

**MALANKARA JACOBITE SYRIAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**



TEXT BOOK CLASS – I

2009



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PREFACE

We are thankful to our Lord Almighty in helping us and guiding us through the work of these Sunday school books. These books are the translations of the “Padamanjari” published by Malankara Jacobite Syrian Sunday School Association.

Children of our community, unable to read and write Malayalam were finding it very difficult to study and understand the faith of our church taught in Malayalam. Even in Kerala, children studying in CBSE and English Medium schools are not able to assimilate Malayalam. Circumstances forced us to have English version for the text books. Now the syllabus has changed that caused the second edition of the text books.

A number of persons contributed to this noble venture. We take this opportunity to thank them all. Let God bless every person who contributed to make these books available to His children. We are happy to submit these books in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ .

We are also grateful to St.Peters Jacobite Syrian Church Baharin who helped us for publishing these text Books in English.

Puthencruz
17.08.2009

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MALANKARA JACOBITE SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Malankara Syrian Sunday School Association was formed in December 27, 1920 at a meeting held at Piravom seminary presided over by St. Paulose Athanasious Metropolitan, known as the "Protector of the True Faith". In 1964 when peace was established in the church M.S.S.A. joined the Sunday School Association of the catholicos faction and continued functioning in the name O.S.S.A.E. But the Catholicos ordained by H.H.the Patriarch in 1964, put forward the claim of a new throne in the church contrary to the true faith and canons of the Church which resulted in the split in the Sunday Association also.

In 1973 a meeting of the Sunday school teachers held in connection with the Patriarchal day decided to reorganize the Sunday Schools which owed allegiance to the Holy Throne of Antioch and All the East. Thus Malankara Jacobite Syrian Sunday school Association was formed in the meeting held at St. Peter's Church, Ernakulam on February 20, 1974. The association byelaw was passed in the meeting held at Baker Memorial School, Kottayam on October 2, 1974. The Association is governed by the byelaws amended and approved by the General Body from time to time and subsequently got registered under the Charitable Societies Act.

H.H. the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East is the Supreme Patron and H.B. the Catholicos is the patron of the Association.

The "Atma Deepam" magazine, an organ of the Association enlightens the souls as the name itself implies. There is an examination wing which controls and conducts the examination from Class I to XII including JSSLC. The JSVBS wing prepares study materials and conducts training camps for teachers for the Vacation Bible School all over India. There is a wing which conducts "Balakalolsavam" at Sunday school, District, Diocese and Association level. Another wing conducts camps for teachers and students. All these wings are functioning from the headquarters. Thus the headquarters at Puthencurz is the nerve centre of various activities of the MJSSA.

M.J.S.S.A. has also started a charity scheme in the name "Mor Baselios Paulose II Catholicos charitable Fund" for the poor and backward.

Plus two course was started for those who passed JSSLC. Syriac language is also taught in Sunday School classes. Several counselling centres are functioning under MJSSA. These were introduced as a Millennium Programme. Spread over in 74 districts there are 600 Sunday Schools, more than 8000 teachers and 60,000 students under MJSSA. No doubt MJSSA has a very important place in the Jacobite Syrian Christian Church in India.

PART I
LESSON 1
PRAYER

1. How do we stand for Prayer ?

We should stand facing east, folding hands on the chest, bowing the head with devotion.

2. To whom do we pray ?

We pray to the one and the only true God.

3. How do we make the sign of cross ?

Hold the thumb, index and the middle fingers of the right hand together with the second one projected little forward and the other two fingers are kept folded. The cross is drawn starting from the forehead to the chest, and from the left shoulder to the right shoulder.

4. How to knee before God ?

Touching on the floor - the tip fingers of both the legs, knee, the folded palm of both the hands and the forehead, one have to knee before God.

KAUMA

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one true God:

Glory be to Him; and may His grace and mercy be upon us for ever. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, by whose glory, the heaven and earth are filled, Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He, who has come, and is to come, in the name of the Lord God; Glory be to Him in the highest.

Holy art Thou, O God!

Holy art Thou, Almighty

Holy art Thou, Immortal

✠ O Thou who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Holy art Thou, O God!

Holy art Thou, Almighty
Holy art Thou, Immortal

✠ O Thou who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Holy art Thou, O God!

Holy art Thou, Almighty
Holy art Thou, Immortal

✠ O Thou who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, be kind and have mercy upon us.
Lord, accept our prayers and entreaties, have mercy upon us.

Glory be to Thee, O God

Glory be to Thee, O Creator,
Glory be to Thee, O Christ, the King, who does pity sinners, Thy servants. Barekmoor.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts and sins as we have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Karthu Prarthana

Swargasthanaya njangalude pithave, Ninte thirunamam parisudhamakkapedaname,
Ninte rajyam varaname, Ninte thiruvistham swargathilepole bhoomiyilum akaname, Njangalkku
avasyamayirikkunna appam, innum njangalkku tharaname, Njangalude kadakkarodu njangal
kshamichathupole, Njangalude kadangalum papangalum njangalodu kshamikkaname,
Pareekshayilekku njangale nee pravesippikkaruthe, Pinneyo dhushtanil ninnum njangale
rakshichu kollaname, Enthukondennaal rajyavum sakthiyum mahathwavum ennekkum,
Ninakkullathakunnu. Amen.

PART II

LESSON 2

HOLY QURBONO SONGS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Bhoovilase-sham
Daivathal preritharaya
Sleehanmar poyi
Jathikalidayil
Bhoothala seemayatholam
Nallevan-geliyon
Kaikkolvor-kkokkeyezhum
Bhagyamithe-nnariyichu
Swargamaha-rajyam | Those aspostles
Chosen, sent by God, they went
to ev'ry place,
Through all the world,-
Gentiles heard from the news.
the Gospel grace.
They proclaimed-the kingdom,
Heav'n's rule-of freedom,
For the faithful bliss. |
| 2 Moraneeso kurisum nin
Mathru janathin prathanayum
Adikaleyum nin kopathin
Vadikaleyum maycheedenam | By Thy cross, O jesus Lord,
By Thy Mother's praying word,
Take from us and from our path
Punishments and rods of wrath. |
| 3 Parisuddhanmare ningal
Prarthippin karthavodai-
Adikaleyum than kopathin
Vadikaleyum mayicheedan. | Plead for us, ye holy saints,
Pray to Him whose will ye did,
That from anger we be spared
That from scourges we be hid. |
| 4 Kazhchayithil karthave nin
Thiruvullam-thushtippettu
Nallamari-chor punnyappe-
tteerayara-nandikkenam | May this offered Eucharist
By the Priest, appease Thee, Lord,
May it gladdened angels high,
Our departed ones absolve. |
| 5 Mathavu yachikkum
Parisudhanmarum
Nadha punyam nalkingu-
marichorkkum. | By Thy Mother's plea,
And of all Thy Saints,
Lord, absolve our sins,
And with us, our dead. |

PART III
OLD TESTAMENT
LESSON 3
GOD THE CREATOR
(Genesis Chapter 1 & 2)

Objective: To know that God is the creator of everything .

Look around you! How many trees, flowers, plants, animals and birds there are! Up above this is the blue sky. The sun gives us light and warmth. At night the moon shines, reflecting the light of the sun. There are also countless stars, which make the sky so beautiful. We see and enjoy all these beautiful objects. Long ago, God Almighty created the heaven and the earth. But there was a time when these did not exist. Only God existed. He created everything including us. He created every thing by his expressed commands except man.

God wanted to make the earth beautiful. The first day He said, “Let there be light”. As soon as God said these words there was light every where. God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light, ‘day’, and the darkness, ‘night’. God continued this work on the second day. He said, “Let there be a sky above the earth”. Then the blue sky appeared. Clouds were formed and drifted up above the earth. God found that what he created was good.

The earth was covered with water. On the third day God said, “Let the waters under the sky gather together into one place and let the dry land appear”, and it happened so. God called the dry land ‘earth’ and the waters He called ‘seas’. He wanted to make the barren land beautiful. He made trees with sweet fruits and plants that bore beautiful flowers with attractive colours and fragrance. How beautiful the earth was now!

On the fourth day, God created more things to make the earth beautiful. He created sun to give light and warmth in the day and moon and the stars in the night. In the morning the sun rises in the east shedding light upon the earth. As time passes it goes up higher and higher and sets in the west leaving the charge to the moon to give light at night.

Then came the fifth day. On that day God created different kinds of fish in the water and beautiful flying birds in the air. God blessed all His creations.

On the sixth day God continued His creation. The different kinds of animals like cows, elephants, dogs, squirrels, rabbits and the reptiles like snakes and worms were created on that day. Then God created man as the crown of creations. God was very much pleased with all his creations.

God made man in His own ‘image and likeness’. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living

soul” Gen 2:7. God named the man Adam which means *Created from the ground*. God created a beautiful garden for man. He named this garden Eden. He put Adam in this garden. To provide a companion for man God created woman. The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. God took one of man’s ribs. From the rib of man, God made the woman (Gen 2:21). He named the woman Eve which means *the mother of all the living*. God brought all living creatures before Adam and Adam named them.

God created all of us. God’s love is everlasting. Being His creation we must worship God. God created man to have fellowship with Him.

Memory Verse: “Know that the Lord is God, we belong to Him”. (Psalm 100:3)

I. Choose the correct answer

1. God created Adam from the
 - a) Breath of life
 - (b) Snow
 - (c) Air
 - (d) Dust from the ground
2. God created the Garden of Eden for the
 - a) Animals
 - (b) Serpent
 - (c) Man
 - (d) Spirit

II. Answer the following

1. What is the name of the first man ?
2. Who was given as friends to Adam by God ?
3. Where did God permitted Adam, to live ?
4. Who has created the universe ?
5. Who has created us ?
6. How did God created man ?

III. Let the child say

- The creation of the first day
- The creation of the second day
- The creation of the third day
- The creation of the fourth day
- The creation of the fifth day
- The creation of the sixth day

LESSON 4

DISOBEDIENCE

(Genesis Chapter 3)

Objective: To learn that disobedience is a sin.

Adam and Eve lived in the garden of Eden in great joy and happiness. They lived in obedience to the will of God and God loved them. God had commanded them not to eat or touch the fruit of the tree which was in the middle of the garden. But Satan was restless when he saw man enjoying fellowship with God. Satan assumed the form of a serpent and tempted Eve and persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit. She ate and gave some to Adam. (Gen 3:17).

As a result of the disobedience, Adam and Eve were thrown out of the garden of Eden. Disobedience is sin and rebellion against the law of God. Sin caused chaos to the universe and humanity. The Serpent was clever enough to trap the first couple into disobedience against God. As soon as they disobeyed, they realized their nakedness. They took fig leaves and sewed them together to make coverings for themselves.

Adam and Eve realized that they had committed a sin. They were scared to face God or to stand in His presence.

God punished Adam and Eve. He increased pangs in childbearing for Eve. He said to Adam that the earth is cursed because of his disobedience and that he will eat only through painful toil. God also felt sympathy for them and gave garments made of skin to protect their body from cold and heat. After that God drove them out of the garden of Eden into the world.

God cared for Adam and Eve even after they disobeyed His commandment. God's love is everlasting. Disobedience is a sin. We must obey the commandments of God.

Memory Verse: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams". (1 Samuel 15:22)

I. Choose the correct answer

1. Adam and Eve lived in
a) Heaven b) The city c) Garden of Eden d) Earth
2. God is
a) Scolding b) Punishing c) Fighting d) Loving
3. Satan is God's
a) Messenger b) Enemy c) Tempter d) Friend

4. Eve ate
a) The serpent b) Apple c) The dust of the ground. d) Fruit of the tree
in the middle of the garden.

II. Answer the following

1. What was God's commandment to Adam and Eve?
2. How did they come to eat the fruit?
3. What happened after they ate the fruit?

LESSON 5

TRUE OFFERING THAT PLEASES GOD

(Genesis 4: 1-15)

Objective: Our offering needs to be motivated by the love for God and our fellow brethren.

Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain, the older son, was a farmer and Abel, the younger son, a shepherd.

One day, Cain and Abel went to worship God. Cain brought less than the best fruits of the ground as an offering to the Lord. Abel brought the best portions from the first born of his flock. God was not pleased with the offering of Cain. God was pleased with Abel and his offering.

Cain became jealous of his brother. He got angry. God warned Cain of his anger. God said to him, *“why are you so gloomy? If you do what is right, you will be accepted. If you do not, sin is lying at the door”*

He did not pay attention to the word of God. He was unwilling to reconcile with his brother. When we go to the temple of God with the best offering, God will bless us.

Cain could not subdue the sin in him. Cain acted as if he loved his brother. He took Abel to the field. There Cain got angry with Abel and beat him to death. See how he reacted to his brother? Abel did only good things in his life. Jealousy led Cain to kill his brother. God called Cain and asked him What have you done ? God cursed Cain to be a restless wanderer of the earth. Nobody can hide anything from God. God knows our thinking, talking and all our actions. A wicked person has no place before God.

Memory Verse: “Whoever loves his brother lives in the light and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.” (1 John 2: 10)

I. Choose the correct answer

1. Cain was
 - a) The oldest son of Adam and Eve
 - b) The youngest son of Adam and Eve
 - c) A shepherd
 - d) God fearing man
2. Abel was
 - a) The oldest son of Adam and Eve
 - b) Business man
 - c) Shepherd
 - d) A farmer
3. He has no place before God
 - a) One who loves his brother
 - b) One who helps his brother
 - c) One who hates his brother
 - d) One who gives good guidance to his brother
4. We cannot hide anything
 - a) From man
 - b) From parents
 - c) From God
 - d) From friends

II. Answer the following

1. What was the offerings of Cain?
2. What was the offering of Abel?
3. Why was Cain angry ?
4. How can we bring an offering which pleases to God ?
5. What did Cain do to his brother?
6. What kind of punishment did Cain receive?

LESSON 6
THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL
(Genesis 22: 1-19)

Objective: To know that we must keep firm faith in God even in our adversities.

About four thousand years ago, a God fearing man named Abraham lived in the land of Canaan. He became the ancestor of the Hebrews and of other nations (Gen 17: 15). He lived a life of complete faith in God. His wife's name was Sarah. The couple did not have any children.

God gave a special assurance to Abraham that he would have a son through whom a nation would rise. Isaac was born to Sarah and Abraham. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

Isaac grew up into a boy. God wanted to test the faith of Abraham. God called him, "Abraham". "Here I am," Abraham replied. Then God said, "*Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the mount Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about*".

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on the shoulders of his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

And the two of them went on together. When they reached mount Moriah, Abraham built an altar and put the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the log of wood. Then he reached out and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called him from heaven and said, "*Abraham! Abraham! Do not lay hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son*".

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided".

God honored Abraham for his faith and obedience. Abraham received the honor of being known as the 'father of all believers'.

Memory Verse: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". (Hebrew 11: 1)

I. Fill in the blanks

1. Abraham lived in the land of
2. Abraham and Sarah named their son
3. Abraham is known as

II. Answer the following

1. How old was Abraham when Sarah gave birth to a son?
2. What was the promise of God to Abraham ?
3. How did God test the faith of Abraham?
4. What was offered as sacrifice in place of Isaac?

LESSON 7

MOSES - GOD'S PROVISION

(Exodus 2: 1-10)

Objective: To learn that God has plans and provides for those who believe and trust in Him.

The children of Abraham grew in number. They became a very big nation called Israel. They lived in Misraim (Egypt). They were foreigners there. Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, and the Egyptians hated the Israelites. They were put into slavery in the land of Egypt. Once, Pharaoh issued an order to destroy all Hebrew male infants. Soldiers were appointed to implement this order. During this period Moses was born to Amram and his wife. They were very religious people. Moses had one elder brother, Aaron and elder sister, Miriam. Unfortunately, Pharaoh's order was so cruel, that soldiers would have killed the baby Moses if they knew about his birth. The whole family prayed with tears.

The family hid the child for two months. But it was impossible to hide the child any longer. They trusted in the power of the Almighty God. When Moses was three months old, his mother made a basket of papyrus, and dabbled it with slime and pitch. She placed the child in the basket and put it by the bank of the river Nile. Moses' sister Miriam kept watching this basket. Then Pharaoh's daughter the Princess came to take bath in this river with her maid servants. She saw the child and felt pity and love for him. Moses was a very beautiful child. Miriam discreetly offered to find a nurse for the child. She brought the mother of Moses. Moses grew with his mother safely and was handed over to the Princess. The Princess called him Moses which means 'drawn out of water'. Moses grew up in the palace and became an outstanding leader. Later God used Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt. The care of God for his children is illustrated in the story.

Memory Verse: “Behold the eyes of the Lord is upon those who fear him, upon those who hope in his mercy”. (Psalm 33: 18)

I. Name the followin

1. The place where Israelites lived as foreigners
2. The Father of Moses.
3. The Brother and Sister of Moses.
4. Surname of the Egyptian King.

II. Answer the following

1. How long was Moses hidden?
2. Where did the mother leave the ark with the baby?
3. Who watched the baby and the ark?
4. Who saw the ark and the baby?
5. Who was brought to nurse the child?
6. What is the meaning of the name “Moses”?

LESSON 8

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS

(I Samuel 1:1-28)

Objective: To learn that our Lord will never disregard the prayers of His children.

God kept the promise given to Abraham. The Israelites now occupied the land of Canaan and lived there. Their temple was located at Shiloh. Eli was the high priest. Elkanah was a pious Ephraimite during the time of Eli. Elkana had two wives Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah was childless. But her husband loved her most. Peninnah had many children.

Elkanah took his family to Shiloh where the temple was located. He gave Peninnah and his sons and daughters their portions, but double portions to Hannah because she was beloved to him. She continued to pray before the altar with tears for getting a child. She made a vow that if God granted her a son, he would be dedicated to the service of the sanctuary. As she was praying before the altar and taking her vow, tears were dropping from her eyes. Eli, the high priest noticed Hannah. Eli could not hear anything because Hannah was sharing her grief with God silently. Eli thought Hannah was drunk. Eli scolded her.

Hannah with utmost humility told Eli, the high priest, that she should not be misunderstood. She was simply expressing her pain and agony of barrenness before the altar. Eli, being the anointed priest, blessed Hannah. He told her to go in peace and assured that God will grant her prayer. God heard the prayer of Hannah. She conceived and bore a son. They named him Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked for him of the Lord “ (1 Samuel 1:20) Soon after Samuel was weaned, his parents took him to Eli and dedicated him for the service of the Lord. Samuel worshipped God and served Eli in his old age and received instruction from him. God loved Samuel and answered all his prayers. Samuel became the last judge of Israel.

Memory Verse: “The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous”.
(Proverb 15:29)

I. Choose the correct answer

1. The temple of God during the time of Eli was located in
a) Jerusalem b) Siloh c) Antioch d) Palestine
2. Who was the father of Samuel?
a) Joseph b) Elkanah c) Eli d) Joshua
3. The mother of Samuel was
a) Hannah b) Peninnah c) Mary d) Elizabeth
4. Who was the high priest of the temple when Samuel was brought to the temple?
a) Zachariah b) Elkanah c) Eli d) Aaron

II. Answer the following

1. How was Israel ruled before they had kings?
2. Why did Hannah become a mockery for others?
3. How did Hannah pray in the temple of the Lord?
4. How did Elkanah treat Hannah?
5. What is the meaning of the name ‘Samuel’?
6. Where did Hannah dedicate Samuel?
7. What did Samuel do in the temple?

LESSON 9
THE CALL OF THE LORD
(1 Samuel 3: 1-21)

Objective: To realize that we must be vigilant to listen to the call of God.

In our previous lesson we saw how the child Samuel came to live in the house of the Lord. He grew up as a model to all children. He learned the word of God from the old priest Eli. Samuel, even as a child, served in the house of the Lord with respect, humility and fear of the Lord. Unlike the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, Samuel treated the people who came to the house of the Lord to worship or to make sacrifices, with love and affection. As Samuel grew in age, he grew in stature and in favour both with the Lord and men. All people loved Samuel dearly.

Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas were also priests. But they were not good persons. They were cruel and treated the people who came to worship in the house of the Lord badly. They even harassed the people who came to make sacrifices and stole the offerings they made. Eli loved his sons but did not stop them from their wrong doing. So the Lord became very angry with all three of them.

One day Samuel finished all his evening duties and was lying down in the house of the Lord. Eli was also lying down in his place to sleep. As Samuel was almost falling asleep he heard someone calling "Samuel". "*Here I am*" he answered, and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am Sir, for you called me." Eli answered, "*My son, I did not call you, you may go and sleep*". So Samuel went back to bed. Again as he was falling asleep he heard the voice "Samuel!" He opened his eyes and rushed to Eli. But Eli had not called-him. So he went back to sleep and the third time the same thing happened. When Samuel came to Eli the third time, Eli understood that the Lord Himself was calling Samuel. So he told him, "*My son, if you hear your name again, say humbly, 'speak my Lord for Thy servant is listening'*".

Samuel went back to bed again. In a few minutes he heard the same voice calling again "Samuel, Samuel". As Eli had told him he answered, "*Speak my Lord, for Thy servant is listening.*"

Then the Lord spoke to Samuel. With much fear and respect, he listened to the words of God. The Lord told Samuel in detail about the punishment he had planned for Eli and his disobedient and proud sons.

Early in the morning Eli called Samuel, and asked him about the word of God. Though Samuel was very much frightened, he told everything to Eli, "*He is the Lord, let His will be*

done”, said Eli. Eli understood that Samuel is the Prophet of God. After the death of Eli, Samuel became the Judge of the people of Israel, and everyone loved and respected him.

We should be prepared to hear the voice of God. Only those who prepare themselves and listen to God can hear His voice.

Memory Verse: “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” (1. Samuel 3:9)

I. Fill in the blanks

1. Samuel learned _____ from Eli, the priest
2. While sleeping Samuel heard a _____
3. Samuel thought that _____ called him.
4. Eli understood that _____ is the one who called Samuel.
5. Eli realized that Samuel is the _____ of God.

II. Answer the following

1. How did Samuel minister in the house of the Lord?
2. What kind of people were the sons of Eli?
3. “Because of his sons, God’s wrath fell on Eli.” Why was this?
4. When God called Samuel, what did he answer?
5. What did God tell Samuel?
6. What did Eli say when he heard the word of God?

PART IV
NEW TESTAMENT
LESSON 10
MARY'S DEDICATION
(St.Luke 1:26-38)

Objective: To learn that God abides with the humble and pure.

We learned that Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God. As the descendents of Adam and Eve, the whole mankind became slaves of satan and death. God is the loving Father. God, the Father loves man-kind. He so loved mankind that he decided to send His only begotten Son to this world to save mankind from the slavery of satan and death. The Son of God decided to become man. There are many things impossible for us human beings. There are limitations on our abilities, intelligence and power. But God is Almighty. There is nothing impossible for Him. So it was possible for Him to be born as a human baby. The Son of God is equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But he emptied Himself from that position and became a human to redeem us from the slavery of sin and restore us as the children of God. See how great God's love is !

When Adam, and Eve sinned, God punished them by sending them out of the Garden of Eden. But at the same time, He promised that the Son of woman would bruise the head of the serpent that persuaded Eve to commit sin. So God decided to take human form from a woman. There was a beautiful innocent girl in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. Her name was Mary. She was betrothed to a man by name Joseph, a carpenter. According to the custom of the land she was under the care of Joseph. As they were not married, she was a virgin. God selected Mary to be the mother of the Son of God. God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary with this message.

Gabriel, the messenger of God greeted Mary by saying,

“Hail Mary, full of grace, our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women”.

What a great greeting! Gabriel, the angel who stands in the presence of God, is the one greeting Mary like this, which means that this greeting is from God Himself. The Virgin Mary received the greeting and heard the message which none before or after has ever heard. See how she was exalted by God ? Mary was frightened and was trembling with fear and wondered what kind of a salutation this could be ! The angel told Mary, “Don't be afraid. You have received favors from God. You will conceive and give birth to a son. You must call him by the name Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. His kingdom shall have no end”.

This is the life saving message. “The Son of God becomes man to save humanity”.

That is the greatest good news - The Gospel - Who was informed first about this Great Gospel ? None other than Mary, who was to receive the Son of God in her womb, was the first to be informed of this message.

Mary believed in the power of God. Still she had a reasonable doubt “How can it be, for I am not yet married”.

Gabriel; told her, “The power of the Highest shall come upon you. The Holy Spirit will dwell on you. So the one who shall be born of you will be called the Son of God “.

Mary became pregnant miraculously by the power of God because the Holy Spirit came upon her. Gabriel told her again, “Your relative Elizabeth who was thought to be a barren woman is also pregnant in her old age. For God nothing is impossible”.

Mary very humbly bowed her head and said, “Behold, I am the hand maid of the Lord. Let it be for me as you said”. She dedicated completely to God. What humility! God rejoices with those who are really humble. Because of her humility she became eligible to be the mother of the Son of God. Gabriel disappeared from the sight of Mary. God Himself chose Mary to be the mother of His Son. The child to whom she has given birth is the Son of God. So she is definitely the mother of God.

Message to Teacher: Teach the prayer “Hail Mary” and compare it with the message of Gabriel.

Note: See the Malayalam song describing the humility of Mary!

“Lokarilevan Mariamepol thazhnnittundu
Avalodu thulliam oonnatha padaviyumararjichu ”

Memory Verse: “For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends”. (2 Cor. 10:8)

I. Fill in the blank

1. Mary’s child shall be called

II. Choose the correct answer

1. Which town did Mary live in ?

a) Samaria b) Syria c) Nazareth

2. Who came to Mary with the message of God ?

a) Michael b) Gabriel c) Moses

III. Answer the following

1. Whom was Mary betrothed to ?
2. How did the messenger of God salute Mary ?
3. What name was to be given to the child of Mary ?
4. What is the name of Mary's relative who was barren ?
5. "For God nothing is impossible". Who said this ?
6. "Behold I am the handmaid of God". Who said this ?
7. Why is Mary called truly the Mother of God ?

LESSON 11

BIRTH OF JESUS

(St.Luke 2: 1-20)

Objective: To learn that the pure in heart will hear good news from God.

We learned in the last lesson that Mary was betrothed to Joseph and that she was carrying Jesus in her womb.

In those days, the land of Judea was ruled by the emperor of Rome. Caesar Augustus was the ruler at that time. He proclaimed that all the people should be registered for the purpose of census according to their tribe and lineage. Joseph, being in the lineage of king David, had to go to Bethlehem, the city of David with his betrothed wife Mary to be registered. In those days the only means of transportation was mules or camels. It was a five-day journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. As there was no other choice, Joseph started the journey with Mary who was in the late stage of pregnancy. You can imagine how tiresome it would be for Mary to undertake such a journey. When they reached Bethlehem there were big crowds everywhere. People from all over had to come to the city for the purpose of registration. Joseph tried all places for a room to sleep. He could not get a place. All the inns and rooms in the hotels were already filled. It was time for Mary to give birth. She was in labor. Joseph searched everywhere frantically. Finally he took Mary to a cave where the cattle were kept. There she gave birth to the baby. He made a little space in the manger to keep the child and for Mary. She wrapped her baby in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger. Who is this baby ? The Son of God ! The creator of the whole universe ! See how humble His birth !

This wonderful birth was proclaimed by the angels to the world. In the open fields near the city of Bethlehem, there were some poor shepherds watching over their sheep in the night. Suddenly a bright light surrounded them. The glory of God shone on them. They were frightened. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and told them, “Do not be frightened, for I announce to you the greatest tidings that is to happen to the whole mankind. The savior of the world, Jesus Christ is born today in Bethlehem, the city of David. This will be your sign, you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger”. Suddenly a multitude of heavenly hosts appeared with that angel and started singing praises. “Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, and good will towards men”. The shepherds were frightened and surprised. See how God chose the poor innocent shepherds who were watching over their flocks alertly during the night to receive this great news. If we are also pure in heart and innocent and do our duties whole heartedly, God will choose us also to hear the good news.

The shepherds said to one another, “Let us go up to Bethlehem and witness this great thing that the angel of the Lord told us about”. Immediately they left for Bethlehem and to the manger. As the angel informed them they saw the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger with his mother Mary and Joseph what they saw and heard from the angel. Everyone was surprised. The shepherds returned to their flocks praising the Lord. Mary remembered all of these things in her heart and meditated.

Memory Verse: “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world”. (1 John 4:14)

I. Answer the following

1. What is the name of the Roman Emperor who ruled the land of Judea during the time of the birth of Jesus ?
2. Which tribe or lineage did Joseph belong to ?
3. Where did Joseph and Mary have to go to be registered ?
4. Where did Mary give birth to baby Jesus ?
5. Who were the first to be informed of the birth of Jesus ?
6. Who informed this message ?
7. What was the song of angels ?

LESSON 12

THE STAR OF NATIVITY

(St. Mathew Chapter- 2)

Objective: To show that men cannot change God's will.

The teacher to note :- Though we have no direct evidence in the scriptures, by tradition we believe that the Magi (m'gushe -Syr.) were three wise men from the East. From St. Mathew 2: 11, we learn that the Magi paid their respects to the Infant Jesus in a house.

When the infant Jesus was born, a star rose in the east. The wise men of the region recognized that it indicated the birth of the Eternal King promised by God to the Jews. They set out to Jerusalem to worship the Divine King. It took them several days to reach the palace at Jerusalem, where King Herod reigned.

The Magi asked about the King of the Jews. King Herod was deeply troubled to hear that the Jews would have a king other than him. He summoned the scholars and the priests and asked, "Where will the Messiah be born?" They replied, "Bethlehem, in Judea." King Herod found out from the Magi when exactly they spotted the star. He sent them to Bethlehem. He requested them to find out where the child was and report back to him so that he could worship the newborn himself. King Herod had evil intentions when he said this. He was determined to kill the infant. His intentions were no secret to God. The Magi set out to proceed to Bethlehem. They saw the star again. It guided them as they went. When they reached the birth place of the infant, the star stopped moving. The wise men went into the home and saw the Divine Infant with His mother Mary. They knelt before Him, worshipped Him, and offered Him gifts of gold, frank incense, and myrrh.

When night fell, the angel of God appeared to the Magi. The angel told them, "Do not return to Herod." The wise men returned to their native land avoiding Herod. After the wise men left, the angel of God appeared to Joseph, "*Herod is seeking the infant to kill Him. Start out immediately for Mizraim (Egypt). Stay there until I command you to return,*" the angel told him. Joseph immediately left for Mizraim with Mary and infant Jesus. What a caring foster father? See the loving care of God!

When Herod realized that the Magi returned avoiding him, he was enraged. He calculated the age of the child from the time the star appeared to the wise men. "*He cannot be more than two years of age,*" he said to himself. The cruel King decided to kill every in-

fant of age two or less, in and around Bethlehem. Several infants were martyred. We remember them on December 27th. The infant Jesus was unhurt. God's will cannot be changed by the power of men. We must rather know God's great power and depend on it in our lives.

Herod died after a while. The angel of God appeared to Joseph again and told him to return from Mizraim. They returned to Nazareth in Galilee and lived there. The Son of God was born as man for the sake of all men of the world. He is the Savior of all men irrespective of their race or nationality. The gospel of good tidings was for the benefit of all.

Memory Verse: "And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed, swiftly. (Isaiah 5:26)

I. Choose the correct answer

1. When infant Jesus was born, what appeared in the east?
a) A comet b) An angel c) A star
2. Who came to worship the infant Jesus?
a) King Herod b) Three wise men c) The Inn keeper
3. Who was the king of the Jews in those days?
a) Pharaoh b) King Herod c) King Saul
4. Where, according to the scholars, would Christ be born?
a) Bethlehem b) Palestine c) Jordan

II. Answer the following

1. When the Magi came out of Herod's palace, what did they see?
2. Whom did the Magi see the infant Jesus with?
3. What did the Magi bring as offerings?
4. Where did Joseph escape to, with Mary and the infant?

LESSON 13

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

The Ideal Boy
(St. Luke 2:41-51)

Objective: To understand that we go to the house of God to pray to Him and to listen to His words.

The infant Jesus grew up in Nazareth with His mother Mary and His foster-father Joseph. As the infant grew up, He gained a great deal of knowledge. The boy showed great interest in praying and obeying God's laws. Mary brought her son up with dedication. She experienced several miracles during this time. The blessed mother used to meditate on those events.

Mary and Joseph used to observe 'passover' at the Temple in Jerusalem every year. Jesus used to go with them. (We also observe 'passover' every year. We partake in the Holy Mysteries on that day. You should never fail to do so. You will learn more about the Holy Qurbano {Eucharist} and the 'passover' in the years ahead.)

All the Jewish families of Nazareth used to go together, by foot, to Jerusalem so that they could observe 'passover'. The journey took four to five days. They used to carry all the food they needed on the way. They would proceed in groups singing Psalms. They then returned from Jerusalem the same way.

The year Jesus turned twelve, He went to Jerusalem to observe the 'passover' as in the past. Thousands of Israelites arrived at Jerusalem to observe the 'passover'. Several merchants also arrived to sell their wares. The city was very crowded. Many came not only to pray but also for sight seeing. We go to the House of God to pray. We must be in the presence of God all the time we are there. The Boy Jesus prayed with His parents, gave offerings, and worshipped God with great devotion.

Other attractions or the wares of the merchants did not distract Jesus. He was attracted only by what pleased God most. In the Temple, He found several scholars of the law reading from and understanding the Holy Law of God. Jesus approached them. When they saw the little Boy amongst them they were amused. They asked Him questions about the Law of God. They were amazed at His answers and His knowledge. The Rabbi seated Him in their midst and conversed with Him. Hours went by.

By then, Mary and Joseph had started back to Nazareth with their people. They did not realize that Jesus was not with them. They assumed that He would be with His friends, as

usual. It was after a day's journey that they realized that Jesus was not with them. When they couldn't find Him among their relatives and friends they were deeply troubled. With grief they went back searching for Him. Three days later they found Him in the Temple seated amongst the scholars of the Law answering their questions, exhibiting His wisdom. They could not believe what they saw. Mary chided her son, "Son, what have you done. Your father and I have searched for you with much grief." Jesus asked her, "Why did you have to search for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house? He left immediately with His mother and went to Nazareth. He lived with His parents in obedience to them. His mother meditated on this event.

We understand that Jesus was an obedient boy. He grew up loving and obeying His parents. Like Jesus, we must also grow up in obedience to our parents.

Memory verse:

"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (Psalms 84: 10").

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. Why did Jesus go with His parents to Jerusalem?
a) For a wedding b) Passover c) For sight seeing
2. Why do you go to the House of God?
a) To pray b) To see friends c) To play
3. In the midst of the scholars, what did Jesus talk about?
a) The Passover b) The feast c) The law of God

II. Answer the following.

1. Why were the scholars surprised when they heard Jesus speak ?
2. What did Jesus' parents assume when they left Jerusalem ?
3. How many days later did they find Jesus ?
4. "Son, why did you do this ?" Who asked this ?
5. Where did Jesus say, he should be found ?
6. How old was Jesus, when this incident occurred ?
7. How did Jesus live after His return to Nazareth ?

LESSON 14

THE JESUS WHO EMBRACES YOU IN LOVE

(St. Mark 10:13-16; St. Matthew 19:13-15; St. Luke 18:15-17)

Objective: To learn that we have to try hard to remain in the presence of our Lord Jesus.

The word about Jesus spread quickly all over. Wherever He went a large crowd gathered to see Him. He preached the kingdom of God to all those who came near Him. He encouraged them to repent and become the children of God. People who gathered near Him would sit for hours listening to His sweet voice without noticing the time go by. They would bring their sick to His presence. He would cure them. The blind were able to see, the lame walked, the paralyzed stood up, lepers were cured, and the dead received life again. When Jesus touched them or commanded them they were cured of illness. Lord Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), the Son of the living God. God is our light, our cure, and our life.

One day, Jesus reached a place near the border of Judea beyond River Jordan. His disciples were with Him. A large crowd gathered from the nearby villages and towns to see Him. Jesus preached to them and cured their sick. When it was evening, Jesus wanted to rest. The disciples sent the crowd away. Jesus moved away from them and sat down to meditate. There were several women among the crowd. They had brought their children along. The mothers wanted their children to be blessed by Jesus whom they called the Rabbi (the teacher). They wanted Jesus to bless them, placing His hand on their heads. Mothers, to this day, would wish the same! They encourage you to go to Church and to Sunday School. When you are in the church, you are in God's presence. In Sunday School you learn the word of God. You receive God's blessings.

The mothers brought their children to Jesus. The children were very happy to be with Him. What a true friend we have in Jesus! He is full of love. He calls you affectionately. When you go to Him you are filled with happiness. You must go to Church and to Sunday School with enthusiasm since you are going to His presence. You will receive His blessings.

Jesus turned to the disciples. Pointing to the children He said, "*Of such is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is for those who are innocent like these children.*" Jesus embraced the children. He placed His hands on their heads and blessed them. We must be eager to go to Him. He will embrace us and bless us all.

Memory Verse: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (St. John 6:35)

I. Choose the correct answer

1. What was Jesus doing alone?
a) Meditating b) Preparing for speech c) Sleeping
2. Why did the mothers want to take their children to Jesus?
a) To be blessed b) To be Baptized c) To be named
3. What did the disciples do when they saw the mothers and the children go to Jesus?
a) Encouraged them b) Interrupted them c) Blessed them

II. Answer the following

1. Who said, "Let the little children come to Me. Do not turn them away."
2. Who will qualify to be in the kingdom of God?
3. What did Jesus do with the children?

PART V

LESSON 15

**THE BLESSED FAITH
AND
THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY CHURCH**

1. Who created the universe and everything in it?
The God Almighty.
2. What is the name of our Holy Church ?
The Holy Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. (Jacobite Syrian Christian Church).
3. Who is the founder of the Holy Church.
Our Lord Jesus Christ is the founder of our Holy Church.
4. Who is Jesus Christ ?
Jesus Christ is my saviour.
5. What is the name of your Parish?
My Parish is (different answers, teach the name of that particular Parish)

