

Palm Sunday, Jesus' Crucifixion and Glorious Resurrection

Youth Group Session Four – Session Leader

Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry – Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Written by Natalie Kapeluck Nixon and Kira Haluszczak

Edited Rev. Fr. John Haluszczak and Catherine Bucharew

Objective: To provide a good understanding of:

✓ Mary's role in Palm Sunday, our Lord's crucifixion and Glorious Resurrection

Items in **blue** are notes for the Session Leader. For younger children read for them – you may want to paraphrase and ask questions often to keep their interest. For older children, allow them to read aloud or to themselves.

This curriculum was written to be used in conjunction with the book *The Illustrated Life of the Theotokos for Children* by Georgia and Helen Hronas. This book is published by Light and Life and can be obtained from them at www.light-n-life.com or by calling 952-925-3888.

Related books for Session Leader's Reference:

The Illustrated Life of the Theotokos for Children by Georgia and Helen Hronas – Light and Life Publishing.
The Incarnate God: The Feasts of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary editor Catherine Aslanoff translated by Paul Meyendorff. St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 2002.

Pre-session Preparation

Make needed copies of Lesson Four Handouts.

Purchase needed number of books for *The Illustrated Life of the Theotokos for Children*

Materials to make homemade cards or purchase “thinking of you” or “loved one” cards for mothers.

Craft – Mosaic Icon of the Theotokos and Child

This craft will be worked on at each session. It is labor intensive but is extremely beautiful and will stay with the youth for their entire lives. See the attached explanation for the craft.

Session

Begin the session in prayer.

Does your mother worry about you? What types of things does she worry about? **Ask each student to name something that their mother worries about.** If you are sick, if you are not with her, if you are eating well, doing your homework, have good friends, etc.. Mary the Mother of God is no different than your mother. Let us read about her worries.

Read pages 36 – 38. Mary, like any mother, worried about her son. She knew He had a special job here on earth to teach people about God and how important it was to follow Him. Mary also knew that many people would not like what Jesus was teaching and she worried about what they might do to Him. For a short time on Palm Sunday Mary lost her worries. She saw that the people were greeting Jesus with shouts of joy. But soon her worries would come true.

What happened in particular to make Mary's worries even greater? **John the Baptist – Jesus' cousin was killed by King Herod.**

Jesus was betrayed by one of his own disciples, Judas. What does betrayed mean? [That he lied to Jesus and did Him harm.](#) The Pharisees had Jesus arrested and Mary became very sick and concerned. Read pages 39 – 46.

Mary would not leave her son. She followed him from place to place watching and witnessing all the terrible things that happened to him – being beaten, sentenced to death, carrying the cross to Mount Golgotha and finally his crucifixion. Do you think it would be easy to watch someone you loved endure all of these things? Almost all of Jesus' disciples and followers left him as events got worse – they were afraid. Only Mary, a few women disciples and the beloved disciple John stayed until the end.

We are told that Jesus looks out for his mother's future, even while he is dying on the cross. What does he do? [He knows that there is no one to care for her so he asks the Disciple John to take her in as his own mother.](#)

As Jesus gives over His mother to John, he also gives her to all of us as mother; for her to intercede and worry and pray for us, just as she did for Him.

Mary knew where Jesus had been taken for burial. How do you think that she felt at this time? [Sad, angry, hurt, alone, etc....](#)

Read pages 47 – 49 – these are called lamentations or sayings of sadness. These help us to understand how Mary felt.

Read page 51. Jesus first revealed himself risen from the dead to whom? [Mary and the myrrh bearing women.](#)

The women were on their way to anoint Jesus' body with special spices and oils. They had quite a surprise when they discovered the tomb empty and the angel sitting on the stone.

How do we know that Mary was present at this time? [We are told that the angel said to her, "Rejoice O Pure Virgin at the Resurrection of your son."](#)

This is important to know. The women were the ones who stayed with Jesus to His end. He gave them the gift of knowing of His resurrection before anyone else. Mary was present when Jesus raised his cousin Lazarus from the dead. She knows all things are possible in God. She had many examples of God's power throughout her life: her own birth, the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of her own son, the Messiah and Son of God.

How do you think Mary felt when she heard the news that her son had risen from the dead? [Happy, relieved, comforted, etc...](#)

Mary has been present at almost every important happening in Jesus' life. There are only a few to which she did not witness herself. This shows us how important she is to Jesus and in His ministry.

[Discuss with the participants ways in which they can better honor their own mothers and in what ways they can strive to not needlessly worry their mothers – discuss what "needlessly" means. Have each participant commit to a way in which they are going to "not worry" their mother. They do not have to share this with the group.](#)

[Provide them with an additional way of honoring their mothers and their goal not to needlessly worry them. Tell the group that they can pray to the Mother of God, that she may intercede for you with her Son, so that](#)

you make good decisions that do not lead to needless worry. Also, ask her that as a mother of understanding, would she comfort your mother in times of distress.

Have the participants make a card for their mother. The card can tell their mothers how much they love and appreciate them and how they appreciate that they worry about them. They may use icons of the Theotokos on the cards.

At this time you may do any of the following:

- Have a short discussion time about the material or for teenagers an open Q & A.
- Review and discuss the icons of Palm Sunday, the Crucifixion, Pascha
- Present a copy of the Pascha to each participant
- Give time for a snack and short break for the participants to play games
- Move right into the next activity
- End the session in prayer to the Theotokos, "Hail Mary Full of Grace". This prayer should be used for the remainder of the lessons.
- Add their worksheet to their worksheet binder

Have the participants use the remaining time to work on their mosaic icons.