**VISION**

**Narrator 1**: Welcome to our Sunday School program. Our theme for this year’s program is VISION. We will see today how people’s vision was changed by the miracles of Christ and how the Creed inspires us to use the principles of our faith to change our vision, just as those who were touched by Christ changed theirs.

**Scene1:**

*The Sunday-school Teacher (Michael): walks on stage and is carrying a rolled-up poster board with the Creed on it. Then, 3 kids walk on stage and then stop, peering out over the audience. They are carrying Orthodox Study Bibles.*

**Teen 1 :** Hurry, we’d better get to Sunday school .

**Teen 2:** *(Looks over at Teen 3),* who is looking out into the audience as if looking out a window.) What do you see out there?

**Teen 3:** I see some of my friends out there playing. They make fun of me, sometimes, because I go to Church. Sometimes I would rather sleep in like they say they do.

(The 3 kids go to Sunday school.)

**Teacher :** Hello, everyone! How are you all doing this morning?

**Teen 3:** Actually, not that great. I’m not really sure why I’m here, and why I’m not sleeping in or doing something fun with my friends, instead.

**Teen 1 :** And I’m confused about how to answer my friends who don’t understand my faith.

**Teacher:** Well, maybe we can find some answers. What is a good place to start when we have a question about our faith?

**Teen 3:** The Creed. It shows us what we believe.

**Teacher:** Right! (Holds up the poster board.) What are some of the things we learned about it?

**Teen 2:** This part about Jesus (walks up to point to the part that he reads): “Who for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.”

**Teen 1 :** Yes, the Incarnation is what we celebrate at Christmas! At the birth of Christ both the shepherds and the wise men had visions that led them to change.

**Scene 2:**

( Shepherds come up onto another part of the stage )

**Shepherd 1:** We have heard the tidings of great joy about the birth of a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

**Shepherd 2:** Let’s go to Bethlehem to see what the Lord has made known to us.

*(They cross over to the manger.)*

**Shepherd 3 :** Amazing! It is just as the angels said. Here is a “babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Let us go now and tell everyone else what we have just seen!

*(Shepherds exit the stage and 3 wise men approach the manger, bow, leave their gifts and walk to the side.)*

**Wiseman 1:** King Herod told us to come back and tell him where to find the baby Jesus. Herod says he wants to go and worship Him.

**Wiseman 2 :** We have been warned in a dream not to go back to Jerusalem.

**Wiseman 3:** Come on, let’s go back to our country in a different way!

**Scene 3:**

**Teen 3**: I see! The birth of Christ changed the visions of the Shepherds and Wisemen and sent them in a new direction? What else does our Creed tell us?

**Teen 1:** “And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.”

**Teen 2:** Right! The Resurrection! Isn’t that the main message of our faith?

**Scene 4:**

3 women and a narrator walk up on stage.

**Narrator 3 :** Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdelene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome brought spices that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

**Mary the Mother of James:** Let us go and anoint the body of Jesus.

**Mary Magdeline :** But Mary, who is going to help us roll away the stone from the door of the tomb?

**Narrator 4** : But when they walked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long, white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

**Narrator 3**: And the Angel told the women “ Do not be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell the disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, as He said to you.

**Mary the Mother of James:** The tomb is empty! Where is the body of Jesus?

**Mary Magdeline :** (Shivering) Mary, I am afraid!

**Salome :** I cannot believe my eyes! What vision is this?! Let’s go back now.

**Scene 5:**

**Teen 1 :** What a vision that must have been to see an Angel and the empty tomb! The women were the first to hear the news of the Resurrection!

**Teen 3:** Yes, the angel told the myrrh-bearing women to go tell the disciples about it! To spread the word!

**Scene 6:**

**Teacher:** Anything else you want to mention about the Creed?

**Teen 2:** What about the description of the Church: “One, Holy, catholic, and apostolic.”

**Teen 3 :** What does “apostolic” mean, exactly?

**Teacher:** Look at the icon of the Pentacost

*(Peter and others walk on stage, Peter is off to the side)*

**Person 1:** I am amazed! Aren’t all those men that are speaking to us from Galilee? Yet I hear them speak in Arabic.

**Person 2:** Yes! How is it that we hear them, each in our own language in which we are born.

**Person 3:** They are spreading the word of Jesus in every language! Listen, Peter is saying that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

**Person 1:** Hearing this news from Peter cuts me to the heart! (She clasps her hands over her heart and those around her do the same.)

**Person 3:** Brethren, what shall we do? What shall we do?

**Peter :** *(approaching the women)* Let me tell you what to do. Number 1, Repent; Number 2: Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and then you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.

(They leave the stage.)

**Scene 7:**

**Teacher:** Now, back to your question. What does it mean that our Church is apostolic?

**Teen 1:** The Church was established by Jesus Christ, and its foundation was laid by the Apostles.

**Teen 3:** Yeah, the Church is based on the unbroken apostolic succession of bishops and the priests. To put it simply, starting from the Apostle Andrew, our church has continued from Pentecost until the present.

**Teen 2:** All of that is right, but there is even more to it. Do you remember what we learned from Archbishop Anastasios, who has done mission work in Africa and Albania? (Shows picture from the 2nd grade Sunday-school book on page 72.)

**Teen 1:** The Archbishop reminds us that it is necessary that the whole Church follow the examples of the Apostles and keep on proclaiming the Gospel to everyone around the world.

**Teen 3:** Yes, I’ve heard that our church has some modern Saints too.

**Narrator 2:** Throughout the centuries the Saints and Leaders of our Church have had dreams and visions calling them to serve God. In 1794, answering a call for missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Aleuts, Father Herman, born in Russia, came to the New World with the first Orthodox mission to Alaska.

**Aluet 1 :** What a nice day to go ice fishing on Spruce Island. Would you like a biscuit? Father Herman baked these for the children.

**Aluet 2:** *(eating biscuit)* Father Herman is so kind and generous feeding our families with the food he grows and standing up for the rights of our poor and oppressed people.

(*shaking as if in an earthquake)*

**Aluet 1:** That was an earthquake! Surely the approaching tsunami wave will destroy us all!!

**Father Herman: *(approaches):*** Do not be afraid. I will place the Icon of the Theotokos here on the beach and the Tsunami wave will not come past the icon.

**Aluet 2:** It is truly a miracle! I see now that through Christ all things are possible!

**Narrator 5 :**  People sometimes asked Fr. Herman how he could tolerate his isolated existence. He replied, “I am not alone. God is here, just as He is everywhere. The holy angels are here too. In 1970 Father Herman was recognized as a saint. St. Herman is the first American Orthodox saint.

(The 3 teens walk over to the same “window” they had been to at the start of the program, looking out into the audience.)

**Teen 3 :** I still see my friends, but now I also see other people, too. People in this city who may not have heard the message of the Gospel. Or may they have heard it, but don’t understand it yet. And, I see people who live far away from me, in other parts of the world, who have also not yet heard the Gospel.

**Teen 2 :** Maybe we can help them!

*(All go off the stage.) (Six children from the younger classes come up on stage, each holding a large letter.)*

**(Child 1)**: Holding up the letter “V” – V is for the new Vision that Christ brings into our lives

**(Child 2 )** Holding up the letter “I” – I is for the Initiative that we take to invite others to Church.

**(Child 3 )** Holding up the letter “S” – S is for Sharing the good news with others.

**(Child 4)** Holding up the letter “I”– I is for Icon, we see all people as an image of Christ.

**(Child 5 )** Holding up the letter “O” – O is for the One, Holy, catholic, and Apostolic Church.

**(Child 6 )** Holding up the letter “N” – N is for Neighbor, which is the person who lives next door or far away

**Narrator 1:** Thank you for attending our program. We would like to thank missionary Nathan Hoppe and his family who visited our parish this fall, and who brought his vision and this book to our parish, “Mission in Christ’s Way,” by Archbishop Anastasios, some of which we have shared with you today.

**Narrator 2 :** Father Kevin and all of us have a vision for our church. We all have a shared vision of Orthodoxy in a Christian world. As with the Orthodox missionaries around the world, let us share the knowledge of our faith with others. Please join us in singing “Joy to the World”

*(All go off the stage.) (Six kids from the younger classes come up on stage, each holding a large letter.)*