

How Orthodox Christians Share Their Faith.

Leader's Guide

Level: High School & Adult

Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to examine different ways the Orthodox Church does mission work and how these things all work together to share the Faith. This will be done through the following:

- Reading Scripture verse that reinforces the underlying principal behind this concept.
- Engaging in a discussion about how and why we love others as a way to share the Faith.
- Sharing a story of how mission ministries have worked together to help establish the Church in Albania.
- Participating in activities that reinforce the various aspects of Orthodox missions ministries and in prayer and support for those ministries.

Read: *James 2:14-26*

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith without works is barren? Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness', and he was called the friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

Discussion Questions: What actions do we take everyday that demonstrate our Faith?

What is the most faithful action you have ever witnessed in another person and why did it demonstrate faith to you?

How would you describe Christ to someone who had never heard of Him before?

How would you demonstrate who Christ is to them if you couldn't write or speak their language?

Story*Reintroducing Albanians to Christ*

Imagine if your classroom or church hall was being used to store food for animals. Imagine the altar destroyed. Imagine your family having to bury their icons in the backyard so they don't get arrested for having them. Imagine going to school and having your teacher tell you that anyone who believes in God is crazy or dangerous. Imagine, that because of all of this, no one around you seems to believe in God. No prayers before meals. No Christmas. No place to go for help if you are scared or going through hard times. Imagine how lonely that would feel. This is exactly what the country of Albania was like a just a little more than twenty years ago.

From the 1940s to the 1990s, a government was in power in Albania that made all religion illegal. For nearly 50 years this government destroyed churches, put Christians in prison, and taught that religion was bad. When that government lost power in 1990 nearly no one in Albania believed in God. Not only had people lost their Faith, but they were starving. Hospitals and clinics could not provide good care for people and important things like roads, buildings, and powerplants were falling apart.

It was into this dire situation that Archbishop Anastasios was sent to help rebuild the Orthodox Church. You see, before the government had banned religion Albania was full of Orthodox Christians and hundreds of Orthodox churches. In 1990, Albania was home to over three million people. How do you re-introduce three million people to Christ?

Archbishop Anastasios needed a plan and he needed some help. Thankfully, the Church has been sharing the Faith with people for over 2,000 years and the Saints of the Church who have done this best in the past have shared their wisdom with us so that we can continue their work.

We know that Christ is Truth, Hope, and Love. Archbishop Anastasios needed to show this to an entire nation of people. He knew he could do this by helping them to rebuild their lives as he worked to rebuild the Church. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, and by working closely with the worldwide Orthodox Church, especially with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) here in the United States, Archbishop Anastasios was able to see the Church in Albania rebuilt and hundreds of thousands of people find joy and hope in the Faith.

To do this, the Archbishop welcomed numerous Orthodox missionaries. Many were sent by OCMC from the United States. For years, they lived with the Albanian people learning their language, serving those in need, and teaching the Faith. Those missionaries would welcome teams of short-term volunteers to help with important projects like running youth camps and establishing outreach ministries. As churches began to be rebuilt and ministries

began to grow, priests were needed. The Archbishop opened a seminary and missionaries began training Albanians to become priests and church leaders.

Donations from around the world also came in to help build these churches along with a seminary for training priests. These gifts also helped to establish schools and even a university. As these amazing things unfolded more and more people saw all that the Church was doing for the Albanian people. The Truth, Hope, and Love of Christ was being shared and many became interested in the Faith. As they were welcomed into the Church through Holy Baptism, they would tell their friends and family and the Church would grow more.

Guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, the Church reached out to the Albanian people in many ways. All of this outreach worked together to share the Faith and re-establish the Church in Albania.

Exercises:

Exercise 1 - Charades

Materials

1. ***Scissors***
2. ***Copies of the attached clue cards for each team***

Divide the class into two or more teams. Be sure to have made enough copies of the included clue card sheets for each team and be sure that the individual clue cards have been cut out of each sheet before you distribute them.

Distribute a copy of each of 30 the clue cards to each of the teams FACE DOWN. Have each team divide the clue cards among themselves evenly keeping them FACE DOWN. Taking turns, have each team member place a clue card on their forehead so that the clue is facing out toward their teammates. Their teammates can act out what is on the card or give them spoken clues as long as they don't use any of the words on the clue card itself. Once the person with the card on his/her forehead guesses what is on the card, the next person places a card on their forehead and tries to guess what it says. This continues until each team has guessed what is on all of the clue cards or time runs out. The team that finishes first, or the one that has guessed the greatest number of clue cards wins.

Players cannot pass and they can only guess one clue before the next player gets their turn.

Exercise 2 - Coin Boxes

We use the 40 days of Great Lent to prepare to celebrate Pascha. We do this by fasting, by spending more time praying, and focusing more on helping others instead of worrying so much about ourselves. Over these next 40 days, as you prepare for Pascha, remember those people who are preparing to become missionaries. Each day, pray for them. As you fill up your coin box, think about how the money that you collect will help people to become missionaries through the Orthodox Christian Mission Center.

Missionary	Mission Team
Priest	Seminary
Water Well	School
Church	Communion
Baptism	Confession

Marriage	Camp
Teaching	Clinic
Medicine	Evangelism
Orphans	Christ
Holy Spirit	Travel

Healthcare	Hunger Relief
Witness	Love
Saints	Missions
Prayer	Chrismation
Bishop	Gospel