have children.

Yet Abraham strongly believed in God, who is faithful in His promises. Years went on.

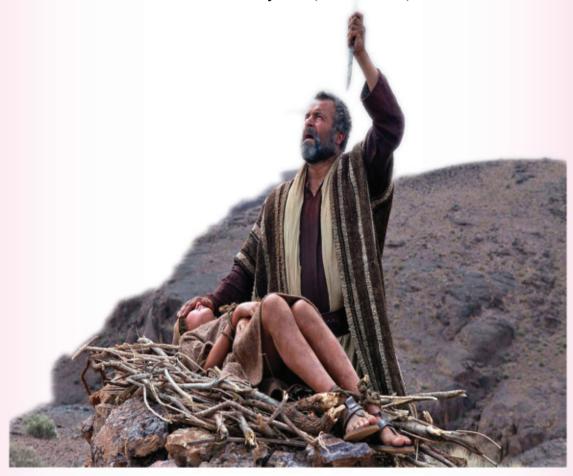
God gave a son to Abraham in his old age.

"Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him" (Genesis 21:3).

The name "Isaac" means "the one who laughs."

Abraham's Loyalty and Obedience

God said to Abraham, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you" (Genesis 22:2).



So Abraham rose early in the morning, went to Mount Moriah with Isaac, built an altar and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar. He took the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called him from the heaven, and said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me" (Genesis 22:12).

Abraham proved his loyalty and obedience by giving his most dearest and valuable thing to God.

As per the command of the Lord, Abraham left his country, his kindred and father's house to the alien land.

> Even in his old age, when God said, his barren and aged wife Sarah would bear a son, he believed it strongly.

He did not hesitate to offer his son, his only son Isaac to God as per His command.

Since Abraham lived trusting in God,
God raised him as 'the Father of Nations.'

As Abraham gave his most dearest, most valuable and everything he owned to God, let us also surrender ourselves completely to God. Moreover, let us also share our most dearest and valuable things with our friends.

Whoever shows loyalty and obedience to God as Abraham did,
He will bless them. His ways are great and marvelous.

Let us preserve the faith that we received;
and grow in it every day.

Let us also assist others to grow in faith.

Let us find answers

- 1. What did God demand from Abraham at Haran?
- 2. What promise did God give to Abraham?
- 3. How did God test Abraham's faith?
- 4. What is the meaning of the name 'Abraham'?
- 5 What does Abraham teach us?

Combine with suitable words

Abraham	Wife of Abraham
Isaac	Father of Nations
Sarah	One who laughs
God	Abraham's offering
Mount Moriah	Revelation

State whether the statement is right or wrong

- 1. Abraham offered burnt offering at Mount Tabor.
- 2. Isaac is Abraham's adopted child.
- 3. Sarah was barren and was advanced in years.
- 4. Abraham was born in the city of Ur.

Prepare a list of people in your parish who have offered their most dearest ones to God as Abraham did.

Priest / Religious	Laity / Those who lead family life



Let us sing together

Loyalty we need; faith we need; As these are most pleasing to God. God, the Father called Abraham Since he was most loyal to God.

Never Abraham did hesitate to offer His son as burnt offering to God. God, the Father showered His blessing upon him Since he was pleased in Abraham.



Let us remember the Word of God

God said to Abraham, "I will make your name great so that you be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).



God our Father, teach us to have faith in you and to live according to your ways.



Let us memorize

"It is great honour, great glory to serve Thee and to despise all for Thy sake" (Imitation of Christ - Thomas A Kempis).



Lesson Three

FAITHFUL JOSEPH



We have come across Abraham and Isaac. Isaac had two children – Esau and Jacob. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are our ancestors.

Jacob had twelve children; and Joseph was his eleventh child. Jacob loved Joseph more than any other of his children.



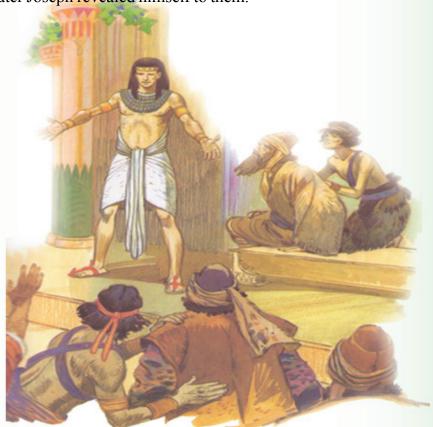
But when his brothers realized that their father loved Joseph more than all his brothers, they hated him. Once, Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. Joseph reached there to see if it was well with his brothers and with the flock. The jealous brothers conspired to kill him. But they did not kill him; rather they sold him to the merchants who were on their way to Egypt. Thus Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh bought him as slave from the merchants. Joseph was very faithful in his works and so he found favour in his master's sight, and he made Joseph overseer of his house.

Joseph was handsome and beautiful and so Potiphar's wife forced him to lay with her. But Joseph did not sin as he feared God. Angered Potiphar's wife spread false claim that he seduced her. Potiphar put him into the prison. But God was with Joseph.



Once, Pharaoh of Egypt had a dream. The magicians of Egypt and all its wise men failed to interpret it. Joseph had a special talent to interpret the dreams. So he rightly interpreted the dream of Pharaoh. Joseph warned Pharaoh of severe famine that will follow the land. Pleased with Joseph, Pharaoh released him from the prison, and set him over all the land of Egypt (cf. Genesis 41:41).

As predicted by Joseph, there was severe famine all over the land. Without food everyone was extremely hungry. But in Egypt plenty of grains were stored as per Joseph's order. The entire world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain. Jacob's children also came down to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph recognized his brothers, but his brothers did not recognize him. Later Joseph revealed himself to them.



When Joseph's brothers came to know that he was the ruler over all the land of Egypt, they got frightened. They thought he would take revenge, but Joseph said to his brothers, "Do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:45).

Joseph unconditionally forgave his brothers even though they did harm to him. Moreover, he brought his father and brothers to Egypt to stay with him. That is how the Israelites came to Egypt.

The forgiving character of Joseph has to be a great example to us. Like Joseph, we should keep ourselves away from sinful situations; and act continuously for the good of the society.

Faithful Joseph is a great example to us.

He was god-fearing and a just man.

He kept himself away from the sinful situations.

He forgave and helped his brothers even though they did harm to him. Joseph's life teaches that God never abandon those who put their trust in Him.

Let us find answers

- 1. Who is Joseph's father?
- 2. How did Joseph reach Egypt?
- 3. Why was Joseph imprisoned?
- 4. How did Joseph become the ruler of Egypt?
- 5. What role model does Joseph's life give us?

1. Joseph put his trust in God.

- 6. Elaborate the qualities that you see in Joseph as a ruler?
- 7. How can we keep ourselves away from the sinful situations that we see in the society?

Five qualities that we see in Joseph

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Make the pictures in order









No:

No:

No:

No:

Let us sing together



From sinful situations – we Have to rush ourselves away. For the love of God – we Have to avoid the sins.

When our brethren harm us – we Have to forgive them patiently. To do good for others – we Have to find opportunities.



Let us remember the Word of God

"All things work together for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28).



Heavenly Father, teach me to forgive sincerely those who trespass against me.



Let us memorize

"There is no holiness without suffering" (St. Francis Sales).



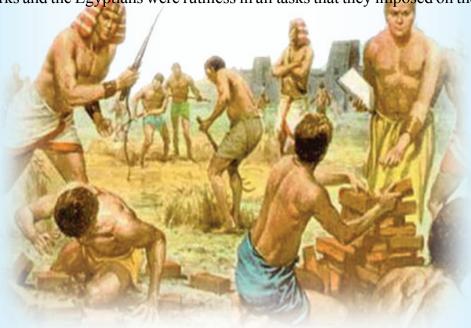
Lesson Four

MOSES, THE LEADER



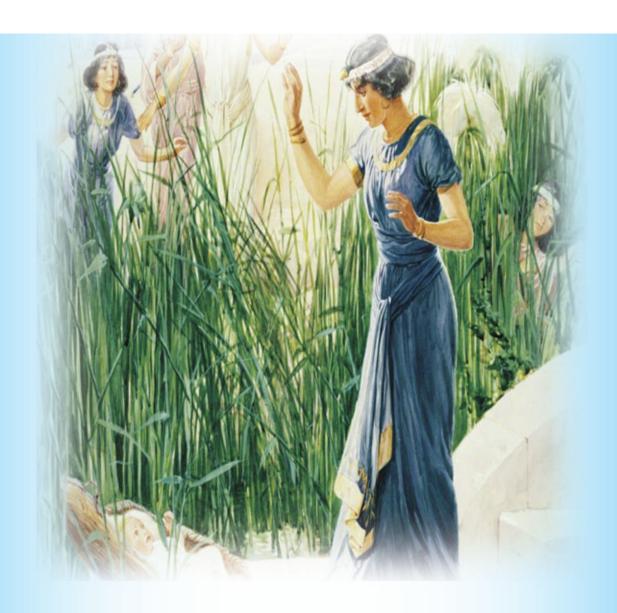
Jacob and his children, who came down to Egypt during the reign of Joseph, settled themselves down in Egypt. They were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong. Seeing their rapid growth, Egyptians were frightened.

As years went on, the Egyptians made Israelites as slaves. They were forced to do hard works and the Egyptians were ruthless in all tasks that they imposed on them.



Birth of Moses

At that time, the king of Egypt, Pharaoh issued an order against the Israelites: 'every boy that is born to the Hebrews, shall be killed.' The king severely implemented this rule among the Israelites. It was at this time, a Hebrew woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months.



When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river Nile. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river Nile, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she felt pity for him and so decided to nurse the child. She entrusted the child to a woman, who was his mother. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses because she said, 'I drew him out of the water.' Moses lived with her in the palace with all luxuries.

Moses knew that he was a Hebrew. One day, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew; he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian. There, he lived pasturing the flock of Jethro, the priest of Midian. Later Moses married the daughter of Jethro

Call of Moses

Egyptians still oppressed the Israelites. The Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. God heard their groaning and took notice of them.

One day Moses was pasturing the flock at Mount Horeb. Suddenly he saw a flame of fire out of a bush. God spoke to Moses from the burning fire: "The cry of Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:9-10).

Moses, who was slow of speech and slow of tongue, placed his weaknesses before God. He informed God that he is slow of tongue, and the Israelites will not believe and obey him. But God strengthened Moses, and He gave Aaron as Moses' assistant. Then God said: "I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do" (Exodus 4:15).

Moses was called and appointed by God to deliver Israelites from the Egyptians, and to bring them up to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites.

Moses delivers Israelites

God performed plenty of miracles through Moses. God's powerful hand was always with Moses. Moses placed his demand before the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, to free the people of God, Israelites from Egypt. But Pharaoh did not agree to that proposal. Moreover, he doubled the oppression towards Israelites. But God did not abandon His people, rather through Moses He sent ten plagues one after another. Finally, Moses delivered the Israelites out of the slavery from Egypt and led them towards Canaan.

To lead the Israelites to Promise Land, Moses dedicated his entire life to God. God established a covenant with Israelites at Mount Sinai through Moses. According to this covenant, Israelites were God's chosen people and Yahweh was their God. Through Moses God also gave Ten Commandments to His people, Israel.

Moses was a great leader chosen by God to deliver His people, Israel.

Like the Israelites who were oppressed under slavery in Egypt, let us also find out the elements of slavery that the people experience in today's world, and try to propose the solutions to resolve this slavery.

Find out Ten Plagues that God sent upon the people of Egypt.

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10.			

Let us find answers

- 1. What is the meaning of the name 'Moses'?
- 2. Why did Moses escape to Midian?
- 3. Why did God choose Moses?
- 4. What is the lesson that we learn from the life of Moses?
- 5. When Moses acknowledged his weaknesses, God strengthened him. Find out how are you going to resolve your weaknesses.
- 6. Who is your favourite leader? What are the qualities you find in that leader?

Let us sing together



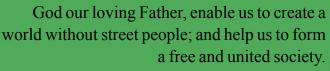
To implement His will, When God call us We have to show our willingness To accept it with courage.

At time when God calls We should never ever say excuses He will provide us talents, Guide us and edifies our path.

Let us remember the Word of God

"Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak" (Exodus 4:12).

Let us pray



Let us memorize

"The prime aim of routine activities is to fulfill the will of God" (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton).

Lesson Five



EXODUS EVENT



To liberate themselves from the slavery of Egypt, the people of Israel started their journey under the leadership of Moses towards the land of Canaan. Canaan was a prosperous land.



Our life is also a pilgrimage:

From slavery to freedom; From sin to salvation; From darkness to light;

From death to life;
From our worldly life to life eternal.

The Experience of Passover

The Tenth Plague that was sent through Moses struck down the entire first born in the land of Egypt. Angel of destruction passed over the houses of Israelites at Egypt. He spared the houses of Israelites and struck down the houses of Egyptians. There was a loud cry in Egypt. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, "Rise up, go away from my people, both of you and the Israelites" (Exodus 12:31).

In commemoration of this day, God insisted Israelites to celebrate Passover every year. The word 'Passover' means 'passing over.'

Having completed 430 years under slavery in Egypt, the people of Israel started their journey under the leadership of Moses towards the land of Canaan.

The Exodus experience is the foundation of Israel's experience of God and its transformation.

Crossing the Red Sea

Keeping in mind the safety of Israelites, God led them towards the Red Sea. When the king of Egypt was told that the people of Israel had fled, he had his chariot ready and took his army with him. Seeing the army of Egyptians advancing towards them, in great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They also murmured against Moses. After strengthening the people of Israel, Moses prayed to the Lord. Then the Lord said, "you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground" (Exodus 14:16). Then Moses stretched out his hands over the sea. The waters were divided. And the sea turned to dry land. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground and reached safely on the other side.

The Egyptians followed the Israelites. When they reached the middle of sea, and at once the sea returned to its normal depth and covered the entire army of Pharaoh; not one of them remained. Seeing the great works the Lord had done for them, the people of Israel and Moses sang a song to the Lord. This song is known as 'the Song of Moses.'

Water at Marah

After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites went three days in the wilderness and found no water. The water that was available at Marah was bitter. The people again complained against Moses. Moses cried out to the Lord; and the Lord showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet (cf. Exodus 15:22-27).

The word 'Marah' means 'bitter' or 'hardened.'

Manna and Quails

The people of Israel reached the wilderness of Sinai. There they did not get food to eat. In their agony God again intervened. He satisfied them by providing Manna from heaven in the morning and quails in the evening.

Water from the Rock

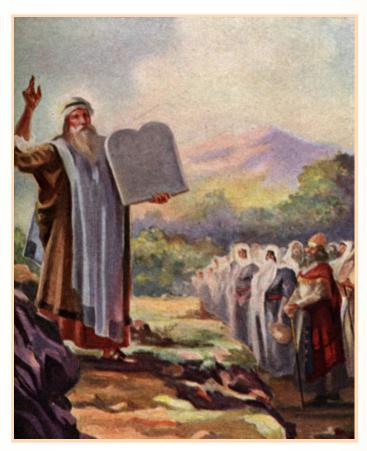
From the wilderness of Sinai, the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed towards Rephidim and camped there. But there was no water for them to drink. The people complained and quarreled against Moses. Having heard the cry of Israelites, the Lord said to Moses to strike the rock that He had shown with his staff. The people were satisfied by drinking the water that flowed from the rock. Since the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, that place is called 'Meribah' (cf. Exodus 17:7).

'Meribah' means 'quarrel.'

Covenant at Mount Sinai

When the people of Israel entered Mount Sinai, God made a covenant with them through Moses and raised them to the status of God's own people. The Lord said, "If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the people" (Exodus 19:5).

Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all His ordinances; and all the people answered in one voice that they will do what the Lord has spoken (cf. Exodus 24:3).



To live according to the covenant God had given them Ten Commandments. These Ten Commandments remind us to adore the Lord throughout our life and to protect our fellow human beings, standing firm in justice.

The covenant at Mount Sinai makes two things very clear:

- 1. The concern of the Lord to reach out to the people of Israel, who were brought from Egypt to the country of Canaan.
- 2. The duty of the Israelites to live according to the Commandments of the Lord.

The people of Israel are chosen by God through the covenant and they are called People of God. When they break the covenant they lose the status of People of God. This status as People of God is both a gift and duty given by God.

The people of Israel become God's own people through election and covenant. The moment they act against the covenant, they lose the status of God's own people. This status is God's free gift to them and it is also their duty to remain in that status.

The journey of Israelites, which were filled with hurdles and sorrows, is a sign of unity. They stayed together by loving and protecting each other, and by worshiping and praising the Lord. God expressed His love towards His people at various situations. At the time of danger, He was their strength. In various forms of nature - as the pillar of fire by night and as the pillar of cloud by day - He led them safely. He always had concern for His people. In our life journey, God is always with us.

Find out and write down:

The miracles performed by God for Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Canaan.

Discuss

God with His people – Exodus 33:12-17

Let us find answers

- 1. What is the meaning of the word 'Passover'? Why do Israelites celebrate Passover?
- 2. How did God protect the Israelites in their journey through Red Sea?
- 3. How did God satisfy the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai?
- 4. Why did God give Ten Commandments to the Israelites?
- 5. State that Exodus Event shows the concern of the Lord towards His people, Israel.

Let us sing together

Life is a journey – in this journey God is our Guide.
As the pillar of fire and cloud, He will lead us.

Even if plenty of hurdles follow, God will strengthen us. To the land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaan, God will lead us.



Let us pray

Lord, lead us towards peace and unity from the relationships of disharmony and quarrels.

Amen.





Let us remember the Word of God

"The Lord is my strength and my might, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him" (Exodus 15:2).

Let us memorize

"Go wherever you want. Search whatever you like. But you will never find a path more noble than the path of Cross" (Imitation of Christ - Thomas A Kempis).



Lesson Six

KING DAVID



There was a boy named David who was keeping the sheep of his father. He was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. He was skillful in playing, a man of valour, a warrior, prudent in speech and a fine-looking man. And the Lord was with him (1 Samuel 16:18).



At was at that time, the Philistines had come for war with the Israelites. The champion of Philistines, named Goliath challenged the Israelites for war and defied the God of Israelites. All the Israelites together with King Saul, when they heard his words, fled from him and were very afraid. But David took his staff in his hand and chose five stones from the wadi, put them in his shepherd's bag and went to the field of battle. As everyone in the battlefield watched, David cried aloud to God and went to fight against Goliath. He put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead and he collapsed on the ground. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, grasped his sword, and cut off his head. People started to sing and praise David who slaughtered Goliath:

"Saul has killed his thousands and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:7).

Saul was very angry, for this saying displeased him, and he tried to kill David. But God's hand always protected David. And he never wanted to take revenge on Saul since he was Lord's anointed.

The people of Israel, who came to Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, encamped there. After Joshua's death, the Judges led the people of Israel. They were god-fearing and had the sense of justice. They led the people according to the commands of the Lord. Judges like Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and Samuel were the most popular and important ones. And Samuel was the last judge.

The people were not satisfied under the rule of judges. And so they asked for a king to govern them like other nations. Without rejecting their wish, Samuel tried to discern the will of the Lord. But the people repeatedly asked for a king, and so God said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them" (1 Samuel 8:7).

Since the people were very firm in their demand for a king, God said, "Listen to their voice and set a king over them" (1 Samuel 8:21).

And so, Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israelites. This is how the rule of kings came into existence in Israel. Saul, the first king of Israel, did not rule the people according to the commands of the Lord, and therefore the Lord rejected him.

Being served as king for many years, Saul was killed in the battle filed. Then, David was anointed as the king of Israel. David, god-fearing king of Israel, led the people of Israel in prosperity and God was pleased with him.

Once, David committed a great sin. He had asked Joab to struck Uriah, one of the soldiers in his army, in the battlefield. When Uriah was killed, he made Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, as his own wife. David's sin was very secret that nobody came to know it. But the Lord, who sees and knows everything, saw his mistake. The Lord sent his prophet Nathan to David to pin point his mistake and to make him to repent. When David heard the words of Nathan, he realized the seriousness of his mistake and repented to the Lord. Feeling pity for him, the Lord forgave him.



To err is human; to forgive is divine. God forgives those who repent.

During his rest of life, David was very loyal to the Lord and he led the people of Israel as per God's commands.

The name 'David' means 'beloved.'

David was the beloved one of the Lord.

As a king, he led the people of Israel for forty years.

He composed plenty of psalms praising the Lord.

Messiah was born from his dynasty.

Let us find answers

- 1. Who led the people of Israel after Joshua?
- 2. Who were the most important Judges in Israel?
- 3. What did God say to the people of Israel when they asked for a king?
- 4. Why did Prophet Nathan blame David?
- 5. Why did God forgive David?

Role Play

Envisage the dialogue between David and Prophet Nathan in the form of a drama and bring out the message.

Let us sing together

Though received plenty of goods from God David forgot everything.

Though he has become a king by the mercy of the Lord, He has committed great sin.



But when he repented over his sins, God forgave all his sins.

Repentance and penance Will please the Lord.



Let us remember the Word of God

"Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7).



Lord, if I happened to commit mistakes, give me your grace to repent and turn back to you immediately. Amen.



Let us pledge

I will guide a child, who often does harm to others, to do good.



Let us memorize

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long."

(Psalm 23)





Lesson Seven

SOLOMON



King Solomon, the son of king David, was the wisest king of Israel. He was the second son of Bathsheba, whom she bore for David.

The name 'Solomon' means 'peace.' It is derived from the Greek word 'Shalom.'

Solomon, though not the first born, became the successor of David because Bathsheba bore him for David. After the death of David, Solomon became the king of Israel. He ruled the Israelites for forty years.

King Solomon struck all his enemies down, and established the kingdom in his hands (cf. 1 Kings 2:13-46). During his reign, Israel became very wealthy. Throughout Israel, there was prosperity and peace, and the people lived in safety. As days went on, the people became unhappy, because King Solomon imposed heavy taxes upon them and forced them to do hard works.

A leader has to act, knowing the will of the people.



Jerusalem Temple

The important incidents that took place during the reign of Solomon were the construction of Jerusalem Temple and king's palace. Though it was the deep desire of King David to construct a beautiful Temple for the Lord, it was not materialized during his reign; rather it was fulfilled during the reign of King Solomon. The Jerusalem Temple that was constructed by King Solomon was the most important place of worship for the people of Israel.

A leader has to seek first God's Kingdom and His justice.

Solomon's Wisdom

Once, King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifice to the Lord. At night Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Ask what I should give you" (cf. 1 Kings 3:4-9). Solomon said, "Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil" (1 Kings 3:9).

A leader has to guide his people wisely and prudently.

It pleased God that King Solomon had asked for wisdom and so, the Lord blessed him with a lot of graces. The Lord has blessed him abundantly by giving him wisdom, prudence, riches and honour (cf. 1 Kings 3:16-28). Wise men from various countries adorned the court of King Solomon. Queen Sheba, who is known for her wisdom, visited Solomon to test his wisdom. She was surprised at the depth of his wisdom (1 Kings 10). Even the aliens, who grasped the wisdom of Solomon, praised the God of Israel.

"One who is wise among his people will inherit honour, and his name will live forever" (Sirach 37:26).

'He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five' (1 Kings 4:32). King Solomon is considered to be the author of Song of Songs, Proverbs, Wisdom and Ecclesiastes.



"All wisdom is from the Lord, and with him it remains forever" (Sirach 1:1).



Solomon's Errors

Though King Solomon was wise and god-fearing, he committed sins against the Lord. He entered into peace treaty with foreign countries and lived with them cordially. He also collaborated with them in the commercial activities. As part of strengthening his foreign policy, he entered into marriage with many foreign women (1 Kings 11:1-3). In the course of time, to please his foreign wives, he even established high places and altars for foreign gods, and became a worshipper of idol. As a punishment for his unfaithful activities, the Lord divided the kingdom of Israel into two.

The unfaithfulness of the leader will split the society.

We have to value wisdom more than all riches and fame.

God gives everything to whoever seeks His Kingdom and justice.

Even if you are wise and prudent, you have to be vigilant, if not you may fall. Loyalty towards God is very important.

Seek first God's Kingdom and justice.

Present in the form of a drama

Solomon's sense of wisdom – 1 Kings 3:16-28

Write down:
What are the lessons that you learn from the errors of Solomon

Let us find answers

- 1. Why did Solomon become the successor of David? Narrate the reasons.
- 2. How did Solomon acquire wisdom?
- 3. What is the meaning of the name 'Solomon'?
- 4. What are the books authored by Solomon?
- 5. Though Israel flourished in prosperity, the people were dissatisfied under the reign of Solomon. Why?

Let us sing together



To fear the Lord is the source of wisdom
And the wise put their trust in the Lord
Even if a wise abandon the Lord
All his wisdom will be in vain.

Wisdom is more valuable than

All riches and fame

But the moment one gets away from

But the moment one gets away from the Lord Even the wise will fall on the ground.



Let us remember the Word of God

"To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Sirach 1:14).

Let us pray

Lord, bless us with your wisdom and give us courage to act rightly discerning the good and evil. Amen.



Let us memorize

"There are those who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge; that is curiosity. There are those who seek knowledge to be known by others; that is vanity. There are those who seek knowledge in order to serve; that is love" (St. Bernard).

Lesson Eight



THE PROPHETS



The people of Israel, who underwent hardships because of slavery in Egypt, groaned and cried out to the Lord for help. God heard their groaning.

"Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters" (Exodus 3:7). God sees the hardships of his people. He hears their cry, and He knows their misery.

God intervenes when His people undergo hurdles and hardships, and even when they fail and commit mischiefs. He specifically selects a very few people to go close to His people and to declare His will, to console them and bring them back to the Lord through repentence of their sins. They are called the prophets.



Prophet:

The one who is send to the people by the Lord.

He is the one who speaks for the Lord.

He is the one who has the vision of the Lord.

The word 'prophet' comes from the Hebrew word 'nabi.' It means "spokesperson." The root word 'nabu' means 'burning' or 'blistering.' The prophet is the one who is very zealous of God's love. Elijah said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts" (1 Kings 19:10).

Israelites are the people of God. They have to be always loyal to the covenant of the Lord. This universe and all its creatures belong to God. God has given this earth and its resources to the entire humankind

But the selfish desire of humankind for wealth and power caused evils in the society. Their necessities turned to be luxuries. Ignoring their God and brethren, they went often behind riches and fame. Business mentality, oppression and grabbing were very common. Moreover, the culture of selling the just people for one pair of footwear and crushing the poor down to the earth was formed. The relationships were shattered. As a result, the covenant with Lord was broken.

Now, God sends his prophets among the people to re-establish the broken relationship between God and humankind and to bring His people back to Him and to their brethren.

The prophet reaches very close to the people of God and:

- ♦ Announces the will of the Lord.
- * Corrects the mistakes of the people and brings the people close to God.
- ♦ Declares punishment to those who ignore to repent.
 - ♦ Consoles the people and gives courage.
 - ♦ Guides the people to move ahead with hope.

God intervenes through prophets at all times.

The messages of the prophets were often influenced by the sociopolitical situations of each period.

The period of prophets was around thousand years.

The period of prophets were mainly divided into six parts:

1. BC 1050 – 687- Elijah to 1st Isaiah [Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah & 1st Isaiah]

2. BC 687 – 587 - Before deportation to Babylon [Prophets: Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum & Habakkuk]

3. BC 587 – 538 - During exile in Babylon [Prophets: Ezekiel & 2nd Isaiah]

4. BC 538 – 480 - After exile in Egypt [Prophets: 1st Zachariah & 3rd Isaiah]

5. BC 480 – 333 - From Restoration to Greek reign [Prophets: Malachi, Obadiah, Jonah, Joel & 2nd Zachariah]

6. BC 170 – 100 - Revolt of Maccabees (Prophets: Baruch & Daniel)

The prophets are called as Major Prophets and Minor Prophets on the basis of the size of the books, and not on the basis of the importance of the messages.

Major Prophets:

1. Isaiah, 2. Jeremiah, 3. Ezekiel, 4. Daniel

Minor Prophets:

1. Hosea, 2. Joel, 3. Amos, 4. Obadiah, 5. Jonah, 6. Micah, 7. Nahum, 8. Habakkuk, 9. Zephaniah, 10. Haggai, 11. Zachariah, 12. Malachi

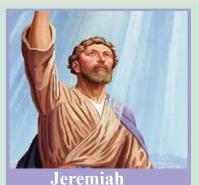
In the Holy Bible, the prophets who have writings in their names are called canonical prophets; and those who do not have writings in their names are called non-canonical prophets. Elijah, Nathan and Elisha are under the category of non-canonical prophets.

Prophets

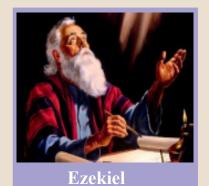
Message



Prophecy about the Messiah and the suffering servant.



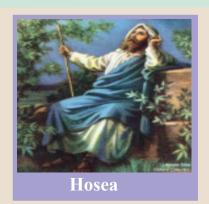
To pluck up and to pull down, to build and to plant; and to establish a new covenant in the hearts of people (31:31 -34).



Prophecy about the restoration of Jerusalem Temple and the incoming period of prosperity for Israelites.



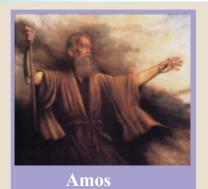
Warning about the end days.



Prophecy about the steadfast love of God. "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice" (6:6).

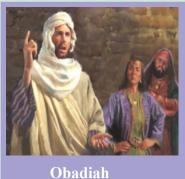


Prophecy about the days of the Lord's coming. "Rend your hearts and not your clothing" (2:13).



Prophecy about social justice: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24).

Prophecy about God who lives in Jerusalem.



"Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down" (1:4).

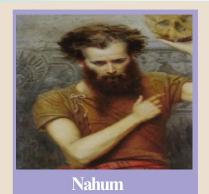


Jonah

Prophecy about the salvation of entire humankind. "And should I not be concerned about Nineveh that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from the left and also many animals" (4:11).



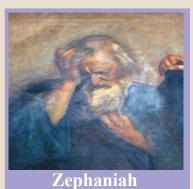
Messiah will be born from the clan of David. "But you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (5:2).



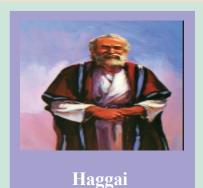
The destruction of Nineveh gives the clear picture of God's justice. "Look! On the mountains the feet of one who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace" (1:15).



Woes to the wicked and peace to the just. "I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength" (3:18-19).



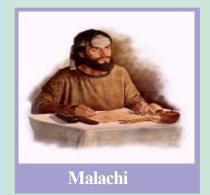
"The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst" (3:15).



Rebuilding the Temple. "The later splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts" (2:9).



Hope about the coming of Messiah. "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a clot, the foal of a donkey" (9:9).



The day of Lord's coming. "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me" (3:1).

John the Baptist was the last prophet,
who did interconnect Old Testament with New Testament.
His duty was to prepare the way for the Lord and to show Him to the world.

We are the Prophets of God

Through the sacrament of baptism, we partake in the prophetic mission of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who worked hard to establish the Kingdom of God in this world, fought against injustice without fear of anyone. He did invite everyone to do what is right. Jesus, who fought against injustice with prophetic courage, gave his life for it. To establish truth, justice and equality in the society, and not to reject everyone's rights, let us fight like Jesus.

As the prophets of God:

- * Let us listen to God
- * Let us proclaim the word of God.
- * Let us bear witness to the truth.

Write the names
Write down the names of Minor Prophets

Discuss:

"Because they sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals - they who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and push the afflicted out of the way" (Amos 2:6-7). Discuss these words of prophet Amos in today's context and evaluate what we can do.

Let us find answers

- Who are the prophets?
- 2. Why did God choose and send His prophets?
- The period of prophets are divided into how many parts? And what are they?
- 4. Who are the Major Prophets? Why are they called so?
- 5. What are our prophetical duties?

Let us sing together

Prophets are the ones called by the Lord.

They are the mediators between God and people.

They are the announcers of God's will,

And they lead us to the Lord.

Today we are God's prophets.

Let us gain the strength of the prophets.

Let us fight against the evils.

And let us change our life as a sacrifice.



"A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you"

(Ezekiel 36:26).

Let us pray

Lord, help to stand firm for truth and justice. Amen.

Let us memorize

"When God pushes you to the edge, trust him fully. Either He will catch you or He will teach you how to fly" (St. Augustine)



Lesson Nine



SALVATION – JUST A CALL AWAY



Every year on 15th August, we celebrate the Independence Day of our country. It is the day of commemoration of Indian Independence from the slavery of British. Did you at any time ponder over our ancestors and the crisis they have undergone?

Similarly, a number of times, the people of Israel remembered their painful experience of slavery in Egypt. The root cause for their slavery was their unfaithfulness towards the Lord.

After the death of King Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was divided into two: Norther Kingdom, known as Israel and Southern Kingdom, known as Judah.

The Kingdom of Israel and Assyrian Deportation

In 931 BC, ten northern tribes of Israel joined together to form Northern Kingdom (Israel). Jeroboam was its first king.

Instead of Jerusalem Temple, Jeroboam established high places for sacrifice. He set gold calves, one in Dan and the other in Bethel. Most of the kings of Israel were not faithful to the Lord. They rejected the prophets of the Lord. Idol worship and social injustice became root cause for God's anger. In 722 B.C, Northern Kingdom (Israel) came under the deportation of Assyrians.

Most Important Kings of Northern Kingdom

Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Jeroboam II

Most Important Prophets of Northern Kingdom Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, Hosea

The Kingdom of Judah and Babylonian Deportation

After the death of King Solomon, his son Rehoboam became king, but he was known as the King of Judah, since the ten northern tribes formed the Northern Kingdom (Israel). The tribes of Judah and Benjamin joined together to form the Kingdom of Judah or Southern Kingdom.

Jerusalem Temple was the most attractive factor of Kingdom of Judah.

Constant wars took place between Judah and Israel. Most of the kings of Judah were unfaithful to the Lord. Having fully involved in idol worship, they failed to listen to the prophets. King Nabuchadnezar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. In 587 BC, the Kingdom of Judah came under the deportation of Babylone.

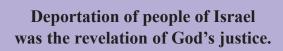
Most Important Kings of Judah

Rehoboam, Asa, Amaziah, Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jehoiakim

Most Important Prophets of Judah Elijah, Joel, Zachariah, Isaiah, Jeremiah Deportation or exile is the period, where the people of God were compelled to abandon their own land and forced to live in an alien land, because they have broken the covenantal relationship with the Lord. It was a situation, where they lost the relationship with the Lord and their liberty, and lived under the slavery of aliens. But druing this period God purified the faith of Israelites, as the gold is refined in the furnace.

Reasons for deportation

- **★** Breaking of the covenant ★ Unfaithfulness towards the Lord
 - **★** Idol Worship ★ Social Injustice ★





★ Kingdom **★** King **★** Temple **★** Priest

The Period after Deportation

Even during the deportation, God did not abandon his people. Through His prophets (2nd Isaiah and Ezekiel) God strengthen his people. He reminded his people of the coming of Messiah and made them the people of hope (2 Samuel 7:12-14; Isaiah 7:14).

During the reign of Persian King, Cyrus the Great, the Babylonian deportation came to an end. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the covenantal relationship with the Lord was renewed and Jerusalem Temple was renovated (521-515 BC).

When people, because of their selfishness,
break their relationship with God, then deportation happens.
When we get out of our selfishness and live in loving God and people,
then we enjoy real liberty.

The period of deportation really opened the eyes of Israelites. They could never forget the punishments they experienced due to their sins. In the course of time, they were under the reign of Greeks and Romans. Often they were subject to attack from inside and outside. But the hope about the coming of Messiah strengthened them. Everyone eagerly and prayerfully waited for the arrival of Messiah. At the time of Jesus, the people of Israelites were under the rule of Romans.

Various deportations of Israelites:

Assyrian deportation in 722 BC; Babylonian deportation in 587 BC;

Deportation under Greeks in 332 BC; Roman deportation in 63 BC

Let us submit our lives in the hands of God.

He will deliver us from all distresses.

Observe the following addictions.

What can we do to abolish them?







Let us find answers

- 1. What did Jeroboam construct instead of Jerusalem Temple?
- 2. What are the reasons for Assyrian deportation?
- 3. How was the kingdom of Judah formed?
- 4. What you mean by deportation or exile?
- 5. What did give hope to the people of Israel during and after deportation?



Let us sing together

Because we did mistakes - we
Got separated from God.
As a punishment for this – we
Underwent long deportation.
Hearts filled with repentance - we
Stand before you, O God!
Wait eagerly for the coming of Messiah

And when will He come here?

Let us remember the Word of God

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him"

(Isaiah 11:1-2).





Let us pray

Lord, never permit us to forget you and go behind worldly pleasures. Amen.

Let us memorize

"How earth stinks in my nostrils when I look up to heaven."

(St. Ignatius of Loyola)

Lesson Ten



JOHN THE BAPTIST



Before sending His only Son, Messiah, God sent a prophet. His name was John the Baptist.

Birth of John the Baptist

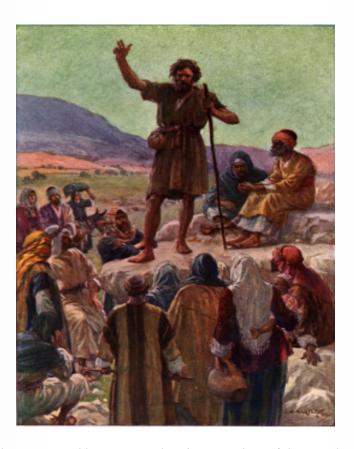
Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, who were advanced in age, had no children. They continuously prayed to the Lord for a child.

One day when Zachariah was officiating as priest before God in the Temple of Jerusalem, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not be afraid, Zachariah; your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, whom you will call by the name John" (Luke 1:13).



But Zachariah did not believe the words of the angel. Therefore, he lost his voice and use of tongue.

Elizabeth bore him a son. Relatives asked Zachariah what he wished the child to be called. Asking for a writing-tablet, he wrote, "His name is John," which means 'by the grace of God.' Immediately Zachariah recovered his voice and use of tongue. Everyone wondered at this; and all who heard it reflected, asking 'what can this child be destined to become.'



John grew and become a pleasing prophet of the Lord. He wore the cloths made out of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

He advocated the people to receive the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He instructed the people:

"Bear fruits worthy of repentance...
Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise" (Luke 3:8-11).

What did John advise the people?

Share

Food, cloth, shelter, wealth and time.

Act justly

Give the other what is his / her worth. Where there is injustice, there is no God.

Do not exploit

Do not exploit the weak and the widows.

Satisfy with what you have

Never be greedy, share what you have, never misuse anything. God hates luxuries and lust.

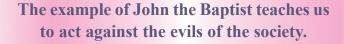
Do not collect more than what is prescribed

God hates corrupt wages and bribery.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist. While John baptized Jesus at river Jordan, the heaven was openned, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove and a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:9-11).

As John the Baptist continued his proclamation, he was told that Herod the ruler received Herodias, his brother's wife, as his own wife. At once, John the Baptist reached in front of Herod and pointed out his mistake. The king became angry and arrested John the Baptist and put him in prison. Hearing that the prophet criticized the king, the queen Herodias too was angry and decided to kill John the Baptist at any cost. At this juncture King Herod celebrated his birthday. During the celebration Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced before the guests and she pleased Herod so much that he promised to grant her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Though king was grieved, considering his promise, he commanded to give her the head of John on a platter. Knowing that John was beheaded, his disciples took the body and buried it.







John the Baptist came to this world to prepare the way for Jesus, the Saviour. Being a voice in the desert, John introduced Jesus to the world as "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). He said about Jesus: "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me" (John 1:30); "He must increase but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

- ◆ Let us also try to introduce Jesus to the world as John the Baptist did (John 1:29-30).
- ◆ Let us also try to decrease ourselves for the betterment and growth of our fellow brethren (John 1:29-30).

Let us find answers

- 1. Why did Zachariah loose his voice and use of tongue?
- 2. What baptism did John the Baptist give to the people?
- 3. What is the reason for the imprisoning of John the Baptist?
- 4. What did happen when Jesus received the baptism from John?
- 5. How did John the Baptist introduce Jesus to the world?

Point out the reason

God sends the prophets. People receive prophets.

Present in the form of a drama

The proclamation of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-18).

Discuss

"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Grasping John's message, what do we plan to implement in our lives?

Let us sing together

To prepare the way for Saviour Jesus Came John the Baptist to this world Ate locusts and wild honey As his food in the wilderness.

John the Baptist inspired the people
To walk on the path of repentance.
Due to the anger of Herodias
John the Baptist sacrificed his life for truth.

Let us remember the Word of God

"One who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals" (Luke 3:16).



Let us pray

Lord, strengthen me not to abandon the truth even if I have to sacrifice my life. Amen.

Let us memorize

"Not committing mistakes is not enough. Not doing good deeds is also wrong. In this way, law is violated" (St. Athanesious).



Kingdom of God is a big family, where each one experiences real freedom and unity. This Kingdom is reigned by God Himself. In this Family, God is the father and we are His children. Therefore, in the Kingdom of God we live together as sisters and brothers.

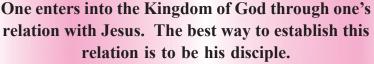
God was the King of Israelites. Under the reign of God as King, the Israelites went through a wonderful experience at Canaan. But that experience did not last for long because Israelites rejected God's kingship and demanded another king. "We are determined to have a king over us, so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:19-20). God granted their wish. As a result of it the earthly kings started to rule the Israelites. As years went on, the kings became greedy and selfish. Consequently, the gap between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, and privileged and under privileged was widened.

Fulfillment of the Promise

God always shows concern for His people. God promised his people a Saviour through Prophet Nathan. Nathan said to King David, "The Lord declares: 'When your days fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me" (2 Samuel 7:12-14).

At an oppertune time, "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16-17).







Immanuel

Jesus, the Son of God, took the human form and was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is Immanuel which means 'God is with us' (Matthew 1:23). Jesus' presence among us is a clear sign of God's reign among us.

Jesus said to the people gathered at the Synagogue for prayer, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus said to the people, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15).

Jesus' leadership imagined the arrival of God's Kingdom into this world.

Leadership Empowers the Weak

In the society where Jesus lived, there were injustice and inequality. In the society, the rich occupied top rank, the working class occupied the middle rank and the weak and the oppressed were considered the lowest rank.

Jesus always stood with the weak and the oppressed. He strengthened them. He said to them, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they inherit

the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Matthew 5:3-11).

By wiping out the disparity in the society, Jesus taught everyone to live in harmony with God and fellow brethren. Love for God and love for brethren has to go hand in hand. Without love for humans, there is no meaning in adoring God. Jesus said, "Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Matthew 9:13; Hosea 6:6).

The experience of God's Kingdom is a situation where everyone's needs are fulfilled and everyone is treated as brothers and sisters.

Compassionate Leadership

Jesus had compassion for the sick and the suffering (Matthew 9:36; 14:14). They were like sheep without a shepherd. Compassion is not just feeling pity, but it is doing the same thing for others as we do for ourselves, especially when we are in a crisis situation. Jesus tried to fulfill the basic necessities of the human life: food, dress, shelter, health and knowledge. "Jesus went about all the villages and cities, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 9:35).

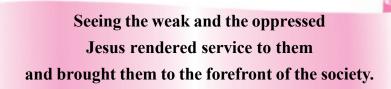
Good leader shows compassion for those who live in pathetic conditions and takes necessary steps to erradicate them.

Serving Leadership

Jesus' leadership advocates service. Power is service. Jesus taught that the real leadership is not holding right and left positions of power; it is indeed sacrificing one's life by serving others. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus taught his disciples to love others through service. So Jesus, the Lord and the Master, washed the feet of his disciples. Thus he gave them a wonderful example of service

We should feel proud when we render our services to others. We should focus on the well-being of the weak and the oppressed. Story of the Good Samaritan is a good example. Like the Good Samaritan we need to serve the needy by sharing our belongings: ass, oil, wine and dinari. Christian leadership always consists in shouldering the responsibility until the oppressed and the weak are empowered.



Life-giving Leadership

Jesus is a great leader who sacrificed his life for his people. Through suffering and death, Jesus gave his life for everyone in this world. Prior to his death, he established the Sacrament of Eucharist. Every day we experience the living presence of Jesus in the form of bread and wine. By rising from the dead on the third day, Jesus conquered sin and death. Even today he lives with us.

Kingdom of God is a situation where God reigns.

God executes his reign with the help of the humans.

Humans have to surrender fully to this reign,
seeking the will of God and living according to it.

We have to see the face of God in our brethren,
whom we have to love and serve. The sacrificing
experience of love and service to the brethren has to
be felt in our day today life. Jesus, who sacrificed
his life on the cross for his people, rose on the third
day and lives with us forever. The experience of
God's Kingdom in this world is just the beginning;
it is completed in the future.

Find out and write

A few incidents where Jesus showed compassion

Write a note on the following:
What are the characteristics of a good leader?

Let us find answers

- 1. What did happen to the people of Israel when they abandoned God's reign?
- 2. What did prophet Nathan say to King David?
- 3. How did Jesus' leadership become compassionate?
- 4. How can Christian leadership become service oriented?
- 5. What did Jesus do to the people whom he saw?

Let us sing together



Christ is our leader. Heaven is our kingdom. To enter into this heaven – let Us join together one in Christ.

By sacrificing his own life - He
Did save all of us.
For the good of others - we
Should come forward to abandon our lives.

Let us remember the Word of God

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34)



Let us pray



Lord Jesus, help us to serve others in love and to find happiness in it. Amen.

Let us memorize

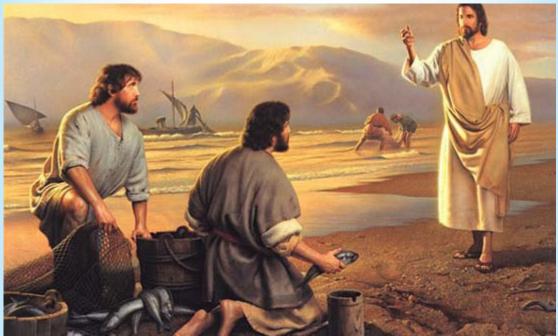
"Christian life in us is to continue and complete the life of Jesus. In this earth, each one has to become another Christ. Like Jesus, each one has to perform his works in this cosmos and complete them in perfection" (St. John Utts).

Lesson Twelve



THE APOSTLES





As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people" (Mark 1:17). And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

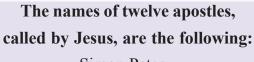
As he went a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him (Mark 1:19-20).

As he was walking along, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me" (Mark 2:14). And he got up and followed him.

Jesus went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons.



The word 'Apostle' means 'the one who is sent.'



Simon Peter

Andrew

Jacob

John

Philip

Bartholomew

Thomas

Matthew

Jacob, son of Alphaeus

Thaddaeus (Jude Thaddaeus)

Simon the Cananaean

Judas Iscariot

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34).

Jesus trained his apostles and sent them to the villages to proclaim the good news. They went around the villages proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven, healing the sick and casting the demons. After receiving the Holy Spirit they started to speak other languages and bore witness to Jesus courageously.

On the day of Pentecost, after hearing the sermon of Peter, three thousand persons repented, believed in Jesus and received baptism. And thus a community of believers was formed and they were called for the first time in Antioch as 'Christians.'

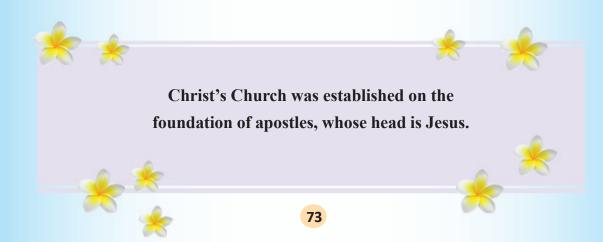
Peter was considered to be head of the apostles. Under his leadership, the rest of the disciples went around the world, proclaimed the good news, and converted many. As a result, Christ's Church spread all over the world. Except John, all other disciples became martyrs for their faith.

Among twelve, one betrayed Jesus to his enemies.

He is Judas Iscariot.

Instead of Judas, the disciples selected Mathias into their fellowship.

Paul was appointed as the disciple of the Gentiles.







The Church, which is the continuation of Jesus, is guided and led by the Holy Spirit. From time to time, Pope is selected as the predecessor of Peter.

Through the reception of baptism, we all become partakers in the responsibility of the apostles.

- * Let us speak about Jesus with our friends and colleagues.
- * Let us be united with Jesus through prayer.
- * Let us visit the sick and serve them with love.
- * Let us show compassion to the poor and the oppressed.

The present Pope Francis is the 266th Pope in the Church.

Let us respect and obey our Church authorities.

Let us pray for them always.

Enact:

Peter heals a crippled beggar (Acts 3:10)
The conversion of Paul (Acts 9:1-19)

Let us find answers

- 1. What you mean by the word 'apostle'?
- 2. Name the twelve apostles?
- 3. Where were the believers called as Christians?
- 4. Who was chosen in the place of Judas?
- 5. Who is the apostle of Gentiles?

Let us sing together



Those called by Jesus are disciples

They are the apostles

They are twelve - and

Peter is their head.

To proclaim the gospel

They did go around the world

They are the foundation of the church – and

So we revere them.

Let us remember the Word of God

"Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:11).





Let us pray

Lord Jesus, teach us to proclaim the Good News with courage like your apostles. Amen.

Let us memorize

"Let us be lilies among the thorns. Even if the thorns hurt deeply, the lilies don't lose its sweet fragrance" (St. Bernard).

St. Francis of Assisi



Born in Assisi, Italy in 1181, St. Francis had all the comforts and luxuries of life. Christened Giovanni by his mother, Givoanna, he was, however, renamed Francesco by his wealthy father, Pietro di Bernardone, who happend to be away on business at the time of his birth.

In keeping with trend of the times, Francis, a highly popular romantic, sought knighthood--and passionately so! Thus, in 1202, when Assisi went to war against Perugia, his involvement cost him a year in prison. Recovering from a serious illness that followed, his attempt in late 1205 to join the papal forces against Frederick II in Apulia came to naught when a vision at Spoleto bid him return to Assisi and there await a call to new kind of knighthood whereby he would "serve the Master rather than the man"--the start of his conversion.

In solitude and prayer he now passionately sought to know God's will for him. His newfound concern for the poor and the sick reached its peak when he one day dismounted his horse to give alms to a leper by the wayside, and, wonder of wonders, held the deformed figure in a warm embrace that, in his own words, changed "bitterness to sweetness"! Shortly after, in response to the command from the cross at San Damiano's Church, "Francis, go repair my house which, as

you see, is falling into ruin," he instanly set about repairing old, dilapidated San Damiano's, even disposing off some his father's silk stock to aquire funds for the purpose. The dispute that ensued had his father hauling him up before the Bishop, demanding the recovery of the money. Francis obliged instanly-- virtually stripping himself, he handed over all his clothes to his father together with the money and made himself a beggar overnight, for the sake of his great Master.

On 24 February 1208, in the centuries old chapel of St. Mary of the Angels, also known as the Portiuncula ("little portion"), he perceived clearly at Mass the Lord's plan for him in Matthew 10:5-14. Thence, though a layman, he began to preach passionately to all and sundry, styling himself the "herald of the great king". The very simplicity of his life and teaching drew around him men of prominence, like Bernard da Quintavalla, a wealthy merchant, Giles the ecstatic and others. On 16 April 1209, with the enrobing of Peter of Cattaneo, a Canon of the Cathedral, was born the Order of Friars Minor--Fratres Minores, "little brothers", with a rule based purely on the Gospel, viz., "To follow the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps", and with Mary, Queen of the Angels as their guide and protector.

When the friars numbered 12 with the entry of the immensely wealthy angelo di Ugone in 1210, Francis sought formal papal approval for his new Order and obtained it from Pope Innocent III.

The friars, attired in born, moved north and south and beyond Italy preaching with such zeal and fervour that the Almighty obviously seemed pleased to add to their number--the first ever General Chapter, the "Chapter of Mats", held at Pentecost 1219 at the Portiuncula brought some 5,000 friars together! Indeed, so rapid was the Order's growth that in 1221, Francis had to request Pope Honorius III to formally introduce a year of "novitiate" for new friars. Having obtained approval for the Rule in its final form from Honorius III on 29 November 1223 Francis withdrew increasingly from administrative affairs.

With the veiling of Clare, a pretty young maiden of noble descent in Assisi, on the night of Palm Sunday 1212, a second Order, the "Poor Clares" for women, came into being. In 1221, he founded the Third Order of Brothers and Sisiters of Penance, a lay fraternity whose members would carry out the principles of Franciscan life while still remaining in the secular world.

Incidentally, Francis declined priestly ordination out of reverence for the priesthood whose dignity he considered himself unworthy of.

Passionately enamoured of the Incarnation, it was Francis who gave Christendom its first Christmas Crib. On the night of Christmas 1223, he recreated the Nativity scene in a cave at Greccio, complete with ox and ass, hay and manager! In 1224, around the feast of Exaltation of Holy Cross, during his contemplation on the Passion of Christ, he was blessd with the imprint of the five sacred wounds of the crucified Lord on his person--the first recorded stigmatization.

Francis considered nature the very mirror of God and so, in his now famous Canticle of Brother Sun, he referred to the sun as brother, the moon as sister, the earth as mother and so on. He brought its significance to perfection when, on his deathbed he repeatedly exclaimed, "Praised be, O Lord, for our sister Death!"

Greatly troubled by an eye ailment he had contracted in the East, and his body ridden with dropsy, Francis patiently prayed, "O Lord, I thank you for the pains I suffer." The significance of the poverty that was basic to Francis' Charism as not mere external poverty but a total self-emptying like that of Christ that the sought (as in Phil 2:7) now begun to emerge more clearly. In his dying moments, he sought and obtained permission from his superior to be allowed to die naked on the bare earth in imitation of his dear Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. On 3 October 1226 Francis breathed his last at the Portiuncula, the very place that had witnessed the revelation of his mission and the birth of his Orders.

Francis' mortal remains were initially buried in the Chuch of San Giorgio at Assisi on 4 October 1226 and later transferred to the Basilica erected to his memory by Brother Elias of Cortona, on 25 May 1230.

Canonized on 16 July 1228 by Pope Gregory IX, Francis was called by Pope Benedict XV the "most perfect image of Christ" that ever lived! In 1916, he was declared patron of Catholic Action; in 1926, Pope Pius XI termed him *alter christus*, i.e., "another Christ", and rightly so, for as the New Encyclopaedia Britannica (vol 4) says: "Probably no one in history has ever set himself so seriously, as did Francis, to imitate the life of Christ and to carry out so literally Christ's work in Christ's own way. This is the key to the character and spirit of St. Francis. To neglect this point is to show an unbalanced portrait of the saint as a lover of poverty." In 1939, this most cherished of Christian Saints, was proclaimed patron of Italy.



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