

Ministry to & with Teens

An Enlightening Experience

Great and Holy Friday is one of the most solemn Holy Days within the life of the Orthodox Church. On this day, we witness our Lord's unchanging love for us as He willingly gives His life for our sake. On Holy Friday, we watch our Lord's crucifixion by the hands of those He came to save.

In Matins of Holy Friday, we hear:

“Today he who suspended the earth upon the waters is suspended on a tree. A crown of thorns is placed on the head of the King of angels. He who wore a false purple robe covered the heavens with clouds. He is smitten who, in the Jordan, delivered Adam. The Groom of the Church is fastened with nails, and the son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear.

Thy sufferings we adore, O Christ!

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Make us to behold thy glorious Resurrection.

Encourage everyone in your parish to participate in this experience. Be sure to have a large number of the teens present to help – and maybe the teens can bring sleeping bags, so they can sleep between their times of vigil. Or you may want to plan some discussion time with your priest or youth director.



Holy Friday Vigil Reading Sign-up Sheet

Beginning with Palm Sunday, have a place for people to sign up for the Vigil. They could sign up to read for 30 minute or one hour time slots. A sign-up sheet might look like this:

Friday

3:00 pm: *Vespers*

4:00 pm: _____

5:00 pm: _____

6:00 pm: _____

7:00 pm: _____

8:00 pm *Lamentations Service*

11:00 pm: _____

Midnight: _____

Saturday

1:00 am: _____

2:00 am: _____

3:00 am: _____

etc.

9:00 am *Holy Saturday Liturgy*

11:00 am: _____

Noon: _____

1:00 pm: _____

etc.

Rush Service and Paschal Liturgy

GREAT FRIDAY VIGIL



Resource & Planning Guide

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GREAT FRIDAY VIGIL

In order to fully appreciate the wonder of Christ's Resurrection from the dead, it is important that we understand the significance of His suffering that we may behold His glorious Resurrection.

An ancient tradition in the Orthodox Church, which NAC Teen SOYO has committed itself to honor, is the Vigil at the Tomb of Christ. After our Lord died on the Cross, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, bound it in linen cloths with spices and buried it in a new tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat opposite the tomb watching as their Lord was buried. The Church over the centuries has joined with these two women in keeping watch over Jesus' tomb. The Holy Friday Vigil at Christ's tomb is our opportunity keep vigil at the tomb of Christ as He descends into Hell to loosen the bonds of death. What better way to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus than to participate in the Vigil by His tomb.

The Church has given us this opportunity to watch and wait with the countless saints and myriads of angels as our Lord conquers death.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Exactly what is a Vigil?

A Vigil is a time of watching, waiting, and preparing. We watch over the Lord's tomb, remembering His suffering and death for our salvation. We take time out of our often too hectic schedule to wait with expectation for our Lord's Resurrection from the dead. It is an excellent time to take account of our life in the light of Jesus' life and teachings, preparing ourselves to be able to behold the glory of His triumph over death. In a very real sense, the Holy Friday Vigil is the final opportunity of getting ready for Pascha (Christ's Passover from Death to Life) – the Resurrection of Christ!

What do I do at the Vigil?

In practical terms, a vigil is spent in meditation and prayer while one or more people read hymns and Psalms before the Tomb of Christ in the Church. In many places, people sign up to read these Psalms and hymns during the night so that there is someone constantly watching over the Tomb throughout the night.

Do I have to spend the whole night at the Church?

Not unless you want to. But after spending some time by Christ's tomb, you may find yourself wanting to stay. In most places, people sign up to keep vigil at the Church at a specific time, say for an hour or so. During this time, they might help read the Psalms or possibly quietly pray and meditate before the Tomb.

In some parishes, the local Teen SOYO members spend the night at the Church, taking turns reading. In other places, families sign up for various times throughout the night, returning for their time of vigil. And in some places, a combination of methods is used. There is a great deal of flexibility in how the Vigil can be organized. What is important is to get as many people in the parish involved in this experience and for it to be prayerful.

How long is the Vigil?

Traditionally, the Vigil starts after the Vespers of Holy Friday afternoon, when the body of Christ is removed from the Cross and placed in the tomb. It would conclude with the Paschal Hours and Matins on Saturday night, as we celebrate our Lord's victory over death and His Resurrection. In some places, the Vigil begins after the Lamentations on Holy Friday evening and concludes with the Liturgy of St Basil the Great on Holy Saturday morning. The length of the Vigil can be altered to meet the particular needs of a parish.

How can Teen SOYO organize a Great Friday Vigil?

First, contact your parish priest and discuss your ideas with him - you need his permission and oversight. He will know the best way of organizing this at your Church. After you have the Vigil scheduled with your pastor, begin advertising it among the Teen SOYO members. Be sure they know what you are doing! It may be a good idea to give them a copy of this pamphlet to read, so they can understand the significance of the Vigil. Then, on the Sunday before Palm Sunday, be sure to place an article or announcement in your parish bulletin concerning the Holy Friday Vigil being sponsored by Teen SOYO.

