

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

PRE K - 3RD GRADE LEADER'S GUIDE

Theme: *"I have set you as a light..." (Acts 13:47)*

Objectives:

- **Introduce** the idea of *being a light* as sharing the love of Christ.
- **Establish** a connection between *being a light* to all people and the words of Acts 13:47.
- **Understand** how we open our hearts to *be a light* to others and help those who are sharing Christ's love to all people around the world.
- **Challenge** the students -- Compare the symbol of sharing the light of the Pascha (Easter) candle to sharing our faith with others. Challenge the students not to hide their candle or the light of Christ. God wants us to share the light and our faith in Christ with all people.
- **Identify** the ways that faith has impacted Magdalena's life, and whose actions were a light for her.
- **Act** by making the connection that Christ shared His gifts by helping, healing, and saving people. We can help people by collecting funds during Great Lent. Putting money in the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) Coin Boxes supports the work of the Mission Center so that many others are empowered to be a light to all nations.

Lesson Overview:

- Begin with the prayer on the next page.
- Activity #1 *Meet Magdalena*.
- Activity #2 Student Work Sheets - Bridging Connections.
- Activity #3 Assemble & Discuss OCMC Coin Boxes.
- Close by reciting the same prayer from the beginning of the lesson.

Lesson Materials:

Activity handouts, colored pencils or crayons, and OCMC Coin Boxes.

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

PRE K - 3RD GRADE LEADER'S GUIDE

Opening Prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus,
We pray for all people, so that they may learn about You and praise You.
Please help Your missionaries teach people about You. Help us to spread
Your Word and raise up new missionaries. Help us to be good examples, full
of love, strength, and faith. Have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Bible Verse: **Read Acts 13:47**

*For so the Lord has commanded us: "I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,
that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth."*

Introduce the idea of *being a light* in this passage. **Emphasize** that:

- We (all of us) are told to *be a light* and to proclaim the Good News all the time.
- The Good News of the "Word of the Lord" is that we are offered salvation through Christ and His Church.
- We are to declare to all the nations the wonderful things that God has done for us.

Activity #1: **Read Meet Magdalena**

Share Magdalena's story with your students, or ask each of them to read a few sentences out loud if appropriate. Discuss the people who were a light of Christ in Magdalena's life as she grew up. Draw attention to them by how they were a light to others. (This is an opportunity to highlight the lesson objectives to **Understand**, **Challenge**, and **Identify** listed on page 1). Pass out the Activity #1 handout to your students. Ask them to fill in the blanks with details from the story. Use this opportunity to further discuss the lesson objectives by

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

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reviewing the story and raising questions as the children complete the activity.

Answer Key: 1) Magdalena 2) Aguacate | Guatemala 3) nursing | sick 4) medicine 5) prayers
6) doctors & nurses 7) faith | love | hope 8) Fr. Andres, Missionaries, doctors, nurses, Magdalena

The following are possible talking points during the activity.

- **Point #1** – What does it mean to be a light to others? You could remind the children about the candle they will light at Pascha (Easter).
 - Ask what does the candle mean?
 - Ask if they share their candle- light with others at Pascha?
- **Point #2** - In Magdalena's story, who were the people who shared the light of Christ with her? Examples were Fr. Andrés, Fr. Evangelos, and her sister and the doctors and nurses and missionaries.
- **Point #3** - People gave gifts to the Clinic. Make a connection to the gifts we received at Christmas and the donations they will collect in the coin boxes. It will be a gift for people in other countries to help them learn about Christ.

Activity #2: Bridging Connections

Pass out the handouts. **Activity A)** Review the map of North America. Have the students find Guatemala. Discuss where it is in connection to the United States. Use this opportunity to help orient your students to understand how we are connected by faith with those sharing the light of Christ around the world. **Activity B)** Ask them to draw pictures of what they have in common with Magdalena and things that might be different. There is space on the worksheets for these drawings. Some items they might draw would be a church, icons, friends, or school books. Some things that might be different could be the types of clothes, geography,

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

PRE K - 3RD GRADE LEADER'S GUIDE

language, or buildings. If the children have difficulty coming up with differences, it is good because most of the differences will be superficial.

Activity #3: Assemble & Discuss OCMC Coin Boxes

Have your class assemble the OCMC Coin Boxes and discuss how these funds will be used to support the ministries of the Mission Center to spread the Gospel around the world. Send the coin boxes and parents' letter home with the students. Ask them to pray for missionaries who are sharing the light of Christ. Give the students an assignment to find ways to *be a light* to others during the weeks of Lent. Fill and return the coin boxes at the appropriate time. Extra coin boxes are available by emailing a request to coinbox@ocmc.org or calling 904-829-5132 or 1-877-GO-FORTH (463-6784).

Follow-up:

Start collecting the coin boxes on St. Thomas Sunday (the first Sunday after Pascha). Remind your students of their role in spreading the light of Christ around the world. Once collected, return the funds to OCMC by a check with a note identifying the name of your parish.

Closing Prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus,
We pray for all people, so that they may learn about You and praise You.
Please help Your missionaries teach people about You. Help us to spread
Your Word and raise up new missionaries. Help us to be good examples, full
of love, strength, and faith. Have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

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A Note to Teachers:

The Orthodox Church in Guatemala experienced rapid growth when a group of tens of thousands of Guatemalan and Mexican peoples came into the Orthodox Church under the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Mexico. Many of the converts are descendants of the ancient Mayan people who live in Central America. The Mayan people suffered near-genocide when hundreds of villages were destroyed and hundreds of thousands of Mayans were killed during years of civil war. Fr. Andrés Girón, a former Catholic priest, was a charismatic leader in the land reform movements. He unified the diverse Mayan communities and, in 2010, brought tens of thousands of Mayans into the Orthodox Church. This was one of the largest mass conversions in the history of Orthodox Christianity in the Western Hemisphere. According to Fr. John Chakos, OCMC Mission Specialists to Guatemala, *"this massive influx of native people is probably the greatest ministry challenge facing the Orthodox Church today."*

The Fr. Andrés Medical and Dental Clinic in Aguacate, (a-gua-'ca-te) means avocado in Spanish, has been open for seven years now. Several times a year, medical mission teams or local healthcare workers arrive with needed medical equipment, supplies, and medicines. Their visits to the clinic are a blessing, but short, sometimes only four days. The Church hoped that one day local people would become the permanent staff of the Clinic. OCMC created a **Medical Education Scholarship** that allowed Magdalena to study nursing and fulfill her dream. Her sister, Juanita, is studying to be a doctor, also with assistance from OCMC. They are both very excited to be able to work together someday soon. They want to share with others the "love of Christ" that so many people shared with their village. In the words of Fr. John Chakos, *"This clinic has already made a difference in the lives of thousands of people. Improving the health of the Mayan people, one village at a time is something to celebrate. We pray for more blessings to come in the name of Christ."*

**For more information about Guatemala, please reference the 9th - 12th grade lesson.*

BIBLE VERSE

For so the Lord has commanded us: "I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth."

Acts 13:47



T O T H E E N D S O F T H E E A R T H

MEET MAGDALENA

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN GUATEMALA



In the United States (U.S.), when we are sick, we go to see a doctor. But not in Magdalena's village of Aguacate (a-gua-ca-te), which means avocado in Spanish. She lives in a village in the mountains of Guatemala. For years, when people were sick, there were no doctors or nurses to help them. But that is changing. Magdalena just finished nursing school. She will work in a clinic in her village. Now Magdalena will help people when they are sick.

When Magdalena was a young girl, the leaders of her Church came to her village. They blessed a clinic and named it after Fr. Andrés Girón. He was the priest who led many of the Mayan people to become Orthodox Christians. Fr. Andrés was full of "light and joy." He always carried a box of medicine with him when he came to her village. He healed people with both medicine and prayers.

OCMC missionaries bring American doctors and nurses every year to help at the clinic. They always brought medicines and supplies with them. The missionaries shared their faith and love while giving people hope. Magdalena dreamed of being a nurse. She wanted to work at the clinic in her village. OCMC helped Magdalena and her sister Juanita to study medicine. One day soon, they will be working together at the clinic. They will share their faith in Christ and be a light to others.



There are saints who are also doctors. They heal people by God's grace, prayer, and medicine. They are special saints because they heal people for free. **Saint Panteleimon** is one of these special saints. His name means that he is very kind and caring. His icon greets people as they enter the reception area of the clinic. It reminds people of Fr. Andrés' care and the "love of Christ" which he offered freely to the Mayan people.

Photo: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

MEET MAGDALENA

FILL IN THE BLANK ACTIVITY



Fr. Andrés Medical and Dental Clinic.



Pharmacy with His Eminence ATHENAGORES, Fr. Evangelos, and some of the staff and clients.

1. The name of the girl in the story is _____.
2. She lives in _____, a village in the mountains of _____.
3. Magdalena just finished _____ school. She will help people who are _____.
4. When Fr. Andrés came to visit a village, he always brought a big box of _____.
5. Fr. Andrés healed people with medicine and _____.
6. OCMC sent missionaries from the U.S.A. who were _____.
7. The missionaries shared their _____ and _____ while giving people _____.
8. Who were lights of Christ in the lives of the people in Guatemala? (More than one answer)
_____.

BRIDGING CONNECTIONS

ACTIVITY A

Look at the map and find the country of Guatemala. Now find the United States of America. Draw a line connecting the two countries. Discuss how far away they are each other. Think about how we are connected by our faith to Magdalena in Guatemala.



Photo: <https://motivasi.my.id/>

BRIDGING CONNECTIONS

ACTIVITY B

Draw a picture of some of the things that you think
are the same between you and Magdalena.

Draw a picture of some of the things that you think
might be different between you and Magdalena.