SAINT SERGIUS SCHOOL

2026–2027 · YEAR 1

SAINT SERGIUS SCHOOL

LESSON 6

Holy Scripture in the Life of the Church

Date: October 25, 2026

Term: I — Entering the Life of the Church

Book Study: The Law of God — Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy

Lesson Focus: How Scripture is proclaimed, prayed, preserved, and interpreted within the Orthodox Church.



LESSON 6

Holy Scripture in the Life of the Church

Introduction

1. What do we mean by the Bible or Holy Scripture?

2. Where have you heard Scripture read in church?

3. Do you recognize any prayers or Psalms from Scripture?

4. Why does the Church read the Scriptures again and again?

What Is Holy Scripture?

Holy Scripture, or the Bible, is the collection of sacred writings received and preserved by God's people. It has two great parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament prepares for the coming of Christ. The New Testament bears witness to Jesus Christ, His saving work, and the life of the early Church.

PROCLAIMED — We Hear Scripture

The Church reads Scripture aloud when Christians gather for worship. At the Divine Liturgy we hear the Epistle and the Gospel. Psalms and other biblical readings fill Vespers, Matins, and many other services.

PRAYED — Scripture Becomes Our Prayer

The Psalter is prayed and sung throughout Orthodox worship. Scripture gives the Church words of praise, repentance, thanksgiving, hope, and trust in God.

CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

The Old Testament prepares for Christ. The New Testament bears witness to Him. We read Scripture to know Christ and to live faithfully in His Church.



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PRESERVED — The Church Hands Scripture On
The Bible did not appear all at once as one finished book. God's revelation was proclaimed and handed down among His people. Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, and other inspired writers recorded the sacred writings that the Church received as Holy Scripture.

Across generations Christians copied, translated, read, taught, guarded, and handed on these Scriptures.

INTERPRETED — We Receive Scripture in the Church
Orthodox Christians read Scripture personally, but we do not interpret it independently according to our own opinions. The Holy Spirit guides the Church in preserving and rightly understanding Scripture. The Holy Fathers and Saints are especially important witnesses to this understanding.

Main Point to Remember
Holy Scripture lives in the Church: we hear it proclaimed, pray it, preserve it, and learn to understand it within the life of God's people.

Key Vocabulary
Holy Scripture — The sacred writings of the Bible received by the Church.
Gospel — The good news of Jesus Christ; also Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
Epistle — An apostolic letter or reading.
Psalter — The Book of Psalms.
Holy Tradition — The life and teaching faithfully handed on in the Church from the Apostles.

Personal reading is encouraged. Private interpretation is not.



COURSE WORK

Holy Scripture in the Life of the Church

Discussion Questions

1. What is Holy Scripture, and what are its two main parts?

2. What does the Old Testament prepare us for?

3. Name two ways Scripture is used during Orthodox worship.

4. Match each term:
Gospel · Epistle · Psalter · Holy Tradition
A. Apostolic letters/readings
B. The life and teaching handed on in the Church
C. The four books proclaiming Christ's life and saving work
D. The Church's great book of biblical prayer and praise

5. Why do Orthodox Christians read Scripture within the life of the Church rather than treating the Bible as a book completely separated from the Church?

6. Choose one way you could make Holy Scripture a greater part of your prayer or Christian life this week.

ACTIVITY

Holy Scripture in the Life of the Church

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Activity — Where Scripture Lives

PROCLAIMED
Draw or write one place where you hear Scripture proclaimed in church.

PRAYED
Name or draw one way Scripture becomes prayer.

PRESERVED
Write or draw one way the Church has handed Scripture on to us.

INTERPRETED
Who or what helps us learn to understand Scripture faithfully?

PROCLAIMED · PRAYED · PRESERVED · INTERPRETED

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Delivery & Differentiation

Lesson Purpose: Students learn that Holy Scripture belongs to the living worship and Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church. Scripture is proclaimed, prayed, preserved, and interpreted within the Church.

Core Teaching: Holy Scripture is the Church's inspired written witness. The same Holy Spirit Who inspired Scripture guides the Church in preserving and rightly understanding it.

Early Learner Emphasis: The Bible is a holy book. We hear it in church, pray its words, and learn about Jesus through it.

Elementary Emphasis: Distinguish Old and New Testaments; Gospel, Epistle, and Psalter; introduce Scripture within Holy Tradition.

Older Student Extension: Divine inspiration; apostolic Tradition; reception and preservation of Scripture; liturgical and patristic interpretation.

Theological Safeguard: Do not present Scripture and Holy Tradition as competitors. Do not present private interpretation as an Orthodox method of reading Scripture.

Main Point to Remember
"Holy Scripture lives in the Church: we hear it proclaimed, pray it, preserve it, and learn to understand it within the life of God's people."

Patristic Interpretation Safeguard
Teachers must not present their own private interpretation of difficult or disputed passages as the teaching of the Church. Use the Holy Fathers, canonized Saints, or trustworthy contemporary Orthodox teachers whose explanation clearly rests upon the patristic tradition.

Personal reading is encouraged. Private interpretation is not.

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Answer Key & Resource Control

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Discussion Questions — Teacher Answer Key

1. What is Holy Scripture?
Answer: The sacred writings of the Bible received by the Church. Its two great parts are the Old Testament and New Testament.

2. What does the Old Testament prepare us for?
Answer: The coming of Christ, the Saviour.

3. Name two ways Scripture is used in Orthodox worship.
Answer: Examples include Gospel and Epistle readings, Psalms, Old Testament readings, prayers, and hymns filled with biblical words and images.

4. Matching:
Gospel → C
Epistle → A
Psalter → D
Holy Tradition → B

5. Why read Scripture within the life of the Church?
Answer: Because Scripture was received and preserved by the Church and is rightly understood within Holy Tradition, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the witness of the Holy Fathers and Saints.

6. How could Scripture become a greater part of Christian life?
Answer: Answers vary. Encourage prayerful reading, attentive listening in worship, learning a Psalm or Gospel passage, and seeking faithful Orthodox guidance when a passage is difficult.

The Law of God
Supporting Reading: Part IV, Chapter 2 — Supernatural Divine Revelation. Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture; Part V, Chapter 5 — Divine Service Books.

Controlled Sources
SSS Year 1 Annual Curriculum MASTER v1.1; The Law of God; official Orthodox catechetical and patristic resources approved for this lesson.

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