



To tithe is to show that we care for the Church

Church School Director and Teacher Notes

Church School Directors, although this program is much simpler and more direct than in previous years, it will require some coordination of the teachers. A grid page has been provided for the task of scheduling.

So, what happens to the money after we put it in the collection plate?

The purpose of these lessons is simple—to show the students the expenses related to living in the Church and to reinforce their role in helping to meet those expenses, now and as they grow older. The beauty and life of the Church doesn't just happen; priests, icons, and ministries don't grow on trees. Faithful people have given their lives, and their money, so that we have what we often take for granted. Our desire is that the students will become aware of some of these expenses and out of their gratitude and love for Christ and the Church, develop a pattern of lifelong giving. It's connecting the dots between giving and the positive results of building and caring for the Church.

The lessons are built around a series of “field trips” in which “guest speakers” from the parish will share briefly about various aspects of Church life and outreach. This material is designed so that it can be customized to the expertise of those in your parish, the needs and interests of the students your class, and your schedule. Please adapt the lessons to be most useful in your setting. Also, be sure to include personal stories of your own experience with tithing, generosity, and stewardship.

You can find additional materials at www.antiochian.org/tithe, such as student booklets, posters, the planning grid, and an article about tithing. Don't forget to visit the site to fill out an evaluation so that we can improve our materials to better serve you and your students.

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Getting Started

There are five levels of lessons:

- K-1: Kindergarten to Grade 1
- 2-3: Grades 2 and 3
- 4-5: Grades 4 and 5
- MS: Middle School
- HS: High School

Please allow a minimum of 10 minutes per lesson. The first lesson is an introductory lesson, and the last lesson is a conclusion lesson. Together with your Church School Director, choose how many field trip lessons you will do in between the introductory lesson and the conclusion lesson.

If your schedule allows for 20 minutes or more, you may include the journaling immediately following the field trip, as part of the class time. If your schedule allows for 10 minutes, you may choose to use another class period for reviewing and the journaling.

Two typical plans might be:

20+ minute lessons (six field trips)

- September: Introduction
- October: Field Trip 1 with journaling
- November: Field Trip 2 with journaling
- December: Field Trip 3 with journaling
- January: Field Trip 4 with journaling
- February: Field Trip 5 with journaling
- March: Field Trip 6 with journaling
- April: Conclusion

10 minute lessons (three field trips)

- September: Introduction
- October: Field Trip 1
- November: Journal about Field Trip 1
- December: Field Trip 2
- January: Journal about Field Trip 2
- February: Field Trip 3
- March: Journal about Field Trip 3
- April: Conclusion

Decide how you will use the related activity handouts (www.antiochian.org/tithe). You can print/copy each lesson's page as needed and send it home with the student at the end of the class, or you can prepare the handouts into a packet (stapled or hole-punched and placed in a folder/binder). Please note that you will need to print/copy multiple copies of the journal page, one for each field trip.

Scheduling

Together with your Church School Director, decide who will select and schedule the visits. Which topics are a good fit for your parish? (For example, if there is a construction project in the works or recently completed, you may want to focus on the topic of construction.) Which topics are a good match for your class? Who in your parish could speak with the students about the various topics? Who will invite the speakers? Where will the “field trips” take place? (If there is not an appropriate place for certain topics, feel free to invite the speakers into the classroom.)

Church School Directors, you may decide to schedule the same visits for each class, customize the visits for each class, or ask each teacher to arrange the visits for his or her class. Here is a sample invitation letter:

Dear _____,

Our Sunday Church School students are learning about what happens to the money they give in the collection and how it benefits the Church and the world. Would you be willing to talk about the expenses related to *hospitality* with *five* classes for about 10 minutes each sometime during the year ahead? I'll work with you to schedule the visits.

Here is a description of what we're looking for: [*adapt the description from the Possible Topics section below*].

Thank you!

For Church School Directors arranging speakers for the classes, there is a planning grid available at www.antiochian.org/tithe.

class	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
K-1 date topic guest	introduction	10/11 worship/icons Sarah B.						Conclusion
2-3 date topic guest	introduction							Conclusion
4-5 date topic guest	introduction							Conclusion
MS date topic guest	introduction							Conclusion
HS date topic guest	introduction							Conclusion

Introductory Lesson

This lesson sets the tone for the series of lessons. We encourage you to read Fr. Thomas Zell's article, *The Trail of the Tithe* (www.antiochian.org/tithe) as background information on the history of tithing.

1. Read, or have students take turns reading aloud, the paragraph at the top of the activity handout.
2. Complete the activity at the bottom of the page.
3. Ask the students about the source of money they receive (allowance, gifts, chores, jobs).
4. Ask the students what they do with their tithe between the time they receive it and when they place it in the offering. This would be an appropriate time to introduce an envelope system, if your parish or Sunday Church School uses envelopes.
5. Discuss with the students the opportunities and procedures for giving at your parish (For example, is the collection received during the Divine Liturgy or in the Sunday Church School? Do students use special envelopes? Can older students use direct deposit?)
6. Consider these additional activities as time permits:

For younger students: Have students wash their hands or use antibacterial hand cleanser. Give each student a scoop of one type of trail mix pieces to count. Have them put one of every 10 pieces in a separate container to be given to the priest. Students can eat the remainder, share it with others, or take it home in the containers you provide. For this activity, make sure that none of the students has a food allergy, and that you are not interfering with the Eucharistic fast.

For middler students: Ask the students to individually compile a list, within a certain time limit, of as many tangible items in the Church building that were bought or donated that they can think of. Ask them to take turns reading their lists out loud. Choose one of the most expensive items on the list and estimate its cost. With the allowances and any other income the students have, how many years/decades/centuries would it take for the students in your class to purchase this item?

For older students: Obtain a copy of the past year's or current parish budget (but don't show it to the students until later). Explain that a budget is a spending plan the parish uses to make sure all the expenses are covered. Ask the students to guess the types of categories and expenses that might be on a parish budget. How much do they think is spent on each in a year's time? Compare with the parish's actual budget. What are the biggest areas that the class didn't think of?

Going deeper for older students: Repeat the activity above with income rather than expenses. Are there any other income sources in addition to the offerings? Figure out how the average giving per person and/or family in the parish. Assuming everyone tithes, what is the total yearly income for everyone in the parish? Per person/family? Does this seem high or low?

About the Field Trip Lessons

Before the lesson

1. A week beforehand, confirm the time, location, and expectations with the special guest presenter.
2. Make sure to have adequate pens, crayons, and/or markers for the students for their journaling pages.

During the lesson

1. Start the lesson by reviewing the purpose of the field trips: to learn about how the money we give in the collection is spent to benefit those in the parish and beyond.
2. If going to another part of the building, remind the students to walk quietly so as not to disturb others.
3. Introduce the presenter and his or her role in the parish.
4. While the presenter is talking, listen carefully, and if necessary, help to direct the presentation to be most appropriate for your students. For example, if the person uses words the students may not be familiar with, ask the presenter to define them.
5. Ask the students if they have questions for the presenter, and facilitate the question-and-answer time.
6. Thank the presenter and return to the classroom.

For younger and middler students, make the field trip as hands-on as possible. If appropriate (and with the presenter's permission), allow the children to touch the items and use their other senses.

For middler and older students, consider compiling with them before the field trip a list of possible questions for the presenter, including specific questions about how much certain items might cost and scenarios of what the presenter wishes could be done with more money allocated for that area of the budget.

Using the journaling pages

Depending on the length of the class period and the time given to this lesson, you can have the students complete the journal page:

1. Immediately after the field trip
2. As a take-home assignment
3. During an upcoming class period (after having the students review the field trip, for their own remembrance and for the sake of any students who were not present for the field trip)

Invite the students to draw in the frame a picture of something they saw during their field trip that reminds them of the topic, and to finish the sentence at the bottom of the page.

For younger students, you may need to review their ideas for completing the sentence, and write a summary phrase on the white board for them to copy.

For older students, you may invite them, instead of (or in addition to) drawing in the frame, to write a poem, take notes, or do calculations in the frame.

Ask the students to tell what specific items they might think about the next time they put money in the offering.

Invite the students to design and sign a thank you card for the guest presenter, perhaps with a similar illustration as the one they drew on the journaling page. (This can either be one card from the whole class, or one card per student.)

After the lesson

1. Give a thank you card(s) to the guest presenter.
2. Ask the presenter any follow-up questions or share any observations the students may have mentioned while journaling.
3. Talk with the Church School Director about any suggestions for improving future field trips.

An additional idea for the journal pages

If you choose not to staple or put the activity sheets in a binder from the beginning of the year, you could collect the journal pages and feature them on a bulletin board following each lesson. After all the lessons, you could then staple the completed pages or put them into a folder for the student to take home.

Possible Topics for Field Trip Lessons: Worship

As time permits, the invited guests may speak about the importance of the items used in worship. However, the main objective of the lesson is for the students to understand the cost of the items. The importance and symbolism are covered in other lessons.

Choose one of these topics to focus on:

- **Visit the choir loft or cantor's stand.** Invite your choir director or cantor to talk with the students about the amount of time needed and cost for choir materials. How many different books are used in the yearly worship cycle? Where do the books come from and how much do they cost? How much does a service book cost? Make a list of the other items found in the choir loft or cantor's stand.
- **Visit the vestry.** Invite a clergy member to show the vestments, demonstrate vesting, and briefly describe the schedule used for different vestments. Count the number of garments. Where do the vestments come from? How much do the various garments cost? If the parish has a seamstress who sews the vestments, ask him/her about the cost of fabric and how many hours it takes to create each type of garment.
- **Visit the iconostasis.** Invite an iconographer or clergy member to talk about the process of writing an icon. How many icons do you see in the nave and altar? How much does one of the smaller icons cost? How much for an icon written in the apse or dome? How much for the iconostasis?
- **Visit the sacristy.** Invite a clergy member to talk about the various items used in worship, such as the chalice, Gospel book, and other items on the holy table, and processional items and the baptismal font. What materials are these items made from? How much do the various items cost?

Possible Topics for Field Trip Lessons: Education

As time permits, the invited guests may speak about the importance of the items used in Christian education. However, the main objective of the lesson is for the students to understand the cost of the items. The importance and symbolism are covered in other lessons.

Choose one of these topics to focus on:

- **Visit the Sunday Church School wing.** Invite the Sunday Church School coordinator to talk about the educational component of the parish. How many classes are there? How many students on an average Sunday? Take a look at the books and materials used for each level. How much do these materials cost? Take a look in the supply closets. What other supplies are needed? How much do these supplies cost? Look around and make a list of everything that needed to be purchased for the Sunday Church School to take place. What would the coordinator do if he or she had twice as much money to spend for materials?
- **Visit the library.** Invite the library coordinator to talk about the items in the library. Estimate how many titles are available. Do the students and/or their parents use the resources? Where do these materials come from? How much do short books cost? How about the thick books? How much do you think it cost to stock the whole library? What would the coordinator do if he or she had twice as much money to spend for materials?
- **Visit the location where retreats take place.** Invite someone from the parish who coordinates retreats or other educational/inspirational events to talk about a recent event. What was the topic? Who was the speaker? How many people came? Discuss some of the costs associated with the event, such as publicity; transportation, lodging, and speaker's fees for the presenter; and food.

Possible Topics for Field Trip Lessons: Facility

Choose one of these topics to focus on:

- **Visit the newest part of the Church building.** Invite a member of the building committee to talk with the students about the processes and costs related to construction of a new building. If possible, find the costs related to the construction of various phases of the building. Discuss the various people and roles involved in building a new facility: building committee, architects, masons, electricians, painters, etc. If there is a plan for expansion, show the blueprint. How much money is needed for the next phase of expansion?
- **Visit the furnace room or utility closet.** Invite a custodian or member of the parish council to talk with the students about the upkeep and maintenance of the church building. Have the students list the expenses they can think of related to operating a building of this size, including utilities and cleaning costs. Discuss the costs of heating and cooling the building, providing water and sewer, electricity, and phone. Ask the students to decide which of these they would give up if the funds would not be available.
- **Visit the outside!** Invite the person responsible for the groundskeeping to talk with the students about the costs associated with the maintenance of the grounds, including grass seed, fertilizer, snow removal, mowing, paving of the parking lot, and painting the exterior. Count the number of trees. Count the number of parking spaces. If appropriate, pick up any trash or pull weeds, as a way for students to help keep the outside beautiful.

Possible Topics for Field Trip Lessons: Clergy

Choose one of these topics to focus on:

- **Visit the priest's office (or the nave).** Invite your priest to talk in general terms with the students about his living expenses, such as mortgage/rent, utilities, food, healthcare, and transportation. Ask the students to make a list of other likely expenses they can think of, from their own family's experience (such as braces for the children, clothing, pets). Where does the money for the priest's expenses come from—a paycheck from the parish and/or another job(s)? If the latter, does he wish that he could focus more on the parish? What else would he like to do for the parish if the funds were available for him to give more time? Ask the students to make a list of all the tasks they've observed the priest performing. Explain how tithes and offerings make it possible for the priest to serve.
- **Visit the priest's study (or the nave).** Invite a clergy member (or seminarian) to talk with the students about seminary. What is a seminary? What was it like to attend seminary? What did he learn? How much did it cost? Explain how part of our tithes and offerings support those in seminary. If the archdiocese hadn't paid for part of the expenses, how would his experience have been different?
- **Visit the Metropolitan and Bishop** (figuratively, if not literally). Invite someone from the parish who is familiar with the archdiocese to talk about the role and tasks of the Metropolitan and Bishops. Show photos of the Metropolitan and Bishop. Ask the students to say the names of the Metropolitan and your Bishop, and to share a memory of a visit from one of them. How do we know that they love us? What do they do when they're not visiting parishes? What expenses do they have? How can our giving generously in the offering make it easier for them to do their work?

Possible Topics for Field Trip Lessons: Outreach

Choose one of these topics to focus on:

- **Visit the Food for Hungry People collection site.** Invite the person responsible for collecting and distributing food to speak with the students. Talk about how many pounds or bags of food has been collected the past few years. Ask the students to talk about the time in their life when they were the hungriest, and what it was like to finally eat. Then ask them to imagine how it would have felt if there wouldn't have been any food for them to eat. If possible, share a story from people who have benefited by your parish's donations of food. Talk about how giving food to hungry people is a way for them to tithe.
- **Visit the kitchen.** Invite someone from the parish who manages the kitchen and/or coffee hour supplies to talk with the students about the expenses related to the parish's hospitality. In addition to coffee hour, who else eats here sometimes? Talk about funerals, weddings, and other events when people might come to Church for the first time. Have the students take a look around the room and in the cupboards, and make a list of supplies, utensils, appliances, and food. How much does it cost for the coffee, tea, sugar, creamer, etc., for coffee hour for one Sunday? How much for a year? If possible, find out how much the appliances (refrigerator, stove, or coffee pot) cost.
- **Visit the neighborhood** (figuratively, if not literally). Invite someone from your parish to talk with the students about an outreach project that your parish is involved with, such as a soup kitchen, prolife center, or college ministry. What are the results of people giving generously to this project? What more could be done do if the parish gave twice as much money to this project?
- **Visit the world.** Show a short clip of a video from IOCC/OCMC to show how tithes to the parish make this missionary work possible. Or, if possible, invite someone who has served in missions (long-term or short-term) to tell about their experiences of serving God in another country. What kind of work did he/she do? How much did it cost to travel and live in that location? Imagine together that your class could go there too. How much money would you need to raise? What opportunities are coming up for the students to help support?

Possible Topics for Field Trip Lessons: The Larger Family

Invite the parish treasurer to speak with the students about how a percentage of the tithes and offerings supports the archdiocese in ministries that are broader than what one parish can do. "Can our parish publish a magazine? Can we run our own Church camp? Can we have our radio station?" Discuss how each person gives to their local parish, each parish gives to the archdiocese, and how all those funds can accomplish more than one parish can do alone.

- Have a copy of the *Word Magazine* for students to look at; ask their thoughts on how a magazine like this can connect the parishes and encourage the people.
- Talk about Antiochian Village (or the camp closest to your parish); ask students how they have benefited by participating in a Church camp.
- Listen to Ancient Faith Radio (ancientfaith.com); discuss how listening to the music and programs can encourage people all around the world, including those who aren't able to attend services regularly.

Conclusion Lesson

1. Ask the students to tell about the field trips they remember.
2. Ask what they think about when they place their offering in the collection.
3. Hand out and have the students complete the Conclusion activity page.
4. Consider these additional activities as time permits:

For all students. Have the students design and give thank you cards to adults who have been involved in the parish for a long time and likely have faithfully contributed financially for many years.

For middler and older students: Ask a student to read aloud 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. In what ways is giving money to God like sowing? What do we reap? What are some reasons why someone might not give cheerfully? Does our attitude about giving to God matter?

For older students. Invite the students (either as a group or individually) to write an "open letter" to the parish, explaining why it is important for all members to give generously.