

Peter, the Seal of the Martyrs

References

The Precious Gem (Alkhareeda Al Na Reessa), The Story of the Coptic Church

Notes for Servants

- ★ Martyrdom is a daily religious test in which a believer lives even if he has no enemy or anyone to persecute him. Martyrdom is the victory we attain over the devil's resistance to the work of God.
- ★ Martyrdom is love, love for Christ, love for people, love for those who persecute us for the sake of Jesus who gave Himself as a sacrifice for us.
- ★ Do you desire to be a martyr? There are many crosses which you have to carry: going without sleep, fasting, many problems, enduring temptations with happiness, thanks and joy.

Objectives

General: Being firm in faith until death.

Specific: The children will be able to:

- A. Confess their faith and witness Christ with full confidence;
- B. Learn that they do not have to be killed to become martyrs, it is enough for them to suffer for His name's sake;
- C. Know that if they deny Jesus before man, He will deny them before His Father.

Bible Verse

" Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. "

(Philippines 2:11)

Teaching Aids

1. Felt figure and flannel board.
2. Video.

Instruction

- (1) Review last week's lesson.
- (2) Who remembers the verse?
- (3) Remind the children about the church occasions for the coming week.
- (4) Teacher should prepare the appropriate questions to emphasize the objectives during the lesson.

Story Time

Peter's parents were righteous people. Peter's father was a priest and his mother was a pious lady. One day, before Peter's mother had any children, she went to the church to take part in celebrating the

martyrdom of the two apostles, Peter and Paul. She asked, with eyes full of tears, the two apostles to pray to the Lord to give her a child. That same night she had a dream where she saw two old men in white. They said to her, "Do not be sad. The Lord will give you a son. He will be a father to a great people. When you get up, go and tell His Holiness the Pope." The pious woman told her husband when she awoke. He believed, and he said to her, "Go and tell His Holiness the Pope." So she went to the Pope and told him about her dream. The Pope blessed her and said, "The Lord is true and honest and shows His wonders through the saints." In less than a year, she had a son and she called him Peter. The Pope baptised him. When he was 12 years old, he was ordained a deacon. When he was 16 years old, he was ordained a priest. The Lord granted him the grace of performing wonders and miracles.

One day the believers gathered to pray in the church. After the prayer, they went out but at the church gate they saw a man possessed by a demon throwing stones at them. They went back quickly into the church to avoid any harm. They told the Pope. The Pope called Father Peter. Peter brought a vessel filled with water, then he asked the Pope to breathe on the water. He took the water and sprinkled it over the sick man's face and the demon departed at once.

When the Patriarch was on his death bed, the people wept and said, "Will you leave us as orphans?" The Pope smiled and pointed at Father Peter and said, "This will be your father who will care for you after I depart." The prophecy came true and Peter became the Pope, the 17th Successor of St. Mark the apostolic and Evangelist, in 285 A.D. and he became the father of the people of the See of St. Mark. At that time the persecution of Christians was severe. Torture and murder went on every day, every month, every year. About 50, and sometimes 100 Christians were martyred daily. Even the murderers were tired. But the Christians were used to singing hymns of praise as if they were going to a wedding. Pope Peter encouraged Christians, fought heresies, preserving the faith. Later on he was imprisoned, and then led to the place of martyrdom. He asked his persecutors to allow him to visit the church where the head of St. Mark was kept. They allowed him to do so. He knelt and bowed and prayed earnestly and ended his prayer saying, "O Lord, I ask you to put an end to this persecution which befell your people. May the shedding of my blood be the end of this persecution against your articulate flock." A voice from heaven was heard saying, "Amen." When Pope Peter finished his prayer, he delivered himself to the guards. He was brave and firm and his face was shining like face of an angel. When the guards saw his face, they could not kill him. The officer in charge showed them 25 pieces of gold and said, "This sum is for the one who dares to cut off the head of that old man." One of them dared to strike the neck of the Pope with his sword. They left him where he was and went their own way. The believers gathered and wept. They took his body to the church of St. Mark. They dressed him in the holy cloak and seated him on the throne of St. Mark on which he never sat during his life as a kind of modesty. His blood was the last that was shed by Emperor Diocletian. That is why he is called the Seal of the Martyrs. The blessing of his people be with us all, Amen.

Discussion

- 1 - Follow up the story by talking about it with the children.
- 2 - Continue the discussion while they do the activity.

Learning Activities

Activity Sheet.