



Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Study Guide - Level 1 (Grades K-2 / Ages 5-7)

Today is the Second Sunday of the Great Fast

Lesson Order

- Opening Prayer
- Intro / Recap last week's lesson
- Review the scripture readings
- Review the hymns of the day
- Read front page of handout together
- Use study guide lesson and Q&A
- Complete handout activities
- Preview next week's lesson
- Closing Prayer

Tips & Hints

- Use as much or as little of the content in this study guide helping the students discover how the Orthodox Faith can be a part of their daily life.
- Use open-ended questions, encouraging young people to share their experiences or ideas, drawing connections to the topics of the day, strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ and His holy Orthodox Faith.
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publisher at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

✓ Goal

After completing this week's lesson, students should be able to articulate the following:

- How today's scripture readings and liturgical hymns apply to their life
- Understanding what God is expecting us to live as His followers and members of the Orthodox Faith
- How being part of the Orthodox Church gives us the tools and skills to live godly lives regardless of our circumstances
- Why they believe and follow Jesus Christ as Orthodox Christians

✂ Overview

Last Week

Was the first Sunday of the Great Fast when we celebrate having icons in our homes and churches.

Icons, like pictures of our family, show us our spiritual family - the Virgin Mary and saints - so we can be like them and grow closer to Jesus and God the Father.

During Great Lent, we make more of an effort, because we're getting closer to celebrating Pascha - when Jesus rose from the dead.

How did He do this? Because He's the Son of God!

This Week

The second Sunday of the Great Fast celebrates the life and teachings of St. Gregory Palamas, a famous bishop.

St. Gregory was really smart, and taught people why it was important to want to be with God.

He explained that Jesus is the Light of the world, bringing us closer to His Father: God!

We honor St. Gregory for being so smart, and thank God that He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from the devil.

📖 Apostolos / Epistle and Gospel Readings

Have one student read today's Apostolos/Epistle and another read the Gospel lesson.

Epistle/Apostol:
Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel:
Mark 2:1-12

1. What is the author of today's epistle/apostol talking about?
2. How does the message of this epistle apply to our lives?

1. What took place in today's lesson?
2. Why is this important for us living in the 21st century?

Possible Answers

- God created everything, and this shows us how much He loves us
- St. Paul, the author of the letter, teaches us that even though we might sin or make mistakes, God still loves us...a lot!
- Jesus' death on the cross restores us to a strong relationship with God
- God's love will never change, so we can find out way back to Him if we fall down or sin

Possible Answers

- The men who help the paralytic are examples of how we can help others
- When we do good things for other people, we are like the men, and also like Jesus Who helped those in need
- We should do whatever we can to get closer to Christ

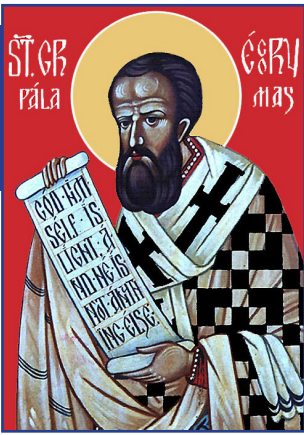
🎵 Hymnography

Have a student read the hymn(s) on the front page of the handout.

1. What do the hymns teach us about today's commemoration?
2. How can the message of these hymns apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- St. Gregory is honored as a wise defender of the Church's teachings
- He was a great teacher who instructed many about the nature of God
- We can ask St. Gregory to pray for us, just as we ask our parents, friends, priest, and others to pray to God for us



Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Study Guide - Level 2 (Grades 3–5 / Ages 8–10)

Lesson Order

- Opening Prayer
- Intro / Recap last week's lesson
- Review the scripture readings
- Review the hymns of the day
- Read front page of handout together
- Use study guide lesson and Q&A
- Complete handout activities
- Preview next week's lesson
- Closing Prayer

Tips & Hints

- Use as much or as little of the content in this study guide helping the students discover how the Orthodox Faith can be a part of their daily life.
- Use open-ended questions, encouraging young people to share their experiences or ideas, drawing connections to the topics of the day, strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ and His holy Orthodox Faith.
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publisher at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

Today is the Second Sunday of the Great Fast

✓ Goal

After completing this week's lesson, students should be able to articulate the following:

- How today's scripture readings and liturgical hymns apply to their life
- Understanding what God is expecting us to live as His followers and members of the Orthodox Faith
- How being part of the Orthodox Church gives us the tools and skills to live godly lives regardless of our circumstances
- Why they believe and follow Jesus Christ as Orthodox Christians

✕ Overview

Last Week

Was the first Sunday of the Great Fast when we celebrate having icons as aids in our efforts to grow closer to God.

In the gospel, we heard Christ calling the disciples to follow Him. Icons can serve as a reminder that Christ has a place in our daily life too, as His modern day disciples.

Our actions can be humble examples, inspiring others to "Come and See" why we follow Jesus Christ and a desire to know God.

Lent help us renew our focus and attention on growing closer to God.

This Week

The second Sunday of the Great Fast celebrates the life and teachings of St. Gregory Palamas, a famous bishop.

St. Gregory taught that our goal in life is to encounter God. By doing this, we can be transfigured into our true nature - rejecting sin to live in the Light of Christ.

St. Gregory's love and devotion to God is an example for us to know and believe in God as much as we can, avoiding wrong teachings about God.

📖 Apostolos / Epistle and Gospel Readings

Have one student read today's Apostolos/Epistle and another read the Gospel lesson.

Epistle/Apostol:
Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel:
Mark 2:1-12

1. What is the author of today's epistle/apostol talking about?
2. How does the message of this epistle apply to our lives?

1. What took place in today's lesson?
2. Why is this important for us living in the 21st century?

Possible Answers

- God established the heavens, the world, and our lives as expressions of His love
- St. Paul teaches us that despite humanity's fall and sin, God still loves us
- Jesus' death restores us to the relationship intended in Genesis
- God's love will never change
- Christ provides a path to heaven, the Church and the saints confirm Jesus is truly God and the source of our salvation from sin and death

Possible Answers

- The men are examples of faith in God, inspiring us to put our own faith in action helping others
- The forgiveness of sins is necessary for our salvation - regardless of any physical or behavioral impairments
- By approaching Christ in repentance, we can be freed from sin and death
- We should do whatever we can to get closer to Christ
- Being an Orthodox Christian means doing more than standing in church one day a week

🎵 Hymnography

Have a student read the hymn(s) on the front page of the handout.

1. What do the hymns teach us about today's commemoration?
2. How can the message of these hymns apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- St. Gregory is honored as a wise defender of the Church's teachings
- He was a great teacher who instructed many about the nature of God
- St. Gregory stands in the presence of God
- We can ask St. Gregory to pray for us, just as we ask our parents, friends, priest, and others to pray to God for us
- St. Gregory's writings remind us that knowing about God helps us know ourselves better



Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Study Guide - Level 4 (Grades 9–12 / Ages 14–18)

Today is the Second Sunday of the Great Fast

Lesson Order

- Opening Prayer
- Intro / Recap last week's lesson
- Review the scripture readings
- Review the hymns of the day
- Read front page of handout together
- Use study guide lesson and Q&A
- Complete handout activities
- Preview next week's lesson
- Closing Prayer

Tips & Hints

- Use as much or as little of the content in this study guide helping the students discover how the Orthodox Faith can be a part of their daily life.
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- Understanding what God is expecting us to live as His followers and members of the Orthodox Faith
- How being part of the Orthodox Church gives us the tools and skills to live godly lives regardless of our circumstances
- Why they believe and follow Jesus Christ as Orthodox Christians

✂ Overview

Last Week

Was the first Sunday of the Great Fast celebrating the restoration of icons to their prominent role in our lives.

We heard Christ calling the disciples to follow Him. Icons serve as a reminder that Christ has a place in our daily life as His modern day disciples.

As Orthodox Christians, our actions should be humble examples, inspiring others to "Come and See" why we follow Jesus Christ and a desire to know God.

The days of Lent help us renew our focus and attention on growing as close to God as possible.

This Week

The second Sunday of the Great Fast celebrates the life and teachings of St. Gregory Palamas, a famous 14th century bishop.

St. Gregory's teachings proclaim the goal of our life is to encounter God, to be transfigured into our true nature - rejecting sin to live in the Light of Christ.

He is an example of faithful devotion to God, and the importance of avoiding false teachings, so we can know and believe in God, having as deep a relationship with God as is possible.

📖 Apostolos / Epistle and Gospel Readings

Have one student read today's Apostolos/Epistle and another read the Gospel lesson.

Epistle/Apostol:
Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel:
Mark 2:1-12

1. What is the author of today's epistle/apostol talking about?
2. How does the message of this epistle apply to our lives?

1. What took place in today's lesson?
2. Why is this important for us living in the 21st century?

Possible Answers

- God laid the foundation for all of our lives, and the heavens are all his works
- St. Paul teaches us that God's love changes humanity, restoring it to what was intended originally in Genesis
- God's love will never change, and this provides us with a focal point when we sin or get lost from God
- We must listen to what God spoke through the angels, so we do not miss out on something greater
- A path to heaven was provided by Christ, and is taught by the Church and the saints, confirming that Jesus is truly God and the source of our salvation from sin and death

Possible Answers

- The men are examples of faith in God, inspiring us to put our faith in action
- The forgiveness of sins is more important than the healing of physical or behavioral impairments
- By approaching Christ in repentance, we can be freed from sin and death
- We should do whatever we can to get closer to Christ
- Are we willing to stand in line for hours to get to liturgy like a concert or new movie?
- Do we help others encounter Christ, removing barriers from their path?
- Being an Orthodox Christian means doing more than standing in church one day a week

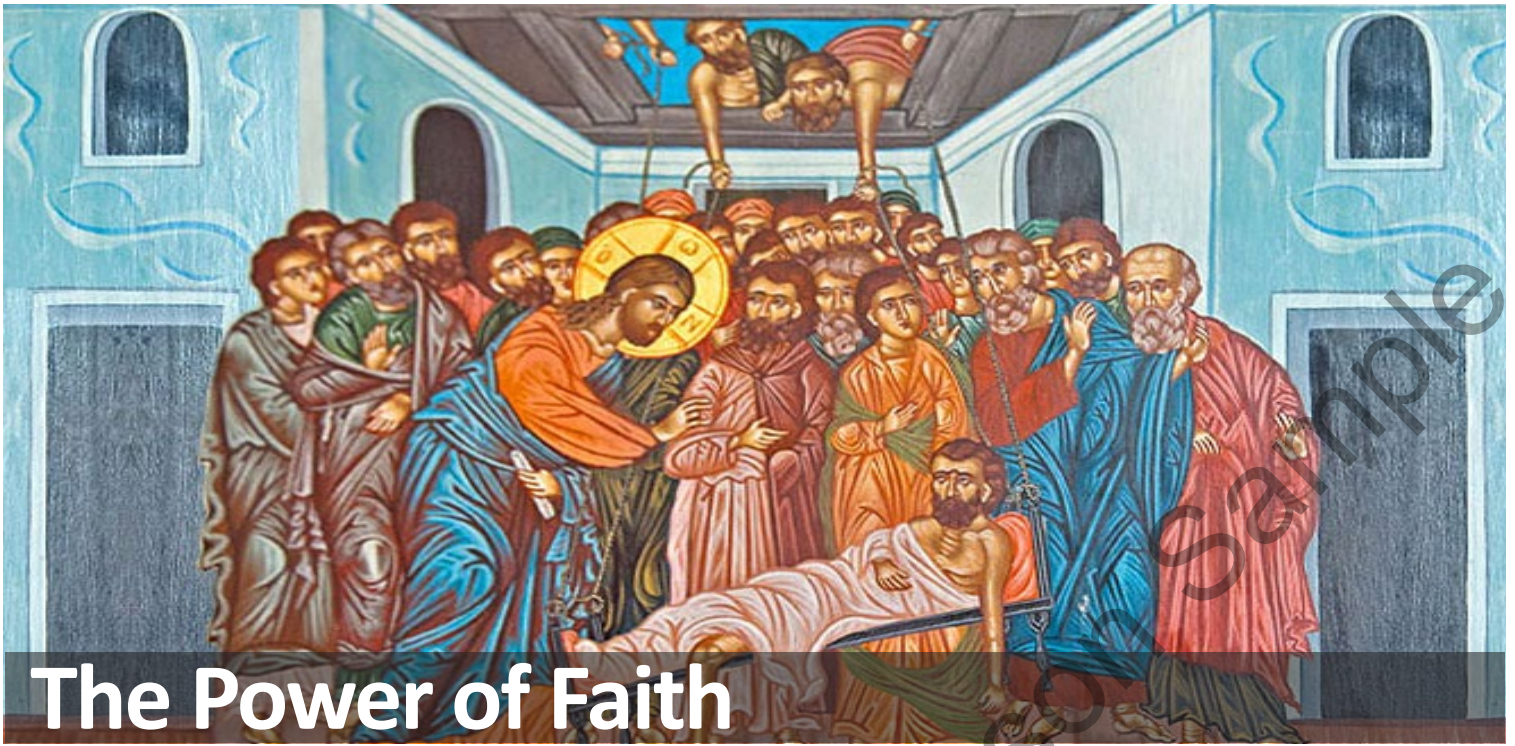
🎵 Hymnography

Have a student read the hymn(s) on the front page of the handout.

1. What do the hymns teach us about today's commemoration?
2. How can the message of these hymns apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- St. Gregory is honored as a wise defender of the Church, and a great teacher who instructed many in the church about the nature of God
- Saints, like Gregory, stand in the presence of God and can pray for us, just as we ask our parents, friends, priest, and others to pray to God for us
- St. Gregory can also help us through his teachings to know more about God, making it possible for us to grow closer to God
- St. Gregory's writings remind us that knowing about God helps us know ourselves better - we were created to be God's helpers in the world, doing good works as Christ helped others



The Power of Faith

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Popularity has a powerful effect on people. Whether you seek it or run from it, popularity can create or destroy friendships.

Jesus Christ was popular and the crowds flocked to Him. They wanted to hear His words, receive healing, and be changed by **encountering Him**.

☞ Jesus is in the House

Scripture tells us that as more people became aware of Jesus, their desire led people to do radical things.

They rejected social expectations, climbed trees, and even tore the roof of houses, just to get closer to Him. What would you do to **get closer to Christ**?

Is Jesus in our Church?

Our church is often called the House of God - not that God needs a place to live - but as the **center of our spiritual community**. It is the place where we come together as Orthodox Christians to worship and praise God in a **unity of Faith**.

Our faith in God generates a desire to be in church. Why do you want to hear God's words in the gospel and **receive His Body and Blood** in the Eucharist?

Is Jesus in our Home?

The spiritual nourishment we receive in **the liturgy sustains us** in our homes throughout the week. When we bring God home from church, His teachings and instructions can **inspire our actions** with our families and neighbors.

How does being involved in **the liturgy inspire you** as an Orthodox Christian in your home and communities?

Is Jesus in our Heart?

God can't live in a box, kept on a shelf until Sunday morning or moments when we need help. We need to allow God to live in our heart, mind, and soul every day.

When **God is in our thoughts**, we can turn from negative ideas. When **God is in our actions**, we can offer help to those in need. When **God is in our heart**, our Faith can move mountains.

Our faith needs to be nurtured, becoming as strong like the men who ripped open the roof for their friend to see Jesus. What are you willing to do to **strengthen your faith to get closer to Christ**?

☞ Scripture Readings

for the Second Sunday of Lent:
St. Gregory Palamas

Epistle: **Hebrews 1:10-2:3**
Gospel: **Mark 2:1-12**

☞ Hymns of the Day

for the Second Sunday of Lent:
St. Gregory Palamas

Troparion (St. Gregory) - Tone 8

O luminary of Orthodoxy, support and teacher of the Church, ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians.

O wonderworker Gregory, boast of Thessalonika and herald of grace, always intercede for all of us that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion (Triodion) - Tone 4

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying:
"Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of All, so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns."

Kontakion (St. Gregory) - Tone 8

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, radiant and harmonious trumpet of theology, we praise you in song, O divinely-speaking Gregory.

As a mind standing before the Primal Mind, guide our minds to Him, Father, so that we may cry aloud to you:
"Rejoice, herald of grace."

Parents, Church School Teachers & Youth Directors:
Watch for the ☞ to indicate topics/questions you can use to inspire conversations with youth. Or use the corresponding study guide for this resource.

Learning from the writings of St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory Palamas lived in the 14th century, and his writings are relevant for us in the 21st century.

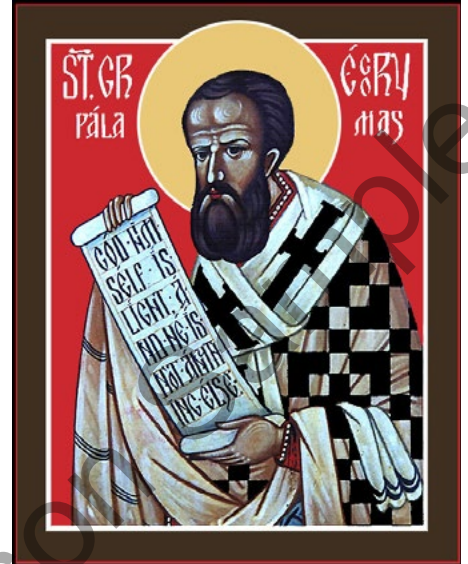
We remember him on the Second Sunday of Great Lent for his great works and writings about the nature of God, and for defending the teachings of the Christian Faith. He described God as Light (what the apostles experienced on Mount Tabor when Jesus Christ was transfigured, revealing the Uncreated Light of God.)

Saints like Seraphim of Sarov, Herman of Alaska, Silouan of Mt. Athos, and others attained the divine grace to experience this same Uncreated Light through their intense prayers and godly living. We too can achieve that level of spiritual holiness.

The writings of St. Gregory are available for us to read, contemplate, and apply to our daily lives.

Instructions:

Read these three quotes written by St. Gregory to a Nun named Xenia in the year 1345, then write a short summary of how his words can apply to your life.



Judgment

For though all will be resurrected, the resurrection of each individual will be in accordance with his own inner state (ref. 1 Cor. 15:23)

He who through the power of the Spirit has gotten rid of his materialistic worldly desires in this life will hereafter live a divine and truly eternal life in communion with Christ.

But he who through surrendering to his materialistic and worldly lusts and passions has in this life deadened his being, will, hereafter be co-judged with the devil, the cause of evil, and will be handed over to unbearable and immeasurable eternal punishment.

Philokalia Vol. 4, pg 298, Counsel #15 of St. Gregory Palamas to the Most Reverend Nun Xenia

- Who will be resurrected at the end of days?
- How does the life I lead now impact the Last Judgment?
- What can I do now to inherit eternal life with Jesus Christ?

St. Gregory's writing on judgment inspires me to live as an Orthodox Christian who:

Wealth

Hence there is no justification in aspiring to become rich even for a good cause. The truth is that people are frightened of being poor because they have no faith in Him who promised to provide all things needful to those who seek the kingdom of God (ref. Matt. 6:33).

It is this fear that spurs them, even when they are endowed with all things, and it prevents them from ever freeing themselves from this sickly and destructive desire. They amass wealth, loading themselves with a worthless burden or, rather, enclosing themselves while still living in a most absurd kind of tomb.

Philokalia Vol. 4, pg 305, Counsel #33 of St. Gregory Palamas to the Most Reverend Nun Xenia

- Why are people afraid of not having money?
- How is faith in God necessary in my life?
- What can I do to place Jesus Christ at the center of my life?

St. Gregory's writing on wealth inspires me to live as an Orthodox Christian who:

Repentance

The first stage of grief resembles the return of the prodigal son. It fills the mourner with dejection and leads him to employ these very words, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before You, and am no longer worthy to be called Your son." (Luke 15:21).

When the heavenly Father runs out to meet and embrace him, the son finds himself accepted with such inexpressible compassion and on account of it is filled with great joy and boldness, he receives the Father's embrace and embraces Him in return. Then, entering into the Father's house, he shares together in the feast of divine joy.

Philokalia Vol. 4, pg 322, Counsel #70 of St. Gregory Palamas to the Most Reverend Nun Xenia

- Why should I repent like the Prodigal Son?
- How does St. Gregory's writings reflect the gospel reading Luke 15:21?
- How can repentance fill me with joy?

St. Gregory's writing on repentance inspires me to live as an Orthodox Christian who:

Holy Father Gregory, pray to God for us!

Celebrating the Life of our Father St. Gregory Palamas

Read the life of Saint Gregory to learn about this important teacher of our Faith. Use a pen or marker to highlight the important events of his life.

St. Gregory Palamas was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople (modern day Istanbul, Turkey), the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

1296 is at the tail end of the Middle Ages. Marco Polo was traveling on the Silk Road to the Far East right around this time.

St. Gregory's father was a very spiritual man who served a high position in the court of the emperor. When his father died suddenly, the emperor himself took part in the raising and education of St. Gregory.

He was privileged to receive an elite education, and St. Gregory devoted himself to his studies with diligence, mastering all of his subjects. The emperor was so impressed that he hoped Gregory would be a government official as an adult.

Instead, at 20 years old, St. Gregory left Constantinople and traveled to a monastery on Mount Athos, in northeastern Greece on the Aegean Sea.

His mother and sisters were also very devoted to God, and went to become monastics themselves.

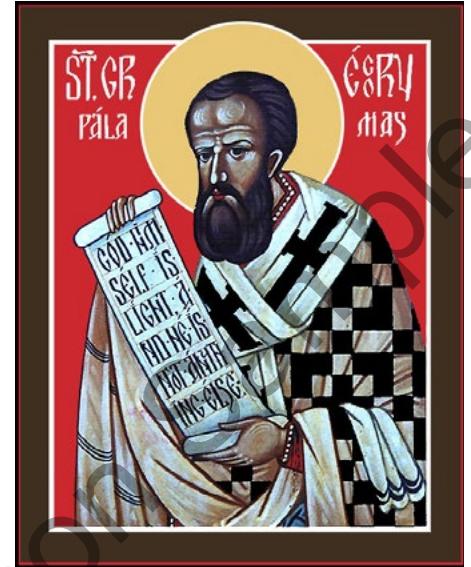
A year after Gregory was tonsured as a monk he received a vision of the holy Evangelist John the Theologian in a dream. St. John promised Gregory that he would protect him throughout his life.

Instructions:

Choose from the events you highlighted in the story above, summarizing or drawing one for each aspect of Saint Gregory's life.

St. Gregory's Early Life

St. Gregory's Prayer Life



St. Gregory spent eight years of spiritual struggle under the guidance of the Elder Nicephoros on Mount Athos, later living at other monasteries where he prayed intensely, working towards a greater degree of spiritual perfection.

He learned the methods of unceasing prayer and mental activity based on "the prayer of the heart."

This is called "Hesychasm" (*pronounced: Hez -ee - kaz -im*, from the Greek word "hesychia" meaning calm, silence).

St. Gregory's spiritual efforts became a central part of his life, and he was ordained to the holy priesthood at age 30.

St. Gregory spent five days a week in silence and prayer to God, and each weekend would serve the divine services and meet with the people. St. Gregory used his education for the good of the Christians by composing poetic and wise homilies. His sermons were so powerful and beautifully written that he often brought people to tears.

St. Gregory soon began to devote himself to theological writing. In fact, St. Gregory's theological knowledge preserved the teachings of the True Faith during a time when false teachings were spreading.

A monk named Barlaam had come to Constantinople and was teaching that it was impossible to know the essence of God. He also preached that the prayers of the heart were heresy. Saint Gregory used his great knowledge of prayer to reject Barlaam, pointing out the errors of his teachings.

He debated with Barlaam, explaining that God's true nature is Light - as experienced on Mount Tabor at the feast of the Transfiguration.

In 1341, a Church council accepted the position of St. Gregory, that God reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world, like light.

Since the patriarch supported Barlaam, in 1344 the emperor (not the same one who had raised Gregory as a child) had Saint Gregory thrown in prison for

causing trouble in the Church and society.

The saint remained in prison for four years until a new patriarch was enthroned. He was released from prison and appointed the Archbishop of Thessalonica (a city in northern Greece).

During this time there was a new empire developing in the Middle East called the Ottoman Empire. The Turks, as they were called, were trying to expand and take over more and more territory to make their empire larger.

On one of his trips, Gregory's ship fell into the hands of the Turks who were not Christians, and therefore looked upon Gregory as an enemy. While held captive, Gregory ministered to the other Christian prisoners and even tried to be kind to his Muslim captors.

St. Gregory's passion for Jesus Christ enraged his captors, but they wouldn't kill him in hopes of gaining a large ransom of money. A year later, St. Gregory was released for money, and he returned to Thessalonica.

In the last three years of his life, Saint Gregory performed many miracles for the people through his intense prayers, healing the sick and infirm.

On the eve of his repose, Saint Gregory saw a vision of St. John Chrysostom who said, "To the heights! To the heights!" He died the next day, November 14, 1359, was glorified as a saint in 1368 at a Church Council held in Constantinople.

St. Gregory's Writings

St. Gregory as a Leader and Bishop

Holy Father Gregory, pray to God for us!

Celebrating the Life of our Father St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory Palamas lived in the Byzantine Empire (modern day Greece and Turkey) during the 14th century (1296-1359).

He lived in a monastery, dedicating his life to God with prayer. Through prayer, he came to understand more about God and helped other monks and nearby Christians grow closer to God.

When a monk named Barlaam started teaching different things about God than what the Church's teachings, St. Gregory shared his knowledge with the people because they wanted to know the truth about God. St. Gregory explained that Barlaam was wrong.

In 1341, a church council with lots of bishops and people listened to Barlaam and St. Gregory. At the end, they agreed with St. Gregory, because his devotion to prayer had brought him closer to God, and they realized St. Gregory was speaking the truth.

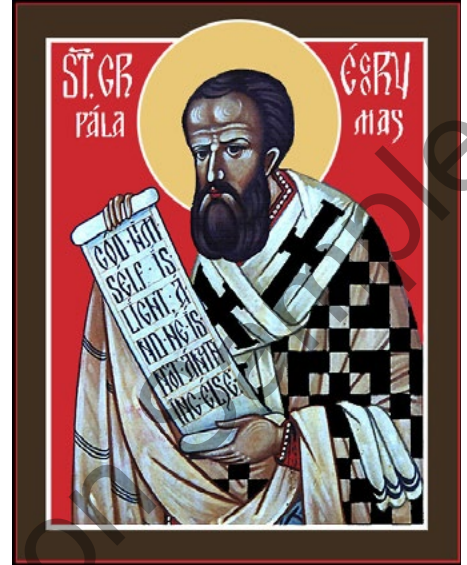
Later, St. Gregory was later made bishop of the city of Thessalonica in Greece, and he cared for the people in the city, praying to God for their healing and repentance from sins. In November 1359, St. Gregory died.

We remember St. Gregory on the Second Sunday of Great Lent for his great works and writings about God, and for defending the true teachings of the church. He wrote that God is Light, reminding us of what the apostles experienced on Mount Tabor when Jesus Christ was transfigured, revealing his brilliant divinity.

Other saints have also experienced God's Light, like St. Herman of Alaska. This is possible - even for us - with lots of prayer and humility. We can learn from St. Gregory's example and his writings, living according to Jesus' teachings, so we can grow closer to God every day of our lives.

Instructions:

Choose an event from the life of St. Gregory above that impresses you, summarizing or drawing it in the box below. Then answer the question to the right of the box.



I am impressed with the life of Saint Gregory because:

*Holy Father Gregory,
pray to God for us!*

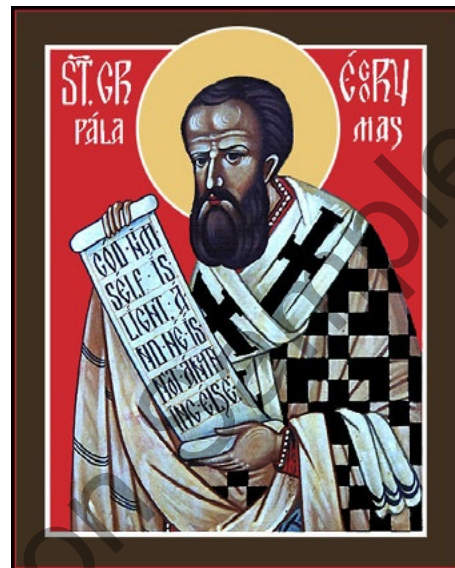
Celebrating the Life of our Father St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory Palamas lived about 700 years ago, that's a long time! He lived in Greece and traveled around the region to speak with other bishops, monks, and people who followed Jesus.

We remember him on the Second Sunday of Great Lent for his great works and writings about God, and for defending the true teachings of the church.

He wrote that God is Light, reminding us of what the apostles experienced on Mount Tabor when Jesus Christ was transfigured, revealing his brilliant divinity.

There are other saints who have experienced God's Light, such as St. Herman of Alaska! This is possible with lots of prayer and being humble. We can learn from St. Gregory and also live holy lives.



Can you fill in the blanks below with these words?

Souls

Gregory

Orthodoxy

Champion

Troparion — Tone 8

O luminary of _____ O _____, support and teacher of the Church,

Ideal of monks and invincible _____ A _____ of theologians,

O wonderworker _____ O _____, boast of Thessalonica and herald of Grace,

Always intercede for all of us that our _____ U _____ may be saved.

What Does This Hymn Teach Us?

circle all the correct answers...

1) This hymn celebrated St. Gregory because:

- He was a faithful follower of Jesus
- He made delicious food for breakfast
- He traveled to many churches

2) St. Gregory prays to God for us because:

- He is in Heaven with God
- He hears our prayers
- Prayer is how we communicate with Saints

Holy Father Gregory, pray to God for us!



Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Resource Overview for Parents and Families

Scripture Readings

Epistle/Apostol:
Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel:
Mark 2:1-12

Troparion – Tone 8

O luminary of Orthodoxy, support and teacher of the Church, ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians.
O wonderworker Gregory, boast of Thessalonica and herald of grace, always intercede for all of us that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion – Tone 8

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, radiant and harmonious trumpet of theology, we praise you in song, O divinely-speaking Gregory.
As a mind standing before the Primal Mind, guide our minds to Him, Father, so that we may cry aloud to you: “Rejoice, herald of grace.”

This Week We Learned About

✦ Scripture

- Hebrews 1:10-2:3
- Mark 2:1-12

✦ About Today's Topic

“The ultimate purpose of St. Gregory's theological teaching was to defend the reality of Christian experience. Salvation is more than forgiveness. It is a genuine renewal of man.”

Archpriest Georges Florovsky

✦ Words of the Saints

“If you do not cut off the inner flow of evil thoughts by prayer and humility, but fight against them merely with the weapons of fasting and bodily hardship, you will labour in vain. But if through prayer and humility you sanctify the root you will attain outward sanctity as well.”

St. Gregory Palamas

✦ In Our Daily Lives

Kindness does not mean overlooking people's sins; it means forgiving them. Kindness also does not mean “being nice” to everyone, whoever they are and whatever they do. It does not mean “going along” with others in every way.

Father Thomas Hopko

Questions for Your Kids

- Why does St. Paul we should stay focused on the teachings of Christ?
- How did the men show their faith in Christ to help their friend?
- What does it mean to have faith in God?

- How did Jesus restore us to communion with God the Father?
- What does it mean to be an Orthodox Christian?
- Why are prayer and humility important for us?

- Why do you think St. Gregory says prayer is important?
- Why is humility important for us?
- How does prayer and humility help us live as Orthodox Christians?

- How can we help those in need during Great Lent?
- Why should we help people throughout the year (when it's not Lent?)
- How can helping other people help us be better Christians?
(Hint: We look beyond ourselves...)

Learn and Discover Together

- Why were the people more amazed at Jesus healing the man instead of forgiving his sins?
- How can we be like the friends of the paralytic?
(Hint: What can we do to help others?)

- What does it mean to be renewed in Jesus Christ?
(Hint: what sacraments involves repentance)
- Why did Jesus Christ become human?
- What is the Orthodox Christian experience for you?

- What does it mean to cut off the inner flow of evil thoughts?
- Is St. Gregory saying we shouldn't fast? Explain your answer

- How can we be kind to others without judging them?
- Why is it important to be kind?
- Is it easier to help people you know or people you don't know? Why?

Tips and Hints

Use as many or as few of the questions and discussion topics above to engage your children in a conversation about this week's scripture lessons to discover how the Orthodox Faith can be applied to each of our lives.

Ask open-ended questions which may lead the conversation to reveal their thoughts about the place God and the church have in their daily life.

As parents, we may not readily have all the answers, but we have the ability to inspire a desire in children to love God, which can benefit them throughout their lives. (And we can always speak with our priest for guidance on answers).

Find moments when you can pray together as a family, and on your own, including prayers for your children to their guardian angels in your own personal prayers.

The Theotokos and saints are always available for you through prayer, ask for their help and guidance in your daily prayers.

Observe the fasts and feasts of the Church which can help build a structure for the holy alongside the secular for you and your children.

Glory to God for all things!



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Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Growing Through Scripture

Study Guide for Teachers and Homeschoolers

Prayer Before Studies to be read by one student or by all students and teacher(s)

+ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Begin with *O Heavenly King, the Trisagion, and Lord's Prayer, then:*

O God our Father, through the grace of Your Holy Spirit – by which You made fishermen into Your all-wise Apostles – enable us to learn and understand the teachings of Your Son's True Faith, so we may live in accordance with Your Will, and be made worthy to one day dwell in Heaven with You, Your Son, and Your Holy Spirit, and with all Your Saints. + Amen.

Goals

✠ Grades K-2

The festal hymn for St. Gregory teaches us about his life and gives us examples of how we can be like this saint who loved God very much.

✠ Grades 3-5

St. Gregory understood that Christ is the Light of the world and taught many people how prayer is valuable in helping us repent and love others.

✠ Grades 6-8

St. Gregory had an interesting life with many experiences - yet he remained faithful to God through them all, inspiring us to do the same.

✠ Grades 9-12

St. Gregory Palamas was a prolific writer - providing us with teachings that are still useful today in our efforts to grow closer to God.

Lesson Outline

- Open with the prayers above (2 min)
- Distribute the lesson (*page one, age-level activity, and pens/pencils or crayons*)
- Have students take turns reading page one. *For grades K-5, read portions or provide a summary of page one. (7 min)*
- *All Grades:* Brief discussion based on page one content, using scripture citations, quotes, and questions like these to spark dialogue: (8 min)
 - ⊕ **Why do we want to grow closer to God?**
 - ⊕ **What did God do for us to save us from our sins?**
 - ⊕ **How did Jesus get rid of the darkness in our lives?**
 - ⊕ **How can we communicate with God and the saints?**
 - ⊕ **Why do we pray?**
 - ⊕ **Why is humility and repentance important for us in our lives?**
 - ⊕ **How can our interactions with others help us grow closer to God?**

Review the goals for each grade level at left.

- Begin handout activity, review instructions by grade level (2 min)
- Students complete activity (15 min)
- Discuss the students' answers and how the purpose of this lesson and what was learned (10 min)
- Close with the prayers below (2 min)

Tips & Hints

- *This lesson is designed for 45 minute class sessions and can be modified based on your schedule and format.*
- Content from this lesson can be used "out of the box" or supplemental to existing lesson plans.
- Share the **Parent Overview** in a timely manner (no later than Sunday afternoon), so parents can discuss and explore lesson topics with children at their convenience during the coming week.
- **Student Handouts** should be shared in print or digital format with the youth before or no later than the beginning of class.

Encourage young people to keep the handouts, as certain features carry-over and will be referenced in future lessons.

- **Resources to have on hand:** Bibles, pencils or pens (or crayons/markers), access to web-based links in the lesson.
- Ask open-ended questions which may lead the conversation to reveal their thoughts about God.
- As parents and teachers, we may not readily have all the answers, but we have the ability to inspire a desire in children to love God, which can benefit them throughout their lives.

We can always engage our priest to get answers we need and circle back with students next week.

- Pray for your students by name at least weekly.
- Be a positive examples of Christian love and living the Faith. May God bless you in your efforts to educate our young people!
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publishers at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

Prayer After Studies to be read by one student or by all students and teacher(s)

+ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Conclude with the Hymn to the Theotokos and then:

O God, our Father, we thank you for the blessings received in Your Son's True Faith, help us, through Your Holy Spirit, to apply this knowledge to our words, thoughts, and deeds, that we may live as You desire, being made worthy to receive your precious gifts, glorifying You as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. + Amen.



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