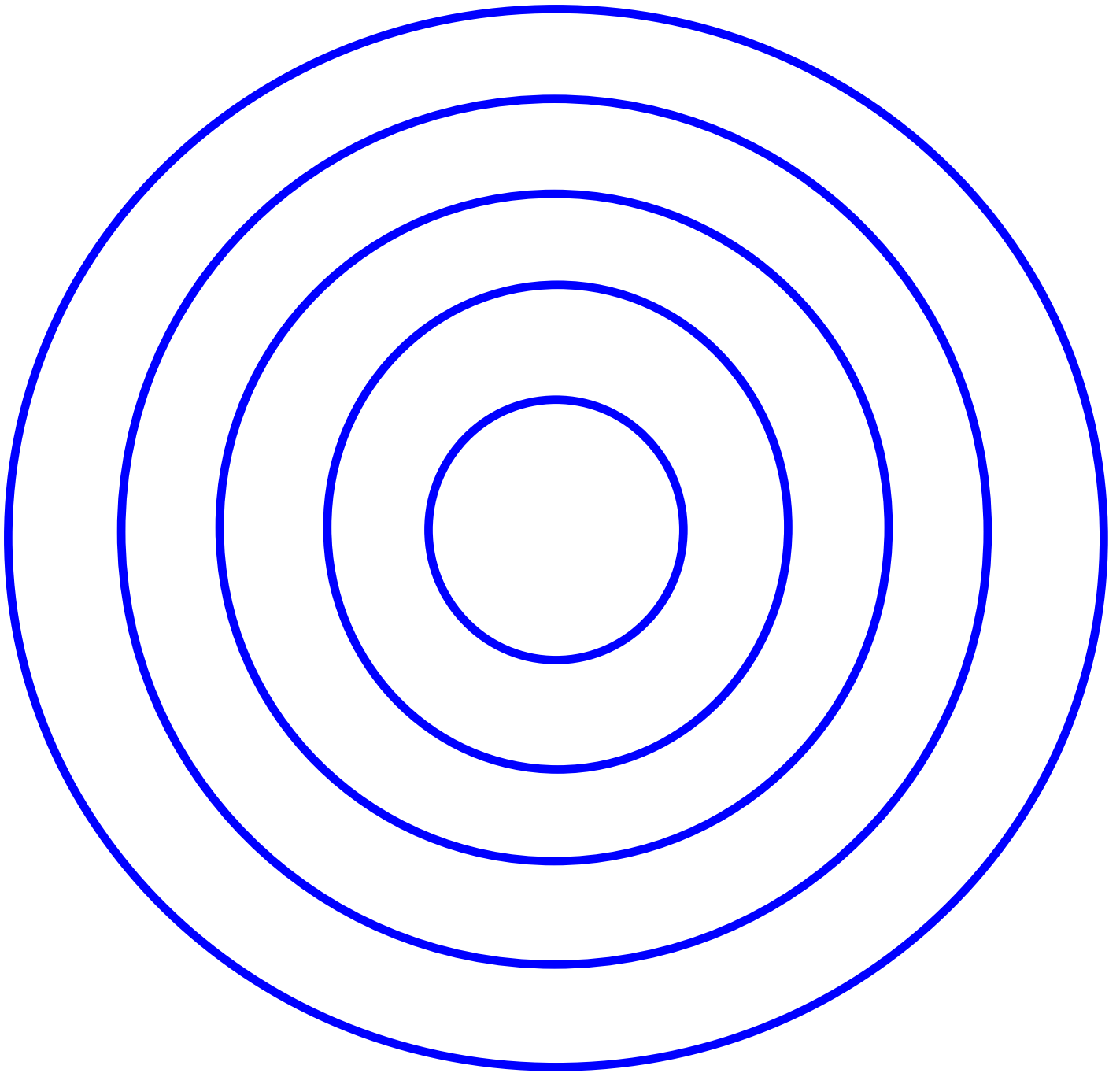


The Universe is My Parish: My Life Diagram Worksheet



St Juliana the Merciful (Feast Day, January 2nd)

Many years ago, when Ivan the Terrible was Czar, deep in Russia there lived a little girl called Juliana. It was hard to live in Russia at that time; there were many wars and many people were killed while others suffered from hunger and disease; schools were scarce and even the churches were so few and far away that Juliana and her family could not go to them often. When she was still a child, her mother and father died, and Juliana went to live with her aunt and cousins. Even as a little girl she amazed everyone with her devoutness and her kindness to the ill and the poor.

Juliana had a special way of helping the poor. She was good at sewing, and often she would sew beautiful things at night when everyone thought she was asleep. She would sell these things secretly, and with the money she received she would buy food and clothing for those in need. No one knew how much she helped others, but those she helped loved her. She not only gave them the food and clothes and money they needed, but they felt that she loved them and sympathized with them.

Juliana never used to show off to her friends and family or brag about her piety. Although everyone liked her, she would find some excuse not to join in wild games and empty pleasures. Instead she would go off by herself and think and pray. Although she never went to school and never learned to read and write, she amazed people with her wisdom and her thoughtful answers to their questions.

"Juliana does not need any teacher," they used to say, "because the saints themselves are her teachers."

When Juliana was sixteen, her family decided it was time for her to marry. She was not particularly glad, because she knew that she would no longer be able to have as much time for her spiritual life and for her good works. She had wanted to become a nun and to devote her life to God entirely. She did not oppose her family, however, because she knew that it was not the outward form, but her inner life, which showed whether she was good or bad.

Juliana married a very good and very rich husband and had to manage a big household, with many servants and peasants. She never scolded the servants but taught them by love, and if they did not do their work properly, she would quietly finish what they had not done. She would never let the servants wait on her, saying, "Who am I, that people such as myself should wait on me? Did not God create them too?"

She knew that all men were equal in the sight of God, even though some were rich masters and others were poor servants. "She treated her servants like children," her son wrote; "she was a mother to them and not a boss."

Not only the poor loved Juliana. Her husband and his family loved her very much, and they begged her to take care of herself, but she went on eating very little, fasting and praying often, while secretly helping the poor at night. The more she helped others, the more gay and joyful she became, and the more everyone loved her.

She had many children, and she loved them all and taught them what she knew. However busy she was with her big household and her work for the poor, she surrounded her children with her love and wisdom. They admired and loved her, speaking and writing about her goodness and love as if she were someone extraordinary.

There were many diseases in those days and several of her little children died. Although she was sure they were with God in heaven, she missed them terribly and when her eldest two sons were killed accidentally, she was so overcome with sadness that she wished to go to a convent so that she could spend the rest of her life in prayer and devotion to God. Feeling that she could no longer go on living as she had, she begged her husband to let her go.

"But who will take care of the other children?" he asked her. "I would be very lonely without you too. Please stay with us for we need you and love you." She agreed to stay and continued to care for her family and household and the poor who came to her door.

Then there came a famine, and the people were very hungry. Juliana gave away all the food she had and taught her servants to make bread out of ground-up weeds or bark instead of flour. This bread became famous; people came from far away to taste it.

"Why is Juliana's bread so sweet and good?" her neighbors wondered. But the peasants used say it was so good because of the love she put into making it and distributing it to the poor. "She lives in God's way," they would say of Juliana.

After many years her husband died. Juliana became still more tireless in her service to others and her prayers to God. She hardly slept at all, and gave away all she had to help others. She never forgot that there was something more to be done for someone else, or that she could devote still more of herself to God and His works. She never thought of her own comfort. Her children loved her very much and they used to beg her to take better care of herself, but she would answer, "What good would it be to save my body and lose my soul?" She went on living in God's way, with no thought for her own comforts.

While she lay dying, surrounded by those who loved her, her children were overcome with grief. All the poor beggars and servants as well as those who had known her sympathetic help had won her many friends. Her love for others and her sympathetic help as a way of life, made her more and more happy as her life progressed.

Because so many people loved her, stories were spread about her, making her famous, although she lived quietly as a simple homemaker, a dutiful wife and mother.

Those who were with her as she lay dying marveled at the joy and peace with which she greeted death. After she had died they saw a bright halo around her head, the same halo as we see around the heads of saints in the icons.

Many years later, the Church recognized her great goodness and deep faith, and proclaimed her a saint. The simple people who had known her considered her a saint even in her lifetime, and they thought of her whenever they heard, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Taken from "They Walked With God: the Lives of Saints for Children" by Lydia Kesich (Out of Print)

Living Examples: The Saints

A spiritual gift is a special ability God gives to people through His Holy Spirit in order that they can glorify God, by showing His love and following His plan.

Saints Name: _____

What spiritual gifts did the Saints have? (Refer to list below.)

How did he/she use them? (Be specific.)

If you asked them why he/she were doing what they were, what do you think he/she would say?

In what ways did he/she share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others?

If she/she helped people, what was his/her attitude about the people he/she were helping?

How would you have acted if you were in his/her situation?

Name people you know who have dedicated their life to serving God's people in need.

Gifted to Give

God has given each of us special gifts, talents, interests and abilities.

a) List some of your talents, abilities, and interests.

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

b) The Bible also lists spiritual gifts that God gives us for the upbuilding of His Church. Read through the following list. Circle any of the words that describe a way you could use some of your talents and abilities (i.e., if you like to cook, that could fit into the gifts of helping, hospitality and giving).

Ask your parish priest, teacher or use a dictionary if you have any questions if you have any questions about the gifts listed.

Serving	Wisdom
Helping	Evangelism
Giving	Tongues and Interpretation
Teaching	Miracles
Preaching	Healing
Pastoring	Faith
Mercy	Celibacy
Hospitality	Martyrdom
Exhortation	Monasticism
Leadership	Others:
Administration	_____
Prophecy	_____
Knowledge	_____
Discernment	

List some ways you think you could use some of your gifts and talents at home, school, church, work, etc. to let your light shine.

Home

School

Church

Work

Making a Plan!
(Duplicate and Distribute)

Name of Project:

Description of project: Who are we helping and how?

Names and Phone Numbers of Project Leaders:

Write out the necessary steps to complete your project:

1. People involved - adult advisor:

- people we are helping:

- people we need help from:

2. Materials - What concrete materials do we need to complete this project?

3. Money - Do we need any money for project materials, transportation, etc.? How will we raise it?

4. What needs to be done first? Second? Third? Etc.?

- TO DO:
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.

5. When do we expect to complete our project?

6. When will the follow-up evaluation take place (date/time)?

Leader's signature of approval:

I Was Hungry

I was hungry
And you formed a humanities club
And discussed my hunger.

Thank you.

I was naked
And in your mind
You debated the morality of my
Appearance.

I was homeless
And you preached to me
Of the spiritual shelter of the
Love of God.

I was imprisoned
And you crept off quietly
To your chapel in the cellar
And you prayed for my release.

I was sick
And you knelt and thanked God for
Your health.

I was lonely
And you left me alone
to pray for me.

Author Unknown

(Taken from *The Word on Being a Leader: Serving Others and Sharing Your Faith* by Jim Burns, Gospel Light Publications, 1995)

Witnessing by Example

Ways of Witnessing through Service

- Shopping with people who cannot carry groceries
- Cleaning house for people who cannot
- Tutoring others (young or old) in skills you have (for example: school subjects; computer skills, etc.)
- Beautifying the church
- Restoring/fixing property (for example: a monastery, church cemetery, town park, etc.)
- Babysitting for busy parents
- Teaching church school classes
- Visiting shut-ins and people in nursing homes
- Others (Use back of this sheet)

See also "20-Something Ways to Involve Youth in Christ-like Service" on *The Hub for Youth and Young Adult Ministry Resources* at:

<http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/TOC/Activities/20somethings/TSWMainMenu/TwentySomething.htm>

People in Need and Community Resources

(Use as a guide for discussion and planning session for service project.)

Who are people in need?

- 1 those on welfare
- 2 the homeless
- 3 unwed mothers
- 4 families with infants and preschoolers
- 5 shut-ins
- 6 elderly who are isolated from their families and/or are ill
- 7 abused women and children
- 8 orphans and children in foster homes
- 9 widows/widowers
- 10 those in nursing homes
- 11 the imprisoned
- 12 the handicapped
- 13 the hospitalized
- 14 chemically dependent - drugs, alcohol
- 15 unemployed
- 16 immigrants
- 17 runaway youth
- 18 pregnant women who lack the financial resources to care for a baby
- 19 unskilled
- 20 mentally retarded
- 21 abusive parents
- 22 children of abusive parents
- 23 children of divorce
- 24 the poor
- 25 single parents

Common community resources followed by #(s) of group(s) indicated on list on left.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 14
Ala-teen: 14
Drug Abuse Clinic: 14
Big Brothers/Sisters Organizations: 22
County Family Services: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8
Parents Anonymous: 21
Teenage Parent Center: 3
Children's Home: 8
United Cerebral Palsy: 12
Services for Handicapped: 12
Vocational Development Center for the Handicapped: 12
County Board of Mental Retardation: 20
Association for Retarded Citizens: 20
Board of Employment Services: 15, 16
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation: 19
County Pregnancy Crisis Center: 3, 18
Battered Women's Shelter: 7
Rape Crisis Center: 7
Goodwill Industries: 19
Headstart: 1, 3, 4, 22
International Institute: 16
Meals on Wheels/Mobile Meals: 6, 9
Safe Landing: 17
United Way: 7, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21
Visiting Nurse Association: 6, 9

Guidelines for Service Projects

Here are certain tips to help make service projects meaningful events.

- Make youth aware of the opportunities they have to serve others instead of imposing service projects on them. The idea is to give them the ability to freely choose to help others out of love, not because they are forced. To this end, advisors may do well to outline the various projects available to members and have them choose at least two in which they want to participate. They may decide to do all of them.
- Projects should help meet an identifiable need of the community or of someone in the community, whether it is the geographic community, the parish community, or the worldwide Orthodox community.
- Implementation of the project should be relatively easy, with a minimum reliance on adult participation.
- The project should require minimal training for participants.
- Activities should be such that both youth and those they are helping are not risking injury.
- Projects should be sensitive to the emotions of youth.
- Projects can be either short-term or long-term.
- As much as possible, projects should require youth to have "face-to-face" contact with persons they are helping.
- Participants should be reminded that when we serve others we serve Christ (Matt 25). It is part of living out the Orthodox Christian Faith, required by our Lord Jesus Christ as an act of love for Him and those whom He created, and should not, therefore, become an opportunity for self-aggrandizement.

Reflection Questions

- What was most challenging about this project?
- Most Surprising? Most inspiring?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about others?

Celebration Ideas

- Party with all participants
- Presentation to Parish
- Pizza Party
- Ice Cream Social

Links

- >> Visit the Orthodox Church in America [Youth 2003/2004](http://www.youth2003/2004) homepage: [yya.oca.org/ocay](http://www.yya.oca.org/ocay)
- >> Explore more projects, resources and ideas: [yya.oca.org/TheHub/index.htm](http://www.yya.oca.org/TheHub/index.htm)
- >> Also, check out [oca.org/](http://www.oca.org/) [FocusEducation](http://www.FocusEducation.org)
- >> Look for the new [Department of Christian Education](http://www.DepartmentofChristianEducation.org) homepage in the coming months!
- >> Have questions / comments? Email us: yyacm@oca.org



Let Your Light So Shine

ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA YOUTH 2003 / 2004



Evaluating the Service Project

(Do as a group)

1. What was it like to _____ (name of project)?

2. Did it help the people we hoped it would? How or how not?

3. How did or didn't the project reflect the commands of Christ we talked about?

4. Were there any surprises, good or bad, or did things go pretty much as we expected? Be specific.

5. What are some things to remember if we decide to do this project or one like it again? (Names, phone numbers, instructions, especially successful points, things to do differently)

6. Do we feel this project is worth continuing, or do we want to try another project?
 - a. If we want to continue this project, what would we have to do? Who else can we invite to help us with it?

 - b. If we want to try another project, what would it be?

Transfigured by the Spirit

Read the following texts:

From the Gospels

And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was **transfigured** before them, and His garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. (Mark 9:2-3)

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lamp stand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." (Luke 11:33-36)

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23)

Account of St Seraphim's Transfiguration

A close admirer and follower of St. Seraphim, Motovilov, described the miraculous transfiguration of the starets' face. This happened during the winter, on a cloudy day. Motovilov was sitting on a stump in the woods; St. Seraphim was squatting across from him and telling his pupil the meaning of a Christian life, explaining for what we Christians live on earth.

"It is necessary that the Holy Spirit enter our heart. Everything good that we do, that we do for Christ, is given to us by the Holy Spirit, but prayer most of all, which is always available to us," he said.

"Father," answered Motovilov, "how can I see the grace of the Holy Spirit? How can I know if He is with me or not?"

St. Seraphim began to give him examples from the lives of the saints and apostles, but Motovilov still did not understand. The elder then firmly took him by the shoulder and said to him, "We are both now, my dear fellow, in the Holy Spirit." It was as if Motovilov's eyes had been opened, for he saw that the face of the elder was brighter than the sun. In his heart Motovilov felt joy and peace, in his body a warmth as if it were summer, and a fragrance began to spread around them. Motovilov was terrified by the unusual change, but especially by the fact that the face of the starets shone like the sun. But St. Seraphim said to him, "Do not fear, dear fellow. You would not even be able to see me if you yourself were not in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord for His mercy toward us."

Thus Motovilov understood, in mind and heart, what the descent of the Holy Spirit and His transfiguration of a person meant.

Based upon everything that was discussed in the retreat, these scriptures, and the excerpt from the Life of St Seraphim, define the phrase, "Let Your Light So Shine."
What is the light? Where does it come from? How do you let it shine?

Personal Inventory

Looking back on my hopes and prayers, my fears and challenges, what now stands between the Lord and me? What sins do I need to confess and what bad habits do I need broken?

What do I need to keep my heart aflame with the love of God and His creation?

What will I do today to care for that flame?

What will I do tomorrow to keep the flame going?

What will I do this week to help that flame grow?

What will I do this month to let my light shine?