ST. MARY'S EDUCATION MINISTRY



Middle/High School Age

References:

Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1

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Unit I: Jesus' Public Ministry (John chapters 1-11)

Lesson 1 [Introduction and Chapter 1:1-18]

Introduction:

- The first books of the New Testament scriptures are the four gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word gospel literally means good news or glad tidings. The gospels tell of the life and teaching of Jesus.
- They were written by the followers of Christ, who were filled with the Holy Spirit after the Lord's resurrection, to bear witness to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the promised Messiah-Christ of Israel and the Savior of the world.
- The gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the ***synoptic gospels***, which means that they "look the same". These three gospels are very similar in content and form and are most probably interrelated textually in some way.
- The gospel of Saint John is very different from the synoptic gospels. It is undoubtedly the latest written, being the work of the beloved disciple and apostle of the Lord at the end of his life near the close of the first century.
- The gospel of Saint John begins with its famous prologue which identifies Jesus of Nazareth with the divine Word of God of the Old Testament, the Word of God Who was 'in the beginning with God,' Who 'is God,' the One through Whom 'all things were made' (1.1–3).
- In the Tradition of the Orthodox Church, a tradition expressed in the Church's iconography, the four gospels are considered to be symbolized in the images of the 'four living creatures' of the biblical apocalypse, the lion, the ox, the man and the eagle, with the interpretation connecting **Matthew with the man, Luke with the ox, Mark with the lion and John with the eagle** (Ezek 1.10, Rev 4.7). Mathew is about what Jesus "SAID", Mark is about what Jesus "DID". Luke is about what Jesus "LIKE/who He was", and John is about "WHO JESUS REALLY IS".
- The four gospels, taken together, but each with its own unique style and form, remain forever as the scriptural center of the Orthodox Church.



- John is the eagle because his Gospel “flies” highest in revealing who Jesus is as the eternal Son of God.

The Author:

- The word John means “Jehovah is tender”.
- From the Gospels, we know that St. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome.
- His brother is James, who is usually mentioned first, and was older.
- He and his brother James were fishing partners with Simon [Peter].
- John and James were preparing their nets in a boat when Jesus called them, both left the boat and their father to follow Jesus, Matthew 4:21-22
- St. Irenaeus reports that John was twenty-five years old when the Lord Jesus called him to be His disciple
- The Lord Jesus Christ chose Simon, Andrew, John, and James to be His first disciples.
- The Lord named John and his brother ‘Boanerges’ which means the ‘sons of thunder’ Mark 3:17.
- John became the apostle of love.
- He was extremely gentle and his gospel, letters, and revelation all revolve round ‘love’
- He continued to preach about love till his old age.
- He also refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, John13:23 20:2, 21:7,20.
- John preached in Asia Minor, namely in Ephesus.
- He was tortured under Dematious and was exiled to the Island of Patmos.
- There he enjoyed the revelations concerning the Day of the Lord: The book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ. He remained in exile until his death.
- In his old age, when unable to do more, he was carried into the assembly of the Church at Ephesus, and his sole exhortation was, "Little children, love one another."
- Of the twelve apostles, he was the only one that wasn’t martyred, dying in exile on the island of Patmos. In addition to the gospel of John, he also wrote 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.

Place and Date of Writing:

It was probably written in Ephesus, towards the end of St. John’s life, in the late 80’s or early 90’s.

Purpose, Theme and Audience:

- The purpose of the Gospel according to St. John is to confirm the believers in their faith that Jesus is the Christ and He is God, and through Him we will have life.
- This Gospel was, in general, written to believers in the whole world.
- Christ's deity is clear in every chapter of the book.

- ❖ It is very important for us to study this book to know how to respond to all the attacks happening nowadays on Christ's Divinity, the Trinity and the Church Sacraments.
- ❖ Probably, the most important words repeatedly used are: "believe"- (98 times); "know"- (55 times); "live"- (55 times); "testify"- (21 times)
- ❖ These words have not been repeated at random or without reason, but it is done by the will of divine inspiration to reveal the aim of this Gospel.
- ❖ The logos (the Word): only John calls Jesus the Word.

Book outline/Summary:

A. Unit I: Jesus' Public Ministry (John chapters 1-12)

1. Prologue (John 1:1-18):The Word of God, which brought all things into being, becomes flesh in Jesus of Nazareth.
2. Call of the First Disciples (John 1:19-51)
3. Wedding at Cana and Cleansing the Temple (John 2:1-25)
4. Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)
5. John the Baptist and Jesus (John 3:22-36)
6. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-42)
7. Healing the Official's Son (John 4:43-54)
8. Healing the Lame Man at Bethesda (John 5:1-47)
9. Feeding the Five Thousand and Walking on the Sea (John 6:1-21)
10. Bread of Life Discourse (John 6:22-71)
11. Debates about Jesus' Identity (John 7:1-52)
12. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11)
13. The Light of the World (John 8:12-59)
14. Healing the Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)
15. The Good Shepherd Discourse (John 10:1-42): In response to the healing of the man born blind, Jesus identifies Himself as the gate or door through which people find life with God and the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.
16. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:1-57): Raising Lazarus
17. Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet (John 12:1-8)
18. Approaching Jerusalem (John 12:9-26)
19. The End of Jesus' Public Ministry (John 12:27-50)

B. Unit II: Jesus' Last Night With His Disciples and the Farewell Discourse (John chapters 13-17)

Jesus washes His disciples' feet to show His love and to foreshadow His death, speaks about His return to the Father and the coming of the Holy Spirit, then prays for His followers and those who will believe because of their witness.

1. Washing the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-20)
2. The Betrayal of Judas (13: 21-38)
3. Jesus' Departure and Return (John 14:1-14)
4. The Coming of the Spirit (John 14:15-31)
5. The Vine and Branches (John 15:1-27)
6. The Work of the Spirit (John 16:1-33)
7. Jesus' Prayer (John 17:1-26)

C. Unit III: Passion and Resurrection (John chapters 18-21)

Jesus is arrested, questioned by Jewish leaders and Pilate the Roman governor, then crucified and placed in a tomb. Rising from the dead, He appears to Mary Magdalene, Thomas, and other disciples in Jerusalem and by the Sea of Galilee.

1. Jesus' Arrest (John 18:1-11)
2. Hearings before the Jewish Authorities (John 18:12-27)
3. Hearings before Pontius Pilate (John 18:28-19:16)
4. The Crucifixion (John 19:17-42)
5. At the Empty Tomb (John 20:1-18)
6. Appearances to the Disciples (John 20:19-31)
7. The Great Catch of Fish (John 21:1-14)
8. Peter and the Beloved Disciple (John 21:15-25)

Chapter 1:1-18: "The Logos"

Lesson Goal:

Understand how St. John speaks about the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and presents his own testimony.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the everlasting Logos, one in essence with the Father [1-2]. He is the Donor of life and light, and through Him, we are granted the privilege of adoption to the Father [3-13].

Lesson Body:

The Word of God 1:1-13:

1) Eternal Word: verses 1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him

nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

With John's great prologue, he traces the origin of "The Word" backward into eternity to where God the Son was present with God the Father before time.

The opening verses of the Prologue have shown us that the Word is both united with and yet distinct from the Father.

"The Word was with God", ➔ expresses the co-existence, but at the same time the distinction of person.

"the Word was God"➔ maintains the distinction of person, but at the same time asserts the oneness of essence.

"We will begin, then, with the creation of the world and with God its Maker, for the first fact that you must grasp is this: the renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word who made it in the beginning. There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation; for the One Father has employed the same agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word who made it at first." St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation.

The Logos is the organ or instrument by which everything was made. Logos means the Word that brings about creation and also means speech itself, which is the natural signal to what is in the mind.

In Him, In this Word, or Son of God, was life, because He gives life to every living creature.

It isn't that the Word "contains" life and light; He is life and light. Therefore, without Jesus, we are dead and in darkness.

- "Could the Word be made by God?
  No, Because He too was with God since the beginning.
- Are the things that God created different from the things that the Word created?
  No, because all things were made through Him". St Augustine.

A person who rejects the light, and holds on to darkness, becomes a darkness that cannot comprehend or tolerate the light.

2) John's Witness: The True Light: Verses 6-13:

The aim of John the Batist's mission was to bear witness to the divine Word who is the Light shining upon those sitting in the darkness.

Verse 8: “John was a light, yet he was not the true Light. If he had not been enlightened, he would have suffered from the darkness. However, he became a light by his being enlightened.” St. Augustine.

The Son was in the world, From the beginning, frequently appearing and making known to His servants, the patriarchs and prophets, the divine will, in dreams and visions, and various other ways.

“The world that did not know Him” are those who love the world and hate the Lord.

The great St. Athanasius says, "The Son of God became man in order that the sons of men, the sons of Adam, might become sons of God….He [Adam is the son of God by nature; we, by grace.”

He had come to His own yet His own rejected Him; yet in the midst of them a few faithful ones were found who received Him. These were driven out of the synagogue and were forbidden to worship in the temple.

1:12-13. Reference to children of God builds on the Old Testament characterization of Israel as God’s children (see Deut. 14:1). Born not of natural descent . . . but of God makes clear that true children of God come into being through faith in Messiah, not physical birth, or ethnic descent. This opens the way for Gentiles to become God’s children.

The Word Becomes Flesh 1:14-18

In this opening verse John is teaching the Church that back before time, the universe and the earth, which were once created through the Word of God, will now be renewed through the same Word, the Word who has come in the flesh-Jesus the Christ, John 1:14.

His divine nature was in no way degraded by His humiliation. This is what happens when a king speaks to a poor person with concern and tenderness. This does not tarnish the king with any shame.

The Lord Jesus Christ was not transformed from His essence into a body. Such ideas contradict the Orthodox faith concerning the mystery of Incarnation. The eternal Word remained fully God and took a complete human nature. He remained the same in essence and additionally took on the image of a slave.

John the Baptist identifies himself as the one the prophet Isaiah prophesied in “Isaiah 40:3”, the prophet Malachi also prophesied the one who would announce the Messiah in “Malachi 3:1”.

- “What does “ …grace for grace,” mean?

> This involves faith; for God once more becomes our defender and seeks our benefit. As we are unworthy to be forgiven, we received such a great gift, and this is what is called grace. What is grace? It is that which is granted freely…for you receive a gift from God: a gift of life through faith; with the promise of eternity and life everlasting as a reward. That is grace!" St. Augustine.

In verses 15, St John is helping us understand something confusing John had said. He was older than Jesus in terms of earthly birth, and yet, because Jesus is God and has always existed, Jesus came before John.

In the Old Testament no one could see God and live. Men saw God indirectly and they could contemplate God's "glory" as it was revealed in the burning bush or the Glory Cloud.

But through the mystery of the Incarnation, God reveals Himself to us, and God the Son dwells among me.

Lesson Delivery Idea:

St. Augustine makes a comparison between the bread that fills the stomach and the Word that satisfies the mind. When He provides food to the people, He cannot offer the same bread to all those present; whereas He offers the Word to everyone and all the people receive it fully in their minds. Truly, the word of man is amazing as it is presented to all in its entirety: how much more efficient would the Word of God, the Creator, be?

If I wished to feed you, I could fill your stomach but not your minds. I would offer food to satisfy you, and do you not break it up to share together? Could my bread go to every single one of you? For if one of you gets it, then the rest will get nothing.

However, note now that I am now speaking and you are all receiving my words. Not just that, but you all are receiving them in their entirety. How amazing are my words! *So how much more amazing is the Word of God?*! Hear this also: I speak with utterances so that speech is delivered to you without getting separated from me.

It reaches you while it does not depart from me. Before I spoke, I possessed the words while you did not have them. Now I have spoken the words, and you have started to receive them without me losing any of them. *How amazing are my words! And how much more would the Word of God be?!* St. Augustine

Memory Verse: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jn 1:1

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1