



# How to Prepare Lessons

St. Demiana Coptic Orthodox Church Servants' Meeting – Archdeacon Moses

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# Introduction

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- ❖ The Goals of a Sunday School Lesson
- ❖ Characteristics of a Successful Lesson
- ❖ How to Prepare a Successful Lesson
- ❖ Questions & Answers

# Goals of a Sunday School Lesson

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- ❖ What are our goals in preparing lessons?
  1. To lead those who are infants in the faith to a mature understanding and knowledge of the Word of God
    - ❖ God's goal for each of us is to "come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4.13)
  2. To bring children closer to Christ, so that they can develop a lifelong, deep, and intimate relationship with Him
    - ❖ Ex: Three stonemasons



# Goals of a Sunday School Lesson

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3. To make church a loving, caring, active, spiritual, attractive, and exciting environment for our Sunday School children

- ❖ No church activity is meaningful if it is not done in love and not done with a spiritual purpose and goal.
- ❖ Requires true and unconditional love for the children we serve
  - ❖ **Love attracts people to the church:** “God is love” (1 John 4:8) and “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him” (1 John 2:10)
  - ❖ What does love transcend?



# Goals of a Sunday School Lesson

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- ❖ *(Recap) Purposes of Sunday School Lessons*

1. To lead those who are infants in the faith to a mature understanding and knowledge of the Word of God
2. To bring children closer to Christ, so that they can develop a lifelong deep and intimate relationship with Him
3. To make church a loving, caring, active, spiritual, attractive, and exciting environment for the Sunday School children

- ❖ Why is this all done through Sunday School?



# Characteristics of a Successful Lesson

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- ❖ What are the characteristics of a successful lesson?
  - ❖ Every successful lesson has four basic characteristics:
    - ❖ Christ crucified and risen
    - ❖ Language and rationale of the Holy Scriptures
    - ❖ Plain speaking; and
    - ❖ Attention to the experience of salvation through the Gospel



# Characteristics of a Successful Lesson

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- ❖ **Christ crucified and risen**

- ❖ Above all, we must preach Christ in every lesson (even Old Testament lessons)
- ❖ The Holy Scriptures cover the entire plan of salvation from creation to the Second Coming as it hinges on the Cross, Burial, and Resurrection. Any preaching in the Orthodox Church is a preaching of the revelation of the saving Mystery of Christ
  - ❖ “...great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.” (1 Tim 3:16)



# Characteristics of a Successful Lesson

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- ❖ **Language and rationale of the Holy Scriptures**
  - ❖ A successful lesson always weaves a beautiful picture from the language of Scripture. Read the Old Testament prophets, the apostles, and the words of Christ Himself – always alluding to the holy words spoken before
  - ❖ More than that, though, a successful lesson thinks Scripturally, not just verbally quoting the Scripture, but with the rationale of the Holy Spirit
  - ❖ The first helps *memorization* whereas the second aids *understanding*



# Characteristics of a Successful Lesson

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- ❖ **Plain speaking**

- ❖ Know your audience and connect to them on their level
- ❖ We follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who always spoke plainly and used parables to illustrate His point
- ❖ A successful lesson connects the Gospel in the language of the Scripture to the everyday life of the child and invites the child to see his or her life in a different way
- ❖ *Be careful:* It is a message “for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16) through declaring the Truth



# Characteristics of a Successful Lesson

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- ❖ **Attention to the experience of salvation through the Gospel**
  - ❖ Your lesson is not an academic lesson designed for a secular classroom. It is a *way of life*. Orthodoxy is *lived*, not *heard*.
  - ❖ You should include personal experiences to show them how Orthodoxy is lived; “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God” (Acts 26:18).
    - ❖ Stories of the saints, Bible personalities, &c.



# Characteristics of a Successful Lesson

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- ❖ *(Recap) Four basic characteristics of every successful lesson*
  - ❖ Christ crucified and risen
  - ❖ Language and rationale of the Holy Scriptures
  - ❖ Plain speaking; and
  - ❖ Attention to the experience of salvation through the Gospel



# How to Prepare a Lesson

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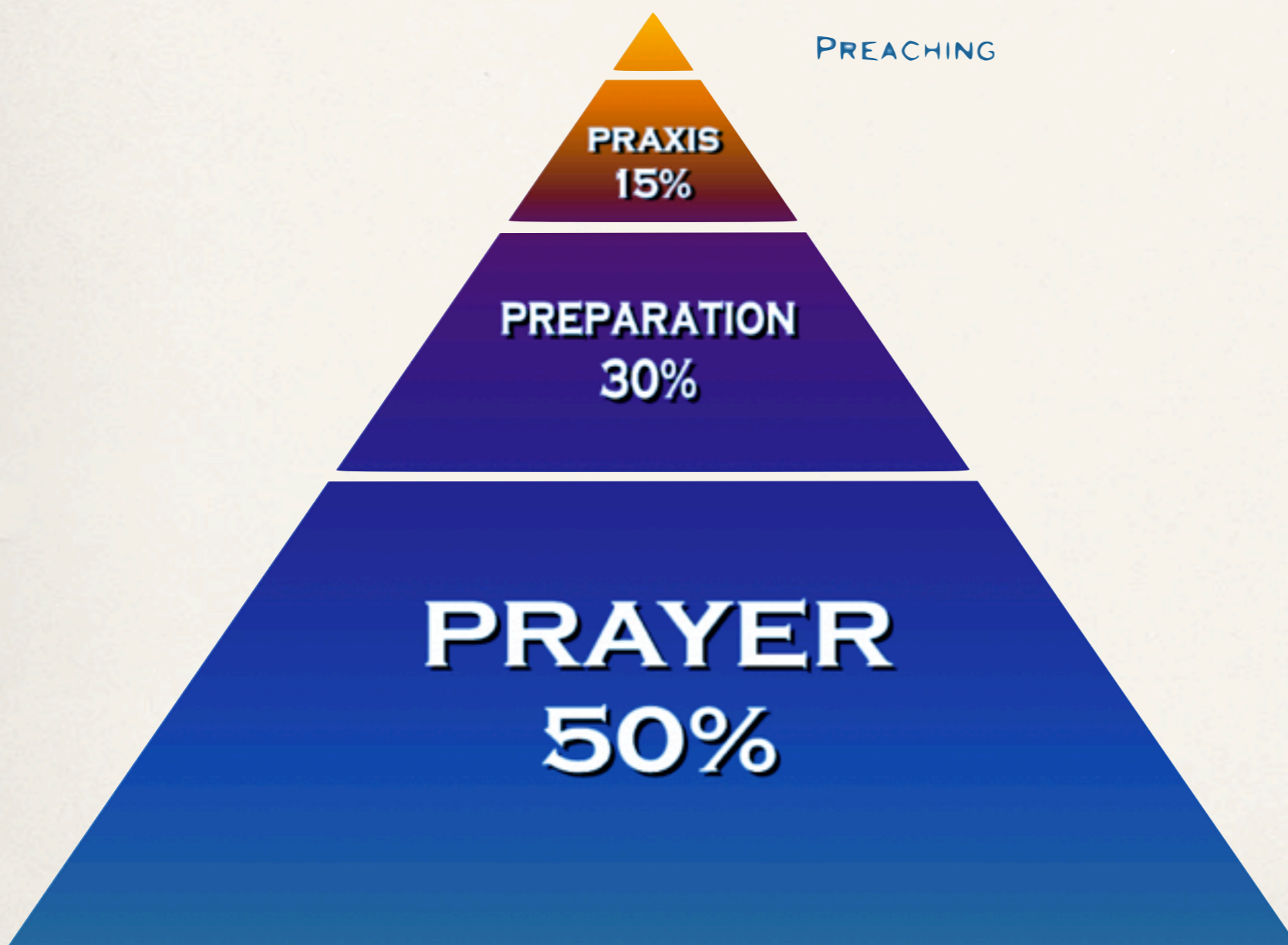
- ❖ Four Steps to Preparing a Lesson (Four Ps)
  - ❖ **PRAYER** – Asking God for wisdom and guidance to teach His children
  - ❖ **PREPARATION** – Gathering resources and writing the lesson
  - ❖ **PRAXIS** – Practicing and rehearsing the lesson to find weaknesses and improve
  - ❖ **PREACHING** – Delivering the lesson





# Allocation of Time to Four Ps

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$$\frac{30 \text{ min.}}{5\%} = \frac{X \text{ min.}}{100\%}$$

**Total: 600 min. (10 hrs.)**

Prayer – 5 hours

Preparation – 3 hours

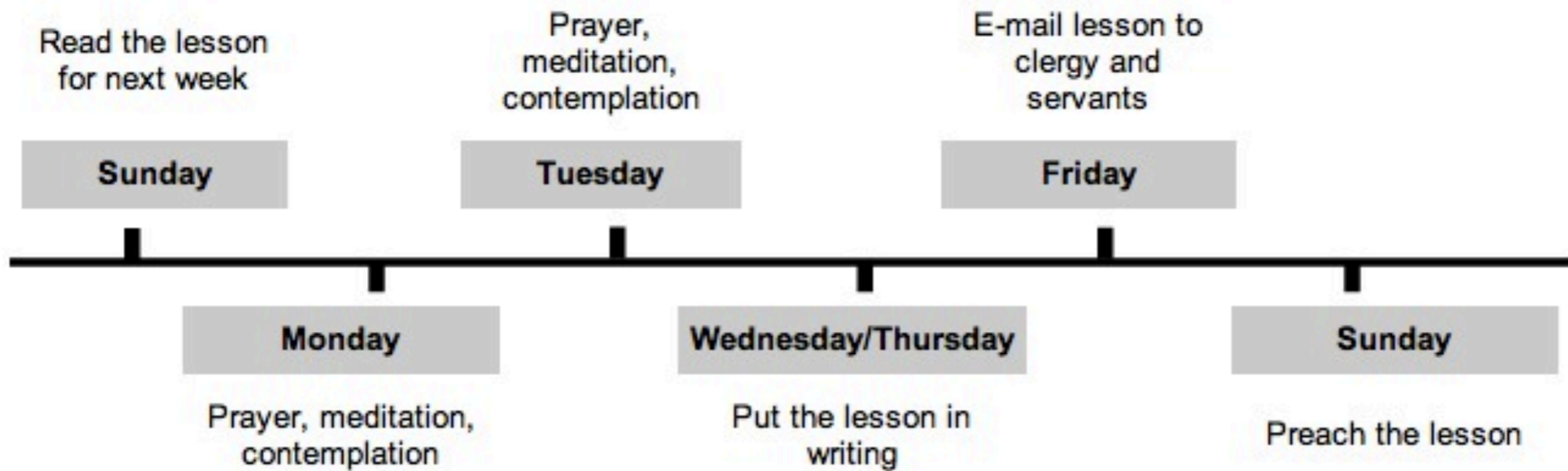
Praxis – 1 hour

Preaching – 30 min.



# Preparation Timeline

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# Conclusion

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“Those who preach lend their voices to the Holy Spirit so that He may write words of eternal life in the hearts of the faithful.”

– St. Basil the Great