

Preparing for Our Lord's Birth: An Activity for Grades 3 to 5

To the Teacher: As we move through the Nativity Fast, or Advent, the Church calendar is studded with the feast days of many great saints. One of the most appealing is Saint Herman, who is commemorated on December 13th.

Thinking about this saint—his kindness, simple humility, and love for all of creation—gives your young students some guidance in their own preparation for the great Feast of the Nativity. For the activity you will need Bibles and:

- icon of Saint Herman
 - a copy of the following page for each student
 - pencils and lined paper for writing
 - a copy for each student of the story of Saint Herman's life, on page 15 of *Saints of North America*, downloadable at dce.oca.org/assets/files/resources/American-saints.pdf
 - copies of the troparion for Saint Herman for students to share (see oca.org/liturgics/music-downloads/north-american-saints)
1. Have students do the cross-out activity on the following page. When they've finished they will have the words **as, neighbor, your, love** and **yourself** remaining. Put in order, the sentence will read: **Love your neighbor as yourself**. Read Mark 12: 31 together.
 2. Ask students: *How do these words tell us to treat other people?* Accept any answers that indicate kindness, unselfishness and similar qualities as good ways to treat neighbors.
 3. Ask: *What does the word "neighbor" mean here?* (Students should understand that the word includes all people we encounter—family, friends, parish members, schoolmates etc.)
 4. Say, *"Let's read about a saint who really lived by these words."*
 5. Read the life of Saint Herman together. Note in the first paragraph that a "hermitage" is a monastery (where monks or nuns live a life of prayer and work) and that Saint Herman's family being of the "merchant class" means that they were not rich nobles, but were not poor.
 6. After reading, ask: *What are some things in the story that tell us how Saint Herman lived by the words we heard from the Bible? Did Saint Herman give his love only to people?* (No, he loved and cared for animals, and took care of the land in which he planted things to grow.)
 7. Have students complete the part of the puzzle page about Saint Herman. Give them paper to write about a few ways his example will help them prepare for Christmas by praying, being kind, and caring for people, animals, and God's whole creation.
 8. Stand together before the icon and say the Lord's Prayer. Sing or say the troparion for Saint Herman. Together, compose a short prayer asking Saint Herman to help you all live as good Orthodox Christians as you prepare for Christmas, the Feast of the Lord's Birth.

FIND THE RIGHT WORDS

To find something important that Jesus Christ taught us to do,

1. Cross out all the colors
2. Cross out all the vegetables
3. Cross out all the animals
4. Cross out all the trees

PINE	ROOSTER	OAK
BLUE	YELLOW	YOUR
CAT	NEIGHBOR	POTATO
AS	CORN	LION
ELM	PINK	RED

MAPLE	CARROT
YOURSELF	SHEEP
PEAS	LETTUCE
GREEN	LOVE
DOG	BLACK

Put the remaining words in order on this line:

After you read about Saint Herman, write down 2 ways he lived by these words.

1.

2.