

can you come up with words that are greater

Lined writing area for student responses.

8

GRADE FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: History and Relationship with Other Churches

Lesson 1

A REFORMED CHURCH

Aim:

To understand the new ideas and outlook growing in our church.

Bible Verse: Psalm 119:105.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.



Palakkunnathu Abraham
Malpan



Kaithayil Geevarghese
Malpan

Main ideas:

The contact with the missionaries of the western culture resulted in reforming several practices of the Malankara church and in obtaining a new outlook on society. The leader of the reform movement was Abraham Malpan (Malpan means teacher or professor). Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan of Puthuppally and several others joined him.

The Syrian liturgy used for centuries in the Malankara church worship was translated into Malayalam by Abraham Malpan and our church began to use it for worship. Also, our church discarded the prayers for the dead and to the saints. People were encouraged to read the Bible and live a life rooted in the Word of God. A new spirit for evangelism grew in our church, resulting in establishing Ashrams for missionary work. There was also a new social consciousness with the sense of openness and a concern for all people including the poor. The church administration itself became more democratic and better organized for promoting its reforming spirit.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Contact with the West brought revival in Kerala Society and Church. What were the changes introduced by Abraham Malpan? Discuss.

Materials:

Pictures of Abraham Malpan, Kaithayil Geevarghese and other reformation leaders.

Conclusion:

As a result of the reformation in the Malankara church, we are enriched with a new outlook and a vision for evangelism. We are proud to belong to such a church.

GRADE FOUR**INTRODUCTION OF THEMES**

Theme: Worship: Faith and Practices of an Eastern Church

Lesson 2**WORSHIP: PRACTICES FOLLOWED****Aim:**

To understand the practices and symbols used in worship and to make them more meaningful.

Bible Verse: Ephesians 6:14.

So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate.

Main Ideas:

Some of the practices and rituals in our church worship are gestures of the priest and the laity- the kiss of peace, the bowing of heads, the reverence paid to the Eucharistic elements, the signing of the cross- all these are part of the liturgical act. In other words, worship is an activity of the congregation to glorify God.

As an Eastern practice, we worship standing, facing towards Madbaha (altar) in the east. The word Kauma, in Syriac, means a prayer said at one standing. All worship services are conducted in a standing posture. In the Holy Qurbana, we face towards east in this posture.

Why do we turn towards east in worship? We may find two reasons. God is metaphorically described as sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2). Since the sun rises in the east, the sun of righteousness will definitely rises in the east. Secondly, Eden, the garden of God's presence, is believed to be in the east (cf-Genesis 2.8). With these assumptions, the Church buildings are normally built east to west.

The shape of Eastern Church building is like a boat. It symbolizes and reminds us of salvation brought by God through Noah. It also reminds us that Christian life is a journey. The baptismal font is placed at the west end of the church. A person who enters the journey is first baptized at the west end and then proceeds to the east looking forward experiencing the presence of God.

Madbaha (Chancel) is separated from the Haikala (Nave) by a curtain. The altar is in the Madbaha, which is the holy of holies. Achen celebrates Holy Communion at the altar. The part of the church or sanctuary where people sit (pew or bench) is called Nave.

Light:

We use light (candles) in our Holy Communion service. It is placed on the altar. Light is a powerful symbol. This symbol is used for at least two reasons. First, in the first century, the persecuted Christians conducted worship services in caves and grave yards. The lighted candles then dispel darkness, and they were able to worship together in that light. By using the symbol, we mean that as the light of the candle dispel darkness, so our lives should give light in a world darkened by evil for others. Jesus himself said in Matthew 5.14 that "You are the light of the world." Secondly, we know the candle gives light by burning its wax. Hence the symbol reminds us that we need to sacrifice ourselves for Christ in this world.

Incense:

Frankincense is the sap of a tree. It is considered as the tear of the tree. The incense that we use is a symbol of our own tears that comes out of true repentance. It is kindled in a vessel called censer. The fragrance that comes out of the incense denotes the offering of a sweet smelling sacrifice rising to God.

The Kiss of Peace:

This is a symbolic action of reconciliation. In our liturgy, the kiss of peace is given just before the proper communion part. That is just after sermon and confession. Therefore a repented community seeks forgiveness not only with God but also with each other. Matthew 5.23,24 says, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Only a repented community can meaningfully participate in the Holy Qurbana.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Show the symbols and explain its importance in worship. Select practices and rituals to be discussed in class.

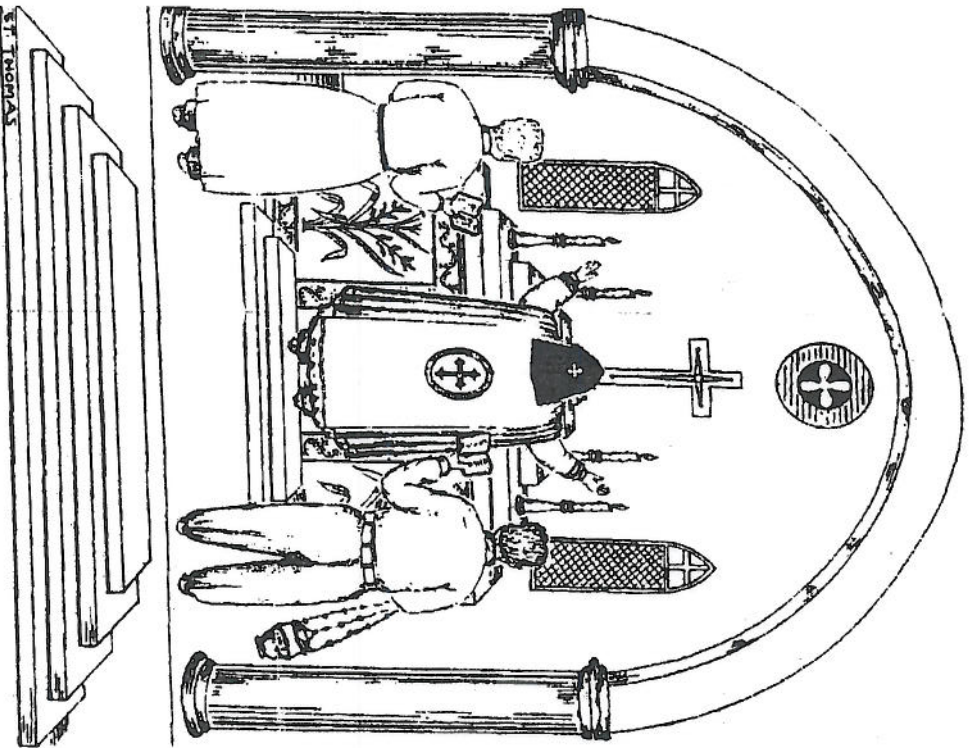
Materials:

Different symbols like candle, incense and censer.

Conclusion:

Practices with the use of symbols help people to worship more meaningfully and have the atmosphere of reverence to experience the presence of God.

Bishop Celebrating H. Qurbana



GRADE FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THEMES Theme: Christian Sacraments

Lesson 3

HOLY BAPTISM

Aim:

To become familiar with the spiritual truth behind Holy Baptism

Bible Verse: Mark 1:8

I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Main Ideas:

Because Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize people and teach them the Christian way of life, baptism is called as a Dominical Sacrament (Matthew 28:19-20). The word, 'baptism' is derived from the Greek word, *Bapto*, which means 'to dip'. The quantity of water used in baptism does not matter but the manner of administering water in the ceremony is important. We should understand that water is only a symbol, which carry God's grace. The faith of the members of the Church who witness baptism becomes the channel of God's grace. The Church uses water and oil as signs of receiving God's grace. Two types of oil are used during this occasion. They are *Sybbe*

(olive oil: 1Samuel 10:1; 16:13; 1Kings 1:39) and *Mooron* (consecrated oil: Exodus 30:22-25). The priest or bishop anoints the forehead of the child with *Sythe* and declares the child's new birth. The *Sythe* signifies the child's separation for a new life as God's son or daughter. Olive oil is a symbol of peace and joy. The *Mooron* is mixed with the water in Baptismal Font. The priest pours it into the baptizing water, chanting prayers, to assure the presence of triune God who only can save the child. The water in the baptismal Font is also a mixture of cold water and hot water. Cold water denotes death and hot water represents life. The mixing of hot water into cold water reveals the spiritual truth of a transition from the death to the new life. This transition is effected by the act of Holy Spirit. *Mooron* signifies the active presence of the Holy Spirit. Representing the Church, the Mar Thoma Metropolitan consecrates the Holy oil, *Mooron*, and it shows the great faith of our Church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Ask the students, why does an achen or a bishop conduct the service of baptism? Why is baptism not conducted at home? What is the duty of a Godparent? Bring *Order of Worship Prayers & Hymns* and explain the different prayers chanted during the use of various symbols like water, olive oil and Holy oil (*Mooron*). The class may invite Achen to come and explain the sacrament of Baptism.

Conclusion:

Holy Baptism is a Dominical Sacrament. The Church as a faith community acknowledges the Divine grace as a gift from God. They are called by God to take the responsibility to pray for the child and work for his or her spiritual growth.

GRADE FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: Uniqueness and Central Values

Lesson 4

EVANGELICAL COMMITMENT OF OUR CHURCH

Aim:

To understand the centrality placed on evangelism in the Mar Thoma Church.

Bible Verse: Romans 10:15b

As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news".

Main Ideas:

The church is called for a mission. The mission is to make disciples for Christ. It is achieved through preaching, teaching and social work. Our church is involved in evangelical work through mission fields, ashrams, schools, hospitals and destitute homes. The Western contact and the 19th century reformation resulted in this new emphasis on evangelism in our church.

Strategies & Activities:

Read the reports of mission fields in the class. Show pictures to the students. Discuss our responsibilities to fulfill the mission.

Teacher shows the maps of India with mission centers (ashrams) marked in them and explains the evangelical work of our church. Does your parish support any particular mission field? Do you know any mission project of North American Diocese? What are the Social Service activities that your parish or Sunday School is doing to reach the community? Who are some of the missionaries that you admire most? Collect their pictures and bring them to the class.

Materials:

Maps, reports and photos of different mission fields in India and in North America (find out and enclose it here).

Conclusion:

The Mar Thoma Church is unique in giving a central place for evangelism. We need outreach activities at our parish to reach the community.

GRADE FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THEMES

Theme: Mission and Ministry of the Church

Lesson 5

SELECTED MISSIONARIES OF OUR CHURCH

Aim:

To learn about the life and missions of some church leaders.

Bible Verse: Isaiah 6:8

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”

Main Ideas:

A Christian missionary or an evangelist is one who is “sent” by God for the proclamation of the message of Jesus. This was conveyed through the Gospels to all people of the world. Jesus, during His ministry, sent His followers only after receiving the Holy Spirit. They went to various parts of the world preaching the Good News. Many followed their examples and spread the word throughout the world. The missionary work was going on for the last two thousand years. The Apostle who came to India was St. Thomas, the first missionary to India.

During modern times, William Carey (1761-1834) came to India as a missionary from England. He translated the Bible into dozens of languages in India. Stanley Jones (1884-1973) who came from America was a friend of the Mar Thoma Church and a regular speaker at the Maramon Convention for several years.

We will select a few Marthomites who are known for their evangelistic commitments.

1. Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan (1880-1947) was the first bishop of the Mar Thoma Church to reach North America (Canada) for higher studies. His enthusiasm for evangelism led to the formation of Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association. He inspired every member to be a missionary. He led the way in sending missionaries from Kerala to other parts of India to preach the gospel.

2. Very Rev. K.E. Oommen (1881-1984) was one of the first college graduates who decided to serve the Mar Thoma Church and strengthened its evangelistic orientation. He was a scholar and a dedicated Christian holding on to life principles. He was rooted in Christ and encouraged others to deepen their faith by having a personal relationship with Jesus.

3. Sadhu Kochu Kunju (1883-1945), a topmost Upadesi (evangelist) of our church, was a supreme example of self-sacrifice. He composed many spiritual songs which give consolation and encouragement as they were written out of deep spiritual experiences. He regularly conducted revival meetings which led to spiritual awakening in the church.

4. Kandamma Varghese (1876-1964) was one of the founding members of the Sevika Sanghom (women's auxiliary). She traveled far and wide organizing women for evangelistic

work. Her life principle was "pray without ceasing, give thanks in everything". She carried a Bible always and shared the Good News whenever she had the opportunity.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

1. Have each student write one page essay on a modern-day evangelist or missionary that he/she might admire. Share the essays with other members of the class.

2. See attached "Matching Game".

3. See attached "Word Unscrambled"

Conclusion:

Missionaries are people who dedicated their life in the Lord's service in response to God's call. In obeying the call, they were able to lead a fulfilling life useful to themselves and others.

MATCH THE FOLLOWING:

Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan

This evangelist created many spiritual songs which gave consolation and

encouragement for spiritual experiences.

Kandamma Varghese

This person was the first college graduates who served our church and dedicated life to strong Christian principles.

Rev. K.E. Oommen

This person was one of the founding members of Sevika Sanghom and always carried a Bible to share the Good News.

Sadhu Kochu Kunju Upadesi The first bishop to reach North America for higher studies and formed the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association.

WORD UNSCRAMBLE: Unscramble each of the following words below.

YIINSMARSO -----

NEVLAGTISI -----

PCLIDSEIS -----

YTRIINSM -----

SPIDUEA -----