

Course Usage: Group in Church Context

The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp

General Guidelines:

- The estimated average time to complete this module is four class gatherings in addition to some time being spent outside of the gatherings for reading of the text. If the text is read as a group, then additional gatherings would be needed. If lessons are completed independently, then fewer gatherings will be necessary.
- It is important that appropriate time is taken, if possible, to carefully read the text (just over 7 pages) and consider the historical context.
- We encourage discussion within the group and with the group leader on historical context, the reading of the text, the core reflection questions, and the summative review.
- We encourage short essays (length should be age appropriate) for the “core reflection questions” or at least outlines or bullet point notes in relationship to the core reflection questions prior to watching the explanation videos.

Sample Schedule:

Gathering 1:

- Lesson 1: Read through the introduction.
- Lesson 2: Each student should read the historical context and watch the video. Students may also want to work through the related links individually or as a group.
- Discuss the historical context within the group led by the group leader.
- Lesson 3: Download the text (printing is optional) and review the “core reflection questions” as a group

Gathering 2:

- Note: This gathering assumes that students have read the text. Each student should take notes on the text with particular focus on the “core reflection questions” and any other points that peak an interest.
- Lesson 3: Discuss the responses to the “core reflection questions” either individually with the group leader, with a partner(s), or as a full group in relationship to the text.

Gathering 3:

- Lesson 4: Students should watch the explanation videos to the “core reflection questions.”
- Lesson 4: Discuss the responses to the “core reflection questions” either individually with the instructor, with a partner(s), or as a full group in relationship to the text.

Gathering 4:

- Lesson 5: Each student should complete the summative review assessment.
- Lesson 5: Students should review the questions they answered incorrectly, they found difficult, or offered new insights into the text.
- Lesson 5: Discuss the results of the summative review either individually with the instructor, with a partner(s), or as a full group in relationship to the text.

Extension Opportunities:

1. Look up the feast day and hymns sung on the feast of St. Polycarp online or in a service book. What are the points of emphasis in the hymns? How do the hymns connect with the text?
2. Do an internet search on St. Polycarp to further expand your understanding of his life and the context in which he lived. You can use the related links provided in the lesson as jumping off points.
3. Do an analysis of the key characters within the narrative of the martyrdom. Students may want to write an interview script from the perspective of another character in the story.
4. Students can build their own quizzes in relationship to the text. Instructors should consider points did they think were important to emphasize in writing their questions?
5. Draw a visual or make puppets or figurines presenting the different scenes represented in the text. Then, consider what the key scenes tell us about the unfolding of St. Polycarp’s martyrdom?
6. Create a trivia game or other kinds of board games that center on the historical facts in the life of St. Polycarp and the time in which he lived.