BE ATTENTIVE

Safe Environment Lesson Plans
Corresponding to the
God With Us Curriculum

PRE SCHOOL to GRADE FOUR
Nativity of the Theotokos

GRADE FIVE to GRADE EIGHT
Transfiguration of Christ

GRADE NINE to GRADE TWELVE
The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Prepared by the
Office of Religious Education
for the Byzantine Catholic
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Revised 2011
INTRODUCTION

In 2003 the Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh initiated policies to protect the rights, safety and dignity of every person, especially children and youth. These policies are a direct response to the mandate given by the bishops of the United States in the 2011 revision of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Article 12 states, “Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain safe environment programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles.”

In 2004, the Office of Religious Education created a Safe Environment Program for grades Pre School to High School corresponding to the God With Us curriculum. Due to the rapid advances of technology, the Safe Environment lesson plans have been revised with a different format, additional content and title.

The title chosen for the revised Safe Environment curriculum is, “Be Attentive.” Our children and youth are familiar with the phrase used repeatedly in the Divine Liturgy. Upon hearing this phrase in the Divine Liturgy we are reminded to “pay attention” to what is being celebrated, to what we are hearing and receiving. All of us in our daily life outside of Church need to be attentive to what we are experiencing. Hopefully, our children and youth will be able to make the connection and have the skills they need to live a safe, healthy, happy and holy life.

REVISED FORMAT

The revised Safe Environment lesson plans are designed to teach grade level groups instead of individual grades. Each lesson plan format follows the God With Us manual format with the exception of the high school group.

The block of time for each lesson is forty minutes but can be adjusted to fit your Eastern Christian Formation program schedule. Documentation must be provided that these lessons have been taught (see Appendix A). Catechetical Sunday is always the third Sunday in September. The form is to be returned by the third Sunday in October.
**WHAT DO THE LESSONS LOOK LIKE?**

Byzantine Catholic Christians live in a visual Church. Because of their educational impact on the believer, *icons*, their art form and theology, offer a catechesis with which all age levels can identify. St. John of Damascus, 730 AD referred to icons as “the books of the illiterate, the never silent heralds of the honor due to the saints, teaching, without the use of words, those who gaze upon them.”

Therefore, the foundation for all of the lessons is a reflection on a particular feast day icon found in Unit Four of the revised student texts, grades one to six. Icon copy sheets are provided for the grades that do not have Unit Four feast day icons.

Every parish with a catechetical program, as well as the Coordinator, will receive a copy of the lesson plans. The Pastor or Coordinator of the program will decide who will teach the lessons.

**PARTICIPATION**

Parents of students participating in the Eastern Christian Formation program have the option to choose whether or not their child participates in the Safe Environment lesson. At your initial meeting with parents at the beginning of the year, a copy of the Safe Environment lessons should be made available for previewing. If they choose not to have their child participate, they are to complete the “opt-out” form, Appendix B, and return it to the Catechetical Coordinator. This form should be kept in the ECF parish file.

**CONCLUSION**

God reveals Himself in our lives today and calls us to discern and commit ourselves to living like Him wherever we are. Your dedication to catechetical ministry and your cooperation with the Office of Religious Education are deeply appreciated. May God bless and reward you.
Documentation of Safe Environment Lessons

Name of Parish ________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________

Name of Pastor ________________________________________________

The lesson plans for Safe Environment, corresponding with the God With Us Curriculum, have been presented to all the Eastern Christian Formation classes during the 20___ - 20___ school year.

______________________________________________________________
Signature of Parish Catechetical Coordinator

______________________________________________________________
Date

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE CHANCERY BY THE THIRD SUNDAY OF OCTOBER.
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
Safe Environment Teaching for Children
“Opt-Out” Form

My Child’s Full Name __________________________

My Child’s Age and Grade ______________________

Parish and City _______________________________

Please verify the following statements:

_____ The Safe Environment Program was offered to my child.

_____ It is my choice that my child not participate in this program.

_____ I have received the materials from my parish for me to use to instruct my child on this topic.

Name of Parent or Guardian _______________________________

(Please print clearly)

Signature _________________________________

Date _________________________________

Introduction, Appendix B
INTRODUCTION
Our Church celebrates the Nativity of the Theotokos (God-Bearer) on September 8 with special veneration since it is through her the Son of God, Jesus, became man. The feast reminds us of the blessedness of the human race. The story of Mary’s birth is not found in Scripture but is based on the Tradition of the Church and non-scriptural sources found in the writings of St. James (The Protoevangelion).

LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW
This lesson will help the children see that God had a plan for Mary. Mary was special. God has a plan for all of His children. He created us and we are special in His eyes. We deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. We must be kind and respectful, not only to ourselves but also to others.

TITLE OF THE LESSON
Nativity of the Theotokos

OBJECTIVE
To acquaint the children with the feast and to let them know that like Mary, they are special in the eyes of God. No one has a right to harm them in anyway.

FOR THE CATECHIST
Like Mary, children possess the qualities of humility and receptiveness. They are simple, trusting and open to others. Because of their vulnerability, they need to know how to protect themselves from people, places and things that could harm them.

BACKGROUND READING
Come Bless the Lord Icon Packet I #20, Nativity of the Mother of God.
Light for Life, Part II, pages 50-54
Teaching Pics: #F1 Feasts of the Theotokos

MATERIALS NEEDED
GWU student text, Last Unit, Grades 1-4, Our Church Year, Nativity of the Theotokos.
Coloring sheet for Pre-K-Kindergarten (Appendix B) Note that this icon is slightly different from the color icon in the student book. Crayons, scissors and glue

ACTIVITY TRACKS (You might want to divide the group in choosing the activities.)
Basic: Icon coloring sheet Appendix B
Group: MY DIGNITY worksheet Appendix C
Craft: Who is in the icon? Appendix D
LESSON PLAN

OPENING

Gather the children at the icon corner and sing a hymn to Mary. (Appendix A)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome the children and have them give their name, grade and the name of their ECF teacher since they are from different grades. Tell the children in Grades 1-4 to open their GWU text to the last unit and find the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, September 8. (Check to see if the children have the correct page.) Preschool and Kindergarten students can use the coloring page or share a book with someone else. Ask the children if they recognize anyone in the icon. Tell them who the figures are. (Anna, the mother of Mary is in the reclining position since she has just given birth to Mary. Joachim, the father of Mary is standing, pointing to his wife. A woman servant is standing next to Anna and another is sitting on a stool, lovingly touching the newborn infant, Mary.)

Call attention to the words “Nativity” and “Theotokos.” Nativity is another word for “birthday.” Theotokos is a Greek word that means, “Birth-giver of God.” Help the children pronounce both words. Sometimes in our prayers we call Mary the “Mother of God” and sometimes, “Theotokos.” Children may not understand the titles but they like to learn new words. Give individuals an opportunity to pronounce “Nativity” and “Theotokos” since both of these words are frequently used in our liturgical worship.

READING THE TEXT

Read aloud the short explanation of the feast or have one of the older students in the group come up to the front of the room and read it. (The children who do not have the text can look on with the others who do have it. The coloring sheet icon is another description of the feast.)

Repeat the sentence from the text, “God wanted Jesus’ mother to be the most special woman in the world” emphasizing the word “special.”

Tell the children they are special too. Each person created by God is special and “unique,” one of a kind like snowflakes. No two snowflakes are alike.

Because we were created by God, no one has a right to harm us in any way. That includes strangers and people we know. We must learn to protect ourselves at all times.

We say NO to strangers who offer rides, treats and ask for directions. We can accept gifts and treats from people we know. Grown-ups should ask grown-ups for directions. If a grown-up wants you to help them, they should ask your parents’ permission.
Have the children place their finger on the servant in the icon who is holding baby Mary. Call attention to the loving manner in which she is “touching” Mary. Explain there are different kinds of touches like hugs, kisses and handshakes. When these touches make us feel loved and appreciated that is “real love.” A bad touch makes us feel uncomfortable. That is “fake love.” You should say “NO,” “STOP” or “I DON’T LIKE THAT” to any touch that makes you uncomfortable.

Our bodies are a gift from God. Your body belongs to you. No one has a right to hurt your body in any way. Everybody deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. (Dignity might be a new word for some children. Tell them it means the same as respect. Have them pronounce it because they will see the word on one of the activity sheets.) If someone does hurt your body, you must tell someone you trust.

Ask the children to name the parents of Mary and identify them in the icon. Mary’s parents taught her “God’s ways” when she was growing up because they were good and holy parents. One of the lessons they taught her was about secrets. There are two kinds of secrets. A good secret, like a surprise birthday party, is one that everybody finds out. A bad secret is one that makes you feel upset or afraid to tell. Bad secrets should be told to parents or a trusted adult immediately. It is not OK for someone to force you to keep a bad secret, trick you, scare you or promise you things to make you do something you don’t want to do.

Listening was very important to Mary when she was growing up. She listened to her parents and in her prayers she listened to what God was telling her.

We must learn to listen, to “Be Attentive”. The priest in the Divine Liturgy tells us often to “Be attentive.” That means, “Pay attention.” Our bodies have an inner siren called INSTINCTS. That is a feeling in our belly or head that tells us, “This is not OK, something is wrong.” When something is unsafe, our instincts tell us to slow down and be careful. (This age level may not be familiar with the word, so have them repeat it after you and reinforce its meaning.)

CLOSING

The icon of the Theotokos has taught us many lessons. (Have one of the older children reread the third paragraph on the icon page which begins, “This feast reminds us, etc.) Tell the children to ask Mary, the Theotokos, to pray for them, to guard and protect them every day of their lives.

Give directions for the activities found in the Appendix. Activities can be done with a large group, or students can return to individual classrooms for separate activities.
**ACTIVITIES**

Appendix B,

Basic: Coloring sheet

Pre-K and Kindergarten do not have the feast days in their curriculum. The coloring sheet should be given to them at the beginning of the lesson. Coloring sheets can be passed out to the other children at the end of the lesson and taken home. Tell the children to hang them up in a place where they can be reminded about everything they learned in the lesson.

Appendix C.

Group: MY DIGNITY worksheet

Pass out the worksheet and call attention to the different snowflakes. Ask the children if they remember hearing the word “snowflakes” in the lesson. (The word was used referring to the uniqueness of each person God created.)

Call attention to the title at the top of the worksheet and ask if anybody can read the word or knows what it means. (The word means “respect”.) What does the word have to do with our bodies?

Read the sentences on the worksheet (or ask one of the older students to read it) and call attention to the two words in the last sentence, “abuse” and “bullying.” Third or fourth graders might be familiar with the words because of all the media attention recently given to these topics. Ask the children what they know about the two topics. End the discussion by emphasizing respect and dignity. Have the students take home the worksheet and put it in a place where they can be reminded about the lesson.

Appendix D.

Craft: Who is in the icon?

Have the children read the names of the individuals in the icon (separate sheet). Have them cut out the names and paste them on the correct figures. (Before applying paste, be sure the children have identified the person correctly.) Ask the children what they remember about each one from the lesson.
Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos

Rejoice, O Vir-gin The-o-tokos! Ma-ry, full of grace,
the Lord is with you! Bless-ed are you a-mong wom-en, and bless-ed
is the fruit of your womb. For you gave birth to Christ the Sav-ior
and Re-deem-er of our souls.
Nativity of the Mother of God
My Dignity

God created me.
I am special.

My body should be treated with respect and dignity.

Jesus teaches me how to be kind to myself and others.

My dignity can not be taken away by bullying or abuse.
Identify the people in the icon.
Cut out the names below and paste them onto the icon above.

Saint Joachim  
Saint Anna

The Theotokos  
Servant for Theotokos  
Servant for Anna

Pre School—Grade 4, Appendix D
BE ATTENTIVE

Safe Environment Lesson Plans
Corresponding to the God With Us Curriculum
GRADE FIVE to GRADE EIGHT

INTRODUCTION
The feast of the Transfiguration of Christ was chosen for this Safe Environment lesson because it does not occur during the catechetical year. We want our children to be acquainted with this event in the life of Jesus and His apostles. The feast is celebrated on August 6, and the theme of light expressed in the feast will help the children understand and remember their dignity as children of God.

The word “transfigure” means “to change”. The Transfiguration of Christ was a unique display of His divine character and a glimpse of the glory which Jesus had before He came to earth in human form. The scriptural account of this feast can be found in Mt 17:1-8, Lk 9:28-36 and Mk 9:2-8.

LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW
As children get older the subject matter for safety evolves. However, the importance of teaching children how to protect themselves remains constant.

They have been taught that Jesus is God’s Son. God reveals Himself to us through His Son, Jesus. Jesus was both human and divine. This lesson will show the children that the Divine Light (God’s Life) that surrounded Jesus on the mountain during His Transfiguration is in each of us through our Baptism. Therefore, our bodies are “Temples of the Holy Spirit,” (1 Cor 6:19) and no one has a right to harm us.

OBJECTIVE
The lesson will provide some simple skills on how children can protect their bodies, make healthy choices, and accept and love themselves and others the way God intended.

FOR THE CATECHIST
At this age self-acceptance, trust and personal freedom undergo significant changes. The circle of people in the lives of children this age includes a community much larger than their families. Through media and the internet, these students are meeting more people than they had previously known. This transitional period from childhood to adolescence needs direction, acceptance, approval of peers and life skills to stay safe. Children this age realize that intentions and motives are important factors in making decisions.
Reflecting on the icon of the Transfiguration of Christ, the children will hear the voice of the Father saying how pleased He is with His beloved Son and further on in the gospel of Matthew He says, “Do not be afraid.” (Mt 17:7). The Divine Light of Jesus is always present within us.

**BACKGROUND READING**
Come Bless the Lord Icon Packet I, #38, The Transfiguration of Christ
Light for Life, Part II, page 46, Light for Life Part III, pages 19-21
The Holy Gospel: A Byzantine Perspective (John S. Custer) pages 126-130
Teaching PIC #F9 Transfiguration

**MATERIALS NEEDED**
GWU text, Grades 5-7, Last Unit, Our Church Year, August 6, Transfiguration of Christ
Icon sheet of Transfiguration of Christ (for those who do not have the revised text)
Copies of Appendix A, B and C
Scissors & glue, pencil or pen

**ACTIVITY TRACKS** (You might want to divide the group in choosing the activities.)
Basic: Keeping Myself Safe Appendix A
Group: Online Safety and Lesson Review Appendix B
Craft: Who is in the icon? Appendix C
LESSON PLAN

OPENING

Gather the children at the icon corner and together sing or recite the Our Father.

INTRODUCTION

Depending on the class size and the age of the children you may want the eighth grade students to attend the Safe Environment lesson for grades 9-12.

Introduce yourself to the children and tell them the lesson today is about the Transfiguration of Christ. Tell them the word “transfigure” means “to change.” Jesus wanted to show us that He is both God and man. He is reminding us that our bodies are special. When we go to live with God in heaven, our bodies will look very different.

The children in the group are probably from different schools and may not know each other. Ask them to give their name, grade and day school they attend. It would be nice to acknowledge any altar servers that might be in the group.

Have the students open their textbook to the last unit and find the icon for the feast day, Transfiguration of Christ, August 6. Make sure everybody has the correct icon. Those who do not have the text should receive a copy of the icon, Appendix C.

Ask a volunteer to come before the class and read the story of the feast. If no one volunteers, the catechist should read the lesson. Call attention to the question at the bottom of the page and read it aloud. “What have you seen that reminds you how great God is?” You can direct the question to a specific student by name. Some of the responses could be a beautiful sunset, giving us family and friends, providing us with delicious food, etc. Tell the children that on this feast day it is a custom in our Church to bless fruits that ripen in the summer since food is a gift from God.

Direct the children’s attention to the figures in the icon. The Apostles Peter, James and John are in the lower portion of the icon. Their bodies show us they are frightened because they have never seen Jesus like this before. Jesus tells them, “Do not be afraid.” (Mt 17:7) St. Peter, shown to the left, is raising his left hand to shield his eyes from the light. St. John, in the center is depicted as fallen, his back turned to the light. St. James, to the right, is portrayed as fleeing from the light.

Ask someone to identify Moses. (He is holding the Ten Commandments.) The children may not be familiar with the other figure, the Prophet Elias. We can read about the Prophet Elias in the Old Testament of the Bible in the Book of Kings. Both Moses and Elias lived before the time of Jesus and are now in heaven.
Jesus is showing to the figures in the icon and to us that He is God. The circle of light surrounding Jesus has a very special message for us. Ask the children to look at the story on the page and find out how many times the word “light” appears. (4 times)

The message the light gives us is that we all received the Divine Light of Christ when we were baptized. That light is God’s life in us, guiding, protecting and helping us to live healthy and holy lives.

There are many ways to feel healthy and holy. One of the ways is to feel good about yourself. We call that a “healthy self-image.” When you have a low self-image you worry that you are not “good enough.” Television, movies and the internet often give us the wrong messages about how we should look or behave. Sometimes our peers pressure us into doing things we know are wrong. They want to have “power” over us. This is called “bullying.” We must stand up for ourselves and not allow anyone to bully us. Tell the children that if they are confronted by a bully, they should ask the Divine Light within them to give them the courage to say, “I’m standing up for myself and making this stop.” Talk it over with a trusted adult who will give you additional help to prevent this.

On the mountain at the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of God the Father was heard. What did he say? (The words are in the text.) Tell the class that each of you is a beloved son and daughter of God. No one has a right to harm you. You have a right to say “NO” to any unwelcome, uncomfortable or confusing touches. If this happens to you and you can’t get away from it, scream, kick and yell. It is more important to get away from a bad situation than to be polite. Let the class know that sometimes children are harmed by people they know and even trust. Regardless of “who” it is that hurts them, they must tell someone.

Peter, James and John were with Jesus on the mountain because Jesus invited them. Ask a student to read aloud the first five lines of the text. (Emphasize the words, “asked them to come with Him.”) These three apostles were Jesus’ close friends. Good friends make us happy, encourage us and make us feel good about ourselves. It is important to choose your friends wisely. It is also dangerous to share personal information or arrange activities with someone you’ve met for the first time, especially if it is someone online. At all times, your parents should know with whom you are communicating. Think before you share. Online images don’t fade away.

Remind the children that when they are out with their friends they should not wear clothes or carry items with their names on the outside. It is good to keep personal information private and give it only to those we trust. Always take a friend with you when using a public restroom, even in church.
When we were very little our parents told us about “stranger danger.” Most strangers are safe and kind and you may need to rely on the kindness of strangers when your parents are not with you. However, some strangers are not kind. If someone in a car slows down, pulls over or tries to speak with you, you should take three steps back from the car, walk quickly in the opposite direction and tell someone. Adults should ask adults for directions.

Take a few minutes and ask the class if they could think of some other ways to protect themselves.

Conclude the lesson by telling the children that the story of the Transfiguration of Christ should remind us to be brave, safe and holy. Always remember, the Divine Light of Christ is with us at all times.

Before dismissing the class to do the activities, gather everyone around the icon corner and recite or sing the Troparion from the feast found on the bottom of the Transfiguration icon #38 in the icon packet.

**ACTIVITIES**

The activities can be done with the large group or in individual age groups.

Appendix A

Basic: Keeping Myself Safe

You will need to run off copies of this handout for the children. The children can take turns reading each of the points. Ask the class if they can think of other ways in which they can protect themselves. Reinforce the icon lesson by asking the following questions:

1. Have the children open their textbook to the icon of the Transfiguration of Christ. Name the figures in the icon. (Peter, James, John, Moses and Elias) Why did Jesus pick Peter, James and John to go up to the mountain with Him? (They were His close friends.) What did the lesson teach you about friendship?

2. What is the light surrounding Jesus remind us of? (God’s life is the Divine Light within us to protect us and keep us safe.)

3. Name one thing you learned from this lesson that you did not know before. (Give each of the children an opportunity to respond.)
Appendix B

Group: Online Safety and Lesson Review

This is a “fill in” activity for the older children in the group. The catechist can decide which children would benefit most from the activity. Once the children have completed the activity, have each sentence read aloud to reinforce the lesson.

Appendix C

Craft:  Who is in the icon?

Have the children read the names of the individuals in the icon. Have them cut out the names and paste them on the correct figures. (Before applying paste, be sure the children have identified the person correctly.) Ask the children what they remember about the lesson.
KEEPING MYSELF SAFE

I will:

1. Check with my parents, guardians, or other trusted adults before going anywhere, doing anything, helping anyone, accepting anything, getting into a vehicle, or leaving with anyone

2. Take a friend with me when going places or playing outside

3. Tell someone NO if they try to touch me or do things in ways that make me feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, because it’s OK for me to stand up for myself

4. Tell my parents, guardians, or other trusted adults if anything happens to me

Sometimes there are people who choose to trick or hurt others. There is no excuse. No one has the right to force, trick, or pressure people into doing things they don’t want to do.

REMEMBER YOU ARE STRONG, ARE SMART, AND HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE ALWAYS.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, “GOD IS WITH US.”
ONLINE SAFETY AND LESSON REVIEW

Fill in the blanks with the words at the bottom of the sheet.

1. I will not give out my __________ address or __________ number to anyone without my parent’s permission.
2. Photos, video clips or other images of me are not to be sent to online friends without my __________ permission.
3. People who do bad things roam the internet just as they roam the streets. There is some __________ online.
4. Private and family matters should not be discussed ________.
5. In the icon of the Transfiguration of Christ we are reminded that the __________ of Christ is with us always to protect us from harm.
6. If I receive a violent or x-rated email I must not ____________, but should report it to my parents or guardians.
7. The word “transfigure” means to ____________.
8. We have received the Divine Light of Christ in ______________.
9. People who bully others, either in person or on the net, want to have ___________ over them.
10. Having a healthy ___________ means to feel good about yourself and recognize the gifts God has given you.
11. No one has a right to __________ you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, scared or confused.
12. When __________ spoke on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured, He said, “This is my beloved __________.” We, too, are beloved children of God.

parents  Son  change  God
self-image  touch  Divine Light  danger
online  email  respond
Baptism  power  cell phone
Identify the people in the icon.
Cut out the names below and paste them onto the icon above

Moses    Peter    Jesus Christ
John     James    Elias

BE ATTENTIVE

Grade 5—Grade 8, Appendix C
Safe Environment Lesson Plan
A Reflection on the Icon
The Descent of the Holy Spirit
GRADES NINE to TWELVE

INTRODUCTION
Young Christians today struggle to live the demands of a happy, healthy and holy life. The messages the culture gives are in many ways contrary to the Gospel. Our youth need to be able to recognize negative behavior and unhealthy people. Our Byzantine Catholic faith offers many images that can help our youth understand their dignity as creatures made in the image and likeness of God. Reflecting on these images can help young people make good moral decisions. One of the images used in this lesson is the icon of The Descent of the Holy Spirit.

TITLE OF THE LESSON: The Descent of the Holy Spirit

OBJECTIVE
To acquaint the students with the icon of The Descent of the Holy Spirit and give some practical suggestions on how they can put into practice the words of St. Paul, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.” (Rom 12:21)

FOR THE CATECHIST
This lesson may be divided into two sessions depending on the block of time being used.

BACKGROUND READING
Light for Life I, pages 57, 73-75
Light for Life II, pages 37-39, 72-79
Light for Life III, pages 19-20
The Holy Gospel: A Byzantine Perspective, (John S. Custer) pages 341-344
The Apostolic Writings: A Byzantine Perspective, (John S. Custer) pages 15-19, 122

MATERIALS NEEDED
Pen or pencil
Run off copies of Appendix A, B, C and D. Do not pass these sheets out to the students until you come to the reference made in the lesson plan.

LESSON PLAN

Grade 9—Grade 12, Page R-1
OPENING

Pass out the icon sheet Appendix A *The Descent of the Holy Spirit* and together with the class read or sing the prayer under the icon, “Heavenly King” etc.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome the students and have them introduce themselves. (You can be creative with the introductions by using an ice-breaker to set a “comfort zone.” The activities on the Appendix sheets will involve some discussion and decisions.)

Tell the class today they will learn about one of the great feasts in our Church called “Pentecost” or “The Descent of the Holy Spirit,” and direct their attention to the icon sheet. Ask the class if they can identify any of the figures in the icon. This feast is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. We read about this event in the New Testament section of the Bible, the Acts of the Apostles written by St. Luke.

During the time of the apostles, this feast was observed in the Jewish tradition as the day the Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit also on that day, for while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

At this level the students have had some background in the Mysteries of Initiation. Ask the class to name the Mysteries they have already received. (Their response should be Baptism, Chrismation, Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.)

When we received the Mystery of Chrismation as infants the Holy Spirit was given to us in a special way. The priest used “Myron” (blessed olive oil mixed with many fragrances) to anoint our forehead, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, chest, hands and feet. He says, “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.” This indicates that we are “Christians” with the power of the Holy Spirit to do what is right and avoid evil.

The many fragrances of the Myron symbolize the variety of gifts the Holy Spirit gives us. Anointing all the different parts of our bodies reminds us that we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit for all the needs of our life.

Direct the students’ attention to the icon. Look at the Apostles sitting in a semi-circle, some of them holding a book and one of them has a scroll in his hand. Those holding a book are the four Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. St. Peter is holding a scroll since he has already been told by Jesus that he would be head of His church. The center place in the icon is unoccupied because it is reserved for Christ, the invisible head of the Church.
At the bottom of the icon we see a symbolic figure of a king. He is known as “Cosmos,” (a Greek word for “world”) as he represents the world in darkness, surrounded by sin. He holds the scrolls, the Good News of Jesus Christ, which the other Apostles will take on their missionary journeys to the four corners of the earth. In this particular icon the iconographer does not show the tongues of fire on the heads of the Apostles or a noise, like a strong wind” (Acts 2:2). Instead, the icon and the postures of the Apostles reveal peace and serenity. They are of one mind and one heart. That is what healthy relationships are like.

Initiate a discussion about relationships. When they are healthy there is a comfort level, respect for differences, common values and interests. Pass out copies of Appendix B, *The Qualities of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships*. Read through each of these qualities with the class and generate a discussion on how each one of them is important.

- **Ability to communicate.**
  To be able to talk about anything, share feelings, dreams, hopes, and fears; to know that the other person is really listening

- **Ability to show affection.**
  To be able to express one’s feelings and show that one cares about the other by the way one treats him or her

- **Forgiveness.**
  To be able to forgive the mistakes of the other; to be able to trust in the forgiveness offered by the other and let the past go; to not hold a grudge

- **Honesty.**
  To be able to be truthful about everything, including feelings

- **Vulnerability.**
  To feel comfortable being one’s self; to let down one’s guard; to be able to risk being known personally and honestly; to feel safe

- **Dependability.**
  To be there for each other when needed; to keep commitments

- **Humor.**
  To be able to relax, laugh, and have fun together

- **Romance.**
  To be able to be romantic without pressuring the other into an uncomfortable physical relationship

- **Patience.**
To realize that relationships go through rough times, but that doesn’t mean the relationship is poor; to be willing to work through rough times.

- Freedom.
  To not be possessive or jealous; to feel comfortable about the other having friends; to be able to spend time apart.

Abusive relationships are obviously very different. Often they may seem at the beginning like healthy relationships, but after the initial “honeymoon” stage of the relationship is over, they become harmful and hurtful.

- Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another’s boundaries; uses power, tricks, threats, or violence to cross or change another’s boundaries; or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) on another person.

Abuse in relationships can take various forms:

- Emotional abuse: putting down the person, making the person feel bad about him/herself, excessive criticism.
- Coercion and threats: making or carrying out threats to do something physically hurtful, threatening to expose embarrassing secrets.
- Sexual abuse: coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically attacking the sexual parts of one’s body, treating a person like a sexual object.
- Economic abuse: destroying one’s property, using money or gifts as leverage in return for sexual favors.
- Isolation: maintaining surveillance, controlling what a person does or who a person sees or talks to.
- Blaming, Denying: refusing to accept responsibility for abusive behavior, blaming the victim causing the abuse.
- Intimidation: acts designed to frighten a person such as frightening gestures, displaying weapons, smashing objects, driving crazily.

Although violence and abuse have numerous causes, underlying or accompanying many of these is the abuser’s need for power and control. Often times, the victims of abuse appear as a threat to that need or serve as a scapegoat to fill that need. To the abuser, violence may often appear to be acceptable behavior for maintaining power and control over others. Being in control may seem to increase self-esteem, reinforce an individual’s
beliefs about masculinity or femininity, or relieve the feelings of loss of control in other areas of the abuser’s life. Date rape is a prevalent form of dating violence to which many young people are exposed.

The abuser is a product of deep-seated problems that do not make him or her an evil person, but do make him or her a person in need of professional help. In an abusive relationship, the immediate concern is the person being abused and how to enable that person to break the cycle of abuse in order to prevent it from occurring again. There is also a secondary concern for the abuser and enabling that person to receive the help they need to change their pattern of behavior.

It is not uncommon for a victim of abuse to experience some of the following: fear, guilt, shame, loneliness, anger, rage, denial, repression, self-punishment, alcohol and drug abuse, continued involvement in abusive relationships, an unhealthy view of sex, a loss of faith, or fear in seeking help.

The reaction of other family members may not be much different and may demonstrate a lack of knowing how to respond appropriately to a victim of abuse.

Conclude the discussion by assuring the students that help is available for anyone who is in an abusive relationship. There are people and agencies ready to offer help to individuals in abusive relationships. All they need to do is ask for help.

One thing not mentioned in the handout is “filthy language.” Our media is full of it and we can easily become immune to it. It takes great courage to walk away from it or confront it. It is demeaning to our dignity as human beings, created by God.

Looking back at the icon once again we see a group of men, a community. The Acts of the Apostles says, “They were all together in one place.” (Acts 2:1) (Someone in the class might question the absence of Mary and other women not shown in this icon. (Acts 1:13-14). The presence of Mary appears in the Pentecost icon in about the 18th century.)

God is a mystery. We can never know God completely, but we can always know Him increasingly better. We do know God is a community of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In community there is strength and the absence of fear. We all need people in our lives and there are times when we guard our privacy.

The explosion of the internet, email communications and social media has impacted our access to information and ability to stay connected with others. To realize the benefits of cyberspace, we must be aware of the potential dangers it passes along, including cyber bullying, sexting and misuse of social media sites. While posting profiles, age, gender, hobbies and interests can be exciting, the information can also be used by online predators to search for victims.

Pass out Appendix C, Cyber Safety. Call on someone to read the handout and ask the class if they could add to it. (Free information is available for Keeping Kids Safer on the
Remind the students that we experience union with God in a special way when we receive Holy Communion. Look at the word communion. In receiving Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy we identify ourselves with the Body of Christ, our Byzantine Catholic Church, its teachings, images, history and traditions. Participating in the Divine Liturgy connects us not only to the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but also to our parish community. Their presence and prayers support us on our journey in this life. It is important to stay connected to our parish and participate in whatever activities are available.

Everything we do as Christians depends on this fact: the Holy Spirit lives within us. This is why we strive to live a moral life, not because there are laws that must be obeyed, but because we ourselves are Temples of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. “You have been anointed by the Holy One.” (Jn 2:20, 27)

Conclude the lesson by doing the activity found in Appendix D What Would You Do?

Thank the class for their participation and recite or sing the Hymn to the Holy Spirit for the feast of Pentecost found on the icon sheet.
Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.
THE QUALITIES OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy relationships include these qualities:

- Ability to communicate
- Ability to show affection
- Forgiveness
- Honesty
- Vulnerability
- Dependability
- Humor
- Romance
- Patience
- Freedom

Abuse in relationships can take various forms:

- Emotional abuse
- Coercion and threats
- Sexual abuse
- Economic abuse
- Isolation
- Blaming, Denying
- Intimidation
Use professional addresses for applications. College and employers pay close attention to suggestive email addresses.

Be aware of your online footprint. Pictures and postings stay online forever.

Your online and electronic actions are indicators of who you really are.

Think before you send. Images and posted comments cannot be taken back.

Inappropriate pictures and messages jeopardize your future. They can threaten your reputation, privacy and future educational and employment opportunities.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Grade 9—Grade 12, Appendix C
1. You think your friend’s partner isn’t treating him/her right.

2. You see a friend yelling at his girlfriend/boyfriend at a party.

3. You are invited to a party at a home and you are told no parents will be home that night.

4. You need a ride home and you can’t reach your parents.

5. You notice a big change in the behavior of one of your close friends. You are suspicious it might be the result of alcohol or drugs.

6. One of your peers is posting embarrassing information about you on the web.

7. You notice that one of your friends has unexplained injuries, like bruises or scratches.

8. You have received a text or an email that contains a threat.