

## 7

## GRADE THREE

## INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: History and Relationship with Other Churches

## Lesson 1

GROWTH OF OUR CHURCH  
IN 2000 YEARS**Aim:**

To provide an overview of the history of our Church.

**Bible Verse:** Matthew 28:19-20.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Main ideas:**

Last year in Grade 1 we studied that Apostle Thomas was the founder of our church in India? Some people in the Malabar Coast of India (Kerala) accepted Christ and developed a Christian community. In the fourth century some Christians from Persia traveled to Malabar seeking for a friendly land and they settled down there. Their leader, Thomas of Cana, was a Syrian merchant. The Malankara (Malabar) church was connected with the Persian church having ecclesiastical connection with the Church in West Asia. The period from the

fourth to sixteenth century is known as the Persian period. During the first half of the 17th century the Roman Catholic Church, which came along with the Portuguese, took control of the Malabar church. But in 1653 it broke away from the Papal authority. The dramatic event is known as the “Coonan Cross” Oath. Later on, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Malankara Church came into contact with the Anglican Church, and protestant churches. The interaction with these protestant churches resulted in inspiring a strong spirit of reformation. A new outlook took shape, and the “Mar Thoma Church” was formed with its new name. Mar Thomites around the world celebrated the 150th anniversary of this event (reformation) in 1986. The last century marked the unprecedented growth of the Mar Thoma Church. It was unthinkable to form a diocese in North America in the early 1970s.

**Teaching Strategies and Activities:**

Show Malabar Coast, Persia and Syria in the bible map and explain historical development of the church. Ask them whether they have gone to other churches which look like ours? See the map of Kerala at the end of Chapter 2, Kerala Cultural Context.

**Materials:**

Map of Asia to show Persia (Iran) and Syria. Use another map (India or Kerala) to point out Malabar Coast. The Malabar Coast, Persia (Iran) and Syria are marked in it.

**Conclusion:**

Our church has a reputation of being a first century church started by apostle St. Thomas. It has a long history and strong tradition of almost 2000 years. We thank God for the meaningful and inspiring traditions of our church.

## GRADE THREE

### INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: Worship: Faith and Practices of the Church

#### Lesson 2

#### WORSHIP:

### SCRIPTURE READING AND SERMON

#### Aim:

1. To recognize the set pattern in Bible reading.
2. To become better listeners of Sermon.

#### Bible Verse: Psalm 119:12

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

#### Main Ideas:

We read the Bible a few times during the worship each Sunday. They include two lessons (the first one from the Old Testament and the second from the New Testament), the epistle and the gospel reading by athen. During the sermon the Bible verses are interpreted and made relevant to contemporary life situations. The preacher seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit in conveying the message of God.

#### Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Teacher brings the assigned scripture portions for the day and explains each. The pattern followed by our Church is

discussed in class. Our young members read the lessons as well as assist in the Holy Communion.

#### Materials:

Bible, Order of Worship, Scripture portion for the Sunday.  
(It is published in the lectionary and newsletter)

#### Conclusion:

Bible is “the Word of God” used in our worship.

## GRADE THREE

### INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: Christian Sacraments

#### Lesson 3

## CONFIRMATION AND CONFESSION

### Aim:

To learn the importance of Confirmation and Confession as Sacraments.

### Bible Verse: Mark 1:15

“The time has come,” he said. “The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

### Main Ideas:

We learnt earlier that confirmation is a sacrament related to the Holy Baptism. It is a sacrament meant for the assurance of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the baptized Child. Holy Spirit is always with the true believers. Just after baptism, the priest or bishop anoints the baby with Holy oil (*Mooron*). The Holy oil symbolizes Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit guides every believer in the right way.

Our Church accepts confession as another sacrament because it is a way of receiving God's grace. Grace is the unmerited love and mercy extended from God towards us. Only He can give us a peaceful mind. So we have to confess

our sins before the Lord. Our church follows open (public) confession. It is a sacrament related to Holy Communion. We administer it during our worship service, just before distributing the elements of bread and wine. The intention of confession is to receive forgiveness of sins.

### Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Bring photographs that show the anointing of baptizing a child by the priest. Explain how the priest performs it as signing cross with Holy oil (*Mooron*) upon the child's forehead, chest, palms and feet. Explain the words that the priest announces during this confirmation (*Order of Worship.. P.152*). Teacher explains the prayer of public confession (*Order of Worship... Pages 53-55*).

### Materials:

Prayer for Confirmation and Prayer of Confession in the worship book: *Order of Worship Prayers and Hymns*, pages 152 and 53-55.

### Conclusion:

When we repent our sins, God forgives us. Then we receive God's blessings through the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

## GRADE THREE

### INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: Uniqueness and Central Values

#### Lesson 4

## EPISCOPACY IN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN CHURCHES

### Aim:

To understand the episcopacy of the Mar Thoma Church in relation to other churches.

### Bible Verse: 1 Peter 5:4.

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

### Main Ideas:

In the Mar Thoma Church Bishops are selected from among the unmarried priests. Our episcopacy is a celibate one. Now we have ten bishops. Metropolitan is the head of the church. The present Mar Thoma Metropolitan is the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma; Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom serves as the Valiya Metropolitan. Bishops in the Western churches follow different practices. Several churches allow them to marry. There is a difference in the color of clothes they wear.

### Teaching Strategies & Activities:

Teacher shows photos or pictures of bishops and priests in different churches. Children notice the differences between them in appearance. The teacher explains the difference between Eastern and Western churches regarding the role of bishops and priests. Celibacy is compared between Mar Thoma clergy and clergy of churches in this country with its protestant practices. Also, our clergy is compared to the clergy of the Orthodox Church in India, and the Church of South India.

### Materials:

Photos of bishops in our church. Pictures of bishops in other churches. See Appendix 3.

### Conclusion:

Bishops are the spiritual leaders of the church. So we respect and love them. There are unique aspects in our clergy, being part of the Eastern Church.

## GRADE THREE

### INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: Mission and Ministry of the Church

#### Lesson 5

### HELPING OTHERS: WHAT DOES THE MAR THOMA CHURCH DO IN INDIA?

**Aim:**

To study the commitment of the Mar Thoma Church for Evangelism by helping others.

**Bible Verse:** Luke 10:22

“The harvest is plentiful but workers are few”.

**Main Ideas:**

Our church has organized several types of activities to help the poor and the needy. There are orphanages, schools for the disabled, destitute homes, mission hospitals just to name a few. The Special Sunday Offertory, covering over a dozen Sundays, raises money for these causes. Our Ashrams take a leading role in starting them. Among the several leaders who initiated them in our church are Juhanon Mar Thoma and Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitanans. They gave leadership for such work as part of their understanding of the church's mission. The church which is the body of Christ is expected to continue the example

of Jesus by reaching those less fortunate in our society out of compassion and love.

**Teaching Strategies and Activities:**

1. Have a guest speaker talk to the students at the end of the lesson, sharing his/her experience(s) during their mission related work. Have pictures of the time spent helping others so that the children understand that it is a global responsibility, and that no one is too young or old to help.
2. Have the students list all the examples of how Jesus helped others in the New Testament. Give the students exactly two minutes to come up with their lists, and compare them to the rest of the class.
3. See attached “Word Game” P98.

**Conclusion:**

We can help others in need through our church which is the body of Christ. We should do more in our diocese and in our community.

### GRADE THREE

WORD GAME: How many words can you come up with from the word below? Please use clean words that are greater than three letters for this exercise.

#### EVANGELISM

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of horizontal lines for writing.