



LESSON MODULE · SSS-L0002

Elevation of the Precious & Life-Giving Cross

Book Study: The Law of God — Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy

Lesson Focus: The students will learn why the Cross is so important to Orthodox Christians and how the Cross, which was once an instrument of death, became through Christ the sign of salvation, love, and victory over death.



Introduction

1. What does the Cross mean to you?
2. Why do Orthodox Christians make the sign of the Cross?
3. Why do people wear crosses?
4. Was the Cross always considered a good thing?
5. What do you think happened to make the Cross a symbol of victory?

Explanation of the Subject

What Is the Cross?

During the time of Christ, crucifixion was a terrible form of execution. The Cross was associated with suffering, shame, and death.

But Jesus Christ willingly accepted the Cross.

He was not forced to save us.

He gave Himself for us because of His love.

Through His death and Resurrection, Christ defeated sin, death, and the power of the devil.

This is why Christians no longer look at the Cross simply as an instrument of death.

We see the Cross together with the Resurrection.

The Cross leads to the empty tomb.

The Cross and Christ's Love

Christ showed the greatest possible love by giving Himself for us.

As Christ says:

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

— John 15:13 NKJV

The Elevation of the Cross

The Church celebrates the Elevation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross on September 14/27.

The feast reminds us of the finding and honoring of the Cross of Christ and of the importance of the Cross in the life of the Church.

The Cross is called:

Precious — because it is connected with Christ Himself.

Life-Giving — because through Christ's death and Resurrection, we receive life.

The Cross is therefore not simply a decoration.

It is a proclamation:

Christ has conquered death.

The Sign of the Cross

We place our fingers together and bring our hand:

Forehead → stomach → right shoulder → left shoulder

As we make the sign of the Cross, we confess our faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Explain that making the sign of the Cross should not become something we do without thinking.

When we make the Cross, we can remember:

"Christ died and rose for me."

Orthodox Christian Life Connection

The Cross also teaches us that following Christ isn't always easy.

Jesus says: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Taking up our cross doesn't mean that we should look for suffering.

It means that when doing what is right is difficult, we remain faithful to Christ.

For you this might mean:

- Telling the truth when lying would be easier.
- Forgiving someone who hurt us.
- Obeying parents even when we don't want to.
- Praying when we would rather do something else.
- Choosing kindness instead of revenge.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 16:24 NKJV

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Key Vocabulary

Cross: The instrument on which Christ was crucified and the central symbol of Christianity.

Crucifixion: The death of Christ on the Cross.

Resurrection: Christ rising from the dead.

Salvation: God's work of rescuing humanity from sin and death and bringing us into communion with Him.

Precious: Something of great value.

Life-Giving: Giving life; the Cross is called Life-Giving because Christ's death and Resurrection bring us life.

Closing

Every time we see the Cross this week, I want you to remember one thing: Christ loves us. The Cross reminds us of His love, His sacrifice, and His victory over death.



COURSE WORK

Elevation of the Precious & Life-Giving Cross Discussion Questions



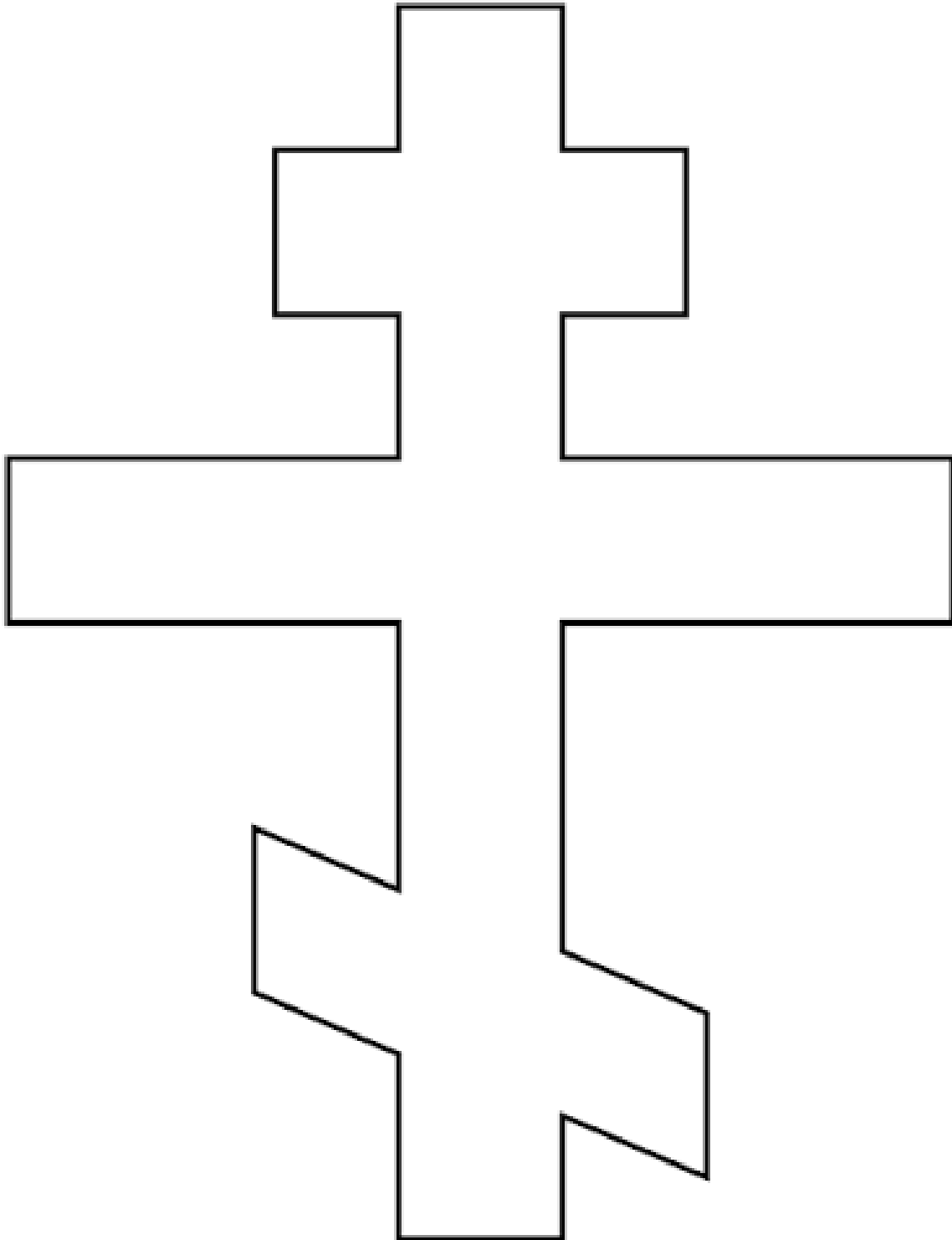
1. Why was the Cross considered a terrible thing before Christ?
2. Why do Christians now see the Cross differently?
3. What did Christ accomplish through His Cross and Resurrection?
4. Why do we make the sign of the Cross?
5. What does it mean to "take up your cross"?
6. Can you give an example of carrying your cross at school?
7. How can the Cross remind us of Christ's love?
8. Why is the Cross connected with the Resurrection?

ACTIVITY



Elevation of the Precious & Life-Giving Cross Activity — "My Cross This Week"

On the cross, write or draw:
"One way I can follow Christ this week is..."



TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Delivery & Differentiation



Lesson Purpose: Students understand why the Cross is central to Orthodox Christianity and connect Christ's Cross and Resurrection with salvation, love and faithful discipleship.

Core Teaching: Through Christ's voluntary death and Resurrection, the Cross became a sign of salvation, love and victory over death.

Early Learner Emphasis: Christ loves us; the Cross reminds us of Him; we make the Sign of the Cross carefully and prayerfully.

Elementary Emphasis: Precious and Life-Giving; Cross and Resurrection; taking up the cross through concrete Christian choices.

Older Student Extension: Explore sacrificial love, discipleship, salvation and why the Cross cannot be separated from the Resurrection.

Sensitive Content Note: For Early Learners, explain simply that the Cross was used to hurt and kill people, without unnecessary detail about Roman execution. Move quickly to Christ's love, Resurrection and victory over death.

Activity: "My Cross This Week"

Give each student a paper cross.

On the cross, have them write:

"One way I can follow Christ this week is..."

Examples:

- I will forgive someone.
- I will tell the truth.
- I will help my parents.
- I will pray before bed.
- I will be kind to someone who is lonely.

A. Early Learners: Draw one way they can follow Christ this week.

B. Elementary: Write or draw one concrete action of faithfulness, forgiveness, obedience, prayer or kindness.

C. Older Students: Write an action and briefly explain how it relates to Christ's command to "take up your cross."

Then have the students take their crosses home.

Main Point to Remember

The Cross shows us how much Christ loves us and reminds us that through His death and Resurrection, He has conquered death.

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Answer Key & Resource Control



Discussion Questions — Answers

1. Why was the Cross considered a terrible thing before Christ?

Answer: Because crucifixion was a cruel and shameful form of execution associated with suffering, humiliation, and death.

2. Why do Christians now see the Cross differently?

Answer: Because Christ was crucified on the Cross, died, and rose again. Through Christ, the Cross became a sign of salvation, love, and victory over death.

3. What did Christ accomplish through His Cross and Resurrection?

Answer: Christ conquered sin and death and opened the way to salvation and eternal life with God.

4. Why do we make the sign of the Cross?

Answer: To confess our faith, remember Christ and His Cross, and confess the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

5. What does it mean to "take up your cross"?

Answer: To follow Christ faithfully, even when doing what is right is difficult or requires sacrifice.

6. Can you give an example of carrying your cross at school?

- Telling the truth.
- Refusing to cheat.
- Forgiving someone.
- Standing up for someone being bullied.
- Being kind when others are mean.
- Not taking revenge.
- Choosing what is right instead of what is popular.

7. How can the Cross remind us of Christ's love?

Answer: Because Christ willingly gave Himself for us. The Cross shows us that His love is sacrificial and self-giving.

8. Why is the Cross connected with the Resurrection?

Answer: Because Christ's death on the Cross was followed by His Resurrection. The Cross is not a symbol of Christ's defeat. Through the Resurrection, Christ revealed His victory over death.

The Law of God

Suggested Reading | Part III — New Testament, Chapter 62, The End of Persecution. The Elevation of the Cross of the Lord (PDF pp. 744–752) (BOOK pp. 399–403).

Supporting Reading | Part V, section on the Exaltation of the Cross (PDF pp. 1138–1140) (BOOK pp. 612–613).

Optional Early Learner Resource: Elevation of the Cross colouring page — see the Activities folder.

Image/icon Provenance: See lesson Sources & Rights record.