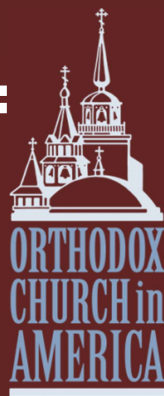


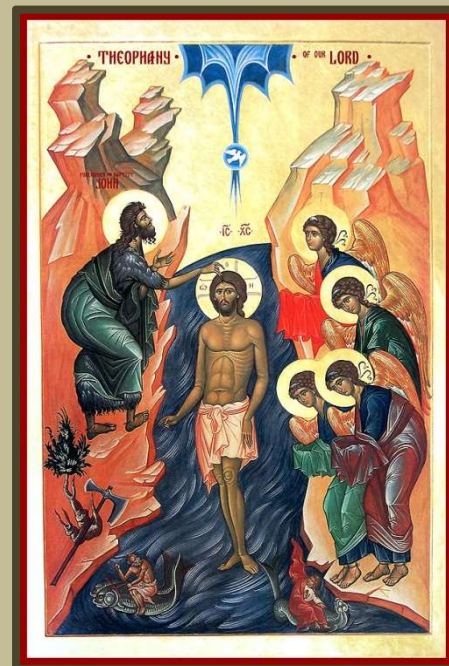
Blessed is the Kingdom: An Orthodox Church School Curriculum



Lesson 12 3rd-5th grades

As Many As Have Been Baptized

Objective: Students will understand that through Baptism we receive the gift of holiness.



Lesson Introduction

5 min

Start by **saying**:

Last week we talked about God having three parts. What were those? (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) Today we are going to look at the time where God revealed the most Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to the world.

Hold up the Theophany Icon, and **ask**:

What is this an icon of? (Theophany or Baptism of the Lord)

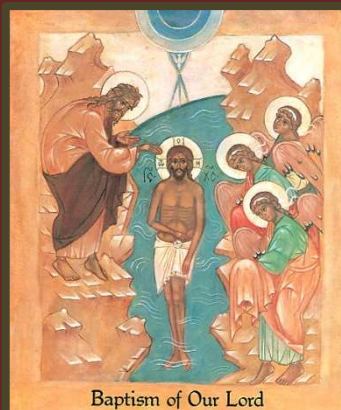
Who is in this icon? Who is in the water? (Christ)

Who is beside him? (John the Baptist)

What is above Christ? (Dove) Above the dove it almost looks like the Heavens are opening. We'll hear more about that a little bit later.

Who is on the opposite bank of the river from John the Baptist? (Angels waiting to receive the baptized Christ)

Let's read about the story in the Bible.



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

- Icon of Theophany

Lesson—25 min

Supplies Needed

- Pictures of each child's baptism if possible
- Spray bottle with water for Baptism
- Paper towel tube for the voice of the Father
- Dove craft sample attached to a pole
- Blue plastic tablecloth to act as a river
- Robe for John the Baptist
- White robe or long shirt for Christ
- Flashlight to highlight the dove
- Orthodox Study Bible

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

Theophany

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2000/01/06/100106-feast-of-the-theophany-of-our-lord-and-savior-jesus-christ>

Baptism

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-sacraments/baptism>

****The week prior to the lesson ask students or parents if they could send in a picture of their child's baptism.****

Open the Orthodox Study Bible to Matthew 3:13. Then **say**:

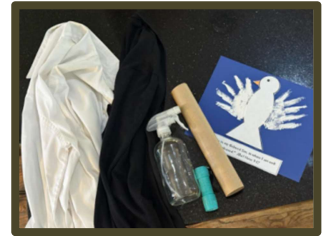
Today we are going to read the story of Theophany. Before we start reading, let's set the scene.

Open a blue plastic table cloth and spread it across the center of the room like a river. **Choose** a student to be the narrator and one to play John the Baptist. **Place** a robe on them, and **ask**:

*Who is John the Baptist?
What did he do?*

*John the Baptist came before Christ
preparing the way of the Lord.*

He prophesied (or announced that) Jesus was coming. John's holiness as a godly man helped prepare people to accept Jesus as Lord.



Have John stand by the river, and then have the narrator **read** Matthew 3:13. **Choose** a student to be Jesus wearing a white robe and have Jesus **approach** John. All other students are bystanders and sit beside the river.

Read Matthew 3:14. Have Jesus **repeat** his line. **Read** Matthew 3:15 having Jesus **say** his line.

Have John **pretend** to baptize Jesus. Have a bystander **hold** a pole with a dove attached to the end, and have it **fly** over Jesus's head.

Have another bystander **hold** a flashlight to **shine** on the dove for dramatic effect.

Read Matthew 3:16-17. Have a bystander **repeat** the words from the voice from heaven **using** the paper towel tube to amplify their voice. Then **say**:

Remember how we said the icon looked like the Heavens were opening? This is that part!

All other bystanders should **look** shocked and amazed at the scene before them. Have everyone **freeze** and snap a picture if you'd like. And then **say**:

*We've been talking about God as three persons or a Trinity.
Who are those three persons? (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)*

Lesson Continued

5 Minute Bonus

Baptism Service

Watch a video of a Baptism service, specifically the immersion part. Discuss how you are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Supplemental Ideas

Theophany Troparion

Listen to or read the Theophany Troparion. Make connections to what you are hearing to what you see in the icon of Theophany.

<https://www.oca.org/saints/troparion/2017/01/06/100106-feast-of-the-theophany-of-our-lord-and-savior-jesus-christ>

Blessing of Water

On Theophany we bless water. If your church keeps a font with Holy Water year round, visit it as a class. Have each student receive a drink of it. Discuss how they can use holy water at home.

House Blessing Visit

Have the priest visit your class and talk about House Blessings. He could show what he brings to them and what he does at one.

Let's look at the scene we have before us. Is God the Son in this scene? (Yes, Jesus in the robe)

Is God the Father here in any way? (Take answers, but guide them to wonder who spoke. And why did the voice say "This is my Beloved Son".)

Is God the Holy Spirit here? (the dove)

This was the first time God revealed Himself as three persons.

If desired, **redo** the entire reading/acting allowing other students to take on different roles. You could even video the students role playing and share it with a younger church school class.

After everyone has had a turn to be a role, have students sit back down, and **look** at the icon of Theophany.

Now that you've read the Bible story of Theophany, let's look at the icon again. Let's look for God as three persons.

Point out Jesus, the dove, and the rays/opening of the Heavens at the top that represent the Father's voice.

Through Baptism we are granted forgiveness of sins. It gives us the gift of adoption to son ship (like Christ). We are invited to become Christ-like. It also gives us the Holy Spirit. When we are baptized, the priest says "(the person) is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And this is repeated 3 times as we are submerged or covered in water.

Have each student, who was able to bring in a picture of their Baptism, **share** the picture, and then **say**:

We are called to take up our cross like Christ, and follow Him. What does that mean? How can we be more Christ like in our daily lives?

Take answers, but **lead** them to consider the following:

Pray

Attend church

Love God

Love others

Be kind—say kind things, complement others

Help others—how can you help your parents today? Or your siblings? Your teachers? Your classmates?

Ultimately, how can you show God's love to others?



Lesson Activities

Holy Water Jar—10 min

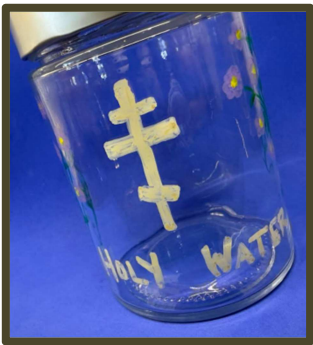
Supplies needed: glass mason jars with lids (1 per student), acrylic paint pens, clear acrylic spray sealer

Ask:

What do we do on Theophany? (Bless water.) Today we are going to decorate a Holy Water Jar for you to store your Holy Water at home.

Use the acrylic paint pens to make a cross, write Holy Water, and decorate their jars with patterns or flowers. Once dry, spray with the clear acrylic sealer, then fill with Holy Water and have students take them home.

Explain where to store their Holy Water Jar—an icon corner or refrigerator. Discuss when to drink Holy Water—when they feel a spiritual need such as when feeling tempted, before a journey, when ill, or at the start of each day.



Pick up your Cross Game—10 min

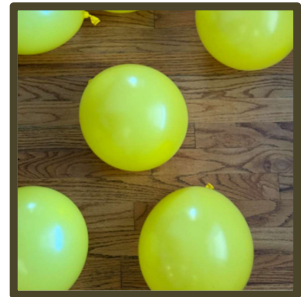
Supplies needed: 8-15 balloons, inflated

Prior to class, blow up all the balloons. You want enough balloons that it would be a challenge for your students to hold on to all of them and walk across the room.

Line students up, give the first student one balloon to carry across the room and back. Repeat this until all students have had a turn. Now hand the first student two balloons and have them carry them across the room and back. Repeat this until all students have had a turn. Then hand the first student three balloons, and repeat. Continue this until the students can no longer carry all the balloons and they start to drop them.

Finally have them take one final walk across the room carrying nothing. Then **ask:**

Which time was the easiest for making it across the room? (The one carrying nothing.) Christ asks us to pick up our cross and follow Him. Much like carrying all those balloons, carrying a cross can be difficult. What is something you struggle with when following Christ? (Examples could be: fasting, prayer, patience.) Christ offers to help us carry our cross. He takes the weight of our tasks and we can rely on him to help us.



Closing Thoughts— 5 min

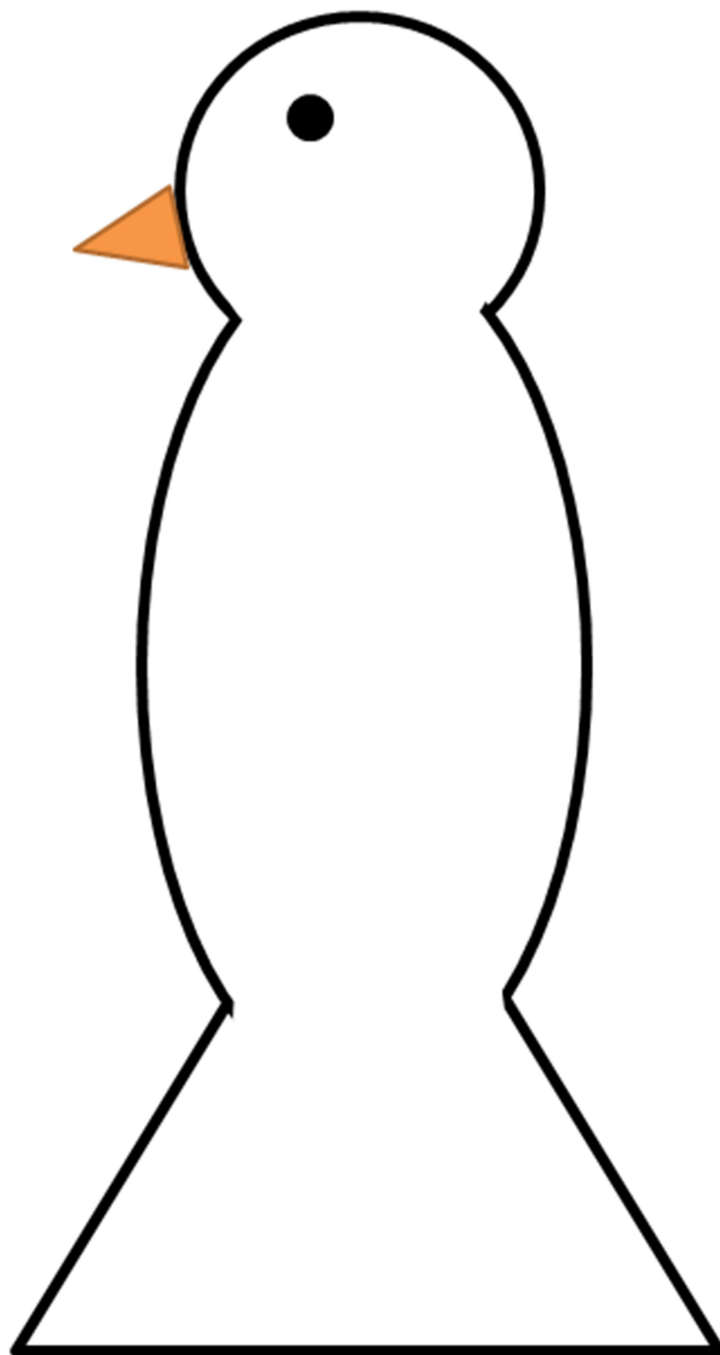
Exit pole—Ask students to answer this question on their way out the door.

Tell me one way you are hoping to be more Christ-like this week.

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!

Craft Printable—Dove



“This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17