

Yr 2 Protection of the Holy Mother of God, Lesson

Opening Prayer:

We flee to the shelter of your mercy, O Virgin Mother of God. Do not reject our prayers of anguish, but free us from tribulations, O only pure and blessed one.

Під Твою милість прибігаємо, Богородице Діво. Молитвами нашими в скорботах не погорди, але від бід нас визволи, єдина чиста і благословенна.

Read the story of the origin of the feast of the protection of the Theotokos or act it out with your assistants as the narrator reads the story:

The Protection of the Holy Mother of God (Theotokos) for Children

One night in Constantinople many, many years ago lots of people were gathered in a large Cathedral to pray. They were praying to be saved from enemies that wanted to attack them. St. Andrew, known as the Fool for Christ, and his disciple Epiphanius were there praying too. As everyone was praying St. Andrew and Epiphanius saw the Theotokos (Mother of God) enter the church! She moved towards the altar. She stood there and tearfully prayed for a long time. Then she went even closer to the altar and continued to pray with tears flowing from her eyes. Finally, she turned towards the people. She was surrounded by angels of heaven and by saints that had lived a long time before! She was wearing a veil on her head. She took it off her head and held it out and over those who were praying in church. St. Andrew and Epiphanius understood that she was showing them that she was protecting the people from their enemies. The people in the city were saved! From that time on, Christians have known that Mary the Mother of God and our mother is our protectress and that they could pray to her when they needed her protection. [Find an adult version of the story here.](#)

700 years later in Ukraine, at Pochaiv, the Theotokos appeared again in a church full of people as they were being attacked by an army. Again she held out her veil to protect the people and they were saved!

We must always remember that when we are frightened, we can pray to Our mother Mary for her protection and for her prayers!

Lesson: When we are afraid, we pray.

Take time to talk about what it must have been like to be in the church; how St. Andrew and Epiphanius must have felt when they saw the vision.

Why were the people gathered in church that night? They were afraid of their enemies that were going to hurt them. *Discuss the reaction of the people when they were afraid. They didn't just hide or try to fight, they first turned to God! This is something that we should try to remember to do at all times of anxiety and fear; we pray first before doing anything else. Discuss times when you or the children have been afraid and have prayed or could have prayed.*

Why should we ask the Theotokos to pray for us? *Discuss how we pray for others and we ask each other to pray for us.* Praying for each other is a very loving thing to do. God created us to be loving. The Theotokos was crying that night because she loved the people so much and wanted them to be protected. Since she is the closest person to God and since we know that she loves us so much, we ask her to pray to God for us! The angels and saints who were with her love us and are constantly praying for us too! How wonderful it is to know that there are so many praying for us! It's like we have a blanket of prayer around us! What a wonderful feeling!

The special prayer we prayed at the beginning of class is a good prayer to remember and to pray to the Theotokos. It is on the icon that we are going to colour today, so when you hang it in your homes, your parents can help you pray it.

Craft: Pokrov icon Craft

In Church: Look around and count how many icons of the Theotokos you can see. Look for all the icons of the saints too. There are a lot! There are so many people praying for us!

