

St. Demetrios Project Instructions

Grades 2-6

Visual Book Report: Biographical Icon of St. Demetrios



Definition: A biographical icon of St. Demetrios is an icon that shows the scenes of the life of St. Demetrios around the icon of the saint. (See pg. 30 in *O God of Demetrios*.)

Supplies: colored construction paper, scissors, crayola drawing chalk (or SMI half-stick Pastels: in 32, 64, 144 piece sets), masking tape, glue, Pastel Spray Fixative.

Directions: Read the life of Saint Demetrios, *O God of Demetrios: The Story of St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki*, by Angeline Eliakopoulos, to the students.

Discuss the life of St. Demetrios with the students. Ask them:

- Why was St. Demetrios in prison? What did he do wrong?

- Why did the ancient Greeks and Romans want to put to death anyone who “called upon the name of Christ”? What does it mean to call upon the name of Christ?
- How was St. Demetrios comparable to the Apostles?
- How did St. Nestor beat Lyaios?
- How was St. Demetrios killed?
- How did St. Demetrios stand up to the pagans? What made him endure the pain?
- Why did St. Demetrios decide to die rather than live?
- Discuss what it means to be a martyr. What does “martyr” mean (witness)? How did St. Demetrios witness Christ? Why is a “great witness”?

Then have each student decide which scene he/she wants to draw. Explain that they are drawing holy icons and that they need to be neat. One or two students should draw St. Demetrios in his military uniform as he is shown in the iconography of the Church. On Sunday, October 26/November 8 (the feast of the saint, invite all the parents to Church before Great Vespers (5PM-7PM), have the students sing the *apolytikion* and *kontakion* of St. Demetrios in front of the biographical icon of St. Demetrios. Then the more able students should recite some of the troparia from the *Akoloutheia* of St. Demetrios. The parish priest should say a few words appropriate to the theme of the Saint and martyrdom.

The same should be repeated on Sunday for the entire parish.

Grades 7-10

The Friends of St. Demetrios

Directions: Photocopy the life of Demetrios, *O God of Demetrios: The Story of St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki*, by Angeline Eliakopoulos, and distribute to each student. Read the life of St. Demetrios in class, out loud, having each student taking turns reading.

Next discuss the life of saint Demetrios in a round table discussion. Some sample questions:

- What does it mean to be a martyr?
- What does the word martyr mean? (witness)
- How are the martyrs witnesses of Christ?
- How was St. Demetrios a “great martyr”?
- How does St. Demetrios’ martyrdom exemplify how our lives should be?
- What are things that may prevent you from the path of martyrdom?
- What different things should we cut ourselves off from?
- How do we imitate St. Demetrios when there is no persecution?
- What sacrifices *are* we going to make for the salvation of our souls?

Activity: Students should be given some 5-10 mins to jot down some ideas on the following question: “How does someone prepare for martyrdom?”

Then, students should be grouped with a partner. Students should be asked to write minimum 250 words on one of the following topics/scenarios (see worksheet):

1. Interview St. Lupus or St. Nestor. Write at least ten questions that will give the Saint the opportunity to discuss his thoughts and feelings about his role in the life of Saint Demetrios. However you choose to present the interview is up to the student.
2. Write a diary that St. Lupus or St. Nestor might have kept before, during, or after the book’s events. Remember that the saint’s thoughts and feelings are very important in a diary.
3. Write an essay describing what you would ask/tell St. Demetrios, if you were with him right before he died?

Grades 11-College

The Witness of St. Demetrios

Directions: Photocopy the life of Demetrios, *O God of Demetrios: The Story of St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki*, by Angeline Eliakopoulos, and distribute to each student. Read the life of St. Demetrios in class, out loud, having each student taking turns reading.

Next discuss the life of saint Demetrios in a round table discussion. Some sample questions:

- What does it mean to be a martyr?
- What does the word martyr mean? (witness)
- How are the martyrs witnesses of Christ?
- How was St. Demetrios a “great martyr”?
- How does St. Demetrios’ martyrdom exemplify how our lives should be?
- What are things that may prevent you from the path of martyrdom?
- What different things should we cut ourselves off from?
- How do we imitate St. Demetrios when there is no persecution?
- What sacrifices *are* we going to make for the salvation of our souls?
- How different is St. Demetrios’ martyrdom from our own spiritual struggle?
Compare and contrast.

Activity: Students should be given some 5-10 mins to jot down some ideas on the following question: “How does someone prepare for martyrdom?”

Then, students should be grouped with a partner. Students should be asked to write minimum 500 words on one of the following topics/scenarios (see worksheet):

1. What sacrifices would you make to emulate the life of St. Demetrios? What is the meaning of these sacrifices?
2. Write a letter of consolation (10-sentence minimum) to the mother of St. Demetrios. The letter should outline the events of the last days of St. Demetrios’ life, his role in the Church of Thessaloniki, his role as a teacher. Explain what it means to be a martyr; what the place and the reward of the martyrs in heaven. Describe St. Demetrios’ accomplishments as a martyr. Explain why St. Demetrios chose death. How did he defeat death? This must be done in the correct letter format.
3. What would you do if one of your friends was in a similar situation as St. Demetrios? What advice would you give?

Finally, the students should be given time to present their assignments in class, creatively; in any way they choose. Discuss each presentation afterwards.

Suggested Schedule

Sunday October 26 (n.c.)

Workshop Grades 2-6 Read St. Demetrius' Life; Learn troparia.

Sunday November 2

Workshop Grades 2-6 Draw Icons of St. Demetrius; Learn troparia.

Friday November 7

Great Vespers/ All-night Vigil

Saturday November 8

Orthros/Liturgy

Workshop Grades 2-6 Finish Icons; Learn troparia.

 Grades 7-10 Reading of Saint's life and discussion; write essays

Workshop Grades 11-College* Reading of Saint's life and discussion; write essays

Sunday November 9

Presentation Grades 2-6 (After Liturgy)

Workshop Grades 11-College* Reading of Saint's life and discussion; write essays

