

# Monasticism

## Session 1

Junior Level (45-50 minutes)

**Theme:** Who: Monastics

**Sub-Theme:** Monastics serve God by living a life of prayer and service in a special setting—either a monastery community or a secluded place in which they live alone.

**Note:** The *Resources* and *Teacher Background Reading* listed below will be useful throughout the unit of study. Teachers are encouraged to use any of the suggested background materials that they can.

**Objectives:** *At the end of this lesson students should be able to:*

1. Define monastics, monks, nuns as those who live a life of prayer and service in communal monasteries or secluded places in which they live alone.
2. State that prayer/worship, work and serving guests are part of the life of most monastics today. (Note to teacher: the exception would be those who live alone and do not receive visitors and guests, as many monasteries do.)
3. State the correct reason why monastics wear black (see below)

**Materials:**

-Information handouts (attached)

-A napkin and fork, a small prayer book, a small tool such as a pair of pliers or screwdriver, a small piece of black cloth.

-Two sets of **nine** small cards or pieces of colored paper (these will be used by students in two groups.) On the cards, the following words: **IRELAND, ANIMALS, PEOPLE, SEVEN, GREAT LENT, KIND, MONASTERY, ABBOT, GENTLE ONE**. Each set should be in an envelope, mixed and not in any particular order.

-Pictures of monastics and monastic life (within the text of the General Introduction provided at the beginning of the unit)

-2 copies of the page “The Story of Saint Kevin” (attached)

**Resources:**

- “Mount Athos,” pp. 32-33, **Katie Visits a Monastery**, Seattle, St. Nectarios Press.
- Monk of St. Tikhon’s Monastery, ed. **These Truths We Hold**. South Canaan, PA. St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1986.
- Video: **St. Tikhon’s Monastery, America’s Holy Mountain**, Grisha Pictures, 3224 Trinity Road, Harrisburg, PA 17109 (DVD/VHS, \$24.00 including shipping)
- Video: **Life Transfigured, The Story of the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration**, Greg, Lisa Uhrin, (\$20.00 plus S+H). Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 321 Monastery Lane, Ellwood City, PA 16117
- Orthodox Monasteries of North America (<http://omna.malf.net>)

**Teacher Background Reading:**

“History and Mission of St. Tikhon’s Monastery”

(<http://stots.edu/history1.html>)

“Monastic Activities,” pp. 17-19, **Life Transfigured, A Journal of Orthodox Nuns**, Vol. 35, #3, Nativity, 2003, Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, 321 Monastery Lane, Ellwood City, PA 16117

Metropolitan Anastassy, *In Defence of Monasticism*, pp 32-37, illustrations of monasteries, throughout text, Jordanville, NY, Holy Trinity Monastery, 1989.  
The Monks of New Skete, *In the Spirit of Happiness*, \$14.95 Monastery of New Skete  
([www.newskete.com](http://www.newskete.com) )

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*Procedure:*

1. **Opening Prayer** (Sung/recited together) 1 minute

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere 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.

2. **Discussion Starter-Bridge** 7 minutes

Ask students to think about kinds of work they might do when they get older. Pose these questions:

--What could you do if you wanted to help sick people get better? (*Nurse, doctor.*)

--What could you do if you wanted to cook good food for people to eat? (*Cook, chef,*)

--What might you do if you love to be around animals? (*Veterinarian, zoo worker, circus worker, animal scientist, etc.*)

--What might you do if like ships and the sea? (Sailor, shipbuilder, join Navy, etc.)

--What might you do if you wanted to spend a good deal of your time praying and coming closer to God? (*Let students give their own answers. Some might say that many people pray a lot, and try to be close to God. Tell them that MONASTICS are people who give up many other things in life in order to live a life of prayer and service to God. Ask students to tell what they know about monastics. Then continue): Monastics live in monasteries and spend much time praying and worshipping. Put the word MONASTCS on the chalkboard, and underneath it put MONKS and NUNS. Tell students that "monastics" refers to both men and women. Ask them to tell you which word, MONKS or NUNS, refers to women monastics, and which one refers to men monastics.*)

### 3. Discussion 8 minutes

Using some of the pictures from the General Introduction to this unit, talk about who monastics are and what they do. First, ask students to tell you what they know about monastics. Then talk together, making the following points:

*Monastics are men and women who come from many different places and backgrounds. Some monastics were born as princes and princesses. Others came from poor families. Some did not have much time in school, but others were very well educated.*

*Some monastics live alone, in places far from other people. But most live in monasteries. (Show pictures of monastery buildings.) There are monasteries for monks, who are men, and separate monasteries for nuns, who are women. All monasteries have chapels where the monks or nuns pray and worship together. They also do many kinds of work. Most monasteries have gardens, and often the monastics make and sell things like bread or cheese to support the monastery. One monastery raises beautiful dogs for people to have as well-trained pets. (Show pictures of some of the kinds of work monastics do to support themselves.)*

*Monastics dress in black, not because they are sad, but to show that fancy clothes are not important. When they don't have to worry about clothes, hairstyles and dressy shoes,  
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*they have more time to pray and to think about God. (Show monks and nuns in their typical dress.) They eat simple, plain food, and they do not spend time watching TV.*

*Monastics do not get married. But they live like a family together in the monastery, and share meals, work, and prayer. (Show monastics in prayer together, and in various kinds of activities.) As in any family home, they have bills to pay, rooms to clean, and groceries to buy. But they also spend much time praying, either alone or together, for everyone in the world. This kind of prayer may not seem like a "job," but it is very hard because it takes energy to put your mind and heart completely on God.*

*Many monasteries welcome visitors. Families, or married couples, or people on their own can come and stay in guest houses to have a quiet time for prayer and thought. They can take part in the worship services in the chapel. They can talk with the monks or nuns about their lives. (Show a picture of visitors to a monastery.)*

*Here is something we can all remember, all the time: In our monasteries, monks and nuns are always praying for us. They pray for everyone in the*

*world. They hope that even if we are not monastics, we also will try to come closer to God and pray more. They know that God loves every person. They know that God hears all our prayers.*

#### **4. A Song**            9 minutes

As a review of what you have talked about, help the children first learn and then sing this song together. The tune is the children's hymn "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God." (*Note: The music for this hymn can be found at [HymnSite.com](http://HymnSite.com). Go to "Hymn Search" in the menu on the left, and type in the title "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God." The title will come up in the larger box at right. Click on it, and the tune will play.*)

**LET'S SING A SONG ABOUT MONKS AND NUNS  
WHO SERVE GOD WITH WORK AND PRAYER.  
SOME LIVE TOGETHER, SOME LIVE ALONE;  
THEY ALL KNOW GOD IS NEAR.  
A PRINCESS, A BISHOP, A MOTHER, A BOY  
THEY WASH DISHES, THEY CUT GRASS, THEY SING WITH JOY,  
YOU CAN VISIT THEM, TOO, AND SING, WORK OR PRAY:  
A GOOD MONASTERY DAY.**

#### **5. Story and Review**            15 minutes

Divide the class into two groups, labeling them ONE and TWO. Have both groups read "The Story of Saint Kevin" (from the text attached.) When they have finished, let each of the groups tell one thing they found interesting about Saint Kevin. (These answers should be their own. It's likely that some will be drawn to Kevin as a lover of animals. Or they may be surprised to find that a future saint was a boy who had trouble getting along with other people and wasn't always a "good boy.")

To review the story, give each group an envelope containing a set of cards or papers. Read the following partial sentences aloud, slowly and more than once if necessary, and let each group work together to choose the card with the correct word to fit in. (It's fine for t

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hem to look back at the story text.) Group members should take turns bringing their chosen cards to you. You can make the activity fun by dramatically announcing, "Group One's answer is.....correct!" or "Group One's answer is.....incorrect!" Or you might read one group's answer and ask the other, "Do you agree?"

Of course, review the correct answers by reading the completed sentences. Answers as follows:

1. Saint Kevin was born in the country of **(Ireland)**
2. Saint Kevin loved **(animals)**
3. Saint Kevin went to a monastery at the age of **(seven)**
4. Saint Kevin had trouble getting along with **(people)**
5. The other monks sent Kevin away to be by himself during **(Great Lent)**
6. Kevin prayed hard, and God taught him to be **(kind)**
7. When Saint Kevin had been a monk for many years, he started a new **(monastery)**
8. The head of a men's monastery is called an **(abbot)**
9. Saint Kevin's name means **(gentle one)**

## 6. **Review and Wrap-Up; Closing**      5-10 minutes

Go over the meanings of the words **monastic, monk, nun**. Then remind the class that you have learned some things about what monastics do. As a review, hold up, one at a time, each of the four objects (prayer book, fork and napkin, tool, black cloth) and let students recall that monastics pray, receive guests, work, and wear black.)

Sing the song together again, and close with the Lord's Prayer.

### **The Story of Saint Kevin**

A baby boy was born to a loving Christian family in the country of Ireland many hundreds of years ago. He was given the name Kevin, which means “gentle one.”

But Kevin was not always gentle. He had trouble getting along with other children. They stayed away from him. They did not want to be hit with stones that he threw at them. They covered their ears with their hands so that they would not hear the names he called them.

How do you think Kevin treated animals? Well, it was different from the way he treated people. With animals, Kevin really was the “gentle one.” He loved animals and took care of them. They trusted him and came when he called them. Kevin and the forest creatures were truly friends.

Many loving parents sent their children to monasteries in days long ago. They did this so that their children could learn to read and write in the monastery schools. They wanted their children to learn the Christian faith by worshipping in the monastery chapel.

Kevin was sent to a monastery when he was seven years old. He was still the same boy, not easy to get along with. The monks had a lot of trouble with this wild boy!

Finally, the monks decided that Kevin needed to spend some time alone with God. They sent him off to be by himself during Great Lent.

During the forty days of Great Lent, Kevin was a kind, loving friend to the animals of the forest. He prayed hard during those long days and nights, too.

When the great feast of Pascha came, Kevin was ready. His prayers had taught him something. God wanted him to be kind to people, not just to animals. God wanted him to be a friend to other people.

Kevin went back to the monastery. He sang “Christ is Risen!” with his brother monks in the chapel. They welcomed him and shared the Paschal meal with him. What a wonderful time it was!

Kevin lived for many more years as a monk. He started a new monastery, and became its abbot. (An abbot is the head of a monastery for men.) When he died, he was buried next to the monastery church.

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## **Monasticism**

### **Session 2**

**Junior Level** (45-50 minutes)

*Theme:* Where: Monasteries in the United States

*Sub-Theme:* Monasteries, both for men and for women, are found throughout the US. They are of different sizes, have different programs, and are supported in various ways.

*Note:* The *Resources* and *Teacher Background* listed in the first lesson of the unit are useful as preparation for this lesson and those that follow.

*Objectives:* At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

1. Locate men's and women's monasteries throughout the US.
2. Define the words **monastic, monastery, monk, nun, abbot, abbess**.
3. Tell a few specific facts about two American monasteries (see below).

*Materials:*

-A napkin and fork, a small prayer book, a small tool such as a pair of pliers or screwdriver, a small piece of black cloth.

-A large wall map of the United States, mounted so that students can mark the locations of monasteries on it.

-Various colors of thick and thin markers (including red and blue thick)

-4 puzzles you have cut from card stock, each with one of the following verses in large colorful thick-marker letters. Cut puzzles into pieces and put each set of pieces into a clear plastic bag (ziptop are easy to handle.) You may want to add simple, colorful borders to the puzzles. (Note: The verses, in order, are adapted from Titus 3:1, Ephesians 6:18, Romans 15:7 and Matthew 6: 28.)

-Paper and pencils

**BE READY TO DO ANY HONEST WORK**

**PRAY AT ALL TIMES IN THE SPIRIT**

**WELCOME ONE ANOTHER AS CHRIST HAS WELCOMED YOU**

**DO NOT WORRY ABOUT WHAT YOU WILL WEAR**

-Computer with internet (If this is not available to you, you can go on the internet before class and copy out the pages noted in the lesson text below)

-Two large pieces of chart paper/butcher paper with the following headings and questions, ready to be mounted on the wall so students can write answers. Leave lots of room for answers. Mount the charts only when students are doing their research, not earlier.

Chart Number One: St. Tikhon's Monastery

1. When was the monastery founded?

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2. What is the schedule of services?
3. Read the Troparion for St. Tikhon of Zadonsk. List here seven ways the Troparion tells us he is an example for us:
4. St. Tikhon's is not only a monastery. It is also an important kind of school. What kind of school is it?

Chart Number Two: Monastery of the Holy Myrrhbearers

1. Who is the abbess of the monastery?
2. When was it founded?
3. Who were the "myrrhbearers" after whom the monastery is named?
4. Name one way in which the monastery supports itself:

*Procedure:*

1. **Opening Prayer** (sung or recited together) 1 minute  
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere 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.
2. **Review Activity** 15 minutes  
Review the meanings of the words **monastic, monastery, monk, nun, abbot**. Put them on the board, and add one new word: **abbess**, the head of a women's monastery. Go over all the words together.  
Sing together "Let's Sing a Song about Monks and Nuns" which the class learned in last week's session. Bring out, from last week, the four objects (napkin and fork, prayer book, tool and black cloth) that tell us about the life of monastics—offering hospitality to guests, prayer, work, and the wearing of black. Review the meanings of the objects.  
Go over, particularly, the meaning of monastics' black clothing: it's a way of showing that the monastic is concentrating on God and on prayer, and not on the things of the world, especially fancy or eye-catching dress.  
Tell the class: *Monastics take the Bible very seriously. Each of the things we've talked about as part of their lives comes from the Bible. I have four puzzles.*

*Let's take turns with them, and match up some verses from the Bible with these four things we talked about. (Hold up each object again, and leave the four objects in plain sight.)*

Divide the class into four groups, and give each group a puzzle to solve, along with pencil and paper. They should put the puzzle together, write down which of the four objects it goes with, and pass it on to the next group till all the groups have finished. Go over the answers together:

**Be ready....** (work) **Pray....**(prayer) **Welcome....**(guests) **Do not worry....**(black clothing)

### 3. Discussion and Discovery Activity

20 minutes

Bring the class back together, and ask: *What countries do you think most Orthodox monasteries are in? Are there any here in the United States? Have any of you visited a monastery? (If so, let those who have visited tell a little about what it was like, and what they did.)* Put the two charts with questions on the wall, and have students share/take turns with the following activities:

-Go to <http://omna.malf.net>.

-Under "Listings by State" identify the states in which Orthodox monasteries are found

-Mark these (approximate locations) on the US map, women's monasteries in red and men's in blue.

-Under "Listings by Jurisdiction" go to Orthodox Church in America, and then to "Stavropigheal" and find St. Tikhon. This is the name of the men's monastery in South Canaan, PA. (Note: A "stavropigheal" monastery in the OCA is one that is under the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Herman rather than a diocesan bishop.) Have students find answers to the questions on the home page, and under the links "History and Mission" and "St. Tikhon of Zadonsk." Note that the left side of the home page shows links both for the St. Tikhon's Seminary (this is the answer to the "school" question and, below that list, the Monastery.

-Record the answers on the chart.

-Go back to "Stavropigheal" and find "Holy Myrrhbearers" which is a women's monastery in upstate New York. Once again, have students find the answers and put them on the chart. The very first page gives the abbess' name and the founding date. This page has a section called "Monastery Links" with an icon to get to the home page, which tells about the first myrrhbearers. Then, to find out one important and interesting way the monastery supports itself, have students click on the box at the top of the home page marked "Zoar Farms." Students will

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enjoy finding out about the monastery's sheep raised for wool to be sold, and other animals.

**5. Writing Activity**

8 minutes

Give each student pencil and paper. Ask them to write about, or draw, one reason why they think monasteries are important for our Christian life. (For example, they might write about the monastics' constant prayer being a good example for the rest of us, or they might draw someone talking with a monastic as a spiritual counselor. Let them come up with their own ideas.)

If you have time, and if some students wish to, they may share what they have written with the class.

**6. Closing**

1 minute

Say the Lord's Prayer together. Ask students to include the monastics all over the world in their prayers, and remind them of the wonderful truth that monks and nuns pray for everyone in the world, all during the day and night.

## Monasticism

### Session 3

Junior Level (45-50 minutes)

Theme: Monastic Communities, in history and now  
Monastics

Objectives: At the end of the session students will be able to:

1. Locate several countries on the globe where there are Orthodox monastic communities.
2. Name several Orthodox monastics both from history and alive today

Materials:

- Globe, Atlas of the world or map of the world with continent and country names.
- A copy of an outline map of the world for each student (a flat map of the world is available for download at: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/>. This map can be used for educational purposes and the .pdf prints on one sheet. Thanks to National Geographic for providing this site for downloadable maps for educational purposes. (There are no country names on the map.)
- Pencils or markers.
- The names: ALBANIA, AUSTRALIA, BULGARIA, CANADA, ENGLAND, ETHIOPIA, FINLAND, GREECE, GUATEMALA, ISRAEL, JORDAN, LEBANON, ROMANIA, RUSSIA, SERBIA, TURKEY, UNITED STATES, written on the board. (There are many additional countries where there are Orthodox monastics. Be sure to include countries the students might be familiar with, or have relatives from. Choose 8 or 10 as time permits.)
- Icons of St. Anthony the Great, St. Herman of Alaska and St. Maria (Skobtsova) . Icons are available for download at [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org), under Feasts and Saints. An icon of St. Maria is available from [www.incommunion.org](http://www.incommunion.org).
- Copies of the worksheets on Sts. Anthony, Herman and Maria for each student.

Procedure:

Opening Prayer (Sung or recited together): 1 minute

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.

Review Activity: 5 minutes

(Teachers: If photographs of monasteries discussed the session before are available use them to remind students about life in the monastic communities.) Say: *Last time we learned about the different monasteries in the United States. We talked about what the daily life at some of our monasteries is like. Where were some of the Monasteries we found last time? (Holy Myrrhbearers, St. Tikhon) Do you remember what the monastics did at the monasteries? (Pray, work, provide hospitality, raise sheep, garden, etc.) Today*

*we are going to discuss some of the Orthodox monks and nuns from around the world and the different places that they live. Some monastics lived a long time ago, and some are still living and praying today.*

Activity: Orthodox Monastics All Over the World. 10 minutes.

Pass out copies of the flat world map to each student. Using a pointer and globe or a large world map, point to as many of the countries listed above as possible noting that Orthodox monastics live in all of these countries. Suggest that the students find those places on their own maps and make a dot or a cross on those countries. Make sure to tell the students that Orthodox monastics live either in a community or by themselves in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Ask them if they know anyone from any of these other countries, or mention names of parishioners who have come to North America from these other countries.

LIVES: St. Anthony, St. Herman and St. Maria. 18 minutes

(Teacher note: Before beginning to read the life of St. Anthony point on the map to Egypt. Have the students put an A on Egypt on their map. Note that St. Anthony lived a long time ago. Show the icon of the saint.)

St. Anthony the Great

Saint Anthony was born in Egypt in the year 251. His parents were Christians and Anthony loved to go to church. When he was about 20 years old both of his parents died leaving Anthony to care for his younger sister.

One day, during a church service, Anthony heard the Gospel passage where Christ speaks to the rich young man: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me" (Mt.19:21). Anthony wanted to follow Christ in this way so he sold the large home and land his parents had left him and gave most of the money to the poor. He asked some Christian women that he knew to care for his sister.

Anthony went to live alone, in a hut not far from his village. He made baskets, ropes and sandals and spent his time praying and learning the Bible by heart. There were times when he missed his former life, and worried about his sister. Many times the devil tempted Anthony and tried to frighten him, but the saint continued to pray and fast.

Anthony moved further and further away from the village, way out into the desert, where no one else lived. There he continued his life of prayer, work and fasting. He fought bravely with the devil. Soon others began to join Anthony in the desert, living in caves nearby and coming to Anthony with questions about how to be better Christians. Eventually they built monasteries and lived, worked and prayed together.

Twice Anthony left the desert and traveled to Alexandria, a large city in Egypt. First Anthony went to encourage the Christians who were being mistreated by the Emperor Maximian. He cared openly for the Christians there, and although many were killed because they were Christians, Anthony survived. Another time some of the leaders of the church asked Anthony to come to Alexandria to help them convince the Christians not to follow those who taught that Christ was not God. Anthony defended Christ, and many people came to believe in Him after listening to Anthony.

Anthony died in the desert, at the age of 105.

(More on the life of St. Anthony, including a downloadable icon of him, is available on [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org) in the Feasts and Saints section. His life is also included in the book *Great Monks of the Desert*, distributed by Orthodox Christian Publications Commission [OCPC].)

(Teacher note: When reading the life of St. Herman be sure to show the students where Finland/Northern Russia is on the globe or world map and trace the route that St. Herman walked through Siberia and by boat to Alaska. Have the students put an H on Alaska on their map. Show the icon of the saint.)

St. Herman  
Wonderworker of All America

Monk Herman was born in 1756 to a merchant class family in Serpukhov, Russia, part of the Moscow Diocese. As a young boy, he had a very prayerful life. At the age of sixteen, he decided to go to Holy Trinity Sergius Hermitage about twelve miles from St. Petersburg, Russia to study about the church.

From the time he was a young monk at the Monastery, many miracles began to occur in his life. He found a large sore on his neck that grew larger and larger and made it very difficult for him to swallow. His face became disfigured. He decided to lock himself inside his cell, a small room, and pray before the icon of the Theotokos. During the night, he dreamt the Theotokos healed him. When he awoke the next morning, the sore had disappeared.

He lived at the Hermitage for about five years and then decided to go to the Valaam Monastery near Finland. While Monk Herman was at the Monastery, he was chosen, along with nine other men, to go to Kodiak Island in North America. They walked across Russia and Siberia and then went by boat to Alaska. In 1794 his life on Kodiak Island began as he ministered to the Russian fur traders who had settled there.

About a mile and a half by water from Kodiak Island is Spruce Island. Monk Herman loved Spruce Island. It reminded him of Valaam. Spruce Island was covered with trees and for the first summer on the island Monk Herman lived in a cave he had dug by himself. After that summer, the Russian American Company built him a cell in which he lived for the next forty years.

He planted potatoes, cabbage, and many other vegetables and ate fish from the little river that ran through the middle of the island. Whether it was summer or winter, Monk Herman wore the same clothes. This included a deerskin shirt without sleeves, shoes, klobuk, and a cassock. He slept on a wooden bench and his blanket was a wooden board.

While he was on the island, he loved to feed the animals by hand, especially the bears. He enjoyed giving advice to people that were having a hard life, and was especially concerned about the children.

One day there was a flood on the island and everyone was frightened. The people asked Father Herman for help. He took the icon of the Theotokos, placed it on the ground and asked the people to pray. The water never went past the icon.

Another time, there was a forest fire on the island where Father Herman lived. He and his friend Ignatius dug a ditch and covered it with moss. The fire roared up the hill and stopped as soon as it reached the moss.

These are just some of the miracles that happened during Father Herman's long life. On December 13, 1837, at the age of 81, he died in his cell on Spruce Island. On August 9, 1970, the Orthodox Church in America canonized Father Herman as the First American Saint.

(This life was taken from the Activity Book *The North American Saints*, available for download at <http://dce.oca.org>. More on the life of St. Herman, plus several icons of him, is available at [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org).)

(Teacher note: When reading the life of St. Maria point to Russia, France and Germany, the places that she lived, worked and prayed. Have the students put an M on France. Show the icon of the saint.)

#### St. Maria Skobtsova

Mother Maria was born in 1891. She lived in Russia and loved to write poetry as a young girl. When she was 32 years old war broke out in Russia. By this time she was married and had two children. Maria and her family traveled to France to escape the war and there she had another child. One of her young children became ill and died. She was very sad and she turned to God and the church for comfort.

Maria began to help other people who had been forced to move. She searched out those who were sick, poor and alone and cared for them. She knew that all people are created by God, in His image, and she wanted to love and care for them. Her bishop convinced her to become a "working nun" and she rented a home where she took in and cared for the poor and homeless. Mother Maria slept on a cot in the basement.

Many people came to visit Mother Maria, and her home became a lively place. Eventually war came to France, and the Jewish people were being sent off to work camps and many of them were killed. Mother Maria tried to help as many Jewish people, especially children, as she could. Others helped her. Some garbage collectors even hid children in garbage bins to save their lives.

Mother Maria was arrested and sent to prison for helping the Jewish people. In prison she and those with her, including her son Yuri, managed to pray and serve the Liturgy every day. Later, Mother Maria was sent to a terrible work camp for women in Germany. There she cared for others, as she had done for many years, and she collected bits of thread from which she embroidered icons. On Great and Holy Friday, in 1945, even though she was to be freed soon, she took the place of a young Jewish woman and Mother Maria was killed. Beginning in 2004 the church began to celebrate her saintly life.

(Information on St. Maria was taken from the In Communion website. There an icon and additional information on her life can be found.)

Activity: 10 minutes

After reading the lives of St. Anthony, St. Herman and St. Maria hand out the following worksheets with the word banks. If time permits have the students do the worksheets individually. If not do them together as a class or in small groups.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Alexandria      monasteries      105      Anthony      work  
Egypt      God      Christians      desert

St. \_\_\_\_\_ was born in \_\_\_\_\_, in Africa. He loved God. When he was a young man he moved to the \_\_\_\_\_ to pray, \_\_\_\_\_ and fast. There he grew closer to \_\_\_\_\_. He visited \_\_\_\_\_ twice and there he helped the \_\_\_\_\_. People loved him and came to him to learn more about God. They started \_\_\_\_\_ where they lived, worked and prayed together. He died when he was \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spruce      boat      Alaska      Herman      walked

Finland      flood      icon      children

St. \_\_\_\_\_ was born in northern Russia, and when he was a young monk he went to live at a Monastery that was very close to \_\_\_\_\_ . He \_\_\_\_\_ across Russia and Siberia and traveled by \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ . He moved to \_\_\_\_\_ Island, where he prayed, worked and fasted. He loved caring for the people and especially loved the \_\_\_\_\_. Once, when there was a strong \_\_\_\_\_ he put an \_\_\_\_\_ of the Theotokos on the beach and the tide water did not rise above it.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

France      nun      children      icons      prison

Maria      poor      war      Friday

St. \_\_\_\_\_ grew up in Russia, but because of the war she and her family moved to \_\_\_\_\_. There she began to care for others, especially those who were \_\_\_\_\_. Eventually she became a \_\_\_\_\_ and rented a house where she welcomed many people. During the \_\_\_\_\_ she tried to help many Jewish people, especially \_\_\_\_\_. She was sent to \_\_\_\_\_ and there she also tried to help others. She prayed and embroidered \_\_\_\_\_ there. She died there on Great and Holy \_\_\_\_\_.

Wrap up: 1-2 minutes

As students are cleaning up ask:

*Can anyone name a country where Orthodox monastics have lived?* (Allow a number of answers.)

*Can anyone name an Orthodox monk or nun who we now know as a saint?* (Allow for answers.)

Closing Prayer (Sung or recited together): 1 minute

The Lord's Prayer. Remind the students that monastics all over the world are praying for the world, for the church and for all of us and that we should remember them in our prayers as well.