

## Lesson #1

### Lesson Plan

#### Topic: Major Feasts of the Mother of God

Grade Level: 5th & 6th (Ages 11-12)

Lesson Duration: 45-60 minutes

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Students will learn about the major feast days of the Theotokos.
- Students will understand their meaning, the biblical and Church tradition background, and why the Orthodox Church celebrates them.

#### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Begin with a short prayer: *"Most Holy Theotokos, save us!"*
- Ask: *"Why do you think the Church gives us feast days?"* (To remember important events, to learn about our faith, to honor holy people, etc.)
- Explain: The Theotokos (Mother of God, Virgin Mary) is honored with **four major feast days** in the Orthodox Church, in addition to being remembered at almost every service. These feasts remind us of her role in God's plan of salvation.

#### 2. The Four Major Feasts of the Theotokos

##### 1. Nativity of the Theotokos (September 21 / Sept 8)

- **What happened?** The Virgin Mary was born to Sts. Joachim and Anna in their old age.
- **Why is it important?** Her birth paved the way for the coming of Christ, the Savior. She is the "New Eve" through whom salvation comes.
- **Symbol:** A new dawn bringing light to the world.

##### 2. Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple (December 4 / Nov 21)

- **What happened?** At age 3, Mary's parents brought her to the Temple in Jerusalem, dedicating her to God.
- **Why important?** She was prepared to be the "living temple" of God when Christ would be born from her.
- **Symbol:** A holy vessel chosen by God.

### 3. Annunciation (April 7/ March 25)

- **What happened?** The Archangel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to Jesus, the Son of God. She responded, *"Let it be to me according to your word."*
- **Why is this important?** It's the beginning of our salvation! God becomes man in Mary's womb.
- **Symbol:** Obedience, humility, and faith.

### 4. Dormition (August 28 / Aug 15)

- **What happened?** The Mother of God fell asleep in the Lord. Christ received her soul, and later her body was taken to heaven.
- **Why is it important?** It shows us the hope of resurrection and eternal life. The Theotokos is alive with her Son in heaven and prays for us.
- **Symbol:** The promise of everlasting life for everyone who loves Christ.

### 3. Activity Ideas (15 minutes)

#### 1. Feast Day Timeline

- Provide a chart of the Church year. Have students place the four feasts of the Theotokos in order.

#### 2. Feast Symbols Match

- Cards with feast names and cards with symbols/pictures (baby for Nativity, temple for Entry, angel for Annunciation, Christ receiving her soul for Dormition). Students match them.

#### 3. Discussion Question:

- *"Which of these feasts do you think is most important for us today? Why?"*

### 4. Take-Home Message

- The Church honors the Theotokos because she said "yes" to God and gave us Christ, the Savior. Her feast days remind us of her holiness, her role in salvation, and her prayers for us. We are also called to say "yes" to God in our own lives.

### 5. Closing Prayer

*"O Most Holy Theotokos, intercede for us with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may live in faith, obedience, and love. Amen."*

# WORKSHEET – Major Feasts of the Mother of God

## PART A: FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the missing words.

1. The Church honors the \_\_\_\_\_ because she is the Mother of Jesus Christ.
2. The birth of the Theotokos is celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_ (month and day).
3. When Mary was \_\_\_\_\_ years old, her parents brought her to the Temple.
4. At the \_\_\_\_\_, the Archangel Gabriel announced that Mary would give birth to the Son of God.
5. The feast of the \_\_\_\_\_ reminds us of the hope of eternal life, when Mary “fell asleep” in the Lord.

## PART B: MATCHING

Draw a line to match each feast with its meaning.

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Nativity of the Theotokos | a. Mary's parents bring her to the Temple to dedicate her to God. |
| 2. Entry into the Temple     | b. The Mother of God departs this life; Christ receives her soul. |
| 3. Annunciation              | c. The Archangel Gabriel tells Mary she will give birth to Jesus. |
| 4. Dormition                 | d. The Virgin Mary is born to Sts. Joachim and Anna.              |



# WORKSHEET

## Major Feasts of the Mother of God

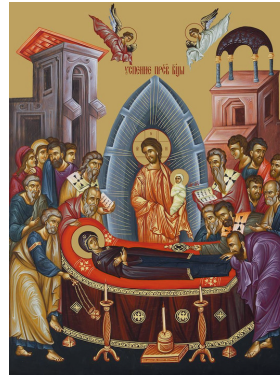
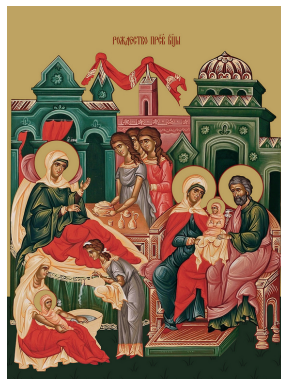
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- c. The Archangel Gabriel tells Mary she will give birth to Jesus.
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# WORKSHEET

Can you identify five differences  
between these two images?

