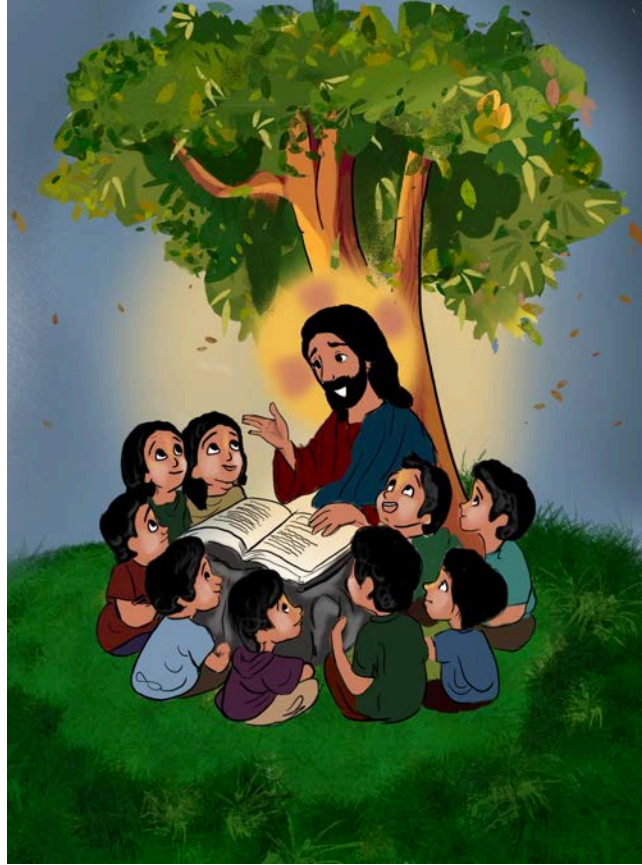




Sunday School of the American Dioceses
of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

2nd Grade

God Cares for Us



2nd Grade
God Cares For Us
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Supporting materials can be found at <https://talmido.org>

Lesson 1: You Are Special

God made us just like Him! That makes us special.

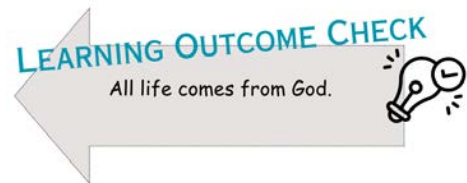
God loves every one of us so much!

Vocabulary Words

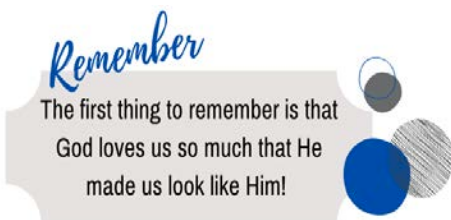
- **Image:** A copy of something. An image looks like what is copied.
- **Likeness:** To act or behave in almost the same way
- **Theosis:** To become more and more like God by doing what Jesus would do.

Made In His Image and Likeness

God is the Creator of all things. He created what we can see and He also created what we cannot see! Everything is made by God!



Do you remember how God created Adam? God made man in His **image** and in His **likeness**!



This includes everybody in this world - man and woman, boy and girl, and even those who are Christian and those who are not Christian. God made everyone in His **image** and so everyone is important and must be treated with love and respect.

Even those who may not look like you, act like you, or live the same way you do are made in God's image.

EVERYBODY looks like God! That is how special we are to God.

We can think, we can understand the difference between right and wrong and we can make the right choices in our lives. But most importantly, WE CAN LOVE!

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Human life is holy and precious.



Question

In this icon, does it look like Jesus and Adam have the same face?

Why do you think the iconographer did that?

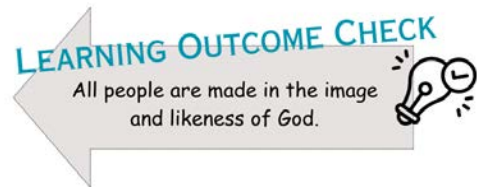
In school, you may notice a classmate who is sad because they are teased or have no friends. As Christians, we have to remember that God made that classmate and loves them, and so we need to also! We should show kindness and be a friend to that classmate.

Remember

Before we do or say anything, we should always think, "What would Jesus do or say?" in this situation. If our actions or words go against what Jesus would do we should not say or do it.

Why should we do this? Because that is what Jesus would have done. And by doing what Jesus would do, we begin to live in the **image** of God. We begin to become like God!

By trying our best to be like Jesus and do what Jesus would do, we become more and more like Him. We all not only have the **image** of God in us, but we have the **likeness** of God. God has made us special and we can choose to do the right things to become like Him. This is called “**theosis**.” **Theosis** is when we become like God, and do things that Jesus would do!



The Church uses many examples from the Bible to show us how Jesus always loved everyone. This also means people who were different and even those who did not like Jesus.

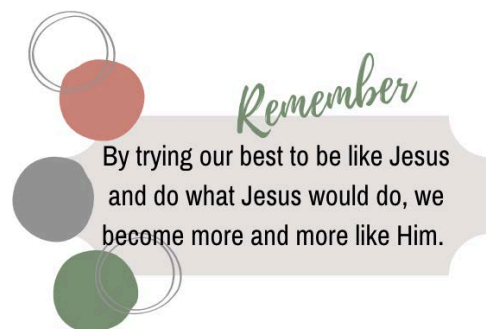
The Samaritan Woman

In **St. John 4:4-42**, we read how Jesus was tired and sat next to a well. He wanted some water and asked Photini, a woman from Samaria, for help.

A Samaritan is a person from a place called Samaria. The Jews and the Samaritans did not get along, so she was very surprised that Jesus wanted her help.



To Jesus, however, it did not matter that she was a Samaritan. She was made by God and God loved her. She was made in God’s **image** and could be like God.



And that's what we see happen at the end of the story. Even though she did not lead a holy life, after she spoke with Jesus, she believed and ran into the town to tell others about Him. Many people came to meet Him and believed in Him.

It does not matter what we all look like, we are different colors, height, weight, etc. It does matter how we behave because we are all made in the **image** of God. Jesus tells us that the most important thing we can do is to love God and to love others (St. Matthew 22: 37-40).

By loving others and the rest of God's creation, we are becoming the **image** of God as He made us to be. When we do the will of God, we are becoming more like Him.

Reflection Questions

1. In Church we sing, "God created Adam and sat down, contemplating him. He saw how fair and like the creature was to the Creator". How was Adam created?
2. Was St. Photini (the Samaritan woman) surprised when Jesus asked her for help?
3. What are different ways you can show God's love to others?

Lesson 2: God's Story

When we listen or read the Bible, we can learn more about God. The Bible is really important for the Church!

Vocabulary Words

- **Almighty:** A word to describe God because He can do anything.
- **Gospel:** A word that means “good news”, and is a special part in the Bible that tells us the story of Jesus. It is written by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.
- **Synoptic:** The books of the Gospel from St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. They have a lot of the same stories and are similar to each other. So, when you read them, you will find many of the same things happening in the stories about Jesus!
- **Theological:** The gospel of St. John is called the theological gospel because it teaches us more about how Jesus is God.
- **Quqilions:** Special prayers that we sing during Holy Qurbana.

The Holy Bible teaches us about God. The Bible is also called the **Word of God** or **Holy Scriptures**.

The first book of the Bible is Genesis, which teaches us that God made the heavens and the earth.

God made everything we can see and also everything that we cannot see. He is **almighty** and awesome!

Remember

Everything we see and also everything that we cannot see is made by God.



God loved man and woman very much. God created us to look like Him and made it possible to be like Him! (**Genesis 1:27**)

The Book of Genesis also tells how the first people (Adam and Eve) listened to the Devil instead of God. The Devil tricked Adam and Eve, and they sinned. Adam and Eve began to die.

But God's story does not end here. When we read the Bible from the first book (Genesis) to the last (Revelation), we learn how God saved us! God's story is that He loves page of the Holy Bible teaches us more about that story. The Holy Bible has two parts - the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is the time before Jesus is born. Do you remember the stories of Noah, Moses, and Jonah? Each one of these **prophets** had a message from God about saving His people. When we read about these **prophets**, we also learn how God wants us to follow His commands. But more importantly, the Old Testament was teaching that Jesus was coming!

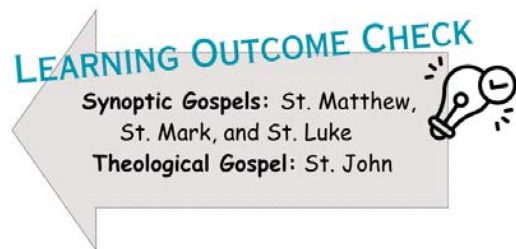
Every page and every story in the Old Testament tell us that the Savior will come and how we will know it is Him. All the prophets and all the laws were there to prepare us for Jesus.

The Orthodox Study Bible that we use today has 49 books in the Old Testament. Some Bibles, that you may have at home, may have only 39 books because they are missing some books! A long time ago, our Church used a Bible written in Syriac called the "Peshitta" that had about 39 books as well.

The New Testament

The New Testament is all about the life of Jesus and the Church in the time after Jesus' death and resurrection.

The first 4 books in the New Testament are special. These books are called the **Holy Gospels** and were written by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John. These four friends of Jesus wrote about Jesus' whole life. The Gospel of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke have many of the same stories and are called the **Synoptic** Gospels. The Gospel of St. John teaches us more about Jesus, and is called the **Theological** Gospel.



From the time Jesus was born, through the many miracles Jesus performed, to lastly when Jesus died on the Cross and resurrected, these four close friends of Jesus kept track and wrote down everything that they remembered and were told about Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit who helped them keep a record of all these real-life stories for us to read.

The fifth book is called the "Acts of the Apostles" and was also written by St. Luke and continues after the Gospel of St. Luke. It talks about the early Church.

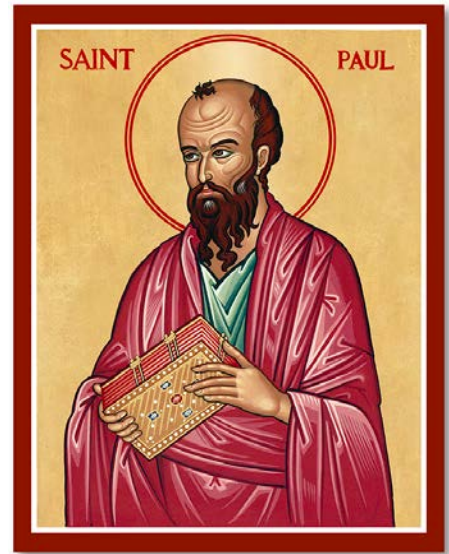
Next in the New Testament, we have many letters or Epistles each written by an Apostle. These letters show us how Christianity spread throughout the world after Jesus rose to heaven.

The disciples had to write their letters on a piece of paper and send it with someone who was traveling across the world. These letters were to teach churches around the world how to follow the directions Jesus left us. This was

to help us become good followers of Christ. A lot of the epistles were written by St. Paul.

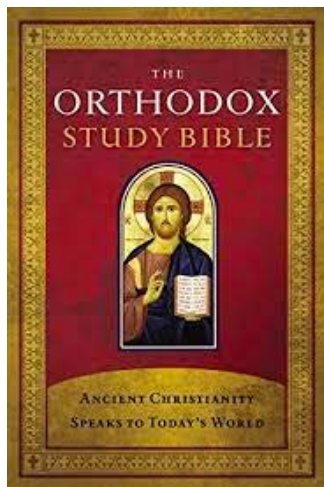
The last book of the New Testament (Revelation) was written by St. John and is the continuation of the Gospel of St. John. It is another theological book that teaches us how to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus.

All 27 books of the New Testament talk about Jesus - His Birth, His Life, and how He continues to act through His Church. Just like the Old Testament, the New Testament teaches us how to be a Christian!



"but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (St. John 20:31)

The Bible and the Church



The Bible is the Church's book!

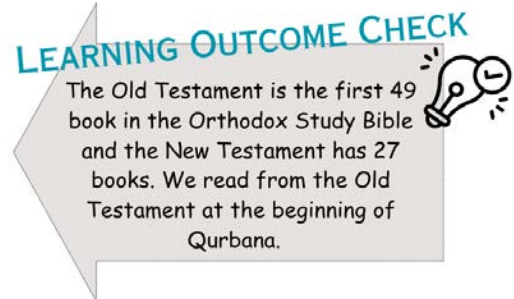
It is very holy and important to us. We read the Bible at home in Church. Bible verses are also in the songs and prayers of Holy Qurbana.

The Bible verses are read in Church according to the **Liturgical Calendar.**

At the very beginning of Holy Qurbana, a member of the Church reads the Old Testament. The first reading is from the first 5 Books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) which are called the Books of Moses.

Once Holy Qurbana begins, we sing special songs before hearing the Epistles which are letters from the Apostles.

The first reading is called the General Epistle and written by one of the first **Apostles**, and the second Epistle is from St. Paul who is also an Apostle but chosen after the Resurrection of Christ.



The priest then carries the Bible forward to read the Gospel. During this time in Holy Qurbana, everyone is standing straight and singing. We also hear the bells and marabhasa at this time. We should fold our hands and listen very carefully to the Gospel reading for that day. The **sermon** after the Gospel helps us understand the Bible reading.

Did you also know many of the songs from Church are also from the Bible? The intercessory prayers (Quqlion) to the Saints, departed (faithful and clergy), and to the Cross are all from the **Book of Psalms** in the Old Testament!

As you see, the Bible is so important in the Church! It helps us be ready, to be more like Jesus and to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus.

The Bible at Home

Today, every Christian can have a Bible at home. It is important for you to read the Bible at home too. The more we hear our parents read the Bible or read it ourselves, the more we learn about God's story and how much He loves us! That's why the Bible is so important at home too!

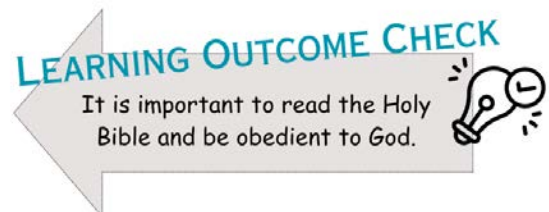


The Bible can be read at any time throughout the day. Just like during Holy Qurbana, we can read from the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Who knew the Bible had so many different parts? Each part of the Bible is unique and teaches us different lessons for our everyday lives.

What is the Bible?

The Holy Bible is the holy book of the Church. The Bible teaches us about Jesus Christ. The Bible was written by **Saints** of the Church and is important for us to grow to know God and to be more like Jesus!



Reflection Questions

1. How many parts are there in the Bible?
2. Does the Old Testament talk about Jesus?
3. What are the first 5 books of the Bible?
4. How many books are there in the Orthodox Study Bible?
5. Do we read the Bible during Holy Qurbana?

Lesson 3: The Church Calendar

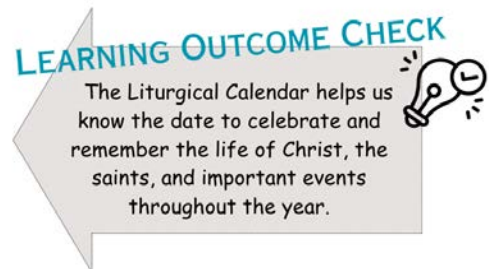
We have a special calendar for the church called the Liturgical Calendar. It helps us celebrate the life of Jesus every year, just like we celebrate our own birthday and other important events.

Vocabulary Words

- **Liturgical Calendar:** This is our Church calendar and has 7 seasons. The calendar follows the life of Christ and our Saints who lived in Christ.
- **Prostrations:** Bending down and touching the ground with our head when we pray. We do this because we love God!
- **Venerate:** To show respect and look up to as holy. We venerate our Saints because they lived their life like Christ, and we venerate holy things like the Cross because they are special to God.

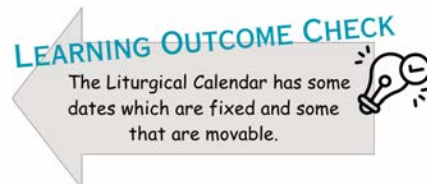
Happy Birthday! Every year we celebrate our birthday on the same date that we were born. We also celebrate major events in our lives, like the first day of school. The first day of school is not always on the same exact date, but it's celebrated every year around the end of summer.

In the same way, the church follows a calendar that celebrates and remembers the life of Christ, the saints, and important events throughout the year. This is called the **Liturgical Calendar**.



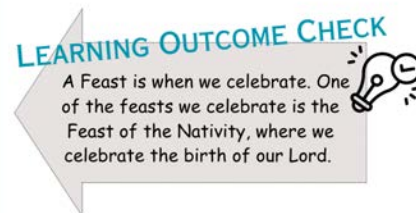
Some events are celebrated on the exact day every year, like Christmas on December 25th. Those that have exact dates are called **fixed dates**.

Other events are celebrated every year during the same season, but the dates change. Easter is celebrated every Spring but on different dates. These are **movable dates**.

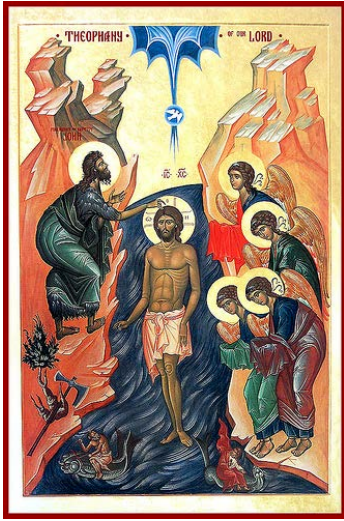


When we go to church, it sometimes feels like we always do the same thing, but it's actually a little different each time.

Sometimes we are fasting, sometimes we are feasting (celebrating). Depending on the season and the day of the week, we sing different songs to match the celebration or prayer. We also sing these songs with different tones to match the season. Each week the calendar has 7 days, and the Church has 7 hours of prayer each day. Can you guess how many seasons the calendar has? 7!



Liturgical Season	Description	Icon
Season of Annunciation	Unlike the regular monthly calendar, the Liturgical Calendar starts 8 Sundays before Christmas with 'Kudosh Etho,' the Sanctification of the Church. This is a movable date around the end of October/beginning of November. The church announces the arrival of our Savior and gives us time to prepare for the Birth of Christ. (Remember: We fast for 25 days before Christmas!)	

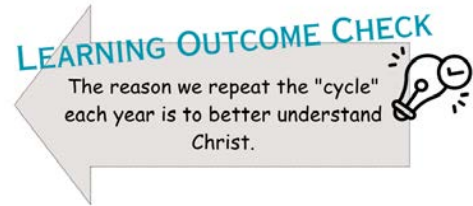
Season of Epiphany	After Christ is born on Christmas (fixed date), we begin the next season. In this season we remember the baptism of Jesus on January 6th (fixed date). At this time, we celebrate the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove during Jesus' baptism.	 An icon depicting the Baptism of Christ. Jesus is shown standing in the Jordan River, being baptized by John the Baptist. The Holy Spirit is represented by a dove descending from the sky. The scene is set against a background of stylized rocks and water. The text 'THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD' is visible at the top.
Season of Great Lent	It's the long 40 days when we give up our favorite foods and activities so that we can really focus on God. Just think back to what Jesus had to suffer through during his forty days in the desert. He did not eat or drink anything! The devil actually tempted Jesus 3 times! The long days in the church and all those prostrations are nothing compared to what Jesus suffered through. But just like Jesus, by fasting, we learn to stand strong against temptations and control our minds and bodies a little better so that we can become more like Jesus.	 An icon depicting the Crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus is on the cross, with the Virgin Mary and John the Apostle standing to the left, and the Holy Mary Magdalene and another figure to the right. The scene is set against a background of stylized rocks and a city in the distance. The text 'THE CRUCIFIXION' is visible at the top.

Season of Resurrection	This is the most joyous feasting season. We celebrate the biggest event ever - Jesus' Resurrection, also known as Easter or Qyamtha (movable date). Jesus rose from the dead and spent 40 days on Earth with His people. Do you remember seeing the big cross from the middle of the church being moved into the altar after Easter? That represents Jesus being with us after His Resurrection. Jesus stayed on Earth for 40 days until His ascension into heaven. This season lasts 50 days from Jesus' Resurrection till the Feast of Pentecost.	 An icon depicting the Resurrection. Jesus, in a white robe, sits on the edge of an open stone tomb. He is surrounded by several figures, including Mary Magdalene and other women, who are looking at him in awe. The background shows a landscape with a cross and a building. The text 'ἡ ἀνάστασις' (The Resurrection) is written at the top.
Season of Pentecost	10 days after Jesus' Ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit came down in the form of fiery tongues and sat upon each of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The apostles were chosen to spread God's word all over the world. But how would they do that if they could not speak the languages in these far away countries? With the power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were able to speak to in the different languages of the world. During this season we remember the Apostles with a 13 days' fast that starts on June 16th (fixed date).	 An icon depicting the Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is shown as a dove with a crown, sitting on a globe. Below the dove, the apostles are seated in a semi-circle, each with a flame of fire on their head. The background shows a building with a cross. The text 'PENTECOST' and 'DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT' is written at the top.

Season of Transfiguration	A little before Christ's passion and death, Christ went to the top of Mt. Tabor where He was transfigured (revealed His radiant glory). This is celebrated on August 6 (fixed date). During this season we also remember the falling asleep (death) of St. Mary on August 15th, which completes the Dormition Fast (August 1st - August 15th) (fixed date). Mother Mary carried Jesus in her earthly body. When she died, her earthly body was taken to Heaven.	 An icon depicting the Transfiguration of Christ. Christ is shown in the center, standing on a rocky peak, wearing a white robe and surrounded by a brilliant, multi-colored mandorla. He is flanked by two prophets, Moses and Elijah, who are also standing on the peak. Below them, three apostles (Peter, James, and John) are shown in various poses of awe and prayer, looking up at the radiant Christ. The background is a golden field with some greenery at the base of the mountain.
Season of The Holy Cross	This last season of the Church season begins on September 14th (fixed date). The Queen and saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine, found the Holy Cross that Jesus was crucified on. The church uses this day to venerate the Holy Cross.	 An icon depicting the Elevation of the Holy Cross. A large wooden cross is the central focus, being carried or elevated by a group of people. In the foreground, a woman in a red and gold robe (likely the Empress Helena) is shown in a gesture of veneration. Other figures in various robes are also present, some holding processions. The background shows a building with a red roof and a cross on top. The text 'ELEVATION OF THE CROSS' is visible at the top of the icon.

Just like our regular January to December calendar, the **Liturgical Calendar** repeats itself every year.

We use this cycle to remember the different parts of Jesus' life. We also incorporate our own holidays and prayers into this calendar.



Next Sunday at church, make sure you listen to the words of the songs we sing and the prayers that we are using as it will tell us where in the calendar we are!

Reflection Questions

1. Is your birthday a date that is fixed or movable?
2. Name 3 major Feasts celebrated in the Liturgical Calendar. Are they fixed or movable?
3. Can you figure out which season we are in now?

Lesson 4: Born Again

Our Baptism is a special day as we become part of God's family. We are born again and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Vocabulary Words

- **Sacrament:** A special event in our life that God changes something in a way we cannot explain. Also called a Holy Mystery.
- **Godparents:** A special person who helps us like our parents grow in our spiritual life in Christ.
- **Font:** A large tub used for baptism

Do you remember attending a Baptism in Church? Holy Baptism is the first **Sacrament** we receive as Orthodox Christians. We all have been baptized!



Baptism is our birth into the life of the Church. This is the day we say we are born again. We begin a new life with Jesus in God's family which is the Holy Church.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Holy Baptism is a person's entrance into the Church.



A **godparent** is someone who promised, at your baptism, to look after you and teach you about Jesus and His Church. Together, your godparent and your parents guide you to grow close to God.

In our Church, we usually see babies being baptized, but even adults can become members of the Church through Baptism. No matter what age we are baptized, we can only receive this Sacrament one time in our life.

During the baptism service, the priest pours water into the font and blesses it. The priest then baptizes the person in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

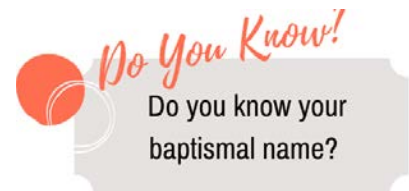
The major events associated with Baptism



After that, the priest makes the sign of the Cross on every part of their body with the holy oil known as Chrism or Myron. This is the **Sacrament** of Chrismation, and the special oil is a way of receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us to become more like Jesus and live like Him.

The seal of the Holy Spirit stays with us forever. This is why we are baptized only one time in our life. We are born again into God's family.

You also have a new name! Your Baptismal name is the name of a saint. The name we use in school and what we use at Church may be different. In Church, we should use our Saint's name.



Saints are holy people who lived the way God wanted us to live. After baptism, you also promise to live God's way. We can study about our Saint and become like them. This way, we can become holy like Jesus.

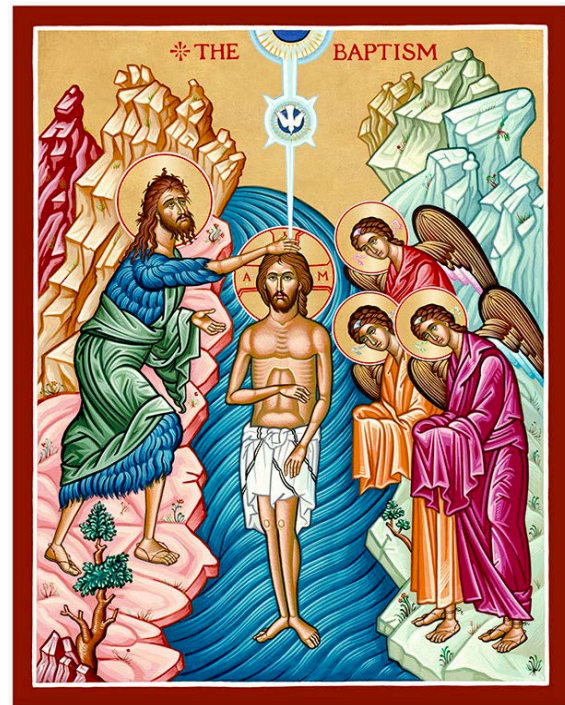
Once we are baptized, we are full members of the Church and can receive Holy Qurbana. Even little babies! When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we actually receive Jesus who gives us life.



Baptism is a very happy moment in our life, because we become part of a bigger family and can now receive Jesus!

Did you know Jesus was also baptized? He was baptized in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist (also known as the Forerunner).

When we are baptized we start our new life to become more like Jesus. Once we are baptized, our sins are forgiven and we become part of the Church forever.



Reflection Questions

1. How do we become members of the Holy Church?
2. What holy things does the priest use during Holy Baptism?
3. Can we be baptized more than one time?
4. Who is the "name Saint" given at your Baptism?

Lesson 5: The Mother of God

Mary was chosen to be Jesus' mom because she loved God and always prayed. She was very humble and she is blessed.

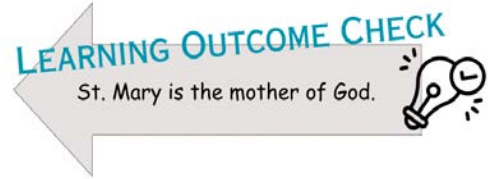
Vocabulary Words

- **Theotokos:** A special word for St. Mary because she is the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ who is God.
- **Devout:** To have strong faith and love for God
- **Humble:** To not think of yourself as more important

Eve had disobeyed God. Sin and death came to the world. But God wanted to save His children and bring them back to Him. God chose a very special woman who loved, obeyed, and trusted God. We know her as St. Mary, the Mother of God..



St. Mary was very **humble** and she listened to God. She has the title of the “**Theotokos**,” which means the “**God bearer**” or “**Mother of God**.”



Holy, Glorious, and Blessed

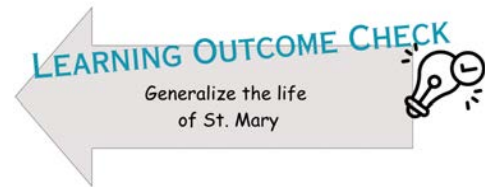
St. Joachim and St. Anna were very devout people who worshiped God. They were old and did not have any children. They prayed every day for God to bless them with a child. They knew one day God would answer their prayers. They also promised God they would dedicate their child to serve God.

God answered their prayers and blessed them with a baby girl who they named Mary. They raised her in prayer, and dedicated her to the Temple when she was three years old.



Why did God choose Mary?

St. Mary loved God. She grew up obeying, serving, and praying to the Lord. She read the **Scriptures** and prayed every day. She was also very **humble**. She was filled with the Holy Spirit.



She was a model human being. God was so pleased and honored her by choosing her to be the mother of Jesus Christ.

How did God tell St. Mary that He had chosen her?

One day when St. Mary was sitting quietly and praying, God sent the angel Gabriel to her to ask an important question. St. Mary was scared but Gabriel said, "Peace be with you," and she became calm.

Angel Gabriel told St. Mary that he had good news to share with her. St. Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of God. She will have a child who will be named Jesus.

She was very surprised, but also a little confused. She was very young and not married.



But she loved God and had faith in Him. So St. Mary told angel Gabriel, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word."

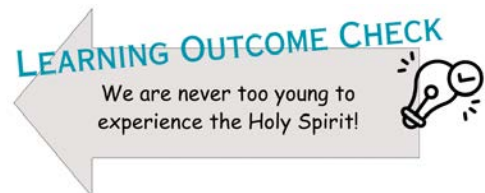
St. Mary obeyed and listened to God, and gave birth to Jesus who came to save us all. We honor and remember St. Mary as the great and Holy **Theotokos** and the queen of all the saints and of heaven. We love St. Mary as if she is our own mother and ask her to pray for us.



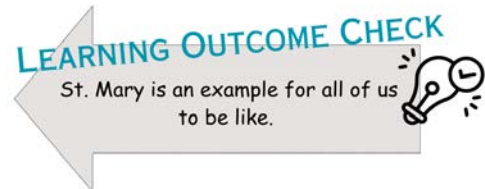
She is most Holy because she had Jesus inside of her. St. Mary was able to receive the Holy Spirit because she was **humble**, obedient, and willing to listen to God.



In the same way, we can be called by the Holy Spirit as well. Just as Christ was born in St. Mary, Christ can be born in us too. St. Mary prayed and obeyed God so much that God chose her.



We should also be prayerful. Then the Holy Spirit can live in us, as God chooses us for His good works. St. Mary is the perfect example of how we can be in the image and likeness of God.

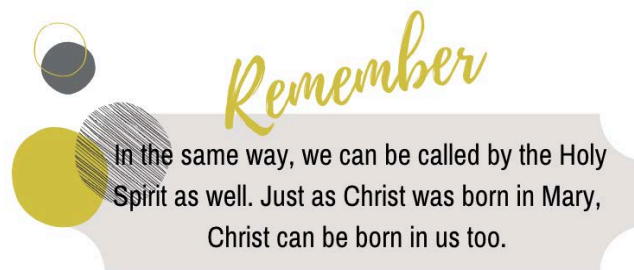


Every Christian must learn this prayer and use it every day:

*Peace be with you Mary, full of Grace! Our Lord
is with You.*

*Blessed are you among women and blessed is
the fruit of your womb, our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Oh, Holy Virgin St. Mary, Mother of God! Pray
for us sinners at all times, and at the hour of
our death, Amen!*



Reflection Questions

1. What did St. Mary do differently than Eve?
2. How did St. Mary please God?
3. What is the meaning of Theotokos?
4. How can we be like St. Mary?

Lesson 6: Peace be with You, Mary

St. Mary lived a life of humility and obedience.

She trusted God and His plan.

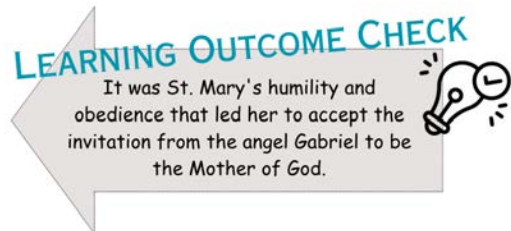
Vocabulary Words

- **Annunciation:** To make known, the announcement by Angel Gabriel to St. Mary
- **Generations:** A group of people born around the same time.

Annunciation to St. Mary

In the last lesson, we learned that Angel Gabriel came to St. Mary with important news. The angel asked St. Mary if she was ready to be the Mother of God.

St. Mary was obedient to the Lord and though she did not understand everything, she said “yes” to God.



St. Mary is an example of obeying God's will even if we do not completely understand.

In her humility, she trusted God and His plan for her. She is the model of obedience and humility for all of us!



This visit of Angel Gabriel to Mary with the divine message is known as the **Annunciation to Mary**. We read about this in the Bible (**St. Luke 1:26-38**) and celebrate this Feast in Church two times!

The Feast of the Annunciation is on March 25th and also the 4th Sunday of the Church calendar that is in November and is called the Season of Annunciation. See how important this is to our Church!



The Icon of Annunciation

Let's take a look at the icon of this event to better understand the story. In this icon, we see the Angel Gabriel announcing the news to St Mary.



The Angel Gabriel is holding a staff which shows that he's a messenger. His feet are apart as if he is running to St. Mary, and the ribbons in his hair show their heavenly job to help God who is King.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

What are some important teachings we learn through the Icon of the Annunciation?



This shows the message Gabriel is giving St. Mary is very important.

St. Mary is holding a scarlet yarn in her hand. In the temple, St. Mary took care of the temple curtain in the temple. She was sewing it when the angel visited.

St. Mary is dressed in blue with a red robe wrapped around her. The blue shows that St. Mary is a regular person, while the red means she is covered in God's holiness. The golden light coming down from above is the Holy Spirit.

Visitation of the Theotokos

St. Mary heard her cousin St. Elizabeth was also going to have a baby (St. John the Baptist).

St. Mary went to visit her cousin. When she reached and saw St. Elizabeth, her baby St. John leaped for joy!

St. Elizabeth said, "Blessed are you amongst women and blessed is the child you will bear" (St. Luke 1:42). St. Mary said, "From now on, all generations will call me blessed" (St. Luke 1:48).



This prayer, "Peace to thee Mary, Full of Grace" comes from this meeting between St. Mary and St. Elizabeth and the visit from Angel Gabriel.

One of the first songs in the Holy Qurbana is a song about St. Mary. The song begins “By the prayers of Your Mother and those of all Your Saints.”

Let us look at the verses in which St. Mary is mentioned.

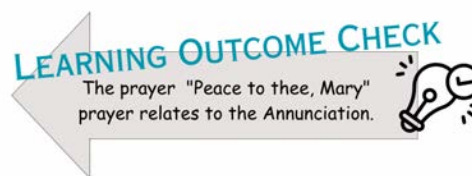
*“Who [Jesus Christ] did become incarnate
Of the pure Virgin
The holy and glorious Theotokos
He became man without change”*

In the Orthodox Church we call St. Mary the **Theotokos**, which means the Mother of God. In Malayalam we call her **Daiva Maathavu**.



Remember, whenever we hear **Theotokos** in our prayers or songs, we are talking about St. Mary.

Having learned more about the most blessed and holy St. Mary, let us look again at the “Peace be with you” prayer:



<i>Peace be with you Mary, full of Grace! Our Lord is with You. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, our Lord Jesus Christ.</i>	<i>In these lines of the prayer, we are remembering Angel Gabriel coming to St. Mary and asking her to be the mother of God. Here we remember the Annunciation.</i>
<i>Oh, Holy Virgin St. Mary, Mother of God! Pray for us sinners at all times, and at the hour of our death, Amen!</i>	<i>In the second part of the prayer, we are asking St. Mary to intercede or pray for us to God.</i>

Reflection Questions

1. Who was the Angel that brought a special message to St. Mary?
2. What event is so special in our Liturgical Calendar that we celebrate it two times?
3. How did St. Mary feel when she heard the Angel? Why did she say “yes”?

Lesson 7: New Life in Christ

**When we are baptized we are set apart as God's children.
At Baptism, we are born again and promise to be like Him.**

Vocabulary Words

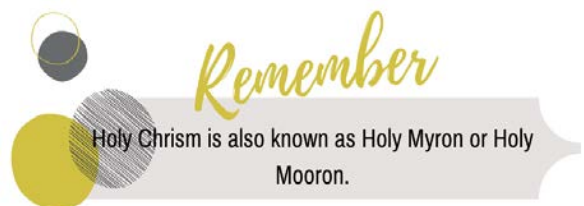
- **Holy Myron (also known as Holy Mooron):** Holy oil used to seal the Holy Spirit, e.g. in Holy Baptism
- **Chrismation:** When the priest or bishop uses a special oil called Holy Myron on the person's body.
- **Sanctify:** To make something special and holy.

Holy Baptism

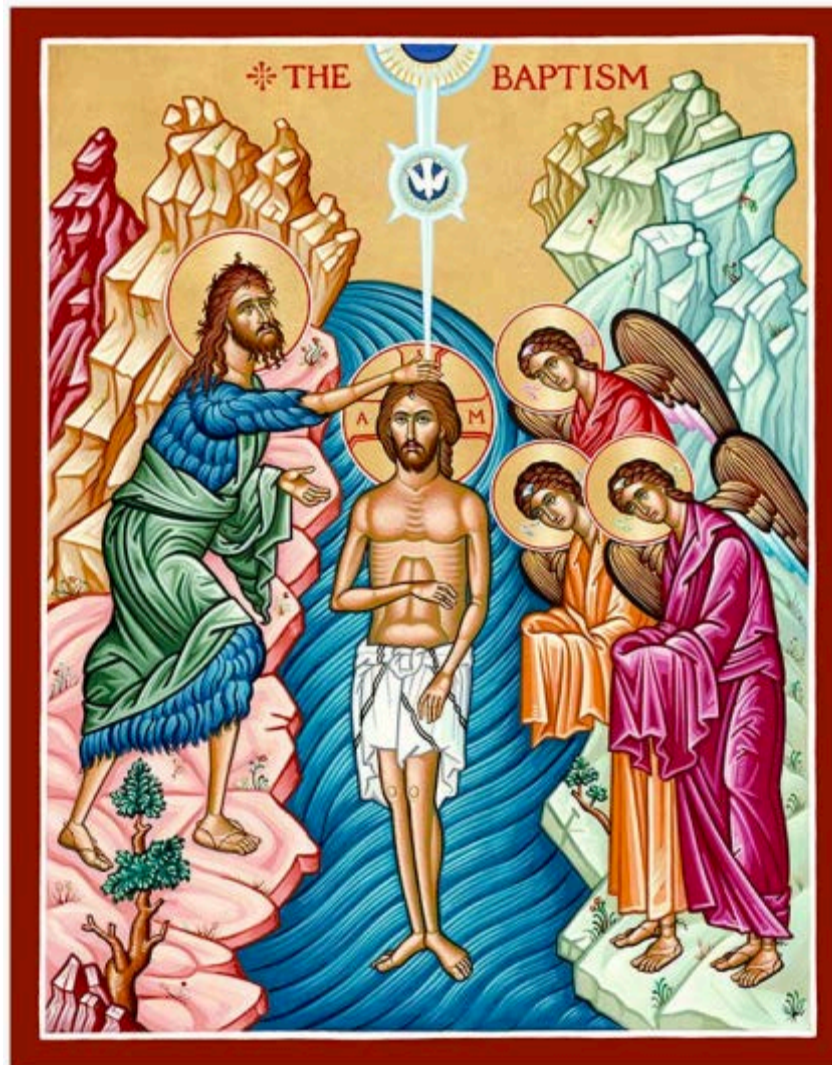
We become Christian when we are baptized. Holy Baptism is the sacrament where we become members of the Holy Church. God loves everybody, even those who are not members of the Church, but during Holy Baptism, we have a new life in Jesus Christ.

The sacrament of Holy Baptism is split into two main sections. The first part is being baptized in water, and the second part is being anointed by a Holy Oil that is called Holy Chrism (also known as **Holy Myron or Holy Mooron**).

The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River is an example of how we carry out the sacrament of Holy Baptism. John the Baptist, who is Jesus's cousin, baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.



Icon of the Baptism of Christ



A fun fact about this is that there are two smaller rivers that flow into the Jordan River. One small river has cool water and the second small river carries hot water. When these rivers join to become the River Jordan, the water becomes warm! This is why we use warm water during Holy Baptism today.

Jesus is God and never sinned. But, Jesus was still baptized. This was to purify the waters of the world and also reveal the Holy Trinity to the world.

When God the Son (Jesus) was baptized, God the Father said “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”, and during the baptism of Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove.

The first part of the sacrament of the Holy Baptism has prayers and songs. At the end of this portion, the Godparent of the person being baptized will say out loud that they renounce Satan and accept the Messiah, or Jesus Christ.

Hot water and cold water are mixed to make warm water which represents the warm water of the Jordan River. Then, Holy Myron is poured into the warm water. Afterwards, the person getting baptized is immersed in the **baptismal font**.



Sanctification makes us clean and pure after immersing our sins into the water. Sometimes the baptismal fonts are small, so then water is poured on the person's head instead.



After immersion in water, the second part of the baptism is the anointing of the person. They receive the Holy Spirit. This is called Holy Chrismation.

Holy Chrismation

Holy Chrismation is given right after Holy Baptism. Chrismation is the act of anointing someone with Holy Myron or Mooron.



What is Holy Myron? **Holy Myron** is a consecrated oil, which represents the Holy Spirit.

Holy Myron is so sacred that it takes a long time to be prepared and ready for use in churches. Because this sacred oil is going to be used in Holy Baptism and in the consecration of the Church, 40 days of fasting and prayer is needed to make it.



Making of the Holy Myron

Most ingredients are not even available in India. The main ingredient is balsam oil, which is expensive and is used for its healing properties. This is important because the Holy Myron is used during Holy Baptism to *heal,* or cleanse us from our sins. In a very large pot, boiled water, balsam oil, and other ingredients are mixed together. This mixture is heated for 40 days. On the 40th day, there is a special Holy Myron consecration service, which lasts about 8 hours long.

During the Holy Chrismation part of the Holy Baptism service, the priest or bishop seals the baptized person with a cross, using the Holy Myron. Then, this oil is rubbed on the body of the person, this usually happens for babies or small children. This called the anointing of the Holy Spirit because it makes the person holy.

In our tradition, the first bath after Holy Baptism service should be somewhere where the water does not splash onto

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Chrismation is the act of anointing someone with Holy Myron or Mooron. Holy Myron is a consecrated oil, which represents the Holy Spirit.



LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Chrismation happens along with Holy Baptism.



LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

The very special oil, the Holy Myron, is rubbed on the baby or person getting baptized. This is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Once we receive the Holy Myron we are sanctified.



the ground where people step on. This is because the water that touches the holy oil becomes sacred!

After the person is anointed with Holy Chrism, the priest places a crown on their head. This crown is called the "Crown of Glory". This represents the heavenly crown we receive as we become members of the Kingdom of God.



After receiving the crown, the priest takes the child into the Holy Altar Room. The child is taken around the altar, kissing all four corners. The baby is returned to their Godparent and gets dressed in all white. The white represents starting a new life as a Christian with all their sins forgiven.

The sacrament of Holy Baptism and Holy Chrismation is now complete.

In an Orthodox Christian family, we are usually baptized as babies or as small children. This is to make sure that the baby grows up in the Kingdom of God.



Some people become Orthodox Christians and are baptized when they are older.

The Church welcomes everyone whether you are a baby or much older. The prayers are the same and everyone is born again.

Set Apart for The Lord

Anointing with oil is how God separates people for His work. This is what happened in the Old Testament when Samuel was selected as a prophet, and Saul and David as the kings of Israel.

In the same way, anointing with Holy Myron separates the person from evil and unites them with Jesus Christ. This means that through Holy Baptism, we are chosen by God to carry out His work in the world. We are stronger with the Holy Spirit inside of us and become more like Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. What is the special oil used during Holy Chrismation?
2. What is placed on the head of the person who has been baptized and chrismated?
3. What happens to us after we are baptized? What makes us different?

Lesson 8: Peace and Good Hope for All

The Church celebrates the Feast of the Nativity every December. We remember the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as a man.

Vocabulary Words

- **Census:** Counting of the number of people who live in an area
- **Manger:** A long box that holds food for horses or cows
- **Nativity:** Another word for birth and in the Church we often use the word to mean the day our Lord Jesus Christ became man

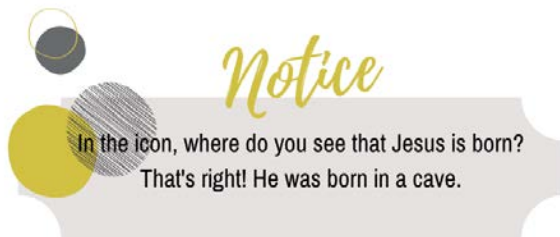
St. Joseph and St. Mary lived in a little town called Nazareth. Before Jesus was born, the Roman Emperor who ruled the land decided that a **census** should be taken in the entire empire.

Everyone needed to go back to their family's home-town to be counted. St. Joseph's was Bethlehem, and they needed to walk almost 100 miles to get there from Nazareth.

As it was close to the time when the baby Jesus would be born, St. Mary rode on the back of a donkey.



This was a very tiring journey, and when they reached the little town of Bethlehem there was no room in any of the inns because of the great number of people who had come for the census. The only place they could find was a cave and that is where Jesus was born!



An angel appeared to a group of shepherds in a field near Bethlehem after Jesus was born. The angel told them not to be afraid, and more angels appeared shining bright and praising God! (**St. Luke 2**).



The shepherds decided they had to go and see this baby.

They found St. Mary and St. Joseph with the baby lying in a **manger** in a cave.

The colors and images of the Icon of the Nativity teach us important lessons about Christmas. Christmas is called the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord (or Yeldho) as the Almighty God became a man on this day, but in humility and not in richness.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

In the Nativity icon, we can see how Jesus was born in a cave and laid in a manger. Can you point to the cave and manger in the icon?



LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Christmas in the Church is called the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very important Feast because this was the day Jesus was born!



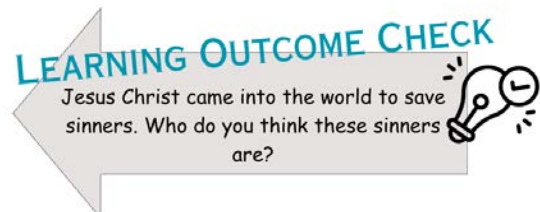
God did all of this because He loved us so much. God can shine brighter than the Sun. However, He used His power to become a poor and humble man who was born in a cave and laid in a stable surrounded by animals. This was to become closer to all of us.



For the first time ever, God became someone we could see, touch and hold. Jesus was God, and Jesus was a human just like anyone of us.



In the Nativity icons, Jesus is wrapped in white cloth in the **manger**. This has an important meaning as Jesus was born as a man to save us from our sins by dying on the Cross. The same white cloth is used to wrap a body after death. But we know God cannot die and it is His Resurrection that saves us!



The Nativity icon teaches us that our Lord Jesus Christ was born to save us by the Resurrection!



In this icon, three wise men came to worship Jesus, because they saw a strange and bright star in the sky when Jesus was born . They knew it was the sign that the King of Kings was born. The wise men decided to find the great newborn King, so that they could worship Him.

Guided by the star, the three wise men went to Bethlehem. The star guided them until it stopped right above the place where baby Jesus lay. They saw Jesus with His mother Mary. The wise men fell down on their knees and worshiped the Child. Then the wise men gave Jesus three royal gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The wise men were very rich and powerful, but they still worshiped little baby Jesus because they knew He was the Son of God.

Even though Jesus is a poor little human baby, He is still God! That's why the shepherds, the wise men, the animals, and all creation worship Him!

Different icons of the Nativity show angels, rich kings, poor shepherds, and even animals. This means that creation was so happy that the Son of God was born as a man! We learn that God became man for all, whether we are rich or poor. Even the animals worshiped Jesus, peeking into the manger where He lay on His bed of straw.

During Christmas, we give gifts to our friends and family. But what kind of gifts can we offer to Jesus? The best gift that we can give Jesus is **love**. We can show our love to Jesus by loving our neighbors - the poor and all others. When we give gifts to the poor, we are also giving gifts to Jesus.



Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!

Reflection Questions

1. Was God born on Christmas, or did God become a man in Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus become a baby to this world?
3. What gifts can we offer Jesus?

Lesson 9: Jesus's Baptism

St. John baptized Jesus to teach us about Baptism and to begin His journey to the Cross. We remember this day as Denaha on our Church calendar.

Vocabulary

- **The Holy Trinity:** The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons and One God. Trinity means three. We remember this every time we make the sign of the cross. We hold our first three fingers together - remembering the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is One God.
- **Theophany:** When someone sees or experiences something really special from God
- **Denaha:** This Syriac word meaning sunrise or dawn used to refer to the feast day we remember the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ



St. Mary and St. Elizabeth were cousins and both were pregnant at the same time.

St. Mary went to visit her cousin and the baby inside St. Elizabeth's womb immediately leaped with joy! Even as an unborn baby, St. John knew that the Lord had arrived. The grace of God can be felt even when we are in our mothers' womb.

St. John's dedication to the Lord continued to grow. When he was older, he lived in the wilderness and chose to wear simple clothing made out of camel's hair. He ate

food from the wilderness, such as locusts and honey. John knew that the Savior was coming, and He was powerful and holy. He taught people about God and told them to ask God for forgiveness for all their sins. He also baptized people with water in the River Jordan. That is why he is known as John the Baptist.



Locusts are part of the family of horned grasshoppers.

One day, John was surprised to see Jesus coming to him to be baptized by the Jordan River. Just like when they first met as unborn babies, John immediately recognized the Lord. John thought he was not worthy to baptize Jesus, but Jesus insisted and reminded John that it was important for Him to be baptized by John. The most amazing thing happened when John baptized our Lord! The Bible says that the heavens opened up, and the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus like a dove.



This is the icon of Jesus's baptism and this is especially important because we see all three persons of the **Holy Trinity** revealed.

Jesus is in the center and is the Son of God. The Holy Spirit is coming down like a dove (in a blue circle). God the Father is invisible but His voice is heard.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

In the icon of the Baptism of Our Lord, we see the presence of the Holy Trinity. How do we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this icon?



Trinity means “three in one.” We believe in one God but He is also three Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is a mystery of the Church and can not be explained but it is true.

Just remember that the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. But all three in the **Holy Trinity** is One God.



Remember

In the icon of Jesus's baptism, we see all three persons of the Holy Trinity revealed. We see the Son of God as Jesus. The Holy Spirit is coming down in the blue circle as dove. The voice of the invisible Father is heard, especially by St. John and the ones standing around.

We also see the evil spirits as water creatures moving away from Jesus. This shows the power of God over all that is evil!

We remember these important events during the Feast Day of the Baptism of our Lord Jesus, but also during Holy Qurbana.

We begin the Holy Qurbana service by singing, “*By the prayers of Your Mother and those of all Your Saints ...*”. At this time, the priest (who represents Jesus) and walks around the altar with a deacon in front walking backwards before him holding a candle. This deacon represents St. John the Baptist as he prepared the way for Jesus Christ.

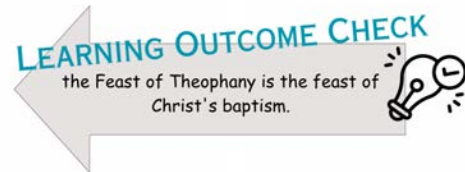




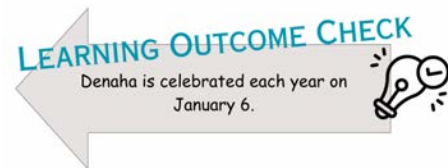
When we look up on the altar, we may also see the symbol of the dove.

This dove reminds us of the Holy Spirit, that came down from heaven like a dove when Jesus was baptized.

In our Church calendar, we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus on the Feast of **Theophany** (or **Denaha** in Syriac). Theophany means God is revealed to us! The amazing things that happened at Jesus's baptism showed that He was not only a human being but is also God.



Denaha is celebrated each year on January 6th. During this service, the priest blesses the water. Then, he holds the water in his hand to bless the four sides of the world (North, South, East, and West), and prays for the world's people. The water reminds us of the waters of Jesus's baptism.



The blessed water is also given out to families to take home. When people are sick or going through difficulties in life, the holy water of Denaha can be used to ask God for help and guidance. It can also be sprinkled around the home, asking God for His presence, protection, and even to drive evil spirits away.





Reflection Questions

1. Who baptized Jesus Christ?
2. What special event happened after Jesus was baptized, and what is that called?
3. Can you point out the Holy Trinity in the Denaha icon? Who is St. John the Baptist pointing to?

Lesson 10: Symbolism

The Church uses symbols to teach us about God.

Vocabulary Words

- **Symbol:** An object or sign that means something
- **Holy Qurbana:** A special worship where we receive the Holy Body and Blood of Jesus. Also known as Liturgy.
- **Gesture:** Moving our body in a special way
- **Nativity:** Another word for birth and often used for the day our Lord Jesus Christ became man

Did you know everyone in the Church is one family? We are all children of God. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.



How do we become members of the family of God? When a baby is born to a mom and dad, they are part of that family. Similarly, when we are Baptized

with blessed water and the Holy Spirit, we are born again into God's family. God's family includes everyone who was baptized! Yes, your classmates and friends in the Church are your brothers and sisters.

God's family also includes everyone who has died in the Church. This is why we pray for all the departed, including our Saints and our relatives. We are all brothers and sisters through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit keeps us together in love.

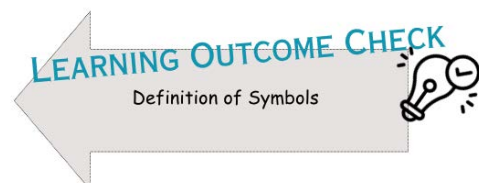
The Church is God's House. In Church, we learn about the teachings of the Church, pray and sing songs, hear the Gospel, and receive Holy Qurbana with other people who love Jesus. During Church, we love each other and give each other the kiss of peace using our hands. It shows that we are not angry or upset with anyone, and are ready to receive the Holy Qurbana.

Symbolism

God's House is very special and holy. God's House is sacred which means it is set apart from everything else. We are in God's House and so we are sacred and set apart too. Many people do not believe in God, and we pray for them because God called us to love everyone (**St. Matthew 22:36-40**).

We keep our doors open and should always welcome everyone to visit our Church. Since we are members of the Church through Baptism, there are many important things we need to learn and believe. Inside the Church we are safe and learn more about God.

Symbols are used to represent someone or something. Symbols are also used in the Church, and helps us to learn about important teachings of God.



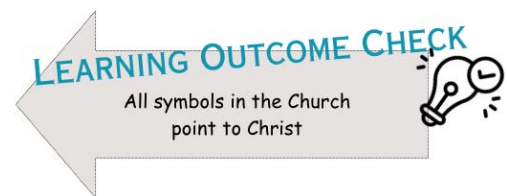
Have you seen this symbol before? Even without any words, we know this means “stop”. Both the shape and the red color are *symbols* for “stop.”



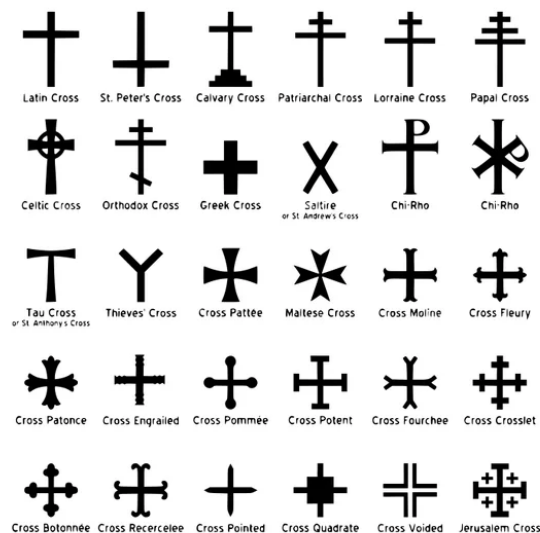
But people are taught this meaning. Sometimes if a person is from another country or cannot see color, the teaching has to be given in a special way to help them see this connection to the symbol.

The same is for Church! This is why attending Church every Sunday, receiving Holy Qurbana, and Sunday School is all important!

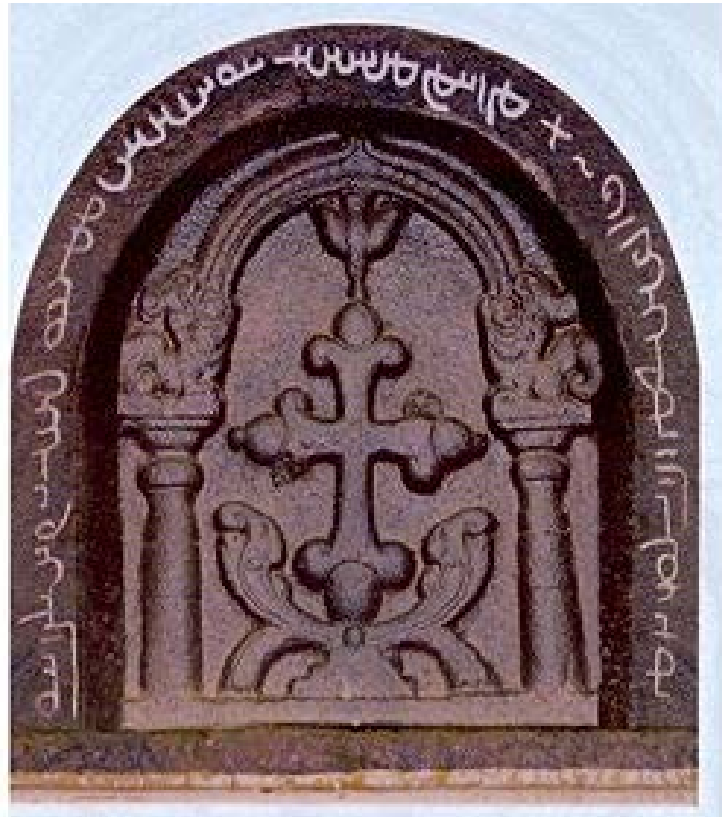
Everything we do in Church is to bring us to Christ. Holy Qurbana is when we come closest to our Lord, but all our symbols in Church also bring us to Christ.



The Cross is such a symbol. We see Crosses everywhere in the Church and in our homes, and they come in all different shapes and sizes.



Have you ever seen this special Cross?



This granite cross is very old. It is from the 7th century AD and was found in India. Christianity in India was alive long before the USA and Canada had even become countries!

This Cross has more symbols - do you see the Holy Spirit? Those who are not familiar with Christianity may only see a bird, but we know that the dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit and we remember how the Holy Spirit descended like a dove when Jesus was Baptized in the River Jordan.

This does not mean the Holy Spirit is a dove! Rather, the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and when we see it in icons, paintings, or Crosses we remember.



The Cross of all types and sizes are in our Church. The Cross always brings us to Jesus. We remember the love of God when we see the Cross.

We also make a **gesture** when we see the Cross or hear the word “Cross.” A gesture is an action we do with our body, like making the Sign of the Cross.

This is another important connection we have with symbols as it helps us remember the important truths we need to believe.

Symbols in the Church



The first thing we notice as we enter the Church is the beautiful **curtain**. It is used to separate that part of the Church which is called the Sanctuary.

What does the **Sanctuary** remind us of? The Sanctuary reminds us of heaven, which is a place of light and joy. The Sanctuary is a little higher than the rest of the Church, so there are two or three steps leading to it.



There is a special table called the **Altar** at the center of the Sanctuary. The priest celebrates the Holy Eucharist on the Altar. The Altar is beautifully lit with candles.



The Altar is also the throne of God. This is where God rests, and all creation worship and praise Him.



At the middle of the Altar, there is the Cross. Jesus, our Lord was crucified for us on the Cross.

The **Cross** is everywhere in the Church. The Cross reminds us that Jesus loves us, died for us, and is with us in the house of God.

On both sides of the Cross are twelve **candles**. The candles represent Jesus's twelve disciples. Candles bring light like the disciples did when preaching about Jesus Christ. The apostles are present with us in God's house.

We can see many **icons** in the Church, icons of Jesus Christ, St. Mary, the apostles, saints, and all the believers who departed from us.

The **censer** is used in the Church for the Holy Eucharist and for other sacraments or prayers. The priest places incense in the censor. The **incense** rises up along with our prayers which go to heaven. The incense is sweet; our prayers also become sweet when we are good, and it pleases our heavenly



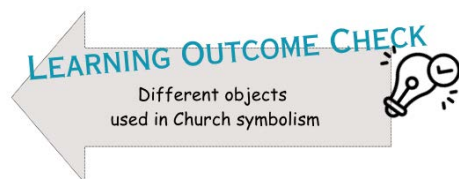
Father. The censer with the incense shows that the Church stands in prayer in God's house.

Do you know the names of the vessels that the priest uses for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist? They are the **Chalice** and the **Paten**. Body and Blood of Christ is not a symbol. It begins as bread on the paten and wine in the chalice and during Holy Qurbana, the Holy Spirit makes this become the real Body and Blood of Christ!



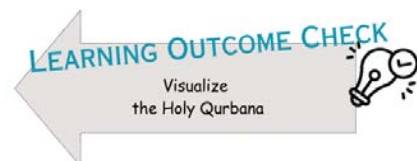
On the right side of the Altar, there is another table that is moveable. The Holy Gospel is placed on that table, and therefore the table is called the **table of the Holy Gospel**. The Holy Gospel contains God's Word taught by Jesus.

All of these items make the Church, God's house on earth, or Heaven on earth.



What We Do in the Church

What do we do when we first enter the Church? We say the prayer, "I will enter Your house in awe and offer my vows to You" [**Psalm 65:13-15 (66:13-15)**].



After we enter the Church, we stay silent. We stand before God with our faces turned towards the east. We fold our hands on our chests and participate in the worship by praying and singing.

When the Holy Eucharist begins after the completion of the Morning or Evening Prayers, we see a procession around the altar. The curtain which separates the Sanctuary is pulled to the side.

We see that the priest, who is beautifully vested, starts the procession around the altar.

He holds a censer in his hands. He censes the altar and the Holy Gospel. The incense rises to heaven along with our prayers. One of the servants of the altar goes before the priest holding a lighted candle.



The priest also turns towards the west and censes the congregation (people). The candles at the altar are lit. All the church bells ring to tell us and the world that this time is important. We feel like we are taken into heaven.



There are other processions, too, during the Holy Eucharist. The priest and the servants at the altar come in procession to read the Gospel to us. The priest holds the Holy Bible (Holy Evangelion or Holy Gospel). The altar servants hold lighted candles at each side of the priest. They turn to the west and walk towards us.

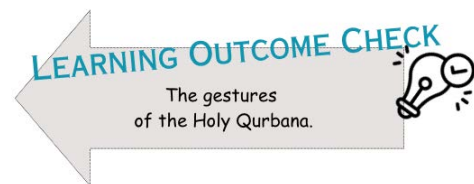
The table of the Holy Gospel is placed in the front middle of the Sanctuary. The priest blesses the congregation and reads out the Gospel. We hear God's Word. Two acolytes stand holding the lighted candles.

The Word of God is light. It shows us God's ways and how to keep them.



During the Holy Eucharist, we give one another our hands for "the kiss of peace." We know that we kiss our parents and our brothers and sisters to show them that we love them. Giving the kiss of peace during the Holy Eucharist shows that we love one another and there is no hatred between us. (**St. Matthew 5: 23-24**)

There are times when we bow our heads. When the altar servant asks us to bow our heads before the merciful Lord, we do so and pray for God's mercies.



The priest turns towards us and blesses us with the sign of the Cross several times.



The priest once again comes in procession toward us. He holds the cup and chalice in his hands. The acolyte comes before him with the censer. All the altar servants hold lighted candles.

The church bells ring and all those who are prepared come to receive the Holy Qurbana. They cross themselves and receive Holy Qurbana.

The priest gives us the final blessings. Then we come one by one, make our offering, kiss the

priest's hand or the cross, and return home in peace.

We do all of these gestures, and see all these symbols during Holy Qurbana. The Holy Qurbana is perfect, complete, and is the full worship. Through Holy Qurbana, we come into communion with God.

This is why we should want to go to Church all the time! God calls us to come together for worship. When we are among other believers, we feel the presence of God. The Holy Church is where the faithful gather together to worship. But at the same time, the gathering of the faithful is also called the Holy Church. Let us remember that Christ tells us where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. (**St. Matthew 18: 20**)

Reflection Questions

1. Can you name one symbol that you see at Church? What does it mean?
2. How do we hold our hands during Holy Qurbana?
3. What should you do with your hands when you hear the bells during Holy Qurbana?
4. Is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ a symbol?

Lesson 11: The Bread of Life

We receive the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ during Holy Qurbana.

Vocabulary Words

- **Holy Eucharist:** Also known as the Holy Qurbana or Holy Communion. This refers to the special worship where we receive the real Body and Blood of Jesus, or sometimes to the real Body and Blood of Christ.
- **Apostles:** the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus Christ

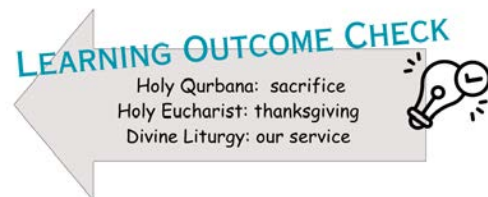
Whenever someone does something nice to us, we feel happy and say 'Thank you!' It makes us also want to do something nice. God has given us so many great things - family, friends, food, water, and clothes are a few of these gifts from God. What can we do to thank Him?

One way to show our love to God is the Holy Qurbana. This is a Syriac word for "sacrifice". A Greek word for Holy Qurbana is **Holy Eucharist**. This means thanksgiving.

Sometimes the **Holy Eucharist** is also called Holy Communion. Eating the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ allows us to become closer to Him.

As Orthodox Christians, we want to become more like Christ. Participating in Holy Qurbana and having Holy Communion is one way we can become closer to Christ.

In this special worship where we give thanks to God, we receive more! If we are prepared, we can receive the real Body and Blood of Jesus.



We use the words “Holy Qurbana”, “**Holy Eucharist**”, and “Holy Communion” to also directly refer to the real Body and real Blood of Christ.

The service is also called the Divine Liturgy because we are with God. This is the way for us to be closer to Jesus and to show our love to Him.

Passover

During the feast of Passover, Jesus came to Jerusalem just before His death. Passover is a great festival for the Jewish people. God commanded them to have a special feast (meal) to celebrate their escape from slavery in the land of Egypt. The feast is called the Passover meal.



Jesus wished to eat the Passover meal together with His disciples. The disciples arranged the meal in a house. When Jesus and His disciples sat down to eat, He knew that it was His Last Supper with His beloved disciples. He was ready to give Himself up and be crucified on the Cross to save us.

As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it. He broke it and gave it to the disciples saying, "Take, eat; this is My body." Likewise, He took the cup. He gave thanks and gave to the disciples saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus Christ gave His Body and Blood to His disciples.

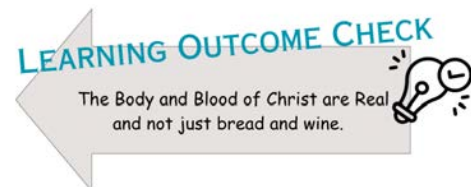
Christ also asked them, "Do this in remembrance of Me." As Jesus has commanded, we gather together in the house of God and participate in the **Holy Eucharist**. We remember Jesus Christ and how He saved us through His death. Jesus Christ gives Himself to us through the Holy Qurbana. He gives us His Body and Blood.

We believe that during Holy Qurbana we receive Jesus Christ. This is a mystery and cannot be explained. Because we receive God we must prepare ourselves. We should not eat after the last meal.

This means if Holy Qurbana is on Sunday morning, we should not eat again after dinner on Saturday. We should have a good night's sleep and not do anything which takes our mind and heart from God. We must pray. Before going to Church we must clean ourselves, take a shower, and wear our best clothes. Our parents and priests can help us more to prepare for Holy Communion.

The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ that we receive may look and taste like bread and wine. But it is really God!

Many people do not believe or understand this teaching. But for Orthodox Christians, the Eucharist is real and not a symbol.



We read in the Bible (**St. John 6:50-68**) that Jesus teaches us this Truth. He is the Living Bread and by eating His Body and drinking His Blood we will have eternal life.

Jesus is God, and as God He can do anything He wants. Through the Holy Qurbana, God wants to give us new life and save us.

The **Apostles** believed this. When Jesus asked if they also wanted to go away St. Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (v.68-69)



What begins as bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of Christ during Holy Qurbana. The priest and the members of the Church pray and believe this is real through the power of the Holy Spirit. Eating the Body and Blood of Christ gives us strength and allows us to have a closer relationship with Him. We receive Holy Qurbana with all faithfulness and holiness.



Every hour of every day, we can thank God for all the blessings he has given us. On Sunday we can all come together and say a very special “Thank You” to God!

Reflection Questions

1. How should we prepare ourselves before Holy Qurbana?
2. Is the Body and Blood of Christ just bread and wine?
3. How does the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ?

Lesson 12: Hosanna in the Highest

Did you know during Holy Qurbana, we sing along with the angels?

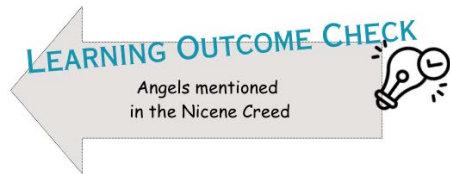
Vocabulary Words

- **Invisible:** Something we can not see
- **Angels:** An invisible being who loves and serves God
- **Demons:** An angel who no longer serves God
- **Choirs:** A group of angels

God created everything. God made the heavens and the earth. He made that we see and all that we do not see. The first book in the Bible (Genesis) tells the story of how He alone created everything.



God created everything from Love. He was happy when He saw what was made. As we say in the Nicene Creed, He also created living things that we cannot like the **angels**.



Angels are show in our icons and also appear in our songs. This is to remind us they are real. In icons, they look like humans sometimes, but they are not. When we die, we do not become angels! In our songs, we sing that angels are of fire and spirit.

Angels love and worship God just like we do, but God made us special. He made us in His image and in His likeness! Angels are also special and God loves them, but only we are created to look and be like Him. Together with the angels, we worship and show our love for God.



Angels and Demons

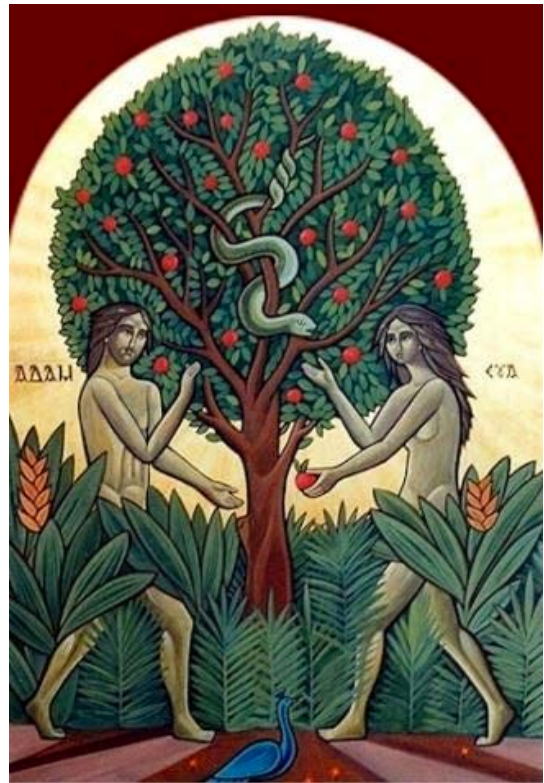
God does not force us or the angels to worship and obey Him. But some of the angels were not happy that God made us so special. They did not like that God loved us so much. They began to disobey God.

Those angels that no longer love and serve God are called **demons**.

Satan (the Devil) is one of these demons. He was jealous of how much God loved Adam and Eve. We read in the Bible how he became like a snake to trick Eve into disobeying God.

Satan did this to destroy God's favorites!

Many angels still love and serve God. The Bible has many stories of angels, and our songs as well!



In the Book of Genesis there is another angel mentioned - do you remember hearing about the cherubim, who guarded Eden with a fiery sword?

The cherubim is a type or "rank" of angel! And the Church teaches us there are many more!

Heavenly Hosts

The “heavenly hosts” are the choirs of angels. There are different types of angels and we can describe them in a “hierarchy” or order. All these angels serve God in different ways.

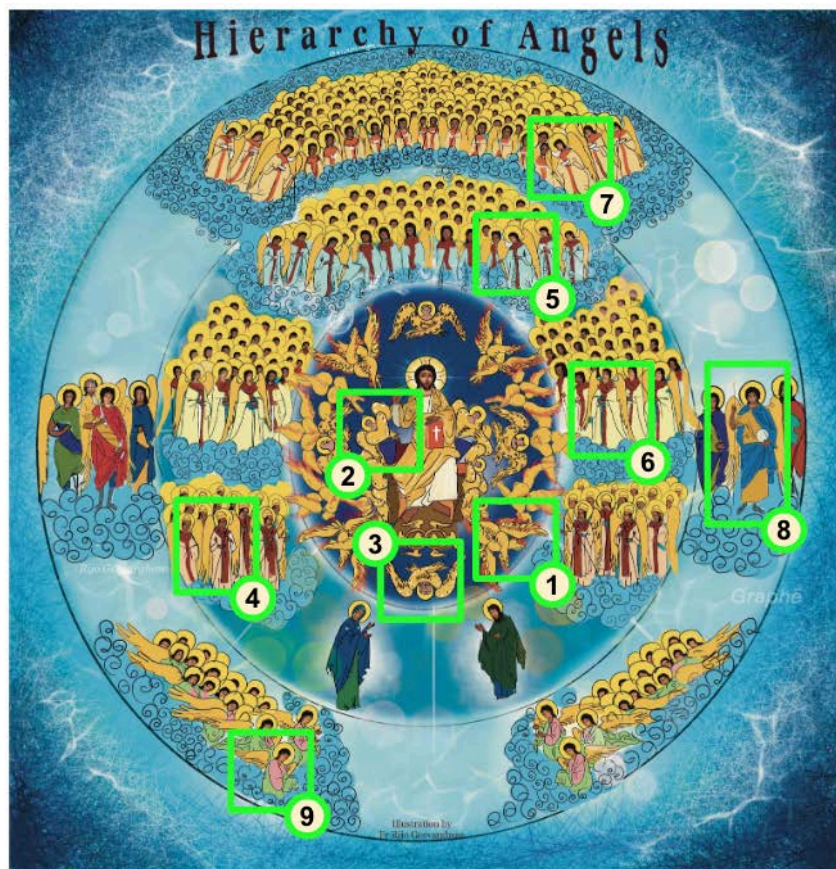


The Ranks of Angels

Remember there is so much we do not know about the spiritual world. But we know there are 3 **ranks** of angels each with 3 **types** of angels. Each type of angel serves God in a special way!

The word “angel” means messenger, but this is only one of their roles. However, it is easier for us to talk about all the types as “angels,” even those who are not messengers. The mission of angels varies. They can be guardians of God’s throne or comfort us.

But all the angels obey and do God’s will.



First Order

1. Seraphim
2. Cherubim
3. Thrones

Second Order

4. Dominions
5. Virtues
6. Powers

Third Order

7. Principalities
8. Archangels
9. Angels

First order

These angels serve close to God and His throne in special ways.

1. Seraphim: They are 6-winged angels that are so bright with love for God that they are called the “fiery ones”.



2. Cherubim: These angels are full of knowledge of God’s Wisdom and as we work through them we understand more about God. They are usually seen with 4 or 6 wings but with many eyes.



3. Thrones: These are very fast-moving angels close to where God is seated. They are also shown with many eyes and always serve God.



Second order

These angels serve God by helping with the order to the universe.

4. Dominions: These angels serve God by teaching us about God's rule. They are shown with crowns and they hold scepters



5. Virtues: Also called "authorities", these angels always serve God and reflect His energy. They help with how the universe runs and are shown with censers and holding mirrors.



6. Powers: These angels serve God and do His will in fighting evil. They are depicted as warriors with swords.



Third order

These angels serve God in ways closer to men and interact most with us.

7. Principalities: These angels help those in power understand God's rule. They are shown holding crowns and staff. They work with us to serve God.



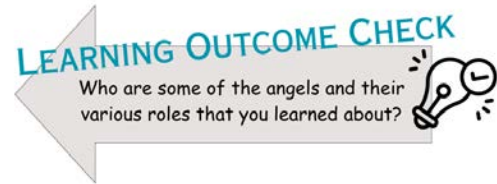
8. Archangels: Are special angels who carry out God's plans for us. We hear most about a few archangels like Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel but there are more. Each Archangel is shown in a special way.



9. Angels: There are many angels who work with us directly. We also have our own guardian angel!



In our hymns and prayers, we sometimes hear angels being referred to as “watchers”. This is from the Syriac name for angels and helps us remember that even though we cannot see angels they are always with God and look over us because we are God’s beloved children.



The Holy Angels

All the ranks of angels love God and serve Him in specific ways. God loves us so much, and He sends the angels to help us! Together with the angels, we work to do God’s will.

This important relationship we have with the angels is most clear during the Holy Qurbana. There is a special prayer called the Sanctus:

*Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God Almighty
By whose glory the Heaven and earth are filled,
Hosanna in the highest!*

*Blessed is He who has come
and is to come
In the name of the Lord God;*

Glory be to Him in the highest!

It is important to remember that during this time of the Holy Qurbana, we are saying this with the angels, as well as all those who have died and are with God. Heaven and earth together are singing and praying! The angels understand and love God, and as Christians we also understand and love God.

“Hosanna” is a special word that means “pray, save us”. It is a cry and shout from us to God who has created us and is the Lord of all things. How special it is that we sing along with the angels! It shows that both in heaven and on Earth, there is only One God who loves us and takes care of all things!

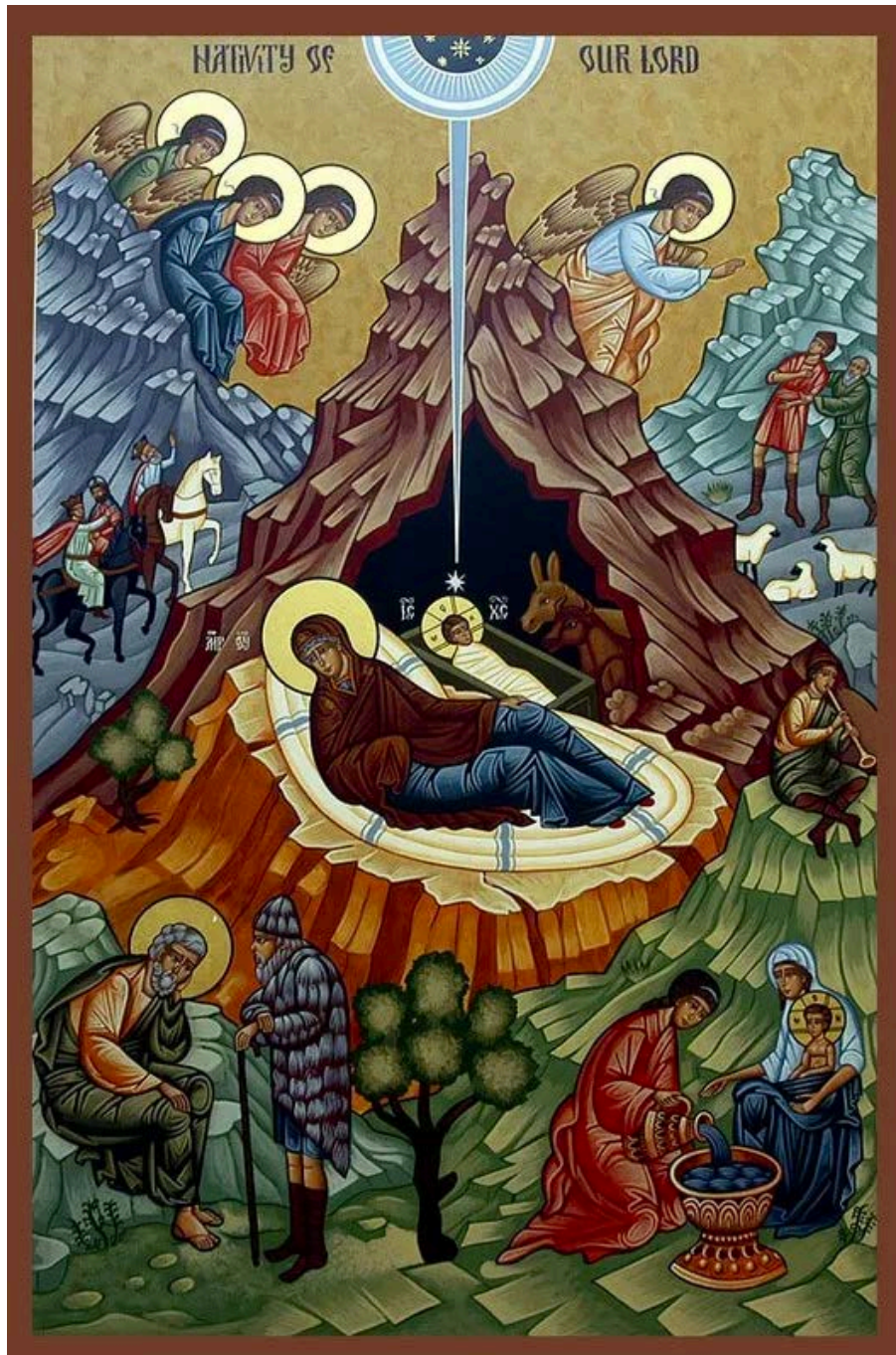
The maravahto (or marbasa) on the Holy Altar is another reminder for us that the angels also worship God along with us. These fans often are decorated with an image of an angel and helps us remember how the seraphim adore God:

*“Isaiah saw in the heights
Seraphs of fire and spirit
Each one of them with six wings
Serving Your divinity”*

Fiery Seraphim and Marvahtho (Liturgical Fan)



Knowing more about angels also helps us understand the Bible. Do you remember at the time of the Annunciation to St. Mary, Angel Gabriel came to speak with her? At the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the angels spoke with the shepherds and sang with joy at the sight of our Lord. The Holy Icons show clearly how angels also work with people to bring them closer to God.



The angels and all of creation were also sad and crying at the time of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on Great Friday.



Do you see how all these special moments included even those things that we can not see? There are so many stories in the Bible and in Church that include the angels. By learning more about the angels, we also learn how we can love God and serve Him.

Reflection Questions

1. Who created angels?
2. Do people become angels when they die?
3. During Holy Qurbana there is a special moment when the priest raises his hands and his voice and prays for us to “lift up” our hearts, and then we sing “Holy, Holy, Holy”. Who else is singing with us when we worship God?
4. On Sunday during Holy Qurbana, what can you see that reminds us of how the angels worship God in heaven?



Lesson 13: Living with Love and Respect

Everyone is made like God and can become like God. Everyone is precious to Him!

Vocabulary Words

- **Precious:** Something of great value that is to be treated with care and respect.
- **Respect:** Giving value and showing kindness for the feelings of others.
- **Sinner:** Someone who has done something that is not what God had wanted because it was not good and holy.

How should we treat people who others do not like? What did Jesus do?



The Calling of Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus was a tax collector and was a rich man. Tax collectors were hated at the time of Jesus because they were often liars and cheaters.

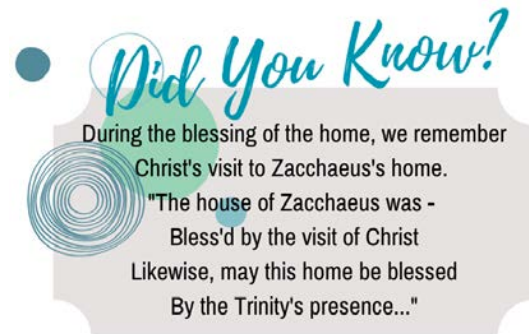
One day Jesus was passing through Jericho. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus because he heard a lot about him. Sadly, Zacchaeus was too short to see Jesus in the big crowd.

So, Zacchaeus climbed a tall tree that was along the way to get a good view of Jesus. When Jesus walked by, he looked upon the tree and saw Zacchaeus. He said “Zacchaeus, come down. I want to stay at your house today”.



Zacchaeus could not believe his ears. And the people near Jesus could not either! They began to complain and said - "Look at the kind of man Jesus stays with! Zacchaeus is a **sinner**!".

But Jesus did not care. God is love, and Jesus loved Zacchaeus even though he was a sinner. Jesus's love and kindness made Zacchaeus cry because nobody wanted to go to his house or make friends with him. Zacchaeus felt the love of Jesus. He was so happy that Jesus wanted to spend the night at his house! What a blessing for Zachhaeus!

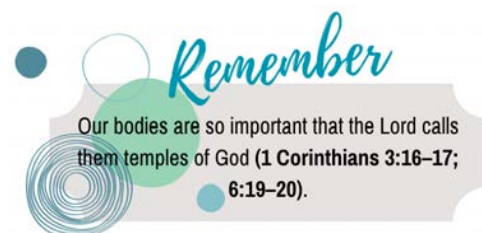


Jesus told the people who were upset something very important. He said, "Today, this family has been saved, and this man is part of God's special family, just like Abraham. I came to find people who were lost and save them."

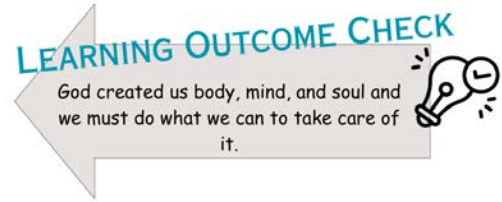
This means that Jesus came to help and love everyone, no matter who they are. He wants to be friends with us and take care of us. Just like Jesus, we should also be kind and helpful to others.

The Temple of God

Jesus taught us to treat others like how we want to be treated (**St. Matthew 7:12**). This is important because everyone is made in the image of God . It is our duty to treat others with **respect** and love them so that we can be like Jesus. Also, by sharing the love of Christ we can bring in change to people's hearts and can spread the good news with our actions.



Our bodies are the temple of God because God created us. This means that God lives within us through the Holy Spirit. We can take care of the temple of God by taking care of our body, heart, mind, and soul.



- **Body:** Needs good food, fresh air and to be kept clean.
- **Heart and mind:** Treat others with respect, gently share our feelings, and take time to do things we enjoy.
- **Soul:** spend time with God in prayer, be an active participant during Holy Qurbana, and regularly attend Sunday School classes.

Remember, taking care of ourselves, respecting and loving ourselves, others around us and God are ways that we can take care of God's temple.

The Jesus Prayer

It is easy for us to look at others and say that they are sinners. But did you know that we may sin without even knowing?

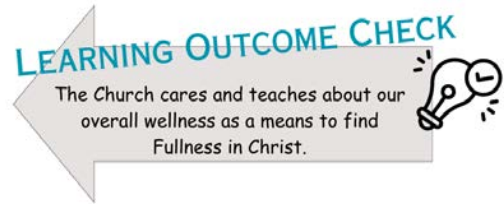
During Holy Qurbana, there is a very special prayer where we ask God to forgive all our sins - ones we do on purpose or by accident, and ones we remember and do not remember. This is very important so that we stay humble can repent. God loves a humble heart!



There is another short but very special prayer that we can say all the time called the Jesus Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!

This prayer always keeps us humble and is a reminder that we are sinners. The Church teaches us that to be healthy means not just our body but also our soul. To be fully with Christ means we must be like Him.



Does the Jesus Prayer sound like another word we say a lot in Church? The meaning of “Kurielaison” in Greek is “Lord have mercy”!

Reflection Questions

1. What can we do to make our body, soul, and mind closer to God?
2. How do you think Zacheus felt when nobody would be his friend?
3. Can you sin without knowing? What should we do so we can say sorry to God for everything?

Lesson 14: The Dreamer and the Ruler

Everything good comes from God. To be like God means to be good and love people, even those who are not nice to us.

Vocabulary Words

- **Cruel:** Causing pain or suffering to others on purpose
- **Jealous:** Disliking someone because they have more than you or wanting what others have



Joseph became a great ruler. But his story teaches us how important it is to stay loyal to God and trust Him, especially during tough times when things don't make sense. Just like Joseph, we can find ways to deal with stress, make good friends, share with others, and handle our feelings, like tantrums, by remembering that God has a special plan for each of us. Let's explore how Joseph's adventures can help us in our own lives!

When Joseph was a young boy, he lived with his parents, Jacob and Rachel. He had eleven brothers, but his brothers did not like that Jacob loved his son Joseph the most. Jacob even bought him a colorful robe that made his brothers even more **jealous**.

One night, Joseph had a dream in which he and his brothers were tying bunches of grain and his brothers' bunches bowed down to his bunch.

When he told his brothers about his dream, they made fun of him, saying "Do you think that you are better than all of us? Do you think that we would ever bow to you?"



One day Joseph's father sent Joseph to call his brothers. But when the brothers saw Joseph, they stole his robe and threw him into an old well. They were so **cruel** that they even decided to sell Joseph to some strangers. They lied to their father that Joseph was killed by a wild animal. Jacob was very sad for the loss of his son but the brothers were glad that they would not have to see Joseph ever again.

The man who bought Joseph was a helper to the Pharaoh (ruler) of Egypt. Joseph was very sad but he never lost faith in God and prayed every day. Soon, Joseph became a favorite of the helper of the Pharaoh, and started to help him with everything that he owned. One day, a woman lied about Joseph and said he tried to hurt her, and Joseph was thrown into jail. But, even there he stayed faithful to God and always prayed. Prayer is a very good way to help us get through difficult times. Prayer keeps us connected with God and reminds us that we are never alone.

Joseph became very good at explaining the meaning of dreams.

One day the Pharaoh was having bad dreams, and only Joseph was able to tell him what the dream meant. Joseph said that Pharaoh's dream showed seven good years of harvest followed by seven bad years of famine (hunger).



Even though the Pharaoh put him in jail, Joseph chose to help the Pharaoh. Joseph told the Pharaoh to save some of the harvest now so they would have food during the bad years. Pharaoh listened to Joseph's words and put him in charge of all of Egypt.

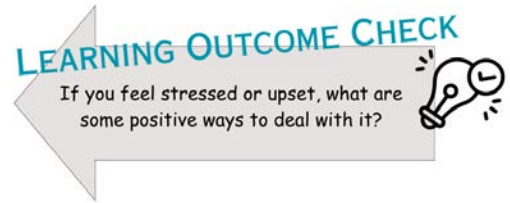
When the years of famine, Egypt was OK! But many other people did not have enough to eat and came to buy grain from Egypt. Joseph's brothers also came to buy grain but did not recognize him because ten years had passed since they had last saw him.

They even bowed to the powerful Joseph, just like it was in his dream! When Joseph told his brothers who he was, he told them, "Do not be angry at yourselves for selling me, because God has put me here to save people from starving." Joseph invited his whole family to stay in Egypt with him, and they lived together happily all the days of their lives.

Like Joseph, we may feel left out or people may be mean to us like Joseph's brothers were. We should always remind ourselves that we are not alone. God is always with us.

There is always Help!

In this Bible story we see that Joseph treated his mean brothers with kindness and respect just like Jesus teaches us. Like Joseph, we can pray to God and also read the Bible to feel God's presence. We can come to Church and be with God.



We can also talk to our priests, our family, and friends as well as many elders in Church, school, or at home. Always remember you are loved by so many even if you are feeling alone!

Reflection Questions

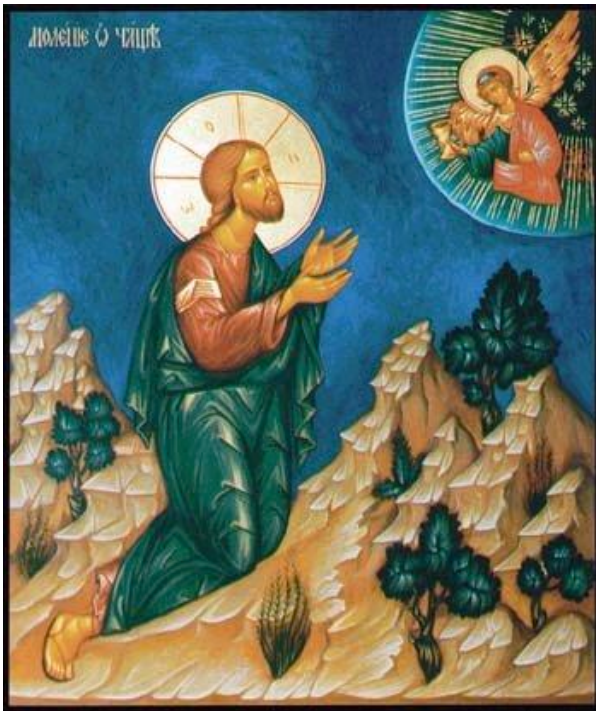
1. What did Joseph do to his jealous brothers when he saw them later?
2. How can we help someone who feels alone and may not want to talk? Sometimes they may get angry with you if you ask them. What should you do then?
3. How does prayer help us when we feel hurt or worried?

Lesson 15: The Lord's Prayer

God wants to hear you talk to Him and He wants to see you pray the way He taught His disciples to pray using the Lord's Prayer

Vocabulary Words

- **Stress:** When we feel worried, scared, or nervous
- **Prayer:** Talking to God. We can thank him and also ask God for help



Prayer is talking to God, and God loves when we pray. The disciples, Jesus' closest friends, wanted to learn how to pray. The disciples were with Jesus all the time, even when He went to pray. Yet, they were still not sure how to pray.

Jesus teaches us how we should pray with humility. Whether our **prayers** are long or short, God always listens! God knows what we mean in our hearts even when we have trouble finding the right words.

Jesus also teaches us that we should not 'show off' when we pray. We should not pray just so that other people can see us or hear us praying loudly. God does not like that. He loves it when we pray in a quiet place, with our own words, for our needs, blessings, and all that we are sorry for.

Jesus taught us a special **prayer** called The Lord's **Prayer**, which we should say often at home and at Church.

*Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our debts and sins as
we also have forgiven our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever.
Amin.*

Let's understand each part of this special **prayer** that Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven

We start the **prayer** out this way so we know that we are praying to God. He is our heavenly Father, and we are His children.

Hallowed be Thy name

This means Holy is Your Name. Even though God wants us to call him Father, He is still God. It's sometimes really hard to understand who God is and what He's like. How did He make us? How is He perfect and never makes mistakes? God just wants us to remember that we need to treat Him super special because He is God and when we pray to Him we need to be respectful.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We should think all the time about living with God. This part means we are praying that people would live in peace and love with one another, just the way it is in heaven with God. This is our reminder of how God wants us to live everyday.

Give us this day, our daily bread

God provides everything we need to live a Christian life. We often ask God for toys (video games and princess dolls). We forget to thank Him for our food, the water, and even the air that we breathe. When we ask God for things, that means we trust Him and should leave the decision to God.

and forgive us our debts and sins as we also have forgiven our debtors.

This next part of the **prayer** is asking for forgiveness for our mistakes. Forgiveness means that we are sorry for something that we have done and do not want to do it anymore. We, also, need to forgive the people who have done wrong to us. Sometimes others hurt us so badly, that we find it really hard to forgive them and maybe, do not really want to even forgive them. Then we must ask for God's help. If we forgive others, God will forgive us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

This part of the **prayer** is really neat because it asks God to help us to know the right thing to do. He will protect us against the evil that is in the world and keep us away from it. Temptation is the idea that is in our heads, that might lead us to do the wrong thing. We ask God to give us the strength to listen to Him and to do what is right.

For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

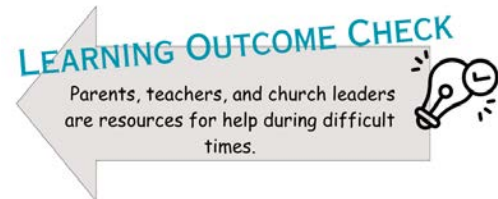
The last part of the **prayer** is the best part! We say out loud that God's kingdom will be forever. With God, we always win!

We should think about the words in the Lord's Prayer. When we pray, we should think about we have to be thankful for and how God has given us everything we need. When we pray "forgive us our debts", we ask forgiveness

for those things that we did wrong, including those that we may have forgotten.

Prayer is our special way of talking to God. So, remember to pray as many times as you can. God loves you and wants to know everything about you and how you're doing. Isn't that wonderful!

The Church teaches us to talk to God through our daily **prayers** and to also seek help from our priests, teachers, and church elders. We can also talk to our priest, parents, teachers, or coaches when we are having a tough time. These adults are there to help and guide us.



When we cut our finger, it is easy for others to see you are hurt and help. But sometimes when we are feeling sad or upset or jealous, these feelings can cause us pain and the people around who love us might not know we need help. God loves us always, and there are also others who love us. We have our home, our Church, our school, and many people who are ready to help! It can be tough but we should trust our parents, teachers, family, and priests enough to share our feelings with them so that they can help.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you think of a time when you felt worried?
2. What did you do when you were stressed?
3. What are some ways you can talk to God and hear His voice?

Lesson 16: Spreading the Good News

The Apostles and disciples told many people about the Gospel.

We can also share God's love with others!

Vocabulary Words

- **Evangelism:** Sharing the good news of Jesus with others by talking and also by our actions
- **Persecute:** To treat someone very badly or hurt them because of what they believe. This is not how God wants us to act and we are to stop others from being treated this way.
- **Mission:** A special task or job that someone is given to do. God's mission for us is to love God and to love everybody!

When you have good news, don't you want to share it?



The Apostles had Good News that Jesus died and rose again! They knew He was the son of God come as man to save us.

The Apostles and disciples had lived, walked, talked, and learned this from Jesus. They were with Him when He lived, saw that He died, and that He rose again!

They also knew He would come again. This is the good news they wanted to share with everyone! One of the Apostles was St. Thomas who even came to Kerala to share the Good News.

Jesus' commandment (**St. Matthew 28:19; St. Mark 16:15; St. Luke 14:23**) is to share this Good News. It was not a commandment just for the Apostles but for us as well! This is called **mission** and **evangelism**. It means sharing your faith with others.

LEARNING OUTCOME CHECK

Sharing our faith with others is what we are called to do as Orthodox Christians. This is called mission and evangelism.



Some of them spoke to others, but many times they shared the love of God with their actions. When others saw them they asked questions. Many died because they loved Jesus and shared the Truth about Jesus. These special people are called martyrs.

In the Acts of Apostles, there was one man named Saul who was not excited about Jesus. Saul did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. He even tried to arrest the people that believed in Jesus. He killed many who believed in Jesus. One day, everything changed.



Saul was on a journey to a city called Damascus. All of a sudden a bright light from heaven shone around him. It was so bright, Saul fell to the ground. Then a voice from heaven said “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Saul asked the voice “Who are you Lord?” The voice replied saying “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” (**Acts Chapter 9**)

Saul was shocked. After the light disappeared, Saul opened his eyes but he could not see. He was blind for three days. Saul’s friends had to help him continue his journey to Damascus.

Meanwhile God also appeared to a man named Ananias who lived in Damascus. God told him to go and visit Saul. Ananias went and explained to Saul that God had sent him. He touched Saul and immediately something like scales fell off his eyes. Saul could see again!

Saul was a changed man. He became filled with the Holy Spirit and was baptized. He began to use the name Paul, instead of Saul. He became a Christian and for the rest of his life, he spread the message of Jesus Christ.

St. Paul

St. Paul went to many countries and told people about Jesus, as He commanded. He helped start the first churches. He wrote many letters (Epistles) that we read in the Bible, at home and at Church. St. Paul is an amazing example of how one person can make a big difference in the world.

What is the message that the Saints had shared to everyone? That God is love! Jesus became man and died on the Cross because He loved us. He defeated death with His Resurrection. This is such wonderful news for

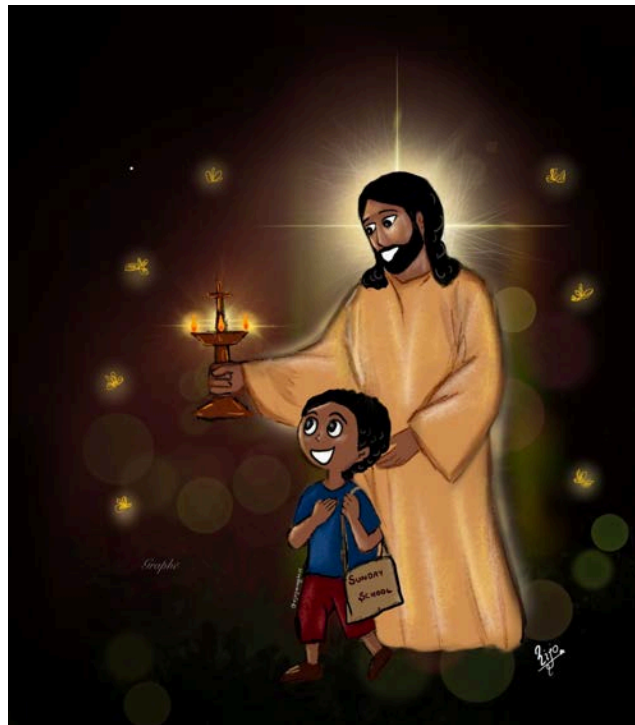


everyone! This is how much God loves us. We need to love God back and also love our neighbor.

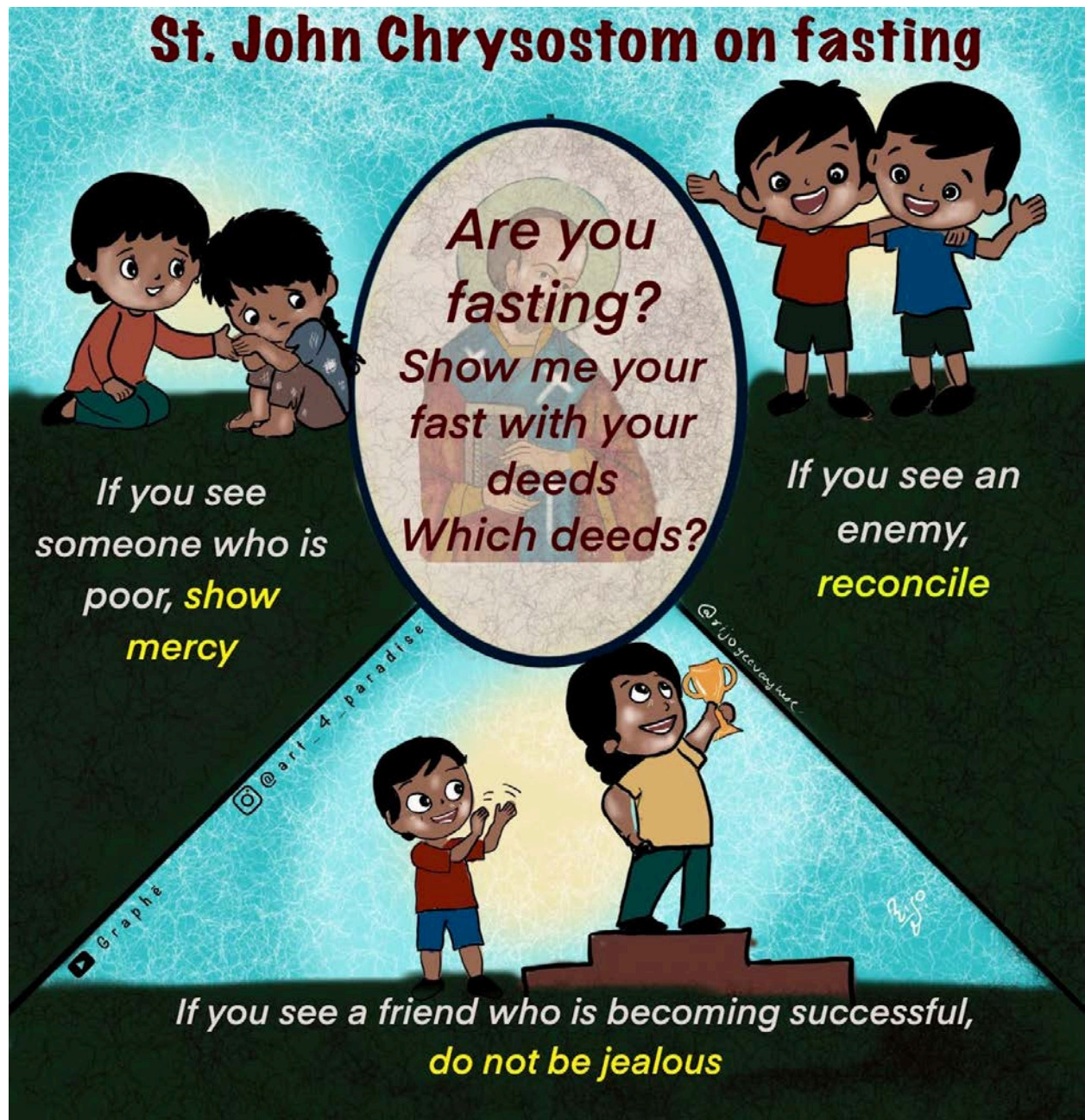
Our Mission

You also can make a difference! It does not matter if you are young - God can still work through you! Sharing the love of Jesus is our mission and the evangelism that we practice. What are some of those things you can do to share the love of Jesus?

- You can tell people about God's love.
- Invite someone to church.
- Be kind to those around you.
- Share what you have and be generous.
- Visit and help those who are sick or lonely.
- Use the talents God has given you.
- Pray for others.
- Teach and help those younger than you.



St. John Chrysostom teaches us that we can also share God's love by fasting!



There is so much you can do to share God's love. And God will work through us to do amazing things also!

Reflection Questions

1. What did the Apostles and disciples share with others about Jesus?
2. What can be our mission?
3. What are some ways we can evangelize and share God's love?

