SAINT SERGIUS
SCHOOL

LESSON MODULE · SSS–L0001

Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Book Study: The Law of God — Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy
Lesson Focus: The students will learn about the birth of the Most Holy Theotokos, the parents of the Virgin Mary, Joachim and Anna, and how God prepared Mary from her birth to become the Mother of Jesus Christ.



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Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Introduction

- Who is the Mother of Jesus?
- What do we call her in the Orthodox Church?
- Why do we call Mary the Theotokos?
- Do you think Mary was important to God's plan before Jesus was born?

Theotokos means "Birthgiver of God" or "Mother of God."

We call Mary the Theotokos because the child she gave birth to is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became truly man while remaining truly God.

The Story of Saints Joachim and Anna

The parents of the Virgin Mary were named Joachim and Anna. They were faithful people who loved God. However, they were very sad because they had no children. At that time, having children was considered a great blessing, and Joachim and Anna carried this sorrow for many years. They continued to pray to God. They did not turn away from God because they were suffering. Instead, they remained faithful.

Important point:

Sometimes we pray for something and do not receive the answer immediately. Does that mean God has forgotten us? No. God hears our prayers, even when we don't understand His timing.

The Birth of Mary

God answered the prayers of Joachim and Anna. They were blessed with a daughter, and they named her Mary. Her birth is celebrated by the Church as the Nativity of the Theotokos. The Church celebrates this feast because Mary's birth is part of God's preparation for the coming of Christ.

Mary would eventually become:
The Mother of Jesus Christ
The Mother of God
The Theotokos

Why Is Mary's Birth Important?
Mary's birth is important because God was preparing the way for the Incarnation. The Incarnation means that:
The Son of God became man. God chose Mary to participate in this great mystery.

Mary's life teaches us about:

- Faith
- Humility
- Obedience
- Purity
- Trust in God
- Love for God



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Scripture Connection
The prophecy:
“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanuel.”

Isaiah 7:14 — SAAS

The Old Testament contains prophecies pointing toward Christ and His coming into the world. The birth of Mary is part of the preparation for this great event.

Memory Verse
Luke 1:38 — NKJV
"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."



Today we learned about the birth of the Virgin Mary. Her birth was part of God's plan to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus Christ. We can learn from the Theotokos and Saints Joachim and Anna to trust God, pray, and remain faithful.

The Nativity of the Theotokos is celebrated September 8/21.

Key Vocabulary
Nativity
Birth
Theotokos
"Birthgiver of God" or "Mother of God."
Virgin
Mary, who remained a virgin and became the Mother of Christ.
Annunciation
The announcement by the Archangel Gabriel that Mary would give birth to the Son of God.
Salvation
God's work of saving humanity and bringing us into communion with Him.
Tradition
The life and teaching handed down within the Church.

COURSE WORK

Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Discussion Questions

1. Who were the parents of the Virgin Mary?

2. Why was Mary's birth special?

3. What does Theotokos mean?

4. Why is the Nativity of the Theotokos important to Christians?

5. What can we learn from Joachim and Anna?

6. Why is patience important when we pray?

7. What can we learn from Mary's willingness to obey God?

8. How does Mary's birth connect to the birth of Jesus?

9. What does it mean to trust God's plan?

10. What is one thing you can do this week to become more faithful to God?

ACTIVITY

Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Look carefully at the icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Can you find:

- **Saint Anna**
- **The infant Mary**
- **Saint Joachim**
- **The women helping Saint Anna**
- **The cradle or bed**
- **The home setting**
- **Anything that shows this is a joyful birth**



TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Delivery & Differentiation

Lesson Purpose: Students understand that the Nativity of the Theotokos belongs to God's preparation for the Incarnation and learn from Joachim, Anna and Mary to trust, pray and remain faithful.
Core Teaching: Mary's birth is part of God's plan of salvation and prepares the way for the coming of Christ.
Early Learner Emphasis: Names and relationships: Mary; Joachim and Anna; Mother of Jesus; simple trust and prayer.
Elementary Emphasis: Meaning of Theotokos; why the feast matters; patience in prayer; obedience and faithfulness.
Older Student Extension: Connect the Nativity of the Theotokos to the Incarnation and salvation history. Ask students to explain how Mary's birth forms part of God's preparation for the coming of Christ.
Activity Guidance: Use the icon hunt with A/B/C depth rather than creating three separate activities.
A. Early Learners: Find and point to named figures/objects:

- Saint Anna
- The infant Mary
- Saint Joachim
- The women helping Saint Anna
- The cradle or bed
- The home setting
- Anything that shows this is a joyful birth

B. Elementary: Identify figures and explain in simple terms what is happening in the icon.
C. Older Students: Observe composition and connect visible details to the theological meaning of the feast.

Main Point to Remember
Have the students repeat:
"God prepared the way for Christ, and Mary was chosen to become the Mother of God."
For older students:
"The Nativity of the Theotokos begins the preparation for the Incarnation of Christ."

Optional Early Learner Resource: Nativity of the Theotokos colouring page — see the Activities folder.

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Answer Key & Resource Control

Discussion Questions — Teacher Answer Key

1. Who were the parents of the Virgin Mary?
Answer: Saints Joachim and Anna.

2. Why was Mary's birth special?
Answer: Because God chose Mary to become the Mother of Jesus Christ. Her birth was part of God's preparation for the coming of the Saviour.

3. What does Theotokos mean?
Answer: "Birthgiver of God" or "Mother of God."

4. Why is the Nativity of the Theotokos important to Christians?
Answer: Because Mary's birth was part of God's plan of salvation and prepared the way for the birth of Jesus Christ.

5. What can we learn from Joachim and Anna?
Answer: We can learn to pray, remain faithful, be patient, and trust God even when life is difficult.

6. Why is patience important when we pray?
Answer: Because God may not answer our prayers immediately or in the way we expect. We should continue trusting Him and His timing.

7. What can we learn from Mary's willingness to obey God?
Answer: We should be willing to listen to God, trust Him, and follow His will even when we do not completely understand what will happen.

8. How does Mary's birth connect to the birth of Jesus?
Answer: Mary would grow up to become the Mother of Jesus Christ. Her birth was therefore part of God's preparation for Christ's birth.

9. What does it mean to trust God's plan?
Answer: It means believing that God loves us and continuing to follow Him even when we do not understand everything that is happening.

10. What is one thing you can do this week to become more faithful to God?
Possible answers:

- Pray every day.
- Go to church.
- Read Scripture.
- Help someone.
- Obey my parents.
- Forgive someone.
- Be kind.
- Thank God.
- Be patient.
- Remember God during the day.

The Law of God

Suggested Reading | Part III — New Testament, Chapter 1, The Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary (PDF pp. 416–419) (BOOK pp. 223–224).

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