

## *“The Harvest is plentiful...”*

*Teacher’s Page - Lesson Summary*

**Grade Level:** Pre K - 3rd Grade

**Theme:** *“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”* Matthew 9: 37- 38

- Objectives:**
- **Introduce** the idea that *“The world is a field ripe for harvest and we are the workers who must work to help Christ harvest the fields.”*
  - **Establish** a connection between the *“harvest”* that a farmer works at to provide food to satisfy hungry people and the *“harvest”* that we as Christians are asked to work at to bring the message of Christ to those who do not know Him and are hungry for spiritual food.
  - **Understand** that when we agree to be a worker for Christ and help with the harvest of bringing people to the Church we are following in the footsteps of many saints, such as St. Cosmas Aitalos and St. Nina the Enlightener of Georgia, who worked tirelessly to share Christ with those who did not know Him.
  - **Challenge** the students to understand that it is part of our faith to share Christ with others.
  - **Identify** the ways that Orthodox Missionaries (such as Katie) are like a farmer who is harvesting a crop.
  - **Act** by collecting funds throughout Great Lent with the Mission Coin Boxes to support the work of the Mission Center so that many more are empowered to work in the fields to bring in the harvest.

- Overview:**
- Begin the lesson with the prayer on the next page.
  - Do Activity #1 (Student Work Sheet - *“Getting to know Katie Wilcoxson”*).
  - Do Activity #2 (Student Work Sheet - *“Lives of the Saints”*).
  - Do Activity #3 (Student Work Sheet - *“Tools of the Harvest”*).
  - Do Activity #4 Assemble the Coin Boxes and send them home with students with the instructions that the donations that they return with will support the work of the Mission Center and *“help with the harvest”* around the world.
  - Close with a prayer.

- Materials:**
- A copy of the pre K - 3rd grade prayer
  - Handouts
  - Crayons / Colored pencils
  - Coin boxes

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*Teacher’s Page - Activities*

**Pray:** *Dear Lord Jesus,  
We pray for all people, that they may learn about You and praise You.  
Please help Your missionaries teach people about You.  
Help us to spread Your Word and raise up new missionaries.  
Help us to be good examples; full of love, strength, and faith.  
Have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

**Verse:** *“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”* Matthew 9:37- 38

**Lesson:** Introduce the idea of “harvest” with the above Gospel passage.

- when a farmer plants a crop he works hard for many months: he prepares the soil, plants seeds, weeds, feeds, and waters his plants. When the crops are ready for harvest he still has a lot of work to do. Finally, he sees the fruit of his labors when the food is harvested.
- we (all Christians) have before us a plentiful harvest. Christ asks us to participate in bringing new Christians into the Church by sending workers into the field who will teach others about His Church. We participate in this work in different ways. Some of us are called to pray for missionaries, others to make their work possible by supporting them financially, and others are called to actually ‘go to the mission field’ to bring the plentiful harvest in.
- the Church sends missionaries into the world to bring the life-giving message of salvation to those who do not know Christ. We see this in the examples of St. Nina and St. Cosmas.
- Throughout history the missionary responsibility of the Orthodox Church has been an important part of the daily lives of the ‘average’ Orthodox Christian.
- Discussion: What is a harvest? What tools are used? What tools are used in missions for a Harvest? What do we need to share the Gospel? What type of field are missionaries working in? What can you/they do in the US? At school? At Church?

**Activity #1:**

- Read Activity #1 about Katie to your class. Show the students the pictures. (You may make student copies of Activity 1 and 2, or you may read from your copy and show the pictures.)
- This is an opportunity to highlight the lesson objectives to **Understand**, **Challenge**, and **Identify** listed in the Objectives section of the previous page.

**Activity #2:**

- Read Activity #2. Read the lives of the two Saints. Reflect on the quote from St. Cosmas found in the Teacher notes on the next page.

**Activity #3:**

- Pass out Activity #3 handout. Read the instructions out loud to the children. Initiate discussion that helps the students understand that as Christians we are asked to be like Saints Cosmas and Nina. There are many other Orthodox Saints as well as modern missionaries like Katie that share the knowledge of Christ with others.

*Continued on next page.....*

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*Teacher’s Page - Activities*

**Activity #4:** Have your class assemble the OCMC Coin Boxes and discuss how these funds will be used to support the ministries of the Mission Center to spread the Gospel around the world. Send the boxes home with the students and ask them to fill them and then return the boxes at the appropriate time. Extra Coin Boxes can be obtained by emailing a request to [coinbox@ocmc.org](mailto:coinbox@ocmc.org) or calling 904-829-5132 or 1-877-GO-FORTH (463-6784).

**Follow-up:** Collect Coin Box money on the predetermined date. Remind class of their role in spreading the fullness of Orthodoxy and the Gospel of Christ around the world. Assign the students to find ways to “help with the harvest” throughout the week.

### **A Note to Teachers:**

*The Orthodox Church has spread around the world due to the dedicated commitment of Orthodox people from all walks of life. Modern day evangelists proclaim our Orthodox faith to friends, family, and total strangers.*

*The Church in Tanzania, through the love of approximately 50 clergy and many dedicated people, is growing because people are sharing their faith. In many parts of the world Christianity is a minority religion. Tanzania is one of those places. Animism (the belief that spirits and gods exist in trees, the wind, and other such things and that these spirits must be appeased), traditional religion (beliefs that are passed down from one generation of a tribe to another with their own specific gods and beliefs explaining natural disasters and the purpose of life), and Islam are more common than Christianity. Some statistics note that three of every ten people in Tanzania are Christian. Other statistics say that only one in every ten is Christian.*

*St. Cosmas Aitolos is known for being a great missionary saint. Both he and St. Nina are known as ‘equal to the Apostles’ because of their missionary zeal. The simple words of St. Cosmas offer us encouragement to do something small which will help bring the harvest in. "If it were possible for me to climb up into the sky and to shout with a great voice, to preach to the entire world that only our Christ is the Son and Word of God, true God and the life of all, I would have done it. But because I can't do such a big thing, I do this small thing. I walk from place to place and teach my brothers as I can, not as a teacher but as a brother."*

## Getting to know Katie

*Activity 1*

Katie is an Orthodox Christian. She goes to Church in Texas. When she finished high school she went on a short term mission trip. She noticed that in other places of the world people do not know about Jesus Christ. There are very few Churches. There are very few priests. There are many people who want to know about Jesus Christ and the Orthodox Church. People have to walk for hours to get to Church.



*Katie Wilcoxson*

When Katie got home she read more about Missions. She read that there were not enough people to teach. There were not enough Bibles.

There were very few priests and deacons. Many people did not read. Many were sick. Many wanted to learn about the Orthodox Church. She read that Jesus needs us to help Him bring people into the Church by going to places where people do not know Him and teaching them that He loves them.



*Metropolitan Jeronimos in Tanzania*

Katie went to college to become a nurse. She went on another Mission Team. In her heart she wanted to teach people about Jesus Christ. Katie also wanted to use her skills as a nurse to help people.

Katie is now preparing to go to Tanzania to help the people there learn more about Jesus Christ and to help the Orthodox Church in Tanzania in other ways. Because she is a nurse she will be able to help take care of sick people.

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Lives of the Saints Activity 2



St. Cosmas Aitalos



St. Nina Enlightener of Georgia

**St. Cosmas Aitalos - Equal to the Apostles: August 24**

Cosmas was born and raised in a place called Aitolia. He was a very short man, but his love for Jesus Christ and for all people was very big and his zeal for spreading the Christian faith earned him the title "equal to the apostles." When Cosmas was 20, he left home to study theology and medicine — then he became a monk and priest and stayed in a monastery for 17 years, to learn more about Christ. When Cosmas read the Bible he noticed many passages that tell us that we have to teach and preach about Jesus. He asked permission to leave the monastery. For 19 years he spent most of his time traveling on foot, by donkey and ship, often followed by hundreds and even thousands of people, teaching them about Jesus Christ. Father Cosmas – like the Apostle Paul – made journeys throughout the world to tell people about Jesus Christ. Cosmas preached in places where people were not allowed to become Christians. After preaching and encouraging people for 19 years, Cosmas died for his faith by the people who made the laws.

**St. Nina (Nino), Equal of the Apostles and Enlightener of Georgia: January 14**

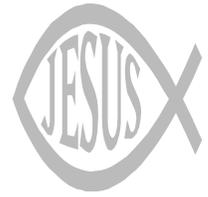
Nina was born in the small town of Colastri. Her father was a Roman general. Nina learned about Orthodoxy from her family. When she was a young woman, she wanted to go to Rome to preach the Gospel. On her way, she taught in many villages about Christianity, and many people become Christians. She traveled to Iberia, where the people did not know about Jesus Christ.

The Queen of Iberia was very ill. Nina prayed to God, and the Queen was healed. The Queen converted to Christianity and was baptized. The King was not happy. He made rules against the people who became Christian and even wanted to kill them. One day when he was out hunting he was hurt. He prayed to the God of Nina and was healed. Soon he wanted to be baptized and became the first Christian King of Iberia. He asked that priests and a bishop be sent to Iberia to teach all the people about Jesus Christ. He built churches and monasteries. As a result of Nina’s work, an entire country became Orthodox.

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*Tools of the Harvest Activity 3*

*Underline the items that you might use to harvest food on a farm. Circle the tools that you use in your Christian life that will help you be like St. Nina and St. Cosmas.*



*A Prayer for Missions*

*God of truth and love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
hear our prayer for those who do not know You,  
that they may come to a saving knowledge of the truth  
and that Your Name may be praised among all peoples of the world.*

*Sustain, inspire and enlighten Your servants  
who bring them the Gospel.  
Bring fresh vigor to wavering faith; sustain our faith  
when it is still fragile.*

*Continually renew missionary zeal in ourselves and in the Church;  
raise up new missionaries who will follow You  
to the ends of the world.*

*Make us witnesses to Your goodness,  
full of love, strength and faith  
for Your glory  
and the salvation of the entire world.*

*Through the prayers of St. Paul, St. Fotini,  
Sts. Cyril and Methodios, St. Cosmas, St. Innocent,  
St. Nina, St. Nicholas of Japan  
St. Herman and all the missionary saints,  
have mercy on us and save us.  
Amen.*