

ORTHODOX SYRIAN
SUNDAYSCHOOL ASSOCIATION
OF THE EAST



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Class XII
English

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Preface

Education is a continuing and refreshing endeavour which attempts to train and equip kids and the young people for a spiritual, active and successful life; and hence it is an 'investment' for today and tomorrow. The myriad possibilities of education have encouraged religion, countries and ideologies to adapt it for furthering their objectives and long term aims. In the Christian tradition "Christian education' is a ministry of the Church.

Secular education programme in every situation and country has undergone enormous transformation through the years. More and more study and research is going into the philosophical base, content, techniques of teaching and learning, learners' participation, technique of evaluation etc. So it is only natural that 'revisions' happen from time to time.

"Christian Education", for which the Sunday School lays the foundation and prods nurture, is never intended to be a carbon copy of what happens in the world of secular education. Christian education has its unique aim and objectives, philosophy, ethics and vision. However, it is not irrelevant to learn from the relevant and successful 'techniques' available and adopted in the secular front. But we must be constantly careful, never to slip away from our firm Orthodox foundations!

It is highly commendable that the Orthodox Syrian Sundayschool Association has taken the bold step to completely revise the whole curriculum, trusting in God, who loves children. Every lesson and every detail is prepared after a pretty long stretch of study, discussion, correction and revisits by a team of people who have the interest and expertise to engage in this exacting and time-consuming exercise. Provisions are made to give proper guidelines and direction to teachers. All this study materials are being prepared in Malayalam and English simultaneously. The regional schools, especially, those outside India, shall adapt these basic materials to suit local situations, linguistic and cultural variances; and aptitudes of children but keeping the broad structure and basics intact.

These revised study materials are dedicated to the Church, with the fervent expectation that all those who love the Church, and our children who are dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, shall certainly welcome this venture.

Devalokom
20-10-2012

Yakob Mar Irenious Metrapolitan
President, OSSAE

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Introduction

We are living through a period of rapid changes. The educational sector reflects these changes to a great extent. Secular education is undergoing a lot of revisions and children are greatly influenced by secular education. Therefore Sunday School Curriculum also requires to be revised according to the new learning methods. The comprehensive revision of the curriculum is undertaken in the light of this reality.

We have no notion that just by implementing the secular methodology of learning, we can reform the character of our children. The fundamental principle there should be the teacher-student relationship modelled on the love between Christ and his disciples. The method of presentation followed in this book would help teachers and students alike in the transaction of the topics discussed.

This textbook comes as a product of the strenuous efforts of the Curriculum Revision Committee headed by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenius, President, OSSAE. The contributions of those who wrote various units are invaluable. This textbook, on its completion, owes much to all members of the curriculum committee, especially H.G. Mar Irenius, President OSSAE and executive editor Sam V. Daniel. Suggestions to improve this book are welcome.

Let me pray for this New Curriculum to inaugurate a new age of Spiritual Enlightenment in Sunday School education. Let me also place on record the gratitude to all those who worked for it. We are highly obliged to Prof. Jose K. Philip for preparing this English edition.

Devalokam
20-12-2012

Fr. Dr. O. Thomas
Director General

Dear students,

We are undertaking a comprehensive revision of the Sunday School Curriculum. The period of learning from Preschool to Class XII is divided into 5 stages.

1. Bethlahem	Preschool class	Upto Age 5
2. Nazreth	Class I to III	Age 5-7
3. Galilee	Class IV to VII	Age 8-11
4. Jerusalem	Class VIII to X	Age 12-14
5. Thabore	Class XI and XII	Age 15-16

The two year learning programme in the Thabore category is titled 'Orthodox Vedapraveen Diploma'. A Diploma certificate will be issued on successful completion of this course. In the second year lessons topics like learning psychology, teaching methods and Evaluation are included. Hence those who complete this course will also acquire the eligibility to become Sunday School teachers. Therefore, learn this course diligently and with enthusiasm. The lessons included are very useful to you. They are prepared in such a simple manner as to promote self-learning.

The textbook for the first year contains 28 lessons in 7 units. Besides another book titled. 'The Meaningful Rituals' will be the supplementary reader. Besides two activities are suggested as practical work.

1. Attend the orientation programme conducted with centre aid in your diocese.
2. Prepare five lesson plans and teach five classes in your Sunday School under the supervision of the headmasters/class teacher. Detailed suggestions for the preparation of lesson plans are given in your textbook. Learn it properly, prepare lesson planes and teach with proper preparation.

Convenient classes for practice teaching can be selected on the basis of the suggestions of the class teacher.

Only those who complete the project of the first year will become eligible for appearing for the second year annual examination.

Take care to learn the lessons systematically. Attend Sunday school classes without fail. Attend the worship in the Church and pray regularly.

Above all, you should pray for all Sunday School students and teachers. The service rendered by our Sunday School teachers in imparting spiritual training to the growing generation and confirming them in right faith and right worship is invaluable. Full co-operation of all students and teachers is essential for the successful implementation of the New Curriculum. Since the new system is different to a large extent from the old, teachers should handle the new curriculum and methods of learning carefully and diligently. Be kind enough to let your valuable suggestions and encouragement known to us. Let there be abundant blessings of the Benevolent God on this righteous endeavour of Sunday school teachers and other authorities for the sake of the Holy Church.

Dr. Sam V. Daniel

Executive Editor



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Unit 1

Missionary Movement and Monasticism

Chapter 1

The Concept of Mission in the Holy Bible

We are quite familiar with the words mission and missionary. We got acquainted with such European jargons and cultural traits only after the advent of the Portugese, who came as Roman Catholic colonial rulers. The word 'mission' mainly denotes evangelism. Ever since Christ's disciple St. Thomas spread Gospel in India, there had been a small Apostolic Christian church functioning in Kerala. However those who came from Europe tried to convert the age-old Oriental Christians of India to the Roman Catholic and Protestant folds forcefully. They disregarded the indogenous tradition and used Gospels for this forceful conversion. As a result the word 'mission' is looked upon with caution and fear within our church. We have to overcome this fear deep rooted in our church history.

Biblical concept of mission

1. Jesus Christ who Incarnated "for us and our Salvation," selected twelve disciples, They lived with Christ for over three years and recieved Spiritual training from Him. Jesus Christ delegated them to various places to announce the gospel of the Kingdom of God. St. Thomas was delegated to the Indian subcontinent. The disciple who was sent for Christ's mission was called 'Sleeha' or apostle. Which means 'the delegated person.' The word 'Sleeha' or 'Sleeho' is a Syriac word. Syriac is a variant of Aramic, the language spoken by Jesus Christ. The Greek equivalent of 'Sleeha' is 'Apostolos' and its latin equivalent is 'missionary.' The task or delegation of 'evangelism' given to the disciples got transformed into the missionary movement.

2. It is mission of the Christian church to announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all human beings. The concept of announcing Christ was often exercised in the

limited sense of public speech and hence came the concept of 'Gospel preaching.' However lengthy preaching at convention centres and street corners alone won't constitute announcing the Gospels. The only basis that we have here is the model of Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus Christ declared that He was fulfilling during his Incarnation the mission entrusted on Him by God the Father.

"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me." (St. John 8:42). When Jesus began His public ministry. He goes to the Synagogue of Nazareth, the village where He had been brought up and reads the Holy Scriptures. He reads from the book of prophet Isaiah. This event is recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke thus:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (St. Luke 4:18, Isaiah 61:1-2). This is Christ's proclamation of the Gospels (Korusoso).

Evangelism includes all these aspects. Hence when Jesus Christ sent His disciples He said: "Proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God and heal the sick". It is a delegation to cure not only the externally visible diseases but also to heal all diseases of sin. People getting the healing of soul body and mind is a characteristic feature of Kingdom of God. There were Jesus and gentiles, men and women, lepers, blind, deaf as well as those who had psychic ailments (the possessed) and the sinful among those who came to Christ for healing. Some of them interceded for the healing of their children. Jesus gave healing to all those who prayed to him in faith. This was the goodnews of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus Strongly objected to the hypocracies of the High priests, the Pharisees and elders. Jesus Christ openly deplored the religious leaders who exploit ordinary people in the name of God and who deprive them of their God given freedom. This was for a social transformation.

Freedom, equality and brotherhood are values of the Kingdom of god. All philanthropic acts shown by Jesus Christ were part of His mission as Messiah or saviour. This should be the model for missionary activities. Mission work is not mere preaching. Christ was prepared to sacrifice his life for the sake of things he taught and worked upon. This is the true missionary model.

In the first three Gospels there are several descriptions of Jesus Christ sending his disciples on missions. We see Him sending twelve disciples and seventy other followers. Chapter 10 of the gospel according to St. Mathew contains the description of Jesus Christ preparing and sending His twelve disciples to announce the Gospels.

The descriptions seen in St. Mark and St. Luke are a synoptic form of this description. (St. Mathew 10:1, 5-11, St Mark 6:7-12, St. Luke 9:1-12. In the Gospel according to St. Luke we see the Lord sending seventy preachers (Another tradition says that it was seventy two) (St. Luke 10:1-12).

The mission assigned to both the disciples and the preachers is the same. Jesus Christ asked them not to carry moneybag, knapsack or extra clothes and announce the goodnews of the kingdom of God and heal the sick with simplicity and peace. St. Mathew records that Christ delegated them to “go to the towns of the lost sheep of the house of Israel” first (St. Mathew 10:5). They should not go into the way of the Gentiles. Instead they should go to the house of the Israelites. This should be understood in the Jewish context. The Jews had been awaiting the arrival of a Messiah who would bring about liberation, salvation and healing. St. Mathew wants to clarify that Jesus of Nazareth is that prophesied Messiah. Hence he records that the disciples were sent to preach the gospels among Israelites and not among the gentiles.

However Jesus Christ never thought that His gospels should be limited within the Jewish community. Several gentiles requested healing from Jesus Christ and He had obliged their requests. Besides, He even stated publically that their faith is deeper and greater than that of the Israelites.

The mission seen in the gospel passages listed above was begun by Jesus Christ during His ministry. Western theologians often describe it as domestic mission because it took place mainly among the Jewish people. In the first three gospels we read that Jesus Christ delegates His eleven disciples (except Judas) to evangelise the entire world after His crucifixion and Resurrection. (St. Mathews 28: 16-20, St. Mark 16:16-18, St Luke 24: 46-49). They Should follow this model of mission and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And He said to them “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (St. Mark) “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (St. Luke). Some scholars are of the opinion that these three Gospel passages are added later. The supporters of western mission argued that the catholic mission model put forward here is different from the model of domestic mission described earlier. The colonial missionary movement began by the European churches from the sixteenth century onwards neglected the first model. They had the mistaken belief that Christ’s mission was to bring all people under the western ecclesiastical hierarchy and worked accordingly. That was why they started “missionary activities” even in our age old

Church in India. As a result they caused divisions among the undivided Church and laid the seeds of schisms that remain even today. The catholic and other churches of Europe follow this style of mission work in Africa, Latin America and Asia even today. As a result staunch opposition against the western missionary model arose in all these countries.

According to the Orthodox tradition, it is not right to demarcate the evangelical mission into two different models. Most of the good qualities seen in the first model should be seen in the second model also. That is, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of peace. It should not be enforced on anyone using atrocious and other undesirable means. Those who bear the evangelical mission should not be materialistic or megalomaniac. They should lead a simple life and should have the right attitude of sacrifice. They should stand for truth and justice. In short, Orthodox tradition teaches that the Christian church too should follow the model of Jesus Christ's life and mission during His Incarnation.

We should never forget that among the western missionaries there were some who committed themselves fully to the service of people and confessed Christ in an ideal manner.

Activities

1. Examine how far the preaching of the Gospels is possible in your lives.
2. Read the gospel according to St. Mathew chapter 10 and find out the main ideas connected with evangelical mission.

Chapter 2

The Orthodox church and the missionary movement

Some people say that Orthodox church is not generally a missionary church. This is because we do not follow the missionary model of the western catholic church or of the reformist churches. We do not believe that missionary work involves converting others to our faith by hook or crook. However we have the duty to announce the good news of the kingdom of God before the world and work with commitment for human good and social transformation in the model shown by Jesus Christ. There have been Plenty of missionary initiatives in the history of Oriental churches. The Persian church or the Oriental Syrian church with its headquarters at Mesopotamia, Iraq had spread out up to China in the 9th century AD through evangelism. The church founded by st. Thomas in India too was once part of this movement. However the Oriental Syrian Church has almost dissipated. The Greek orthodox missionaries Methodios and Kirlos evangelised the slavics of Russia and Bulgaria in the ninenth century. They made a script for the Slavonic language and translated the Holy Bible and the liturgical books into that language. In both these cases we can see that neither coercion nor colonial political hegemony was made use of. It is about five hundred years later that the Western Churches began their missionary work. This work was done mainly with the support of the political, economic and cultural suzerainty of colonialism. However we should not forget the fact that even among these colonial missionaries there were selfless souls who worked hard and self-sacrificingly laid their lives for the education and welfare of the people.

Generally Orthodox churches are too ritualistic. They have very attractive and heart rending forms of worship. They focus on the peck less observance of their most beautiful and elaborate Holy Eucharist and other prayers. Their interest is in attaining the experience of the Kingdom of God through the extra sensory experience of worship. Hence some critics allege that the sorrows, hunger and injustice suffered by people are somewhat neglected. The concept of 'Liturgy after the Liturgy' has developed in Orthodox missionary parlance in recent times. The word 'Liturgy' in

Greek means service, nursing etc. As per the literal meaning of this word, our service can be either service to God or service to man. Generally Orthodox worship gives prominence to service of God. Hence the first liturgy is service to God and the second is service to man. True worship gets completed only when both are co joined. Hence what Orthodox tradition means by this word is that both these aspects-service of God and service of man should be undertaken simultaneously. In short worship and mission stand together. One is inseparably related to the other. Hence it cannot be alleged that Orthodox church gives prominence to only one of these aspects.

The Church by its very nature is oriented towards the world. St. John in his gospel records that “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son” (St. John 3:16). The church teaches that the inspiring force behind God’s creation of the world is love. We also should love all the creatures created out of God’s love. The word ‘world’ might create confusion. Loving the world which has injustice and immorality means to love it in order to transform it into one of good news and justice. It is said that ‘God hates sin but loves sinners.’ Similarly in this world we should resist and correct worldliness which is the creation of man. At the same time we should accept this world which in the creation of God with sympathy and love. Hence it is the mission of the church to pray for this world and submit it with all its problems, before God. We are doing it very well in our worship. We should maintain this attitude to the world in the daily chores as well as in the socio – economic and political domains of human life. The mission activities of Orthodox church should originate from God’s love and concern for His creation.

Our church gladly welcomes all who are desirous of joining it out of love for Christ and His gospels. But we totally denounce the practice of enlisting members of the church through coercion or political pressure or offer of money, job etc. (It is unfortunate that some churches follow this practice in the guise of mission work). Orthodox church doesn’t recognize any mission work which pays no respect to the Christian principles like human love, freedom and social justice.

Orthodox teachers teach us that mission is a fundamental character of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity which includes Father, son and Holy Spirit exists as one and three persons simultaneously because of eternal mutual love. It respects the individuality of the three persons and in variably observes the essence of Oneness. What we see in creation and the rhythms of the universe is the eternal flow of God’s love. The Orthodox church takes from its vision of the Holy Trinity an order of existence that bears witness to Divine Truth and human good through mutual respect, cooperation and equitable co-existence.

The essence of the mission work of the Orthodox church is upliftment of the most depressed classes of the society, equitable utilization of wealth, and social service steeped in love of God. The ultimate goal of Orthodox missionary thought is that, like Jesus Christ all humans and all creation of God should attain transformation and part take in God nature.

Activities

1. Explain the meaning of the phrase 'Liturgy after liturgy'.
2. Examine how our form of worship involves the concept of 'mission through, worship'.

Chapter 3

Malankara Orthodox Church and mission Activities

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church originated as a result of the sacrificial missionary activity of St. Thomas. Hence the spirit of evangelism should be inbuilt in the very nature of Malankara church. Some people allege that Malankara church lost some of its evangelical passion because it coexisted peacefully as a small community with the caste system of the Indian society. It is true that the church in India could not correct the caste system which is contrary to God's will and create an alternative social system based on equality. Our church Fathers like St. Gregorios of Parumala in the later half of 19th century, Pathrose Mar Osthathios of Mookkancheiry in the first half of 20th century and Geevarghese mar Osthathios and Sthephanos Mar Thevodosios later, realized this truth. They taught and worked focusing on the missionary activities of the church. Several priests like K.A. Philippose Ramban and the laymen who worked committedly with them gave good witness to the gospels in the church. St. Gregorios of Parumala and later Pathrose Mar Osthathios became worried about the pitiable socioeconomic conditions of the Dalits and tried to improve their lot in the light of the gospels. St. Gregorios envisioned the sense of equality and thoughts of justice that could be developed through education and acted accordingly. The 'servants of the cross' society inspired many people. In the turbulent atmosphere of court cases in the community, it gave new light and hope to the people. Pathrose Mar Osthathios metropolitan was high born and well educated. Yet he neither wore costly robes nor used luxurious vehicles. Instead he empathized with the lives of the lovely and the infirm in the model of Jesus Christ. He went on strike for the rights of pulayas, parayas and other downtrodden sections of the Society to walk through public roads. Our society is yet to understand his contributions in this field fully. His grace Geevarghese Mar Osthathios struggled for social justice and inclusive care of the poor. He always taught that true Christianity is a religion of love. Similarly Stephanos Mar Thevodosios was a great

soul who worked hard as the missionary of the malankara church in North India. Utmost humility, sacrificial attitude and selflessness were his hall marks. All these ascetics and teachers submitted their lives completely for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their witness is strong enough to lead the Malankara church in the path of evangelism.

What is described above is one important aspect of the Christian mission of the church. The mission of the church has several other important aspects as well. For example dialogues with the surrounding religious and secular culture from the standpoint of Christian gospels is a very important mission of the church. Eminent church Fathers and teachers like the Cappadocian Fathers had taken up this mission quite seriously. When Christians exist as a minority here, the majority believe in other religious and ideologies. The philosophy and psychology, grammar and linguistics, literature, art and logic of India were once world class. The Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions bear their indelible imprints even today. All these together have created a great cultural ambience around us. Similarly, modern science and technology, and ideologies for socio – economic transformation are lively enough to influence our vision of life today. To interact with them and respond to them cognitively steeped in the standpoint of Christ's love and Christian wisdom, is a great mission which many fail to undertake. In the twentieth century HG Paulose Mar Gregorios became a great missionary of the church in this aspect. He acquired a large following among several people. His thoughts and visions were led by the values of the kingdom of God. Fr. Dr. V C Samuel was a great scholar who bore good witness in the relationship with other Churches and religions. Missionaries like Fr. T J Joshua who explain christ's gospels in a simple fashion through various publications and media and spiritually inspire people are good models of bearing witness to the gospels in recent times. Besides these, we have several priestly and non-priestly missionaries who are significant. Many people who uphold their Orthodox Christian witness while executing their professional duties in various fields in various parts of the world, are unknown to the pages of church history. Yet they continue to give inspiration to several people. They are good missionaries of the church.

We can hope for a full time missionary bishop and missionary dioceses in the church. At present the missionary activities of the church are co-ordinated by the Mission Board presided over by His Holiness the Catholicos. All our spiritual movements focus on action plans beneficial to the members of the church only. But the gospel work will become complete only if we develop the perspective to gain those within and outside the church alike.

Brahmavar Mission

Brahmavar mission is a significant one in the evangelical mission of the Malankara Orthodox Church. Brahmavar mission was founded by a priest named Antonio Francis Xavier Alvariz who was attracted to the Orthodox faith after his alienation from the Catholic Church. Another Catholic priest named Norono was his assistant in this endeavour. The place Brahmavar is near to Uduppi. About 1000 families in this region seceded from the Catholic Church and joined the Orthodox Church under the leadership of these priests. A gospel community called Brahmavar mission was founded. Reverend Antonio Francis was consecrated metropolitan under the name Alvariz Mar Julius on 29th July 1889 at Old seminary. Joseph Mar Dionysius, St. Gregorios of Parumala, Paulose Mar Ivanios and Paulose Mar Athanasios of Kadavil officiated the consecration ceremony. Since he seceded from the Catholic Church, Mar Julius had to suffer a lot of hardships from them.

Today Orthodox Church has a diocese with Brahmavar as its headquarters. H.G. Yakob Mar Elias is the metropolitan of this diocese (2013).

Activities

1. Make a study of the missionary work of St. Gregorios of Parumala.
2. Prepare a list of the mission activities founded by a H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.
3. Prepare a report of the activities of Brahmavar mission.

Chapter 4

Monastic movement and missionary work

The monastic movement of the church helped a lot in providing a powerful leadership and sense of direction to the Christian church. In the third century AD Several ascetics arose in Egypt, Syria etc. They devoted their entire time for prayer and ascetic rigors in deserts etc. In the earliest times most ascetics led a lonely life St. Antony was a famous ascetic. Later St. Pachomius founded coenobitic (community) monasticism. He insisted that the ascetics should live together following common rules and should observe their ascetic rigors and worship as a community. As a result monasteries (Dayaras) and monastic orders came into being. Later in the 4th century AD St. Basil of caesarea formulated the dictums of monasticism. In the sixth century AD St. Benedict founded monastic orders for the first time in the western countries and formulated laws for ascetics. The Irish missionaries traveled far and wide and spreaded the light of the gospels.

The monastic movement made great strides in the organizational structure of the western church. The monastic orders founded by St. Francis Assisi, St. Dommonic, Ignatius Loyala etc. in the middle ages became the major monastic orders of the catholic church. Their style of work had both good and bad aspects. For example the Portugese established power in Kerala by the end of the 15th century. The Jesuit missionaries who came along with these colonial powers used derogatory means of religious conversion to bring the apostolic and indigenus Malankara church to catholic faith and under the pope's see. Conversions, of a similar manner, were carried out not only in India but also in South America and the other parts of the world. This helped the church of Rome which had been a regional church of West Europe to spread out into different parts of the world.

In the Oriental church also famous monasteries (Dayaras) and famous monks originated. Along with them there developed several books regarding monastic life and guides for fulfilling spiritual rigors. It was the monks like Mar Aphrem who tried to enrich the liturgical literature of the church. They renounced the world and its desires and followed very simple style of living. They sat in lovely spots with

constant prayer, study of the Holy Bible, meditation and writing interpretations thereby creating a great Christian heritage. Several books of this kind have become great instruments of the church in its missionary work. For example the compilation of orthodox spiritual books known as 'Philokalia' was translated and published in 5 volumes in Malayalam. A member of the church devoted his time and wealth for this Endeavour and as a result a new interest and enthusiasm has developed among the monastic orders of Kerala. The word philokalia can be translated as 'love of goodness' or 'love of beauty' Goodness and love (kalos) refer to the eternal goodness and eternal love of God. Mount Athos is a peninsula of Greece lying on the Mediterranean coast. This place is exclusively inhabited by ascetics and has several hermitages. Several ascetics of the Orthodox church reside there execute their spiritual rigors. Philokalia is a compilation of the deeply spiritual teachings and admonitions and instructions for monastic and ascetic life, of church fathers since fourth century AD. This book has helped a lot in the spiritual awakening of the Russian church, which in the most populous of oriental orthodox churches, time and again. In the orthodox tradition, the major support to the missionary movement is provided by purity of life, good spiritual literature and rigors of worship. Unlike that of the western church, we do not have the practice of monks going out to convert people. However in modern times some. Orthodox churches have started preaching gospels in different parts of the world and receiving new believers to their fold. The Greek and Russian churches have gained new followers as a result of their missionary activity in Asian and African countries. The Coptic church of Egypt which has communion with our church in the Holy Eucharist, has widened its witness in Africa and Europe through its missionary work. Several people in the USA etc have come forward to accept the Orthodox faith. Such people come forward to the orthodox fold because of their differences with certain practices of the reformist churches (Eg: Homosexual marriages) and their eagerness to experience the spirituality of Orthodox worship. In places where the Orthodox churches give good witness, many people will naturally be attracted to the Orthodox fold. This is because only the Orthodox tradition upholds the faith, traditions and worship of the ancient church in an unbroken manner. The Orthodox churches should realise their potential in this regard. It should willfully give more importance to its missionary movement founded on love for man and faithfulness to Christ.

The organized monastic movement began in the Malankara Orthodox Church only six to seven decades back. We are still unable to put into practice the deep rooted relationship between monasticism and mission work. However saintly ascetics like St. Gregorios of Pampady converted their hermitages to Dayaras and bore Christ's witness in the midst of people belonging to different communities in an elaborate

and effective manner. Our community carries the memories of several Rambans who converted their asceticism in a similar fashion into good witness of the Gospels.

If we examine the ancient tradition of the Orthodox church we can see that the liturgical literature, missionary activity and social service of the church will become effective only if there are plenty of people who lead a lively and complete ascetic life. We can also learn from history that if people who don't have the required call of the Lord to steep themselves in prayer, fasting and spiritual studies and to observe celibacy and those who look upon asceticism as a stepping stone to various positions, take to monasticism it will be a negative witness.

The Mission Board founded by H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios gives leadership to the mission activities the church today. Dr. Mar Chrisostomos is the present president of the Board.

If the Malankara church studies about its missionary tasks prayfully, if it takes strong decisions and executes them and if it founds good missionary movements, we have plenty of possibilities before us.

Activities

1. Make a study of the role played by 'Dayaras' of our church in evangelism
2. What can our church do in the domain of evangelism? List your suggestions.

Unit 2

Orthodox Faith

Chapter 5

Fundamentals of our Faith

The fundamental principle of Orthodoxy is belief in the Holy Trinity and the belief that Jesus Christ is Incarnated God. The belief in Holy Trinity should be upheld like life breath and it should become the guiding model in all domains of our life.

The Holy Trinity

In the writings of the old testament, the Holy Trinity is either concealed or only partly revealed. Theologians justify it by pointing out the reference to the veil made by St. Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 3. “For until this day the same veil remains inflated in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart (2 Corinthians 3: 14-16). What becomes evident from this is that the truth was only partly revealed during the Old Testament times. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews reminds us that God spoke to His prophets and the fathers only partly in olden days. (Hebrews 1:1)

The passages of the Old Testament given below prove the presence of the Holy Trinity.

1. The word for God given in Genesis 1:1 of the Original Hebrew Bible is ‘Elohim’. Grammatically this is a plural word in Hebrew language.
2. Genesis 1:26 says “Then God said, Let us make a man- Someone like ourselves” Note that here also the plural word is used.
3. Another example of the use of the plural form is in Genesis 3:22 which says “Now that the man has become as we are..”

4. The plural form is again used in Genesis 11:6-7. Where the scattering of human language at the tower of Babel is described. "Come let us go down and give them different languages."
5. In Genesis chapter 18 the Lord reveals himself to Abraham in the oak grove at Mamre as three persons. But Abraham addresses them in the singular form as "Master." The Church Fathers have interpreted it as the revelation of the Holy Trinity.
6. The blessings of the Lord are revealed in three different ways in Numbers 6:24-26. The Church Fathers interpret this also as an indication of the Trinity.
7. The Seraphim in Isaiah's vision described in Isaiah 6:1 onwards praise the Lord as "Holy, Holy, Holy". The Church fathers interpret this also as the presence of the Holy Trinity.
8. In Psalm 33:6 we read "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" Here the Lord is manifested in three different ways as Jehovah, His Word and His breath. (The word used for all the three in Hebrew was "Rooha")

Besides these, there are verses which suggest the presence of the Son or the Holy Spirit. For example Psalm 2:7 says "You are My Son, today I have begotten You". (Similarly the concept of 'Spirit' is revealed in Psalm 143:10 and Isaiah 48:16).

In the New Testament, the presence of the Holy Trinity is more explicitly revealed through the descriptions of the Incarnation of God, the son and the promise and revelation of Holy Spirit. The voice from Heaven and the descend of the Pigeon at the time of Christ's Baptism are also understood as the revelation of the Holy Trinity.

St. Mathew 28:19 specifically states "in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit". Even though three persons are described here the singular form "name" is used along with them. From this we understand that even though the Lord reveals Himself in three different ways, He is One. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, the blessings are given in the name of Holy Trinity. Besides, the presence of Holy Trinity is evident when the promise of the Holy spirit is made in St. John 15:26. In the epistles of St. Paul there are served lengthy references to the three persons of the Holy Trinity, especially in the epistle to the Ephesians Chapter 1-3.

The Holy Trinity in the Teaching of Church Fathers

The explanation regarding the Holy Trinity gained a lot of currency in the fourth century AD through the creed of the Church, which became its fundamental

doctrine, and other missionary writings. However belief in Holy Trinity was explained at length by the New Testament Church, the Apostolic Fathers and the writings of the Apologists. St. Irenius of Lyons in the book, 'Against the Heresies' (1:10) says: "Eventhough the Church has spread worldwide, the faith that are have recieved in regarding the Only Omnipotent Father, the only son who incarnated for our salvation and the Only Holy Spirit who announced the business of Salvation through prophets and other men of God. The Church which has recieved this missionary teaching is One in Faith as if belonging to One Family, even though it has spread out across the world."

St. Basil, the Great says that praises like "Praise to Father, Son and Holy Spirit," "Let there be praise and worship of God the Father and the Holy Spirit along with that of the Son for ever" existed in the Church ever since the period of the Gospels.

The three Persons in the Holy Trinity are equal in power and the glory. There is no difference among them. The Fathers of the Early Church teach us that there is no Chronological difference among them either Even though the three persons are different in their manifestation, they are One in their origins. They are eternal in their existence. The Church Fathers has to suffer a lot of hardships in order to affirm the members of the Church in their fundamental faith.

The Church Fathers before the fourth century AD have tried to explain the Oneness of the Holy Trinity and the differences among the three persons of the Holy Trinity. The examples they used are:

1. Sun, sunray and light.
2. The root, bunk and fruit of the same tree.
3. Spring, pool and stream of water.
4. Consciousness, wisdom and longing.

In each of these examples, the origins of all elements are the same. Yet all of them have different forms and expression. However there are more examples. They can't explain the concept of the Holy Trinity fully. St. Gregory Nazianzen, a Church Father of the fourth century AD teaches us that we are unable to comprehend God by comparing Him with any system existing on this Earth.

The Worship of the Holy Trinity

The prayer 'Praise to Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (Shubaholabo....) is a very important prayer in our liturgy. We worship the Lord as the Holy Trinity in all forms of our worship including the Holy Eucharist and all other sacraments and rituals. We begin all rituals and end all prayers with the worship of the Holy Trinity.

In the Holy Eucharist, we explicitly celebrate the Holy Trinity during the liturgy of blessing the bowl of incense and when the Holy mysteries (in Chalice and Paten) are celebrated. When the Holy Mysteries are celebrated during the Holy Eucharist, the expressions of the Persons of the Holy Trinity are explicitly stated. God the Father who created everything, God the son who sustains everything and the Holy Spirit who fulfils everything- The Holy Trinity is explicitly expressed in our Holy Eucharist in this manner. In the sacrament of Baptism, the baptized person is repeatedly marked in the name of the Holy Trinity. In the sacrament of marriage the Holy Trinity becomes the model of love and unity for the couple entering into family life. The wedded couple enter family life with the Holy Altar which is the abode of Father, son and Holy Spirit as their witness. Even in the liturgy of consecrating houses what is most notable, is the presentation of the Holy Trinity It describes hospitality founded on Holy Trinity as the bases of Christian life by describing the incident of three men of God visiting Abraham Moreover the benediction that “Let the Holy Trinity reign here” is given to the consecrated home. Thus we can understand that the worship of the Church is the worship of the Holy Trinity.

Incarnation

God the son incarnated as a human being. He lived as one among us, suffered, died and resurrected. The Church holds to this belief and gives it the same importance given to the belief in the Holy Trinity.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory’ (1st Timothy 3:16) This was a psalm of faith in the early Christian Church. This verse describes fully what the Church means by the word ‘Incarnation of God’.

Activities

1. Describe the biblical basis of the belief in Holy Trinity.
2. Explain with examples how the Holy Trinity is described in various liturgies.

Chapter 6

The Sacred Tradition

The word tradition comes from the Latin word 'Traditio'. Its root word in Greek is 'Paradosis.' The literal meaning of this word is "something that is transferred through generations." What we mean by tradition is the belief in Holy Trinity and the life based on it revealed in Jesus Christ, and the eternal witness to it given through the Church by the Holy Spirit.

Tradition is biblically based and apostolic. St. John explains it accurately.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the word of life-

The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the father and was manifested to us..." (1 John 1:1-3)

What the Church looks upon as the holy tradition are the truths of faith handed down from the apostles through the apostolic and Church fathers to the present day Church. These truths of faith had first been seen and experienced by the apostles. They sustained them in the New Testament Church and passed them over to the succeeding generations of the Church through the Heads of Church appointed by them. The truths of faith that are thus handed down, sustained and upheld by the Church of today constitute the holy tradition. Most important among them are faith in the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. Whenever teachings contrary to these fundamental beliefs arose, the Church fathers tried to preserve the greatness of this tradition.

The words of St. Athanasius of Alexandria regarding the Holy faith are notable. "Tradition refers to that faith given by Logos in the beginning and preached by Apostles, preserved by Church fathers and reared by the Holy Church which is founded on it." (Epistle to seraphion, 28)

Tradition doesn't mean blindly preserving what belongs to the preceding generation without any change. We should view it as a continuum of precedent truths

sustained by the Holy Spirit. Tradition is an extension and continuation of the life of the Church in Holy Spirit. St. Basil the great says: 'Our reentry into the paradise is made possible through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables our inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, our return through God the son, our freedom to call the Lord father our share in eternal glory and our entry into the state of total bliss. (On Holy Spirit XV). We should look upon the sacred tradition of the Church in the light of this continuing experience made possible by the Holy Spirit.

Fellowship with Heavenly saints

Our fellowship with saints is a belief that exists in the Church appended to the belief in the Holy Trinity and it is a part of the sacred tradition. It is not meant as a short cut to prayers for personal gains.

The belief that death is not an end and death enables the continuity of eternal life is a part of the fundamental Christian faith. Those who coexist in this world ask for mutual prayer. This is not looked upon as a short cut. Instead it aims at our unity in prayer. St. Paul reminds us that "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." (I Corinthians 13:12). If so, our fellowship with saints is as important as or more important than our mutual prayers when we live in this world. Jesus Christ reminds us that "who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophets reward and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." As far as we are concerned, mutual prayers are also an indicator of the relationship required between members of the Church. A person doesn't cease to be part of Christ's body through his death. Hence becoming just and praying are very important part of the sacred tradition of religious life in the Church.

In our fellowship with saints, we give a prominent position to Mother of God. The Church accords great diligence and sanctity to the role of St Mary in the act of Incarnation. The praise of St. Mary said by Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist (St. Luka 1:41-45) is accepted by the Holy Church as the basis of its continuous fellowship with St. Mary.

Church Fathers since second century AD have repeatedly recorded about fellowship with the saints, especially the fellowship with St. Mary. In the description of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius written in the beginning of second century AD, there is the confession of a vision in which the saint was seen to be praying for them in the other world The holy Church is seen in its fullness through the totality of its visible and invisible levels.

Fellowship with the Departed

Fellowship with the departed is a sacred tradition of the Church which holds equal status with 'fellowship with the saints.' This is a great tradition existing in the New Testament Church. While teaching about Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:29 St. Paul asks "What will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? "What we understand from this is that in the New Testament Church one also remembered one's preceding generations when he received baptism.

God is eternal. So his love and mercy are eternal. Hence we cannot think that God's love cease to act upon a person after his death. St. Paul while remembering his fellow preacher Onesiphorus in 2 Timothy 1:18 prays.

"The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day The Church remembers its departed in the same prayerful vein.

The icons used in worship, and the relics of saints are part of the Church tradition which help to affirm ourselves in the fundamentals of our faith.

Activities

1. Explain the biblical basis of the sacred Church tradition based on Ephesians 2:13-14, Galatians 2:8-9, 1 Corinthians 11:23 and 2 Thessalonians 2:15.
2. All our traditions should help us in the development of our faith in Christ. analyse this statement on the basis of this lesson.

Chapter 7

Church Fathers

Orthodox Church doesn't give any precise definition regarding who and what are Church fathers. We do not proclaim a pantheon of Church fathers using certain criteria.

However prelates of the oriental Church were called 'Fathers' ever since the first century AD. All bishops were called 'Pope' which meant father'. The equivalent term used in Arabic language was "Baba" and in syriac 'Bava'. Later heads of monasteries (or Abbeys) were called 'Abbots' which also meant 'father'.

From the fourth century onwards those who opposed through writings the heresies arising in the Church, and those who defended the true faith came to be called as 'fathers'. Their times and contributions are intimately connected with the defence of Eternal faith. Hence Church fathers have a very important role in the Church. In the Oriental Church the period of Church fathers is approximately upto eighth century AD. Among the church fathers we remember in the fifth 'Thubden' of the Holy Eucharist, Mar Isahak of Ninava and St. James of Edessa lived upto AD 700 and AD 708 respectively.

The Church Fathers can mainly be divided into four categories.

1. The Church Fathers before the Great Council of Nicaea including the Apostolic Fathers
2. The Fathers of the Great Councils
3. The Fathers after the Great Councils.
4. The Monastic Fathers

From Apostolic Fathers upto the Great Council of Nicaea

The apostolic fathers were the contemporaries of Christ and the disciples of the Apostles, who received the teaching directly from Christ's disciples. The three important Apostolic Fathers known for their lines and writings are Mar Clement of Rome, Mar Ignatius of Antioch, and Mar Polycarp of Smyrna.

The writings of these three Church Fathers are similar to the New Testament Epistles. Their writings remind us that each of the apostles taught faith elaborately along with their letters and these teachings enjoyed great popularity in the early Church. These writings also prove that the biblical writings do not contain the teachings of the Apostles fully. Mar Clement of Rome wrote an 'Epistle to the Corinthians' in about AD 96. In chapter 40 of this Epistle he says that the Holy Eucharist should be celebrated at the appointed time, in the stipulated manner. It should not be altered according to our liking and should be conducted with extreme sanctity.

St. Ignatius of Antioch has seven extant writings to his credit. They are written when he was being taken from Antioch of Rome for persecution. These writings elaborately describe the answer to the question 'who is Christ?' (Christology). These epistles also reveal the roles of 'Episcopa', 'Kashisha' (priest) and deacon in the Church.

St. Polycarp of Smyrna opposed the heresy of Docetism which argued that the sufferings of Jesus Christ in flesh are only illusory.

The writing titled 'Didache' or 'The Teachings of the twelve disciples of our Lord' became popular in the Church ever since the first century AD. This work is considered as old as the New Testament writings. In Chapter 14 and 15 of 'Didache' the method of celebrating the Holy Eucharist is described in detail.

During the period between the Apostolic fathers and the Synod of Nicaea, a lot of in depth theological writings originated in Greek and Latin languages. These writings originated mainly in Asia Minor (present titled Turkey), Antioch and Alexandria. The five volume work of St. Irenius of Lyons (AD 155) titled 'Against the Heretics' give a detailed account of the tradition of the early Church. This work also describes the need for right apostolic succession.

St. Clement and Origen of Alexandria are two notable church Fathers. The writings of St. Clement analyses the Greek and Hebrew-Judaic philosophies parallelly and gave explanations conducive to the acceptance of the goodness of Greek philosophy. Even though the later writing of Origen deviated from the general beliefs of the Church, his biblical interpretations and lengthy visionary writing regarding the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation are significant ones in the Church tradition.

In the three centuries unto the synod of Nicea, the Church fathers laid a strong foundation from the conservation of true Christian faith based on the demands and circumstances of those times.

The Fathers of the Great General Councils

This period is considered as a golden age in the tradition of Christian writings. During this period there were numerous stalwarts in this field including St. Athanasius of Alexandria, the Cappadocean fathers, St. Ivarios the Golden tongued and Mar Coorilos of Jerusalem in Greek language; St. Augustine of Hyppo and St. Ambrose of Milan in Latin; and St. Aphrem and St. Aphrahath in Syriac.

These Church fathers wrote at length regarding the Incarnation, Logos or God the Son, Holy Trinity and these differences between the three persons constituting the Holy Trinity and their unity of Being. During the period of these fathers Christian faith developed a strong philosophical foundation based on a variety of concepts. This philosophical writings, speeches; interpretations of the Holy Bible, lengthy poems, epistles, obituaries, biographies and monastic writings laid this foundation. Their role in formulating the canons of true faith and the creed of the church during the three great councils is unparalleled. All of them had received world class education available during that time. Their writings are discussed at length and subjected to much research even today.

The writings of Greek and Syrian Fathers of this period lays the foundation of the belief in Holy Trinity of the Oriental tradition. Moreover the writings of people like St. Basil the great provided the general rules and explanation for the conduct of monastic life. Many of the philosophical writings of St. Gregory Nazianzen are the sources of prayers like 'Prumeon' and 'sedro' used in our liturgy.

Church Fathers after the Great Councils

The theological controversies and the changed political circumstance which arose in and around towns like Alexandria and Constantinople after the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 caused great schisms and divisions in the Church. This developed into an unbridgeable divide as the oriental churches with Alexandria as its centre refused to acknowledge the Synod of Chalcedon in AD 451. In the periods that followed the writings of Church fathers were mainly lengthy interpretations of various philosophical perspectives. The main writers of this period are St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch and St Philoxenos of Mabbug. They have several theological interpretations as well as biblical interpretations to their credit.

Monastic Fathers

Monasticism came into existence in the Christian Church since the third century AD. It existed as individual monasticism and community monasticism. The first

solitary marks recorded in history are St. Paul and St. Antony of Thebes who lived around AD 250 in the Egyptian desert. Later several people followed their model of asceticism. When the Christian Church received official state recognition in the beginning fourth century AD, a lot of worldliness crept into it. Monasticism is said to have originated as a protest against this worldliness. The monastics wanted to stay away from worldliness and conserve God nature. Since it was impossible to comply with Christ's love through martyrdom, many took to monasticism as an alternative. They thought that they could attain something equivalent to martyrdom by rejecting the world.

Caenobitic or community monasticism became popular by the end of third century AD and the beginning of fourth century AD. Under the leadership of St. Pachomios, several separate abbeys and convents for monks and nuns were established in different parts of Egypt. He published monastic spiritual texts and rules of monasticism. Later a monastic community was founded in Pontis, Asia Minor by St. Basil. He also wrote spiritual exercises and rules of life for monks. (The oriental monastic texts of St. Basil were translated into Latin about a century later. It became the fundamental doctrine of the Benedictine monastic order of the Catholic Church).

We should look upon the life of Monastic Fathers not as a way of life confined to only one period in history. They gave a variety of contributions to the Church through their spiritual guidances, liturgical compositions and spiritual biographies. 'The life of St. Antony written by St. Athanasius, 'The history of Loesiack' by Palladius, 'The life of St. Matrina' by St. Gregory of Nyssa etc. are some of such writings.

The Monastic fathers kept themselves away from public life and the din and bustle of daily life. Yet they boldly resisted the social evils and practised the purity of the kingdom of God in their religious lives. Their contributions to the church are invaluable.

Activities

1. Make a collection of the biographical sketches of Church Fathers commemorated in the fifth dyptich ('Thubden').
2. Prepare a project report of the contributions of Church Fathers.

Chapter 8

Orthodox Churches Today

Today Orthodox Churches which belong to two families, namely the Oriental Orthodox and the Byzantine Orthodox Churches, have spread out across the world. The radical changes in international boundaries, changes in political circumstances, individual and mass migrations due to a variety of reasons like work, industry or war have caused the spread of churches in various countries. Some Orthodox churches have started new missionary initiatives in many countries, even though on a minor side.

I. Oriental Orthodox Churches

There are six churches in this family which have communion in the Holy Eucharist, yet independent.

1. Armenian Apostolic Church

The Armenian church claims the apostolic succession of apostles Bartholomew and Judas. To day it exists worldwide as two Catholicates and two Patriarchates. The Mother see of Holy Etchmiadzin is given a preeminent position among them. The present Catholicos is His Holiness Karaiken II (2012). The ancient and famous cathedral church, Museum and monasteries are very famous. There are around six million believers under this Catholicate in Armenia, North America and Europe. The catholicate of Antelias, Lebanon (Great House of Cilicia) comes next. Even though the Catholicate of Etchmiadzin is given the status of first among equal, the one in Lebanon remains independent administratively. It is estimated to have more than four million believers in countries like Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Greece, Iran, Persian Gulf, America, Canada, Venezuela etc. The present Catholicos is H.H. Araam I. Armenian Orthodox Church also has two Patriarchates in Jerusalem and Constantinople. Even though they do not have much following they are historically very significant.

2. Coptic Orthodox Church

This is an ancient Church founded in AD 42 by St. Mark, the author of Christ's Gospel. It has given very important contributions to Orthodox faith. In olden days the head quarters of this Church was Alexandria, an ancient centre of Christian scholarship. However in the Changed political circumstances today, the head quarters has been shifted to Cario the capital city. This church exists today as the largest Christian community in the Middle East.

The Coptic Church has a long standing Monastic tradition. It has several monastries in Egypt and other countries even today. However at several places in Egypt the members of Coptic Church suffer a lot of hardships from Islamic fundamentalists.

The head of Coptic church is officially known as 'Pope of Alexandria and whole of Africa'.

His Holiness Pope Shenoda who headed this See till his demise on March 17 2012 was noted for his traditional Monastic rigour and spiritual vision. His contributions to Orthodox church include several notable spiritual texts. The head of Coptic church is elected through an elaborate and transparent electoral process. The right to elect the head of Coptic church is vested not only with the bishops but also with priests, laity and the monks. On November 4, 2012 Bishop Thevodos was elected the new Pope. He was anointed as the new head of Church, as the 118th Pope, on November 18, 2012. Our church has very good relationship with the Coptic church. His Holiness the Catholicos of the East was a special invitee for the consecration ceremony.

Coptic church has a following of 18 million within Egypt and four million outside Egypt. Historically the Orthodox Churches of Ethiopia and Eritrea are considered daughters of the Coptic church. Both these churches revere the Coptic Pope by giving him the status 'first among equals'. Today Coptic church is also a missionary church. In the twentieth century two daughter churches namely British Orthodox Church and French orthodox church developed as the mission churches of Coptic Orthodox church.

3. Syriac Orthodox Church

This is a church founded in Antioch, Southern/Turkey by St. Peter. Just like Alexandria, Antioch too has an age old Christian tradition. This church is enriched by a long standing monastic tradition, of liturgical literature and tradition of theologians. The liturgical language is Syriac. However Arabic is also used everywhere now a days.

The Church has a following of 7 million people worldwide. Due to torture and changes in political circumstances this church has only seven lakh members in Syria at present. There are a number of believers in countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Europe and America, The head of Syriac orthodox church is known as Patriarch. This church is led by Patriarch H.H. Zakka Since 1980.

The relationship between Malankara Church and the Syrian Church began with the coming of St. Gregorios Abdul Jaleel to India in 1665. This relationship became strong by the 19th Century. However estrangements have crept into this relationship in the twentieth century due to various reasons.

4. Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

Teacher shall give a project on this (Prepare a project report titled 'Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church')

5. Ethiopian Orthodox Thevahedo Church

'Thevahedo' means being made one. Eventhough there had been Christian presence in Ethiopia Since the first century AD, the Christian Church became the official religion only during the Axumite dynasty in the fourth century AD. It spread out after the efforts of St. Frumentius (Known as Abba Salma in Ethiopian language) who reached the shores of Ethiopia following a shipwreck in the fourth century AD. St. Athanasius of Alexandria appointed Frumentius as the bishop of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian orthodox church existed as a part of the Coptic Orthodox Church till 1948. It became an autonomous church since 1949. In 1959 Pope Cyril VI of the Coptic Church anointed Aboona Baselius as the first patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Aboona Paulose (the fifth Patriarch of the Church) had been the president of World Council of Churches. He passed away on 16th August 2012. The process of selecting the next patriarch is underway.

This church has an age old monastic tradition. It has several active monasteries even today. It is believed that the Ark of the covenant of Jews is kept in Our lady Mary of Zion' Church in Axum province of Ethiopia. Only one monk in the monastery attached to this Church has permission to enter the place where the Ark of the covenant is kept. A lot of pilgrims visit this church.

This church has about 45 million believers in Ethiopia and abroad. Ethiopian Orthodox Church has about 60 bishops and 44 dioceses.

6. Eritrean Orthodox Thevahedo Church

This Church became self entitled in 1993. Eritrea which had remained as a Confederate country of Ethiopia declared independent in 1991 and became a recognised sovereign country in 1993. Following this the orthodox church also became free. In 1998 Abba Sheneuda, the Coptic Pope anointed Aboona Philipose as the first patriarch of Eritrean Orthodox church.

Unstable political conditions, wars with neighboring countries etc. seriously affect the general peace of Church as well. In 2004 Abba Antonios (3rd patriarch of the Eritrean church) was anointed by Coptic Pope Abba Senouda in the capital city of Asmara. He is the head of Eritrean church recognised by the Oriental Orthodox churches. In 2007 the Eritrean government put him under house arrest and confiscated his official symbols. He is denied permission and circumstances to communicate with the external world. No one is permitted to visit him either. The affairs of the church is today managed by Aboona Dioscorus who is not recognised by the Oriental Orthodox churches. The church has a following of 30 million within and outside the country.

II Byzantine Orthodox Churches

If we consider the Byzantine orthodox churches as a single unit, it is the second largest Christian community in the world.

1. Ecumenical Patriarchate of constantinople

This patriarchate is considered the most important one among the fourteen Byzantine churches which have communion in the Holy Eucharist and yet independent. Eventhough this patriarchate has only very few followers when compared with the Russian Orthodox Church, it has much prominence because of the historical importance of Constantinople. The present Patriarch is His Holiness Bartholomew I. He is given the position of 'first among equals' by the other Byzantine Orthodox churches. Hence the patriarch of constantinople is also known under the title of 'Ecumenical Patriarch' (Constantinople is today known as Istanbul, the capital of European Turkey. Hence the headquarters of this church is in Istanbul). Some of the self-entitled orthodox churches are the Finnish orthodox church of Finland, Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, The Patriarchal Exarchate of Russian, church in west Europe, Ukrainian Orthodox church of Canada, and Korean Orthodox Church are considered independent Archdioceses of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Among them the Korean Orthodox Church is a missionary church of the Russian Orthodox church.

2. Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria

Like the Coptic orthodox church, this church also has the succession of St. Mark the evangelist. The present head of the church is Patriarch Theodore II. There are about three lakh members in Egypt and about 1.5 million members outside Egypt. They speak Greek, Arabic, English and French. The liturgical books of this Church have been translated into the languages of its believers and this church is in the forefront of Orthodox missionary activities.

3. Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch

This church is headed by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. The headquarters of the church is Damascus of Syria. It has an estimated following of 2 million people. It gives a lot of importance to missionary activities and is quite active in Western Europe and America. It is also in the forefront of publishing Orthodox literature.

Patriarch Ignatius IV of this church passed away on December 5, 2012 and was succeeded by Patriarch John X.

4. Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem

This church can be considered the mother church of the entire Christian churches. There are more than five lakh believers in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Qatar and America. The present Patriarch is Theophilus III. The ancient St. Catherine Monastery in Mount Sinai is under this Patriarchate.

5. Russian Orthodox Church

Russian Orthodox church is the largest Christian community among the oriental churches. It is estimated to have 150 million believers. The headquarters of the church is the Damilon monastery in Moscow. The liturgical language of the church is Slavonic.

The self entitled rites of Russian Orthodox church include Latvian orthodox church and Moldovan Church belonging to the Estonian group of Churches and Japanese and Chinese orthodox churches belonging to the Ukrainian group. The Russian church enriches the orthodox tradition by its iconography and by its ancient and modern architectural styles.

6. Serbian Orthodox Church

The Serbian Orthodox church spans in countries like Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia etc. Besides it has a following in America, Australia and European

Union. There are around 10 million members in this church. As a result of the Kosovo war in 1999 several churches and monasteries which were considered sacred by the Church became abandoned. At present the Patriarch of the church is Patriarch Irinege. (In 2010 His Grace Gabriel Mar Gregorios metropolitan participated in the consecration ceremony of Patriarch Irinege as a representative of our Catholicos. The theological writings of Fr.Dr. K.M. George, which were translated into Serbian language has gained popularity in this church).

7. Romanian Orthodox Church

Romanian Orthodox church has about 17 million members in Romania and 7 lakh members in Moldova. It also has several parishes in Western Europe and America. The Church met with a lot of sufferings under the communist rules of Romania. From 1987 onwards the church was given permission to function and its growth accelerated thereafter. The church's contribution to theological literature is quite significant. The present head of the Church Patriarch Daniel.

8. Bulgarian Orthodox Church

This church is the largest Christian presence in the Balkan region. The Christian church was established in the Balkan region as a result of the evangelical activity of Christ's disciple St. Andrew in the first century. It seceded from Constantinople patriarchate in AD 870 and became a self entitled church. There are around 10 million members for this church Patriarch Maxi passed away on November 6, 2012.

9. Georgian Orthodox Church

Christianity reached Georgia in the fourth century AD after Iberia accepted Christianity in the fourth century AD. The headquarters of this church is Tbilisi in Georgia. It has a following of about 3.5 million in Georgia, America, Russia and Western Europe. The present head of church is Patriarch Ilia II. (He was the Chief guest when our church celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the Catholicate in 1992). In 1990 the Patriarchate of Georgia seceded from the Patriarchate of Constantinople and became a self-entitled church. The church got official documents of recognition from the government since 2002.

10. American Orthodox Church

This church is composed mainly of Russian and members of other Byzantine Orthodox churches. The self entitlement of this church was recognised by the Russian-Bulgarian, Georgian, Polish and Czech-Slovak Orthodox churches by 1970. Eventhough this church has only one lakh members, it gives a lot of contributions

to the young generation of the Orthodox Churches across the world in general and to the young generation of America in particular. The head of church is Metropolitan Ticon.

Conclusion

The other Orthodox churches in the world are:

1. Cyprus Orthodox church believed to be established by St. Barnabas (Head of church is Chrisostomon II and it has 7 lakh members)
2. Greek Orthodox church which became independant from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1833. (Head of church is Archbishop Ivanios II. There are 10 lakh members)
3. Polish Orthodox church which became independant from the Russian Orthodox church in 1948. (Head of church: Metropolitan Sawa. Members Six Lakhs)
4. Albanian Orthodox church which became independent from constantinople in 1937. (Head of church: Arch Bishop Anastagios, Members: 7 Lakhs)
5. Church and Slovakia Orthodox Church which became independant from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1951. (Head of Church: Metropolitan Christopher, Members 1 Lakh) (The information given in this Chapter is based on December 2012)

Activities

1. Make an appoximate estimate of the total number of believers under various Orthodox Churches of the world.
2. Find out the churches which have the tradition of apostolic succession.
3. Find out the circumstances which led to the strained relationship between Syriac Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Church.
4. What is meant by Oriental Orthodox Churches?

Unit 3

Learning and Teaching in Sunday School

Teaching and Learning are interrelated like two sides of a coin. Teachers should always focus on preparing the students for effective learning through their teaching process. This is a painstaking task. This service of God should be taken up powerfully and executed with proper preparation.

The four chapters of this unit aim at providing an overall concept regarding learning and teaching in Sunday school. The first chapter details with the goals and basic components of learning and teaching. The second chapter explains various teaching methods and how they can be utilised in the Sunday school classes. The third Chapter describes various learning aids and their uses. The fourth chapter describes various evaluation tools and their features. The activities given at the end of each Chapter should be worked out. Further information regarding this can be collected from your teachers.

Chapter 9

Learning and Teaching in Sunday School

Structure of the Chapter

1. Introduction
2. What is learning?
3. The psychology of learning
4. What is teaching?
5. Goals of Teaching
6. Learning and teaching
7. Conclusion
8. Activities
9. References

1. Introduction

Teaching can be made effective only if we understand what is learning and teaching. Teaching has certain specific goals. If the teacher doesn't understand them properly, he will not be able to make his teaching effective. This chapter offers a simple explanation regarding all these things.

2. What is learning?

Learning is a permanent change brought about in an individual by the experiences and insights gathered from his external circumstances. Learning effects changes in the individuals character and cognitive structure. Two important perspectives regarding learning are.

- 1) Learning effects changes in the character and behaviour of a person (Behaviourism)

- 2) Learning results in changes in the cognitive structure of an individual. This means that the horizon of knowledge enlarges and new knowledge is acquired (Cognitivism)

It is generally agreed that learning effects changes in an individual. This change can happen as a result of external stimuli as well.

We can divide the circumstances experienced by an individual into two: (1) natural environment (2) artificial environment. The natural environment is got naturally. It is not created by artificially by anyone. But artificial environment is created specifically by us. Hence it is formal too. Eg: Sunday School, School, Training Centres etc. Both these environments influence the students. Learning can take place only if the environment is conducive.

3. Psychology of Learning

Let us think about certain basic components of learning in this section. The most important components are (1) Genuine interest (2) Right attitude (3) Readiness to learn (4) Aptitudes (5) Motivation. A Genuine teacher has the duty to develop these qualities in a student. Some students do not have interest in studies. This may be due to several reasons like Faulty teaching practices, wrong attitude of the teacher to the students, apathetic methods of punishment, lack of suitable learning activities, problematic home environment etc. An ideal teacher should be able to kindle interest in learning among his students. Only then will effective learning become possible. Learning becomes possible only if the skills and abilities mentioned above are practised.

4. What is Teaching?

There are several definitions for teaching. All of them point out one important principle. Teaching is a process that enables right learning. Teaching is a systematic work done by teachers to instill right learning among the students.

The basic components of teaching are (1) Teacher (2) student (3) subject and (4) environment or circumstances. Teaching will become successful only when these four components act together appropriately.

5. Goals of Teaching

The goal of teaching is all round development of the student. It aims at physical, cognitive, mental, moral and spiritual development. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father our Nation has pointed out that one goal of teaching is spiritual development. He says "By education, I mean an all rounded drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind and spirit".

The goals of Sunday school teaching can be divided into three.

- (1) ultimate goal
- (2) long term goal
- (3) short term and immediate goal

Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal of Sunday school teaching is to enable the students become God's Children and inherit eternal life or the kingdom of heaven.

All the rituals and sacraments of our Church have the same goal. Hence the teacher should always keep this ultimate goal in mind.

Long term goals

The long term goals given below help in attaining the ultimate goal mentioned above.

1. Confirm your Orthodox faith and lead an ideal Christian life.
2. Lead a collaborative life in the society as people with good character.
3. Generate the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) which are ideal values.
4. Develop good thoughts and good action.
5. Function charitably in the church and the society.
6. Sustain yourself in true faith and true worship.
7. Take pride in Orthodox faith, and the apostolic foundation and traditions of the Church.

Short term goals

Short term goals or learning objectives are those that can be attained within a short period. The Sunday School teachers should try their best to realise these goals in each of their classes. The main short term goals are given below.

1. Learn and assimilate the biblical truths.
2. Read and meditate on the Holy Bible regularly. The canonical prayers should be said regularly (at least as two times)
3. Learn the prayers and hymns of the Church and practice them in daily life.
4. Understand the sacraments, fasts and liturgies of the church clearly and observe them in life.
5. Learn the biographies of Church Fathers and imitate their good models.

6. Learn the history of the Church especially the history of the Catholicate. Increase the awareness regarding the practices and social service activities of the Church and observe them in life.
7. Understand the good habits to be followed and implement them in their life.

Our new curriculum is designed based on the objectives stated above. The teachers should understand that our goal is neither to prepare the students for the examination nor to develop a spirit of competition among them. Teachers should try to provide learning experiences conducive to attaining the various goals mentioned above. In short all the curricular and extra curricular activities of the teacher should be oriented to the various goals.

6. Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching are interrelated and complementary. Teaching will become in effective if true learning doesn't take place. Genuine teaching is an art as well as a skill. An ideal teacher is one who fulfils these parameters of teaching.

7. Conclusion

We have understood what learning and teaching are; how effective learning can be made possible and what are the basic components of learning. We have also understood what are the goals of Sunday school teaching. Ideal teachers are those who create the most appropriate learning experiences using their skills and abilities in order to ensure that the students are provided with right learning.

8. Activities

1. Compare learning and teaching.
2. Prepare a chart containing the various goals of teaching. Collect and add more goals.
3. Conduct a discussion in the class on how we can generate interest in learning in the student Present the findings in the class.

9. Reference Books

1. Aggarwal J.C.; 'Principal Methods and Techniques of Teaching'
2. Kochhar S.K., 'Methods and Techniques of Teaching'
3. Sharma R.,A., 'Technological foundation of Education'
5. OSSAE Publication 'At the Teacher's Feet'

Chapter 10

Teaching Methods

Structure of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. What is meant by methods of Teaching?
3. Various methods of teaching and their characteristics
4. Methods of teaching in Sunday school
5. Conclusion
6. Activities
7. Reference

1. Introduction

Teaching is a systematic set of activities undertaken by teachers in order to achieve specifically pre decided learning objectives. Hence 'How to teach?' is as important for a teacher as 'What to teach?' Different teachers might present the same concept differently. Let us take the example of the parable of Good samaritan. Some teachers might present it like a story. Others might present it as a description Yet some others might adopt question-answer method or discission method. An ideal teacher would select the most appropriate method among them taking into consideration the nature of the learning material and also the interest, abilities and environment of the learners. The method thus selected by the teacher is known as method of instruction or method of teaching. In this chapter we learn what are teaching method, what are the various methods of teaching and what are their features.

2. What is meant by methods of Teaching?

The goal of teaching is to bring about desirable changes in abilities of students. The teachers create desirable learning experiences for this purpose. Various ways of providing learning experiences in this manner are known as methods of teaching.

Effective learning takes place only when the lesson is presented using the most appropriate teaching methods. Hence the teacher should take into consideration the previous knowledge of students, nature of the lesson, learning objectives, learning aids, time available, abilities and interests of students etc. while selecting his teaching method. Using only one method throughout a lesson is not desirable. Various methods of teaching should be integrated so that the teacher's presentation becomes attractive. This approach is known as Multi Methodology Approach. For example one concept can be presented in the form of a lecture and then a discussion can be conducted for consolidating it. Thus whatever methods of teaching possible in a class should be utilized and an accurate and systematic presentation should be made. We shall look at the various methods, of teaching.

3. Methods of Teaching

There are several methods of learning. This is because no single method of teaching is complete or perfect. Hence different methods are to be used according to the nature of learning.

Teaching methods can generally be divided into two types:

- (a) Teacher centred methods
- (b) Learner centred methods

a) Teacher centrad methods

These are traditional methods of teaching. Here the focus is given to the teacher and his abilities. The students become merely listeners. The teacher adopting this method will not be able to give due consideration to the abilities of students. The important methods of teaching included in this group are:

- Lecture method
- Story Telling method
- Demonstration method
- Narration method and
- Textbook method

Our Sunday School teachers mainly resort to these methods. We donot mean to say that they are bad. These methods can be made attractive by adding a proper introduction or conclusion or by asking questions in between or by adding jokes etc. judiciously. However these methods provide very little scope for encouraging independant thinking and active participation improving enquiry skill etc. among the learners. They don't help in making learning natural and effective. Hence if

these methods are adopted, the children might find learning as a difficult task. Learner centered teaching methods are later developments to meet the defects of teacher centred methods.

(b) Learner centred methods

Here the students themselves take up the learning process under the teachers guidance and learn by themselves through various activities. In the last chapter we found that students need total interest and readiness if true learning is to take place. Here the teacher doesn't teach directly. Instead he prepares the students for their learning and provides arrangements, encouragements and suggestions for learning smoothly. If these methods are adopted children do not acquire knowledge mechanically instead they develop the ability to acquire knowledge effortlessly and apply them in various situations in life.

The various methods belonging to this group are discussion method, cooperative learning, Inquiry method, Project method, Problem solving method, Observation method and Dramatization method. These methods are rarely made use of in our Sunday Schools. However as the present revision of the curriculum is learner centred the teachers should become equipped to make use of the above methods to an extend. special training programme should be arranged for the teachers with this goal. Let us look at the teaching methods in detail.

4. Method of Sunday School Teaching

Here various traditional and modern methods for Sunday school teaching are described briefly.

It is not correct to use only one method for teaching throughout. Various method should be blended judiciously and the presentation should be done in a natural manner. This kind of approach is called Multi methodology Approach and it is explained earlier. Teachers should practise how to design their lesson in this method.

1) Lecture Method

This method is the most popular one among teachers. Here the teacher presents the lesson in the form of a speech. A speech done with proper preparation will be attractive. This method can be used for explaining concepts, linking ideas, giving instructions and suggesting ideas outside the text. A good frame work should be prepared before hand and the presentation should be simple and attractive. This method should sparsely be used in the lower classes.

2) Story telling method

This is a method that can be effectively used in any class especially in the lower classes. The lesson should be prepared like a story and should be presented attractively, while the story is narrated, the teacher should pose questions in between and should sustain the attention of students. Pictures can be shown in between as well.

3) Discussion Method

This method can be adopted from class 5 onwards. the lesson should be divided into different topics and hints for discussion of each topic should be written on card. The students can be divided into different groups and each group should be given this card. The students should discuss their topic in the group, find out various ideas and record them and the group leader should present them in the class. This can be followed by a general discussion of the topic involving the entire class.

4) Co-operative learning

This method promote self learning among students. Learning pairs and learning groups are formal for this purpose. They are assigned learning tasks by providing them with the topic for learning and hints. They can make use of not only the time during the class but also the time after the class for this purpose. They learn by reading books, collecting knowledge from others etc. record their findings in a diary and present them in the class.

5) Project Method

Project is a learning activity undertaken in a natural manner voluntarily. This is a method of acquiring knowledge through various projects. The projects given should be simple enough for the learning level of the child. It should be enjoyable as well. This kind of learning generally takes place outside the class. Data should be collected and the analysis and findings should be prepared in the model of a project and should be submitted to the teacher. You have learned how to prepare a project and have already prepared one in Class XI.

6) Observation Method

This is the method of directly observing the learning sources, collecting information and recording them. An Observation Diary can be kept for this purpose. For example in order to study the various parts of a church building, the teacher should first point them out to his students. The students will observe these parts

and write down the details. These details are later discussed in the class and inferences are drawn.

7) Dramatization Method

This is the method of role playing the contents of a lesson in the form of a short play. This method includes forms of stage presentation like skit, mime, short play, monoact, role play etc. Such performances require good preparation and rehearsal. The teacher should equip the students for the performance. For example the story of Good Samaritan can be enacted using various methods. After the performance, discussions are held to share the various concepts.

8) Thinking Skills Development Method

This method prompts the students to think on their own and formulate various concepts while studying the lessons. For example, think that you are teaching the lesson 'Prayer for the departed' After teaching the concepts give the students a situation to apply their acquired concepts and biblical passages. This can be writing a letter to a protestant friend who oppose prayer for the departed. In the letter the student can justify prayer for the departed based on biblical justifications. Here the student is not attempting a mechanical repetition of the learned concepts. Instead he is applying it in a specific situation. This requires in depth thinking. Similarly writing stories, plays, poems etc. based on the concepts learned can also be attempted.

Many of these methods listed above can be undertaken by teachers in their Sunday school classes. The book 'At the Teacher's Feet' (Gurupadantike) can be made use of for this purpose. It is the responsibility of an ideal teacher to design the nature and methods of his teaching considering the conditions, viability, abilities and the topic of study.

5. Conclusion

We have learned the characteristics and use of various methods of Sunday School teaching in this chapter. Teaching is an art as well as a skill. When the lessons are presented with good commitment, preparation and prayer, the classes will become most attractive. The teachers should select appropriate methods and should prepare a blue print suitable to each class as part of their Sunday School teaching.

6. Activities

1. Making use of the various methods of teaching given in this lesson, attempt teaching practice in your class. You may make use of small portions of your syllabus for this purpose.

2. Select various lessons and discuss the most appropriate teaching methods for them in your class.
3. Find out the teaching methods used by your teachers in each class for transacting the syllabus.
4. Attempt a comparison between Teacher centred methods and learner centred methods.
5. List the teaching methods discussed in this lesson as well as other teaching methods. Collect details of other teaching methods from your teachers.

7. Reference books

1. Aggarwal J.G., Principles, Methods and Techniques of Teaching
2. Kochhar S.K. 'Methods and Teaching Techniques of Teaching'
3. OSSAE, 'At the Teacher's Feet'

Chapter 11

Learning Aids

Structure of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. What are Learning Aids?
3. Characteristics of Learning Aids
4. Various types of Learning Aids
5. Learning Aids and their uses
6. Learning Aids for Sunday School classes
7. Learning Aids and the Teacher
8. Conclusion
9. Activities
10. References

1. Introduction

Our senses are the doors of learning. The experiences which are enjoyable to our senses become our learning. What we hear, see and smell are our experiences. When we hear, see and touch the same object we get different sensory experiences (Multi sensory experiences). By virtue of these experiences, learning becomes easy and natural. The well known scholar Joseph Weber says that 40% of our learning take place through visual experiences, 25% through auditory experiences and the rest 35% through all other sensory experiences combined.

From this we can understand that what we see rather than what we hear have greater influence in learning. Learning Aids or Audio Visual Aids tools made use of by the teacher for providing various experiences of this kind. What we study in this chapter are Learning Aids and their characteristics various types of Learning Aids and the various learning Aids which we can make use of in Sunday School teaching.

2. What are Learning Aids?

Learning Aids are those Audio Visual Aids which promote learning and which make learning easier by reducing its complexity. Because of its use, the quality of learning increases and learning becomes easier. Learning Aids are the means for making the learning experiences transparent and comprehensible. Thinker Eric Ashby points out four revolutions which have happened in the field of education.

- 1) Transfer of education from home to school.
- 2) Use of written documents for learning
- 3) Invention of Painting and use of printed books.
- 4) Use of electronic medium.

Among them the fourth change helped in increasing the efficiency of education and making it more attractive. Such equipments used for making learning attractive and efficient are known as Learning Aids.

3. Characteristics of Learning Aids

By using Learning Aids, learning becomes enjoyable and attractive. Let us look at the other characteristics of Learning Aids as well.

- 1) They prompt learning. They can inspire the students to learn.
- 2) They can provide multisensory experience. They provide experiences for hearing, seeing, reading, writing and doing.
- 3) When we use the images of real objects as learning aids, students will get the experience of seeing those objects directly.
- 4) They can provide variety to the class. For example when a picture is shown during the process of teaching, the students will become more interested.
- 5) Learning Aids help in saving time and energy. There is a saying that a good picture is better than one thousand words. It makes learning much easier.
- 6) Learning Aids help in avoiding the boredom of the class. Films and documentaries can be made part of teaching. Then the class will become very attractive.

It is said “I hear, I forget I see, I remember and I do, I understand”. Good teaching provides opportunities to students not only to hear, but also to see, read, write and do. Learning Aids should be properly used to meet this end.

4. Various Types of Learning Aids

Learning Aids are mainly divided into four categories

- 1) Printed Aids like Textbooks, Work book, Handbook, Magazines, Journals, Newspaper etc.
- 2) Audio materials like Radio, Tape Recorder, Language Labs etc.
- 3) Visual Materials like Chalk, board, charts, pictures, maps, models, projects, Over Head Projector, flash cards, activity cards etc.
- 4) Audio-Visual Materials like Television, Films, Documentaries, Video CDs, Computer etc.

5. Learning Aids and their uses

The question whether learning aids have a role in learning doesn't arise at all. Their role have been discovered by scholars several years back. The first person who suggested that learning aids could be used for the learning of students was the Dutch theologian and writer Erasmus (1466-1536). Later philosophers like Roussou, Pestalossi supported this argument and made their own contributions. Today our problem is how we can effectively make use of learning Aids in education. When efficient teachers take classes with the help of the most attractive aids, the impact on students will be unique.

Points to be remembered while using Learning Aids

- 1) The learning aids selected should be the most suitable one.
- 2) They should be related to the subject of learning.
- 3) They should be similar to real objects.
- 4) They should be sufficient to attain the learning objectives.
- 5) They should have the required size and clarity.
- 6) The teacher should know how to manage them.
- 7) They should be made use of at the most appropriate time.
- 8) They should ensure the participation of maximum number of people.
- 9) They should be handled with care.
- 10) The teacher should construct charts pictures and tables on his own and prompt student to do so.
- 11) Since audio visual aids have great influence, they should be given more focus.

6. Learning Aids for Sunday School Classes

Today we rarely use learning aids in our Sunday School. But if the teacher is willing, we can make use of several aids in the Sunday School classes.

- 1) Display boards: Blackboard, white board, bulletin board, roller board and the modern interactive board are available today.
- 2) Various Type of Charts: Ideas can be represented in various ways on a chart paper. There are various types of charts like concept based charts, tabular chart, chain chart, flow chart, picture chart etc. They can be made attractive by giving them various colours.
- 3) Maps, Globe etc.: Sunday School publishes maps of biblical places. Along with them ordinary maps and globe can be used.
- 4) Models: Models are small three dimensional representations of real objects. Eg. model of bird, model of Thabor hill etc. Models can exert greater influence than pictures.
- 5) Pictures, Icons etc: Pictures are two dimensional forms of real objects. Models are not readily available always., Hence picture become quite handy learning Aids. The picture should be large enough and multicolored. Icons are more real and meaningful than pictures. We can make use of them also in the class.
- 6) Reference books, magazines and other publications: It would be very good if the Sunday school have a good library. If not, teachers should take interest and collect books for the library. Various reference books like Books for 'Divyabodhanam course, 'Thiruvachanam Bhashyam' (Interpretation of the Holy Bible) Biblical dictionary, Encyclopedia of Malankara Church, Malankara Church Fathers etc. should be collected and used. The Malankara Church magazine can be subscribed to.
- 7) Computer, Laptop, LCD Projector, Screen etc.: These learning aids are quite useful for the Sunday School classes Today Video CDs on various topics including Church history are available. They can be shown in the general class and in specific classes as well. If there is internet facility, information from various sites including those of the Church could be downloaded and displayed using LCD.

7. Learning Aids and the teacher

A learning aid, how much effective it is, not a substitute for an efficient teacher. The Sunday school teacher should have the interest and ability to use any kind of learning aid. Only then will teaching become effective. Moreover learning aids should be used at the appropriate time. Our Sunday schools suffer from lack of time and resources. Teachers should utilize maximum number of learning aids possible within their limitations.

8. Conclusion

We learned about various learning aids, their features and use as well as the various learning aids that can be employed in the classroom. We also learned that they are equipments which help in the process of learning and they inspire the students to learn.

9. Activities

- 1) Prepare a table of various types of learning aids.
- 2) Conduct a discussion in the class regarding the possibilities of learning aids in Sunday school classes.
- 3) Prepare a few learning aids that can be used in Sunday school classes.
- 4) Utilize the learning aids prepared in your teaching practice classes.
- 5) How far can media like newspapers, television and cinema influence Sunday school teaching? Discuss with your friends.

10. References

- 1) Dale, Edgar - Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching
- 2) Kochhar SK - Methods and Techniques of Teaching
- 3) Rather A.R. - Essentials of Instruction Technology

Chapter 12

Evaluation in Sunday School Classes

Structure of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. What is evaluation?
3. Need for evaluation
4. Features of evaluation
5. Techniques & Evaluation
6. Techniques of Evaluation
7. Evaluation at various levels of learning
8. Evaluation in Sunday school classes
9. Conclusion
10. Activities
11. References

1. Introduction

An important question in teaching is ‘why teach?’ What does a teacher teach his students for? An ideal teacher will have definite goals in his life. They can be called objectives of teaching or objectives of learning. The goal of teaching is the realisation of these objectives. The teacher would try to provide the most suitable learning experiences for this purpose. Along with it a teacher has the responsibility to examine “how far his teaching had been successful?” He should review how far he had been able to realise his goals of teaching. We are learning the details of this process through this lesson.

2. What is evaluation?

Evaluation is the process of measuring the learning outcomes of a student. At the same time it is also an assessment of the teacher’s abilities. This is a continuous

process. Teaching and evaluation should go hand in hand. Evaluation should be suitable enough of measure the abilities of students. It should be objective based as well as learning experience based.

3. Need for evaluation

Why should evaluation be done?

1. To assess the learning outcome of students.
2. To measure intelligence and other abilities.
3. To measure the quality of teaching
4. To understand the learning disabilities of students.
5. To promote students to higher classes
6. To group students on the basis of their abilities.

Thus evaluation has a number of uses.

4. Features of Evaluation

Evaluation is an indispensable component of the teaching process. Let us think about the features of correct evaluation.

1. It should be objective based
2. It should have validity
3. It should have reliability
4. It should have stability
5. It should have practicability
6. It should have objective

Evaluation should be done with due consideration to the above qualities.

5. Types of Evaluation

Based on its nature, evaluation can be classified into

1. Process evaluation and product evaluation

Evaluation is often done on the basis of learning products. But the process of learning is equally important. Learning process refers to the method used for learning. Both of them should be taken into account for evaluation.

2. Summative and Formative evaluation

The evaluation done at the end of one stage of learning is summative evaluation. The evaluation done continuously using various methods is

called formative evaluation. Summative evaluation helps in deciding promotion to the next class and in understanding the general level of learning of the student. However continuous evaluation is required to identify and remedy the deficiencies in learning.

3. Internal and external evaluation

Internal evaluation is the assessment made by the teacher who imparted the learning experiences. It helps in measuring the behaviour, leadership qualities presentation skills and linguistic ability of students. But external evaluation is the evaluation conducted by an outside agency. Both these types of evaluations are required to assess the comprehensive abilities and permanent achievements of the students.

4. Grading and Marking

Marking refers to evaluation by awarding marks to each question included for evaluation and thereafter tabulating the entire marks for the subject. But Grading is evaluating each question on the basis of Grades A B C D etc. and calculating the overall grade finally. It is generally held that grading method is much better than marking method.

6. Learning levels included in evaluation

The fundamental levels of learning are knowledge, comprehension, application of knowledge, completeness and creativity. Separate questions and other methods of evaluation are used for measuring each level. Question for examining the memory of students as well as other methods of evaluations are required. Evaluation at knowledge level includes questions for testing the memory of students. Evaluation at comprehension level includes questions for explaining on one's own, finding out examples, comparison, contrast, etc. Evaluation at application level includes measuring the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in various situation of life. Competency is acquired by continuous practice of the ability to apply knowledge. Evaluation at the level of competency includes questions to measure this ability. Evaluation at the level of creativity includes writing stories, plays, poems etc. and developing new ideas. Hence when evaluation is designed, the levels of learning abilities to be evaluated have to be decided and appropriate techniques for evaluating them have to be adopted.

7. Techniques of Evaluation

Assignments, projects, practicals, seminars, presentations etc. can be used for internal evaluation. Various types of tests or examinations are used for external evaluation. There are two types of examinations.

1. Oral Test
2. Written examination

Oral test is conducted for the Nazareth Category (Classes one to three) of our Sunday school. Majority of questions used in it are objective in nature. Questions like identifying pictures, name something, answer in a word, reciting prayers and songs of worship etc. can be used for this. If objective questions are given more importance in written examination, evaluation will become objective, and easy. Essays should be included in higher levels like application, analysis and creativity.

8. Evaluation in Sunday School

The ultimate goal of Sunday school teaching is not acquisition of knowledge. Instead students should be equipped to lead an ideal christian life, become eligible for eternal life and inherit the Kingdom of God. What is most important is providing learning experiences for acquiring this ultimate goal and its various short term goals which are considered as its sub categories. Hence evaluation need not be given undue importance. Sunday schools can adopt grading system instead of marking system for this purpose. Grading system is ideal for avoiding unnecessary competition, making evaluation more authentic and bring more students to the forefront. We should take care that examinations do not repel students from the Sunday school.

9. Conclusion

Learning experiences and evaluation are inter related. It is the teacher's duty to conduct evaluation carefully and make it fool proof. Evaluation should be sufficient enough to measure the real ability of students. Besides there ideas, we have looked into various types and techniques of evaluation and evaluation in Sunday school in this chapter. We should be able to think and reflect more on this area.

10. Activities

1. Imagine that you have become a Sunday school teacher. You are asked to teach a class in the Nazareth category. State with examples the methods of evaluation you would implement in the class.
2. Discuss in the class the similarities and differences between the techniques of evaluation used in Sunday school and the secular general education.
3. Are objective questions sufficient to measure the various abilities of students? Discuss with your friend and prepare a note on the topic.

4. What are the differences between process evaluation and product evaluation? Explain with examples.
5. Is internal evaluation successful in Sunday school classes? Conduct a discussion in the class. Record your findings in the diary.

11. References

1. Aggarwal JC - 'Principles, Methods and Techniques of Teaching'
2. Sharma R.A. - Technological Foundation of Education.

Unit 4

Sunday School Teaching

Teaching in Sunday school is a really divine service. It is a great blessing that one gets a call to be a Sunday School Teacher. Sunday School Teaching is a wonderful call from God to those whom He loves and fills with His Grace.

After Resurrection, our Lord called Simon Peter and said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know that I love you" (St John 21:15). The command of our Lord to him here is exactly the call for Sunday School Teachers. "Take care of my lambs". Let our Sunday School Teachers take up this task as a challenge and get ready, prepare and teach well and serve our Lord as best as one can. In this unit, we are going to learn how to equip oneself as a good and effective teacher in Sunday school.

The first chapter deals with the talents and preparations of a teacher. 'How to get ready for teaching' is discussed in the second chapter while working out the lesson plans is explained in the third. The fourth chapter illustrates various stages of Sunday School management. Let us learn them to acquire adequate inputs to become a good teacher depending on God all the way!

May our Lord shower His Blessings on us!

Chapter 13

Sunday School Teacher – Talents and Preparations

Structure of lesson

1. Introduction
2. Who is a good teacher?
3. Role of teacher in the process of education
4. Qualities and skills of a teacher
5. Responsibilities of Sunday School Teacher
6. Conclusion
7. Activities
8. Reference Books

Introduction

In the process of education, the role of teacher is very crucial. Even in the present era of advanced technology, a good teacher stands out unique. A good teacher always succeeds in transforming the learning materials as a lively and joyful experience to the students. More than conveying knowledge, a teacher makes a student think and act, leads him and relates to him as a good friend and counselor. This lesson explains the qualities and talents as well as responsibilities of a good teacher.

Who is a good teacher?

This is a highly relevant question in education. A good teacher is one who transforms his students, nurturing them with adequate and fruitful teaching methods and experiences. A teacher is a master craftsman who moulds intelligent citizens who would be useful to the community. H G Wells said, “The teacher is the real maker of History”. In schools, teacher takes up a multiple role as father, mother,

brother, sister, friend and counselor of students. He is the catalyst in the process of education. He is a 'gardener'. Students are the budding plants in the garden. The teacher takes care of them so that they would grow up and spread fragrance in the whole community.

Role of teacher in the process of education

There are three aspects in the learning process: teacher, student and learning material. Look at this statement: Teacher taught John, Latin. Here a good teacher should know Latin, but not Latin alone. He should know his student John too. The needs of the student as well as his characteristics should be known to the teacher. The teacher should come to know about the life situations of his student as also his family background. The role of the teacher in learning process is really great. May be one can compare his role with that of the director of a stage play. The director may not act and never for once comes to the stage. But he is very much there behind the curtain in full control of everything. He takes up full responsibility to present the play effectively on the stage. Similarly, a teacher equips a student to learn, extending him all possible help. Thus he becomes the facilitator. He is the preserver of our culture as well as its custodian. He is a mediator between the student and the learning material. A good teacher controls the life of a student as well in a way. Thus teachers are often called mentors. A student undergoes the experience of assimilating the learning material through the effective presentation of the lesson by his teacher. Now let us have a look at the qualities and capabilities of an effective teacher.

Qualities and skills of a Teacher

We can view the capabilities of a good teacher classifying them as three groups.

1. Teacher qualities
2. Leadership qualities
3. Personal qualities.

Teacher qualities. A teacher should possess good knowledge of his subject. The present day students can acquire various inputs with the help of easily accessible media sources. Therefore, the teacher should be knowledgeable enough and well equipped to convey latest developments in different areas of knowledge to his students. And, he should be one who is really interested to teach. He should develop a habit of reading good books and shall be very continuously scanning different reference resources. More important, a good teacher must orient himself to work for the good of the community.

A good teacher must be familiar with different teaching methods and should be able to implement many of them before his students looking for the practical utility. Proficiency in presentation skills are always accepted as an effective criterion to assess a teacher. Similarly, communication, interaction, presentation, voice modulation, effective use of teaching aids, evaluation methods are skills associated with good teaching. Utilizing the most suitable teaching methods and making learning process effective is considered as the stamp of a good teacher.

A teacher shall be good enough to understand his students and identify their interests, potentials and talents as well as their limitations so that he can effectively help them in the learning process.

Leadership qualities. A teacher shall always be an ideal leader. Students shall find their teacher as a role model worthy enough to emulate. His leadership qualities shall always be democratic in nature. Students should have enough freedom but they should also be controlled properly. The teacher shall also be a good shepherd. Thus, Jesus Christ happens to be the model teacher whom we can emulate. Only truly capable teachers can lead the students in the right way.

Personal qualities. The teacher shall be one who possesses a personality that carries good traits. He shall practice good life values such as love, patience, humility, kindness, self control, faithfulness and goodness. He shall always show off a pleasant face. He shall be reliable, possessing a good sense of humor, but shall use his humor judiciously. And a teacher shall be well experienced with the realities of life.

Responsibilities of Sunday School Teacher

Just like any teacher, a Sunday school teacher has a lot of responsibilities. He shall be aware of these responsibilities and shall be a role model to his students. Others should feel like emulating his traits. He shall be a strong believer in God and shall be one leading a good prayer life, taking part regularly in worship at church as well as participating actively in all spiritual activities of the parish.

He shall have a thirst to learn more. He shall undertake 'Divyabodhanam' Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses conducted by our Theological Seminary. Having a basic knowledge in computer, L C D projector and the like is beneficial. All round development of students shall be his target. He shall encourage and guide his students with this in mind. Organizing study tours, pilgrimages, camps shall come up as a priority and he shall co operate with the Head Master in accomplishing the same. He shall participate in various conferences and meetings as well as training programs conducted at District, Diocese and Central levels. He shall be active in all spiritual, philanthropic activities of the Church. He shall have absolute loyalty to

the Church. He shall work actively for the welfare of the community and shall be selfless in his approach, shall read a lot and shall acquire general education to a reasonable level. Undergoing teacher training courses like T T C or B Ed is also good. These are various means of enhancing teaching skills.

Consolidation

We have just an overview as to who is a good teacher and what shall be his role. Further, we also tried to analyze the skills and qualifications of a teacher. We also came across the responsibilities as well as the tasks of a Sunday School teacher briefly. May be now, you can answer a question: do you feel like becoming a Sunday School teacher? If your answer is “yes”, then get ready; pray for it and prepare yourself for that “call”.

Activities

1. What are the qualifications for a good teacher?
2. Make suggestions for developing the teaching skills of a Sunday School teacher.
3. If Sunday School system has to be successful, we must have a group of teachers who are talented as well as committed. Do you agree to this? Explain.
4. Organize a discussion in your class on the topic, ‘Qualifications, skills and responsibilities of a Sunday School Teacher’
5. From your experience, what are the qualities you would identify in a good teacher?

Reference Books

1. Green, Thomas F, The Activities of Teaching
2. Sharma R A, Technological Foundation of Education
3. Weigand, James E, Developing Teacher Competency
4. Mursell, James I, Successful Teaching
5. Fanders, Ned A, Analysing Teacher Behavior

Chapter 14

Planning for Teaching

Structure of lesson

1. Introduction
2. Preparing for teaching (Planning)
3. Usefulness of Planning
4. Types of Planning
 - a. Year Planning
 - b. Unit Planning
 - c. Daily Lesson Planning
5. Steps in Lesson Planning
6. Planning and success in teaching
7. Conclusion
8. Activities
9. Reference Books

Introduction

How does a teacher prepare and equip himself for teaching is very crucial in making teaching process effective. Analysis of the context of lesson, teaching methods, learning activities, system of evaluation are all various elements to be planned well in advance. What is the need of 'preparation' for teaching? What are the advantages of lesson planning? What are the types of planning? What is the role of planning in successful teaching? We are discussing these issues in the present lesson.

Preparing for teaching (Planning)

Intelligent and effective planning is a basic factor in effective teaching. Planning for teaching refers to the efforts initiated by a teacher in conveying to his students the essence of a lesson with all its details as appealing as possible so that the same is retained by them in a lasting manner. For this, the teacher gets ready with certain systems which can be called the lesson plan. If a teacher equips himself with due preparation and a properly worked out lesson plan, he can enter the class room with total confidence and handle lessons better.

Usefulness of Lesson Planning

Planning is crucial for successful execution of any activity. Planning is absolutely essential for making teaching effective. The following are four factors that help a teacher to plan his lesson prudently.

- ✦ Skills and Competencies of a teacher.
- ✦ Knowledge of the topic
- ✦ Understanding the capabilities and aptitude levels of learners
- ✦ A reasonable understanding of different teaching methods

Advantages of lesson planning are briefed below:

1. Through proper planning and identifying the learning goals, teaching becomes objective based.
2. Planning helps students to understand their goals of learning.
3. Planning helps objective based evaluation.
4. Planning helps students and teachers to systemize and utilize their time and talents judiciously.
5. Through proper planning, teacher becomes self confident.
6. Planning helps to connect a lesson with its previous one thus ensuring continuity in learning.
7. Teaching aids which are to be used in a class could be fixed and arranged sufficiently in advance, with proper planning.
8. Individual differences in a class can be confronted to a great extent with intelligent planning.
9. An effective planning equips the teacher to provide a good introduction, to organize the learning points systematically and also to consolidate the day's working.

10. Planning encourages the students in follow up activities as well as continuous reading, thus enriching their learning experience.

Thus, the advantages of planning are manifold. As such, the need for working out proper lesson plans assumes added importance in the successful learning process. May be, teachers can maintain a diary for this. Now we will discuss three important means of planning.

Types of Planning

These are the three main types of planning.

1. Year Planning. This is a sort of general preparation covering the entire lessons for the whole year. The document worked out in this manner can be called a *year plan*. The objectives to be achieved in one year including study tours, observations, inter faces, assignments, projects, seminars, role plays, exhibitions and the like could be used as evaluation tools have to be documented. Such a plan can help the system monitor the week to week progress and ensure time bound completion of tasks.
2. Unit Planning. The Sunday school texts are formulated, bifurcating various lessons into a number of units. Planning based on each unit can be called *unit planning* and such a document worked out is a *unit plan*. This has to be worked out in an elaborate manner than the year plan. The specific purposes, teaching methods, teaching aids and evaluation methodologies for each unit are to be documented here.
3. Daily Lesson Planning. This is worked out in detail based on year plan and unit plan. The document so prepared is called a *daily lesson plan*. This plan shall include learning purpose, previous knowledge, teaching aids, introduction, presentation, consolidation, related activities, evaluation methodologies as well as reference resources for further reading. The next lesson will discuss in detail how lesson planning is to be worked out and documented.

Steps in Lesson Planning

Teaching becomes effective only if lessons are planned systematically. Step by step planning is what is needed for each lesson.

- ✦ Decide the different purposes of learning. Sunday School education is not just to gain knowledge, but to apply the knowledge acquired

practically in different walks of life. Thus, the purposes chosen shall be most appropriate. Various purposes discussed in Chapter one has to be kept in mind.

- ✦ Selection of lesson portion and analysis thereof. The lesson content has to be decided in advance each week and subject it to deep and systematic analysis.
- ✦ Decide on the teaching aids. This should help organizing what teaching aids are to be resorted to.
- ✦ Finding out the previous knowledge of students. It needs to be examined as to the extent of previous knowledge the students possess with regard to the topic being covered in the concerned lesson.
- ✦ A proper introduction to the lesson is needed. Introduction shall be attractive, short and simple. The introduction shall be a stepping stone to the main content of the lesson.
- ✦ Presentation of the lesson. The lesson shall be divided into different parts and each part may be presented with methods most suitable to that part. Also, students' activities shall be given due importance.
- ✦ Revising and evaluating. While considering the evaluation process, it shall be ensured that the key points of the lesson get revised. It is advisable to prepare suitable questions for this exercise.
- ✦ Continuous activities. Sunday School education cannot end with classes on one day a week. Follow up activities, projects, Bible reading portions related to the prescribed lessons are all required to be given as assignments.

Planning and success in teaching

If teaching has to be effective and successful, planning assumes a very important role. Therefore, it is very vital that the various steps discussed above are implemented, while carrying out the planning.

Consolidation

We were learning how to prepare for teaching. There are different types and methods of preparations and planning which we have examined and understood various aspects involved in the process.

Activities

1. How does one prepare to become a Sunday School teacher?
2. What are the advantages of lesson planning?
3. What are the different types of planning? Explain each of them.
4. What are the different steps in lesson planning?
5. Organize a discussion in your class on the topic, 'How useful is planning in Sunday School teaching'.

Reference Books

1. Aggarwal J C, Principals, Methods and Techniques of Teaching
2. Donald C Olrich, Teaching Strategies
3. Kochhar S K, Methods and Techniques of Teaching
4. Rather A R, Essentials of Instructional Technology

Chapter 15

Preparation of Lesson Plans

Structure of Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Documented plan for teaching
3. Different types of documented plans
4. Model lesson plan for Sunday School
5. Different segments of lesson plan
6. Time schedule in Sunday School
7. Consolidation
8. Activities
9. Reference Books

Introduction

We have had a detailed discussion on the role of planning for teaching in the last lesson. It must be understood that teaching process is somewhat complex in nature which needs very systematic preparation. As part of this preparation, a teacher works out a document which we call a lesson plan. What are the different types of such plans and what constitutes a model plan document are discussed in this chapter in a simple manner.

Documented plan for teaching

To ensure that the teaching process is effective and successful, the teacher decides well in advance suitable details and explanations on the concerned topic



and works out a plan which shall be in a specific frame work. This document is called lesson plan, which is nothing, but the documented action plan of that teacher. A lesson plan is a blue print, a guide map and a comprehensive chart of class room teaching. This document is the basic requirement for successive teaching process. This shall be comparable to climbing a ladder in as much as that the different stages of teaching get used effectively and efficiently. The previous chapter introduced different types of lesson plans which we are examining in detail now.

Different types of documented plans

A teacher has to work out mainly three documented plans

- ✦ Year Plan
- ✦ Unit plan
- ✦ Lesson plan

Year plan: A teacher works out this plan based on his entire topics to be dealt with for one year. The targets to be achieved, major teaching methods (like study tour, discussions, projects, role plays, observations, survey etc) main evaluation methods are all looked into and taken into consideration while this is worked out. The number of periods required for each unit has to be planned and recorded. The teaching activities for the whole year are to be included in this plan. This can be bifurcated into two like first half year and second half year. What is given below is a model year plan based on the lessons prescribed for class II.



Year Plan

Name of Teacher Academic Year of Sunday School

Name of Sunday School Total No of Periods: 32

..... Total Chapters: 21

Class: 2 No. of Students:

Sr no	Unit	Targets	Teaching Methods	Teaching Aids	valuation	No of Periods
First half year (13 lessons)						
1	Bible stories (lessons 1 to10)	Learn Biblical truths and practice them in life. Read and meditate Bible daily	Role play, Group activities, Story presentation	Bible, pictures, models, Lap top LCD,Projector, Bible map, Thiruvachana bhashyam	Oral test, quiz,drawing, coloring	14
2	Prayer (lessons 11,12)	Regular prayers, Evening and morning	Groupactivities	Kudumba-aradhanakramam, pictures	Oral test	3
3	Liturgical songs	To sing liturgical songs understanding meaning	Group activities	The Service book of HolyQurbana, pictures	Oral test, quiz	1
Second half year (8 lessons)						
4	Prayer (lesson 13)	Prayregularly	Questions& answers	Kudumba-aradhanakramam	Oral test	2
5	Liturgical Songs (lesson 15)	Take partin HolyQurbana with fear singing liturgical songs	Discussions, group activities	The Service book of HolyQurbana, pictures	Oral test, quiz	2
6	My church	Understand Holinessand characteristics of church	Observation, group activities, study tour	Picture of Church,Lap top, LCD projector	Oral test, quiz	3
7	Great men	Make Saints' Life as model	Stories, speche, group activities, study tour	Icons of Saints, Lap top, LCDprojector	Oral test, quiz	4
8	Good habits	Learn good habits and practice inlife	Observation, stories, group activities	Pictures, Reference Books, Lap top, LCDprojector	Oral test, Drawing, Coloring, quiz	3



At the very beginning of the academic year, a plan shall be documented and kept ready by the teacher. Based on this year plan, each unit plan has to be worked out. Year plan is not very elaborate, but it covers all the main topics and lessons. But a unit plan has to be more descriptive and lengthy. Now, let us understand how this goes about.

Unit plan: Based on the various information contained in the year plan, a plan called unit plan has to be worked out for each unit. A model unit plan is given below.

Unit Plan

Name of Teacher Academic Year of Sunday School

Name of Sunday School

..... Total Chapters: 2

Class: 2 No. of Students:

Unit: Good Habits Total No of Periods: 32

Sr no	Sub unit (lessons, activities)	Target	Teaching methods	Teaching aids	Evaluation	No of periods
1	Cleanliness, introduction, lesson text, allied activities to be made practical	Make body mind and spirit clean, learn the need for cleanliness, illness and problems due to lack of cleanliness	Observation, story, speeches, group activities, questions & answers	Pictures, charts, ref. books, Lap top, LCD projector	Oral test, quiz, drawing, coloring activities	1
2	Be a good friend, lesson text, allied activities to be made practical	Be a good friend to others, get good friends, learn to help others, be in fellowship with others in happiness and sorrow	Observation, story, speeches, group activities, questions & answers, assignments	Pictures, charts, ref. books, Lap top, LCD projector	Oral test, quiz, drawing, coloring activities	2



Previous knowledge of students;

- ✦ They can identify sun, moon, stars, birds and animals, trees and plants and the like.
- ✦ Students have studied in class one that God created Adam and Eve and made them stay at the Garden of Eden

Teaching aids:

- ✦ A picture of the Garden of Eden
- ✦ Pictures of birds, animals, trees, fruits, vegetables etc
- ✦ Different pictures showing God's creation on different days. (General creation on the first six days)

Introduction:

Children, do you walk through a garden? Do you like it? What sorts of flowers do you like most? Can you name your favorite flowers? Can you name your favorite animals, birds, trees, plants? Why do you like them? Teacher shows the picture of a beautiful garden and asks them a few questions and the children answer them. They appreciate the beauty of all these. They name domestic animals, wild animals, plants, flowers, fruits. Now the teacher comes up with the crucial question: Who has created all these? All these you see around us daily are all created by God. God created them on different days one by one and we are going to read that story i.e. the story of creation, today.

Presentation:

Learning Points	Learning Experience	Ongoing Evaluation
In the beginning, God created Heaven and earth	What did God create first? The teacher asks this question and the children give several answers.	Name a few objects created by God.
After that, God created all other beings	Teacher reads Genesis 1:1 and gives an explanation	How did God create man?
God created human beings making them like Him. God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it He breathed life giving breath into his	Teacher explains the order of creation showing different pictures.	On which day, God created man?



nostrils and the man began to live. He was named Adam and God put the man in the garden of Eden. There, as companion to him, God created Eve. This was the creation on the sixth day.		
Then on the seventh day, God stopped working. We call this day Sabbath.	The teacher presents the story of creation, how Adam was created, how Eve was created, how they were placed in the garden of Eden and all in an orderly manner.	How God created Eve?
We observe the Day on which Jesus Christ was resurrected, the first day of the week, as Sabbath or Holy.	Which day is the Sabbath? What are the importance and special features of this day? How do we observe this day? What all things do we do this day and what all we should not? The children shall be made to say these.	What is the name of the garden in which God placed Adam and Eve? What are the special features of the garden of Eden? What is the importance of Sunday, the day we observe as Holy?

Putting into practice:

Do we do things which our parents ask us to do? Do we do such things we are not to do? Had you been in the shoes of Eve, what would have you done? When Adam came to know of Eve's action, what should have been his stand? Think about all these. The story we have read today is made available as a picture story, which is read out by the teacher slowly like telling a story in such a way that children can appreciate it better. Children appreciate and enjoy the story of creation.

The questions given as part of the ongoing evaluation is put before the class and students are encouraged to find the answers. Activities could be done in the class itself as far as possible. May be, if needed, home work can be given for completion. They are made to sing a hymn and say a prayer.

The teacher reworks those decisions to be implemented as given above and the students are made to repeat them aloud. The biblical verses given above are to be read by students at home and they are encouraged to do so by the teacher.



Allied activities:

- ✦ Collect pictures of animals, birds, fruits, vegetables etc to be made into album
- ✦ Draw the picture of the above items and color them.
- ✦ Encourage students to try to grow plants, vegetables etc in the courtyard of their home and take care of them

Now, a summarized lesson plan of what we have discussed above is given below.

Lesson Plan

1. Basic Information
2. Learning targets.....
3. Previous knowledge students possess.....
4. Teaching aids
5. Introduction
6. Presentation

Theme	Learning experience	Evaluation	

7. Putting into practice
8. Allied activities

A text is just a helping hand or a guide. We must realize that this in itself is not complete. As such, once a lesson plan is worked out, Holy Bible as well as other reference books has to be utilized. Good stories out side the text, illustrations and other practical experiences are to be taken into account. If such a systematic lesson plan is prepared, then there may not be any need to refer to the text frequently while taking class. Now we will see how the different segments in lesson plan can be taken care of.



Different segments of lesson plan

Let us try to understand the above sub titles in a detailed manner one by one.

Basic Information

This segment provides some information about the teacher, the class, topic, number of students etc

Learning Aims

When a lesson is taught, that has to effect some desirable changes in the behavior of students. Such changes shall not be confined to the knowledge acquired from such lessons, but there shall be an emphasis on the part of the teacher for changes at levels of assimilation, practicalities as well as intellectuality. (Please refer to the targets proposed in the model lesson plan) The various aspects of learning targets has been discussed in Unit Three of volume one.

Previous knowledge of students

Before a student is made ready for a new lesson, he would have acquired some basic information on that topic through a previous lesson or from other sources. A teacher shall try to identify such data in advance so that the new topic can be presented easily.

Teaching aids

Teaching aids consists of a list of charts, pictures, maps, computer, projector, reference books etc required for the particular lesson. They need to be arranged in advance and used as and when the need arises.

Introduction

There shall be a good introduction for any lesson. Such an introduction helps the students get into the topic systematically. This is the stage whereby students are made ready for a new lesson. As such, the introduction shall be simple, interesting and attractive. The points which might come up here shall as best as possible be from the day to day living styles of our children. Again, there must be a link to their past experience and knowledge. The teacher shall ensure that the introductory part is completed within 3 to 5 minutes. The introduction shall lead to the main topic of the day.



Presentation

This can be worked out in various ways. In the above lesson plan, what is shown is a simple system that can be generally adopted. The lesson plan is illustrated in three columns. The important themes from the lesson are given in the first column one after one. In the second column, suitable learning experiences related to various facets of the theme are identified and noted. Various questions, charts for demonstration, pictures, class activities, stories of great personalities, places and incidents introduced, group discussions, presentations by children and such things are recorded. The third column is for evaluation methodologies. For this the questions provided in the text under the title 'stop and think' can be utilized. Presentation of a lesson shall always be student centered. More emphasis shall be given for student activities and presentations.

Putting into practice

Once the essentials of a lesson are fully analyzed and presented, students need to be trained for retaining them and putting them into practice. May be, the teacher can record a few questions related to day to day life of the children. They shall be made to sing, read the Bible and pray. Also, students shall be made to recite the 'decision' that is given at the end of the lesson as part of learning experience.

Allied activities

These activities shall be aimed at making various ideas acquired in the classroom in their day to day practical life. A varied set of activities shall be worked out such as drawing, acting, singing, telling stories, locating bible verses, cross words puzzle solving, and so on.

Time schedule in Sunday School

Implementing a systematic and realistic time schedule is not an easy job for Sunday Schools. Most of the parishes arrange their Sunday School immediately after the Holy Qurbana, but there are parishes who arrange it in the afternoon between 1:30 and 4:00 or so. Sunday School classes shall commence with singing a hymn, bible reading and prayer. Even students can be given this responsibility class wise and by turn. Here students of one class may join together in singing a hymn followed by bible reading by one student and the prayer shall be led by another. This task can be assigned to one class a week in advance. The concerned class teacher can oversee this. This session shall be followed by a general class. This shall be handled by the teachers by turn. For such general classes, a list of topics shall be



prepared in advance. This session can be utilized for practicing liturgical hymns, general knowledge, bible verses, bible classes and the like. (Again, this can be planned after the second period too). There shall be two periods after the general class each of 30 / 45 minutes duration. And these shall be handled by two teachers. A possible model class time table is given below. Exact timings can be decided based on local situations.

Class Time Table

10:00 am	Hymn, Bible Reading, Prayer
10:10 – 10:30	General Class
10:30 – 11:15	Period One
11:20 – 11:50	Period Two
11:50 – 12:00	General Instructions, Prayer

Further, a consolidated time table can be prepared to be maintained in the Sunday School office.

Consolidated Class Time Table

Sr no	Class	10 -10:10	10:10-10:30	Period I 10:30-11:15	Recess 5 Min	Period II 11:20-11:50	11:50-12:00
	Bethlehem Nursery	Hymn, Bible Reading, Prayer	General Class	Name of Teacher, Subject		Name of Teacher, Subject	General Instructions, Prayer
	Nazareth I						
	II						
	III						
	Galilee IV						
	V						
	VI						
	VII						
	Jerusalem VIII						
	IX						
	X						
	Tabor XI						
	XII						



Apart from this, a Teachers' Time Table is prepared with the list of all teachers and the classes and subjects they are handling. Such a Time Table is quite handy for planning the schedules systematically.

Teachers' Time Table

Sr no	Name of Teacher	Period I, Class, Subject	Period II, Class, Subject
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Working out a proper Time Table will help a Sunday School schedule function systematically. Time table is often called a 'second wall clock'

Consolidation

Now, we have learnt how to work out a lesson plan for the purpose of teaching in Sunday School. Let us study this plan thoroughly and prepare another lesson plan based on this format. Subsequently, you need to prepare five lesson plans with



the help of your teacher and get ready engage classes accordingly. Once this is done, one can work out good lesson plans and teach effectively. Further, one shall observe the actual teaching of good teachers and try to learn from them whenever needed. Thus, one shall attempt to be as effective a teacher as possible. Such teachers will be respected and accepted by students. Let us organize ourselves in this manner.

Activities

1. Discuss the varying steps in preparing a lesson plan.
2. Choose five lessons of a class and work out lesson plans
3. Teach for five periods in Sunday School
4. Prepare teaching aids like charts, pictures, models and the like for these classes.
5. Organize a class room discussion as to the effective utilization of computer and internet for Sunday School teaching and learning.
6. Work out a Model class time table for your Sunday School

Reference Books

1. Rather A. R., Essentials of Instructional Technology.
2. Aggarwal J. C., Principals, Methods, and Techniques of Teaching.



Chapter 16

Sunday School Management

Structure of lesson

1. Introduction
2. Sunday School – Basic Components
3. What do we mean by ‘Sunday School Management’?
4. Sunday School – Levels of Administrative Machinery
5. Management Structure of Sunday School
6. Sunday School Principal / Head Master – Responsibilities and Qualifications
7. Sunday School – Basic Facilities needed
8. Problems faced by the Sunday School and solutions thereof
9. Consolidation
10. Reference Books

Introduction

A favorable atmosphere is needed for effective functioning of a Sunday School. A plant needs fertile soil, favorable weather conditions and proper care for its growth. Similarly, ensuring favorable circumstances for the proper and efficient functioning of Sunday School is called Sunday School Management. What all factors shall be brought together in such a scenario? What is Sunday School Management? How far secular management components can be practiced in Sunday School? What are the qualifications and responsibilities of Sunday School Principal / Head Master? What sort of problems is faced by Sunday School and how they can be tackled? Such issues are discussed in this chapter.

Sunday School – Basic Components

The basic components of Sunday School learning are nothing but those components that help smooth functioning of Sunday School and those persons

who are involved in implementing them. These components are generally of two types namely (1) Human Resources and (2) Physical Resources.

(1) Human Resources: These components are very important as far as a Sunday School is concerned. These include people working from the central to the parish level. At the parish level, the Vicar, Management Committee, Head Master, teachers, parents, students, and members of the parish as well as others associated with this form this component. All these persons could be effectively made to get involved in the functioning of Sunday School. Parents are equally important as teachers. As per the teaching scheme of Sunday School, putting learning experience into practice, post class activities, follow up reading are integral parts of the learning process. Parents' support is most essential for implementing these effectively. For this, parents – teachers' committees could be organized, if needed. Such committees have started functioning in many parishes now. Once or twice a year, an orientation program may be arranged for them. Such programs as well as training workshops shall be organized for teachers too. All activities shall necessarily be with the concurrence of the vicar as well as with the knowledge of Management Committee.

(2) Physical Resources: These resources are equally important as human resources. These include text book, teaching aids, teachers' guides, time table and other infrastructural facilities. A student centered, activity oriented and life related syllabus and text books are absolutely essential for the success of Sunday School curriculum. It is really encouraging that our Sunday School Syllabi are being revised likewise, but other basic components too need to be suitably upgraded.

All these various components have to be effectively and efficiently aligned so as to make Sunday School system really effective and fruitful. The inbuilt mechanism that takes care of these aspects and the agency which takes up leadership thereof is called Sunday School Management.

What do we mean by 'Sunday School Management'?

School management is a system functioning in a school whereby the running of a school is done efficiently and provide education that is useful and good enough to students. Similarly, there is a system within the Sunday School set up which functions right from the unit level to the central level ensuring value based and quality based education imparted to students for which there are administrative methodologies and procedures which go together. This system is called Sunday School management. For this, those who take part in the administrative system should work hard with total commitment, sense of direction and absolute reliance on God. The activities at different levels of Sunday School need to be executed efficiently for which there must be concerted efforts on the part of all concerned.

Sunday School – Levels of Administrative Machinery

Following are the different administrative levels of our Sunday School

- ✦ Central Level
- ✦ Diocese Level
- ✦ District Level
- ✦ Parish / Unit Level

Central Level: At the central level, there are officials such as President, Director General, Publication Officer, Office Manager and Treasurer who look after different activities of Sunday School. For decision making in policy matters, there is an elected executive committee. There is also O V B S committee led by a Director and General Secretary who manage the affairs of O V B S. O V B S is an extended activity of the Sunday School programme. Communicating with various units is the responsibility of the executive committee and they do this mainly through circulars. Further, publication of text books, visiting units, conducting examinations, training teachers, conducting O V B S, charity works, and other progressive activities are all done under the directions of the Central Office.

Diocese Level: There is a Sunday School Council at diocese level with a Vice President, Diocese Director, and Diocese Sunday School Secretary which look after various activities. This council is responsible for distribution of text books, visit of units, conducting examinations, training teachers and arranging O V B S classes.

District Level: There is a District President, District Inspector, and a District Sunday School Secretary and a council consisting of others. They take lead of all Sunday School activities such as unit visit, examination conduct, teachers' training, O V B S conduct and other progressive activities.

Parish Level / Unit Level: The activities are coordinated by staff council under the leadership of Head Master and Staff Secretary. Their main responsibilities include admitting children, arrangement of classes, appointment of teachers, preparing time table, teachers' in service training, conducting examinations, organizing O V B S classes, maintaining proper registers and records, implementing directives from central level, improving basic infrastructure, organizing co curricular activities (study tours, pilgrimages, camps, special classes, observations, preparing reports, keeping premises clean, orientation classes, charity works, hospital visits, house visits) etc. These activities take place under the control of the Head Master.

Management Structure of Sunday School

The basic elements in Sunday School Management are the following:

- ✦ Planning
- ✦ Organization

- ✦ Staffing
- ✦ Directing
- ✦ Coordinating
- ✦ Controlling
- ✦ Recording
- ✦ Budgeting

Planning: Proper planning is essential for the smooth running of a Sunday School. This has to be done at the very beginning of every academic year or even before that. Planning with various resources, organization of different curricular and extracurricular activities, arrangements for conducting examinations, managing basic infrastructural facilities etc contribute towards the effectiveness of Sunday School education.

Organization: If different factors of Sunday School education are organized with the right orientation, students' learning can be improved. There are human factors as well as material factors. Head Masters, teachers, students, Parish Vicar, Managing Committee and parents constitute the most essential part of this. Material factors include syllabus, text books, teaching aids and other physical facilities. All these factors shall be judiciously organized for the proper functioning of the Sunday School programme.

Staffing: Capable, committed and spiritually oriented teachers make a good asset for any Sunday School. The qualities and responsibilities of a teacher were discussed in some detail in chapter one. Such persons shall be identified from among the parish members by the Vicar and Head Master. It must be borne in mind that educational qualification alone shall not make a good teacher. A teacher shall be one who regularly participates in church worship and other sacraments as well as one who takes keen interest in prayer, lent, fasting and such other rituals. He shall be loyal to the Church. There must be arrangements to give training to those who are chosen as teachers. They shall be encouraged to join the 'Divyabodhanam' programme (theological programme for laymen). They shall participate in all training and refresher programs conducted at the diocese and district levels. These training programs shall be arranged at parish level too. There shall be a register containing all information about the teachers. Further, teachers who have served for long say, 20/25/40/50 years shall be honored at the appropriate forums.

Directing: Executing all the activities of a Sunday School systematically by its Head Master is called directing. We shall try to learn the qualifications and responsibilities of a Head Master shortly.

The Head Master shall delegate different activities to suitably equipped teachers and shall support and encourage them for effective implementation. Such activities, by their variety as well as content, will make the students enjoy them. Organizing study tours, staying together in a campsite and learning, singing songs and praying, drawing pictures, writing poems and stories etc will make Sunday School programme very interesting and attractive.

Coordinating: Streamlining different factors which are part of a Sunday School, with the right attitude, ultimately enhancing the overall quality, is called coordinating. In the paragraph above titled 'Organization' dovetailing human factors and material factors, it is the Head Master who should take up the responsibility to execute them. This process can also be called 'instructional inter relationships'. Teacher – teacher relation, teacher – student relation, student – student relation, and teacher – parent relation could be smooth and getting on like a well oiled machinery. Of the above, teacher – parent relationship is very crucial and if this relation becomes strong, the functioning of Sunday School will be doubly beneficial. For this, working out a P T A forum can be thought over which shall be managed by a committee with a president, secretary, treasures and members. This forum can also organize orientation programmes for parents. We have some parishes having very efficient P T As.

Controlling: 'Controlling' means executing laws and regulations which are required for the smooth functioning of Sunday School as also conducting examinations efficiently and such other things. The Sunday School shall function within the stipulations prescribed in the constitution of the Church and the Sunday School constitution. Also, the functioning shall follow the bye laws of Sunday School association. All are equal in Sunday School family and nobody shall claim any special treatment. At parish level too, bye laws shall be formed and implemented subject to the overall policy of the Sunday School Association.

Each Sunday School shall ensure timely and systematic conduct of central level, diocese level and unit level examinations and co curricular competitions. The Head Master is fully responsible for this. The Head Master shall submit the relevant statements regarding conducting of the examinations properly and timely to the Central Office through the District Inspector. Again, the Head Master shall ensure adequate facilities conducting the examinations.

Recording: Details of different activities of Sunday School shall be recorded properly and maintained in registers and files. What type of records or registers is to be maintained is being discussed later in this lesson under the sub heading 'basic facilities'.

Budgeting: The income and expenditure of the Sunday School has to be planned in advance and the actual data shall be recorded properly in books and registers. This exercise is called budgeting or income - expenditure planning. Receipts shall be issued for all income items and bills or vouchers of expenses shall be properly filed.

These activities shall be entrusted to those teachers who possess necessary skills in this. The Head master shall oversee these works and ensure proper maintenance of records. An experienced, skilled and committed Head Master can implement these quite efficiently and provide inspiring leadership too.

Sunday School Head Master – Responsibilities and Qualifications

Any organization that functions in a systematic manner needs a good leader. For a Sunday School, the Head Master assumes this leadership role. He is the nerve center and his role is similar to that of a ship's captain within this set up. He can be compared to the axis of a globe which means that he is the most crucial person who holds lots of responsibilities.

✦ Responsibilities of Head Master:

- (a) Teaching
- (b) Supervision
- (c) Organization
- (d) Conduct of examinations
- (e) Relationship

The Head Master shall be prepared to handle any class in case of absence of a teacher. As supervisor, he has to ensure smooth running of all classes. Whatever is to be done relating to the obligations with Sunday School Central Office or diocese has to be carried out as and when needed and required. He shall ensure that all activities are going on well. All inter personal relations shall be maintained in good spirits and the Head master shall see that everything is accomplished in an orderly and effective manner.

Now we shall examine the qualities and skills needed to ensure that all the above activities are getting along as best as possible.

✦ Qualities of a Head Master.

- (a) Leadership qualities
- (b) Teacher qualities
- (c) Personal qualities

The Head Master shall have leadership qualities of a high level. He shall be influential and be a role model for other teachers to emulate. And he shall be role model in humility. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd shall always be the ideal for a Head Master. Moreover, the Head Master shall function in a democratic manner.

The Head Master shall essentially be a good teacher, having in - depth knowledge of the topics to be taught. He shall be able to clarify the doubts, if any, of other teachers regarding the topics as well as related issues. Also, he shall be motivated to continue to learn and keep in touch with the latest developments in life and society.

And more than all these, he shall be a man of good character, constantly holding on to high moral values. He shall be one who is deeply involved with good prayer life, sacramental life, worship, lent and other observances of the Church. He shall be an epitome of punctuality and discipline. He shall be strong enough to relate with all teachers without any discrimination. In all things, he shall be ideal and a role model.

Sunday School – Basic Facilities

In brief, the following are the basic facilities needed for a Sunday School.

- (1) A room with essential furniture including shelves, cupboard, table, chairs.
- (2) Facilities for conducting general class and individual classes
- (3) Facilities to store teaching aids and books
- (4) Cupboards for stocking records, files, registers

Now let us see what are the essential records, files and registers required at a Sunday School.

Records and Registers:

- (1) Admission Register
- (2) Teachers Register
- (3) Teachers Attendance Book
- (4) Students Attendance Books
- (5) Account Book
- (6) Stock Register
- (7) Mark / Grade Register
- (8) Log Book (Records of Activities)
- (9) Rank Register

- (10) Shield & Trophy File
- (11) Endowment Register
- (12) O V B S Admission Register
- (13) Visitors Diary
- (14) O V B S Account Book & O V B S Report Book
- (15) Notice Book
- (16) Letter Head
- (17) Receipt Book
- (18) Library Books Register
- (19) Books Distribution Register
- (20) Inward Letter Register (21)
- Outward Letter Register (22)
- Staff Council Minutes Book (23)
- Annual Report Boob
- (24) Inspection Diary
- (25) Co curricular competitions Register

Files:

- (1) Admission Applications file
- (2) Voucher File for Sunday School
- (3) Applications and Complaints File
- (4) Progress Card File
- (5) Circular File - Center
- (6) Circular / Correspondence File – Diocese / District
- (7) Central Examinations Mark / Grade List / File
- (8) Question Paper File (Class wise)
- (9) Outward Letter File (Copies)
- (10) O V B S - Admission Applications File
- (11) O V B S Voucher File

Of the above, a Sunday School must maintain systematically all necessary records as best as possible. This will make the unit functional and effective in all respects. There must be a concerted effort from all those who are associated with the functioning of the Sunday School.

Today, we face a lot of practical problems in getting on with Sunday School education, which are being briefly discussed below. Let us try to understand some common problems and solutions thereof.

Problems faced by Sunday School and Solutions thereof

Here, we discuss a few problems which are common to most Sunday Schools. Students shall analyze such problems within their respective Sunday School and make an attempt to arrive at solutions with the assistance of their teachers.

- (a) Attendance of students is coming down.
- (b) Students do not find Sunday School very attractive
- (c) Generally, many individuals are not coming forward to serve as teachers.
- (d) Existing teachers are not very regular and punctual
- (e) Basic facilities for conducting classes are minimal in many Sunday School units.
- (f) Generally, facilities like office room, staff room are not available in Sunday School units.
- (g) Time available for Sunday School is very limited due to various reasons.
- (h) On Sundays, due to marriages, baptism, meetings etc Sunday School gets cancelled
- (i) The support from the parish is not encouraging in some parishes.
- (j) Parents are not very keen to send their children regularly to Sunday Schools
- (k) There are disagreements between Head Master and teachers on Sunday School issues
- (l) Timely support and directions may not come from District, Diocese, Central levels
- (m) In higher classes like XI and XII, the number of students is few due to their being 'busy' in their secular education.
- (n) Many of the teachers now in service are not properly trained.

Suggestions for improvement:

- ★ To tackle the issue of shortage of students in senior classes, the curriculum committee, after detailed discussions and study has come out with certain directions. Accordingly, those children who are studying in U K G level of secular schools shall be admitted to class I of Sunday School. If so, a student of class IX of secular school shall be studying in class X of Sunday School.

The revised curriculum has looked into this aspect and the content of the lessons are suitably organized.

- ✦ At the commencement of the school year, there must be a preparatory retreat for teachers and students when all the teachers and students shall have Holy confess and receive Holy Qurbana. The opening day can be given a festive color by arranging a light tea session, an opening class by a reputed person on a subject of contemporary importance for growing up children and some entertainment programs by children.
- ✦ There must teachers in adequate numbers who shall be given the requisite training
- ✦ There shall be a time table to be followed in all strictness giving utmost importance to punctuality. Different responsibilities shall be delegated to all teachers.
- ✦ Cancellation of Sunday School classes on account of other parish or Sunday School activities shall be avoided
- ✦ An office room for Sunday School is highly necessary. The library books, teaching aids, records and files shall be properly kept here. It must be made sure that all accounts are properly maintained.
- ✦ Examinations shall be conducted promptly. Those students who are found backward in studies shall be identified and special classes shall be arranged for them.
- ✦ Arrange a study tour / a pilgrimage once a year with teachers and students
- ✦ On important occasions, make it a regular practice that teachers and students join together in receiving Holy Qurbana.
- ✦ Arrangements shall be made to conduct house visits with students and teachers in groups, particularly those houses where there are sick and aged people. Also, make such visits to those houses where there are children who do not attend Sunday Schools. Advise such students to come forward to Sunday School classes.
- ✦ Encourage children to participate in various camps.
- ✦ Make it possible to stay together in the church once a year and participate in all our prayers at the correct timings and arrange some orientation classes with an experience of staying together, praying together, eating together and learning together.
- ✦ Celebrate students' birthday with prayers and sharing sweets.

- ✦ Arrange a Service of Dedication for those children who complete 12 years of age under the leadership of the Vicar. Let them have confession and receive Holy Qurbana next day.
- ✦ Arrange uniforms and badges for Sunday School teachers and students
- ✦ Try to prepare a diary containing various activities of the Sunday School and the time table.
- ✦ Also try to publish a magazine carrying the artistic talents of Sunday School students.

Consolidation

Now we have learnt what is meant by 'Sunday School management'. We have come across the different segments of management from central level to unit level. Again we have learnt how to put into practice various factors which come up in Sunday School education. We also discussed the common problems and their probable solutions. At the class level, more solutions can be worked out.

Activities

1. Prepare a chart showing the different administrative levels of the Sunday School system with proper markings.
2. Collect details of Sunday schools like teachers, number of students and similar relevant information from your diocese district wise and organize a report.
3. Explain the different responsibilities and qualifications of Sunday School Head Master
4. Try to examine what types of files and records are to be maintained in Sunday School. Prepare a list such records your Sunday School possesses and have a discussion with your Head master.

Reference Books

1. Kochar S K, School Organization
2. Agarwal J C, School Administration, Management and Organization
3. Rather A R, Essentials of Instructional Technology

Unit 5

Christian Education

Chapter 17

Christian Education

Introduction

In its 'soul' and general context, essentially, 'education' is one and the same in different contexts the world over. To be exact, it is rather impossible to categorize education in terms of religious beliefs. However, it remains a fact that religious and political movements have developed their own exclusive systems of education, in order to realize their specific aims. It is in this context that we need to understand and appreciate the Church's endeavour to spread its faith and ordained principles of life. Thus, it becomes obvious that education has a philosophical foundation. Along with this, in modern times, since the need to transform education has gained wide acceptance, psychology too has found a place in education. This major shift in focus was necessitated by the acknowledged need to develop proper character and behavioural patterns in the students; and also the adoption of new learning techniques.

During earlier times, education was generally reckoned as a means to obtain knowledge. But in modern times, 'education' has got an extensive meaning and wider objectives than mere acquisition of knowledge. Rather, the modern understanding is that education involves acquisition of various skills and abilities; concept-formation; acquisition of the real meaning of 'freedom and human rights' etc.

The long - cherished idea that the teacher placed on the high academic pedestal, 'gives' certain pieces of knowledge to the learner has been largely dismantled. The emphasis in modern times, on the other hand, is on the creation of conducive learning - environment; enabling the learner to analyze things in their own ways, using their abilities; help them develop learning - facilitating skills; meaningfully

guide their personality development, and the like. In short, these elements are to be developed in the learner. In this 'revised' understanding of learning, it has to be accepted that in the educational process, both the teacher and the students are subject to the process of learning.

Meaning and Relevance of Christian Education

The notion that knowledge and wisdom are indispensable for growth in virtues is pretty ancient. According to Plato, the philosopher, education is an exercise in which the latent goodness in a child is developed to a permanent stature. The Biblical wisdom which says, "Devotion to the Lord is the beginning of wisdom", (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10) becomes more meaningful to us here. Thus Christian Education is considered as an inalienable element in Christian ministry. In this there is an overt and deliberate attempt to provide guidance and practical knowledge in divine truths, spiritual mode of life, relationship with God, practice and appreciation of the divine sacraments in the Church, unblemished life, covenantal life-style etc. There is no denying the fact that Christian Education never shies away from adopting certain 'techniques' of education from the secular world, which are found useful and beneficial. However, it needs to be noted that Christian Education has its unique aims and techniques in teaching and learning. The ultimate aim of Christian life and education is deemed to be *Divinization* or *Theosis*. It means growing into the image and likeness of God, all the while focussing on the life and character of Christ, through a life of spiritual discipline.

This is not to deny the presence of traces of moral teachings in the general and secular education. At the same time, it shall be reemphasized that Christian education is indispensable to help the individual grow as a real Christian into the stature of Christ, who is the head of the Church. This is all the more essential due to the constant changes in life situations, the effects of the growth of science and technology and the general decadence in moral standards in social life.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught that all the commandments given by God for the good of mankind could be summarised into two:

Love God in an unselfish manner, and

Love fellow beings as we love ourselves.

These are the means to lead us to the freedom which is the glory of the children of God, and to holiness (Romans 8:20). The commands of Jesus Christ,

"Let children come to me and do not stop them" (Matthew 19:14)

"Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15),

Clearly points to the basic need to give instruction and education. If we think carefully it could be discerned that Christian Education is not something that the Church “gives” to her kids and young ones. Instead, it is a process that takes place in children, as they interact with the spiritual experiences available in the Church. Such spiritual experiences include Orthodox Faith, life in the family, growth and development of children etc. The growth of a Christian is a continuing process. Learning is always tied to the environment and is developmental. This development shall depend on knowledge, growth into emotional maturity, lots of experiences and the background of general maturity and the apperceptive mass (latent background knowledge gathered through the years).

Educational psychologists usually give the warning that children should never be taught as if they were grown-ups. Amazingly this aspect of teaching had been pointed out by St. Gregory of Nyssa, the Cappadocian theologian who lived in the fourth century.

In this way, education is interpreted as a life-long process. We are actually teaching the community and generations by giving suitable education to our children. The real intent of Christian Education is to prepare children for growth in real life. This growth is made possible in the community of the faithful. The members of the Church are enjoined to the body of the Church with the help of worship, symbols, history, teachings of the Fathers etc., which are present in the Church community. Significantly, Jesus taught his disciples and the people at large.

Chapter 18

Christian Education—Historical Background

It could be said that Christianity is a continuation of the Jewish church. A study of the history of Christian Education must start from the background of Jewish educational tradition. Our Lord was born into a Jewish family and grew up in that tradition.

Characteristics of Jewish education

1. Content

At the beginnings, Jewish religious education was totally informal. The Commandments of God obtained through Moses became the basis of Jewish education. Thus the reading and recitation, and the study of the “Law” were most important. Topics like God- man relationship, human life, personal relationships, religious and social obligations, moral principles, rules regarding worship of God etc. were part of the “Law”. The real Jew was one who lived perfectly observing the Law. Such a person was one, who found favour in the sight of the Lord, was righteous and blameless (Genesis 6:8, 9).

2. Learning Environment

The first scene of this informal religious education was the family; and parents were the first teachers. Children obtained the initial lessons in religious education from the mother. Later, the father took over this responsibility. The major responsibility of the religious education of children was vested with the father of the household. Instruction was by word of mouth, and the father used to recite to them details about Passover festival, Pentecost festival, Festival of Booths, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and the diverse kinds of sacrifices. Children were told how Yahweh treated their ancestors, and also about the covenant that Yahweh made with their forefathers. An important segment of this informal and ‘homely’ education was for children to learn the Torah (Law) by heart. When the child attained age four, he was taught the Creed. It was a prayer known as “schema” , consisting of Deuteronomy 6: 4-9, which read:

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Thus an environment was prepared so that children would grow up, understanding the meaning of social life. Family worship and discussions and interpretations in relation to the Mosaic Law were common. This informal mode of education attempted to impress upon children the fundamental religious and spiritual nature of human life; as well as the great event of the “Exodus”, marking the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, in which there was direct intervention of God in Jewish history, and its essential influence in the life of a Jew.

3. Formal Education

Israel had worshipped in Tents of Meeting (synagogues) during their sojourn in tabernacles in Diaspora days, and even later. These were regional worship places as well as centres of religious education. Grownups gathered there to listen to the recital of the Torah and receive instructions in practical life. Children learned reading, writing and basic Mathematics, and subsequently tried to learn the Jewish Law by heart. It was only later that formal schools were started. Between 75 B. C. and 64 A.D. “Beth Hazepher” (House of Books) and “Beth Hamidrash” (House of Learning) were founded. Six- year old-children were taught here by teachers appointed by the Chief Priest. In Beth Hazepher (age 6-10) the study of religious books took place, while in Beth Hamidrash the oral learning of “Mishna” took place (age 10-15) There were arrangements for higher studies in the “Law and the Prophets” for those interested.

4. Teachers

a. Priests: The priests, who were in charge of conducting prayers and sacrifices, were given the responsibility to teach children regarding rituals like sacrifices, festivals and other religious observances. It was obligatory for priests to recite to the people the entire Mosaic Law, once in seven years (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). They used to write down their teachings and answers to questions along with historical events. Later, these scripts were considered as official documents in Jewish society.

b. Prophets: The real job of the prophets consisted of conveying God’s messages to the people; calling the people to remove the sins and evil in their character and

activities; highlighting God's righteousness, holiness and the covenants with the people; counselling the people and their rulers to lead a moral life; chastising evildoers and the like. The prophets were thus 'teachers'.

Religious Education in New Testament Times

Jesus Christ was widely acknowledged as a "Rabbi" (teacher). He used to teach people with short, yet meaningful, parables with power and authenticity. He taught his disciples too. His teachings were centred on God's point of view. Essentials of theology, God's abiding love for humanity, need for repentance, Love of God and Love of man, human accountability before God, moral and righteous life style and nature-friendly life formed a major share of the 'content' of his teachings.

Apostolic Times

The Christian Church was a "teaching" Church from the very beginning. Three thousand people joined the Church following an extraordinary event and a powerful oration (Acts 2:41). It may even be said that the formulation of the Gospels was part of this "teaching ministry". This teaching went along by introducing Jesus Christ as the real Messiah, in the Greco-Hebrew cultural context. Also, it is obvious that the apostles had introduced unique forms of teaching even before the gospels were written. The New Testament provides pointers to show that there was the custom of explaining the meaning and significance of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist (1Cor.11:23 +)

Apostolic instructions indicate that parents have the responsibility to educate and nurture their children:

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline And instruction of the Lord". (Ephesians 6:4)

The early Church, it sees, had a firm conviction regarding the importance of religious education. Because of this catechumens were allowed to take part in a part of church worship. These people, who were being prepared for receiving baptism, were barred from the important part of worship (please refer to the *two* parts of the Holy Qurbana). Along with religious education, moral training for life and the possibility of interaction with other Christians were also involved in this programme.

Chapter 19

Christian Education and the Sunday School

Preface

The bases of Christian Education were the teachings of Jesus and the apostolic tradition. It must be noted that religious education was an inseparable part of worship. The “charter” of Sunday School education is the command of our Lord:

“Let children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom Of heaven “(Matthew 19:14).

The call by Jesus was to make disciples of all nations. The means prescribed for ‘making disciples were baptism and instruction. There is also the assurance that the Lord shall always be with those who teach:

“Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you;”(Matthew 28: 19-20)

This instruction is elucidated in the general epistle of St. Jude:

“Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to content for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Thus it becomes clear that Sunday school learning is an inalienable part of Christian worship and Christian Education.

The History of the Sunday School Movement

The evolution of the Sunday school in the western Church could be seen as one of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. It was actually Robert Rakes, a journalist, who made a beginning for the Sunday school movement in England. It is reported that the first Sunday school teacher was Mrs. King. The Industrial revolution had made great changes in society. Those who were engaged in agricultural activities moved to the industrial domain. Children, along with adults, got engaged in hard labour. They were not much educated. Lack of fixed hours of work and low

wages were only too prevalent those days. These children were free during weekends. This kind of life – work schedule made many of them, especially children, hard hearted, criminal-minded and drug addicts. Robert Rakes, the journalist turned his attention on these children. The children were turning to criminal activities during weekends when they were free after six days of hard labour; and had nothing else to do. Rakes decided to try a hand at reforming these children.

In 1780, he gathered those children loitering on the streets, by giving them sweets and welcome words. He led them to the house of Mrs. King. There they were taught reading and writing; and also the Bible and prayers. The grownups were taught first so that they could be used to teach young people. When Rakes died in 1811, there were 5000 children in England studying in Sunday schools. It was Rakes thinking that the Church should take over this responsibility. At that time, the Church was not quite happy about “teaching” on Sundays. And obviously, the industrialists who thought the phenomenon of children learning, would be a hindrance to their exploitation also did not support this programme.

But later on the Church recognized this movement, which was growing fast, and supported and encouraged it. In these Sunday schools, it was not only religious instruction that took place. However, this gathering was only on Sundays, it was called “Sunday school”.

Christian Education and Sunday School

We have already seen that the programme of Christian Education is a systematic ministry of the Church. This endeavour to teach people regarding the holy sacraments, holy traditions, history of the Church, application of Christian principles in practical situations etc. has to be accomplished prayerfully and enthusiastically. People may go astray is not properly educated, especially in the present society where heterodox teachings and wrong modes of spirituality are gaining ground. The Church is called to fulfil this responsibility with great enthusiasm, for which, suitable programmes and resources are to be developed. It must be acknowledged that a kind of “Faith education” campaign is necessary for all, at different age levels. The firm foundation for the growth, personality, character formation, basic concepts, moral foundations, learning to give and receive love and the like are laid during infancy and adolescence. Precisely because of this, in a larger sense, all educational programmes, including Christian education must start during these “impressionable” years. This idea points to the significance and indispensable nature of Christian education. Since, the strong foundations for a person’s growth are to be laid during childhood, the importance Sunday school education has doubly increased.

Impressions and concepts which are true and good need to get implanted in young minds at the early stage of their development. Such impressions germinate in young minds in a congenial atmosphere. Therefore, the lessons in initiation to 'experiencing God' must be made available at this stage in life. This, exactly, is the aim of the Sunday school.

Sunday School Movement in India

In 1800, three protestant missionaries - William Carey, Marshman and Ward – started a school at Kolkata; but it did not continue for long. This project was renewed after a couple of years. Closely following this, the Sunday school in India started in 1903. Other missionaries started Sunday schools in other parts of the country. The Baptist Church established their Sunday school Association in 1809. By 1970, several Sunday school Associations were functioning in many places in India. In 1876, seventy seven representatives of different Sunday school Associations came together and established the India Sunday school Union (ISSU), with headquarters at Jabalpur. It was moved to conoor in 1927. ISSU published Sunday school books in 20 regional languages. The first India to head the ISSU was Mr. Rallaram. ISSU started conducting annual exams from 1896 onwards.

Before long, Evangelical Fellowship of India and All India Sunday School Union started their work in this area. The Orthodox Sunday School Association is collaborating AISSA from 2007, which takes special interest in training Sunday school teachers.

Sunday School Movement in the Malankara Orthodox Church

Mar Thoma VI, the then Malankara Metropolitan, renowned as Mar Dionysius the Great (1765-1808), a programme of religious education was started in the Malankara Church, specifically to teach prayers and sacraments; later this got transformed as the Sunday school. Another motive for starting this programme was to ward off the "reformist" teachings of the western missionaries. In fact, one of the major decisions of the Assembly of parish representatives at Kandanad church in 1909 was to "teach children canonical prayers and about the sacraments". Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius of blessed memory showed much enthusiasm in implementing this decision. The founding of the first 'Paditha Veedu' (House of Learning), that is, the Old Seminary at Kottayam in 1815, has to be seen in this context. Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II, the founder of M. D. Seminary, Kottayam, made arrangements for conducting religious instruction in parish churches on Sundays. The entire Bible was available in Malayalam language by the

middle of 19th century. Subsequently, along with topics of faith, sacraments and worship, Bible portions also formed part of Sunday school education.

During the regime of Sabha Bhasuran St. Dionysius Vattasseril, the Orthodox Sunday School movement obtained a systematic organizational stature. Fr. K David was appointed as the secretary of the Malankara Sunday School Samajam. To begin with seven classes were arranged; later on two more were added. The lessons were arranged in such a way that before children reached class V, they would learn usual prayers by heart.

In 1930, Puthenkavil Mar Philoxenos, the “nightingale” of the Church, was appointed as the president of the Samajam. In the draft document of the Church constitution, prepared by a committee constituted by Vattasseril Thirumeni, with Rao Sahib O. M. Cherman as convenor, made the following proposals, pertaining to the Sunday school:

Clause 138. Every parish shall have Sunday schools, one or more.

Clause 139. The Sunday Schools shall function under the supervision of the vicar and assistant vicars, if any.

Clause 140. For the proper functioning of the Sunday schools, every diocese shall have a secretary; and for the whole Church, a General Secretary elected by the Church Managing Committee. The secretary for the Diocesan Sunday schools shall be appointed by the Diocesan Metropolitan.

It is pertinent to note that “Basic Doctrines of the Church”, a book authored by Saint Dionysius, while he was teaching in the Orthodox Seminary, documenting the quintessence of Church teachings, was an essential part of the Sunday school curriculum.

Those who had turned against Vattaseril Thirumeni, called for a meeting at Karingachira church, and organized what came to be known as “Malankara Syrian Sunday School Association” (MSSA). However, after the Indian Supreme court judgment in favour of the Orthodox Church, efforts were under way to amalgamate there two Sunday school movements. Accordingly, in 1964, a joint meeting was held under the presidentship of His Holiness Catholicos Augen I, at M. D. Seminary, Kottayam, and made new arrangements towards amalgamation. Two committees – Constitution Committee with Kaniyamparampil Kurian Cor Episcopa as convenor, and a Syllabus Revision Committee, with Fr. K. David as convenor – were elected and authorized. The report of the committees was ratified by the Episcopal Synod on 20. 1.1964. The Orthodox Syrian Sunday School Association of the East (OSSAE) was reorganized with Vayaliparambil Mar Gregorios as President, Kaniyamparambil Kurian Cor Episcopa as Director General and Fr. K. David as Publication Officer.

At that time, there were 1010 Sunday schools, 92777 students and 7251 teachers throughout the Church. In 1966, Paulose Mar Philoxenos replaced Mar Gregorios as president. However, fresh schisms in the Church saw Mar Philoxenos and Kaniampambil Cor episcopa resigning from their respective positions and organizing a separate Sunday school movement under the aegis of a divisive pro-Patriarch movement they organized – the Antiochene Movement. A parallel Sunday school movement was thus born with the name “The Malankara Jacobite Sunday School Association”.

In 1974, Mathews Mar Coorilos was appointed President. Along with him, Fr. K David Cor Episcopa was appointed Director General and Fr. T. G. Zachariah as Publication Officer. Following the death of K David Cor episcopa in 1974, Chirathalat C. V. George Cor Episcopa was posted as D. G.

It was at this time that moves were afoot to devise a common curriculum for all the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The moving spirit behind this novel idea was Paulose Mar Gregorios, the renowned theologian and philosopher. The common Curriculum prepared by a committee under the leadership of Mar Gregorios came to be implemented in all the Oriental Churches. Fr. T. J. Joshua was appointed as D. G., When C. V. George Cor Episcopa relinquished his post. Along with Fr. Joshua, Sri T. T. Chacko assumed responsibility as publication Officer. Sri Chacko passed away in 1997, and Fr. K. V Thomas got posted as Publication Officer. Sri C. U Matthew was appointed as Office Manager.

This period could as well be acclaimed as “The Golden Age” of OSSAE. It was during this period that a new curriculum, students’ Charity Offering, endowments, preparation and maintenance of correct data, a new column in the “Malankara Sabha” monthly as a channel of information to the Church at large, regular letters to vicars of parishes to keep them in touch with the Sunday school movement, the central office work starting with a common prayer every day etc. were introduced during this period.

In 2001, the representatives of the Sunday schools outside the state of Kerala, in India, came together at the St. Thomas Orthodox Seminary, Nagpur; and passed certain resolutions and made recommendations regarding the revamping the Sunday school activities in their region taking care of the linguistic, cultural and other social factors there. These recommendations were accepted by the OSSAE, and was later ratified and implemented by the Holy Episcopal Synod. Accordingly, Fr Dr. Reji Mathew, Principal of the Nagpur Seminary was appointed as the first Director of OSSAE-OKR. Mathews Mar Epiphanius served as President of OSSAE DURING 1991-2002; And Paulose Mar Milithios in the next five years. In 2007, the then

Metropolitan of the Madras Diocese, (now in Kochi Diocese) Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios was appointed President.

Fr. T. J Joshua retired from the position of DG in 2009; and Fr. Dr O. Thomas was appointed as Director General. It was decided in 2010 that the entire syllabi of OSSAE shall be revised, and a committee consisting of the President, D. G., Publication officer, and other experts in the field, with Prof. Dr. Sam V Daniel as its convenor. The committee has been fully into it, and new teaching materials are being made available.

The Sunday school is an indispensable part of the ministry of Christian education. The OSSAE, is conducting the ministry of training and educating children to grow as Godly citizens, thus implementing the testament of Jesus Christ. Let us pray that the lord of the Church shall bless this ministry and make it useful for our young people.

Chapter 20

Christian Continuing Education

The principle that education is a process that runs throughout life has been widely accepted. Sunday school children are to *grow*, firmly rooted on the firm religious and moral foundation which they gained through Sunday school education. For attaining this end, continuous religious education and moral training are a must. The various spiritual organizations in the Church help individuals to hold fast to the Orthodox faith, true worship, moral life, social service etc. OVBS, Orthodox Youth Movement, MGOCSM, Prayer Groups, Martha Mariam Samajam and the “Divya Bodhanam” project function in the Church with this end in view.

1. Orthodox vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School made its debut in India in the 1950s. It aimed at implanting Christian virtues in children during the summer holidays. Vacation Bible schools have functioned in different parishes from 1959 onwards. Usually this programme ran for ten days in which children spent time in storytelling, singing, games: at the same time learning Bible lessons, stories of saintly persons, Christian values and prayer life. In the beginning the books published from Bangalore by the VBS Ministries were being used. Among the leaders of this movement in the Orthodox Church were, Fr. K. O. Thomas, Fr. M. V. Paulose and Fr. J Varghese Kayamkulam. In 1977, it was decided by the Holy Synod to change the title of the programme as Orthodox Vacation Bible School, and make it a wing of the OSSAE. Fr. J Varghese Kayamkulam was appointed as its first Director, and Deacon Raju Varghese as the secretary. Soon a new curriculum was made for the OVBS and units were started in almost all parishes. Currently, Fr. K. V Alias serves as the Director and Dr. Iype Varghese as Secretary.

A special feature of this programme is that even those children who rarely come for Sunday School classes, do attend the OVBS activities! In this way, OVBS serves as a continuing education programme of the OSSAE. The OVBS classes are divided into six units. Every year, a general theme is decided for that particular

year's classes, and the lessons are prepared on its basis. Obviously it is a welcome feature that OVBS is happily welcomed by all children across the parishes.

2. Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement (MGOCSM)

The MGOCSM was started in 1908 in the name of St. Gregorios of Parumala. The origins of this movement could be traced back to the regular fellowship meetings of Orthodox students studying in various colleges in Madras city, in the early part of the 20th century.

Initially, the MGOCSM units functioned in educational institutions. This movement had the objective of prepare an environment for students (who have finished their Sunday school age) to lead a life rooted in Christian principles, and giving importance to *worship, study and service*. In this way it serves as a continuing religious education programme for students. It has encouraged and inspired students to come together once a week in colleges and get engaged in Bible study, prayer and service activities. It also helps in maintaining their relationship with the Church on a strong footing. A significant activity of the Movement is the four- days' Annual Conference held every year on different locations.

Earlier, the movement was confined to colleges; subsequently it was extended to schools as well. Further, several other branches like Medical Auxiliary, Technical Auxiliary have grown out of this. This Movement has a constitution of its own. During the time Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilos, its long serving present, Students' Centres were established at Trivandrum, Kottayam and Alwaye. These Centres have served as milestones in the growth of the MGOCSM. Geevarghese Mar Coorilos is currently the president of this Movement, and Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese serves as the General Secretary. Its head office is at the Kottayam Students' Centre. Student Chaplains have been posted in major cities in India. Though units were established in educational institutions earlier, now, due to the changes in the educational sphere, units are being organized in parishes.

3. Orthodox Christian Youth Movement (OCYM)

Orthodox youth associations used to function in several parishes from the second part of the 19th century. These fellowships were aimed at defending the Church against the heterodox onslaughts of the Protestant groups. There fellowship groups were organized systematically in 1933; and thus the "Syrian Yuvajana Sangham" (Youth association) was born with the objectives of worship, study and service. The first President was Puthenkavil Mar Philoxenos; and Fr. P. E Daniel

(later Daniel Mar Philoxenos) served as the secretary. The name *Orthodox Christian Youth Movement* was accepted at the Annual Conference at Puthuppalli in 1958. A monthly titled *Orthodox Youth* was being published by this organization. Fr. K. V. Samuel served as its editor for long. In our times the publication has been rechristened as *Orthodox Yuvajanam*.

OCYM has the pronounced ministry of sustaining the youth of the Church who have passed the Sunday school studies, in the worship and sacramental life of the Church, and make their moral and religious moorings strong. Through Bible study programmes, arts and sports competitions, service activities and Annual Conferences, the Movement is trying to channelize youth energy and enthusiasm for the good of the Church and society; and their latent talents are brought out and encouraged. Yahanon Mar Polycarpos currently serves as its president, and Fr. Jessen, as secretary.

4. Prayer Groups

The prayer fellowships, also known as “Vayana Yagangal” (Bible Reading Fellowships) and “Family Units” do not have a long history in the Malankara Church. However, prayer fellowships presided over by priests, have been there in different places. This movement aims at encouraging Bible study, active participation in the life of the Church, helping the poor and Christian fellowship. This form of “continuing education” also emphasises Christian family life and its values, understanding the eternal truths in the Bible and the issue of confronting social problems affecting individuals and families.

The participants in this family prayer fellowship are mostly adults.

5. Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam (Women’s Fellowship/St. Mary’s Guild)

The pronounced mottos of the M.M. Samajam are: pray, work and shine. The Samajam moves on with programmes like Bible study; sharing in the life of the Church; taking care of the poor, the sick and the suffering and Christian fellowship. Since this organization is exclusively for women, it helps them to organize appropriate programmes aimed at their spiritual sustenance and growth. Basically, the Samajam is a centre for study and spiritual instruction. The 80th anniversary of this Movement was celebrated in 2012.

In the parishes, after the Holy Qurbana, women come together for study, and for analyzing issues of Christian family life, the sacraments, Church history etc. The Samajam serves an important link between the women folk in the Church,

(who form more than half of the Church population), with the sacramental life in the Church. Women are encouraged to engage in religious studies, and annual exams are conducted for them. Recently a new project of the Samajam has been launched: ensuring the cooperation of ladies, a few “cottage industries” have been started for the benefit of the samajam; and at the same time training them in cooperative endeavours, and lessons in self help projects. Every year the annual meet of the Samajam members is conducted in an elaborate way.

In this context, the Samajam activities could be reckoned as a continuing education programme.

6. Divya Bodhanam (Sacred teaching)

This programme has been devised as a continuing education programme for adults. It is based on the conviction that basic theological and biblical studies are necessary, not just for the clergy only, but for all lay people – men and women, at least in a limited way. An increased awareness of this conviction gave birth to this programme in the closing decades of the 20th century. Dr Paulose Mar Gregorios, who was the renowned principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, gave a lot of encouragement to this endeavour; and organized the seminary staff to prepare the learning materials for this. Like in other courses of study, Divya Bodhanam programme also conducts Certificate courses, Diploma courses and Degree courses as part of this project.

It could be said without any doubt that this programme has enabled a large population in the Church to get basic understanding in theology.

Unit 6

Environmental Spirituality

The very existence of life is being threatened today because of the unlimited and thoughtless exploitation of nature. Man alone is responsible for this environmental crisis. All resources and facilities needed for man's survival is provided abundantly in nature by God who created it. But man's greed has reached such levels that his profit motives and selfishness endanger the balance of nature with the result that other beings too find it difficult to lead a peaceful life. Such exploitation is a clear violation of the will of God who created the universe and everything in it. God wants His creations to protect this universe and take care of it so that everybody shall enjoy its goodness and live in a spirit of co existence. But we find today that this Godly arrangement is spoilt by man by his extreme selfishness. This exactly is the real threat faced by this planet earth.

The four lessons in this unit discuss those man made issues resulting in ecological calamity, focusing on the various reasons behind them and solutions thereof. The first lesson explains what is meant by eco – spirituality and its relevance and also the need of studying the environment and environmental issues. Also, the Christian approach towards environmental issues is briefly dealt with. The varying ideas like biblical basis of eco – spirituality, Church Fathers' teachings about stewardship in our universe, Eastern eco – spirituality, completeness of creation, and its inter dependence are explained in the second lesson. The third lesson takes care of the universality of salvation and Holy Spirit induced human interference. Finally, the fourth lesson deals with the importance of sustained development, various means to achieve sustained development and retaining sustained development thorough spirituality.

In short, this unit deals with the idea of environmental spirituality with special thrust on its social and spiritual dimensions.

Chapter 21

Eco – Spirituality: Meaning and Significance

Structure of Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Ecology
3. Environmental Crisis
4. A Christian Approach to Environmental Issues
5. Consolidation
6. Activities

Introduction

This universe and everything in it are created by God. The existence of all living beings is based on mutual dependence. But man being selfish exploits and destroys nature and other living beings in order to enhance his comfort level. People now realize that developmental action plans with emphasis on techno – economic growth endangers the very existence of human beings. In this context, various governments and social organizations are trying to evaluate ecological problems which threaten the healthy existence of human beings and other living organisms. These days, discussions and studies are going on across the world to understand how human interference affects the nature and the environment and also how such imbalances could be removed. The world is now getting convinced that this issue can hardly be solved by sciences or by governmental initiatives alone. Just like any other social issue, creation of spiritual as well as social awareness coupled with initiation of certain concrete steps towards containing the problem are absolutely necessary to address ecological problems. In this chapter, we are going to discuss ecological issues in the context of theological perspectives of Orthodox Churches.

Ecology

Have you heard about environmental studies or environmental education? The branch of science studying the relationship between humans and nature is called

ecology or study of environment. By the term 'environment', we mean all the animate and inanimate organisms which constitute life system and all such factors influencing their existence as well as their mutual relationship. Human interference in environmental issues is always very critical in its nature. Once we ignore nature and law of nature that sustain it, the existence of all living organisms including human beings will be in danger. It shall be remembered that sustenance of life is based on a coordinated functioning of a complicated bio system. Any disturbance to a bio process will affect all those that are part of that bio chain. For example, consider a situation where waste materials are dumped in large quantities into a beautiful pond of water lilies. Now, to dissolve these wastes, more oxygen is needed by the molecules. But, the presence of waste materials in large quantity will create shortage of oxygen within the pond, and slowly, the level of oxygen will be drastically reduced and all those molecules will perish. The bio structure of the pond will be totally destroyed. The wastes will remain there and the pond itself will disappear within a short time. Thus, the behavior of one bio factor in an environmental chain will affect the entire bio factors of that chain. In fact, the changes which may occur in an environment may not be at the originating point of the damage. The impact can be at a far off location. Climatic variations and global warming are effects of such strokes to environment.

Environmental Crisis

In the modern world, seasonal variations are not truly visible and identifiable. For instance, the rainy season may be overtaken by summer, thus dislocating the order of seasons. Accumulated waste polluted emissions from vehicles as well as the smoke and carbon coming from the burning of fuels and the waste products from industrial houses all put together make our atmosphere totally polluted and dirty. And this is the situation that we experience on earth, our dwelling place, where life has to be sustained in a God given environment. Maintaining a healthy environment is based on the mutual relationship among the different living organisms. But man's social and economic developmental activities lead to environmental imbalances. Environmental balancing goes off the track because of the defective planning of industrialization and the consequent defilement of environment. Development for the sake of development is becoming awfully costly when we consider the damages inflicted on environment. This indirectly causes huge expenditure to be incurred in the public health sector to take care of the health conditions of human beings and other living beings. The most common environmental problems are ozone depletion, global warming, acid rain, depletion of ground water, deforestation, disappearance of certain species of living organisms

and such other complex issues. These environmental issues may ultimately lead to the annihilation of life from earth. In short, modern science has identified that the root cause of environmental problems are the unjustified exploitation of nature. In this context, it is highly relevant to explore how religion and morality can help to orient humans not to destroy nature, but use and nourish it.

A Christian Approach to Environmental Issues

God has created man as the crown of all creations. ‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it’. (Genesis 2:15) Thus, it is man’s duty to guard earth and nature and work for his sustenance. God gave authority to man ‘to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’. (Genesis 1:28) Different types of vegetation and fruit bearing plants were provided for man as food. The violation of this basic command has given rise to environmental issues across the earth and also its atmosphere. In this backdrop, we can understand that there is a moral and spiritual dimension to the issue of ecology.

God created man in His own image and likeness. Man has to love and look after other beings as God would. The depletion of natural resources, exploitation of nature, distribution of vegetation, irregularity of ‘seasons’ are all caused by the greed of humans, forgetting the God given responsibility to protect the earth. Thus it assumes the dimensions of a moral problem, for the moral degradation has resulted in the undue exploitation of nature. The Holy Bible and teachings of Church Fathers provide spiritual insights of Eastern Churches on the importance of man and creation. Let us discuss them in the following lessons.

Consolidation

By now, it is expected that you would have gained some insights into the idea of eco – spirituality and its significance. We have briefly discussed what should be our approach to the environment and the existential threat faced by our environment these days and the root causes of the problem. In an eco friendly spirituality, many of these problems could be effectively tackled.

Activities

1. Mention the damages caused to nature due to man’s greed senseless actions?
2. Ascertain the environmental problems in and around your place and suggest solutions

3. Conduct a discussion in your class on the topic 'Christian Approach to Environmental Problems'. Work out a report based on this discussion and present it in the class.
4. What is the real meaning of the word, 'rule'?
5. Observe World Environment Day (June 5). Organize different orientation programs in Sunday School.
6. Make your Sunday School premises clean and beautiful with plants and trees.

Chapter 22

Biblical Basis of Eco – Spirituality

Structure of Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Biblical Basis of ‘Eco – Spirituality’
3. Taking Care of The Universe – teachings of Church Fathers
4. Eco – Spirituality: an Eastern Orthodox point of view
5. ‘Fullness of Creation’
6. Consolidation
7. Activities

Introduction

We have learnt the meaning and importance of ‘eco – spirituality’ in the previous lesson. We have also tried to understand the Christian approach to environmental issues. Now, in this lesson, the Biblical basis of eco – spirituality is being explored. Further, how we are expected to take care of this universe is also discussed based on the teachings of Church Fathers.

Biblical Basis of ‘Eco – Spirituality’

The Holy Bible transmits a message to us to take care and protect all the creations. However, the relation of man towards nature is not illustrated fully in the Bible, since the Bible is not a social science text book! But, the Bible provides a basis for our understanding on environment which is useful in trying to solve our basic environmental problems. The universe and its origin as recorded in chapters 1 and 2 of the Book of Genesis provides the basic texts of Christian eco – spirituality. Particularly, Genesis 1:1-11 contain specific illustrations about the universe and the place of man within that. (The passage is read out from Bible and students give

/ seek explanations) Here, we see that God is the origin of all creation and that has found every creation GOOD. Also, we read that Adam was created out of the soil from earth. (Genesis 2:7) The word Adam means, 'taken from earth'. Here is a pointer to the relation between humans and nature.

How can the relation between man and the earth be explained?

The great flood during the time of Noah and the entry of all types of living beings into the Ark and finally the sign of rainbow are all indications that God takes care of not only man, but also all creations. (Genesis chapters 7, 8, 9) The bow shaped rainbow and the curvature of the door of Holy Madbaha indicate God's grace and mercy. (Note that this is not Gothic style) The blessing from God, 'be fruitful and increase in number' is for the entire living beings. (Genesis 1:22; 8:17) In short, the story of creation summarizes the following: all sorts of life originate from God; all creations are great; man has been created by God in connection with the earth; God cares for all His creations. This means that men should respect and value the earth and all forms of life on it.

However, Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 give rise to certain misconceptions. The commands of God 'subdue it' (1:28) and '...to work it and take care of it' (2:15) have been misinterpreted as a right to rule and exploit all creations and utilize universe for the satisfaction selfish motives thereby even destroying it beyond repair. Particularly, this sort of misinterpretations are practiced in western thinking that for the sole comfort of human beings, all organisms of nature can be utilized without any discretion and to any limit as we read from the writings of experts. In fact, these Biblical verses are reminding man his responsibility and call to sustain and protect earth and all beings those inhabit earth. The word rule in Genesis 1: 28 indicative of a governance filled with mercy and human concern. This is to be accepted as a responsibility that brings up abundance and peace, and not as one as a destroyer exploiting nature for selfish gains.

Similarly, Leviticus chapter 25 is a fine example of providential care for nature and man's participation in such care. Psalms 8, 104, 148 etc illustrate the goodness of creation and the relation between man and nature. The entire creation witness God's greatness. There are certain books in Holy Bible where nature is pictured as a medium of God's revelation to man. For example, in the Book of Job, God speaks from a natural medium like a storm. (Job 38 and 39) Thus, man has to learn a lot from nature and as such, man is duty bound to respect and protect them. Again, due to man's denial of God's command, the whole creation was subjected to

deterioration and in the Old Testament books, there are thoughts of salvation of the entire creation. (Mica 4, Ezekiel 47, Isaiah 2, 11, 35)

In the New Testament, it can be seen that Christ's salvation is not for human beings alone, but for realigning the whole creation. (Romans 8:18 – 25, Colossians 1:15 – 23, 1 Corinthians 15: 20 – 28, 2 Corinthians 5:17) In Romans 8: 18 – 25, St Paul teaches that the liberation of man and the whole creation is made possible by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1:15 - 23, we find Christ reconciling all creation with God. In short, the above verses from New Testament reveal God's providential care is available for the whole creation. This also explains God's plan for the universe He created: the relationship between God and His creations as well as the mutual relationship between different forms of creation among themselves. The Bible witnesses that with the Fall of man, this mutuality broke down, but still, God's care follows all creations.

Taking Care of Universe – Teachings of Church Fathers

St. Basilios (Basil), the Great, St. Gregoriose of Nyssa, St. Gregoriose of Nazianzen, St. John Chrysostam, Maximus the Confessor were some of those fathers who defined creation and its greatness. These fathers treat the universe and the existence of world as explained in the Bible. Mostly, they base their teachings on St John 1: 1 – 18, Colossians 1: 15 – 20 and Hebrews 11:3. While discussing the order of creation, they took care to underline Holy Trinity as the creator. Accordingly, Basilios, the Great teaches that the whole creation is in their journey to wholeness. In that sense, the deterioration we see in nature cannot be accepted as a natural transformation in this journey.

Church Fathers used to take care to present God as Omnipresent and Omnipotent. Further, the process of salvation is seen as an activity of the Creator based on His love. Moreover, in the backdrop of Greek philosophy about creation of world, the interpretations were based on the medium Logos for illustrating universal salvation. Thus, Christ's sacrifice on the cross was related to the liberation of the whole creation. But the western church stressed on individual salvation, whereas St. Athanasius and other Eastern Fathers saw salvation far beyond individual needs, but involving the emancipation of the entire creation in its totality. St. Gregoriose of Nazianzen presented Christ beyond all doubts as one who is the Redeemer of the whole universe and the leader of the whole world. He taught Christ's birth as a human being related to the entire universe. According to Gregoriose of Nyssa, creation is through the Logos and salvation is related to the Logos. Church

Fathers, in general, present the action of Holy Spirit at creation and the power of God which moves forward consolidating the entire creation.

‘Eco – Spirituality’; An Eastern Orthodox Point of View

The teachings of Orthodox Church about environment are in the context of spirituality and theology. We react to environmental issues as powers that disturb the ‘wholeness’ of creation. The Orthodox shall confront with such issues understanding the impact of industrialization causing damages to creation. We are going to discuss below, three important elements of eastern eco – spirituality regarding the uniqueness of all creation of God.

- ✦ Creation centered Eastern theological outlook
- ✦ Universal Redemption by Christ
- ✦ Holy Spirit driven interference of man

The basis of Orthodox environmental understanding in its essence is based on the Biblical teachings about creation and interpretations given by the Church Fathers and also the significant elements in Orthodox Church worship.

Fullness of Creation

The luxury and comfort of human beings are valued more in a human centered world order. There is a philosophy that the whole created universe is meant for the consumption and exploitation of man for his pleasure and no other creature possesses and reflects the Glory of God. But according to Eastern Fathers, man is just one of those creations of God among many. All the objects in this universe are the symbols of God’s will, care and purity of intention. Man has been created in God’s own image and likeness because He wants man to realize his God-given vocation to reveal the purpose behind the creation of man. But the selfish man takes a stand that he has been placed as the crown of all creations so that he can exploit all other creations and use them for his selfish motives. But God has placed man as a mediator, in a priestly position and as a cosmic divinizer among all other creations. The main responsibility of man is to stand as an icon of self sacrifice and goodness just as much as Jesus Christ is. To make all creations grow to their fullness, a constructive interaction from man’s part is essential. In short, the dualism that separates creations into human and nonhuman is alien to the Eastern thought process. Here, creation is a medium of divine Revelation. Care and love are associated with the presence of God. Thus man is to reflect the faithfulness, kindness, justice and redemptive love

of God. For example, those truths of God and his nature which we find difficult to comprehend are revealed through his handiwork i.e. creation. The vastness and depth of the sky and the physiology and anatomy of man and other living organisms are all illustrations revealing the inimitability and nature of God who created them. Thus God reveals Himself through His Creation. In that sense, the order of this world itself is understood by Eastern spirituality as a sacramental principle. This is nothing but divine in what we see around us as good or transforming. Everything around us is understood as LOGOS or the word of God and not as simple factors those do not have any individuality or freedom or power of discrimination. As such, though God alone is Holy, the universe too has to be kept holy because God dwells in it. Since, just like man, non human universe too has been given personality and individuality and freedom by God. The supreme dignity given to them by God is revealed likewise. Universe is not a consumer product for man to exploit. Man should approach the universe with respect. If this universe is deemed a as sacrament, then man is the priest between God and universe and this is the way eastern ecological knowledge understands environment and man.

Consolidation

In this lesson, we learnt in detail the biblical basis of eco – spirituality, what have been taught by Church Fathers as to how man has to look after universe, the place of environment in eastern spirituality and what is meant by fullness of creation. These learning points can be summed up as under:

- ✦ Since God alone is Holy, the universe where God dwells too shall be kept holy and in order.
- ✦ Universe is not a consumer object for man to exploit.
- ✦ God has chosen man as a priest for all living organisms in the role of an interceder.
- ✦ To grow all creations to their fullness, the care and help of man is essential.
- ✦ We come to know about the love and inimitability of God, the protector of all creations, through the fascinating beauty of creations.

Activities

1. Conduct a debate in your class on the topic, 'Biblical Basis of Eco – Spirituality'
2. Make a study on the topic, 'Care for the Universe in the Teachings of the Eastern Church Fathers' and submit a report.

3. Write an essay on, 'Fullness of Creation'.
4. Prepare a list of those factors essential for the normal survival of living organisms.
5. Explain your stand on the fact that one segment of people has occupied and is ruling over the resources which God has created for all living beings. This is highly immoral and leads to a large segment of human beings as well as other living organisms being left in abject poverty.

Chapter 23

Universality of Salvation in Jesus Christ

Structure of Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Universality of Salvation in Jesus Christ
3. Holy Spirit-driven Intervention of Man
4. Consolidation
5. Activities

Introduction

God descended to earth as man not for man alone, but for the whole universe. All those “signs” shown by Jesus Christ were related to nature. Our Lord never suggested anything out of nature. God becoming man and the Redemptive activities were aimed at the “reinstatement” of everything to its proper stature. This lesson discusses these aspects in detail based on biblical teachings.

Universality of Salvation in Jesus Christ

As seen by Eastern Churches, Jesus Christ came down to earth as man and died on the cross, to overcome corruption leading to death, and the divinely planned Redemption is for the entire universe. In modern liberation thoughts, in order to eradicate poverty of man and to ensure equality for all, scientific and technological means are used / misused to exploit the universe and natural resources unscrupulously. In such modern development oriented projects, there is no move to sustain or to preserve this beautiful universe created by God. But in the context of Salvation by Jesus Christ, the whole purpose is to reconcile the entire creation to God. According to this view, the universe is not exploited for man’s selfish motives. God becoming man and identifying with the universe in everything except sin in Jesus Christ was intended to redeem and glorify the whole creation.

During the days Jesus Christ lived as a human being on earth, he transformed water into wine and calmed the rough sea, thereby making nature accept that he was the master of all creation. Even the life of a small sparrow was valuable to Him. He applied mud with saliva in the eyes of the blind man and gave him eyesight. These signs illustrate that being God, Jesus Christ came down to the corrupted creation, but with deep and matchless love and care. Likewise, God expects a sincere approach from man towards God and all creations. St Paul looks forward to the Redemption as a reality as awaited by the entire creation (Romans 8: 18 – 25). This is made possible by getting unified with the Redeemer Jesus Christ. Man's evil led to the corruption of creation, but by identifying with Jesus Christ makes it possible for everything to be reinstated to His original goodness. That is to say, to Redeem the universe destroyed by man's sin and exploitation is the duty of those who are partners in the Salvation of Christ. It is a common characteristic of all living beings that death is a resultant effect of sin and thus we cannot leave anything to be annihilated. The creator God has come to the created earth to provide life in abundance and not death. The very purpose of our call is to preach the gospel that provides this abundant life to the entire creation. There, we can see the universality of salvation through Jesus Christ getting revealed. Here, the ways and means of making and preserving peace and restoration are to be practiced by human beings who share in the New Life of Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit-Driven Intervention of Man

Man is created in the image and likeness of God and this status is not to be spoiled. The source of man's intelligence or wisdom is God and therefore, exactly in the very same manner as God intervened in the universe, man has a call to interfere for the sustenance and redemption of the universe as well as for mending the damages and defects suffered by the creatures. But that has to be with total humility and respect to co creations. Man has to constructively interfere in all environmental issues faced by this world with that love revealed in Holy Trinity. Here are a few guidelines:

- ✦ Environmental concerns as a spiritual area: Orthodox Churches do not view environmental issues merely as moral or social problems. A man-centered world order considers environmental issues as moral and social problems, but in Eastern spirituality, such issues are certainly problems of

a spiritual nature. Man has been interfering with his selfish agenda in God's world and this is a rebellion against the Will of God as per the teachings of Orthodox Churches.

- ✦ Wholesome Revelation that is unfolded through worship: The Eastern worship emphasizes a wholesome view on environment and man's position in nature. During the Holy Qurbana, we use objects from the earth such as bread and wine into which Lord Jesus has passed on His life. He has entered the objects of this universe and these objects stand glorified. The preparatory service for Holy Qurbana and associated prayers convince a believer of the universality of Christ's salvation and he has been made to partake in such experience. Moreover, important feasts like Pentecost, Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Epiphany (Danaha) are all associated with the use of objects from this nature and also prayers for their sustenance. In all these, we can discern that man and nature are God's creation and the mystery of God coming down as man is for the redemption of man and nature.
- ✦ An environment-friendly pilgrimage: Study tours could be arranged to pilgrim centers, churches and monasteries which are close to nature. Such pilgrimage centers should be plastic free and clean, and arrangements shall be made to understand and experience peaceful co existence of all living organisms.
- ✦ Natural and simple life: We need to learn to avoid artificial products those vitiate nature and avoid consumerist motives. We shall maintain a friendly and positive interest in all objects and adopt simplicity in life by avoiding over eating and luxurious life styles. Disfigurement and destruction of nature has to be avoided. Hard work and nature-friendly activities could be part of our daily routine. It is high time to realize the dangers caused by carbon emission from vehicles and the misuse and overuse of natural energy sources.

Consolidation

In this age of globalization, the meaning of 'love thy neighbor as you love yourself' is not to be understood merely as an instruction to love human beings. The destruction of nature, which is needed for the survival of life itself, will annihilate everything. Thus, 'love thy neighbor' also means to be friendly to the environment as well.

Activities

- ✦ Suggest a few ways and means where man can interfere to solve environmental problems.
- ✦ How can we connect the various elements of Holy Qurbana with nature?
- ✦ Prepare an essay on the topic, 'Universality of Salvation in Jesus Christ'
- ✦ Prepare a list of those objects from nature we use in the celebration of feasts of our Church.

Chapter 24

Sustainable Development Through Spirituality

Structure of Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Sustainable Development - Origin and meaning
3. Sustainable Development - Importance
4. Sustainable Development - Methods
5. Global Development and Future of Sustainable Development
6. Sustainable Development - Through Spirituality
7. Consolidation
8. Activities
9. Reference Books

Introduction

Development means progress, betterment, growth etc. Have you ever come across the term 'sustainable development'? It indicates development related to environment. The problems faced by the environment these days are global in nature and not confined to a particular country or a place. Sustainable development tackles environmental issues along with developmental activities. What do we mean by 'sustainable development'? In this lesson, we shall discuss its origin, meaning, range, importance and also how spirituality becomes an inalienable factor in it.

Sustainable Development - Origin and meaning

Among all problems we confront now, environment-related issues are most crucial. Any developmental activity neglecting environmental balance is sure to fail. Balance of nature is totally disturbed by the misuse and destruction of environmental resources for the sake of man's selfish gains and greed, paying no attention at all to the limitations of nature. This is the root cause of most of the environmental problems we face today.

It was in the 1970s that awareness about environmental issues became visible at the global level. At Stockholm in Sweden, a conference on Human Environment was held by the United Nations Organization in 1972. It was in this conference that the problems faced by environment caught world attention for the first time. This Stockholm conference helped to see the world as one unit and the view of “One World” came into being. Through its final report, this conference told the world that environmental problems were affecting people globally and therefore all nations should work hand in hand to tackle them. This conference can be considered as a first step forward to sustainable development.

The idea of sustainable development was for the very first time introduced in 1981. World organizations like International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), World Wild Life Fund (WWF) and United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) jointly worked out an authentic document namely, ‘World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development’ where the idea of sustainable development was presented to the world with total clarity.

A world commission was appointed by UNO in 1983 to study those issues affecting environment. This commission is known as World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). In 1987, this commission published a report namely ‘Our Common Future’. This report contains exhaustive details regarding those factors affecting environment adversely, the not so healthy status of environment and those issues relating to development. This report further provides a clear definition to sustainable development. Not only that the report introduces a new dimension to the term development but also suggests an international strategy to confront those issues which have come up as part and parcel of globalization and modernization.

The definition provided in this report for sustainable development is as given below:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED: Our Common Future, 1987)

Sustainable Development: Importance

Let us see two important aspects pinpointed in the above definition.

- (a) The first is related to economic development. Economic development is not merely for the eradication of poverty or solving unemployment. Provisions of better living facilities and assistance to satisfy man’s wants

and needs are also social issues coming under the banner of development. Each individual, while working towards fulfilling his wants and needs, shall also give a helping hand to others for taking care of their wants and needs too.

- (b) The second is related to availability of natural resources. The truth is that available natural resources are not sufficient to satisfy the needs of the present and future generations. When we overuse the resources from nature, they are not recycled in the same proportion as we spend them. Thus the availability of resources does not get replenished. This changes the balance and normal pattern of nature. Let us find out a few examples for this phenomenon.

This situation is the result of man's selfish desires and greed for his satisfaction for which he has been exploiting nature and natural resources. Of late, these tendencies are very much on the increase. The advancement of science and technology has made available more sophisticated equipments and machines which are found quite handy for extracting the maximum from nature. We used to depend on wells for drinking water. But now, whenever there is shortage in water, we resort to digging tube wells and consequently, the ground water in that vicinity gets drawn towards the tube well. Thus, while one family earns enough and more water through a tube well, the neighboring families depending on traditional wells face water shortage. Likewise, people demolish hills and fill up paddy fields. This activity simply disturbs the balance of nature dangerously and results in variations in climatic conditions. This can cause landslides, flood, shortage of rain and other man made calamities. Again, rock quarrying and sand mining from rivers have added to this problem. This causes depletion of ground water levels and also results in draughts. Water resources in nearby areas get dried up. Large scale deforestation gives rise to depletion of oxygen content in the atmosphere. This too contributes towards draught. Atmospheric temperature keeps on rising day by day.

It is in such a situation, the importance of sustainable development becomes crucial. In the name of development, we are exploiting God given natural resources to its maximum. Instead, we must use such resources in a planned way so that they would be available for the coming generations too. For example, if we cut down a tree, a new one must be planted immediately in its place. This system is being implemented effectively in some countries.

Sustainable Development - Methods

A joint effort by people, government, voluntary organizations, and social activists shall make sustainable development possible. Each one shall have to play his role

effectively and work hard as individuals and as a community. Let us see some methods through which we can try to achieve sustainable development.

- ✦ A system shall be put in place to ensure that the resources in an area are used with self control and efficiency so as to attain self sufficiency.
- ✦ To take decisions on the above and to enforce developmental activities, people participation has to be ensured.
- ✦ At any cost, developmental activities those are damaging to nature shall be avoided.
- ✦ Develop a production mechanism without disturbing the balance of environment. The waste produced shall be processed to make new products.
- ✦ Environmental issues shall be included in the school curriculum.
- ✦ Organize orientation classes and seminars on environmental issues. Observe June 5 as World Environment Day
- ✦ Encourage research studies to identify eco – friendly activities.
- ✦ Ensure effective control on activities and consumption styles which may help to solve environment issues.

For survival of life in this universe, it is necessary that we develop a lifestyle that is environment friendly. Joint effort from people of all walks of life is absolutely essential for realizing this.

Global Development and Future of Sustainable Development

Globalization has raised strong challenges in the way of sustainable development. Globalization and liberalization have enhanced living comforts of human race and international trade has been made simple. But contemporary calamities reveal the blocks before sustainable development. Global warming and lack of rain lead to shortage of drinking water. Scientific and technological developments helped man to exploit natural resources to a very large scale. On the face of it, it may be found useful, but in the long run, they are causing damages to humanity. As such, our developmental activities shall in no way be a threat to the natural environment as well as to the coming generations.

The change in modern man's consumerist culture has disturbed the equilibrium of nature. The invention of polymer products is a revolutionary change in this field. The objects those were made using wood or bamboo are now made from plastic. Maybe they are quite cheap now and thus it looks really attractive. These are virtually 'use and throw' type objects. For example, ball pens, plastic objects etc. The chemical C F C is used to make thin plastic covers and this if gets into the atmosphere, can

turn out to work as catalyst to destroy the ozone layer. Once ozone layers are damaged by cracks, highly dangerous ultra violet rays of light from sun will directly fall on earth and this can cause color blindness, skin cancer, sun burn and many other deceases. Ozone layer protects earth from ultra violet rays spread like an open umbrella. Our present day consumer products such as refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers are all emitting gases which damage the ozone layer. The carbon emitted by motor vehicles adds up to this. Deforestation reduces atmospheric oxygen. Plastic products when burnt produce dioxin which is a poisonous vapor and will merge into atmosphere. This causes diseases affecting lungs.

All those discussed above are factors disturbing the future of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development - Through Spirituality

Christian theology teaches that along with man's fall, nature too got damaged. According to St Paul, man and all other creations are looking forward to Redemption (Romans 8:22) Man is empowered only to protect and decently handle the creations. It is pertinent to note that apart from man, no other living being destroys their dwelling place, the nature. In the Book of Genesis, along with the narration of the events of creation, we read God judging man who has acted against His directions, "... cursed is the ground because of you..." (Genesis 3:17). This indicates that man is responsible protecting and sustaining earth. We, the followers of Jesus Christ who has taught us 'Love thy neighbor", shall try our best to achieve sustainable development. Some of the action points which we can carry out are given below:

- ✦ Use water with control
- ✦ Make rain pits and block flow of rain water
- ✦ Prevent soil erosion; plant bushes on the ridges of paddy fields.
- ✦ Do not keep earth barren, but plough the soil and allow water to settle down to underground.
- ✦ In your courtyards, do some farming work; make a vegetable garden
- ✦ Plant sapling of trees and look after them
- ✦ Protect ponds and other water sources
- ✦ Do not dig bore wells; discourage it
- ✦ Do not fill up paddy fields
- ✦ Protect rivers and streams
- ✦ Discourage sand mining from rivers beyond limits

- ✦ Keep your house and premises neat and clean
- ✦ Reduce the use of plastic; whatever plastics are used , do not burn them after use
- ✦ Do not waste electricity; switch off fan and lights when not needed
- ✦ Reduce pollution by emission from moving vehicles.

Consolidation

There are lots of things we could do carefully as suggested above. We must think whether we need development at the cost of a dying nature. Development, endangering nature is not at all advisable. But, we welcome any development that is not causing damage to nature. That is what is meant by sustainable development. In this endeavor, spirituality is a very good help to attain sustainable development.

Activities

- (a) Prepare an essay on the subject ‘Sustainable Development – Meaning and Depth’
- (b) Suggest a few methods to achieve sustainable development
- (c) Organize a discussion in your class on the topic, ‘Sustainable Development through Spirituality’
- (d) As students, what can you do to attain sustainable development? Give some working suggestions.
- (e) “The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom” (Isaiah 35:1). What is the message you get from this?
- (f) Find out Biblical references to environment protection and explain them.

Reference Books

- (a) Agarwal, Anil (1992). What is Sustainable Development?
- (b) Fisher, W F (ed.) (1997) Towards Sustainable Development
- (c) Nayar, K R (1994) Politics of Sustainable Development
- (d) Redclift, M and Woodgate G (eds.) (1997) The International Hand Book of Environmental Sociology
- (e) IGNOU (2005) Sociology of Development. M S O Study material.

Unit 7

Globalisation

Globalisation is something that is very often discussed in our socio political circles. It is not so easy to define globalisation precisely. Some view globalisation as a welcome phenomenon by which lots of opportunities are created through the inflow of human resources, capital, knowhow etc while others consider this as the encroachment of a system that handles wealth in an arbitrary manner.

Chapter 25

Faces of Globalisation

To explain it simply, globalisation is the mutual relation between economical, political, cultural and social factors transcending the limits of nationality and culture. Globalisation has seven faces according to Petrella (1996): (1) Wealth and capital (2) market and strategies for competition (3) the steadily declining control of local governments (4) life style and culture (5) political alignments influenced by certain vested powers (6) similarity in the mode of thinking as one world, ideologically and intellectually and (7) technology. These are not seen in their fullness anywhere in the world. Yet, it is true that specific changes are coming up in many segments.

Capitalism – marketisation – globalisation

Some people think that globalisation is the internationalization of capitalism, because the driving force behind globalisation is Trans National Corporations (T N C). Their activities are spread across several countries. For example, the various stages involved in the process of manufacture of automobiles such as design, resource mobilization, production, market, sales etc are not confined to one country alone.

Although dissemination of knowhow to every nook and corner of the world, in order to accelerate development was targeted through globalisation, what happened was marketisation based on economical and political permutations and combinations.

As part of globalisation, each country opens up their market to other countries. Here, developed countries sell their products to underdeveloped and undeveloped countries. Developed countries have in their custody the modern technical knowhow and capital resources, using which they market their products at cheap rates. Developing countries find it extremely difficult to sustain their products under such a marketing scenario. In effect, the products of developing countries get pushed out of market. Ultimately, developed countries will dominate the market. It is the multinational countries who take globalisation forward. While many countries rely on resources globally, T N Cs can choose those countries which are more profitable

and possessing better infrastructural facilities. Here, globalisation itself has its foot on a strong economy.

Fruits of globalisation

Communication facilities have expanded and improved a lot as a result of the liberalization policy being implemented by the government. Such enhanced communication facilities have helped globalisation to pick up. Thus, time and distance are considerably reduced and the world itself has got transformed as a global village. This revolution in communication has changed not only the economic system but also the cultural as well as social relations. For example, these days, ordinary people, migrant workers or even refugees can be in touch with their friends and relatives in other states or countries. As such, the definition of community stands modified with the word 'local' having not much significance at the moment. The reasons for changes and events at local level are possibly related to incidents taking place elsewhere in the world.

Another segment of globalisation is cultural globalisation. The concept of planetary citizenship is steadily growing up where diversities such as nationality, caste, religion, gender and the like are becoming increasingly insignificant. But whether we have developed a global culture is an open question. Anyway, it is true that every national culture has been suffering from value erosion consequent to the excessive influence of other cultures. Media controlled by foreign monopolies, the movie world, television, music and several others influence these changes. To confront this cultural onslaught, many movements are picking up at grass root level. It can be seen that some of the religious extremist movements have come up because of these developments.

It must also be understood, in the backdrop of political level globalisation, that many of the economic, social and environmental issues are to be considered at international forums, and solutions arrived at.

In a globalized atmosphere, production, marketing and exchange take place without political interference. By corporate internationalization, business, foreign investments, sub contracts, licensing, joint contracts, agreements are all possible at the global level.

Today, World Bank and International Monetary Fund are in a position to deal with local governments and can implement their policies by subjecting them to economic discipline. Even United Nations Organization has lost its shine and lost prime power before these bodies. The resultant effect of such developments are

reduction of subsidies in the agricultural sector, modification of tax structure, reducing the level of dominance of public sector and moving towards privatization, concessions in licensing policy, direct foreign investment in telecommunication and several other changes.

Globalisation, is it an evil?

A simple answer to this question is rather difficult. G D P has increased, number of well - to - do people has increased, migration from villages to urban centers has increased, rural areas have been undergoing a process of urbanization and exports have shot up.

At the same time, a tendency to slow down or even to create road blocks for development activities of developing nations is clearly visible from the approaches of developed nations as well as from international bodies like World Bank and IMF. The GATT was confined to very few countries during early 1947, and now more than half of the world countries are forced to be part of GATT. Moreover, flow of economic assistance from developed countries to undeveloped countries has depleted substantially. Further, there is a tendency among developed countries to exploit the natural resources and traditional knowhow of developing countries. Developing countries are holding the patent rights of many traditional value added products of other nations. Basmati rice, Basmati rice etc from India are examples for this. Even, availability of seeds in the agriculture sector may be influenced adversely by globalisation.

Globalisation has been considered as the prime reason for most of the changes we see in the present day society. Left and right political segments are having different approaches to globalisation. The influence of globalisation is quite apparent in unemployment, poverty, decrease in rural population, and a consequent increase in urban population, increased drug abuse, changed characteristics of family life, declining health conditions, increasing crime rates, sex trafficking, changed life style etc.

Many criminal activities are also getting 'globalised' through this phenomenon. These include sale of drugs, sale of weapons, sex export, gambling, black money and the like.

Seeing all creations of God as unique entities is a great and noble philosophy. All the creations of God are intended for co existence and survival of all living organisms. Though the concept of 'one world' is a welcome idea, the understanding of such a concept breaking and intruding into the diversities and human freedom as well as cultural uniqueness has to be carefully monitored. Whatever be the form

of colonization, it has to be seen as a step not in agreement with God designed social life pattern. Today, a new system has come into being which is cultural, intellectual, political and wealth - oriented. Once love and readiness to sacrifice are replaced by selfish motives and exploitation, the balance sheet shall be a global catastrophe. Attempts to suffocate the basic cultural heritage of different societies and different language backgrounds, branding them as 'defective', come from ignorance or arrogance and not from sympathetic understanding. Globalisation shall always pave the way for profit oriented projects sowing the seeds of annihilation, thereby sidelining the goodness based on just growth of economy.

“Take off the grave clothes and let him go”, Jesus said pointing to resurrected Lazar, and this command is quite significant. God has never allowed people to bind anybody as per their whims and fancies. He fed five thousand men using that little food he got from a small source. Nobody is authorized to shutdown a useful source of water however small it may be. It is simply natural to quench one's thirst by drawing water from a well in one's courtyard, but instead, forcing one to consume packaged drinking water only, under the guise of globalisation, must be resisted at any cost.

Under the present world scenario, our point of view about this universe as well as our experience in life may undergo changes; in our normal life, globalisation is certain to interfere with our work, education, politics, family, entertainment, and in such other areas. As part of globalisation, revolutionary changes are taking place one after another. This is sure to continue.

It may not be possible to keep away from globalisation. At the same time, the positive aspects of globalisation are sure to be nullified by excessive marketisation.

To contain the ill effects of globalisation, the best means shall be that each nation attaining self sufficiency as early as possible. Let us strive forward to reach that goal.

Activities

1. Have a discussion on GATT
2. Discuss whether globalisation can be defended from a religious and spiritual point of view.
3. Have a discussion with those members of your parish who are engaged in agriculture, trade and small scale industries and gather their ideas about globalisation and ascertain how it affects their life and activities.
4. What can be done at our local level for achieving self sufficiency?

Chapter 26

Information Technology: Problems and Prospects

Information Technology, popularly referred to as IT is a branch of science that has revolutionized the life pattern of man which has led him to a very vast world of knowledge at an amazingly fast pace. Today, the world of IT is expanding exponentially. Information Technology has become very influential and also useful. It is not too much to say that modern life has already turned out to be I T based.

What is Information Technology?

Information Technology can be understood as collection of data with the help of computers and storing it to be processed and used as and when needed.

Today, under the broad banner of I T, computer (hard ware, soft ware, and operating systems), web based information systems, communication products, video – multimedia products, information kiosks, office products (photo copier, fax machine) are all included.

Possibilities of IT

The entire world has got transformed into a global village interconnected by a computer chain so that people, wherever they live, can be in close proximity with others, seeing them, talking to them and exchanging ideas with them. IT happens to be a reflection of human freedom as well as that of the concept of a world community. We knowingly or unknowingly uses the possibilities of I T to a great extend in our daily lives. IT opens before us a wide vista of opportunities and possibilities. Let us look into some of these.

Communication: This branch of science has progressed a great deal and has greatly influenced people in the field of communication. Till quite recently, one had to wait for years for getting a telephone connection whereas it takes just ten minutes for ten connections now. One can exchange information within seconds to any

nook and corner of this world using internet. The man at the other end on a computer screen could be seen and talked to face to face. Indeed, the world has become rather small through I T.

Travel and Tourism: Journey tickets can be booked for train, airplane or bus, advance blocking of rooms in hotels and lodges can be done and details of different tourist locations or heritage sites could be collected with the help of internet facilities. Now, we do not require hard copy of tickets for travelling. A proper message received in the cell phone will suffice. As such, everyday, a large quantity of paper is saved. For doing railway reservations, one can use SMS facility through cell phones.

Banking: Services in the banking sector can be accessed through internet, and people are increasingly resorting to this. It is not necessary for one to go to his bank for transacting his money dealings. People are quite familiarized with ATM facilities as well as internet banking which are widely utilized.

Other services: In this modern world, people are having busy schedule of life with the result that there is no time sufficient to carry out mundane tasks. Now, one doesn't have to go to the respective offices for payments of telephone or electricity bills and also for booking a refill for his LPG connection.

Collection of information/ education: Using different search engines through internet, one can gather information on various places of importance, historical events, personalities, institutions and the like. Internet is a media which provides any sort of data. Through internet or IT, one can avail the services of online libraries; further, it is possible to trace good educational institutions of other countries, obtain detailed information about various courses, online registrations, examinations and so on.

The use of IT is really extensive in areas like health care, trade and international communication. In these sectors, services of experts can be accessed as and when needed and decisions can be arrived at through video conferencing. Status of different activities could be ascertained on line with the help of IT, such as movement of cargo, timely decisions and so on. By using customized software programmes, lots of time can be saved. Public relations could be maintained effectively with help of a well designed web site. Also, communication between establishments can be carried out online very easily. Through this system, Bible references can be accessed very quickly and correctly.

Advertisement media: Many are using these media quite effectively to raise funds for charity activities. IT sector is very influential in marketing and business. Today,

opportunities are tapped through IT for advertisement media that are more and more influencing the young generation, and this tendency is expanding pretty well. Through this, the culture of online marketing of various consumer products is spreading very fast.

Also, IT is an extra source for earning more income. The present day world is an 'information society'. We have many enterprising people among us who earn big money by designing web sites as well as by engaging in sharing of data. There are IT products which can be effectively implemented for safety and security of individuals, residential houses as well as institutions. This can also help in nabbing criminals. IT sector has started playing an effective role at government levels too. One good example here is the already implemented system of e governance. In Kerala, working of the secretariat and the office of Chief Minister are available in web site.

The growth of the modern world through information technology is only too obvious. These opportunities can be utilized by us for the welfare of all.

Misuse of IT

Though IT is something really useful for mankind, very often, this turns out to be a new medium for criminal activities. Let us look into certain areas related to this.

IT sector involves activities based on computer. A big challenge here is the infiltration of virus which damages the normal functioning of a computer totally. Banking services implemented through computer net work are misused by unscrupulous elements of our society. One has to be very vigilant of the frauds committed after hacking the passwords of bank clients.

Another example of systematic cheating is the false e mails which reach mail addressees carrying intimation of winning of international lotteries or awards etc, mostly from fake overseas sources. Many have got trapped by responding to such mail which ultimately ends up with financial loss and of course, loss of face!

There are web sites spreading obscenity which tempt young generation to look at sex with a vulgar eye, ultimately leading to undesirable and criminal activities. The wrong misuse of the internet is leading youngsters to sexual anarchy through obscene web sites.

By creating false websites, cheating takes place in tourism, travel and hotel room booking and the like. People are blackmailed and insulted by creating false profiles through internet. Unauthorized copies of movie prints are taken and

circulated through internet whereby producers of movies are put to big monetary problems.

For spreading scandals against individuals, internet is used by anti - social elements. There have been incidents of suicides because of the circulation of photos those are made nude by morphing.

False SMS circulated by communal and hate campaign groups create communal clashes and loss of life. These types of activities affect even the national security of many countries.

Relationships which blossom exclusively through social networks are alienating people from the main - stream of society.

Generally, the elder generation in our community is not much aware of the good and bad of IT. Today, we have a large group of youngsters who are quite familiarized with various aspects of IT, and spend their precious time exclusively in sites such as those providing entertainment, online games as well as social networks like face book, twitter etc, ignoring the better and positive side of this medium; obviously, this proves disastrous in the life of youngsters. Misuse or overuse of the computer and internet is found to be the main reason for many a good student lagging behind in their academics.

Many people, in their prime age of life, work hard day in day out in IT companies and make good money. But when they are past their optimum stage of life, they become unwanted and are systematically pushed out; and this phenomenon raises doubts as to how secure is an IT job, despite the fact that the biggest source of employment generation. Indeed, this is a big challenge brought in IT sector.

In short, technology of knowledge is useful to the community to a very large extend, but it has its own negative characteristics too. The government must initiate formulation of adequate legal measures to ensure that IT sector is not misused and those who work as detrimental to the welfare of the community get punished. Schemes should be designed to use IT for the welfare of people as well as for developing various areas for the betterment of the community.

We have been discussing very briefly some of the good possibilities of IT and also the tendency to misuse IT. We should be capable to use the positives of IT wherever possible. We are subject to the influence of negative forces every day in one form or another. We may do wrong on our own or we may become victims to the designs of others. We have to be very careful in our day to day life. We cannot survive ignoring this. Let us try our best to utilize the better possibilities of information technology in our individual life as well as in our social life.

Activities

1. Find out how we can use information technology in the area of social service.
2. In what ways can our Church make use of the possibilities of IT in the 21st century?
3. Joining together with the Orthodox Youth Movement of your parish, organize a seminar on the subject 'Information Technology: use and misuse'

Chapter 27

Science and Technology

Modern science and technology have been a great influence in all walks of life. They have grown by leaps and bounds during the last two centuries. They are growing so fast that the entire body politic is overcome by them. Modern man is working out ways and means to take total control of not only one's individual life and community, but also the entire universe, using science and technology.

There is no place in this world today which is not benefitted by the advantages of science and technology. New inventions have given more leisure in human life. Most of the works man used to carry out physically has now become quite easy with the help of technology. Moreover, it is also apparent that those inventions which are not really useful to man will not survive long.

Utilities of science and technology

In the household: The achievements of science and technology have been most useful in every household. In an ordinary family, machines have taken over routine works such as grinding, grounding, washing of clothes, cooking and the like. The shift from joint family system to nuclear family system has found these inventions very useful. All the entertainment within a family is now based on technological gadgets.

In communication: This is one area which has been revolutionized by the expansion of technical knowhow. The development of Digital Technology and its phenomenal growth has not only modernized communication systems, but has totally revolutionized it. Fast and cost - effective methodologies have made communication through telephone system very popular. The young generation relies on telephone, internet, SMS, e mail, and social net working sites for communication. In India, the use of mobile phones and internet has become widespread within a very short time. Census 2011 places population of India at 1210 million, but there are 940 million telephone connections as per statistics available as of September 2012.

India stands second in the world in telephone connections and third in the use of internet.

The world of knowledge: The astounding growth of technical knowhow resulted in the unlimited expansion of the world of knowledge. The world of knowledge happens to be on our finger tips. Using computers, any information available anywhere in the world can be accessed by anyone. Thus, the whole world is transformed as a small village through computer networking.

The growth of technology has modernized the field of education too. Education has drastically changed with the introduction of digital library, facilities to make online references to libraries located at far off centers, formulation of smart class rooms etc. May be within a few years from now, going to a school or college holding a bag carrying text books and note books would be turning out to be a thing of the past.

Several world nations have made phenomenal gains through space technology. Not only did man conquer the moon physically, but has advanced very far in exploring other planets. Today, man is dreaming of acquiring land not in this earth alone, but on the moon or the mars too. As a tourist, man can travel to other countries, and even travel across the space in a space shuttle.

Similarly, the use of modern technical knowhow is quite common in areas such as diagnosis and treatment, office work, banking, travel and tourism, development of basic infrastructure, automobile industry, media, agriculture, means of entertainment etc.

Importance of technical knowhow

Today, if various machines get damaged, the world would come to a standstill. We totally rely on machines to get our works done. Even for simple arithmetical calculations, we resort to calculators.

Hard work of many laborers were necessary for the construction of new roads, railway lines, bridges, canals, buildings etc, but such activities are now possible with machines reducing the need of manpower substantially. There used to be agitations earlier against the introduction of computers for fear of unemployment, but time has proved otherwise that the use of machines becomes a blessing to make up the shortage of man power. The present scenario is such that man cannot live without machines.

Growth of technical knowhow: the negatives

Technology has proved very useful to mankind, but there are some danger signals too. Let us examine some of them.

1. Community turns a consumer society. The regularly changing technical knowhow, consequent varieties of consumer products, their advertisements are all transforming community into a consumer society. The stiff competition between manufacturers and their strategies to capture the market give rise to many attractive advertisements to allure people, placing the common man in a situation making it very tough to make a choice.

2. 'Use and throw' culture. This is a culture fast spreading to our daily life situations. Plastic ware and materials are to be treated as 'use and throw' items, but now many modern types of equipment particularly house hold articles too fall into this category. The developing technology makes fashionable products which are not very cheap. This can even give rise to financial problems in families which are not so rich.

3. Simple life style gives way. Growth of technology has caused deterioration of traditional culture as well as erosion of moral values. Simple life style gives way to luxury. The feel of the new generation is to go for the latest technological gadgets. This affects spiritual life too. Families which used to give importance to family prayers do not find enough time left for prayers! When people spend more time before television and the computer, spiritual life gets depleted. In short, a simple life style where spirituality has a pivotal role is gradually getting displaced.

4. Gift of intelligence gets underutilized. Over reliance of technology results in one's natural talents going unused or underutilized. Before the popularization of mobile phones, people used to memorize lots of phone numbers, but today even one's own phone number has to be retrieved from the mobile phone. In case the mobile phone is lost, all numbers are lost. Lesser dependence on one's own memory and intelligence results in deterioration of memory power. The new generation asks calculators for working out even very simple arithmetical calculations. Here too, we do not use our natural talents. Even the ability to read and write in good language is slowly disappearing from our youngsters. In new generation vehicles, there are computer programs providing route maps and traffic guidance. Before long, one may be resorting to machines to find out the way to one's own house!

5. Physical exercises get reduced. Earlier people used to have physical exercise through small house hold chores, walking and also agricultural activities. Now, most of the house hold activities have been taken over by machines. Agricultural activities are very little. Today, people get little physical exercise from walking or hard labor. This type of life style opens the door to different types of diseases.

6. Social relations get affected. Due to technological advances, the new generation people confine themselves to keeping relationships only with those who are part of their limited circle. Consequently, social relations are declining and the new

generation grows up without any exposure to common social experiences. Ultimately, they end up having little or no relationship to the environment.

7. Faith in God on the decline. The modern man relies more on science and himself than on God's guidance. Here, faith declines and there is no scope of spiritual growth. Technology is useful in many ways, but it can never replace the need for and the faith in God. Science and technology have their limitations. As a creation of God, there are certain purposes for human life. Once we live our lives to realize this purpose relying on God's providence, we can see God as the creator and sustainer of everything in this universe. Then we could live selflessly for the welfare of the community and utilize science for creation of a society that is rich in love and goodness.

Activities:

1. Discuss the use of science and technology in segments such as medical science, travel, tourism, banking etc.
2. Discuss ways and means for implementing the positives of science and technology in the field of spreading gospel.
3. Organize a seminar on the subject, how to utilize modern technical knowhow in Sunday School education.

Chapter 28

Drug abuse and the threat to healthy living

The simple explanation of health is a 'healthy mind and a healthy body'. The different aspects of health can be physical health, mental health, community health and spiritual health. It means that a person who is 'healthy' should be healthy on all these aspects.

Social evils which adversely affect one's health are smoking, drinking and drug abuse. It is during adolescence that many people usually get into these habits. Unhealthy friendships and the undue influence of the media are the culprits at this stage. Youngsters may be drawn to evil habits out of curiosity, and slowly, they become addicts. The most disturbing problems affecting the youth are alcohol and drug abuse.

There are instances of death by poisoned drinks and drugs which are too many that people take them in their stride. Those who really suffer are the kith and kin of deceased persons. Usually, it all starts with smoking and then gets into drinking and ultimately land up in drugs. The pattern is to start with small dosage and then gradually increase the quantity reaching a level of no return to a situation that without this, life will not move forward. Drugs are easily available in the form of pan parag, ganja, hance, brown sugar and a whole tribe of them.

Though, there is a ban to these imposed by the government, there is collective failure in its implementation and as a result, these are secretly available even in school / college premises.

Once started, it is very difficult to come out of this vicious habit. Not only that, such people will try to attract more youngsters into this. The marketing of drugs is controlled by underworld gangs internationally. Many get into this racket with an intention to make quick money. But once trapped here, an escape is virtually impossible. Even, one's life itself would be under constant threat.

Causes of Alcoholism and Drug abuse

There are several reasons behind the use of drinks or drugs. Usually, situational causes take the lead.

1. During adolescence, there is an urge to give an impression to others that one is almost an adult and many turn to smoking which can gradually lead to drinks and drugs. Once this starts, an affinity is developed towards them and continued use of them becomes a habit and soon, turns out to be a slave of that substance. In no time, the very same substance becomes the singular ingredient of happiness and soon a situation develops where the abuser cannot live without it.
2. There are youngsters who resort to smoking as well as drug just a fashion. This is considered as a means to catch the eyes of others.
3. There is another group who see drugs or drinks as a means to run away from their personal problems. Their problems can be marital, issues between brothers and sisters or between parents and children, financial setbacks and so on. These issues are common these days, but instead of facing them boldly and arriving at solutions realistically, they think drinking can make them forget all these and thus achieve peace of mind. In a very similar manner, some senior students take to drinking as a solution to deal with their problems with studies. Some others take to these evil habits to escape from their official problems at their work - place.
4. There prevails a notion that consumption of drinks and drugs provide a kick and thrill in life. But such feelings of comfort are nothing but distortion of man's normal activities which are properly oriented through one's own creativity.
5. A very important reason behind one resorting to habits of smoking, drinking or using drugs is the compelling influence of friends. Not to get alienated from this company of friends and to avoid looking 'small' before them, they succumb to the persuasion of a puff or a smoke and thus it starts right during the adolescence itself.
6. There are people who take up drinking just to escape from the sorrow due to the demise of a dear and.
7. Again, there is another group who holds a misconception that daily drinking provide them strength to take up physically hard tasks.
8. Many consider drinks indispensable for evening social get-togethers or parties. Many of those who celebrate success in business or quick profits or to enhance social status arrange dinner meetings where drinking is essential.
9. The new generation even thinks that drinks are part of celebrations connected with special occasions, festivals and even feasts of saints.

Health care and consumption of drinks / use of drugs

Use of drinks and drugs give rise to various problems in life. It affects health, paves way for liver - related diseases, causes cancer etc.. Once a person becomes a slave to drinks, he is placed in a situation where he cannot live his life without consuming drinks. He starts drinking right from the morning. Consequently, he cannot concentrate in his work as he should. Once the tag 'drunkard' is attached to him, he becomes a laughing stock in his community.

Once you are a slave to drinks and drugs, you tend to do anything to make money. Youngsters may resort to stealing and small crimes. Elders will gradually sell off everything they possess to raise money for this. After selling off everything, they may even start borrowing and end up as a pauper. Those who are employed will start accepting bribes and start making money through unjust means.

Drug abuse and alcoholism happen to be one of the main reasons for disturbed family life. Many families are financially broken just because of the habit of drinking. Usual consequences of drinking are daily quarrel between husband and wife, quarrel with children, destroying household articles and the like.

Personal life gets disturbed: The sense of purpose in life is lost and inherent talents cannot be properly used, and it becomes impossible to learn anything fresh. They turn out to be a liability to family and community. Very often, this leads to suicide too.

Prayer life and faith in God vanishes: Those who submit to drinks and drugs fail to attach any serious importance to God or faith. If at all they attend worship services, that would be for just name's sake.

Sexual anarchy: Quite often, sexual anarchy develops as a side effect of drinking. Those who are addicted to drugs share the same syringe for administering drugs resulting in the spread of HIV / AIDS among themselves.

If students happen to take on drugs, they are seen to go behind in studies, stay away from schools, fail to cope up with studies resulting in backing out, develop unhealthy friendship with elders, get associated with anti social elements of the community, take part in criminal movements and engage in undesirable activities.

How to confront the habit of drinking and drug abuse?

Those who are habituated to drinking and using drugs create lot of problems at different levels - individual, family and society. Beyond a certain limit, this has to be considered as a state of illness. It is necessary to take proper treatment here. As part of such treatment, the availability of drinks and drugs should be controlled. The negative impact of drinks and drugs should be widely publicized. They should be

subjected to correct treatment at de addiction centers. Further, they should be made to participate regularly in the meetings of Alcoholic Anonymous Groups. Also, they should be made to engage in activities against alcoholism. There are many people among us who have freed themselves from alcoholism and are leading a perfectly normal life. But to come to this level, one has to decide for himself and stick to his decision, which cannot be achieved by simple persuasion from others. It must be made obvious that it is one's own responsibility to take care of one's health.

It is next to impossible to escape from the clutches of octopus. Drinks and drugs are similar to this phenomenon. Famous poetess Ms Sugathakumari once said, "They will make you a slave like a cruel devil. You turn mad once the poison enters you as drinks, smoke or injections. You will do anything for getting it. You will steal, you will kill and you will do any criminal offence. Laws and good manners and ideologies will be thrown out. The slave of drugs will get drowned in an underworld exclusively of his own making".

Mostly, drugs are traded centered around schools, colleges, hostels, labor centers etc. Since this is against the law of the land, anyone who happens to see this should inform the Police.

Things to be taken care of:

1. Care should be taken in choosing friends. Undesirable friendships and gangs should be avoided.
2. It is accepted that prevention is always better than cure. As such, it is better to make sure individually that one stays away from smoking, drinking and drugs.
3. One should decide himself that leisure hours, entertainment and time spent with friends are tackled as best as possible. Any influence from others to deviate should be resisted strongly and with determination. We should re examine our friendships with those who don't respect our concern for our wellbeing health wise or otherwise. We may have to discard such friendships.
4. Wherever seniors or friends try to influence children to take drinks or drugs, such incidents must be immediately brought to the attention of parents and teachers.

We must accept the fact that we are surrounded by people with a 'business eye'. The present life style of our youngsters is mostly emulating others. We are eager to follow whatever is seen in advertisements or television or movies. But we must view things discriminating between what is good and what is evil; and consciously choose the good.

The Holy Bible very clearly elucidates the dangers caused by drinking and intoxication in family and society. Genesis 9: 21 – 23 explains the incidents subsequent to Noah getting intoxicated and the consequences thereof. The apostolic warning that a drunkard will not get into Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10) should serve as a warning for all.

Activities:

1. Along with the Youth Movement of your parish, organize programmes to make special days free from drinks.
2. Study how do drinks and drugs affect health detrimentally and arrange a discussion in your class.

