SAINT SERGIUS
SCHOOL

LESSON MODULE · SSS–L0003

St. Sergius of Radonezh

Book Study: The Law of God — Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy

Lesson Focus: Students will learn about St. Sergius of Radonezh, his childhood struggle to learn, his life of prayer and humble work, and how his example teaches Christians to persevere, serve, obey, and grow in humility.



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SAINT SERGIUS SCHOOL

Introduction

1. What do you already know about St. Sergius of Radonezh?
2. Have you ever found something difficult to learn?
3. What helped you keep trying?
4. What do you think it means to be humble?
5. Does your parish or Church school have a patron saint or feast?
6. What do you know about that patron?

Who Was St. Sergius?

St. Sergius of Radonezh is one of the most beloved saints of the Orthodox Church. He is also the patron saint of St. Sergius School, where this lesson was developed. His life gives Christians everywhere an example of prayer, humility, obedience, faithful work, and service to others.

Before he became St. Sergius, his name was Bartholomew. He was born into a faithful Orthodox Christian family and, from childhood, desired to know God and live a life of prayer.

When Learning Was Difficult

According to the Life of St. Sergius, Bartholomew struggled to learn to read while other children learned more easily. This troubled him because he wanted to understand the Scriptures.

One day he met an elder monk and asked him to pray for him. The elder blessed him and gave him a piece of prosphora. Afterward, Bartholomew began to read and understand much more easily.

This story does not teach us that prayer always makes difficult things suddenly easy. It shows us that when Bartholomew struggled, he turned to God, kept trying, and did not give up.

Important Point

When learning is difficult, we can pray, ask for help, keep trying, and trust that God is with us.

Obedience and Faithfulness

As Bartholomew grew older, he wanted to become a monk. His parents, Cyril and Maria, asked him to wait and care for them. Bartholomew obeyed. After their repose, he entered the monastic life and received the name Sergius. His example teaches us that loving God does not mean ignoring our responsibilities. Faithfulness often means doing the work God has placed before us.

A Life of Prayer and Work

St. Sergius went into the forest to live a quiet life of prayer. A small church was built there in honour of the Holy Trinity. Other men eventually came to join him, and a monastery grew. St. Sergius became its igumen, or abbot.

Even as the leader, he continued ordinary work: carrying water, chopping wood, baking bread, preparing food, sewing clothing, and serving the brethren. He showed that Christian leadership is not about being served. It is about being willing to serve.

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Scripture Connection
"Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart." Matthew 11:29 - NKJV

Christ teaches us that humility is part of following Him. St. Sergius tried to live this humility through prayer, obedience, work, and service.

Memory Verse
"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 - NKJV

What is Humility?
Humility does not mean thinking that we are worthless. It means remembering that our gifts come from God, refusing to make ourselves more important than others, and being willing to serve. St. Sergius became widely respected, but he did not seek fame. He taught humility not only with words. He lived it.

Prayer, Work, and Service
We may not live in a monastery, but we can learn from St. Sergius. We can:

- pray before beginning our work;
- keep trying when learning is difficult;
- obey our parents and teachers;- do our responsibilities carefully;
- help others without expecting praise;
- remember that our abilities are gifts from God.

When ordinary work is done faithfully and with love, it can become part of our life with God.

St. Sergius and Christian Learning
St. Sergius is especially meaningful to St. Sergius School because he reminds us that Christian education is about more than simply knowing more things. Learning should also help us grow in prayer, faithfulness, humility, patience, service, and love for God.

Your own parish or Church school may have a different patron saint or feast. That patron also gives your community a special example of life in Christ. Ask: What does the patron of our own parish or school teach us about following Christ?

Today We Learned
St. Sergius became holy by faithfully following Christ through prayer, humility, obedience, work, and service to others. His life reminds us that holiness often grows through small acts of faithfulness that nobody else may notice.

The Repose of St. Sergius is commemorated September 25/October 8.

Key Vocabulary
Patron Saint - A saint especially honoured by a church, school, or community as an intercessor and example of life in Christ.
Monk - A man who gives his life especially to prayer, repentance, obedience, and service to God in the monastic life.
Monastery - A community where monks or nuns live a life centred on prayer and service to God.
Igumen / Abbot - The spiritual father and leader of a monastery.
Humility - Remembering that our gifts come from God and being willing to serve without making ourselves more important than others.
Obedience - Faithfully listening and responding to proper guidance and responsibility.

COURSE WORK

St. Sergius of Radonezh

Discussion Questions

1. What was St. Sergius called before he became a monk?

2. What was difficult for Bartholomew when he was young?

3. How did Bartholomew respond when learning was difficult?

4. Why did Bartholomew wait before entering the monastic life?

5. To whom was the small church in the forest dedicated?

6. Name two kinds of ordinary work St. Sergius continued to do for the monastery.

7. What does Christian humility mean?

8. How can prayer and ordinary work belong together?

9. St. Sergius is the patron saint of St. Sergius School. What does the patron saint or feast of your own parish or Church school teach your community about following Christ?

10. What is one way you can follow the example of St. Sergius this week?

ACTIVITY

St. Sergius of Radonezh

Activity — Following St. Sergius

Prayer – Work – Service

St. Sergius followed Christ through prayer, faithful work, humility, and service to others. Think about one way you can follow his example this week.

I CAN PRAY

One thing I can remember to pray about this week is:

_____

I CAN WORK FAITHFULLY

One job, lesson, or responsibility I can do carefully is:

_____

I CAN SERVE

One way I can help someone without expecting praise is:

_____



St. Sergius, pray to God for us.

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Delivery & Differentiation

Lesson Purpose: Students learn who St. Sergius of Radonezh was and understand how prayer, perseverance, obedience, humility, faithful work, and service shaped his life in Christ.

Core Teaching: St. Sergius became holy not by seeking importance, but by faithfully following Christ through prayer, humility, obedience, work, and service.

Early Learner Emphasis: St. Sergius loved God, prayed, worked, helped others, and did not give up when learning was difficult.

Elementary Emphasis: Connect the childhood learning story with perseverance and prayer; introduce monk, monastery, igumen/abbot, humility, and service.

Older Student Extension: Explore Orthodox monastic vocation, humility as freedom from pride rather than low self-worth, and Christian leadership as service. Ask how knowledge and ability can be used without becoming a source of pride.

Hagiographic Note: Present the elder/prosphora account as the received Life of St. Sergius. Do not turn it into a formula that prayer automatically makes school easy. The teaching emphasis is that Bartholomew brought his difficulty to God, accepted help, persevered, and grew.

Activity Guidance: Use the Prayer - Work - Service worksheet with age-appropriate depth.

A. Early Learners: Draw or dictate one simple way to pray, work faithfully, or help someone. The teacher may complete the sentence for the child.
B. Elementary: Complete all three prompts with a short sentence or drawing and choose one action to practise during the week.
C. Older Students: Complete all three prompts and explain how one chosen action requires humility, perseverance, obedience, or service.

Presentation Extension: Use Asset A02, the hagiographic vita icon, on a dedicated presentation slide. Show the full icon first, then enlarge selected details so students can observe individual scenes without relying on tiny printed imagery.

Local Parish Connection: St. Sergius is the patron saint of St. Sergius School, but do not assume he is the patron of the parish using the packet. Invite students to name their own parish or school patron saint/feast and identify one thing that patron teaches their community about following Christ.

Main Point to Remember: "St. Sergius followed Christ through prayer, humility, obedience, faithful work, and service."

For older students: "St. Sergius shows that Christian learning and leadership should lead us toward humility, service, and deeper life in Christ."

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Answer Key & Resource Control

Discussion Questions — Answers

1. What was St. Sergius called before he became a monk? **Answer:** Bartholomew.

2. What was difficult for Bartholomew when he was young? **Answer:** He struggled to learn to read and fell behind other children.

3. How did Bartholomew respond when learning was difficult? **Answer:** He prayed, asked the elder to pray for him, accepted the elder's blessing, and continued learning rather than giving up.

4. Why did Bartholomew wait before entering the monastic life? **Answer:** His parents asked him to wait and care for them; he obeyed them until their repose.

5. To whom was the small church in the forest dedicated? **Answer:** The Holy Trinity.

6. Name two kinds of ordinary work St. Sergius continued to do for the monastery. **Answer:** Any two: carrying water, chopping wood, baking bread, sewing clothing, preparing food, building cells, or other monastery work.

7. What does Christian humility mean? **Answer:** Humility means remembering that our gifts come from God, refusing to make ourselves more important than others, and being willing to serve.

8. How can prayer and ordinary work belong together? **Answer:** Prayer can shape the way we do ordinary responsibilities. Work done faithfully and with love can become part of our life with God.

9. St. Sergius is the patron saint of St. Sergius School. What does the patron saint or feast of your own parish or Church school teach your community about following Christ? **Answers vary:** St. Sergius is the patron of St. Sergius School; other parishes or schools should identify their own patron saint or feast and explain what that patron teaches about life in Christ.

10. What is one way you can follow the example of St. Sergius this week? **Answers vary:** pray before work, keep trying when learning is hard, obey parents/teachers, complete responsibilities carefully, help someone without seeking praise, or serve faithfully in another concrete way.

The Law of God

Supporting Reading | Part V, Chapter 12, Concerning Monasticism and Monasteries (PDF pp. 1145–1156) (BOOK pp. 616–622); Part I, Chapter 4, Prayer (PDF pp. 59–60) (BOOK p. 19).

Optional Early Learner Resource: *Saints and the Animals That Served Them* — Orthodox Church in America, Department of Christian Education. The St. Sergius of Radonezh section includes an iconographic line drawing suitable for colouring as well as additional age-appropriate activities. See the Supplemental Resources link for this lesson.

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