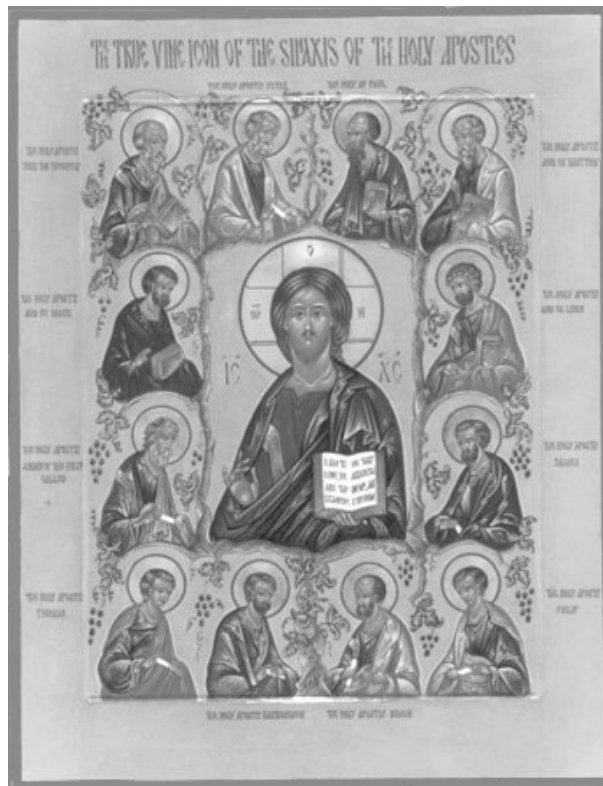


UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA

Church Camps Religious Theme 2003

Resource Material



“THE HOLY APOSTLES”

Prepared by the Office of Missions and Education,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
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UOCC Church Camps Theme 2003 – The Holy Apostles

Forward

Christ is in our midst!

The following is resource material for the third annual Church Camps theme for our UOCC Ukrainian Orthodox camps and summer programs. This year's theme, "The Holy Apostles", follows in series with the first and second themes "Jesus Christ", and "Mary the Mother of God". This year's theme is designed to introduce children and youth to the lives and work of Christ's closest followers, the men He hand-picked to form His inner circle and become the first bishops of His Church.

You will find the material divided up into ten lessons, one for every weekday of a two-week camp session. If your session runs for one week only, this material could be presented in the morning and evening to cover all lessons. Should your camp session run when the feast day of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul falls, it is recommended that you save this lesson until that day and shift the other lessons accordingly (i.e., Monday of the first week would be followed by the lesson for Wednesday).

Though most lessons cover only one Apostle, because we have to fit 13 apostles into ten days, some doubling up had to be done (13 counting the first 12, and St. Paul). Each lesson contains the following information: date of the apostle's feast day, Tropar to the apostle, a Scripture reading, a short account of the apostle's life, and suggested discussion themes for children under 12 years old and 12 and older.

May this material prove valuable for further teaching our children and youth about these great heroes of our Faith, and by the prayers of the Holy Apostles may each one of us become a messenger of the Good News, if not by words, then certainly by attitudes and actions.

Fr. Andrew Jarmus, Director
Office of Missions and Education

"O Holy Apostles, intercede with our merciful God, that he may grant to our souls the forgiveness of our sins." (Tropar to the Twelve Apostles, Tone 3)

UOCC Church Camps Theme 2003 – The Holy Apostles

Resource Material

MONDAY OF WEEK 1

The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called

Feast Day: Dec. 13

Scripture Reading: John 1:35-40

Tropar to Saint Andrew (Tone 4)

As the first-called Apostle and brother of their leader entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, O Andrew, and great mercy to our souls.

Life of the Holy Apostle Andrew

The Holy Apostle Andrew was a fisherman by profession. He was the son of a man named Jonah and brother of the Apostle Peter. Before following Jesus, St. Andrew was first a disciple of St. John the Baptist. When John pointed to the Lord Jesus and said: 'Behold the Lamb of God' (Jn. 1:36), St. Andrew left his first teacher and followed Jesus. He was the first man whom Jesus called to be one of His Apostles; this is why we call him St. Andrew the First-called. After that, Andrew brought his brother Peter to the Lord, as well.

St. Andrew preached the Gospel in Byzantium, then in the lands along the Danube, and in Ukraine and around the Black Sea. Finally he ended his preaching work in Greece, where he suffered for Christ's sake. When he preached in the lands of Ukraine, while in Kyiv he raised the Cross on high and prophesied a Christian future for the Ukrainian people and their spiritual descendants.

St. Andrew suffered for his Lord in the year 62. He was crucified on an X-shaped cross. While he was still alive on the cross, the St. Andrew continued to teach the Christians who were gathered round him. The people wanted to take him down from the cross, but he would not let them. He chose instead to follow Christ right to the end, dying on a Cross for the Gospel just as Jesus did.

Some say that the bottom bar of our Ukrainian Orthodox cross is slanted as a symbol of the Cross of St. Andrew, since it was Andrew who was the first to preach the Good News to the people in the Ukrainian lands.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Following Jesus Eagerly

St. Andrew followed Jesus eagerly when John pointed Him out. We too should be eager to follow Jesus. Believing in Him should make us happy to obey His teachings. Following Jesus is not a chore, it is a great gift. What are some of the ways that we show Jesus that we are truly his followers?

12 & Older: Our Calling from God

Like St. Andrew and the other apostles, we all have a calling. God has made each of us with a special place in His plan. It is up to us to seek out our calling by examining our talents and interests. We then must try and follow it in our lives. What are some of the callings that we can have?

TUESDAY OF WEEK 1

The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Feast Day: July 12

Scripture Reading: Matthew 16:13-18

Tropar to Sts. Peter and Paul (Tone 4)

Leaders of the Apostles and teachers of the world, pray to the Master of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Life of the Holy Apostle Peter

The Apostle Peter was first called Simon. He was the brother of St. Andrew the "First-called" Apostle. St. Peter had a very strong character and he naturally assumed a leading role among Christ's Disciples. He was the first to call the Lord Jesus the Messiah – that is, Christ, the Savior promised by God (Mat. 16:16). For this firm faith, he earned the name *Rock* (which is what the name "Peter" means).

Although he was so close to Christ, when Jesus was arrested and crucified, Peter abandoned Him and three times he denied knowing the Lord. After Jesus' resurrection, when St. Peter saw

the risen Lord he wept bitterly for his sin of denying Christ. At this moment, Jesus asked St. Peter three times if he loved Him – three times Peter said, “Yes” – just like three times he said he did not know Jesus. By this, St. Peter was once again blessed as an apostle, and Jesus instructed him to “feed My sheep”. Part of his work of feeding the Lord’s sheep was to write letters – called “epistles” – to the Christian faithful. These letters are found in the New Testament. In his epistles, St. Peter encourages the faithful when they face disagreements and persecution, and false teachers.

St. Peter was the first Apostle to go out and preach the Good News to the people. After preaching in and around Jerusalem, St. Peter preached along the shores of Mediterranean sea, in Antioch, Asia Minor (now part of the country Turkey), and later in Egypt. From Egypt, St. Peter crossed over to Greece, and then he preached in Rome, Spain and Brittany (northwestern France). Toward the close of his life, the Apostle Peter returned again to Rome where he died for Christ in 67 AD, by being crucified upside down.

Life of the Holy Apostle Paul

The Holy Apostle Paul was first named Saul. He came from a town called Tarsus (in Asia Minor). As well as being of Jewish descent, St. Paul was a Roman citizen. He was very well educated in Roman culture and philosophy and also in the Jewish religion. By trade, St. Paul was a tent maker.

St. Paul was not one of the original Twelve Apostles. At first, Paul was very opposed to Christ and his teachings. It was on a mission to destroy the Christian faith that the Lord called him to become an apostle. While he was travelling to the city of Damascus, a bright light shown on Saul, which made him fall to the ground blind. A voice called out from the light, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul asked, "Who are you?" Jesus answered, "I am Jesus, who you are persecuting." The Lord commanded Saul to go to Damascus, and there he would be instructed on what to do further. In Damascus, Paul was taught the faith and was baptized. The moment Saul was submerged in the water he regained his sight. From that time he became a zealous preacher of the teachings he had first persecuted.

For the next 34 years, St. Paul would preach the Gospel all over the Roman Empire, including in Rome itself. For his missionary work, St. Paul would suffer much persecution at the hands of the general public, Jewish religious leaders and Roman officials. He was put in prison twice; at the end of his second imprisonment in 67 AD, St. Paul died a martyr’s death for Christ by being beheaded.

Many of the books of what we know today as the New Testament are the epistles (which means “letters”) of St. Paul to the various Churches where he preached. St. Paul’s epistles contain many important teachings about Christian faith and life; one of his most important messages is that our life as Christians must be founded on the pillars of faith, love and the grace of God.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Letters of Love

Saints Peter and Paul both wrote special letters, called “epistles”. These letters are now part of the Bible. They teach us that God loves us and they explain to us how we can show our love for God. What would you write in a letter to someone about God and about how they could show their love for God?

12 & Older: The Gift of Repentance – turning back to Christ

There were times in both Saint Peter and St. Paul’s life when they did things that denied Jesus. Each of them turned from these ways and asked the Lord to forgive them. God will forgive us when we sin against Him, if we sincerely ask for it; we cannot “out sin” God’s love for us. Asking God to forgive our sins and committing not to do them again is what we call “repentance”. In our Orthodox Faith, what are some of the ways that we turn to God in repentance?

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 1

Saints James and John (“the Theologian”), the Sons of Zebedee

Feast Days: May 13 (St. James); Oct. 9 (St. John)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:18-22

Tropar to St. James (Tone 8)

As a disciple and soldier of the Lord, O James, you were ranked among the choir of Apostles together with your brother, and you did cleave wholeheartedly to the Saviour. Armed with the power of the Spirit you preached Him to all, and was slain by the sword. Wherefore we honour you.

Tropar of St. John the Theologian (Tone 2)

Apostle beloved of Christ our God, hasten to deliver a defenseless people. He Who allowed you to recline on His breast receives you bowing in prayer, O John the Theologian. Implore Him to dispel heathen persistence and to grant us peace and mercy.

Life of the Holy Apostle James, the Son of Zebedee

The Holy Apostle James, Son of Zebedee, was called by our Lord Jesus Christ together with his brother, the Apostle John the Theologian. It was to them and to the holy Apostle Pete Jesus

Christ revealed His Divine nature: at the Resuscitation of the Daughter of Jairus, on Mount Tabor (at the Transfiguration), and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

St. James preached in Spain and in other lands, and then he returned to Jerusalem. He openly and boldly taught about Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and with the words of Holy Scripture he denounced the Jewish religious leaders and scholars. They could not argue with St. James' teaching and so they hired a sorcerer to debate with him about his teachings concerning Christ as the Promised Saviour of the world. The sorcerer sent to the apostle his student, who was converted to belief in Christ after speaking with St. James. Then the sorcerer himself came to believe in God, he burnt his books on magic, accepted holy Baptism and became a true follower of Christ.

Eventually the Jewish religious leaders were able to have St. James arrested and sentenced to death. Saint James calmly accepted the death sentence and continued to bear witness about Christ. St. James was beheaded in the year 44 at Jerusalem.

Life of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

Together with his elder brother James, St. John was called by our Lord Jesus Christ to be one of His Apostles. The Apostle John was especially beloved by the Saviour for his sacrificial love and his spiritual purity. He was one of the three apostles, who were particularly close to Jesus. He was the only Apostle who did not abandon Jesus at the time of His Crucifixion, but stood with at the foot of the Cross with Mary, Jesus' Mother. It was here that Jesus entrusted His mother to the care of St. John. John remained in Jerusalem taking care of Mary until the time of her death – we call it her “falling asleep” or “Dormition” in the Lord.

After the Dormition of Mary, the Mother of God, the Apostle John, set off to the city of Ephesus and other cities of Asia Minor to preach the Gospel, taking with him his own disciple Prochorus. During their journey, the ship they were in sank in a storm; all those on board made it to land, except St. John. Prochorus wept bitterly, but he went on towards Ephesus alone. On the fourteenth day of his journey he stood at the shore of the sea and beheld, that the waves had cast ashore a man. Going up to him, he recognized the Apostle John, whom the Lord had preserved alive for fourteen days in the deeps of the sea. The Apostle John and Prochorus then set off to Ephesus together.

In Ephesus, the Roman officials arrested St. John and took him for trial in Rome. The Apostle John was sentenced to death for his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord protected him. The apostle was forced to drink a cup of deadly poison but he remained alive. Later he was dipped in a cauldron of boiling oil, but he came up from it unharmed. After this, they sent the Apostle John off to imprisonment to the island of Patmos, where he spent many years. On the island of Patmos, his preaching and miracles brought all the inhabitants of the island to Christianity.

One day, St. John went with his disciple Prochorus to a remote, high place on the island, where he went on a three-day fast. During this fast, St. John received many visions that Prochorus wrote down. These would later come to be known as the Book of Revelation.

After his exile on Patmos, the Apostle John received his freedom and returned to Ephesus, where he continued with his activity, instructing Christians to guard against false-teachers. In about the year 95, the Apostle John wrote his Gospel at Ephesus. St. John died at more than an hundred years old. He was the only apostle who did not die a martyr's death, and for a long time he remained the only remaining eye-witness of the earthly life of Christ.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Our Family is God's Family

Saint James and St. John were brothers and were from a very faithful family. God wants our whole family to love and follow Him. What can we do as families to show that we follow Jesus?

12 & older: Living the Faith with Boldness

Jesus called Saints James and John the "Sons of Thunder" because of the power of their faith, love and preaching. This name tells us that they live their faith with confidence and boldness. In Canada, we have the freedom of religion and are not prohibited from openly expressing our beliefs. What can we do in our lives to boldly (without fear or shame) express our faith in God?

THURSDAY OF WEEK 1

The Holy Apostle Philip

Feast Day: Nov. 27

Scripture Reading: John 1:43-46

Tropar to St. Philip (Tone 3)

You received the enlightenment of the Comforter and rise on the world like a star; with divine Light did you dispel the darkness of ignorance, O Apostle Philip. We entreat you, intercede with Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Life of the Holy Apostle Philip

The Holy Apostle Philip, was born in the city Bethesda, in Galilee. He had an excellent understanding of the Old Testament prophecies about God's promised Savior. St. Philip became a follower of Christ after Jesus Himself called him. It was St. Philip who brought the Apostle Nathaniel to Christ.

St. Philip preached the Word of God in Galilee. From Galilee he set off to Greece. From Greece he went east as far as Asia Minor, everywhere preaching the Gospel and undergoing sufferings. Both he and his sister Mariam who was accompanying him were often pelted with stones, locked up in prison, and thrown out of villages. While preaching God did many great miracles through St. Philip, many of them miraculous healings; through these miracles, many people came to believe in the Lord.

Toward the end of his life, the Apostle Philip arrived in a city called Hieropolis, where there were many pagan temples. One of these temples was a pagan temple devoted to snake-worship, which had an enormous serpent in it that the pagans worshipped as a god. The Apostle Philip by the power of prayer killed the serpent and healed many bitten by the snakes. Among those healed was the wife of the city governor. Having learned that his wife had accepted Christianity, the governor gave orders to arrest Saint Philip, his sister, and the Apostle Bartholomew who had been travelling with them. The governor gave orders to crucify the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew. At this time there began an earthquake, and it knocked down to the ground all those present at the court. Hanging upon the cross at the pagan temple of the serpent, the Apostle Philip prayed for the salvation of those that had crucified him, to save them from the earthquake. Through his prayers everyone remained alive, except for the governor and the pagan priests.

Seeing this happen, the people believed in Christ and began to demand that the apostles be taken down from the crosses. The Apostle Bartholomew, in being taken down from the cross was still alive, and he baptized all those believing. But the Apostle Philip died on the cross.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12 Forgive them that Hurt Us

While St. Philip was hanging on the cross, he prayed for God to save the people who crucified him. Jesus did the same thing when He was on the Cross, asking God the Father to forgive those who hung Him there. In our lives, when someone hurts us, God does not want us to get back at them. He wants us to forgive them, and show this forgiveness but asking Him to bless them. What are some of the ways that we can show someone that we have forgiven them?

12 & older What god do we follow?

The pagans in the snake temple worshipped a serpent as a god. We might not do things so drastic, but we still might give material things in life more a priority than God. What are some of the things in this world that we have to be careful do not become more important to us than God?

The Holy Apostle Bartholomew

Feast Day: June 24

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:15-21

Kondak to St. Bartholomew (Tone 4)

You appeared as a great sun to the world with miracles and rays of teachings. You guide to the light all who venerate you, O Bartholomew, Apostle of the Lord

Life of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew

The Holy Apostle Bartholomew was born at Cana of Galilee, the town where Jesus performed His first miracle, when he changed water into wine at a wedding feast. St. Bartholomew preached the Gospel in Syria and Asia Minor with the Apostle Philip and his sister, Saint Mariam. In one of the villages they were preaching in they met up with the Apostle John the Theologian, and together they set off to continue preaching the Gospel.

At the city of Hieropolis, where St. Philip killed the giant snake, there lived a man who had been blind for 40 years. When he received healing, he believed in Christ and was baptized. News of this spread throughout the city, and many, many people came to the house where the apostles were staying. The sick and those possessed by demons were released from their infirmities, and many were baptized. The city governor gave orders to arrest the preachers and throw them in prison. At their trial, the governor thought that perhaps some sort of magic power was hidden away in their clothes, so he gave orders to strip them. But Saint Mariam began to seem like a fiery torch before their eyes, and none dared touch her. When the earthquake hit the city and the people were saved through the prayers of St. Philip. They rushed to take the apostles down from their crosses. Since the Apostle Bartholomew had not been put up high, they managed to take him down quickly, and so he survived this ordeal. After the death of St. Philip, the Apostle Bartholomew and St. Mariam stayed with the new Christians in Hieropolis for a while and then moved on.

The Apostle Bartholomew eventually set off to India, and then went to Armenia, where he worked many a miracle and healed the daughter of the emperor Polimios from the demons afflicting her. The emperor in gratitude sent gifts to the apostle, who however refused to accept them, saying that he sought only for the salvation of the souls of mankind. Then Polimios together with the empress, their healed daughter and many of those close to them accepted Baptism. And people from the ten cities of Armenia followed their example. But through the scheming of the pagan priests, the Apostle Bartholomew was seized by the emperor's brother, and crucified upside down. But even from the cross he did not cease to proclaim the Good

News about Christ the Saviour. Finally, they flayed the skin from the Apostle Bartholomew and cut off his head. Believers placed his remains in a metal coffin and buried him.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: The Greatest Reward

When the Armenia emperor wanted to give St. Bartholomew a gift for healing his daughter, St. Bartholomew said he did not want it. He did this because he did not preach to get something out of it. He preached because of His love for God and for the people who He met with. When we do good, we need to remember not to expect to get something out of it, but to do it because this is how God wants us to live. Knowing that we have followed God by showing love for another person is our greatest reward. Has anyone ever done something nice for you without expecting anything back from you? How did you feel when they acted kindly to you like this?

12 & older: Miracles

The miracles performed by Christ and His saints are not just events in history but continue to happen in people's lives today. When God performs a miracle in someone's life, whether directly or through the prayers of another person, it is to show His power and His glory. They are done for the sake of the one who is blessed by the miracle and for those who witness it. They are not meant to be like circus side show attractions or magic tricks. We need to remember that miracles are always done by God's will, not ours. We cannot demand miracles from God. When they come, we must receive miraculous events with gratitude, giving glory to God for His great gift. Have you ever witnessed a miracle? Do you know someone who has?

MONDAY OF WEEK 2

The Holy Apostle Thomas

Feast Day: Oct. 19

Scripture: John 20:24-29

Tropar to St. Thomas (Tone 2)

you were a disciple of Christ and one of the Twelve, and by your unbelief did proclaim Christ's Resurrection. By touch you were assured of His holy Passion, O glorious Apostle Thomas. Pray to Him to grant us peace and mercy.

Life of the Holy Apostle Thomas

The Apostle Thomas was a fisherman from Galilee. Hearing Jesus' preaching, he left all and followed after Him.

The Bible teaches us that the first time that Jesus came to His apostles after rising from the dead, Thomas was not with them. When he heard the news that Jesus was alive, St. Thomas did not believe the other disciples: "I will not believe unless I see in His hand the wound of the nail, and place my finger into it, and place my hand in His side." The second time Jesus appeared to the apostles Thomas was with them, and Jesus let Thomas touch His wounds. "My Lord and my God", the Apostle cried out and thus became one of Jesus' most fervent preachers.

St. Thomas founded Christian churches in Palestine, the lands that are now called Iran, Ethiopia and India. Preaching the Gospel earned the apostle a martyr's death. For having converted the wife and son of the governor of the Indian city of Melipur, the holy apostle was locked up in prison, suffered torture, and finally, having been pierced with five spears, he gave up his to the Lord.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Let's Not Judge Others

For St. Thomas, it was important to touch the risen Lord Jesus in order to believe that Jesus truly rose from the dead. In our Church we use many different things to help us grow in our belief. The things in church that we can touch, hear, smell, taste and see make it easier for us to understand God's teachings. What are some of these things?

12 & older: Dealing with Doubts

The Apostle Thomas at first doubted that Jesus had truly risen from the dead. But, once he saw the Lord, he believed with his whole heart. In our lives, we too might have times when we struggle with doubts and questions about our faith. What is important is that we ask our questions, not thinking that the Church has no answers, but always trusting that the answers are there. All we have to do is look for them, just like Jesus promises: "seek and you shall find". (Matthew 7:7) If someone we know is struggling with doubts – about themselves, their families, their faith – what are some of the ways that we can offer them encouragement?

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

Feast Day: Nov. 29

Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:9-13

Tropar to St. Matthew (Tone 3)

O Apostle Matthew, you heard the Voice of the Word and received the light of faith. You abandoned the office of publican and proclaimed Christ God's Self-emptying. Ask that those who praise you may receive forgiveness and great mercy

Life of the Holy Apostle Matthew

The Holy Apostle Matthew, was also named Levi. He was brother of the Apostle James Alphaeus. St. Matthew was a tax-collector, and he lived in the city of Capernaum. When Jesus called St. Matthew to become one of his apostles, Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples to his house for a supper. Christ and His disciples accepted the invitation and visited with Matthew and his other tax collector friends. This angered the Jewish officials because tax collectors of that time were known to be very greedy and unfair people. To even speak with a tax-collector was considered a sin. Matthew, said he was sorry for his sins, and paid back anyone he had cheated. Then, he gave the rest of his possessions to the poor, and together with the other apostles he followed after Christ.

St. Matthew first preached in Palestine for eight years. Towards the end of this time, at the request of the Christians of Jerusalem, Matthew wrote his Gospel, telling of the life and teachings of Jesus.

St. Matthew left Palestine to preach in Syria, the lands of modern-day Iran, and Ethiopia. The ruler of Ethiopia did not want his subjects to become Christians and stop worshipping the pagan gods. He accused the apostle of sorcery and gave orders to execute him. They tied up saint Matthew to a pole, head downwards, heaped up brushwood and ignited it. When the bonfire flared up, everyone then saw, that the fire did no harm to St. Matthew. Then the king gave orders to add more wood to the fire, and to set up around the bonfire 12 idols. But the flames spread to the idols and caught on even king. The frightened king turned to the saint for help, and by the prayer of St. Matthew the flame went out. The body of the holy apostle remained unharmed, and he gave up his soul to the Lord.

The ruler deeply regretted what he had done, but still he had doubts. By his command, they put the body of Saint Matthew into an iron coffin and threw it into the sea. He said, that if the God of

Matthew would preserve the body of the apostle in the water, as He preserved him in the fire, then this would be proper reason to worship this One True God.

On that night the Apostle Matthew appeared to the local bishop in a dream vision, and commanded him to go with clergy to the shore of the sea and to find his body there. Together with the bishop on his way to the shore of the sea went the Ethiopian king. There on the shore they found the coffin carried back by the waves. Then the king begged forgiveness of the holy Apostle Matthew, and was baptized, taking on the name Matthew. He left his seat as king to become a priest and later bishop of the Christians of Ethiopia, continuing to follow the example of his namesake, St. Matthew the apostle.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Making amends

When he was working as a tax collector, St. Matthew took money from people that was not his. When he asked God for forgiveness, he showed that he was truly sorry by giving back the money he had unfairly taken from people. When we do something that hurts someone or makes something break or be lost, we need to show that we are truly sorry by helping to make things right again. This is called making amends. What are some of the ways that we can make amends with our family or friends when we have hurt them in some way?

12 & older: Not condemning others.

Before becoming an apostle, St. Matthew was a tax collector. Tax collectors were infamous for abusing their power and cheating people, taking more money from them than they should – often by force. Rather than shun Matthew, Jesus saw in him the possibility for great goodness, and so He reached out to him. Each of us has the potential for great goodness, regardless of what we have done in life. Rather than attacking someone for their faults and weaknesses, Christ wants us to encourage them and help build up their talents and strengths. Have you ever know someone who surprised you by being much more than you ever expected that they could possibly be?

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 2

The Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of Our Lord

Feast Day: July 2

Scripture Reading: Matthew 10:16-22

Tropar to St. Jude (Tone 1)

We know you as Christ's kinsman and martyr and praise you with holy chant. O Apostle Jude, you trampled on error and preserved the Faith. As today we celebrate your memory, through your prayers may our sins be forgiven

Life of the Holy Apostle Jude

The Holy Apostle Jude is also known in the Bible as Judas (“not Iscariot”), Thaddaeus, Levi and Barsabas. He was the son of St. Joseph, the Guardian of Christ and His Mother, and a step-brother of Jesus.

St. Joseph was an older man, whose first wife had died. With his first wife, St. Joseph had several sons who were already young men by the time Joseph was called by God to take care of the Ever-Virgin Mary and the Christ-Child. When Joseph returned from Egypt with Mary and her Son, he began to divide among his sons the worldly things belonging to him. He wanted to give part also to Christ, born from the All-Pure Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. His sons were opposed to this and only the eldest of them, James, accepted Jesus – for this he was termed Brother of the Lord. Later on Jude believed that Jesus was the Saviour promised by God, and with all his heart he turned to Him. Jesus thus chose by Him to be one of His twelve Apostles. Remembering that at first he would not accept Jesus, St. Jude considered himself unworthy to be called a brother with God. In his own Epistle which we find in the Bible, St. Jude calls himself merely the brother of James.

The Apostle Jude preached the Gospel first in Judea, Galilee, Samaria and later in the lands of Arabia, Syria, and on to what is now known as Iraq, preaching in the city of Edessa. While he was preaching, St. Jude wrote an epistle that now makes up part of the New Testament. The Apostle Jude taught that faith in Jesus Christ is important, but along with it we must be involved in actions that are fitting our beliefs.

The Holy Apostle Jude died a martyr about the year 80 in Armenia in the city of Arata, where he was crucified on a cross and pierced by arrows.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Wherever we go, God is not far from us.

St. Jude and the other apostles traveled far from home to preach the Good News of Jesus. Everywhere they went, though, they knew that God was always with them – when things were going well, and when they were going bad. No matter where we go, we must never forget about God, and we must remember that He is always with us. What can we do to remind ourselves that God is always with us?

12 & older: Humility

St. Jude did not feel it was right to be called the “brother of the Lord”, because he at first did not accept Jesus as part of his father’s household. He did this out of his deep regret for rejecting

Christ. For him this was an act of humility. Humility is a great Christian virtue. It does not mean being down on oneself. It means that, knowing we are not perfect, we must not act as if we are better than someone else. What are some of the things that we can say or do that express humility?

THURSDAY OF WEEK 2

The Holy Apostles James Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot

Feast Days: Oct. 22 (St. James); May 23 (St. Simon)

Scripture Readings: John 2:1-11

Tropar to St. James (Tone 4)

O holy Apostle James, you received the fiery grace of the Spirit and did shine on the world like the morning star; you dispelled the pagan night of idols. Pray unceasingly for our souls

Tropar to St. Simon (Tone 3)

O glorious Simon, when God Incarnate revealed Himself to you, you were kindled with divine zeal. You were a zealot among the Apostles and eager to emulate Christ's death. You did go forth to Him by crucifixion. Entreat Him to grant us His great mercy

Life of the Holy Apostle James the son of Alphaeus

Holy Apostle James the son of Alphaeus is also called St. James Alphaeus. He was the brother of the holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew. St. James Alphaeus, together with the St. Andrew, made missionary journeys preaching in many towns through what is present-day Israel, and converting many to the path of salvation. In the Egypt, Saint James finished his apostolic work with a martyr's death on the cross.

Life of the Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot

The Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot was another son of Joseph, and a step-brother of the Lord Jesus. The first miracle which Jesus did -- changing water into wine at a wedding supper -- happened at the house of Simon. Struck by this miracle, Simon with all his heart and soul believed in the Lord as the Promised Savior, and became one of Jesus' followers. The title "Zealot" means a person who is zealous. The holy Apostle Simon preached the teaching of Christ at Judea, Egypt, Libya, and Britain. In the Ukrainian regions of the Crimea he accepted a

martyr's death, and was crucified on a cross. He was buried near the ancient Ukrainian city of Sukhum.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: True Heroes

People can have many kinds of heroes: sports stars, characters from TV programs, men and women from history. The most important heroes are our heroes of the Faith. These are the people who show us how to follow Jesus in our lives. We call them the saints. The saints pray to God for us, asking that He would help us in our lives, and they remind us that we can also be heroes of our Faith when we follow Jesus in our lives. Who is your favorite person from the Bible or your favorite Saint?

12 & older: Popularity

The lives of other apostles are much better documented than the lives of St. James Alphaeus and St. Simon. But that does not mean that what they did wasn't important. It was so important for the Church, that they are honored as saints – our intercessors before God and our role models of Christian life in this world. True greatness – greatness in God's eyes – is about quality, not quantity. It is not measured by how well-known we are, but on whether or not we are being true to God's teachings. What is the hardest thing about feeling unpopular?

FRIDAY OF WEEK 2

The Holy Apostle Matthias

Feast Day: Aug. 22

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:15-26

Tropar to St. Matthias (Tone 3)

Called by the Holy Spirit you did complement the twelve-fold choir of the Apostles. You proclaimed with them the condescension of God the Word, O wondrous and glorious Apostle Matthias. Pray that all who praise you may receive great mercy and the forgiveness of their sins

Life of the Holy Apostle Matthias

The Holy Apostle Matthias was born in Bethlehem. From his early childhood he was a student of the Holy Scriptures. When the Lord Jesus began preaching, St. Matthias believed in Him as

the Savior promised by God, and followed constantly after Him. Jesus chose him to be one of the 70 disciples whom He sent out to preach. After the Jesus ascended back to heaven, St. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot among the 12 Apostles.

The Apostle Matthias preached the Gospel at Jerusalem and in Judea together with the other Apostles. From Jerusalem he went with the Apostles Peter and Andrew to Antioch, and Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey). Here the Apostle Matthias was locked into prison, from which he was miraculously freed by the Apostle Andrew. Saint Matthias preached with St. Andrew for three years. He was frequently subjected to deadly peril, but the Lord preserved him alive to further preach the Gospel. One time non-believers put St. Matthias in prison and forced him to drink a poison potion. The apostle drank it and not only did he himself remain unharmed, but he also healed other prisoners which had been blinded by the potion. When Saint Matthias left the prison, his enemies could no longer find him – since he had become invisible to them.

The Apostle Matthias eventually returned to his home country of Judea and kept preaching to his countrymen about Christ's teachings. He worked great miracles in the Name of the Lord Jesus and he converted a great many to faith in Christ. The Jewish High-Priest hated Jesus' teachings and he ordered that the Apostle Matthias be arrested and brought for judgement in Jerusalem. The Apostle Matthias was sentenced to death by stoning. When Saint Matthias was already dead, his head was cut off – which symbolized that he was an enemy of the Roman Empire. The Apostle Matthias died for Christ in about the year 63.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: God Takes Care of Us

God took care of St. Matthias and protected him from many dangers. God is also always watching over us. He sends to each of us an angel to be the guide and guardian of our lives. Through our guardian angel God protects us from danger and leads us in a way of life pleasing to God. Many times our guardian angel protects us even when we don't know we are heading for trouble. Have you ever been in a "close call" where you just knew that someone was looking out for you?

12 & older: A Life-long Commitment

Sometimes, when we read stories from the Bible or the lives of the saints, we do not at first see the time frame that these things took place in. St. Matthias preached the Gospel for 30 years before giving up his life for the Lord. When we make a commitment to God, we make it for the "long haul". Every day of our life is part of our spiritual journey; every step of this journey should be made knowing the Christ and His saints are travelling with us. In the Divine Liturgy, when we say "let us commend out whole life to God", we do not only mean every part of it, but also every day of it. What could you see yourself doing in the Church 5, 10, and 15 years from now?