



Holy Mysteries

also called the Sacraments



OPENING PRAYERS:

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Glory to thee, our God, glory to thee!

Prayer to Holy Spirit

O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Trisagion Prayer

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Before Study

Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart that I may hear thy word and understand it and so fulfill thy will. Amen.

LESSON / ACTIVITY: See pages below. For each topic, please note Parent roles and (child responses).

Prayers

CLOSING PRAYERS:

“Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb: for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

Pray to God for me, O holy [name of your patron saint], pleasing to God, for with fervor I run to thee, swift helper and intercessor for my soul.

O Lord, save thy people and bless thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries, and by virtue of thy Cross preserve thy habitation.

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos: ever-blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim; without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of thy most pure Mother, of my holy guardian angel, of [name of your patron saint], of [saint(s) of the day], and of all the saints: save me, a sinner. Amen.”

What are the Holy Mysteries?

(p. 1)

THE HOLY MYSTERIES

(sacraments)

EVERYTHING IN LIFE CAN BE A SACRAMENT,
filled with the Spirit of God by His Grace.

"Whatever you do,
do everything for
the glory of God."

1 Corinthians, 10:31



Through the Holy Mysteries known as sacraments, the Orthodox bear witness to the work of God's Holy Spirit in all aspects of Christian life and upon all creation.



What are the Holy Mysteries? (p. 2)

Recommended video for ages 12+



Recommended video for ages 7+



Baptism and Chrismation

The Rites of Initiation into the Church, since ancient times, are:

- Water baptism (“in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” Mt 28.19)
- Anointing with Chrism (“the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” Acts 19.6)
- Holy Communion (“He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” Jn 6.56)

Parent Asks: “Do you remember seeing a Baptism? What did you notice? What did the priest do? What did the godparent do? How is it different for a baby or an adult?”

Parent Explains: “The priest immerses the child in water three times: once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit. Baptism symbolizes burial (as the child is under water) and resurrection and new birth in Christ (as the child is lifted out). In Baptism, one is born into the kingdom of God through renewal in Christ--becoming a new creation. We sing, ‘As many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!’

“Chrismation occurs immediately after Baptism. The priest anoints parts of the body with holy oil (chrism), marking them with the sign of the cross, and repeating, “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Chrismation is a personal Pentecost--the descent of the Holy Spirit. Through chrismation, the person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit and is welcomed into the Body of Christ--His church.

Parent Explains: “Confession is a sacrament of reconciliation with God after having been separated by sin. To ‘repent,’ is to ‘turn back’ toward God. The penitent (person repenting) stands with the priest, who is the witness, not the judge. The penitent confesses and expresses sorrow for having sinned. Then the priest pronounces the prayer of absolution, through which God’s forgiveness is given. Confession is a sacrament of healing. We heal our relationship with God and are healed by God. Confession is a remedy for spiritual sickness, like medicine is a remedy for physical sickness.”

To older children:

What is Sin?

Hint: it’s not “breaking a rule”



Confession



Confession

To younger children:

“What did Jesus say you should do if someone hurts you?” (Forgive them) “What should you do if you hurt someone?” (Ask the person and ask God for forgiveness.)

“God loves us and cares for us. When we ask Him for forgiveness, he will always forgive us. Confession is a chance to tell God we’re sorry and want to try again.

Jesus wants us to listen to Him and do good things for other people. If we hurt someone, we hurts ourselves too. When we confess our mistakes to Jesus, He will help us heal.”

Marriage

Parent Asks: “What does it mean to be married? What happens at a wedding? Is God part of a marriage?” (Yes.)

Parent Explains: “In marriage, a man and a woman become one spirit and one body through the Holy Spirit.”

“The rings are blessed and exchanged to show that each partner enters the marriage as a free commitment. The priest then places crowns on the heads of the bride and groom, symbolizing God’s matrimonial blessing, martyrdom, and membership in God’s Kingdom. The ceremony also includes the ‘common cup,’ symbolizing the couple’s total sharing of life.”



Holy Orders / Ordination

Parent Discusses with older children:

Christ is the only priest, pastor and teacher of the Christian Church. He alone guides and rules His people. He alone forgives sins and offers communion with God, His Father.

Christ has not abandoned his people, but remains with his Church as its living and unique head. Christ remains present and active in the Church through his Holy Spirit.

The sacrament of holy orders in the Christian Church is the objective guarantee of the perpetual presence of Christ with his people. The bishops, priests, and deacons of the Church have no other function or service than to manifest the presence and action of Christ to his people. In this sense, the clergy do not act in behalf of Christ or instead of Christ as though he himself were absent. They are neither vicars of Christ, nor substitutes for Christ nor representatives of Christ.

Christ is present now, always, and forever in his Church. The sacramental ministry of the Church—the bishops, priests, and deacons—receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to manifest Christ in the Spirit to men. Thus, through His chosen ministers, Christ exercises and realizes His unique and exclusive function as priest, perpetually offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice to the Father on behalf of His human brothers and sisters. Through His ministers in the Church, Christ also acts as teacher, Himself proclaiming the divine words of the Father to men. He acts as the good shepherd, the one pastor who guides His flock. He acts as the forgiver and healer, remitting sins and curing the ills of men—physical, mental and spiritual. He acts as bishop, overseeing the community which He has gathered for Himself (1 Pet 2.25). He acts as deacon (which means servant or minister) for He alone is the suffering servant of the Father Who has come “not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20.28).

Parent Asks: “How do you think a deacon becomes a priest? Do you remember seeing an ordination? What did you see the bishop do? Can you remember one word he said very loudly?” (Command.)

“Holy orders is for the ordination of the three orders of the clergy, what are they?” (Deacon, priest, and bishop.)

Parent Explains: “Holy orders is celebrated by the bishop (or 3 bishops, if a bishop is being consecrated) and is affirmed by the local congregation. They are given special vestments to wear.

Parent Asks: “Why is ordination important? What are priests called to do?” (teach, serve, continue the ministry of Jesus Christ.) “Who were Jesus’s apostles? What did they do?”

Parent Explains: “Through holy orders, clergy receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and Apostolic succession (from Christ’s Apostles), enabling them to continue the ministry of Christ in the Church.”

Parent Explains: “The service of Holy Unction has six parts. They are:

Holy Unction

Parent Asks: “What do you do when you’re sick? Who do you ask for help? What prayers can you say? How did Jesus help sick people?” (He forgave sins and healed people from sickness and suffering.)

Parent Explains: “Holy Unction is the church’s prayer for spiritual and physical healing. Through anointing with oil, the person’s sufferings are united with those of Christ, and sins are forgiven.”

“On Wednesday of Holy Week, many Orthodox are anointed for spiritual healing and in preparation for Pascha (Easter).”

Action	Meaning
1. Confession	The sick person must be healed in soul as well as body (Remember the story of the paralytic).
2. Introductory prayers and psalms	We confess our sinfulness and ask God to create a new spirit within us.
3. Canon	We ask God to have mercy on us, drive away all evil powers, and grant us healing so we may bless Him forever.
4. Troparia to the Saints	We ask the saints, especially those who have suffered themselves as martyrs, and the Theotokos to intercede for us (pray to God on our behalf).
5. Epistle and Gospel lessons	Seven priests, seven epistles, and seven gospels; after each one the priest anoints the sick person with Holy Oil.
6. Prayers of anointing	As the person is anointed, the priest reads a prayer asking for remission of the person’s sins and healing of his soul and body. Amen.”

The Eucharist / Holy Communion



Parent Asks: “Who made you?” (God.) “What are some other things God has made?”
“Does everything we need to live come from God?” (Yes.) “What are some of those things?”

Parent Explains: “God made us and the world we live in. God gives us everything: food to eat, clothes to keep us warm, houses to shelter us, birds and flowers to make us happy, sunshine and stars to make things light and bright. God also gives us families and friends to love us and care for us. He gives us animals and pets to love and play with.”

“When we love someone very much, we want to share our things with them. We invite our friends to eat with us. We share our home and our life with them. In the Divine Liturgy, we tell God how much we love Him and sing songs of praise. We also bring food to Him. We ask God to come and share our food with us. The food we bring to God is bread (prophora--*have child repeat this word*) and wine. This gift to God is one small way of telling God we love him and want to share our lives with him.”

“Someone in our parish family baked the bread that is used in Holy Communion. Before being baked, it’s stamped with a special seal. The very center of the seal is called ‘the Lamb.’ This is the section of the Holy Bread that the priest places in the chalice with the wine.” *Point to the four squares for small children.* “The Holy Spirit changes the bread and wine into Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy.”

The Eucharist / Holy Communion

This 2-page lesson is recommended for Sunday or Saturday.

Parent Explains: “Partaking of the Eucharist is also called ‘Communion,’ a combination of the words ‘common’ and ‘union,’ since the Eucharist puts us into a common union with God Himself. When we receive Holy Communion, we’re receiving Jesus. The word ‘Eucharist’ is derived from the Greek word, ‘eucharisto,’ which means, ‘thank you.’ We thank God for Communion with Him. The Eucharist is the ‘sacrament of sacraments.’ It is the center of life.

To young children: “God loves us. God wants us to share His life with us. God blesses our gifts of bread and wine. God makes our gifts special. He shares them with us as Holy Communion. Holy Communion is very special. It’s like being invited to a great banquet in God’s House.”

Parent Asks: “When we come up to receive Holy Communion, how should we behave?” (Reverently, etc.)
“Should we be talking or laughing?” (No.)

Parent Explains: “Receiving the Eucharist is very special. It is the most important part of the Divine Liturgy. We should be on our best behavior and walk quietly. God makes us His special guests. He prepares the food we have brought as our gift. God blesses it and shares it with us. Bread and wine are changed to the Body and Blood of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and received as spiritual nourishment by the faithful for the remission of sins and life everlasting. The Lord Himself invites the faithful to the Eucharist, which is His sacrifice for and offering to all people. All baptised Orthodox who have prepared may share in the Eucharist.

Parent helps child prepare for the next Divine Liturgy: “The Eucharist is the ‘sacrament of sacraments,’ so how should we prepare to partake?” “What should we do before coming to church?” “Which prayers do we say?” “Should we first apologize to others and forgive others because we know that God will ‘forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors’ (*others*)?” (Yes.)

~4 mins