

## **Home as Church: Educational Materials for the Sixth Sunday of Pascha**

This study guide is intended to present information about the event of Christ's Resurrection so that you can deepen your knowledge of the Orthodox faith. The study guide centers around biblical events as salvific (that save us).

These resources are useful for youth ages 6-14. The given material as an adjunct can stimulate thought and deepen insight. Resources should inspire dialogue with youth.

The study questions are related to the event of Christ's Resurrection, as the core of our Church life, and therefore for clearer comprehension of our Orthodox faith.

Questions and comments can be directed to the publisher at [edu@easterndiocese.org](mailto:edu@easterndiocese.org)

### **Overview**

Christ's resurrection is the deepest expression of God's divine selfless love for man and the world in general. On the other hand, various sick people and / or their relatives show an unusual and firm faith in Christ as Savior. In the Gospel, God and man cooperate, and the fruit of such cooperation are acts of love. The Holy Apostle Paul emphasizes that the event of Christ's Resurrection from the dead is an event in which faith is an expression of the way of life with God: "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty." (1 Cor. 15:14)

Although in the minds of most people the term *faith* has a very concrete meaning and is basically a principle of Church's dogma, in biblical language it has the meaning of *trust*. The church's experience of the event of Christ's Resurrection is, therefore, trust in a personal relationship with God. Orthodox teaching is based on the biblical experience that God is the Source of Life.

The prepared educational materials for the Sunday of the Blind describe Christ's encounter with a man blind from birth. It is a touching experience. This event is recorded in the Gospel of John. The suffering of the blind man was an occasion to talk about faith and form. This story is a reminder that doing good deeds happens with God's blessings and does not choose days or hours to happen.

We come to know God through the experience of gospel events and the manifestation of His deeds of love within history. Through these acts of love, faith is transformed, which transforms sole intellectual conviction and "knowledge."

### **Page 1:**

The sixth Sunday of Pascha- the Sunday of the Blind describes the encounter of a blind man with Christ. The meeting takes place at the Temple in Jerusalem. Christ asks His disciples what they think is the cause for his blindness. While the disciples discuss who sinned, and the Pharisees express doubt that Christ was sent by God, the Lord points out that the glory of God was shown on the Blind. The Pharisees protest because the miracle was performed on the Sabbath, and thus violated one of the most important norms of the law of Moses. The conversation deserves attention because, instead of paying attention to the miracle of faith of this helpless person, and thanking God, the Pharisees attack both the blind man and Christ.

### **Page 2-3:**

This page contains the Epistle and Gospel readings for the sixth Sunday of Pascha - of the Blind. In the Epistle reading for this Sunday we can learn that the Apostles Paul and Silas baptize the jailer and his household. Baptism is, therefore, a personal confession of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. At the core of every confession of Christian faith is to profess Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

The Gospel describes in detail the encounter between the Blind and the Lord Jesus Christ. The dialogue between Jesus Christ and the Blind encourages thinking about the strength of faith but also the obedience of this man. By performing a miracle on the Sabbath day, Christ "broke" the form and drew the wrath of the Pharisees upon Himself. The event of Christ's Resurrection from the dead will fully reveal that the sacred books of the Old Testament announced the coming of Christ into the world. Christ as Savior may not have been recognized by the Pharisees, but the Blind, like the Samaritan woman, professed faith in Christ as the Son of God. Do you think the Pharisees had reason to attack the Lord for doing a good deed? What is their reaction? How did the Blind respond to the act of Christ's love and compassion?

#### **Page 4:**

On this page, through the perspective of the narrative, the event of the meeting of Christ and the Blind is described. The iconographer faithfully portrays this biblical story. The calmness of Christ and the suffering of the Blind can be seen. The scroll in the left hand of Christ warns the viewer not to be distracted by the narrow form of the law, but to recognize the light of Christ, which enlightens the world. It is very useful to emphasize that in this case, the healing of physical sight gave healing to spiritual sight. The healing of the eyes awakens the faith of the Blind and glorifies the work of God's mercy! Like all previous Sundays, this Sunday try to recognize what is soul-beneficial by recounting this event in your own words as well.

#### **Page 5:**

Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For this Sunday, the hymns are dedicated to Christ's Resurrection and the Sunday of the Blind. The troparion emphasizes the goodness of Christ, specifically describes Christ's suffering on the Cross and the event of the Resurrection, through which the universal resurrection is indicated. The melodies used are Serbian liturgical traditions and are posted in Church Slavonic and English on the YouTube channel.

#### **Pages 6:**

Serbian Patriarch Pavle of blessed memory once mentioned that a spiritual disability is much more serious than a physical disability. For His Holiness Patriarch Pavle the most serious problem is not recognizing the presence of a spiritual disability. For that reason, the story of the Blind speaks of his faith, but also of the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. The essence of church life is maturing in a personal relationship with God. God is reached through a certain way of life, and not only through a certain way of thinking. According to the words of the Holy Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich, the moment when the Blind man showed his faith, he recognized Christ in front of him as the Son of God.

His faith also awakened the spiritual sight, because he saw the One Who came to save human from sin. The event of Christ's Resurrection completely indicates the future fruits of that life. Man will be able to enjoy divine goods eternally, and according to the words of the wise Apostle Paul, "this mortal must put on immortality". (1 Cor. 15:53)

#### **Pages 7-8:**

Learning through play is always useful. Test your knowledge through these interesting games. In essence, they pertain to the above-mentioned event from the Gospel in the form of questions and answers. If you have an interesting article, song, prayer or drawing, please send it to

edu@easterndiocese.org. I encourage everyone to respond to this invitation. We will publish the submitted materials at the first opportunity!

For church chant, we used the following two resources:

1. Notni Zbornik by Nenad Baracki
2. Anthology of Serbian Chant: Volume II by Nikola Resanovich