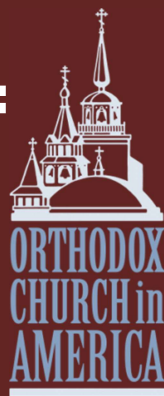


Blessed is the Kingdom: An Orthodox Church School Curriculum



Lesson 11 Preschool

The Holy Trinity

Objective: Through the Trisagion Hymn students will understand God as one God with three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Lesson Introduction

5 min

Start by **saying**:

Here we have an apple. Let's examine it. What is on the outside of it? (The peel or skin)

Using the knife, **peel** off the skin of the apple, and then hold up the peeled apple and **ask**:

What is this? (Flesh or meat of the apple)

Cut the apple into four parts, and **remove** the seeds. Hold up a seed, and **ask**:

What is this? (Seed)

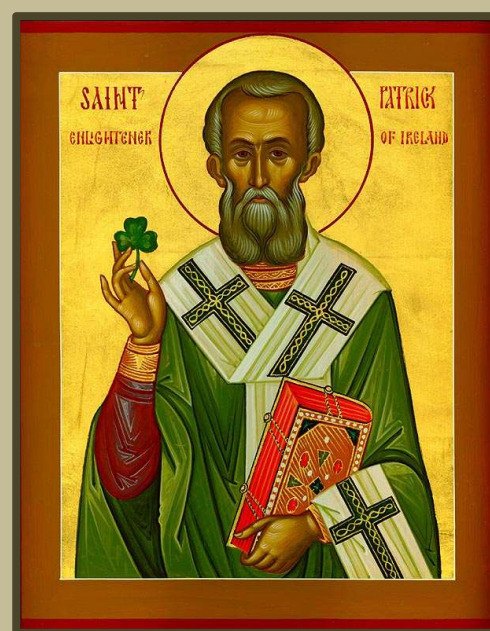
Holding up all three parts, **ask** the following:

Is the skin or peel still an apple? (Yes)

Is the center flesh or meat of the apple still an apple? (Yes)

Are the seeds still an apple? (Yes)

Each part is still an apple. It's all an apple, but it has three parts.



Opening Prayer

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.

Liturgy Links

<https://www.oca.org/media/video/20th-aac-thursday-morning-divine-liturgy>

Trisagion Hymn

Skip to 41:23-44:49 for this portion

Supplies Needed

- Apples—one to demonstrate and extras to eat
- Knife
- Plate

Lesson—25 min

Supplies Needed

- Apples from before
- Paper or board to write on
- Three Candles
- Lighter
- Adult helper
- St. Patrick Icon printable

Teacher Resources

OCA Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs: A Manual for Adult Instruction

<https://www.oca.org/cdn/PDFs/2023-0609-EOCB.pdf>

Chapter 6 The Holy Trinity

Life of Saint Patrick

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/1949/03/17/100821-saint-patrick-bishop-of-armagh-enlightener-of-ireland>

The Sign of the Cross

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-building/sign-of-the-cross>

Hand out pieces of the apple for the class to **eat** while they listen. **Play** the hymn Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal from the Liturgy link, and then **say**:

This hymn from the Liturgy is called the Trisagion which is Greek and means "thrice holy". It reminds us that God has three parts. Can you name them?

The Father (God)

The Son (Christ)

The Holy Spirit

Write down each part as they name them, and then **continue**:

Just like the apple, God has three parts that are still each God. There is only one God, just like there is just one apple, but like the apple has a peel, the flesh, and the seed, God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Have an adult helper ready to assist you, and then **choose** a student to help you. **Hand** a candle to the student. Have them hold it upright. Next, have your adult helper and yourself each **hold** a candle. **Light** each candle, and **ask**:

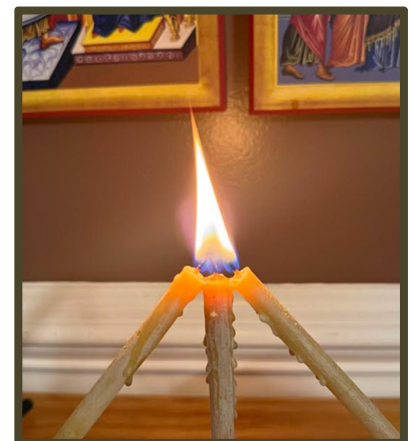
How many candles do we have? (Three) How many flames do you see? (Three) What do you think will happen when we bring the flames together?

Take answers, and then have the student keep their candle upright, while the adults **tilt** their candles to have all three wicks touching.

Ask:

How many flames do you see? (One) There are three candles, but one flame. Just like God has three parts, but is one God.

Repeat this process with each student having a chance to hold the center candle.



Lesson Continued

5 Minute Bonus

As Many As Have Been Baptized Hymn

Listen to the hymn "As Many as Have Been Baptized" that is sometimes used in place of Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal during feast days, such as Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, and the Feast of Theophany. Practice crossing yourselves at the appropriate times.

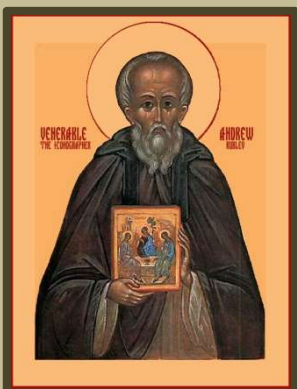
Supplemental Ideas

Leaf Spotting

Head outside to look for plants that have three leaves attached to one stem.

The Hospitality of Abraham Icon

If your church has an icon of The Hospitality of Abraham, also known as The Holy Trinity, have students look at it. Discuss how Abraham was visited by three angels that represented God's three persons. Read the story in Genesis 18:1-8.



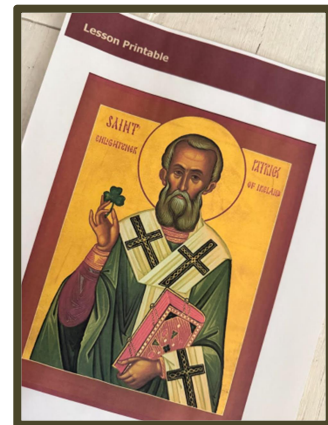
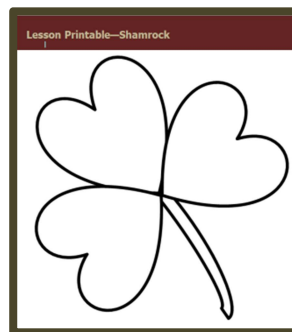
Blow out the candles, and **show** the icon of St. Patrick. **Say:**

St. Patrick was the Bishop of Armagh and is called the Enlightener of Ireland. He helped explain God's three parts by using a shamrock. Do you see what St. Patrick is holding? (A shamrock)

How many stems does the shamrock have? (One)

How many leaves does the shamrock have? Let's count them. (One, Two, Three)

It has three leaves growing out of a single stem. If the stem represents one God, what do the leaves represent? (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)



Have the students stand before your icon corner in your classroom, and **ask:**

When we pray, we frequently talk about God as three persons. When do we do that? (Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit) What have you learned to do when we say this phrase? (Cross ourselves)

Review how we cross ourselves putting our thumb and first two fingers together. **Ask:**

Why do we put those three fingers together? (Because God has three parts—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

Any time the Trinity is mentioned we are meant to cross ourselves. Such as when we say: Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but also during the Trisagion Hymn we listened to earlier. Let's practice listening to the hymn and crossing ourselves.

Play the Trisagion again having students cross themselves each time they hear "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal" or "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit".

Lesson Activities

Pastel Shamrock—10 min

Supplies needed: table cloth, black construction paper, shamrock printable cut out, tape, chalk pastels, Q tips, hair spray, wipes

Prior to class print the shamrock printable and cut out the shamrock, one per student. Tape the shamrock onto a piece of black construction paper. Cover the tables as this can get a bit messy, and have wipes available to clean hands afterwards. Have students make a thick pastel line around the shamrock's edge. Using a Q tip smudge the pastel line and pull it away from the shamrock. Once done, remove the shamrock printable, tap paper gently to remove extra pastel dust, and spray the black construction paper with hair spray to set the pastels and prevent them from running.

Ask students what the stem and three leaves of the shamrock stand for (God; Three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).



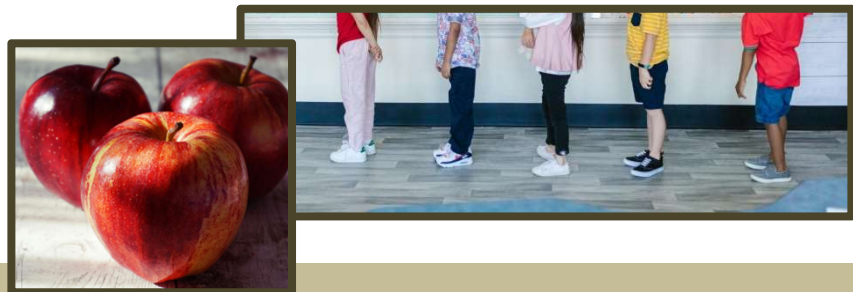
Over/Under Apple Relay—10 min

Supplies needed: 2-3 apples

Students stand one behind the other in a line facing forward. The front person gets an apple. They pass it to the person behind them by reaching over their head. The person behind them grabs the apple and then passes to the person behind them by reaching between their legs. They continue this relay of over/under until it reaches the last person in line. This person then runs to the front of the line and restarts the relay by passing the apple over their head to the person behind them. This can continue until the person who started in the front is now at the end of the line.

If your class is large, you could split into two or three groups and race each other. You could also time them to see how fast they can go and see if they can beat their last time. Or see if you can do without dropping an apple. You could also have them do all over their head for one round, and then do only under their legs for one round.

The goal is to get them moving. And be sure to ask them to explain why you would be using an apple for this game. Remind them of the "one apple; 3 parts"; "one God; 3 persons" connection.



Closing Thoughts— 5 min

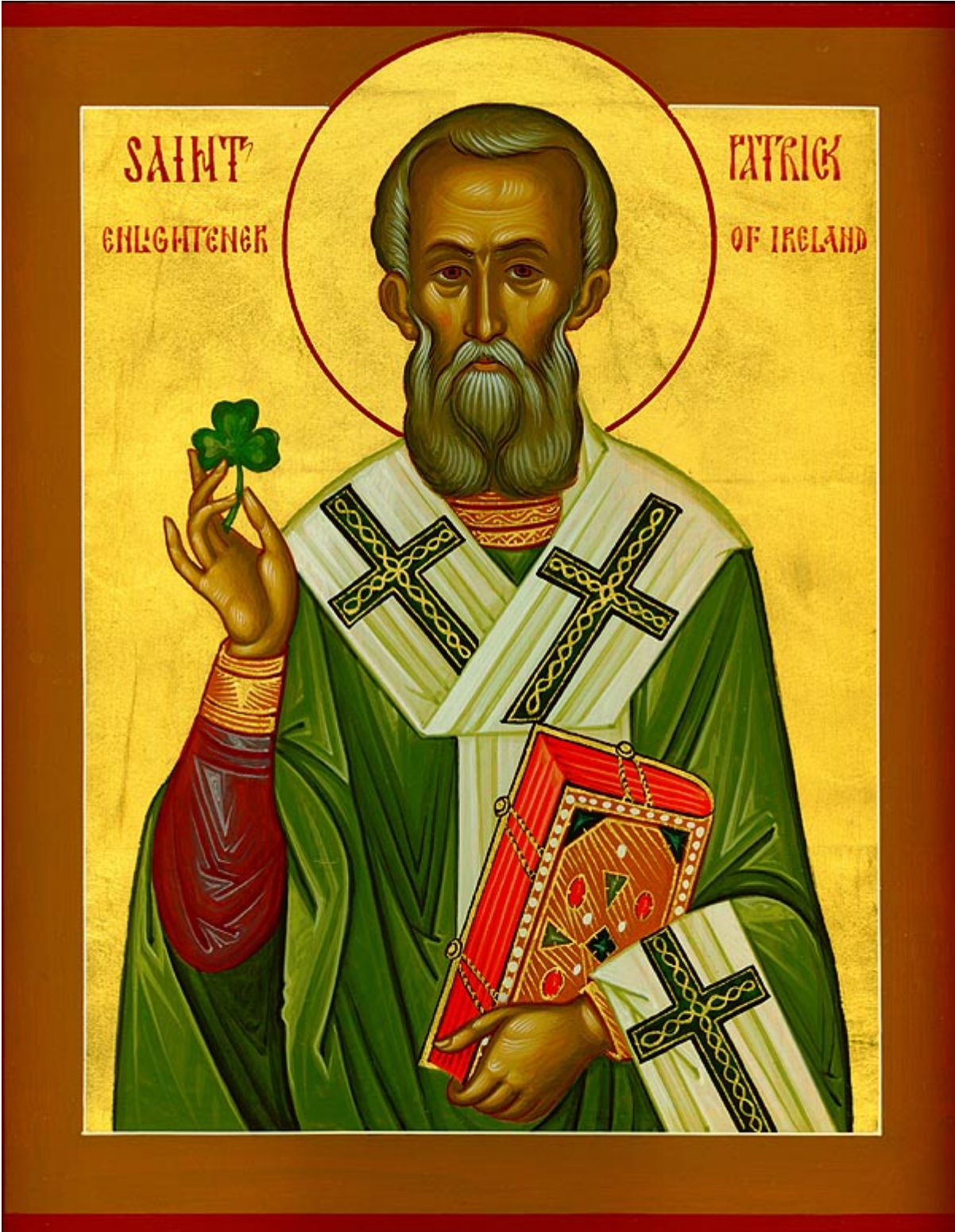
Ask: *Name something that has three parts, but is one thing.*

Examples: egg, apple, orange, shamrock, God, pumpkin, zucchini...

Closing Prayer

It is truly meet to bless you, 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 defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you!

Lesson Printable



Lesson Printable—Shamrock

