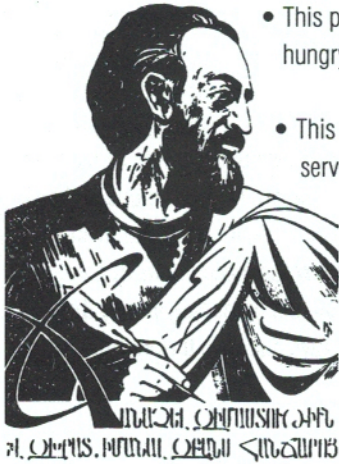


Session Five **Serving the Church**

Discover!

As you may know, it is often said that we can give to the church by offering our time, talent, and treasure (a word which means our money or possessions). Money, then, is only a third of what we can give.

The people whose names appear on the cards given to your group are people who gave of their time and talent. Read about them, and then choose the description that best fits each one. These are your choices:



St. Mesrop

- This person used a love of teaching, and taught a whole nation of people hungry to learn.
- This person counseled and helped people in various dilemmas; such a service was sometimes called "giving judgment."
- Carpentry, leatherworking, sewing, crafts. This person used a skill in one of the many kinds of handiwork to help others.
- This person loved thought and poetry, and used them to put eternal truths into poetic form.
- Music, like other kinds of art, can soothe and give hope to people. This person used musical ability to do that, just as many artists use their art to do so.
- This person spoke for those who did not have access to the people in power.

As a Group:

Try to name a contemporary person or persons who are doing something similar to what was done by the people you read about. These contemporaries might be people you know, or people you are aware of but don't know personally.

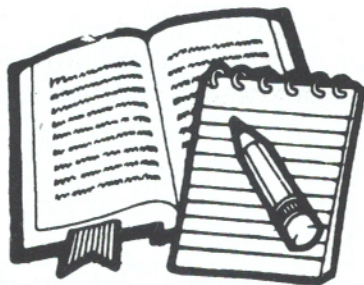
Think about the people in your group and your class. Who has talents that might enable them to do something like what was done by the people you read about? What kinds of work would need to be done to develop those talents? Who might have an ability that could be developed into a useful talent? (For example, maybe someone likes music but has never taken a piano lesson, or enjoys reading but has never tried writing beyond what is required for school.)

Taking a Look at What We've Done (and maybe we've only just begun . . .)

Here is a chance to reflect on what you have done together over the past several weeks. Write your opinions; you'll be given a chance to share them with the class.

Part A

1. How did it feel to make the effort at service that you have made over the past few weeks? What experiences stand out in your mind?
2. Do you think the service helped the people it was intended to help?
3. Were there any surprises, good or bad, that came out of the experience? Did things go just about as you expected them to? Be specific here.
4. What are some things to remember if you or your group decide to undertake a similar project in the future? (Names or phone numbers, instructions, successful points, things to do differently, etc.)
5. Did this service, in your opinion, fulfill the commands of Christ that the class has talked about over these weeks? Why do you have the opinion you do?



Part B



6. What kinds of service would you like to continue or begin in the future? What do you see as the necessary steps to keep these kinds of service going, or begin them?

7. What special circumstances do you need to take into consideration?

(For example, are there class members who would like to do something that the rest of the class may not be interested in? Will schedules be changing— Perhaps because of upcoming school activities—in ways that will alter the amount of time you can give to a service project?)

8. Have you learned anything in your experience with this course so far that you can incorporate into your future work? (For example, have you discovered a person or agency that can be of help, or a person in the parish or in your circle of acquaintances who has expertise?)

9. You looked at various kinds of service to your parish church several weeks ago (singing, serving at the altar, reading Scripture, etc.) Choose a kind of service that you might be able to do for the long term. Note any ways you could prepare yourself for it. (For example, you could go to a teaching workshop for choir singers or for Sunday school teachers if you plan to undertake one of those services.)

Still More Words from Mother Teresa

"There are some people who, in order not to pray, use as an excuse the fact that life is so hectic that it prevents them from praying.

"This cannot be.

"Prayer does not demand that we interrupt our work, but that we continue working as if it were a prayer. It is not necessary to be always meditating, nor to consciously experience the sensation that we are talking to God, no matter how nice this would be. What matters is being with him, living in him, in his will. To love with a pure heart, to love everybody, especially to love the poor, is a twenty-four-hour prayer."

(From *In My Own Words* by Mother Teresa, compiled by Jose Luis Gonzalez-Balado, Liguori Press, 1996.)

How could these words affect your thinking about service? They might have more to do with an attitude, a state of mind and heart and soul, than with thinking about specific kinds of service. Use your thoughts to help compose a prayer.



Session Five

Serving the Church

Key Concepts

1. Time-talent-treasure is a classic description of the kinds of service we can offer to the Church. Money is only one element.
2. We have many examples of people who served the Church with talent or time rather than money, or only money.
3. Each of us has gifts to offer.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Consider the lives of biblical people and saints who served the Church in non-monetary ways.
2. Enumerate some ways in which they can serve the Church apart from giving money.
3. Evaluate the work they have done, and the service they are giving, during the time of this mini-course.

In this wrap-up session, students can take time to evaluate their own reaction to the weeks of study and service: what have they learned, how do they feel, what plans will they make to carry on what they are doing now?

Also, they will look at the lives of some "servants" who gave of their time and talent to the Church (which here means not just the parish but all the people of God) in various ways, and will reflect on how they might do the same.

Bibles, pencils and paper, a copy of Hagop Nersoyan's *History of the Armenian Church*, six 3x5 cards, each headed **Discover!** and containing one of the following: 1. *Dorcas, Acts 9:32-43*. 2. *Deborah, Judges 4:4-10*. 3. *David, 1 Samuel 16:23*. 4. *St. Mesrob, story in History of the Armenian Church*, pp. 92-96. 5. *Esther, Book of Esther, 4:4-16 and 7:1-3*. 6. *St. Gregory of Narek, story in History of the Armenian Church*, pp. 156-160. Since this is the final session, you may want to create some small token (a certificate, an inexpensive gift, a prayer written out on card stock) for each student as a remembrance and a reminder to continue the work of serving others in God's name. You may wish to wait for the closing prayer which students are asked to create at the end of this session. You can copy the text and reproduce it in some attractive format for each student, and deliver or mail it to them later. Consider writing up the service projects for your parish newsletter or a Diocesan publication.

Background for Teacher

Materials Needed

Procedure

1. Open with a prayer. Since an overall evaluation of your weeks of work together will take up the next part of the session, go on now to another activity. Divide the class into groups of three or in pairs, and give each group a few of the 3x5 cards. (How many each group gets will depend on class size.) Ask them to read about the "servants" named on their cards, and then follow the directions in the activity **Discover!** in the student text. (Note: The descriptions in the student text go, in order, with these people: Mesrob, Deborah, Dorcas, Gregory of Narek, David, Esther.) Call the groups back together, and let them share their findings. Perhaps some students will have the happy experience of discovering that their classmates think they have the talents to do something like what Deborah or David did!

(20 mins)

2. Use a good portion of the session to evaluate the work you have done together. Have the students fill out **Part A** of **Taking a Look at What We've Done (and maybe we've only just begun)** in the student text. Allow about ten minutes for this, but don't rush anyone. If some need more time to complete **Part A**, the others can begin thinking about the questions that follow in **Part B**.

(15 mins)

3. Now, give students time to answer the questions in **Part B**. Again, allow about ten minutes for writing and five for discussion. Make notes on the plans (if any) that students make, and be sure to note the reactions they had to the mini-course and the work they have done. Before ending the discussion, be sure everyone is satisfied with and clear about what their ongoing service (if any) will be. (15 mins)

4. Close by, having students (in small groups) consider **Still More Words from Mother Teresa** in the student text, with the comments and questions that follow there. Have a brief and informal closing ceremony if you wish, and use the prayer students devise to end the session.
(10 mins)

Procedure