



*Department of Christian Education*

## ***Lenten Tips of the Week*** **FIFTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT**

### **FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES...**

Click [here](#) for ***Journey to Pascha 5th Week Lesson***  
from the OCA Department of Christian Education

Free Sample Handouts **on *St. John of the Ladder***  
From OrthodoxJourneys.com (attached PDF)

Click [here](#) for ***Crafts and Games on Repentance***  
From OrthodoxPebbles.org

Click [here](#) to watch ***We've Forgotten What Faith is...***  
From Y2AM

Click [here](#) to watch ***St. John of the Ladder***  
From 3 Men and a Bible

### **FOR FAMILIES and STUDY GROUPS...**

Click [here](#) for ***Reflections on the 5th Week of Lent***  
from the OCA Department of Christian Education

Free Sample Handouts **on *St. John of the Ladder***  
From OrthodoxJourneys.com (attached PDF)

**For more info or support, contact**  
**Mat. Tamara Cowan, Department of Christian Education**  
[tamarancowan@hotmail.com](mailto:tamarancowan@hotmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/nynjocaeducation](https://www.facebook.com/nynjocaeducation)



# Ascend to God

## *Glory to Jesus Christ!*

☞ Have you ever thought about what it means to **be with God**? Where is this path to Paradise with God?

Our life is a **journey to Salvation**, and can be described as a ladder, where our daily experiences and struggles represent steps which can bring us closer to God.

## *Life is a Journey*

This image of a ladder was taught by **Saint John Climacus**, a 7th century spiritual father of the Church, known for his writings encouraging the faithful to live according to God's commandments.

How often do we help others? How often do we read scripture outside of liturgy? Do others see the Image of God in our words and actions?

## *Drawing Closer to God*

Why should we do what the Church teaches? Because, as St. John reminds us, what we do today either separates us from or **brings us closer to God**.

We become real members of the Orthodox Church - and our true selves - when we say "no" to the passions and temptations of life, and say "yes" to doing what Christ teaches.

## *Living on the Ladder*

As Orthodox Christians **our experience of God** must extend beyond standing at liturgy on Sunday morning. It means actively offering our praise and thanksgiving for God's mercy, and then **sharing that same mercy** with friends and strangers alike.

Making God's Kingdom present in our world begins with **receiving the Eucharist** and then going into the world **bearing the Light of Christ** in school, at home, and every place we go.

## *Now is the Time for Action*

Pascha is just a few weeks away. These days of **Great Lent allow us to repent** and draw closer to God. Deciding to focus on God means our prayers, fasting, and acts of charity **bring us closer to God**.

As we ascend the ladder of our life, our acts of holiness make us like the saints who resembled the Image of God before others. May we also draw closer to God and each other, thereby **bringing Paradise into this world**.

## ☞ **Scripture Readings**

for the Fourth Sunday of Lent:  
St. John Climacus

Epistle: **Hebrews 6:13-20**  
Gospel: **Mark 9:17-31**



## ☞ **Hymns of the Day**

for the Fourth Sunday of Lent:  
St. John Climacus

### **Troparion - Tone 1**

Dweller of the desert and angel in the body, You were shown to be a wonder-worker, our God-bearing Father John.  
You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer: healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith.  
Glory to Him who gave you strength!  
Glory to Him who granted you a crown!  
Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!

### **Kontakion - Tone 4**

The Lord truly set you on the heights of abstinence, to be a guiding star, Showing the way to the universe, O our Father and Teacher John.

*Parents, Church School Teachers & Youth Directors:*  
Watch for the ☞ to indicate topics/questions you can use to inspire conversations with youth. Or use the corresponding study guide for this resource.

# Climb the Ladder to Heaven

Over 1400 years ago a monk named John was living in Egypt and was asked to write a guidebook to help other monk with their spiritual efforts.

Saint John wrote a book called *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. It helps everyone know how to draw closer to God through godly acts of charity and prayer.

Saint John uses the image of Jacob’s Ladder (read Genesis 28:10–19) to teach us about the temptations we’ll face and how to focus on God.

The goal is to do things which will unite us to the love and joy of God.



## Instructions

Start at the bottom of the ladder and choose from the list of words below, placing them into each rung of the ladder to identify the way we should live as Orthodox Christians.

- Obedient
- Prayer
- Anger
- Greedy
- Love
- Humility
- Lying
- Joyful

We are called to be like God, Who is

To be spiritually healthy we need

Avoid pride, instead choose

Being

Avoid

Flee from

Remain

Be

Y

T

E

G

Y

B

is not Godly.

by telling the truth.

in the face of struggles.

to God (and your parents).

Can you reach the top?

Start Here

# What I Believe:

Read this quote from St. John Climacus.

Then, explain in your own words or with a drawing what the quote means in your daily life as an Orthodox Christian.

“Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honor your patience.”



*“Ascend,... Let us hasten until we attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of God,... since God is indeed love, to whom be praise, dominion, power, in whom is and was and will be the cause of all goodness throughout infinite ages. Amen.”*

**- Saint John Climacus**