



# KID'S DAY CAMP – 2024

THEME: **DHOSTH**  
(A Friend in all situations)



## THE APPROACH

The Kid's day Camp is conducted during the summer vacation; therefore, we need to realize that the children will be in a mood to enjoy and relax, it is their vacation!

Inviting them to the camp should be for immersing them into an atmosphere of joy and friendship

and at the same time fulfilling the important task of spiritual learning, the balance is prime.

**AGE GROUP:** 4 – 15 yrs.

**HOW MANY DAYS?** - Short camp: 1-day, Longer camp: 4-days

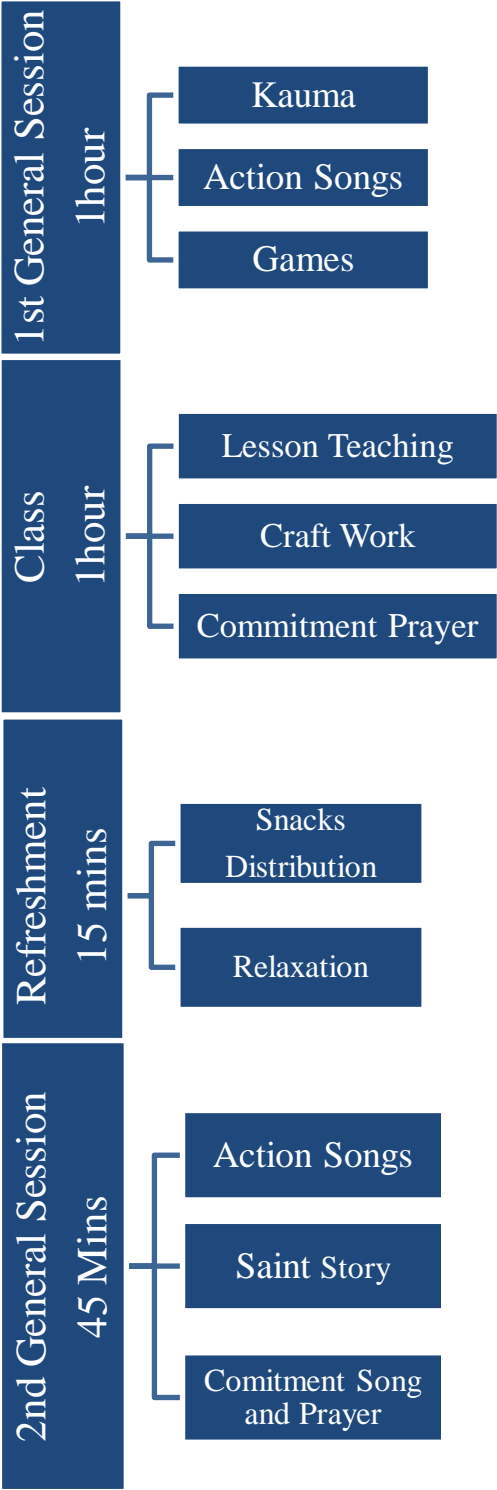
**DURATION:** Three hours a day

## THE PATTERN

❖ As children enter– Children should not be left unattended. Every day the volunteers need to be prepared with some children-friendly games or other interesting activities to keep them engaged until the camp begins for the day. These can be normal games or activities that the kids in your area are familiar with or you can bring back some old games that used to be played and would be fun for the kids. This can be a time that the volunteers get to spend time playing with and getting to know the kids better. Make sure that the games are fun for all and it does not become too competitive. Here are some ideas of games/activities you could do:

- Skipping rope (individual ropes or one big rope where many can jump at the same time)
- Making crafts out of coconut or palm leaves
- Flying paper airplanes
- Playing SAT
- 7 stones
- Hop scotch/Nondi
- Kancha
- Gilli Dandaa
- Kho kho
- Lattoo

- ❖ 1st General Session - The camp starts with general session; the priest should begin the camp each day with the kauma.  
If the Camp is not conducted in a parish the alternative is to install an Altar towards the east in the decided venue.
- ❖ Divide into designated groups – The children are divided into different groups as per the age bracket. To make it more interesting, each class can be named the names can be from the Bible itself, it can be Bible characters.  
The selection of the teachers should be done very carefully, the teacher should be able to handle the assigned age group efficiently.
- ❖ Refreshment – Snacks and juice can be provided to the children so they don't feel weak or hungry in between the camp.
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> General session – The children gather back to the common gathering place for the concluding general session. Here we can tell the saint stories and finish the day with the commitment prayer.
- ❖ Schedules – A typical format of the schedule for a basic understanding is provided at the end of the document.
- ❖ The final day, the 4th day of the Kid's Day Camp is for the children to showcase their talents, it can be a class or an individual. The schedule for the same is also provided. The goal is to make it a jovial day but at the same time a day of summarizing all the three days of learning.
- ❖ On the 4th day the parish can invite the parents of the children who have attended and also the children of the community to join and watch. The decision to do so is left to the priest.
- ❖ The Sunday School leaders has to select the songs/action according to the theme and the subthemes.



## **THE LESSONS**

- ❖ Even though it's a 4-day camp, the lessons are designed for three days.
- ❖ 4th day is for the children to showcase their talents. The ideas to organize the activity for the 4th day is provided towards the end.
- ❖ The lessons are structured in a manner that will enable the child to think with their mind and also reflect it with their heart.
- ❖ Each lesson consists of a story from the Bible (or) related spiritual things and also a story of a saint.
- ❖ A verse for the day is added with the lesson for the children to memorize.
- ❖ Activity is thoughtfully formulated for the children to imprint it into their thoughts. The child can carry the craft they have made to their homes.  
The crafts are explained well at the end of each lesson.
- ❖ At the end of the lesson the teacher leads the child to do an activity, ponder upon few questions, take decisions on how to apply it in life and also to say aloud a written prayer.

### ❖ DAY – 4

A day exclusively for the parents and the parish to watch their children showcase their talents. It can be any kind of talents, but it is also suggested that the aspects of what they have learned during the three days are reflected through what they do.

## **SOME IDEAS**

### ❖ Prepare Early

Towards the 2nd day of the kid's day camp, the teachers can discuss with the class and come up with an idea of what they are going to showcase as a class or as individuals. So that by day 3, all the events of the classes are at hand to prepare a proper schedule.

### ❖ What can the kids showcase?

- Sing a song they have learned
- Doing an action song, they have learned
- Reciting a memory verse
- Portraying the summary of the lessons creatively
- A skit

## Lesson – 1

### True Friend Jesus

(Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner)

**Objective:** Children are introduced to their best friend, Jesus.

#### Synopsis of the lesson for the Day:

In today's lesson, Sam finds his 'friends' in a particularly distressing situation. His wise grandmother helps rescue his 'friends' and she uses this incident to teach Sam about the most trusted, loyal and true friend anyone can have and the special way to become His friend.

Later, in today's saint story, we will learn about a young girl's unwavering faith, miraculous encounters, and dedication to telling others about this special 'friend'.

#### Story: Jesus Christ the Son of God.

It's been a week since Sarah and Sam have come to their grandmother's house. They have already eaten so much and enjoyed doing lots of different things.

Sarah has found many friends in the village; children around her age.

As for Sam, he has found some friends too – but they were different kinds of friends. They were pretty small; really small in fact. They were ants! Yes, ants! He used to love watching a family of ants which had made its home behind his grandmother's house. He was fascinated to watch them go in line; in search of food; then later he

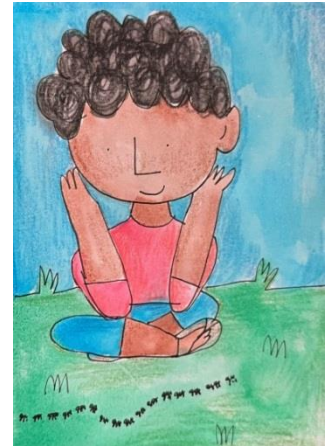
would love to watch them bring small grains of food back to their house. In fact, he doesn't know how time went when he was watching his ants. They were his friends; maybe his only friends there.

One day, grandmother was cooking some savoury snacks in the afternoon, when Sam ran into the kitchen. He looked scared, panicky and was panting. 'What happened child?' the grandmother asked.

'My ant; my ... my ants are; they are going to die!!!' He was almost crying. 'Grandmother, you have to save them. I tried to do everything I could; but they are not listening or understanding what I'm trying to say. It's like they are afraid of me,' He pulled his grandmother's hand and took her out of the house to the place where his ants were nesting. 'What happened to them Sam?' the grandmother asked.

'Look; look at where they are headed to!' he said pointing his finger towards a long line of ants.

As the grandmother followed the ants that were proceeding in an orderly fashion, she realized that what her 9-year-old grandson was saying was correct. The ants were headed towards a small puddle. Although for us it was a small puddle, for the ants it



would be like the biggest ocean! ‘Grandmother, you need to do something. I tried shouting at them – they didn’t hear me. I tried blocking them with my hand – they just went around it. They are afraid of me. Somehow, they must know that they are headed towards destruction!’

The wise grandmother looked around for a leaf. She plucked a small leaf from a plant nearby and put it in the puddle. It was big enough to cover the puddle. The ants easily crossed over safely to the other side. Sam was so happy that he hugged his grandmother!



### Story Time:

On the way back, Grandmother gave Sam some water to drink. And she started to talk with Sam.

‘Sam, can I use your ants to show you something important?’ ‘Yes, Grandmother,’ he replied.

‘You tried all you could to save your ants. But you still couldn’t help them right?’

‘Yes, I tried everything, Grandmother. But they could not understand me! They were scared! But I love those ants, I am their friend! Why don’t they understand that Grandmother?!’ Sam asked.

Grandmother replied, ‘Well, maybe you look like a scary giant to them! Maybe that’s why they got terrified and started going away from you. There was only one way to make them understand.’

‘What is that way grandmother?’ Sam asked looking up at her. Grandmother said, ‘The only way is to become an ant!’ ‘But that’s impossible, grandmother,’ Sam replied. Then grandmother said, ‘Yes, true with us it won’t work out. But God did something similar long time back.’ Suddenly Sam asked, ‘God? What did he do, Grandmother? Did he become an ant?’

‘No, my child. God, in heaven, saw that we human beings were going in the wrong direction. God saw that we were going away from God and towards eternal separation from God. God tried telling us in many ways. He wanted to let us know that He was a good and loving God, a God who cared enough to create us. But we humans couldn’t understand his love. So, God did only what He could do - He became a man himself. He became one like us.’

‘Yes, yes – I know Grandmother. That is Jesus – isn’t it!?’ Sarah had joined them by that time.

‘How did you know that sister?’ Sam asked. ‘Because grandmother once told me this story too!’ she replied. Then Grandmother continued...

‘Yes, God sent His only Son – Jesus, to earth. He was born like you and me – to Mother Mary, the Holy Theotokos. He grew up and lived among men and did many good things. And Jesus said that He was the way to eternal life. And if we followed Him, we too would not perish but have everlasting life. Remember, child, just like I put a leaf and saved the ants, God, through Jesus also has shown His great love for us and offered salvation for us.

‘Wow, I never realized that Jesus was God himself. That is amazing,’ Sam said.

‘Yes, Sam, that is something special.’ ‘Okay, ‘I am going to play now, my friends are calling me,’ Sarah said.

‘Ok bye, my dear,’ grandmother said.

### **Lesson Time: Jesus your best friend**

After Sarah left the home to play with her friends. Sam was sitting alone and he was sad so the grandmother went to him and asked, ‘Why are you sad, my child?’ Sam replied, ‘well, my sister has lots of friends. But I don’t have anyone – well except those ants.’ Then the grandmother replied to him, ‘Oh, yes you do! You have the best friend ever, my child. Someone who will never leave you!’

‘Who is that grandmother?’ Sam asked, ‘It is Jesus. He is your best friend.’ Grandmother assured Sam that, ‘Jesus will always be with you!’

‘But I can’t see him, Grandmother; how do I know He’s there with me? How can I call him and talk to him?’, Sam asked, Grandmother replied to him, ‘well, can you see the wind?’ Sam replied - ‘No.’ ‘But can you experience the effects of wind?’ Grandmother asked,

‘Well, yes. I can feel it right now blowing across your garden grandmother.’ Sam replied. ‘Just like that, God is near you. You can experience His love. Do you know how you can be aware of His presence my child?’ Grandmother asked Sam. Sam replied, ‘No, grandmother.’ Then Grandmother said to him, ‘It’s by prayer. And I have a very special prayer for you.’ But Sam replied ‘Oh grandmother, I don’t like these prayers! They are sometimes soooooo long and so boring.’ That made grandmother laugh out loud and she said to him, ‘No, no, this is short and sweet, I promise. But it is very powerful, too.’ ‘Oh, then please tell me grandmother.’ Sam said.

Then grandmother taught him the prayer, ‘it’s called, ‘the Jesus Prayer’, and it goes like this: ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

‘It’s very easy to learn. Can you say it with me?’

Then Sam also started to say the prayer along with grandmother.

‘Jesus Christ’ – ‘Jesus Christ,’

‘Son of God’ – ‘Son of God,’

‘Have mercy on me a sinner.’ - ‘Have mercy on me a sinner.’ Sam repeats the prayer with grandmother without mistake. Then grandmother appreciated him and said, ‘very good!’

‘Now, before you sleep tonight, both you and your sister both say this prayer together and sleep.’

Sam replied ‘Ok grandmother! Sure we will do that. Now ‘I’m so hungry grandmother.’ Sam ran into the kitchen and was about to take the snacks grandmother had made, but then he heard her say - ‘you cannot eat without washing your hands!’ ‘Of course grandmother,’ he said grudgingly.



He liked everything about grandmother – except her rules. What’s the point of all these rules, he thought to himself. No time to think now; the snacks were too delicious! He ran, washed his hands and sat down and began gobbling up the tasty snacks grandmother had made.

**Applications:**

1. I will always remember that Jesus is my best friend
2. I will learn to say the Jesus Prayer from memory
3. I will pray the Jesus Prayer every day

**Questions:**

1. What are the names of the 2 children in the story?
2. Who were the ‘little friends’ of Sam?
3. Why was Sam worried about the ants and what did grandmother do to save them?
4. What did God do when he saw that humans were going away from Him?
5. What is the name of the friend who came to earth to save humans? And who is he?
6. Who is our best friend?
7. What is the name of the prayer that grandmother taught Sam?
8. What are the words of the prayer?
9. When can we pray this special prayer?

**Memory Verse:**

**(Age 4-10)**

You are my friends if you do what I command. - John 15:14

**(Age 11-15)**

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. -John 15:14-15

**Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen †



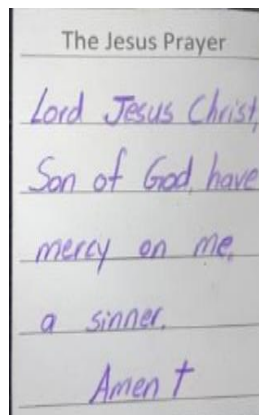
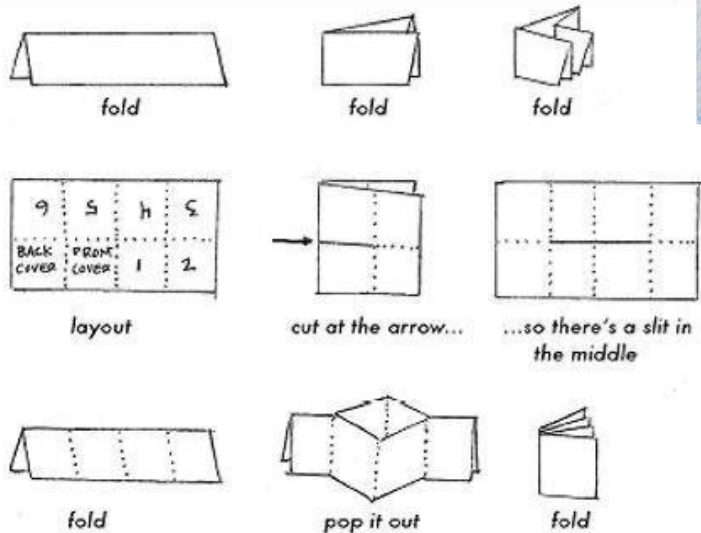
## Activity/Craft: Option – 1 (Mini Story Book)

### Materials Needed:

- One print out per child
- Colors
- Scissors

### Mini Story Book

- Make a copy of the story book page for each child
- Let the children color the pictures (while kids are coloring you can talk about the story in the book)
- Help the children to write the Jesus Prayer on the last page.
- Fold the book like this:



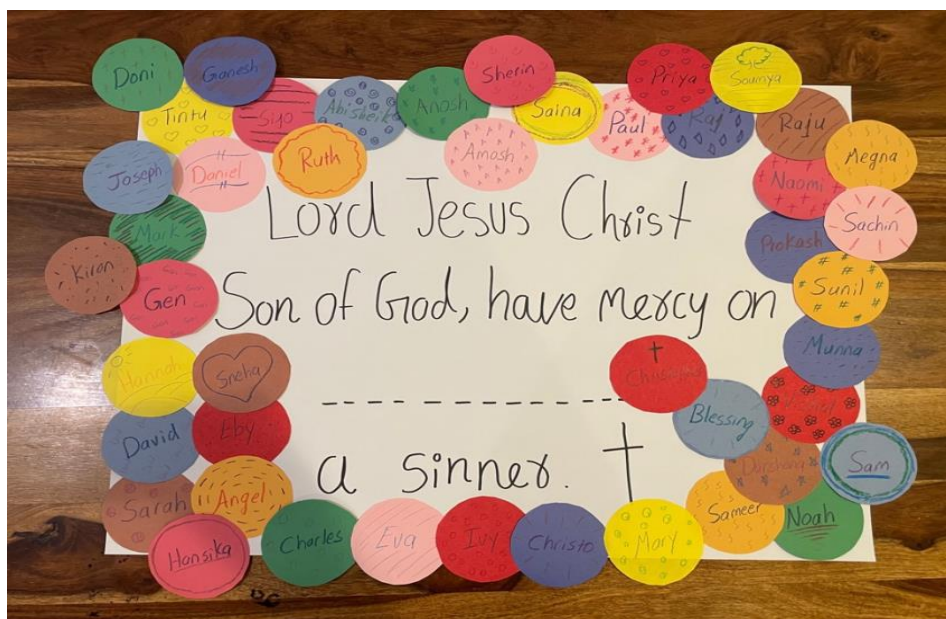
**Option - 2 (if print outs are not available)**  
**Activity/Craft: Large Wall Art Jesus Prayer**

**Materials Needed:**

- Few chart papers
- One small paper (can be any size you choose) for each child
- Coloured paper would look nice if available
- Colours, markers
- Glue or cello tape

**Large Wall Art ‘Jesus Prayer’**

- ❖ Before the camp, tape several chart papers together and write the Jesus Prayer on it, leaving the ‘on me’ part blank. It should read ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on \_\_\_\_\_, a sinner.’
- ❖ Put this up on a wall that will be visible to all during the camp.
- ❖ Give each child a paper and let them write their name on it and decorate it however they like.
- ❖ Let each child go to the large Jesus Prayer on the wall, they can first pray the Jesus Prayer for themselves (saying their name in the blank – ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on Joshua, a sinner’) and then glue or paste their name near the Jesus Prayer.



## DAY I – SAINT OF THE DAY (Saint Thecla)

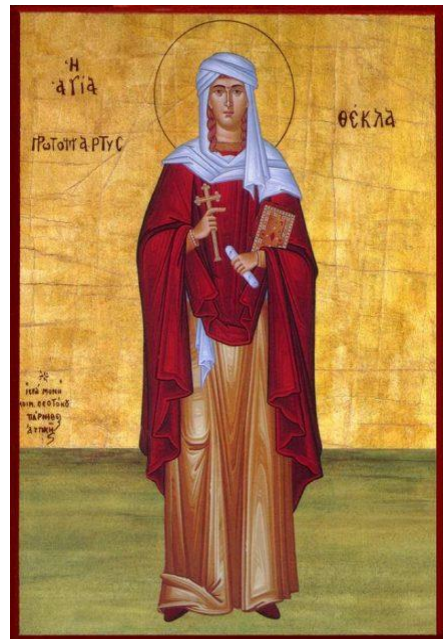
### Synopsis:

Today's saint was born into a non-Christian family in the 1st century. She defied societal expectations and persecution to embrace Christianity after hearing the teachings of St. Paul. Her unwavering faith, miraculous encounters, and dedication to spreading the gospel earned her the title 'Equal-to-the-Apostles.' Let's start!

### Story:

In the year 16 AD, Saint Thecla was born into a non-Christian family in the Lycian city of Iconium, which is now Konya, in the south-central part of Turkey. Saint Thecla's family took good care of her. When she turned 18, her mother wanted her to marry a young, wealthy man in the city, so she forcefully set up her engagement, even though Saint Thecla didn't want to. Saint Thecla was very sad, so she sat down by a window in her house and thought about how her life would be in the future.

By sheer coincidence, she heard St. Paul the Apostle speak about Jesus Christ as a true friend, while she was sitting near the window. Saint Thecla was so moved by what she heard that she accepted Christ as her friend and companion and decided to follow in Christ's footsteps. She also decided not to get married. But when her mother and groom (the person she was engaged to marry) heard about all of this, they were really upset. They complained to the local ruler about St. Paul, and the local ruler jailed him because it was illegal to speak about Christ in public at that time. But nonetheless, as soon as Saint Thecla heard about St. Paul's imprisonment, she wanted to meet him and hear more about this special friend.



One day, Saint Thecla's parents and future husband found out she wasn't at home and started looking for her everywhere, but they couldn't find her. Guess where she went!? She had gone to jail to learn more about Jesus Christ, her real friend, from St. Paul! When the family learned this, they all went back to the local ruler and further complained about St. Paul. This time, the ruler took strong action against him. They tried to get St. Paul to leave the country.

Although they all told St. Thecla to marry that young, wealthy man, she made it clear that she wanted to stay a virgin and tell everyone about her real friend, Jesus Christ. When she heard this, her mother got furious and urged the local ruler to threaten Saint Thecla with severe punishments. The ruler told the soldiers to put Saint Thecla into the fire if she didn't renounce her faith in Christ. When Saint Thecla refused to

forsake her faith in Christ, the soldiers set her on fire. There, she experienced a vision of Christ, which gave her the courage to face the flames. When the flames got close to Saint Thecla, a thunderstorm and torrential rain descended from the sky, quenching the flames.

The ruler was very upset since his plan didn't work out. But Saint Thecla kept strong in her faith in her friend Jesus. This angry ruler told Saint Thecla to face the wild animals in an open stadium. A lioness was let loose to attack Saint Thecla. But do you know what happened? Everyone was shocked to see the lioness, instead of attacking and hurting her, the lioness come close to Saint Thecla and gently sat down next to her!

Then they let out a bear. When it came close to attacking Saint Thecla, the lioness jumped up to protect her and killed the bear. Then they let out a very big lion. This time, as before, the lioness came to protect Saint Thecla too!

When the ruler saw that Saint Thecla could not be hurt, he became scared. He knew that the holy warrior for Christ was safe because she was serving the Almighty God, Jesus Christ, who was her friend. Then he told them to set Saint Thecla free.

After this, Saint Thecla went to Antioch to meet the holy apostle St. Paul and some of his friends, including St. Barnabas. Together, they spread the gospel and told everyone about their true friend, Jesus Christ. After this, she lived for many years, continually proclaiming her friend Jesus Christ to everyone and healing many sick people through her prayers. Saint Thecla brought many to Christ, and the Church appropriately named her 'Equal-to-the-Apostles.' Saint Thecla continued her life of holiness and then peacefully fell asleep in Jesus at the age of 90.

**Lesson:**

From the story of Saint Thecla, we learn that even when things are tough, we can always count on our friend, Jesus Christ. Just like Saint Thecla didn't give up on her friendship with Jesus during hard times, we should remember that Jesus is always there for us when we face difficulties or feel alone.

So, when life gets tough or lonely, we can talk to our friend Jesus by saying 'The Jesus Prayer.'

**Let's say it together now:**

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"

Let's repeat it: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"

Keep in mind that your friend, Jesus, is always with you. May God bless you all!

## Questions:

1. What was the name of the saint?
2. Who did she hear speaking about Jesus?
3. How did her family react when she told them about her decision not to marry and to share about her friend, Jesus with others?
4. What happened when the soldiers set her on fire?
5. What happened when the lioness, the bear and the big lion were let out to attack the saint?
6. What did the ruler do when he realized that St.Thecla could not be hurt?
7. After being released where did St.Thecla go?
8. What did St.Thecla do till she died at the age of 90?
9. How did she die?
10. What special name did the Church call St.Thecla?
11. Who was St.Thecla's best friend, who was always with her?
12. What can I learn for my life from St.Thecla?

## Lesson-2

### Forgiving Friend Jesus

(‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner’)

Objective: **Children should understand about God’s ‘mercy’ through Jesus.**

#### Synopsis of the lesson for the Day:

In today’s story, you will see how, enticed by a bet, the joy of getting together with his cousins, soon turns disastrous for Sam. But thankfully as things get better, his wise grandmother shares a story which helps Sam see that, despite his flaws, his best friend is ready to extend forgiveness and ‘mercy’ to him. Later in the saint story, we will learn about how a big, strong, troublemaker changed his ways to become a loving and kind man.

#### Introduction:

Today Sarah and Sam woke earlier than usual. They were so excited. Because today their cousins were all coming! Oh, it was going to be so much fun!!! Sam told his grandmother the different games he was going to play with his cousins, while Sarah made a list of things to talk about to them. They hardly ate any breakfast; they were too excited to be hungry. Both were sitting outside the house waiting for it to be 10am; that’s when the cousins would come.

And surprise! They came half an hour early! Oh, what a joy it was to see their cousins after almost a year! Since they all lived far away and studied in different schools, it was difficult to get together often. But each vacation time, they would come together at grandmother’s house. Not only did that make grandmother happy, but that made them happy too! Almost immediately they started playing hide and seek and all sorts of games. They even invented games as they went along.



#### Story: Have mercy on me a sinner

‘Children come into the house,’ they heard grandmother say. ‘It’s time for lunch!’

‘Already?’

You never knew how fast time went when playing with your cousins. Reluctantly, everyone came into the house. They tried to continue their hide and seek game inside

the house. But grandmother had strict rules. No running in the house, no shouting in the house, no throwing balls...and...so many rules! Grandmother did have a lot of rules that they all had to follow. That was one thing they didn't seem to like about grandmother's house. But there wasn't much time to think about rules, because even as they came into the house, they could smell their favorite dessert being made by grandmother! Oh, they could not wait to have it.

All the children gathered around the small table and sat down.

'No, no – go and wash your hands well and then only touch the food,' grandmother told them sternly.

So grudgingly they went to wash their hands. But as they were waiting in line to wash their hands with soap, one of the older cousins said – 'I bet no one can beat grandmother super scanners!' Everyone giggled.

'What is a scanner?' 6-year-old Martha, the youngest of the cousins asked.

'Oh, a scanner is something which can see things most others can't, and grandmothers' eyes are like that!' Sarah replied. After that Sam said, 'I bet grandmother won't see my dirty hands.'

'Oh, really Sam,' teased the oldest cousin, Rachel. Then Sam replied to Rachel 'I will take up your bet; but what will you give me if I do take the bet?' Then Rachel said 'If you eat grandmother's food, without washing your hands, I will give you, my dessert!' And that was too tempting an offer for the young boy! After all, none of them, especially Sam understood why grandmother had to be so strict about washing hands?!

None of the neighbors or your other friends had a rule like that; grandmother was being a little too strict, maybe a little too superstitious too.

'Then I will eat without washing my hands,' Sam said.

'But you can't break one of grandmother's rules,' the other cousins insisted.

But Sam said, 'that's ok; for one day no one will notice, and it won't matter anyway. I'll wash my hands for the other meals.'

'But what if she finds out?' the other cousins asked.

Sam replied, 'she won't find out, if you don't tell her!'

Martha (the youngest cousin) asked, 'Won't you get sick; your hands are so dirty?'

Sam boldly said, 'no, people just say that; I won't get sick. I have a stomach of steel!'

Everyone laughed.

So, the young boy sneaked in and sat down to eat without washing his hands. Even when grandmother asked if everyone had washed their hands, the young boy nodded as if he had done it. And sure enough, the boy won the bet, and he

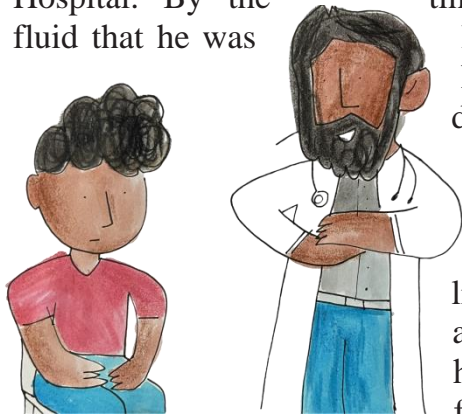
got the dessert – two desserts in one day! Oh, what a wonderful feeling it was, to win the bet



and to have two desserts.

But unfortunately, that wonderful feeling lasted only till the middle of the night.

By that time Sam's stomach started rumbling and grumbling; he started to feel nauseated and soon started to sweat. And then it started – diarrhea and vomiting – those evil twins sent from hell (that's what grandmother called them) to drain the life out of you. The whole house was awake. Grandmother insisted that they take Sam to the nearby village and arrange a vehicle to take him to the nearby Government Hospital. By the time Sam reached the Hospital, he had lost so much fluid that he was



hardly able to stand or even sit up. 'If you had been late, things would have been very bad,' explained the doctor the next day.

After two days Sam was strong enough to go home. But before going, the doctor came to see him. The doctor asked the boy a lot of questions; like what he ate, when did he eat, etc. And finally asked him the dreaded question – 'did you wash your hands before you ate that day?' The look on the boy's face said it all. The doctor understood what had

happened and strictly told him to never to do that again. He said that there are bad germs (small bacteria) in the dirt which you need to wash away before eating food with your hands. If you don't, you can get seriously sick – like you did. Sam promised to always wash his hands before eating from now onwards.

After coming home, Sam recovered quickly – mostly because of grandmothers' food and prayers.

The next day, as Sam was eating some light food which grandmother had prepared, she came and sat by him. She was stroking his hair in a loving way. He could not hold back his sadness and the guilt inside him, and Sam started crying.

Then grandmother told him don't cry dear, sometimes what your parents or elders tell you to do, or rules which they ask you to follow, don't make sense - like the rule to wash hands before you eat food. But there is a reason for that rule. It's to help prevent sickness which spreads from dirty hands and water. But you are too young to understand the reason behind the rule. And so it's important to 'obey' even if you don't understand fully.'

Sam with tears in his eyes said, 'I know I disobeyed your rule grandmother; that's why I got sick. Would you ... 'he stopped half way, and wiped away his tears.



Before he could finish his sentence, grandmother said, 'Child, don't worry, its ok. I am not angry at you. I'm happy that you are healthy now.'

Surprised by grandmother's answer, Sam replied, 'but I thought you would be angry at me.'



‘I am not angry at you. Neither is Jesus, your best friend. In fact, I was thinking about a story of a loving Father Jesus told once. Have you heard of that child?’ asked grandmother.

‘I’m not sure,’ Sam replied.

### **Lesson Time: The Prodigal Son**

There was once a loving father who had two sons. One day the younger son said that he wanted to leave his family and go far away. His father was surprised, because the son had everything he needed – a loving family, enough food to eat, a good bed to sleep in, and lots of friends. But the younger son insisted that he wanted to go far away to another country. Finally he made his father sell his property and give all that money to him. He then took all his belongings and went away. This made the father very sad. The boy enjoyed his life for some time. But soon the money ran out and his new friends all left him. Finally, he had almost no money and was starving. Then he remembered how his life was before he had left home, how much love he received from his family – his father, his mother and those in his house. He knew he had made a mistake leaving his house. And he had suffered the consequences of his decision.

‘That sounds a lot like me, grandmother,’ Sam said, sadly. ‘Did he go back to his house, grandmother?’

‘Yes of course he did! And the surprising thing was that when he returned to his home his father was not angry at him. His father ran to him, hugged him, and loved him just like he loved him before!’

‘I am amazed at how loving the father was. He forgave his son even after all the mistakes he had done grandmother.’ said Sam.

Then Grandmother replied ‘Sam, my child, that father is a picture of Jesus, your best friend.’

‘Yes, of course many times we make mistakes. We don’t realize that God’s laws, just like my rules, are given for our protection and out of God’s great love for us. And when we deliberately choose to do the wrong things, we suffer the consequences of it. Sin is when we choose to walk away from God. And that is why the Bible says we are all sinners – means those who sin or walk away from God. When we sin, we are breaking the loving relationship that we have with God, just like that younger boy broke off his relationship with his father.’

‘But the good news is that Jesus is not angry at you. He wants to be your friend again. Of course, He is sad when you sin and walk away from Him. But he’s also waiting to receive you back and restore the loving relationship, that wonderful friendship just like before.’

Sam asked, ‘but how can I do that grandmother?’

‘Child, do you remember what we learned last time?’ grandmother lovingly asked.

Sam quickly replied, ‘the ant story, you mean, grandmother?’

Grandmother smiled and nodded, ‘yes, that story and the prayer I taught you?’

‘Yes, yes, I do remember.’ said Sam, ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, eh ... love me a

sinner.’ Sam couldn’t really remember the last part accurately.’

Patently grandmother said, ‘no, Sam – it’s ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner’ -grandmother said, stressing on the second half of the prayer.

Oopss. He had not been faithfully saying the prayer before bedtime.

Grandmother put her arm around Sam and explained, ‘last time, through the story of the ants we learned that Jesus was the Son of God that is He was God Himself who came down from heaven to save us, His creation. But the second part of the prayer says – ‘have mercy on me a sinner.’”

Looking confused Sam asked, ‘but what does mercy mean, Grandmother?’

‘Well, mercy is like the medicine the doctors gave you or like the special food I prepared for you which helped you recover from your sickness. Just like that, you are asking Jesus, your friend to heal and restore your soul with His medicine of love,’ said grandmother.

Sam ever so curiously asked, ‘so, Jesus is still my friend? He’s not angry with me anymore?’

‘No child, he is still your best friend. He’s not angry at all. He is always waiting to receive us back, even though we often walk away from God – like that younger boy in the Bible story. And when you pray the Jesus prayer after you do something wrong, it is like Jesus is wrapping His loving arms around you. He is your best friend’ said grandmother while giving Sam a hug.

That night the children all slept peacefully with the assurance that Jesus, their special friend, still loves them. This time, when Sam said the Jesus Prayer, he specially focused on the second part - ‘have mercy on me a sinner.’

Oh, how he loved his grandmother.

But how come she is so loving? What’s the secret of her joy, her kindness and her compassion, he thought to himself. Maybe I’ll ask her tomorrow and Sam quickly drifted off to sleep.



### **Application:**

1. I will obey even when I don’t understand why.
2. I know that God loves me even though I disobey and make mistakes, he is not angry. He is merciful.
3. When someone is unkind or does something wrong to me I will not be angry, instead I will show mercy like God shows mercy to me.

## Questions

1. What was the bet Sam made with his cousins?
2. What happened to Sam after he disobeyed the rule about washing hands?
3. Was Sam sorry about what he had done?
4. Was grandmother angry when Sam came home from the hospital? Why or why not?
5. What bible story did grandmother tell Sam?
6. Was the father in the bible story angry when his son returned home?
7. Who is the father in the bible story a picture of?
8. Is God angry with us when we make mistakes and disobey?
9. Can we come to Jesus and ask forgiveness will he have mercy on us?
10. When someone makes a mistake or hurts you, will you be angry with them or have mercy on them?

## Memory Verse:

(Age 4 to 10)

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. - Psalm 51:1

(Age 11-15)

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. - Psalm 51:1

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. - Hebrews 4:16

## Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen †

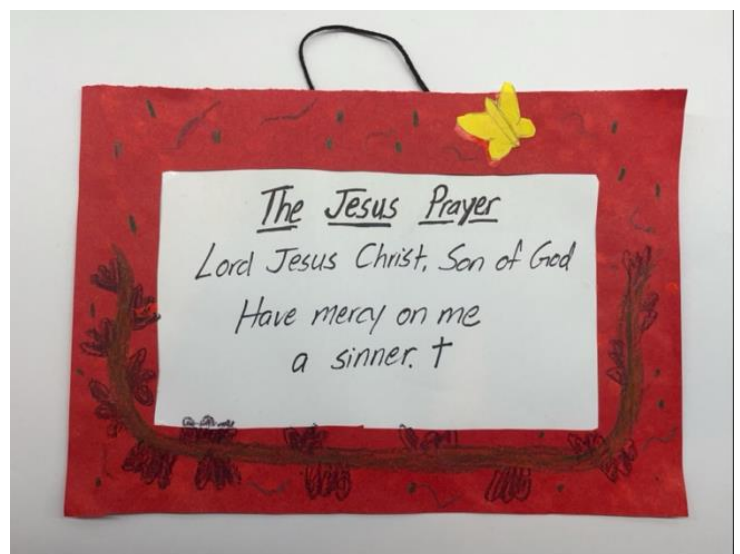
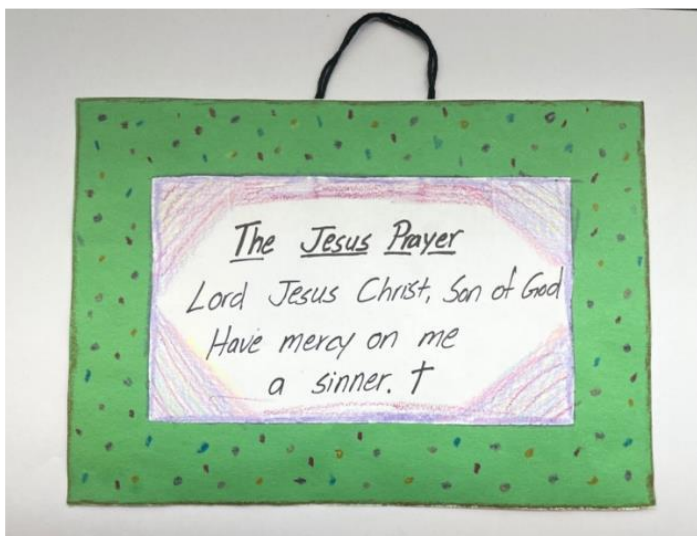
## Activity/Craft: Jesus Prayer Frame Art

### Materials Needed:

- Half an A4 size white paper per child
  - Cut the papers before the camp
- Half an A4 size colored paper per child (if not available give another white paper)
  - Before the camp cut out the colored paper as a frame, by marking the measurement of each side and cutting out the middle part)
- One small piece of string for the hanger (about 16cm long)
  - Cut these before the camp
- Cello tape
- Glue
- Colors, markers, small stickers, anything which is available that they can use to decorate the frame

### Jesus Prayer Frame Art

- Give each child a white paper and the cut out frame
- Let them glue the frame onto the white paper making sure to match up the edges
- Have each child write the Jesus Prayer inside the frame. (if the kids are very small the teacher can help them to write it, you can write it with pencil and they can trace on top of that or you can write it for them)
- Next give the kids time to decorate the frames with colors, markers, or whatever is available.
- Place the string in the back center of the frame and tape it on
- Encourage them to find a special place at their home to hang this up, so they can see it every day.



## DAY 2 – SAINT OF THE DAY

### (Saint Moses the Black)

#### Synopsis:

Long ago in Egypt, there was a strong man named Saint Moses the Black. Starting as a troublemaker, he changed his ways, becoming a saint and helping others. This is a story of how Jesus, and faith in Him, can turn a wicked life into one filled with love and kindness.

#### Story:

We all have assumptions about saints. We think all of them are very thin and bald with long beards etc. But today we will hear an entirely different story; the story of Saint Moses the Black, who was born in Egypt in the 4th century. The 'black' in his name refers to his darker skin tone since he was of African descent.

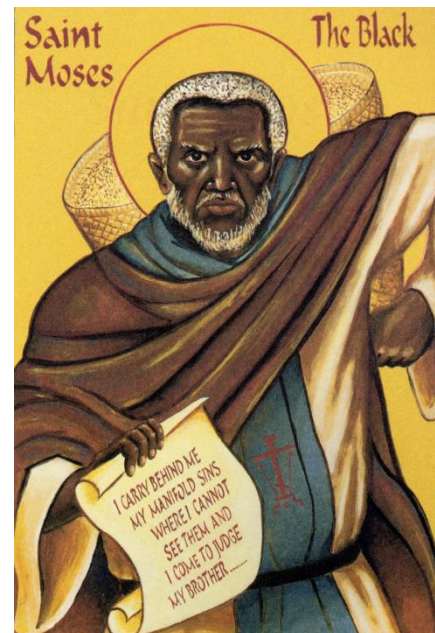
The story of Saint Moses starts with him being a slave in the home of a ruler (governor). He was a very strong and tough man. While Saint Moses worked as a slave in the governor's house, he got into the bad habit of stealing things.

He stole more and more as he got older. His crimes got so bad that he even killed someone, which is why the ruler kicked him out of his house. Saint Moses was now an outcast and had nowhere to stay or food to eat. People around him avoided him because they knew about his bad acts, leaving him with nowhere to go.

That's when Saint Moses caught the attention of a gang of thieves, who saw his skills and invited him to join them. Because he was so strong, he quickly became the head of the gang, which stole things and beat up many innocent people, making the community very scared.

As Saint Moses' fame as a criminal grew, the local government and people tried to catch him for his crimes. When Saint Moses came to know about this plan, he became afraid and tried to hide where no one could find him. He ran away to a village in the desert near Alexandria, where a group of saintly men were living. There, among the quiet and religious people, Saint Moses went through a huge change. He gave up his old lifestyle, became a Christian, and started a new journey as a monk after being moved by the monks' faith.

But his old gang tried to kill him because they were angry that he had changed his ways. Once, they broke into his room to take revenge. But Saint Moses, still strong from his past, captured all of them without hurting them and brought them to the



monks to be judged. Because they cared, the elders told Saint Moses to free them.

When his old gang saw how Saint Moses had changed, they decided to follow Christ too! As more people saw how humble and obedient he was to God, Saint Moses became a respected spiritual figure who gained many followers.

He soon became a deacon and then a priest. Saint Moses' dislike and hatred toward people turned into a love for everyone. Later on, a very saintly Bishop, Saint Macarius made a prediction that Saint Moses would be killed as a martyr.

Many years later, some very bad people attacked the monastery which was home to Saint Moses and his followers. Saint Moses told his followers to leave because he knew the attackers were coming. But seven loyal followers decided to stay with him. The attack on them was cruel, and Saint Moses the Black and his followers were killed. One monk was watching from afar. He witnessed the attack and also something amazing. He saw seven crowns falling on their heads in a vision from heaven.

### **Lesson:**

The story of Saint Moses the Black shows how faith can change things and how God's love and kindness can save a dark life. Jesus will never leave us, no matter how many wrong things we do or how many bad things happen in our lives. He loves us all the time! He is with us all the time and always ready to help us!

When you know you've done wrong, when you feel bad, when someone hurts you, or when you feel alone, what can you do?

Try to have a conversation with your best friend, Jesus!

But how are we going to do it? How can we talk with Him? Yes, by saying 'The Jesus Prayer.'

By praying the Jesus prayer, we can always stay close to Jesus, who is God's Son.

Shall we say the Jesus Prayer together?

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Let's repeat it three times, all together.

May God bless you all.

## **Questions:**

1. What was the name of the saint?
2. Why is he called 'the black?'
3. What kind of man was St. Moses?
4. Why did the ruler he was working under send him away?
5. After being sent out what did St. Moses do?
6. Did people like him or were they afraid of him?
7. Where did he hide when the government was trying to find him?
8. What happened to St. Moses when he was hiding?
9. What did his old gang try to do to St. Moses when they heard about him becoming a monk?
10. When St. Moses forgave his old gang who had come to kill him, what did they decide to do?
11. How did St. Moses die?
12. What amazing thing did a fellow monk see from far when St. Moses was being martyred?
13. Is there any person in this world too bad or too evil that God would not have mercy on them?
14. Will God ever give up on us when we do bad or wrong things?
15. What simple prayer can I pray to stay close to Jesus?
16. What can I learn for my life from the life of St. Moses?

## Lesson – 3

### **I Am a Friend of Jesus**

(The Three Pillars of Our Faith)

**Objective:** Children should learn how to ‘reflect’ or become like their friend, Jesus.

#### **Synopsis of the lesson for the Day:**

In today’s story, the grandmother shares the three secrets to her remarkable character and her extraordinary kindness despite facing hardships. The children leave for home after their vacation, carrying not only their bags but also the valuable teachings imparted by their loving grandmother.

And later in today’s saint story, we will learn about the inspiring story of a man, who went from living a comfortable life to facing tragedy and then choosing to live entirely for Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

‘How fast time goes,’ Sarah told Sam. Yes, the past two weeks at grandmother's house had gone by in a flash.

‘I wish I could stay longer,’ he said, sadly.

‘Don’t be so sad,’ said grandmother who came into their room while they were packing their bags. ‘Come with me, we still must see one more thing before you both leave!’

‘Yes, we did not see the river yet grandmother,’ Sam said excited.

Every year before they left to go back to their home, grandmother would take Sarah and Sam to the river nearby, sit under the giant tree there, and tell them a final story. It was a tradition for them.

#### **Story: The Three Pillars of our Faith**

Soon, they were on their way to the river. On the way, Sarah asked grandmother, something she had wanted to ask for a long time. Sensing that Sarah wanted to ask something, grandmother looked at her and said – ‘it's ok, you can ask me anything!’

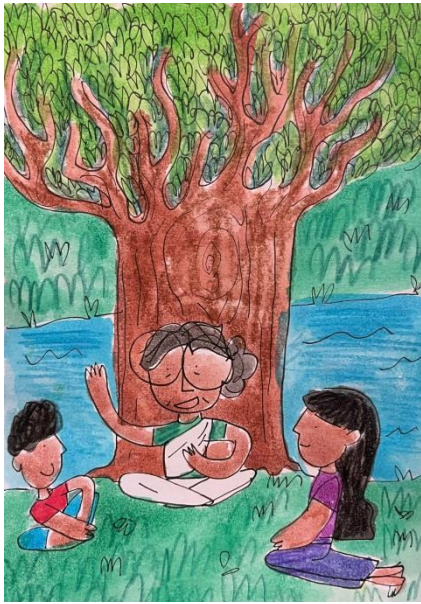
Sarah began, ‘Grandmother, we know that you lost grandfather (your husband) when you were young, and you brought up your children by yourself. You worked very hard, and you had a very hard life. But even in the midst of all this, how come you are so loving, kind, joyful and gracious? Something is different about you. Each time we come, we experience a special peace and happiness. What is the secret grandmother?’

Grandmother smiled. Oh, that smile; it could lighten up the darkest of darkness! She radiated joy.

‘Children, come let’s sit.’



By that time, they had come to the banks of the river and were under the shade of the big tree. And grandmother started to reply to Sarah's question. 'It was not always like this in my life. When I was your age, I used to be angry and disobedient – a rebellious child. I used to steal my neighbor's fruits and throw stones and hurt their animals. Worst of all – I was never truthful. I was a nuisance in my house. Even I didn't like the things I did.'



'But then one day, my grandmother came to live with us. She was old at that time, and she stayed with us for a long time. I used to sleep in the same room with her. At first, I was not happy that I had to share my room with my grandmother. But then slowly, I saw that something was different about my grandmother. I began to observe her - she was at peace, no matter what happened. One day, I asked her the same question you just asked me now.'

'That's when she introduced me to Jesus, her best friend. She told me stories from His life, all the miracles He did, all His teachings and so much more. Actually, most of the stories you hear from me are from what I remember my grandmother telling me!'

'You remember all those stories from such a long-ago grandmother?' Sam asked.

'Yes, I do! I can almost see her telling me those stories, especially those times at night, before we went to sleep.'

### **Lesson Time:**

'She once took me to this river and asked me to look into the still waters. She asked me what I saw in it.' I said, 'I see clear water.' 'Anything else, dear?' My grandmother asked again. I looked again and I said – 'I see my reflection!'

Sarah excitedly burst out, 'It's like a mirror isn't it grandmother?'

Grandmother explained, 'In those days mirrors were not common in houses.'

'What? You didn't have mirrors in your house grandmother?' asked Sam in amazement.

'Well, we only had one and the whole family had to share it!' said grandmother.

Then my grandmother said – 'child, just like you see your reflection in the water, when people see you, they must see Jesus, His reflection.'

'I don't understand,' Sarah said.

'What I mean by reflection is that, when people see you, they should see the characteristics of Jesus in your life. It's sort of like the water reflecting your face in it.'

'Oh, ok. Now I understand,' Sarah said.

'But then, I didn't know how I could do that. Then, my grandmother told me a secret how I can reflect the character of Jesus, in my life and how I can keep Jesus as my

best friend. Well, actually she told me three secrets,' whispered grandmother with a smile on her face.

'What are they, what are they?' The children asked excitedly.

'Show me your hands,' grandmother said, and she handed them 2 thin ropes.

'Ropes? Is this the secret,' asked Sam. 'What do you do with these small ropes?'

'Have patience my dear; this is part of the secret,' grandmother gently replied.

'She taught me to tie simple knots on the rope. And then while saying the Jesus Prayer, I used the knots in the rope to keep count.'



'See, like this,' grandmother said, taking Sam's small rope and making a simple knot on it.

'Why don't you try and make a knot, Sam?'

'It looks hard,' Sam said.

'It's easy,' Sarah said, she made a knot easily, but Sam needed some help. But finally he did it!

'Ok, now, make a total of 10 such knots – spacing each knot equally,' grandmother said.

Then she took out her own old rope with 10 knots and showed it to the kids.

'My grandmother helped me to make 10 knots like this. And then, as I said the Jesus Prayer slowly, I would hold one knot firmly. Then the next time I said the Jesus Prayer, I would move to the next knot.'

'My grandmother told me, say the Jesus prayer at least 10 times in the morning, afternoon and evening. You see, this 'rope' can be to help keep count while praying.'

'I started doing it faithfully and then over the years, I did it more often. Now I do it even without thinking much about it. This prayer helps me to be aware of the fact that Jesus is with me, all the time.

He is a friend who will never' ... 'leave me nor forsake me!' Sarah finished the sentence.

'**The second secret** was the most difficult for me to digest. Because it had to do with food!' grandmother said.

'Oh, she must have told you to wash your hands'! Sam answered thinking back to his hospital episode.

'Well, my grandmother taught me that too, but the second secret was to **fast** ever so often.'

‘What?? Not eat? That would be so difficult grandmother. I can never do that!’ Sam said.

‘Yes, at first it was difficult, and I started slowly – first with not eating anything before Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Then sometime later, I avoided eating chocolate for Lenten season. It was really difficult; but then I realized that avoiding food helped me overcome my temptations – like anger and jealousy. Over the years slowly I became better at fasting regularly. Of course, I love cooking delicious food, especially for you all, but I love to fast also.’

‘No wonder I didn’t see you in the kitchen on Sunday morning grandmother,’ Sarah said.

Just then they saw a man riding a bicycle coming near. It was a hot day and he stopped by the shade of the tree to get some rest. Seeing him sweating and hot, Sarah took out her water bottle and gave the man a drink. The man thanked her. ‘What time is it,’ the grandmother asked the man. He said, ‘it’s nearly 3pm.’



‘Oh, children, it’s time for us to start walking back home. Otherwise, you will miss your bus home!’

‘But grandmother, you didn’t tell us the final secret!’ exclaimed Sarah and Sam at the same time.

She smiled and said, ‘you just practiced the third secret – **Almsgiving** – giving to others from what you have.’

‘When I was your age, I started to look for simple small ways to help others. Like one day I shared my extra pencil with my friend, another day I shared my lunch with a friend who forgot to bring it, another time I shared my extra clothes with one of my friends whose clothes were torn. I used my time to help other younger children in their studies. God always loves a cheerful giver, and He always blesses those who give, said grandmother.’ They were home by that time. Their parents had packed their bags and were ready to go.

Grandmother hugged them tightly and said, ‘continue to practice these three things, and one day, your grandchildren will ask you the same questions you asked me too.’



‘Now, let’s say the Jesus Prayer together’ said grandmother. ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have Mercy on Me a Sinner.’

Then, they said the Lord’s Prayer together and grandmother gave them lots of kisses and they left for their homes. Their vacation had come to an end, but the lessons they had learnt didn’t leave them even after they were far from grandmother’s home.

‘When will we see grandmother again? I want to hear her stories again.’ Sam asked his parents.

‘Maybe next year, for your school vacation,’ Sam’s mother replied.

Sam looked out the window of the bus and started to imagine all the new stories and adventures he would have next year.



**Application:**

1. I will use my counting rope (which we will make today) when I say the Jesus Prayer every day.
2. I will slowly learn to fast (maybe no chocolates for a day, or no TV or phone for a day), when my parents think I am old enough I will not eat before Divine Liturgy.
3. I will practice almsgiving (helping others)

**Questions:**

1. Where did Sarah and Sam go with their grandmother in today's story?
2. What was not common in homes when grandmother was young?
3. When people see us, whose reflection should they see?
4. What are the 3 secrets that grandmother said had helped her to become more like Jesus and to reflect his characteristics in her life?
5. How can we practice these 3 secrets in our lives?
6. What prayers did the grandmother say with Sam and Sarah before they left for home?

**Memory Verse:**

(Age 4 to 10)

Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. - I John 2:6

(Age 11-15)

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. - Psalm 51:1

Give ear to my words, O Lord , Consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. - Psalm 5:1-2

**Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen †

## Activity/Craft: Counting Rope

### Materials Needed:

Small thin rope/twine, (40 cm long) (if the rope is very thin cut 80cm and fold it in half to make it thicker)

### Counting Rope

Give each child the small rope and Show them how to tie a knot and how to space the knots evenly

Let them tie 10 knots in their rope, being careful to space the knots equally (small kids will need help, however DO NOT do it for them, do it together with them so they feel like they made it)

Show the kids how to hold the first knot and pray the Jesus Prayer, then hold the next knot and pray the prayer, Go through all 10 of the knots saying the prayer each time.

Now practice this together as a class. Everyone holds the first knot and prays the Jesus Prayer then the second knot, etc.

Encourage the kids to keep this counting rope safe and use it every day or several times a day when they pray, just like the Grandmother did in the story!!



## DAY 3 – SAINT OF THE DAY

### (Saint Antony the Great)

#### Synopsis:

In the year 251 in Egypt, a man named Saint Antony faced big changes. From a comfortable life to facing tragedy and then choosing to live entirely for Christ, this is an inspiring story. Overcoming temptations like no one else has, even today; we use his God-given wisdom to help our spiritual journey.

#### Story:

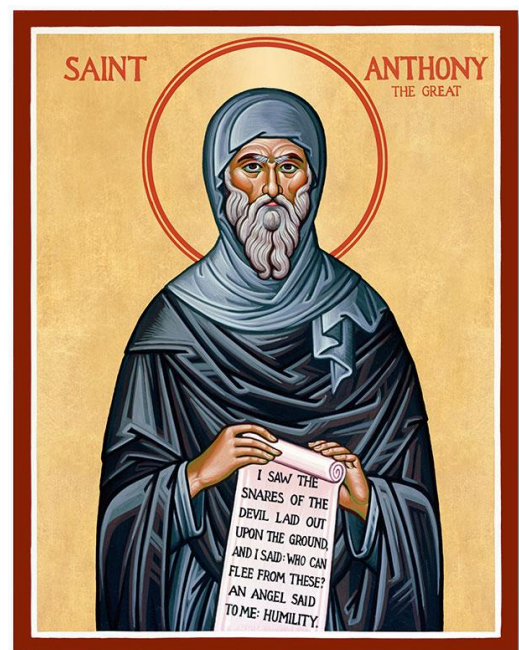
Saint Antony the Great, born in 251 in Egypt near the Thebade desert, had a life filled with challenges and triumphs that left a lasting impact on those who followed his teachings. His journey began in a life of comfort, raised by devoted Christian parents who were both wealthy. However, at the tender age of 20, tragedy struck when his parents passed away, leaving Antony as the sole caretaker of his younger sister.

Despite the huge responsibilities thrust upon him, Saint Antony remained a devoted steward of God, regularly attending church and immersing himself in the Christian way of life. It was during one such church service that Saint Antony's life took a transformative turn. The priest read a passage from Matthew's gospel, recounting Jesus' words to a rich young man, "If you want to be perfect, sell everything you own and give the money to the poor." Saint Antony, deeply moved, imagined himself in the young man's shoes and sold most of his riches, keeping only a small portion for his sister's well-being.

Saint Antony made the decision to leave his home and live entirely for Christ, as a result of his newly discovered faith and conviction. Placing his sister in the care of a community of praying women, he set out to live an extremely simple life in a humble hut near his hometown. Engaging in activities such as gardening and weaving palm mats, Saint Antony began his solitary journey.

As he lived this extremely simple life, seeking God through prayer and fasting. Saint Antony faced numerous temptations from the devil. The devil would often try to put doubts and evil thoughts in his mind. Sometimes it is said the demons would try and attack him physically too! However, through unwavering dedication to prayer and fasting, Saint Antony emerged victorious over these temptations.

Not afraid of the devil, Saint Antony continued his special life of total dedication to God, away from the society in the deep desert area, for over 20 years!



And it is during this time,

he developed a unique practice of tying knots in a rope to help him keep count of his prayers. But the devil understood the power of this habit and therefore, attempted to disrupt his spiritual discipline, by untying these knots. But Saint Antony, with God's special wisdom and guidance began tying the knots with the symbol of the cross, overcoming the devil's efforts.

Saint Anthony was so spiritually powerful that once when the devil came in the form of ferocious animals, he laughed at them, telling them that if they had any authority, they should try and attack him. But do you know what happened? In a moment of divine victory, these ferocious creatures all vanished like smoke, showing God's protection over the saint.

Many were inspired by his life, choosing to embrace extremely simple lifestyles. Saint Antony continued to share his wisdom, occasionally traveling to nearby towns to preach and teach. Despite government restrictions on public preaching, he fearlessly proclaimed his faith. God allowed Saint Antony to live to the remarkable age of 105 before peacefully departing.

Though Saint Antony is no longer among us, his life remains a profound example, influencing generations to come. His journey from wealth to a life fully devoted to Christ, his resilience against temptation and his unwavering faith continue to inspire people to live purposeful and devout lives. Saint Antony's legacy endures as a testament to the transformative power of faith, church, and an extremely simple life devoted to Christ.

### **Lesson:**

From Saint Antony's story, we can learn the power of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Especially we learned something new today: where the knots in the prayer rope came from.

His journey teaches us that even in challenging times, using the three pillars of faith – we can resist temptations, and leading a simple and purposeful life can have a profound impact.

Of course, never forget the Jesus Prayer. And now we have a way to keep count while saying the powerful prayer: The Jesus Prayer!

## **Questions:**

1. What was the name of the saint?
2. What kind of family was he from?
3. What tragic thing happened when he was 20 years old?
4. When St. Antony was attending a church service the priest read a passage from the Bible that changed his life. What was the passage about?
5. What did St. Antony do with all of his riches? Did he keep anything? Why or why not?
6. What did he do with his younger sister?
7. What kind of life did St. Antony live, was it very simple or luxurious?
8. How did St. Antony overcome temptations and attacks by the devil?
9. For how many years did St. Antony live in solitude in the desert?
10. What unique practice did he start during his time in the desert to help him keep count of his prayers?
11. Was anyone inspired by his simple lifestyle?
12. How old was St. Antony when he died?
13. What are the 3 pillars of faith that St. Antony practiced in his life?
14. What can I learn for my life from the life of St. Antony?