

Objective:

The students will be able to:

- Express that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is our guidebook to help us live united with Him now and forever.
- Explain how the Bible brings us the joyful message that Jesus has won salvation and eternal life for us.
- Sort the books of the Bible into the Old Testament and New Testament and recall bible stories from specific books.
- Use the Bible to read and study a verse about how Jesus has won eternal salvation for us.
- Use the jigsaw method to teach classmates about how the Bible is God's revelation to man.
- Unpack the entire CF quote and find examples throughout scripture to support its meaning.

Time:

Up to three 40 minute lessons

Materials:

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

The Lesson Plan:

Opening

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

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

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

Introduction

Pair off the students in your classroom. Ask the students what the Bible is. Give them several minutes to “think-pair-share” their answers with their partners. Call on the students to share their answers with the entire class. Write their ideas on the board (or chart paper) under the heading, “What is the Bible?”

Content

- 1) On a piece of chart paper, make a t-chart with the headings: “Old Testament” and “New Testament”. Ask the students to recall what they know about each testament and share that information with a neighbor. They can write their ideas on post-it notes. Take a moment to allow the students to share with the class what they discussed with their neighbor and hang their post-it notes on the appropriate side of the t-chart. (*In the Old Testament, there are books written by prophets, their scribes or persons not known to us. The New Testament was written by some of the Holy Apostles or their scribes or disciples. The Old Testament contains the history of God’s people and the foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus Christ into this world. The New Testament contains the Gospels, which tell us about Christ’s life on earth, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, the beginning of the Church, and the Epistles, the letters written to the early Christian communities by some of the Apostles and Revelation written by St. John, the Evangelist. These authors of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit. That’s why the Bible contains the Word of God.*) Make sure the students are clear on these points.
- 2) Ask the students partner up with a classmate. Divide the Books of the Bible cards among the pairs and give them a few minutes to decide with their partner in which testament the book belongs. They can make two piles and refer to the table of contents for the last minute, if necessary.
- 3) After they’ve created their piles, give the students another few minutes to write down on each card any bible stories they remember from the specific books. Allow them to use their bibles as they complete this activity. Direct the students’ attention to the board. Have each partner group come forward and tape the book cards under the appropriate heading, reading aloud the book of the bible and the story/stories found in that book. Ask the students who are seated to double check their classmates’ answers by looking in the table of contents. Repeat with each partner group until the activity is completed.
- 4) Tell the students that within these books there are many stories and lessons for us, but one most important message. Have the partners turn to 1 John 5:11-12 (page 1703 in the Orthodox Study Bible). Assign students to read these verses. Discuss their meaning (*that Jesus has won salvation and eternal life for us! Eternal life means we will live forever with Christ in the heavenly kingdom. When we think about living forever because of Jesus’ victory over death, we are joyful.*) Continue to read 1 John 5:13. Discuss. (*The words in the Bible bring us this joyful message and proclaim it not just to us now, but to everyone who lived, and will live also, to the end of the world.*)
- 5) Ask the students to recall the story of Adam and Eve. Discuss how Adam and Eve rejected God and did not recognize their own sinfulness. What did God intend for the world originally? (*To be united to Him = Paradise*). Though we were separated from God by sin, God loves each of His children and offered all of us the chance to be with Him again. How? (*God gave His Son, Jesus to come into this world. Jesus suffered for us and overcame death through the Glorious Resurrection. Through repentance, any of God’s children can turn to Him and accept salvation that Jesus won for us!*)
- 6) Hand each student the pre-copied pages from the Orthodox Study Bible: 1753-1755 (“The Bible: God’s Revelation to Man”). Have the students silently read the introductory paragraph at the beginning. Ask the students to summarize/discuss that paragraph with their partner. Now divide the class into groups of 3. Within the trios, assign each student a different subheading to read: “The Bible Reveals God”, “The Bible Reveals our Need”, and “The Bible Reveals Salvation”. Tell the students that as they are silently reading their assigned section, they are to “talk to the text” and jot down in the margins thoughts that come to mind, feelings that they have, and the “MVP, or their most valuable point”. After giving the students time to read their sections and

“talk to the text”, have them regroup with their trios and take turns presenting/teaching their section by sharing their conversations with the text and the MVP.

Activity

- 1) Divide the class into five groups. Post the entire theme quote at the front of the room. Read it together: "The Bible is a scented garden, delightful, beautiful, it enchants our ears with birdsong in a sweet, divine, and spiritual harmony, it touches our heart, comforts us in sorrow, soothes us in a moment of anger, and fills us with eternal joy."
- 2) Give each group a piece of poster board. Call to attention the five colored portions of the quote. Assign each group one of the colored phrases from the quote. Working within their groups, have the students find example scriptures from the Bible and answer/address the HOW of their assigned phrase from the quote. Have the groups use their assigned phrase from the quote as their title for the poster and record their findings and thoughts on the poster. Allow them to use drawings, magazine cut outs, scriptures, etc. to illustrate their points.
- 3) Allow each group the chance to present their poster in front of the rest of the class. When all groups have finished with their presentations, post their work in the classroom as a reminder of the theme for the rest of the church school year. Remind the students that each of the posters represent how the Bible fills us with eternal joy.

Closing

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