

ST. PHILIP'S FAST FOR FAMILIES

Week 1: Feast of St. Philip

Read:

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael, John 1:43-50

The next day, Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Pray/Sing the Kondak of the Week:

Kondak - Tone 8

The God inspired Philip,
your friend, disciple and imitator of the Passion, proclaimed You as God to the
whole world, O Christ, all merciful.

By his intercessions and those of the Mother of God guard your
Church and every city from the lawless enemies
(Anthology for Worship, p.723, 724)

Reflection for parents:

- How did you come to your Faith and who was instrumental in introducing you to Jesus?
- What do you think Jesus is calling you to do in your life?

Discuss:

- If you were to share your Faith with a friend, how would you do it?
- What would you say to your friend about how you experience Jesus?
- How would you explain why you go to Church?
- What kind of "Penance" could each of you choose for St. Philip's Fast and how would this Penance help bring you closer to God. Remember, a Penance is not a self-punishment. It is an expression of Repentance, (coming back to God). This can be fasting from food or activities, or it can be doing something extra like prayer and reading Scripture. Penance is a way of exercising to strengthen us in faith.

Pray:

The Jesus Prayer, opening your heart to hear God's call for you. You can find an audio version of it here: <https://eeparchy.com/2019/02/20/jesus-prayer-sung-english-video-mp3/>

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of God
Have mercy on me a sinner
(10X, slowly and calmly)

Господи Ісусе Христе
Сину Божий
Помилуй мене, хрїстну/ого
(10X, повільно й спокійно)

Week 2: Presentation of the Theotokos

Read:

Presentation of the Theotokos

According to tradition, the parents of the Virgin Mary, Righteous Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate him or her to the service of God. Their prayers were answered, and when their daughter reached the age of three, they gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the all-pure Mary in Her finest clothes. With the singing of sacred songs and lighted candles, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15).

There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies inside the Temple.

Pray/Sing the Troparion of the Week:

Troparion - Tone 4

Today is the prelude of the good pleasure of God, and the
proclamation of salvation for the human race.

in the temple of God the Virgin is clearly revealed
and beforehand announces Christ to all.

To her, then, let us cry out with a mighty voice:

Rejoice, fulfillment of the Creator's plan.

Reflection for Parents:

- How have you "encountered God in the Temple" in your participation in the worshipping and in the life of the Church?
- Have you dedicated your life to God or is this something you need to work on? What might that look like?

Discuss:

- What are some of the things you each enjoy about praying in Church?
- What are some ways your family serves God through the Church? Are there new ways that you would like to serve him through the Church?
- Because Mary lived a life of service to God and she is a model for us, brainstorm about St. Philip's Fast projects and activities (e.g. charitable acts) that you can accomplish individually and as a family. These could be ways that you serve God through others.

Pray the prayer to the Most Holy Mother of God that she may guide you to serve God with your whole life as she did:

Rejoice, Mother of God, Virgin Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among
women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb; for
you have borne Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer
of our souls.

БОГОРОДИЦЕ ДІВО, радуйся, благодатна
Маріє, Господь з тобою. Благословенна ти між
жінками і благословенний плід лона твого, бо ти
породила Христа Спаса, Ізбавителя душ наших.

Week 3: St. Andrew the First-Called

Read:

Jesus' First Disciples (John 1:35f)

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

St. Andrew in Tradition

After the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, St. Andrew went to the Eastern lands preaching the Word of God. He went through Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, and Ukraine. He stopped overnight on the hills of Kyiv. Rising in the morning, he said to those disciples that were with him: "See these hills? Upon these hills shall shine forth the beneficence of God, and there will be a great city here, and God shall raise up many churches." The apostle went up around the hills, blessed them and set up a cross. He also went to Thrace, where in the small village of Byzantium, the future Constantinople, he founded the Church of Christ. On his journeys the First-Called Apostle endured many sufferings and torments from pagans, but through the prayers of the Apostle, the Lord worked many miracles.

Pray/sing the Troparion of the Week:

Troparion - Tone 4

As the first-called of the Apostles and
full brother of their leader
implore the Master of all to give peace to the world and
- to our souls - great mercy.

(The Divine Liturgy, An Anthology for Worship, p.732)

Reflection for Parents:

- Are you a light to others? Would people at work, school, in social settings, or even at the grocery store know that you are a Christian by the way you act and how you speak to others or treat others?

Discuss:

- The meaning of Messiah (google it) and talk about what it means that Jesus is the Messiah.
- Which areas of our World today do not reflect God's Will, e.g. In what ways is our society and world not loving?
- What concern/s has God has placed in your heart and what do you think he is calling you to do about it?
- What would you ask Jesus if you met him?

Pray the song O come O come Emmanuel:

O COME, O COME Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Прийди прийди Еммануїл
З неволі вирви Ізраїль
Тужать вони в ярмі чужім,
Аж Бог Син не з'явиться їм.

REJOICE, REJOICE, O ISRAEL,
TO THEE SHALL COME EMMANUEL (2X)

РАДІЙ РАДІЙ О ІЗРАЇЛЬ
НАРОДИТЬСЯ ЕММАНУЇЛЬ (2X)

Week 4: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

Read:

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

St. Nicholas' parents could not have children for many years, but after many prayers, God gave them a child, Nicholas.

One day a bishop had a vision of Jesus telling him that the next Archeparch of Myra would be the first person to arrive in church. The bishop went to church at night to see who it would be. The first person in church was the child Nicholas. "What is your name, child?" the bishop asked. The boy-saint replied, "My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant."

When he grew up, St. Nicholas participated in the First Ecumenical Council. This Council proclaimed the Nicene Symbol of Faith (the creed), which we pray at every Divine Liturgy.

One time, a poor man, with three daughters had no food. When the saint learned of the man's poverty, he secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money, the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. St. Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters. In bestowing charity, St. Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

Pray/sing the Troparion of the Week:

Troparion - Tone 4

The truth of your deeds made you for your flock a rule of faith
And an image of meekness, a teacher of continence.
And so you gained the heights through humility, riches
through poverty, father and bishop Nicholas.
Intercede with Christ our God for
the salvation of our souls.

(For music see: Anthology for Worship, p.735)

Reflection for Parents:

- Do I do "good" things for others without hoping to get recognition but just out of the goodness of my heart? How might I improve on this?

Discuss:

- What did Jesus say about the poor (Luke 6:20-26; Luke 12:22-34; Matthew 25:31-46).
- What are some new ways we can help the poor as a family, as a parish and as a country?
- What might it be like to be poor?
- Why do you think St. Nicholas did things in secret?

Sing "О Хто Хто" (O Khto Khto) – in English or Ukrainian.

О Хто Хто / O Saint Nicholas

О хто, хто Миколая любить,
О хто, хто Миколая служитъ,
Тому святий Миколай
На всякий час помагай.
Миколаю!

Nicholas, who is it you love?
Nicholas, who is it you serve?
He will lovingly receive,
And give aid in time of need.
Saint Nicholas!

Week 5: Sunday of Our Holy Ancestors in Faith

Read: (one or both)

Daniel 6:11-24

The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day." Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

.... Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?" Daniel then said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong." Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Daniel 3:1-30

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue... When they were standing before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire." at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O King. They do not serve your gods and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar in a furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up?"

.... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up. "Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted.... so the men were bound... and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire.... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, "Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." He replied, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

Pray/sing the Troparion of the Week

Troparion - Tone 2

Great are the achievements of faith!

In the fountain of flames, the Three Holy Youths rejoiced as by the water of rest, and the prophet Daniel was revealed shepherding lions like sheep.

Through their intercession, O Christ God, save our souls!

(The Divine Liturgy, An Anthology for Worship, p.744)

Reflection for Parents:

- This week we are asked to learn courage. Am I courageous when it comes to my faith or is it hidden? Do I live my faith without fear of what other might think?

Discuss:

- Was there anytime you needed courage to be a believer in God?
- What would you like to do for God?
- Was there a time that you felt God helping you when you were scared? What do think that would feel like?

Pray the Troparion of the Moleben for the Nativity Fast:Troparion - Tone 4

Prepare yourself O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all. Be ready; for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth from the Virgin in the Cave. Her womb has become a spiritual Paradise, in which the divine Fruit was planted. And if we eat of It, we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.

Week 6: Sunday before the Nativity - The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Read: (Remind your family that the authors of the passages lived at least 700 years before Jesus was born. The people of Israel waited for a very long time for the coming of Christ. Now, we are waiting for him to come again.)

Micah 5:2-4

Bethlehem Ephrath, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the LORD will choose one of your people to rule the nation - someone whose family goes back to ancient times. The LORD will abandon Israel only until this ruler is born, and the rest of his family returns to Israel. Like a shepherd taking care of his sheep, this ruler will lead and care for his people by the power and glorious name of the LORD his God. His people will live securely, and the whole earth will know his true greatness,

Isaiah 9:6-7

A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace. His power will never end; peace will last forever. He will rule David's kingdom and make it grow strong. He will always rule with honesty and justice. The LORD All-Powerful will make certain that all of this is done.

Pray/Sing the Troparion of the Week:

Troparion - Tone 2

By faith you justified Your ancestors,
and through them you betrothed the Church taken from the nations.
These saints exult in glory, from their seed
comes the blessed fruit, the one who bore
You without seed.

By their prayers, O Christ our God, have mercy on us!
(The Divine Liturgy, Anthology for Worship, p.741,742)

Discuss:

- Does God like those who are biggest and strongest better than others?
- In Isaiah 9 what will save the World? How will He rule and over what?
- How can we help the world get ready for the coming of Jesus at the Nativity and in the second coming?
- How do these passages give us hope?

Sing or pray:

People in darkness have seen a great light, a great light!

Maranatha, Maranatha

Come Lord Jesus.

Maranatha Maranatha

Come Lord Come.