



Sunday of the Holy Ancestors

Study Guide - Level 1 (Grades K-2 / Ages 5-7)

Today is the Sunday
of the Holy Ancestors

Lesson Order

- Opening Prayer
- Intro / Recap last week's lesson
- Review the scripture readings
- Review the hymns of the day
- Read front page of handout together
- Use study guide lesson and Q&A
- Complete handout activities
- Preview next week's lesson
- Closing Prayer

Tips & Hints

- Use as much or as little of the content in this study guide helping the students discover how the Byzantine Catholic Faith can be a part of their daily life.
- Use open-ended questions, encouraging young people to share their experiences or ideas, drawing connections to the topics of the day, strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ and His holy Byzantine Catholic Faith.
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publisher at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

✓ Goal

After completing this week's lesson, students should be able to articulate the following:

- How today's scripture readings and liturgical hymns apply to their life
- Understanding what God is expecting us to live as His followers and members of the Byzantine Catholic Faith
- How being part of the Byzantine Catholic Church gives us the tools and skills to live godly lives regardless of our circumstances
- Why they believe and follow Jesus Christ as Byzantine Catholic Christians

✕ Overview

We hear many names read in today's gospel, people who we know are the earthly ancestors of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, as the Son of God, always existed. When he was born of the Virgin Mary, He became human like us, and still remained God.

Jesus came to save us from sin and death, which isolates us from God. It is through God's love that we are restored to a full relationship with God the Father.

Each of us and every other person is precious in the eyes of God, worthy of His love. We are called to share that same love

as best as we can, with everyone we meet in life. As we prepare for Christmas, we are called to be like Jesus, humble, loving, and kind to others - worshipping Him as our Lord and God.

📖 Apostolos / Epistle and Gospel Readings

Have one student read today's Apostolos/Epistle and another read the Gospel lesson.

Epistle/Apostol: Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

1. What is the author of today's epistle/apostol talking about?
2. How does the message of this epistle apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- St. Paul talks about the saints of the Old Testament
- He explains that they had faith in God, becoming part of the history leading to Christ's birth
- God's promise of Salvation for us is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ
- We are recipients of God's blessings as members of the Byzantine Catholic Church
- God provides for our needs and ensures we have to be His followers now

1. What took place in today's lesson?
2. Why is this important for us living in the 21st century?

Possible Answers

- The gospel tells of the genealogy or ancestry of Jesus Christ and what happened at His birth
- Joseph, faced with the challenge of Mary's sudden pregnancy, was assured by an angel that the child would be called Jesus, and would save people from their sins
- Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him in obedience to God
- Christ's birth is wondrous because it provides us with an opportunity to encounter God

🎵 Hymnography

Have a student read the hymn(s) on the front page of the handout.

1. What do the hymns teach us about today's commemoration?
2. How can the message of these hymns apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- Jesus Christ's earthly ancestors were faithful to God's promise
- These saints and holy people pray to God for us
- We can also play an important role in the Church
- We glorify God in our hymns and prayers for being born of Mary

A Closer Look

Let's take a closer look at today's primary topic.

Opening Review

Today we hear a reading with a lot, lot, lot of names. How many? 47!

The reading tells us about Jesus Christ's earthly ancestors. He had grandparents and many other relatives, like his mom, Mary!

The genealogy of Christ reminds us that *each of us* plays an important part in the life of the church today. Matthew's entire gospel is for our understanding and benefit.

What Does This Mean For Us?

Knowing that the birth of Christ was the result of God's plan over forty-two generations (and actually since He created the world), how we should remember that God is all powerful and uses that power to love us.

From the start of the book of Genesis and the founding of the world, God's relationship with His creation is an expression of His love. We were created in God's image: to love, think, be creative, express compassion for others, and ultimately, be in communion with God.

History recounts the path winding it's way to that very special moment when the Archangel Gabriel came to Mary, announcing she would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and give birth to a Son: Jesus Christ.

God acts in His way, at His time, to provide what we need. When we get distracted or lose focus on God, we become anxious, worried, scared. But God will help us if we reach out to Him: that's called praying to God!

The devil doesn't want us to talk with God, so we have to be careful and do our best to stay focused on being like Jesus and His saints. That makes God happy, and is good for us too!

Wrap Up

As we draw closer to the Nativity of Our Lord this week, let us remember that Christ's birth was a miraculous event in our world, and it should also be the same in our own lives.

Christ's birth can only be explained through the love and grace of God.

Being faithful to God's commandments and teachings doesn't mean everything will make sense or give us a sense of calm. That's ok.

These individuals are important, because we're seeing them as part of a bigger picture. Just like us and our role in the Church!

God's plan will sometimes be a mystery for us, but that's ok, because He's God and knows what we need and how to handle things for us. We just need to have faith and trust God.

When we come to church on Christmas, we get to participate in the divine liturgy and receive the Eucharist. It's our way of celebrating Christmas with God in His home.

Later, we celebrate with our family at home with gifts and special foods.

Coming to Church on Christmas shows God that we love Him, and want to be with Him on very special occasions.

It's our opportunity to approach and kneel before the icon of the Nativity, glorifying God for His great mercy and love.

Discussion Questions

Choose from these possible questions to explore today's topic.

Question #1: Why is it important to know Christ is the descendant of all of these people?

Possible Answers:

- The reading connects the Old Testament with Jesus Christ
- It shows Christ isn't some random guy claiming to be the Son of God
- Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise God made concerning a Messiah, meaning He IS the Messiah

Question #2: Who are the important names in today's scripture reading?

Possible Answers:

- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Patriarchs)
- Judah (of the Twelve Tribes)
- Jesse (Father of King David)
- David, Solomon (Kings of Israel)
- Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon (587-539 BC)
- Joseph (the betrothed of the Virgin Mary)
- All of the names listed

Question #3: How is God present in our lives?

Possible Answers:

- Moments of love
- A feeling of peace
- Calm acceptance without anxiety
- Grace-filled moments of compassion
- A kind word, a hug, a smile
- Prayer to the Theotokos and saints
- Being at the liturgy
- Receiving the Eucharist
- When we forgive or repent

Question #4: How can we respond when we experience God's grace in our life?

Possible Answers:

- Give thanks
- Pray for ourselves and others
- Keep doing God's commandments
- See the joy in life
- Love others in a godly way
- Repent before God, forgive others
- Go to church, offer a candle in thanks, receive the Eucharist

Preview

Next Week

We continue the celebration of the Nativity by honoring St. Joseph the Betrothed, St. James, the Lord's brother, and St. David, the prophet and ancestor of Christ.

St. Joseph was faithful in very unusual circumstances, St. James was the son of St. Joseph and a devoted follower of Jesus, and St. David wrote the book of Psalms.

We have the choice to follow God with faith, knowing from the lives of these three saints, God has a very specific plan of salvation for each of us living in the 21st century.

On The Web

What Does the Name Jesus Mean?

<https://antiochpatriarchate.org/en/page/jesus-what-does-this-name-mean/2326/>

