









FOLLOWERS – LESSON PLAN

Age	Term	Mod.	Module Theme	Module Title	Lesson Number and Title
16	2	4	Celebrations	Modern Saint	70: Maria Of Paris

Use the syllabus framework to complete above. Infants: 20 minutes; Juniors: 30 minutes; Middles & Seniors: 45 minutes (Mod. = Module Number, Module Theme - in the heading, Module Title - uppercase in the cell, Lesson Num [NO. column] and Title)

							
Verbal V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Logical L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Spatial S	Kinaesthetic K	Musical M	Intra - personal P1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter - personal P2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural N

Tick the appropriate box(es) above [copy this:] for the modes of learning being used in this session.

Prayer: O Lord of hosts, be with us, for beside you, we have no other helper in adversity; O Lord of hosts, have mercy on us.

Starter: Then the king will say to those on his right hand, “come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave me food,... and I was a stranger and you took me in,... I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:34-36).

Learning objectives: The way to God lies through love of people, each one of us needs to find his true vocation in life and use it to serve others.

Core Activities and Learning

Elizaveta Pilenko, the future Mother Maria, was born, from a devout Orthodox Christians parents, in 1891 in the Latvian city of Riga, and grew up in the south of Russia on a family estate near the town of Anapa on the shore of the Black Sea. When she was fourteen, her father died, so the family moved to St Petersburg, where she became part of radical literary circles, and wrote her first collection of poetry, *Scythian shards*, in 1912. Liza found herself drawn toward the religious faith she had jettisoned after her father’s death. She admitted to the Theological Academy of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in St Petersburg. As World War 1 was beginning, she tried to create better social structures, by joining the ill-fated Social Revolutionary Party, a movement that was far more democratic than Lenin’s Social Democratic Party.

In February 1918, Liza was elected deputy mayor of Anapa. She looked red for the white forces, her life was in danger, arrested, jailed and put on trial. After the trial, It was thanks to Daniel Skobtsov, that Liza avoided execution. They fell in love and within days were married. The tide of the civil war was now turning in favour of the Bolsheviks. Both Liza and her husband were in peril, as well as her daughter Nastia and unborn child. They made the decision many thousands were making: it was safest to go abroad, her mother, came with them. Their long journey finally ended in Paris in 1923.

In the hard winter of 1926, Nastia came down with influenza and became thinner, and after a month in the Pasteur Institute hospital she died. The death of someone you love, she wrote, “throws open the gates into eternity, while the whole of natural existence has lost its stability and its coherence”. She emerged from her mourning with a determination to seek “a more authentic and purified life.” She felt she saw a “new road before me and a new meaning in life, to be a mother for all, for all who need maternal care, assistance, or protection”. She devoted herself more and more to social work and theological writing with a social emphasis. In 1927 two volumes, *Harvest of the Spirit*, were published in which she retold the lives of many saints.

While her work for the Russian Student Christian Movement suited her, the question was still unsettled in her life what her true vocation was. She began to envision a new type of monasticism in the world, “half monastic and half fraternal,” which would connect spiritual life with service to those in needs, not simply open the door when those in need knocked, but would actively seek out the homeless. An ecclesiastical divorce was issued on March 7, 1932. A few weeks later, in the chapel at St. Sergius Theological Institute, Liza was professed as a nun. She was given the name Maria.

The last phase of Mother Maria’s life was a series of responses to World War II and Germany’s occupation of France. Jews was forbidden access to nearly all public places, captured, and killed. Father Dimitri, Mother Maria and their co-workers set up routes of escape, providing jews with false baptismal documents. Nazi security police arrested them, and her son Yura, separated, All four died in German concentration camps after suffering. It is reported that Mother Maria gave up her life for a girl in Auschwitz.

On January 18, 2004, the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul recognized Mother Maria Skobtsova as a saint along with her son Yuri, the priest who worked closely with her, Fr. Dimitri Klépinin, and her close friend and collaborator Ilya Fondaminsky.

ACTIVITIES – after reading her life and discussing its significant points from a Christian point of view. Complete the Activity SAheet (70) then work through the Follow Up section (below).

Resources: Mother Maria Icon, Activity Sheet 70

Review: “The way to God lies through love of people”, “There are signs which we must understand and paths which we must follow”, “We must not allow Christ to be overshadowed by any regulations, any customs, any traditions, any aesthetic considerations, or even any piety.”(Mother Maria)

Follow Up: Describe a true vocation in life; explore and share what you might be called to do to serve God.