

Blue Religion Topics



What is prayer?

Food and rest are essential to sustain human life; knowledge, art, and culture in general enrich the mental capabilities of men, but only prayer reveals and expands our spiritual faculties.

God loves all His creation, and in particular He loves each of us since He is our Heavenly Father. As it is natural for children to want to see and converse with their parents, so it should also be natural and pleasant for us to converse with our Heavenly Father and to want to be in spiritual communion with Him. This conversation with God is called prayer. The soul, while uniting with God in prayer, simultaneously is united with the whole spiritual world — with the angels and saints. According to Saint John of Kronstadt, “Prayer is a golden bond of the Christian — a stranger and wanderer on earth — with the spiritual world of which he is a part, and even more so with God, the source of life.”

Prayer is frequently accompanied by devout words and other outward signs of piety: the sign of the Cross, kneeling, prostration, etc. But prayer can also be offered without words, and without other external manifestations. This is the inner or hidden prayer of a pious soul, which is familiar through experience to many earnest Christians.

Types of Prayer

During prayer a Christian pours out his soul before God: he glorifies Him for His great perfection, thanks Him for His mercy and goodness, and makes requests for his needs. Hence there are three main forms of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, and petition.

Praise (*Doxology*) — is the most perfect and selfless type of prayer. The more pure and blameless a person is, the more the perfection of God is reflected in him, and through this he involuntarily calls forth happy words of praise and glory. Thus the angels in the heavens unceasingly glorify God in hymns. “Praise,” says Bishop Theophan the Recluse, “is not an indifferent contemplation of God's attributes, but a living experience of them, full of joy and exaltation.”

Thanksgiving is sent up to God for all the good things received from Him. It arises naturally in a grateful and sensitive soul. God is merciful to all of us, but not many of us remember to thank Him. Out of the ten lepers healed by our Savior, only one, a Samaritan, returned to thank Him (Luke 17:12-17).

The most widespread form of prayer is **petition**, offered in acknowledgment of our weaknesses, infirmities, and lack of experience. Because of sins and passions, our souls become weak and sick. Therefore, it is essential in prayer to ask God to forgive us and help us to overcome our faults. Sometimes requests are made because of an impending danger hanging over us, a need, etc. Petition in prayer is inevitable in view of our weakness and is readily accepted by the all-merciful Lord (Matt. 7:7; John 16:23). But if our prayer has only a predominant character of request, if the voice of praise and thanksgiving is almost unheard, this indicates poor development of our spiritual life.

Often these various forms of prayer become combined in one. A person begs the Lord about his needs and simultaneously praises Him for His greatness and goodness and thanks Him for being

able to fearlessly address Him as to his merciful Father. The most festive hymns of praise in the Church frequently turn into compounded petitions (“Glory to God in the highest,” “We praise Thee, O God”), and sometimes the opposite: tearful prayers

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to God for help resolve into a sublime harmony of grateful thanks and praise. Many Psalms reflect this type, for example, Psalms 146, 148, and others.

How we should Pray

When praying, it is important to turn away from our usual cares and preoccupations, **collect our scattered thoughts**, as if closing the door of the soul against all that is worldly, and direct all our attention towards God.

Placing oneself before the face of God and bringing to mind His greatness, one who prays must necessarily recognize his **unworthiness** and spiritual poverty. “While praying one should imagine all creation as nothing compared to God, and only God as everything” (St. John of Kronstadt). An edifying example of the proper attitude of prayer was given by our Savior in the parable regarding the publican who was justified by God for his humility (Luke 18:1-14).

Christian humility does not cause depression or hopelessness. On the contrary, it is linked with firm faith in the goodness and omnipotence of the Heavenly Father. Only prayer of faith is accepted by God, as we read in the Gospel: “*Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them*” (Mark 11:24). Warmed by faith, a Christian's prayer is very powerful. The Christian remembers the command of Jesus Christ that it is necessary to pray always and not lose heart (Luke 18:1), and His promise: “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*” (Matt. 7:7).

The Gospel has many examples of the great power of prayer: the Canaanite woman who begged the Lord to heal her daughter (Matt. 15:21-28), the defenseless widow who persuaded the unjust judge to take her side (Luke 18:5-8 and others). One should not despair if his prayer is not answered immediately: this is a test, not a refusal. “This is why the Lord said ‘knock,’ to show that if He does not open the doors of His mercy immediately, we should nevertheless remain waiting with the light of hope” (St. John Chrysostom). The true Christian will continue his prayer with uninterrupted effort until he convinces the Lord, and until he calls down upon himself His mercy, like the Old Testament patriarch Jacob who said to the stranger wrestling with him, “*I will not let You go unless You bless me!*” (Gen. 32:26) and indeed he received God's blessing.

Because the Lord is our Heavenly Father, we are all brothers. He will answer our prayer only when we have a true, brotherly, benevolent relationship with each other, when we have vanquished all strife and enmity and have shrouded all offenses with forgiveness and made peace with everyone. “*Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses*” (Mark 11:25).

What to ask for?

Regarding how to pray, St. Isaac the Syrian writes: “Do not be thoughtless in your petitions, in order not to offend God by your foolishness. But rather be wise, to become worthy of the greatest gifts. Ask for a treasure from Him Who is a stranger to stinginess and you will receive a treasure from Him in accordance with the reasonableness of your request. Solomon asked for wisdom and together with it

he received an earthly kingdom because he made a wise request before the Great King. Eliseus asked for a twofold portion of grace of the Holy Spirit and his request was not refused. To ask for trifles from the King insults his dignity.”

The greatest teacher of prayer is our Savior. Prayer accompanies all the important events of His earthly life. The Lord prayed, receiving baptism from John (Luke 3:21). He spent the whole night praying before He chose the Apostles (Luke 6:12). He prayed during the Transfiguration (Luke 22:41). He prayed on the Cross. The very last word before His death was a prayer (Luke 23:46).

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Being impressed by the inspiring image of the praying Savior, one of His disciples turned to Him with the request: “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1). And in answer to this Jesus Christ gave the prayer, short in form, but rich in content, that wonderful, incomparable prayer which to this day unifies the whole Christian world, the “Our Father,” the Lord’s Prayer.

This prayer teaches us about what and in what order to pray. Having turned to God, “*Our Father,*” we acknowledge ourselves to be His children, and in relation to each other, brothers, and, therefore, we pray not only for ourselves but for all people. With the petition “*Hallowed be Thy name,*” we ask that His name might be holy for all people, that everyone might glorify the name of God by their words and deeds. “*Thy Kingdom come.*” The kingdom of God begins within the believer, when the grace of God, having filled him, cleanses and transfigures his inner world. Simultaneously, grace unites everyone, people and angels, into one great spiritual family called the Kingdom of God or the Church. For the good to be spread among people, one should ask: “*Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,*” that is, that everything in the world should be done according to the all-good, all-wise will of God, and that people should as diligently fulfill the will of God on the earth as the angels do it in heaven.

“*Give us this day our daily bread;*” give us today all that is necessary for our daily sustenance. What will happen to us tomorrow we don’t know; we need only our “*daily bread,*” i.e., every day that which is necessary to sustain our existence. “*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*” These words are explained by St. Luke who states them thus: “*And forgive us our sins*” (Luke 11:4) — our sins become our debts because in sinning we fail in our duty and become debtors before God and man. This petition with special emphasis admonishes us to forgive our neighbor for all offenses. Having refused to forgive others, we dare not ask God to forgive us our sins and say the words of the Lord’s Prayer. “*And lead us not into temptation*” — a test of our moral powers by means of an inclination towards some sinful act. Here we ask God to protect us from falling into sin if such a test is necessary. “*But deliver us from the evil one*” — from every evil and the cause of evil, the devil. The prayer finishes with the assurance of fulfillment of our request, for to God belongs an eternal kingdom, power, and glory.

Thus the Lord’s Prayer, unifying within itself all for which it is necessary to pray, teaches us to place in proper order all our personal desires and necessities. First we must ask for the highest good — for **God’s glory**, for the spreading of good among people and the salvation of our souls, and only then we make requests for our daily needs. In relation to our requests “Let us not teach Him how He should help us,” says St. John Chrysostom. “If we discuss our business with those who defend us before the judges, and leave the way of defense up to them, all the more should we act likewise in relation to God. He knows well enough what is beneficial to you.” Besides this, we should completely deliver ourselves to the Lord’s will: Thy will be done! An example of such a prayer has been left to us by the Savior Himself. In the garden of Gethsemane He prayed: “*O My Father, if it be possible, let this*

cup pass from Me,” and immediately added: *“Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt”* (Matt. 26:39).

When to Pray?

The apostle Paul teaches us: *“Pray without ceasing”* (1 Thess. 5:17). It is necessary to pray during those bright, exalted moments when the soul experiences a visitation from above and soars towards heaven and feels a need for prayer. It is necessary as well to pray at all other times assigned for prayer (in the mornings and evenings) even though we are not in the mood to pray. Otherwise, the ability to pray will be lost, just as an old iron key rusts when it is not used. For our soul to preserve a pious freshness, it is necessary to set as a goal to pray regularly, despite the fact that we might or might not be inclined to. Orthodox Christians pray daily in the morning, after awakening, and in the evening before going to bed. We should also pray at the beginning and the end of every important work. In this respect a prayer book is a necessary companion.

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Besides private prayer at home, there is another form of communal prayer, performed in church. Concerning this prayer the Lord said: *“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”* (Matt. 18:20). Since apostolic times the most essential public prayer has been the Liturgy, performed in churches on Sundays, in which the believers with one heart praise God. The public worship carries with it a great spiritual power.

The Fruits of Prayer

Prayer, like a farmer, plows the field of our heart and makes it capable of receiving heavenly blessings and bringing forth fruits of virtues and perfection. Prayer attracts into our hearts the **grace of the Holy Spirit**, thus strengthening our faith, hope, and love. It illuminates our minds, directs our will to do good, consoles the heart in sorrow and suffering, and, in general, gives us everything that serves our true welfare.

Prayer, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, is “the breath of the soul” and is a great blessing to us all. The ability to pray with due concentration and with the whole heart, or to have the gift of prayer, is one of the most precious spiritual gifts. The merciful God endows a person with this ability as a reward for his diligence in prayer.

Communion with God in Prayer

Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky

“Near art Thou, O Lord” (Psalm 118:153)

God is with us everywhere. If we were not so distracted, we would have a constant awareness of God's presence — whether we were at home, on the street, in the field, in the forest, on the sea, underground; whether we were in freedom or in captivity — everywhere.

Always to be with God in one's thoughts — this is to be in a state of constant prayer. But we are distracted by our daily concerns. Knowing that to pray we must remove ourselves at least somewhat from the day's tumult of activities, we set aside some time in the morning and evening. Usually we pray alone, by ourselves, as the Savior taught; *“When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is, in secret”* (Matt. 6:6). But our Lord also said something else: *“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst”*

(Matt. 18:20). And in his High-priestly prayer to His Father, He uttered these holy words concerning those who believe in Him: *“That they may be one, even as We are One”* (John 17:22).

We Orthodox Christians comprise the one Body of Christ's Church, the one House of God, as it is written in the Scripture: *“Christ as a Son over His own House, Whose House are we”* (Heb. 3:6). Here is another world, different from the vain world that surrounds us. Here is a holy world, God's inheritance. Here is — a world of prayer. And this expresses its very essence: life in this special world is a life of prayer — prayer as communion with God, as glorification of God. And more — through prayer we are able to have communion with the entire world of heaven: with the angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, hierarchs, the righteous ones, and a particularly joyous communion with the Most Holy Virgin, the Theotokos. Here is the prayer which we Christians who are still citizens of earth offer for one another. Here we also have our prayer for those close to us, who have departed this life, and here is our appeal to the saints that they, too, raise their prayers on behalf of our beloved ones. This, then, is the **fullness** of prayer.

Communion with God is prayer. In its fullness prayer is most completely achieved in the Orthodox temple. The Church is a world of prayer, and the place of prayer — its fullness — is the temple. Therefore the Orthodox temple itself is called a **church**. Here is the catholicity, the comprehensivity, the universality of the Church, as it was expressed by the holy Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews: *“Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto*

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the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are witnesses in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:22-23).

Man was created to glorify God and to rejoice in union with his Creator. With the fall of Adam, the law of sin took root in the human race, despoiling the close relationship man enjoyed with God in Paradise. But through God's infinite love, man was given the opportunity to regain harmony of soul and restore the bond with his Creator. This is most readily attained through the Church which guides man in the way of repentance and sets him on the path of true faith, teaching him to 'rightly glorify' God — which is the very meaning of the word “orthodox.” And how do we glorify God?

The general principle of Orthodox worship is expressed in the words of the Psalm: *“Let every breath and all creation praise The Lord.”* All of nature, in and of itself, glorifies the Lord. For this reason, in our churches various elements of nature — incense, blessed water, blessed oil, wax candles, palm branches — all serve to the glory of God, and to the fullness thereof.

If nature offers itself in praise of its Creator, how much more should man, the crown of creation, give glory to God. In like manner, therefore, we join our physical bodies in the act of worship — whether in standing, kneeling or making prostrations — in fulfillment of the Apostle's injunction: *“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service”* (Rom. 12:1).

How often we hear the familiar call of King David's Psalm: *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name”* ... 'All that is within me' — of course, all the best and most noble energies, abilities, talents — God's gifts — are called to glorify the Lord. Through love for God expressed in words of prayer, homilies, chants, painting, architecture ... using everything that contributes to the magnificence of the temple and its Divine services, we strive to thank the Lord for

those gifts He has bestowed on us. Of course, not every art form lends itself to this purpose. Instrumental music, for example, tends sooner to divert our attention from feelings of reverence and awe than to inspire them. And statues, aside from their ancient association with pagan worship, are ill-suited — because of their earthly solidity or form — to represent the life of the spirit, to direct our gaze heavenward. Moreover, the soul and the spirit are expressed primarily through the eyes which, in sculpture, are left empty.

Above all, it is through prayer that we glorify our Creator. Prayer is an expression of love towards God and towards our neighbor. Prayer is that bond of love which unites the Church on earth with the Church in heaven. Let us strive, then, to enter more deeply into the world of prayer found in the holy Orthodox Church, to develop a constant awareness of God's presence, and to recover that blissful state experienced by Adam in Paradise, a state of communion with God, for which we were created.
Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY

Missionary Leaflet # 1E
Editor: Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

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**Know the following prayers in either Russian or English**

**O Lord Save Thy People – Tone 1**

Save, O Lord, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance! Grant Thou victory to the Orthodox Christians over their enemies, and by power of Thy cross, preserve Thy commonwealth.

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Спаси, Господи, люди Твоя и благослови достояние Твое, победы православным христи~~ан~~ом на сопротив~~ив~~ныя даруя и Твое сохраняя Крестом Твоим жительство.

**It is Truly Meet**

It is truly meet to bless thee, the Theotokos, ever-blessed and most blameless, and Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

Досто~~й~~но есть яко воистинну блажити Тя, Богородицу, Присноблаженную и Пренепорочную и Матерь Бога нашего. Честнейшую Херувим и славнейшую без сравнения Серафим, без истления Бога Слова рождшую, сущую Богородицу Тя величаем.

**Troparion to St. Vladimir – Tone 4**

Thou wast like a merchant that seeketh a beautiful pearl, O glorious sovereign Vladimir, sitting on the height of the throne of the mother of cities, God-protected Kiev. Searing and sending to the imperial city to know the Orthodox Faith, thou didst find Christ, the priceless Pearl, Who chose thee as a second Paul, and Who didst shake off thy spiritual and physical blindness in the holy font. Wherefore, we who are thy people celebrate thy falling asleep. Pray that thy Russian land be saved, and that Orthodox people be granted peace and great mercy.

Уподобился еси купцу, ищущему добраго бисера, славнодержавный Владимире, на высоте стола с~~е~~дя матере градов, богоспасаемаго Киева: испыт~~у~~я же и посылая к Царскому граду

уведети православную веру, обрел еси безценный бисер - Христа, избравшаго тя, яко втораго Павла, и оттрясшаго слепоту во святей купели, душевную вкупе и телесную. Темже празднуем твое успение, людие твои суще, моли спастися стране твоей российскийския и подати православным людям мир и велию милость.

### **Kontakion to St. Vladimir – Tone 8**

Emulating the great Apostle Paul in thy maturity, O most glorious Vladimir, and putting aside all zeal for idols as childish thoughts, thou has adorned thyself with the purple robe of divine baptism. And standing now in gladness before Christ the Savior, pray that thy Russian land be saved, and that Orthodox people be granted peace and great mercy.

Подобствовав великому апостолу Павлу, в седмицах, всеславне Владимире, вся яко младенческая мудрования, яже о идолах тщания, оставль, яко муж совершенный, украсился еси Божественнаго Крещения багряницею, и ныне, Спасу Христу в веселии предстоя, моли спастися державы Российския начальником и множеству владомых.

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Explain why and when we say – Amen

A very minor word, "Amen", is so often repeated during our services and in our private prayers. Usually, it marks the end of prayers or important texts of religious content and it is like a seal placed on everything of particular importance. And that is exactly what it is. One of the earliest meanings of the ancient Hebrew word "amen" was "to be worthy of trust". Other meanings are: "it is verily so", "let it be so", "let it be accordingly", "so be it". In the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy, Moses instructs the people of Israel to build an altar, gives them the order of sacrificial offerings and commands them to obey God and submit to him: "This day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God." In response to the loudly proclaimed words of the prophet, words which reject every impiety and every untruth, the people exclaim repeatedly "Amen.- And the last lines of the last book of the New Testament, the Apocalypse or the Revelation of Saint John the Theologian read: "He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly! Amen."

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Thus the word "Amen" is used in the Old Testament to signify agreement and, by the same token, the acceptance of all consequences arising from that agreement. Furthermore, in order to bear witness to this agreement and at the same time praise the Lord, this word is repeated twice: "Amen, Amen" In the New Testament this word is used even more frequently. In the Christian Church, the believers, even Greek speaking believers, started using this ancient Hebrew word at the end of each eucharistic prayer spoken by the priest. But even private prayers and hymns of praise of early as well as present day Christians end with this word. Christ used this word at the beginning of particularly important words of witness: "verily, verily I say unto you," or "amen, amen I say unto you." He invested this word with a new, special meaning which had been unknown in the old rabbinical literature by using it to confirm the absolute truth and veracity of His words lending them the weight of His Divine authority. In the New Testament (in Slavonic) even Christ Himself is called "Amen", the True One. As Apostle Paul says in his epistle to the Corinthians: "... all promises of God are in Him (Christ), and Amen is in Him - to the glory of God and through us."

And so, as we utter the word "Amen" we give ourselves to God, we submit to His will. As He has signed the New Testament, His Testament, with His Blood which He has shed upon the Cross so we receive from Him this New Testament, this new covenant of God with man and we confirm our

faithfulness and devotion to Him by this burning word of faith – Amen! *Source: St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Washington, DC*

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**Know the “usual beginning” through “Our Father” in English or Church Slavonic** Priest: Blessed is our God, always now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. 3x

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. 3x.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Священник: Благословец Бог наш всегда, ныне и присно, и во веки веков.

Аминь.

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Слава Тебе, Боже наш, слава Тебе.

Царю Небесный, Утешителю, Душе истины, Иже везде сый и вся исполняяй, Сокровище благих и жизни Подателю, прииди и вселися в ны, и очисти ны от всякия скверны, и спаси, Блаже, души наша.

Святый Боже, Святый Крепкий, Святый Безсмертный, помилуй нас. 3X

Слава Отцу и Сыну и Святому Духу, и ныне и присно, и во веки веков. Аминь.



Пресвятая Троице, помилуй нас; Господи, очисти грехи наша; Владыко, прости беззакония наша; Святый, посети и исцели немощи наша, имене Твоего ради.

Господи, помилуй. 3X

Слава Отцу и Сыну и Святому Духу, и ныне и присно, и во веки веков. Аминь.

Отче наш, Иже еси на Небесех, да святится имя Твое, да приидет Царствие Твое, да будет воля Твоя, яко на Небеси и на земли. Хлеб наш насущный даждь нам днесь; и остави нам долги наша, якоже и мы оставляем должником нашим; и не введи нас во искушение, но избави нас от лукаваго.

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### **Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ**

After the Annunciation, Mary continued living in Joseph's house, and "she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save his people from their sins.' Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Behold, a Virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,' (Isaiah 7: 14) which being interpreted is: 'God with us'" (Matt 1: 18-23).

The story of the birth of our Savior according to St. Luke begins thus: "It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, who was great with child" (Luke 2:1-15).

And though the Christ child was born in a manger in humble circumstance, the joyful tidings of His birth became known to the poor shepherds in a nearby field and to eastern wise men in far off lands. To the shepherds the angel said: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men'" (Luke 2: 10-11;13-14). Following a star, wise men from the East came to worship the newborn King of the Jews. They saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matt 2: 1-11).

The contemporary Russian Orthodox practice of the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord includes the reading of the Royal Hours in the morning on the even of the feast, followed by a Vespereal Divine Liturgy. In the evening on the eve of the feast a special Vigil is held comprised of Great Compline,

Matins, and the First Hour. In some homes a special meal with 12 dishes is served following the Vigil. On the day of the feast itself the Divine Liturgy is served at which all who are able partake of Holy Communion. After the Divine Liturgy, and for the 12 days between Nativity and the feast of the Theophany of the Lord, it is traditional to visit friends and loved ones and to sing Christmas Carols in celebration of this great feast.



**Detailed explanation of leading up events and celebrations after Easter (великий пост/Great Lent, Преображение/Transfiguration, Страстная Неделя/Holy Week, Страстной Четверг/Holy Thursday, Пасхальная Заутреня/Paschal Divine Services, etc.)**

## **Great Lent**

Great Lent is the most important and most ancient of the fasts which extend over more than one day. It reminds us of the forty-day fast of the Savior in the wilderness, and prepares us for Passion Week and for the joyous Feast of Feasts, the radiant Resurrection of Christ.

The Holy and Great Fast is a time for special prayer and repentance during which each of us should beseech the Lord for forgiveness of sins through Confession and preparation for Communion, and then worthily partake the Holy Mysteries of Christ in accordance with the commandment of Christ (John 6:53-56).

During the Old Testament period the Lord commanded the sons of Israel to give each year a tithe (one tenth) of all that they possessed, and when they did so they received blessing in all their affairs.

In like manner the Holy Fathers established for our benefit that a tenth of the year, the period of Great Lent, be consecrated to God, so that we might be blessed in all our affairs and each year purify ourselves of our sins which we have committed during the course of the year.

Great Lent then serves as the God-ordained tenth of the year, for it equals approximately thirty-six days, excluding Sundays, during which we separate ourselves for a time from the distractions of life and all its possible enjoyments, and dedicate ourselves primarily to the service of God unto the salvation of our souls.

Great Lent is preceded by three preparatory Sundays. The first preparatory Sunday of Great Lent is termed the "Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee." This Sunday's Gospel parable of the Publican and the Pharisee is read in order to demonstrate that only prayer with heartfelt tears and humility, like those of the publican, and not with a recounting of one's virtues like the pharisee, can call down upon us the mercy of God. Starting with this Sunday and continuing until the fifth Sunday of Great Lent, following the reading of the Gospel, during the All-night Vigil, the contrite prayer is chanted, "The doors of repentance do Thou open to me, O Giver of Life..."

The second preparatory Sunday of Great Lent is termed the "Sunday of the Prodigal Son." In the touching parable of the Prodigal Son read during Liturgy, the Holy Church teaches us to rely on the mercy of God, provided we have sincerely repented of our sins. On this Sunday and the succeeding two Sundays, following the singing of the Polyeleos (the meaning of which is both "much oil" and "much mercy", and consists of selected verses of Psalms 134 and 135 set to festive hymns) at the All-night Vigil, Psalm 136 is chanted: By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and we wept when we remembered Sion... This psalm describes the suffering of the Jews during the Babylonian

captivity and their longing for their fatherland. The words of this psalm teach us

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about our spiritual captivity, the captivity to sin, and that we should aspire towards our spiritual fatherland, the Heavenly Kingdom.

The final words of this psalm scandalize many with reference to Blessed shall be he who shall seize and dash thine infants (those of the Babylonians) against the rock! Of course, the literal meaning of these words is brutal and unacceptable for the Christian, for the Lord Himself taught us to love and bless our enemies and to worship God in spirit and truth. These words gain a pure and lofty significance with a Christian and spiritual nature, for they mean, "Blessed is he who has a firm resolve to break, on the rock of faith, the newly forming evil thoughts and desires (as it were in their infant state) before they mature into evil deeds and habits."

The third preparatory Sunday before Great Lent is called "Meat-fare Sunday," because after this Sunday, of non fasting foods, one is allowed to eat cheese, milk, butter, and eggs, but no meat or poultry. This Sunday is also termed the "The Sunday of the Last Judgement," as the Gospel passage concerning the Dread Judgement is read, describing the final reward or punishment awaiting us, and thereby awakening the sinner to repentance. In the hymns on Cheese-fare Sunday, the fall into sin of Adam and Eve is recalled, which resulted from lack of self-control and fasting, with their salvific fruits.

The last Sunday before Great Lent is termed "Cheese-fare Sunday," because it is the last day on which one can eat cheese, butter and eggs. During the Liturgy we hear the Gospel reading (Matt. 6:14-21) concerning the forgiveness of our fellow man for his offenses against us, without which we cannot receive the forgiveness of our sins from the Heavenly Father. In accordance with this Gospel reading, Christians have the pious custom on this day of forgiving each other their sins, both known and unknown, and those who have a quarrel with someone undertake every effort to be reconciled. Therefore this Sunday is also termed "Forgiveness Sunday."

The general characteristics of the divine services during Great Lent consist of prolonged services of a less exultant character. There is less chanting, longer readings from the Psalter and additional prayers, which dispose the soul towards repentance. At every service full prostrations are done during the penitential prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, "O Lord and Master of my life..."

During the morning hours, Matins, the Hours with certain insertions, and Vespers are served. In the evening, Great Compline is served instead of Vespers. On Wednesdays and Fridays the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated. On Saturdays the Liturgy of St. John of Chrysostom is celebrated and on the first five Sundays the Liturgy the St. Basil the Great, which is also celebrated on Great Thursday and Great Saturday of Passion Week.

During Great Lent each Sunday is dedicated to the commemoration of a special event or person which calls the sinful soul to repentance and hope in the mercy of God.

### *The Sundays of Lent*

The first week of Great Lent is distinguished by its special strictness and its lengthy services. On the first four days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) the canon (set of prayers) of St. Andrew of Crete is read at Great Compline with the refrain between each verse, "Have mercy on

me, O God, have mercy on me."

On Friday of the first week, at the Liturgy after the Prayer before the Ambo, the blessing of "koliva" (a mixture of boiled wheat with honey) takes place in memory of the holy Great Martyr St. Theodore Tyro, who granted supernatural help to Christians to help them keep the fast. In 362 A.D., the Byzantine Emperor, Julian the Apostate, ordered that the blood of sacrifices offered to idols be secretly sprinkled on the provisions for the city of Constantinople. The Great Martyr St. Theodore, who was burned alive in 306 for his confession of the Christian faith, appeared in a dream to the bishop of Constantinople, Eudoxius, and exposed the secret plot of

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Julian. He ordered him not to buy food for the entire week at the city market, and to instruct his flock to live on koliva.

On the first Sunday of Great Lent the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" is celebrated, which was established by the Empress Theodora in 842 A.D. in memory of the restoration of the veneration of the holy icons. At the conclusion of the Liturgy a Service of Intercession ("Moleben") is held in the center of the church before icons of the Savior and the Theotokos, asking that the Lord confirm Orthodox Christians in the faith and bring back to the path of truth all those who have apostatized (renounced their faith) from the Church. The deacon reads the Creed solemnly and pronounces the anathemas, proclaiming that all those who have presumed to distort the true Orthodox Christian Faith are separated from the Church. He then intones "Eternal Memory" for all the reposed defenders of the Orthodox Faith, and finally, "Many Years," for all those who are living. This service is customarily done in the presence of a bishop.

On the second Sunday of Great Lent the memory of St. Gregory Palamas is celebrated. A bishop of Thessalonica who lived in the fourteenth century, he continued the battle against Western, Latin distortions of the Christian faith. In accordance with the Orthodox Faith he taught that the ascetic endeavor of fasting and prayer, particularly the practice of the Jesus Prayer according to the teachings of the hesychastic (contemplative) Fathers, prepares one to receive the grace-filled light of the Lord, which is like that which shone on Mt. Tabor at the Lord's Transfiguration. In other words, if God wills, according to one's striving, one can partake of divine blessedness while still on this sinful earth. Thus the second Sunday of Great Lent has been set aside to commemorate this great Church Father, who made explicit the teaching which reveals the power of prayer and fasting.

On the third Sunday of Great Lent, during the All-night Vigil after the Great Doxology, the Holy Cross is brought forth from the Altar and placed in the center of the church for the veneration of the faithful. During the prostrations made before the Cross (which often contains a portion of the True Cross) the church chants, "Before Thy Cross, we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify." This hymn is also chanted at the Liturgy instead of the Trisagion. The Church has placed this event in the middle of Great Lent in order that the recollection of the suffering and death of the Lord might inspire and strengthen those fasting for the remainder of the ascetic struggle of the fast. The Holy Cross remains out for veneration throughout the week until Friday, when, after the hours and before the beginning of the Presanctified Liturgy, it is returned to the Altar. Thus the third Sunday and fourth week of Great Lent are termed those of the "Adoration of the Holy Cross."

On the fourth Sunday of Great Lent St. John of the Ladder is commemorated, the author of the classic ascetic text, *The Ladder*, in which he indicates a ladder, or succession of virtues which lead us up to the Throne of God. On Thursday of the fifth week at Matins, the Great Canon of St. Andrew

of Crete is read, along with the reading of the life of St. Mary of Egypt. The commemoration of the life of St. Mary of Egypt, who formerly had been a great sinner, is intended to serve as an example of true repentance for all and convince us of the ineffable compassion of God. On Saturday of the fifth week (Matins on Friday evening) we celebrate the "Laudation of the Theotokos," which consists of the reading of the Akathist to the Theotokos. This service was initiated in Greece in gratitude to the Theotokos for her numerous deliverances of Constantinople from its enemies. The Akathist is read here for the confirmation of the faithful in their reliance upon the heavenly Mediatress (female mediator, in this case the Theotokos), who, delivering us from visible enemies, is even more an aid to us in our battle with invisible enemies.

On the fifth Sunday of Great Lent we commemorate our holy Mother Mary of Egypt. As mentioned above, the Church finds in her an image of true repentance and a source of encouragement for those engaged in spiritual endeavors, by virtue of the example of the ineffable mercy of God shown towards her a repentant sinner.

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The sixth week, which directly precedes Palm Sunday, is dedicated to the preparation of those fasting for a worthy meeting with the Lord and for the commemoration of the Passion of the Lord.

On Saturday of the sixth week the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus Christ is commemorated. This day is termed "Lazarus Saturday." During Matins the "Troparia on the Blameless" are chanted: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes..." and at the Liturgy instead of "Holy God" we chant "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia," for those catechumens who are baptized according to custom on this day.

The sixth Sunday of Great Lent is one of the twelve great feasts, in which we celebrate the solemn Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem for His voluntary Passion. This feast is also termed Palm Sunday. After the reading of the Gospel at the All-night Vigil, we do not chant "Having seen the Resurrection of Christ" but rather the 50th Psalm is read immediately, and after being sanctified with prayer and holy water, bundles of palms, flowers, and (in the Russian Church) pussy willows, are distributed to the faithful, who then remain standing until the end of the service holding these bundles with lit candles as a sign of the victory of life over death.

At Vespers on Palm Sunday the dismissal begins with the words, "May Christ our true God Who for our salvation went to His voluntary Passion,..."

### **Passion Week**

Passion Week is the term for the last week before Pascha. It has this name because it is consecrated to the commemoration of the last days of the earthly life of the Savior, His suffering, death on the Cross, and burial. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of this week are dedicated to the commemoration of the last conversations of the Lord Jesus Christ with the people and His disciples.

The specifics of the services of the first three days of Passion Week are as follows: at Matins, after the Six Psalms and the "Alleluia," we chant the troparion, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh at midnight...", and after the Canon is read we chant the exapostilarion, "I behold Thy chamber, O my Savior..." On each of these three days we serve the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with readings from the Gospels. The Gospel is also read at Matins.

## **Great Thursday**

The service of Great Thursday is dedicated to the commemoration of the Mystical Supper, the washing of the feet of the disciples by Jesus Christ, the prayer of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and His betrayal by Judas.

At Matins after the Six Psalms and the "Alleluia" we chant the troparion, "When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of the feet..."

The Liturgy served is that of St. Basil the Great and is combined with Vespers in commemoration of the fact that the Lord established the Mystery of Communion during the evening. Instead of the Cherubic Hymn and the communion verses, "Let our mouths be filled...", we chant the hymn, "Receive me today, O Son of God, as a communicant of Thy mystical supper..."

In the Moscow Cathedral of the Dormition and in the Kiev Caves Lavra on this day after the Liturgy, and in the Greek Church during Matins of Great Wednesday, there is performed the Sanctification of Chrism, which is used for the Mystery of Chrismation, and in the consecration of churches and Antiminsia (the antimins is the

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special cloth that the bishop issues to each parish that allows the Divine Liturgy to be served – the Liturgy takes place on the antimins).

## **Great Friday**

The services of Great Friday are dedicated to the commemoration of the sufferings on the Cross of the Savior, His death and burial. At Matins, which is served on the evening of Great Thursday (as all Matins services of this week are held the night before the actual day), the Reading of the Twelve Gospels takes place, the Gospels being placed in the middle of the church. These are selections from the four Gospels which proclaim the Passion of the Savior, beginning with His final conversation with the disciples at the Mystical Supper, and ending with His burial in the garden by Joseph of Arimathea and the setting of the military watch over His Tomb. During the readings, the faithful stand with lit candles, which are symbols both of the glory and magnificence which the Lord did not lose during the period of His suffering, and of the ardent love we should have for our Savior.

On Great Friday the Royal Hours are served, but Liturgy is never served, since on this day the Lord offered Himself as a sacrifice.

Vespers is served at the ninth hour of the day (3 P.M.), which is the hour of the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. In this service His removal from the Cross and His burial are commemorated.

With the chanting of the troparion, "The Noble Joseph, having taken Thy most pure body down from the Tree...", the clergy take up the Burial Shroud (an icon) of Christ lying in the tomb (called "Plaschanitsa" in Russian, "Epitaphion" in Greek), from the Holy Table as it were, from Golgotha, and carry it from the Altar, into the center of the church, preceded by candles and incense. It is placed on a specially prepared stand that resembles a tomb, and the priests and all those present prostrate themselves before it and kiss the wounds of the Lord depicted upon it, the pierced side and the

imprint of the nails in the hands and feet.

The Burial Shroud is left in the church for three days, from Friday afternoon through Saturday and until the first moments of Sunday, in commemoration of the three day entombment of Christ.

## **Great Saturday**

The divine services of Great Saturday are dedicated to the commemoration of the time Jesus Christ remained "in the grave bodily, but in hades with Thy soul as God; in Paradise with the thief and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things O Christ, the Inexpressible," and finally, the Resurrection of the Savior from the grave.

At Matins on Great Saturday (served in parish churches on Friday evening), after the Great Doxology, the Burial Shroud is borne out of the church by the priests, accompanied by the chanting of "Holy God...", as at a normal burial service. The people all join in following it while it is carried around the church in commemoration of the descent of Christ into hell and His victory over hell and death. After it is brought back into the church, it is taken through the open Royal Gates into the Altar as a symbol that the Savior remained inseparable from God the Father, and that with His suffering and death He again opened the gates of Paradise. During this moment the choir chants, "When the noble Joseph..."

When the Burial Shroud is again placed on the tomb in the center of the church, a litany is said and the prophecy of the Prophet Ezekiel is read, concerning the resurrection of the dead. The Epistle instructs the faithful that Jesus Christ is the true Pascha for us all, and the Gospel relates how the high priest with the permission of Pilate placed a watch over the Lord's tomb and sealed it.

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The Divine Liturgy on this day is later than any other day of the year and is combined with Vespers.

After the Vespers Entry and the chanting of "O Gentle Light..." we begin the reading of fifteen lessons from the Old Testament, which contain all the foreshadowings and prophecies of the salvation of mankind through the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After these readings and the Epistle reading, the forefeast of the Resurrection of Christ begins. The choir begins to chant slowly "Arise, O God, judge the earth, for Thou shalt have an inheritance among all the nations..." while in the Altar and throughout the church, the black vestments are replaced with white ones. This change is a symbol of the event in which the Myrrhbearers, early in the morning "while it was still dark," saw before the tomb of Christ the angel in radiant vestments and heard from him the joyful proclamation of the Resurrection of Christ.

The deacon, now clad in bright vestments like an angel, goes out into the center of the church and before the Burial Shroud reads the Gospel which proclaims to mankind the Resurrection of Christ.

The Liturgy of St. Basil the Great then continues in its usual order. Instead of the Cherubic Hymn we chant the following, "Let all mortal flesh keep silence," and instead of "It is truly meet..." we chant, "Weep not for Me, O Mother, beholding in the tomb Thy Son..." The communion verse chanted is, "The Lord awoke as one that sleepeth and is risen, saving us."

Following the Liturgy there is a blessing of bread and wine for the nourishment of those praying. A

few hours later the reading of the Acts of the Apostles begins in the Church and continues until the beginning of the Midnight Office.

An hour before midnight the Midnight Office is served during which the Canon of Great Saturday is read. At the end of this service the priests silently take the Burial Shroud from the center of the church and into the Altar through the Royal Gates and place it upon the Altar Table, where it remains until the Ascension of the Lord, in commemoration of the forty day abiding of Jesus Christ on the earth after His Resurrection from the dead.

The faithful now reverently await the hour of midnight when the radiant, Paschal joy of the greatest feast, the Resurrection of the Lord our Savior Jesus Christ begins.

This paschal joy is a sacred rejoicing of which there is no likeness nor equal on earth. It is the endless joy and blessedness of eternal life. It is of this joy that the Lord spoke when He said, Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you (John 16:22).

### **The Feast of Pascha**

The word Pascha means "passover" or "deliverance" in Hebrew. The Jews, in celebrating the Old Testament passover, commemorated the liberation of their forebears from Egyptian slavery. Christians, on the other hand, in celebrating the New Testament Pascha, celebrate the deliverance through Jesus Christ of the entire human race from slavery to the Devil and His granting to us life and eternal blessedness. Due to the blessings which we have received through the Resurrection of Christ, Pascha is the feast of feasts and the triumph of triumphs, and therefore its divine services are distinguished by magnificence and an exceptionally solemn rejoicing.

Long before midnight the faithful in bright and festal clothing stream into the churches and reverently await the approaching Paschal Festival. The clergy are vested in their brightest garments. Prior to the actual moment of midnight, festive bells peal out the announcement of the coming of the great moment of the light-bearing Feast of the Resurrection of Christ. The entire clergy with crosses, candles and incense come out of the Altar and

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together with the people, like the Myrrhbearers who went very early to the tomb, circle the church and chant, "Thy Resurrection, O Christ Savior, the angels hymn in the heavens; vouchsafe also us on earth with pure hearts to glorify Thee." During this procession, from the heights of the bell tower, as if from Heaven, there pours forth the Paschal peal. All those who have come to pray walk with lit candles, thus expressing their joy of soul in the radiant feast.

The procession pauses at the closed western doors of the church, as if at the opening to the Tomb of Christ. Here the highest ranking priest, like the angel who proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ to the Myrrhbearers at the tomb, is the first to proclaim the joyous verse, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life." This verse is thrice repeated by the clergy and the choir.

Then the presiding clergyman proclaims the verses of the ancient prophecy of the holy King David, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered..." and all respond in answer to each verse of the psalm with, "Christ is risen from the dead...."

The doors are opened, and the congregation, as once did the Myrrhbearers and the Apostles,



enters into the church, resplendent with the light of candles and lamps, and chants joyously, "Christ is risen from the dead...!"

The Resurrection Matins consist primarily of the Paschal canon of St. John of Damascus. Each ode of this canon concludes with the victorious hymn, "Christ is risen from the dead." During the chanting of the canon each of the clergy in turn, holding the cross with candles and preceded by candle-bearers, go around the entire church censing the risen!" The faithful all respond loudly, "Truly He is risen!" The repeated procession of the clergy from the Altar commemorates the appearances of the Lord to His disciples after the Resurrection.

After chanting the hymn "...let us embrace one another. Let us say Brethren, even to them that hate us; let us forgive all things on the Resurrection...", all the faithful begin to greet each other saying, "Christ is risen!," and replying, "Truly He is risen!" They seal this greeting with a kiss and exchange Paschal eggs which serve as a meaningful symbol of the resurrection from the grave, the resurrection of life from its very depths through the power of omnipotent God.

Then the homily of St. John Chrysostom is read which begins with the words, "If any be devout and God loving, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumph..." St. John summons all to joy, "Ye rich and ye poor, with one another exult. Ye sober and ye slothful, honor the day. Ye that have kept the fast and ye that have not, be glad today..."

"Let no one weep for his transgressions, for forgiveness hath dawned from the tomb. Let no one fear death, for the death of the Savior hath set us free..."

And finally he solemnly proclaims the eternal victory of Christ over death and hell, "O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory? Christ is risen and thou art overthrown. Christ is risen and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life flourisheth. Christ is risen, and there is none dead in the tombs (for death is not a permanent end now, but only a temporary condition), for Christ being risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of them that have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen."

Immediately following Matins, the Hours and Liturgy are celebrated with all the doors to the Altar open. They were opened at the beginning of Matins and will not be closed throughout the entire week as a sign that Jesus Christ has opened the gates to the Heavenly Kingdom forever. At the Liturgy the first section from the Gospel of St. John the Theologian is read, which begins with the words, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..., which is a description of the divinity of our Redeemer. If the Liturgy is

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concelebrated by many priests, then the Gospel is read in several languages as a sign that the "proclamation" concerning the Lord "went forth" unto all the people on earth.

Before the conclusion of the Liturgy the blessing of the Paschal bread, the Artos, is performed. It is distributed to the faithful on Bright Saturday following Liturgy, as a Paschal blessing.

Immediately after the Paschal Liturgy, and sometimes between Matins and the Liturgy, the Paschal bread, cheese, eggs and meat for the Paschal meals of the faithful are blessed.

After each Liturgy of Bright Week the Cross of Christ, accompanied by the ringing of bells, is carried in triumph around the church. Indeed, all during the week bells are rung as often as possible. It all

serves to express the joy of the faithful and to celebrate the victory of Jesus Christ over death and hell. To emphasize this joy the Holy Fathers instituted the rule that kneeling and prostrations are forbidden in church from the first day of Pascha until the Vespers on Pentecost.

The presiding priest celebrates Vespers on the first day of Pascha in his best vestments. After the Vespers entry with the Gospel, the Gospel passage is read which describes the appearance of Jesus Christ to the Apostles on the evening of the first day of His resurrection from the dead (John 29:19-25).

On the first Tuesday after Bright Week, in order to share the joy of the Resurrection of Christ with the reposed and in the hope of the universal resurrection, the Church holds a special remembrance of the dead. After the Liturgy a general Service of Remembrance and Intercession, or Pannykhida, is said, and following a custom of the early Church, the faithful visit the graves of their relatives on this day.

Paschal chanting is used in the church until the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, which is celebrated on the fortieth day after Pascha.

“Law of God”

Fr. Seraphim Slobodskoy

## **Transfiguration**

Jesus Christ, in speaking to His disciples, often told them that He was to go to Jerusalem to receive suffering at the hands of the high priests and the teachers of the Law, that he was to be killed and to be resurrected on the third day. The apostles believed that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, but they were deeply distressed at the thought of His suffering and could not bear to hear that He, the Son of God and the Messiah, would be degraded, would suffer, and would die. The disciples still had earthly hopes about the glory of the Savior. They hoped that Jesus would free Judea from the Roman Empire's rule and would restore the Kingdom of Israel.

To strengthen their faith for the time when they would see Him suffering and to take their minds off earthly thoughts, Jesus Christ showed His disciples His Divine glory. Not long before His suffering, Jesus took three of His disciples - Peter, James, and John - and led them up a high mountain, Tabor, to pray. Walking a little distance from them, He began to pray while the exhausted disciples fell asleep. When they awoke, they saw their Teacher transfigured: His face shone like the sun, and His clothing was white as snow and glittering like light. And standing with Jesus were two prophets - Moses and Elijah - who appeared in their heavenly glory to talk with Jesus about how He would soon fulfill God's purpose by suffering and dying in Jerusalem.

"When they awakened, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. And it came to pass as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah' - not knowing what he was saying" (Luke 9:32-33). "While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And behold, a voice out of the cloud, said, 'THIS IS

MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. HEAR YE HIM!' And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and be not afraid.' And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, except Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no

man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead' (Matt. 17:5-9).

The disciples fell to the ground in fear. Jesus came near them, touched them and said: "Arise, do not be afraid." The disciples arose and saw Jesus as He always was. When they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them not to speak of what they had seen until He had arisen from the dead.

After such proof of His Divine glory, the apostles' faith in Christ as the Son of God could no longer be swayed.

It is important to understand that although this feast is celebrated on August 6/19 it actually took place in the time leading up to the Lord's Passion. It is transferred to the Lenten period proceeding the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos because this Lenten period is most similar in strictness to Great Lent, when the Transfiguration actually took place.

Missionary Leaflet # E50  
Editor: Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

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## **Lives of St. Vladimir, St. Grand Duchess Olga, St. Alexander Nevsky, St. George**

### **St. Vladimir Equal of the Apostles – July 15/28**

Prince Vladimir was the son of Prince Svyatoslav and Malusha, the Princess of the Drevlyany people. He was raised by his mother's brother Dobrynya, who was a pagan. In 972 Vladimir became the ruler of Novgorod. In 980, when the war between brothers was at its highest point, Vladimir started hostilities against Kiev, ruled at the time by his brother Yaropolk. After the victory over his brother Vladimir became the ruler of Kiev. He conquered Galitia, suppressed the rebellious Votka people, fought with the Pecheneg tribes, and expanded the territory subject to him from the Baltic Sea in the north to the river Boug in the south. He had 5 wives and numerous concubines. He installed idols on the Kiev Mountains with human sacrifices being brought to them. It was at that time that Variagians Feodor and Ioann died for being faithful to the Lord. The death of these martyrs impressed Vladimir so much that he began to doubt pagan beliefs.

Vladimir invited missionaries from many countries to come to Kiev: Moslem Bulgarians who lived beyond the Volga river, German Latins, Jews and Greeks. The prince asked them about their creeds, and each of the visitors offered him his own belief. It was the Greek preacher who impressed Vladimir most of all. At the end of their conversation, the preacher described the day of the Lord's judgment. Upon counseling with his boyars, Vladimir sent 10 wise men to find out whose faith was better. When the Russian envoys arrived in Constantinople they were impressed to the depth of their souls by the splendor of the St. Sofia cathedral, the harmonious singing of the royal choir and the grandeur of the service conducted by the Patriarch. "We were not even aware if we were on the earth or in heaven," they related to Vladimir while recounting their impressions. And the boyars added, "If the Greek faith had not been superior to other beliefs, your grandmother, Olga, who was the wisest of living people, would not have embraced it."

Vladimir decided to get baptized, but he did not want to turn Russia into a Greek subject. For this reason Vladimir started hostilities against Greece and occupied Hersones, from where he sent envoys to Constantinople demanding that the emperors Basilius and Constantine agree to his marrying their sister Anna. They replied that Anna could only marry a Christian. Then Vladimir

declared that he is willing to accept Christianity. But prior to the bride's arrival to Hersones, Vladimir was inflicted by blindness.

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In this state, like the Apostle Paul, he became aware of his spiritual powerlessness and was prepared for the great miracle of rebirth. When the Princess arrived in Hersones, she advised Vladimir to get baptized as soon as possible. Vladimir was baptized in 988 and was named Vasilii. Upon coming out of the baptismal font he regained his physical and spiritual vision and exclaimed in rapture, "Now I have seen the true God!"

Returning to Kiev together with Korsun and Greek priests, Vladimir suggested to his twelve sons to become Christians and they were baptized in one of the Kiev streams called Kreshchatic. Many boyars followed the example of his sons. Meanwhile Vladimir started to ban and destroy idols. Perun, the greatest of the idols, was tied to a horse, dragged off its mount with desecration and thrown into the Dnieper River. This was followed by preaching the Gospel to people. Christian ministers brought people together and preached to them the true sacred faith. Finally Saint Vladimir told all the Kiev citizens, both rich and poor, to come to the bank of Dnieper on a certain day to get baptized. The Kiev citizens were willing to fulfill the Prince's order reasoning: "The Prince and boyars would not have adopted the new faith, if it had not been better."

On the appointed day, the citizens of Kiev came to the bank of the Dnieper River. Vladimir himself came there also accompanied by Christian ministers. All the people entered the river, with the water reaching up to their necks or chest, adults were holding children and babies, while the ministers were reading prayers on the bank. Saint Vladimir was elatedly praying to God that he and his people be commended to the Lord.

After the baptizing of the people living in Kiev and its suburbs, the new faith was brought to Novgorod. In 990, Mikhail, the first metropolitan of Kiev, arrived in Novgorod with six bishops accompanied by Dobrynia, uncle of Saint Vladimir. Like in Kiev, they overthrew the statue of Perun, dragged it on the ground and cast it into the Volkhov River. After that they proclaimed the people Catechumens (a Catechumen is a learner – one preparing for baptism) and baptized them. Metropolitan Mikhail together with 4 bishops and Dobrynia left Novgorod for Rostov, where they baptized many citizens, received presbyters into the ministry and built a church. But the pagan beliefs persisted so long after that in Rostov, that the first two Rostov bishops - Saint Feodor and Saint Illarion - after many great efforts to eradicate paganism had to leave the cathedra (the seat of the ruling bishop). Saint bishops Leontius and Isiaya worked hard to put an end to idolatry in Rostov. Venerable Ambrosius founded the Rostov monastery and was an archimandrite there.

In 992 the Holy faith was brought to the Suzdal region. Prince Vladimir went there with two bishops. The Suzdal people adopted Christianity and got baptized willingly.

Vladimir's children receiving appanage principalities (a geographical district over which a prince rules) from him, gave much attention to expansion of Christianity in their crown domains. Hence, in the 10th century, in addition to Kiev, Novgorod, Rostov, and Suzdal, the Holy Creed was also taught in the towns of Murom, Polotsk, Vladimir-of-Volyn, Smolensk, Pskov, Lutsk, Tmutarakan and in the land of Drevlans. Later, in the land of the Vyatich people (more recently called Kursk, Orlov, Tula and Kaluga regions) Venerable Kuksha, a monk of the Pechora monastery, accomplished a lot of ministerial work and preaching. He suffered a martyr's death from the pagans.

In the beginning the Christian faith was initially adopted in territories adjacent to Kiev and along the waterway from Kiev to Novgorod, wherefrom it was spread along the Volga artery. Under the Orthodox dominion, Slavic tribes started to be drawn together into a united state.

The successful conversion of Russian people to Christianity can be explained by the fact that it was spread predominantly by peaceful means - by ministrations and preaching (unlike Roman Catholics who often used fire and sword). As well as the fact that it was done in the native Slavic language, due to the work of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

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Following the example of Russians some national minorities living on lands adjacent to Russia started to convert to Orthodox Christianity. Thus, in the 10th through the 13th centuries some Finnish tribes (Izhora and Korela), Chude, Cheremis and Votiaks, and also some non-Russian tribes living in Vologda and some other national minorities were baptized. In the beginning of the 13th century the city of Nizhni-Novgorod was erected on the banks of the Volga and Oka Rivers to become a stronghold of Orthodoxy among non-Russians living along the Volga River and in the middle regions of Russia.

In the western parts of Russia the spreading of Orthodoxy was confronted by another strong influence coming from the Roman Catholic Church. Latin missionaries from Sweden were preaching in Finland. The tribes living south of the Finnish bay were initially converted into Orthodoxy, but later Latin missionaries from Denmark inhabited the region. By the end of the 12th century a Latin Order of Knights of the Sword was established in Livonia, which opposed both the Russian influence and the successful expansion of Orthodoxy. In Lithuania the Orthodox Christian faith started to be adopted in the 12th century from the neighboring Russian settlements. In the 13th century, after Lithuanian princes conquered the Russian towns of Novogrudsk, Slonim and Brest, some of the Lithuanian people got baptized.

The expansion of Orthodoxy here was particularly promoted by the martyrdom and death of three court dignitaries of the Lithuanian prince Olgerdt (who was the son of Gedemin, the founder of the Lithuanian kingdom). These were Saints Anthony, Ivan and Eustaphius. But by the end of that century Lithuania and the western part of Russia subject to it joined the Catholic Poland. After that Roman popes did everything possible to attain 2 goals: the separation of southwest lands from the unified Russian church, and the introduction of the so-called "Lithuanian Unia" there.

### Influence of Christianity on the Life of Russian People

Immediately after adoption, the Holy Christian faith began to effect positively the life of our ancestors. The society started practicing the Christian way of life such as frequent prayers, charity, and traveling to holy places to name a few. Especially pronounced was the beneficial influence of Christianity on the hearts and lives of some prominent personalities of that time. While a pagan Prince Vladimir was indulging in vices, he was also notorious for cruelty. Christian faith changed him as if he had been born again. He became reserved, chaste and compassionate towards the poor and disabled. Every day in his palace he would give alms to the beggars and send out everything necessary for nurturing the poor and crippled at their homes.

As a new Christian, Vladimir was even doubtful about the execution of the worst criminals. He asked bishops if execution would constitute a sin. Even posing such a question (the answer is: execution is

very rarely allowed in Orthodox countries) showed the complete change of heart Vladimir had – from life as a pagan to live as a Christian. Vladimir's sons, saint martyrs Boris and Gleb, were a true model of Christian piety. The Russian metropolitans Mikhail, Illarion and others were famous for their saintly ways of life. It was in the monasteries that we find especially numerous examples of righteous and devout life.

The development of spiritual enlightenment and written language, as well as the establishment of schools in Russia enhanced the beneficial influence of Christianity on the Russian way of life.

It was a special care for Archbishops and princes to enlighten people in the spirit of Christianity. Following the advice of the first prelate of the Russian church - Metropolitan Mikhail - the Great Prince Vladimir organized schools in Kiev and other cities. Metropolitan Mikhail often invited the teachers and instructed them in the ways to educate children. Prince Vladimir's son Yaroslav the Wise, ordered churches built and people taught in the cities and settlements. In Novgorod he organized a school for 300 children. According to a chronicler, Mikhail himself was reading books "day and night" and gathered "many scribes" who were copying books and sometimes translating them from Greek into Russian. The successors of Vladimir and Yaroslav followed their

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example, as did the clergy and the monks. The books were considered to be part of the holy work at the monasteries; many monks devoted all their time when free from prayers to reading and translating books. Sometimes in order to copy some books they had to travel to the East - to Constantinople and Athos.

Furthering the Christian enlightenment of people, archbishops and pastors of the Russian church were also striving for establishment of civil order in Russia, which would be based on the unshakable foundation of Christianity. The influence of Russian Christian pastors was especially beneficial during the afflictions of internal strife. Either the metropolitan himself tried to put an end to discords between princes, or sent his bishops to perform the task. Amongst all of those discords and civil strifes, our hierarchy preserved its unity and indivisibility, which was the main factor in uniting the Russian state.

### **St. Olga Equal of the Apostles – July 11/24**

In the year 862, the Novgorod Slavs asked Rurick to be their prince. Two of his comrades-in-arms, Askold and Dir, left Novgorod to try their luck in the south of the country. They saw Kiev on the bank of the Dnieper and conquered it. In 866 they launched a campaign moving the Russian army from Kiev against Tzargrad (Constantinople). In Constantinople, the Emperor Mikhail the III and the Patriarch Photios prayed to God and after the night service in the Vlakhern Cathedral they carried the cross to the shore of the Bosphorus bay. They dipped the robe of the Theotokos into the waters of the bay. The sea that had been calm before that, became suddenly stormy and wrecked the ships of the Russians. Many of them died, and the ones who survived came home impressed and awed by the wrath that the Lord sent upon them. (Later that event began to be celebrated as the Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos).

Before long a Greek bishop came to Russia and started preaching and telling Russians about our Lord the Savior and the Holy wonders recorded in the Old and New Testaments. The Russians who heard him telling about the three young men surviving the blazing furnace of Babylon (Dan. 3), stopped him and said, "If we do not see a similar miracle, we will not believe you." The bishop said prayers and then placed the holy Gospel into the fire. The flames did not harm the Gospel, not even the cloth book markers were singed. This miracle impressed the people so much that many of them

started to convert to Christianity. A church dedicated to Nicolas the Wonderworker was built on the grave of one of those Christians.

Oleg, Rurick's relative, succeeded his throne. He conquered Kiev and had a successful military campaign against Tzargrad (year 906). He also accomplished a trade treaty with the Greeks that was profitable for the Russians. Rurick's son, Igor, signed a new trade treaty with Tzargrad after another war in 945. Describing this event the chronicler mentioned that in Kiev the prince's army swore to observe the treaty; pagans vowed before the statue of Perun, while Christians vowed in the church of St. Ilias. This shows that under Igor there were Christians in Kiev and even among the prince's soldiers. Igor's wife, Olga, was very beautiful, intelligent and virtuous. After Igor's death she ruled Russia because her son Svyatoslav, was too young at the time. According to the annals, she was terrible and merciless to the enemies of her motherland. But the Russian people loved and respected her as a mother for her caring devotion, compassion and fairness. She never tyrannized anyone, she was a fair judge, her punishments were merciful, and she cared for the poor, the elderly and the crippled. She listened patiently to every petitioner and was glad to fulfill every fair request.

When Svyatoslav grew older she could spend more time on charity. Her conversations with Kiev clergymen led her to understand the value of true faith in contrast to paganism and she decided to be baptized (in 957). According to the old stories told at that time, she went to Constantinople for the sacred mystery of Christening to be performed by the Patriarch Polyeuctus. Emperor Constantine the Bagryanorodni was her godfather. Saint Olga was baptized Elena. After being christened Saint Olga tried to persuade her son to convert to Christianity, but Svyatoslav was too belligerent to accept her convictions. "I will be a laughing stock for my soldiers," he said. At the same time he did not prohibit his subjects to get baptized. When St. Olga came home after

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Christening she devoted her life to Christian piety and to the spreading of the Christian faith among her subjects. It is believed that it was St. Olga who built the wooden church of St. Sofia in Kiev.

According to an author from that period, St. Olga "having perceived the true God, Maker of heaven and earth, and having converted into Christianity, destroyed the idols of the devil and began to live according to Jesus Christ's commandments. She loved God with all of her heart and soul and sanctified herself with the good deeds of clothing the poor, giving food and rest to homeless, providing the destitute, orphans and widows with everything they needed and doing this all with the quiet love of her heart."

Saint Olga left our world in 969. Prince Vladimir put her imperishable relics to Desyatinnia cathedral. It was the first time that the sacred relics were revealed in Russia. Later (before the Mongol invasion) God glorified the relics of the Princess Olga with wonders and she was sanctified.

### **St. Alexander Nevsky – November 23/December 6**

He was born on May 30, 1219 at Pereaslavl, a fief of his father, Prince Yaroslav, who was of the house of the Grand Prince of Suzdal. He spent the first years of his life in this small city which stood on the shores of a lake among the trees and meadows and was defended by a simple wooden palisade. His parents, real country nobility, were very devout, they contributed to the adornment of the cathedral and of a monastery established nearby on a hill and they were present at all the divine services celebrated in a small chapel which was connected with their residence by a wooden arcade.

Alexander was scarcely three years old when his father was elected prince of Novgorod and went to live two leagues away from this ever unruly city in order to preside over its fortunes. Here again the role of the Church seems at first to have been predominant. It was in the cathedral of St. Sophia itself that three times a week the council of boyards, the real masters of the free city, met together. But dissension reigned in this strange republic, incessant disputes occurred between the rich merchants and the craft guilds, between the nobles and the prince. As a child, Alexander was present at stormy scenes and at scuffles between citizens and his father's followers. On four occasions he witnessed his father's departure for his fief at Pereaslavl whence he was recalled again at once by his new subjects. At an early age Alexander thus came to know the horrors of internal dissension, the dangers which threatened his country, and became aware of the duties incumbent on its rulers. He developed a profound spiritual life. After mastering the first rudiments of his education he would become absorbed for hours at a time in reading the Old and New Testaments.

At the age of nine he was left alone at Novgorod with his elder brother Theodore, under the guardianship of certain nobles. His father, who had grown disgusted with his office, only returned for short periods and at one time the children themselves were obliged to flee under the leadership of a tutor. Meanwhile, Theodore, the older brother, died prematurely on the eve of his wedding, and when his father, in 1236, became by right of succession Grand Prince of Kiev (that is, ruler of all Russia) to Alexander fell the fief of Novgorod.

The adolescent found himself faced with terrible responsibilities. The following year occurred the great Mongol invasion of the north of Russia and it was only by a miracle that the barbarian hordes were halted before the walls of Novgorod in March 1238 and made their way back to the steppes. Alexander, called on to reign and to fight, henceforth devoted his whole life to the service of the nation; bowing to the divine will he sacrificed himself for the common good. But he did not renounce the world. In 1239 he married the daughter of the Prince of Polotsk, a feudal neighbor. He enjoyed the pleasure of the chase and hunted bear armed only with a sling. But his duty always took first place with him.

His memorable reign at Novgorod lasted for sixteen long years. Alexander made it his business to combat the separatist tendencies of the city and to strengthen its links with the central power. He endeavored to weaken the economic and political power of the boyars by a direct intervention in the administration of justice, by taking

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away from the important merchants the right of levying a tribute on furs over an immense region of the north for their own profit and by abolishing other unjustified privileges.

But it was particularly as the defender of the material and spiritual patrimony of the nation that he has rendered his name immortal by his victorious resistance to the Swedes, the Teutonic Knights and the Lithuanians and, subsequently, when he became Grand Prince, by establishing an acceptable modus vivendi with the Mongolian overlord.

His first victory over the Swedes, won in 1240 on the banks of the Neva, had world-wide repercussions and earned for him the name of Nevsky with which he is known to history. In order to obtain possession of those parts of Russia which had not fallen under the dominion of the Tartars and to cut the only outlet of Novgorod to the Baltic Sea, King Erik had gathered together a great army and placed it under the command of his son-in-law Birger. The King derived some encouragement for his undertaking from a Bull of Pope Gregory IX, addressed in 1237 to the Bishop



of Upsala and summoning the Swedes to a crusade against the Finns who had abandoned their Catholic faith under the influence of their neighbors (that is, the Russians). The interpretation of this papal message was clearly somewhat forced, but it appeared to furnish the King of Sweden with some justification for his aggression. Alexander had foreseen the danger. In 1239 he had organized the defense of the routes from Novgorod to the sea and had placed the defense of the routes from Novgorod to the sea and placed his sentries on both sides of the Gulf of Finland. Pelguse, the chieftain of a local tribe, a convert to Christianity, warned him of the disembarkment of the Swedes on the banks of the Neva, and at once the prince hastened to meet them after he first asked the blessing of his Archbishop. Reviewing his troops before he set off he uttered the phrase, an allusion to the Psalms, which has remained famous: "God is not on the side of force, but of the just case, the pravda."

Before coming up with the enemy, Alexander's troops had a difficult march before them over marshy land. Pressing on swiftly they arrived on the banks of the Neva which were still shrouded in mist. A few hours earlier at dawn Pelguse had experienced a curious vision. He saw a boat with mysterious shapes on board coming slowly down the river; it was the holy princes-martyrs Boris and Gleb amid their heavenly oarsmen, coming to the help of their "brother Alexander."

Battle was joined at sunrise. It caught the Swedes unaware; they were convinced the Novgorod forces, deprived of the assistance of the Suzdal army, recently destroyed by the Mongols, would be in no position to offer them resistance. Birger was installed in a gold embroidered tent as were many of his knights, but the main body of troops had not yet disembarked. The Russians carried out their attacks with lightning like rapidity while Alexander in person wounded Birger with a blow from a spear, his men at arms cut the bridges joining the boats to the river bank. Panic seized the Swedes and the battle ended with their flight in utter disorder.

Similar scenes occurred in the following year when Alexander inflicted total defeat on the Knights of the Teutonic Order who had acted in concert with the Swedes. They had seized Izborsk, broken the truce of Pskov and burned the outskirts of that city before the boyards opened the gates to them. Having crushed the Swedish offensive, Alexander was ready to go to the aid of Pskov, but prevented by the boyards from carrying out this plan he withdrew to his father at Pereaslavl. It was not long before he was recalled by his subjects who at last had realized the true extent of the danger. He returned with regiments raised in the territory of Suzdal and set off for the western frontier at the head of all the forces still remaining to Russia after her conquest by the Mongols.

Alexander's fame as a warrior and saviour of his people is best remembered in the Lake Chudskoye battle. The steel clad Teutons driving a wedge through the lines and the Russians retreating on to the ice of the lake and attacking the enemy on two flanks, bringing down hundreds of knights and putting the others to flight. Alexander's victory was complete and the German advance was arrested for centuries. On the 5th of April 1242

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the very existence of Russia was saved. Once again those who were present at the battle thought they saw heavenly armies appearing to bring aid to Prince Alexander.

To preserve the integrity of the frontiers of Novgorod it only remained for Alexander to put an end to the invasions of the Lithuanians who in a poorly defended region had for many years past waged a kind of guerrilla warfare. In 1242, as the Lithuanian pressure increased, Alexander destroyed, one after another, seven of their detachments by using in a defensive war his tactics of lightning attack. In

1245, having repulsed a further invasion, he no longer had anything to fear from this quarter. Lithuania gave up annoying her neighbors.

But after 1246, quite new tasks occupied his attention. The second period of his life was beginning; henceforth his eyes were to be turned to the east. His father, the Grand Prince Yaroslav, had just died on his way back from a journey to Karakorum where he had been summoned by the Grand Khan and presumably poisoned, that, at least, is the assertion of the Russian chroniclers. The matter of succession could not be settled without further intervention of the Tartar leaders. For reasons that are unknown to us it is not the deceased prince's oldest son but Alexander who was summoned, together with his brother Andrew, to appear before the Asiatic overlords.

He was faced now with a tragic dilemma. Was the conqueror of the Swedes and the Teutons, was the hero of the Neva and Chudskoye Lake, to adopt the attitude of a humble vassal and to recognize openly the loss of Russian independence, thus insulting the death under torture already suffered by some of his near relations? Alexander, an Orthodox prince, thinking solely of the good of his people preferred to submit to the divine will and took counsel of the higher clergy. Metropolitan Cyril gave his approval to the decision to leave, on the condition that he worshipped no idols and did not deny his faith in Christ.

Collaboration with the tartars was indeed at the moment an historical necessity, the nation could not count on help from outside, the attitude of neighboring countries was entirely hostile and the worth of her own warriors, which was sufficient to confront enemies as courageous as the Swedes or the Teutons in equal numbers, did not amount to much when faced with the hordes of nomads who carried all before them as they advanced by their tens or even hundreds of thousands.

Subsequently, the Russians have been able to recognize the great services that Alexander rendered them by sacrificing his pride on the alter of the fatherland. The Mongols themselves were profoundly impressed by the conduct of a man whose reputation had reached them some time beforehand, they granted him the honors due to his rank and spared him the ordeal by fire and worship of the idols. Nevertheless, they obliged him to undertake the interminable journey to Karakorum through the deserts of Asia and only allowed him to return to his native land after three years' absence. on three occasions during the following years, Alexander had to return to his master's camp situated to the north of the Azov Sea to arrange current affairs and also to implore their mercy for the people under his government.

His elder brother was dead and his second brother Andrew had taken flight after an attempted rising which ended, as could be foreseen, in terrible reprisals; Alexander had become the Grand Prince of Russia. It was his concern now to prevent further invasions, to inspire the Grand Khan with confidence, to serve as intermediary between him and the Russian people, and to prevent rash insurrections even at the price of painful concessions.

This superhuman task was by no means made easier by fresh attacks from Sweden, against which, in 1258, Alexander was obliged to conduct a new campaign, victorious like the first, and still less by the incessant unrest in Novgorod which, in 1259, assumed an especially serious character when the Tartars were conducting a general census of the population. Only the personal intervention of the Grand Prince who went there at the head of an armed detachment and lavished presents on the tartars, succeeded in preventing terrible bloodshed.

Alexander allowed himself to be discouraged by none of these difficulties. Having established himself at Vladimir, the ancient city of Suzdal, famous for its numerous churches, he repopulated the villages deserted by their inhabitants, rebuilt the churches and monasteries and reopened the law courts. He arranged a marriage between one of his sons and the daughter of the King of Norway in hope of thus counterbalancing the power of the Swedes. In the solitude of his high position he found a friend and counselor in the person of the Metropolitan Cyril, a great churchman, who was able to understand and advise him; Cyril had seen Kiev and Lavra of Pechersk in ruins; like Alexander, he hoped to spare the nation further misfortune.

In 1242, when the exactions of the Tartars provoked once more a popular rising, Alexander undertook his fourth journey to the Tartar headquarters in order to ward off a punitive expedition. For a whole year he did all in his power to pacify the Great Khan and his henchmen; he even succeeded in dissuading the Tartars from their plan of raising Russian regiments for a war against Persia. But he had come to the end of his strength. On the return journey, over roads made difficult by the autumn rains, he died at a monastery in November 1263. Before his last breath he gave up his princely rank and the glories of this world in order to put on the habit of a monk.

"The sun has set over the land of Suzdal," exclaimed Metropolitan Cyril in announcing the death of their leader to the dismayed people. Alexander's funeral took place with great solemnity. Legend asserts that when he was placed in the coffin and as the Metropolitan endeavored to place between his fingers the prayer of absolution, according to the custom of the Orthodox Church, the dead man opened his hand and seized the sheet of parchment. Subsequently, numerous miracles occurred at his tomb. He was canonized locally in 1380 and by the whole Russian Church at the Council of 1547. Five centuries after his death, following the victorious outcome of his war against Sweden, Peter the Great transferred the relics of St. Alexander Nevsky to the new capital of St. Petersburg where they lie today at the Lavra that bears his holy name.

It is to St. Alexander Nevsky that the Russian people are wont to address their prayers at times when great misfortunes befall the nation and threaten its existence. Alexander is venerated as a saint without having been a hermit, an ascetic or a martyr. "God has glorified his righteous servant," writes the chronicler, "because he worked much for the land of Russia and for Orthodox Christianity."

He entered into rest at the age of forty-three, on November 14th, 1263. The transfer of his relics to the city of Vladimir is commemorated on August 30.

### **Great Martyr St. George – April 23/May 6**

The Great Martyr George was the son of wealthy and pious parents, who raised him in the Christian faith. He was born in the city of Beirut (in antiquity - Berytos), at the foot of the Lebanese mountains.

Having entered military service, the Great Martyr George stood out among the other soldiers by virtue of his mind, valor, physical strength, military bearing and beauty. Having quickly attained the rank of millenary [tribunus millenarius, an officer in the Roman army in charge of a thousand or more soldiers - Translator], St. George became a favorite of the Emperor Diocletian.

Diocletian was a talented ruler, but a fanatical adherent of the Roman gods. Having set for himself

the goal of reviving dying paganism in the Roman Empire, he went down in history as one of the most cruel persecutors of Christians.

Once, when he heard in a court the inhuman sentence concerning the annihilation of Christians, St. George became inflamed with compassion for them. Foreseeing that sufferings were also awaiting him, George distributed his property to the poor, freed his slaves, appeared before Diocletian and, having revealed himself as a Christian, denounced him for cruelty and injustice. George's speech was full of powerful and convincing objections against the imperial order to persecute Christians.

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After futile persuasions to deny Christ, the Emperor ordered that the saint be subjected to various tortures. St. George was confined in a dungeon, where they placed him supine on the ground; his legs they confined in stocks, and on his breast they placed a heavy stone. But St. George manfully endured the sufferings and glorified the Lord. Then George's torturers began to refine their cruelty. They beat the saint with ox-hide whips, subjected him to the wheel, threw him into quicklime and forced him to run in shoes with sharp nails inside. The holy Martyr endured everything patiently. Finally, the Emperor ordered the saint's head to be cut off. Thus, the holy sufferer departed unto Christ in Nicomedia in 303 A.D.

The Great Martyr George, for his valor and his spiritual victory over his torturers, who could not force him to renounce Christianity, and likewise for his wonderworking assistance to people in danger, is additionally called the "Trophy-bearer." The relics of St. George the Trophy-bearer were placed in the Palestinian city of Lydda, in the church that bears his name, while his head was preserved in Rome, in the church that is also dedicated to him.

On icons, the Great Martyr George is depicted sitting on a white horse and smiting a dragon with a spear. This depiction is based on tradition and relates to the posthumous miracles of the holy Great Martyr George. It is said that not far from the place where St. George was born, in the city of Beirut, there lived a dragon in a lake who frequently devoured people of that locale. What kind of beast it was, a python, crocodile or large lizard is not known.

In order to appease the wrath of that dragon, the superstitious inhabitants of that locale began regularly by lot to give a youth or maiden up to it to be eaten. Once the lot fell on the daughter of the ruler of that locale. They took her to the shore of the lake and tied her up where she began to await in terror the appearance of the dragon.

When the beast began to approach her, suddenly a radiant youth appeared on a white horse who smote the dragon with a spear and saved the maiden. This youth was the Great Martyr St. George. By such a miraculous appearance he caused the extermination of youths and maidens to cease in the environs of Beirut and converted to Christ the pagan inhabitants of that country.

One may suppose that St. George's appearance on a horse to defend the inhabitants from a dragon, and likewise the description in his life of the miraculous reviving of a farmer's only ox, served as the cause for honoring St. George as a protector of animal husbandry and as a defender from predatory beasts.

In pre-revolutionary times, on the day of St. George's commemoration, the inhabitants of Russian villages, for the first time after the cold winter, would drive their animals out to pasture, after having performed a moleben (a Te Deum, or, a short service of thanksgiving) to the Holy Great Martyr and sprinkling their homes and animals with holy water.

The Great Martyr George is a protector of the army. The depiction of George the Trophy-bearer on a horse symbolizes victory over the devil [the ancient serpent]: "...behold a great fiery red dragon with seven heads and seven diadems on his heads....he laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the devil and satan and bound him for a thousand years...." (Rev. 12:3, 20:2). This depiction was included in the ancient coat of arms of the city of Moscow.

Countless miracles have been performed at his grave; he has also appeared in dreams to those who, thinking on him, have sought his help, from thence until the present day. Consumed by love for Christ, it was not difficult for St. George to leave all for this love - his status, wealth and imperial favor, his friends and the whole world. For this love, the Lord rewarded him with a wreath of unfading glory in heaven and on earth, and with eternal life in His Kingdom. The Lord further endowed him with the power to help in need and distress all who honor him and call on his name.

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St. Vladimir and the Baptism of Russia

See life of St. Vladimir above.

Guide to learning and reading Russian

1. Learn the Cyrillic alphabet prior to doing anything else.

Letters are the building blocks of words, and you need to learn the 33 basic building blocks before moving on. Refer to 5th level to review, it includes the letter with its sound.

The alphabet may seem very different and unfamiliar, but it has many similarities to the Latin alphabet. For example, some letters are **written and pronounced the same** in English and Russian. These include: **а, е, к м, о** and **т**.

Some letters are **written the same but pronounced differently**. Examples of these include **в** (pronounced with an English *v* sound, like in the word “victory”), **с** (pronounced with the English *s* sound, like the word “steak”) and **н** (pronounced *n* in Russian).

Other letters will **look different but sound the same**. These include: **б** (sounds like *b*), **г** (sounds like *g*) and **д** (sounds like *d*).

The rest of the letters will **look and sound brand new** as they’re unique to the Cyrillic alphabet, with some letters originating in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets. These letters include: **ы** (no English equivalent sound), **ь** (soft sign with no vocal sound) and **ѣ** (hard sound with no vocal sound).

2. Practice sounding out each letter on its own.

To truly master the Russian alphabet, you need to memorize what each letter looks like and what sounds it makes. Unlike the French, Russians pronounce all of their letters, so you don’t need to learn which letters must be silent in specific words. After practice of pronouncing each one individually, learn words that start or include the individual letters to perfect the sound.

3. Learn the most common Russian words first.

Every language has words that are more common than others, so it’s helpful to learn those before others. In Russian, they include words such as:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| да (yes) | она (she) |
| нет (no) | я (I, me) |
| и (and) | ты (you) |
| он (he) | |

If you’re learning Russian for a certain purpose, such as for visiting Russia there will be specific words that fall into each category (travel) that you should learn. You can use 4th level to review the camp schedule common activities. Focus on what’s most useful for you!

4. Use context to understand the meaning of words you don’t know.

When you first start to learn Russian by reading, you won’t understand many more words than you actually already know. Try use contextual cues to figure out what’s being written. Using the context of what’s happening in the sentence and the overall piece you’re reading, you should be able to figure out the meaning of the unknown word. If not, keep on reading and it may make sense after a few more sentences.

5. Find words that mean the same thing in Russian and English.

When reading something in a foreign language, one of the first tricks to understand the content is to find words that have the same meanings in Russian and English. This is an easy strategy that makes reading comprehension easier. There are a ton of words in Russian sound just like their English counterparts, which include:

- **компьютер** (computer)

- **мама** (mama)
- **такси** (taxi)

6. Learn basic Russian reading rules.

There are always exceptions but learning reading rules can help you make better educated guesses at pronunciation while reading. You can start out by learning reading rules for:

- **The palatalization of consonants:** Most Russian consonants form a palatalized, or soft, sound when they come before letters *е, ё, и, ю, я* and *ь*.
- **Voiced and unvoiced consonants:** Russian, similar to all other languages, has consonants that are voiced and unvoiced. When your vocal cords vibrate upon pronunciation, that's a vocal sound. The absence of that creates an unvoiced sound. It doesn't mean that the letter has no sound, it just means it sounds more like a whisper, such as saying "s" rather than saying "r." There are various rules for when consonants are voiced and unvoiced, but in Russian, the second consonant of the pair is always the determinant.
- The consonants *р, л, м, н* and *й* are always voiced.
- The consonants *ц, ч, щ* and *х* are always unvoiced.
- The voiced consonants *б, в, г, д, ж, з* always become unvoiced at the end of words, before the last soft sound and when they come before unvoiced consonants.
- The unvoiced consonants *п, ф, с, т, ш* and *к* always become voiced when they come before *б, г, д, ж, з*.

7. Practice, practice, practice.

It will take you a while to get through learning the alphabet, pronouncing letters, putting sounds together and understanding words. As long as you stay consistent and committed, you'll eventually get there. Read everything and anything in Russian to reinforce what you already know, such as subtitles, magazines, recipes and anything else you can get your hands on. This will provide you with a wide variety of materials to learn new words and phrases.

8. Find a Russian friend to read to.

Teaching yourself to read in Russian can be problematic if there's no one there to correct your pronunciation or help you with understanding difficult words or the overall context. Find a Russian friend who you can read out loud to. Once you've read something to them in Russian, they can correct your pronunciation and answer any questions you may have. You can also listen to them read aloud while you follow along with the text, to gain exposure to natural pronunciation.

Retrieved and edited from <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/russian/how-to-read-russian/>



Alexander Pushkin

The main historical merit of Pushkin consists of his impeccable establishment of the Russian folk speaking language in literature. We have the right to ask ourselves: why of all people Pushkin received the honor of being rightly called named the authentic founder of the modern Russian literary language? And the answer to this question can be put in one sentence: because Pushkin was a brilliant national poet!

Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin was born on June 6, 1799 (May 26 by the old calendar) in in a noble landlord family in Moscow on the day of the Holy Resurrection celebration. On the same day, Emperor Paul had a granddaughter, in whose honor all churches served molebens and rang bells. Thus, in such a coincidence of birthdays, the Russian genius was marked by universal national exhilaration.

The father of Pushkin, Sergey L'vovich, and the mother, Nadezhda Osipovna, maiden name Gannibal, were far cousin relatives. The family (which also had two other children, Olga and Lev) belonged to the most noble and educated society of Moscow. Poets, artists, and musicians gathered in the rented apartment of Pushkin's family. French adoration that manifested society, French upbringing in the family, French governesses, and access to wonderful libraries of the father and uncle shaped the mind and young soul of Pushkin. Thus, his first ever written poems were in French.

At 12 years old, having received elementary home school education, Alexander was sent to study at Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum under St. Petersburg, the summer residence of Russian Tsars. The program of studies in Lyceum was extensive but not very in-depth. It was, however, intended for high governmental careers and gave students the right to minister in upon graduating. Pushkin's nickname in Lyceum was "Frenchman".

In 1815 Pushkin triumphantly read his poem "Memories in Tsarskoe Selo" on an exam in the presence of poet G. R. Depazhavina, "The old man Derzhavin noticed us, and upon entering his grave, blessed us." At the graduation ceremony of 1817 Pushkin, also read his own poem "Distrust."

After graduating in 1817 and being seriously ill in 1819 Pushkin would routinely come to mother's estate village of Mikhailov Pskov Province. In his first years since finishing the Lyceum, Pushkin wrote the famous poem "Ruslan and Ludmila."

Freethinking that challenged authority, prevalent in society at the time, was reflected in poems and actions of young Pushkin. "Pushkin must be sent Siberia; he has flooded Russia with his outrageous poems, all the youth is learning them by heart," a decision made by emperor Alexander I. However, after many troubling intercessions of friends Pushkin was sent south instead of Siberia. Until 1823 Pushkin spent time remitted in Kishinev where he wrote the poem "Gavriliada" and started the poetic novel "Evgeniy Onegin," in Caucasus he wrote "Prisoner of the Caucasus," in Odessa. Inspiration from these found their way southern poems of Pushkin, "The Robber Brothers," "The Fountain of Bakhchisara," "Gypsies."

In 1823 Pushkin is sent back to his mother's estate. The novel "Evgeniy Onegin," some of which was written in the village of Mikhailov Pskov Province, is considered an encyclopedia of the Russian lifestyle. Impressions of Russian nature, charm of the ancient Pskov land with its "noble mounds," settlements, association with the peasants, the nanny Ariadna Rodionova, "everything [that] worried the gentle mind" of Pushkin contributed to the understanding of souls of Russian people, and their folk way of life; confessed the poet himself; Mikhailov changed his creative method. From the Romanticism of his early days of youth he shifted to Realism. His talent strengthened. Nearly 100 works of writing were produced in Mikhailov: country chapters of the "Evgeniy Onegin," the tragedy of "Boris Godunov," the poem of "Count Nulin," the final ending of the poem of "Gypsies," and poems such as "Village," "Imitations of the Quran," "The Prophet," "Bacchus Song," "I remember a wonderful moment..", "I visited again..", the beginning of the first prose of the novel "The Moor Peter the Great" (at the arrival of 1827). Here on the land of his father, Pushkin gained an impulse of creativity further. Friends believed Mikhailov to be the poetic homeland of Pushkin.

The death of tsar Alexander I, uprisings in St. Petersburg December 14th, 1825, in which many friends of Pushkin participated, changed his fate. The new tsar Nikolai I, urgently called the poet into Moscow, allowing him to live where he pleased and announced himself as the official censor of Pushkin.

In May of 1829, Pushkin proposed to beautiful young Natalia Nikolaevna Goncharovna but received a vague answer. May 6th of 1830, he was finally engaged to N. N. Goncharovna. December 5th of the same year the poet returned to Moscow, and February 18th, 1831 he married. The first few months of marriage with his wife were spent in Moscow, in rented apartment on Arbat in Khitrovo House (now House 53). That May the young couple moved to Tsarskoe Selo, the place of cheerful memories from Lyceum. Here he wrote "The Tale of Tsar Saltan" and October 5th, "Letter of Onegin to Tatiana."

In June of the 1831 Pushkin received permission to use the governmental archives to write "The History of Peter the Great." From mid-October of 1832 and to the ends of his days Pushkin lived in St. Petersburg. In 1832 his daughter Mariya was born, in 1833 son Alexander, and in 1836 daughter Natalia.

The last years of life were not easy for Alexander Pushkin. The royal court disfavored the poet, and the financial situation left much to be desired. Despite of this Pushkin worked hard during this period, nurturing his ideas and plans for the further works of writing.

During the same period a certain figure Dantez arrived at Russia in need of leaving his homeland for his political views. This man knew how to sneak into peoples' trust, and made women fall in love with him. Soon he gained many influential patrons in St. Petersburg. He met Natalia Pushkin at a ball and intrusively began to court her. Instantly dirty rumors spread all over St. Petersburg about the relationship of the wife of the famous poet. Pushkin could not tolerate the gossip and the libel sent to his friends and challenged Dantez to a duel. Dantez became seriously frightened. To somehow pacify the anger of the poet he proposed to Ekaterina Nikolaevna, sister of the Natalia who loved Dantez. The marriage took place, but the rumors did not stop about Natalia and Dantez and even worsened in detail.

Enraged Pushkin wrote an insulting letter to Baron Gekkern, the adoptive father of Dantez through official documents. In the letter he crudely forbade Baron and his son from his house. Baron responded to the letter saying that the duel remains in power that Dantez accepts it. On January 27th, 1837 around five o'clock in the evening, on the Black River suburb of St. Petersburg a fatal duel took place from which Pushkin was mortally wounded in the stomach. Dantez survived, later he was degraded, sued in court, and deported from Russia, despite of this he was happy for his fortune of escaping a death penalty.

His death was truly Christian. Learning of his inescapable end he wished to see a priest. The priest took confession from the dying poet and gave him Holy Communion at the church Khram Spasa Nerukotvornogo Obraza. He was dying as courageously as he had lived. He called his wife and children crossed and blessed them, bade farewell to his friends. "It is finished. I am going. I can hardly breathe. I am suffocating." were his final words. His exequy was served in the church of Khram Spasa Nerukotvornogo Obraza on Konyushennaya Square.

Poems

Я вас любил

Я вас любил: любовь еще, быть может,
В душе моей угасла не совсем;
Но пусть она вас больше не тревожит;
Я не хочу печалить вас ничем.

*I loved you once, and still, perhaps, love's yearning
Within my soul has not quite burned away.
But may it nevermore you be concerning;
I would not wish you sad in any way.*

Я вас любил безмолвно, безнадежно,
То робостью, то ревностью томим;
Я вас любил так искренно, так нежно,
Как дай вам бог любимой быть другим.

*My love for you was wordless, hopeless cruelly,
Drowned now in shyness, now in jealousy,
And I loved you so tenderly, so truly,
As God grant by another you may be.*

Зимний вечер

Буря мглою небо кроет,
Вихри снежные крутя;
То, как зверь она завоет,
То заплачет как дитя,
То по кровле обветшалай
Вдруг соломой зашумит,
То, как путник запоздалый,
К нам в окошко постучит.

*Storm has set the heavens scowling,
Whirling gusty blizzards wild,
Now they are like beasts a-growling,
Now a-wailing like a child;
Now along the brittle thatches
They will scud with rustling sound,
Now against the window latches
Like belated wanderers pound.*

Наша ветхая лачужка
И печальна и темна.
Что же ты, моя старушка,
Приумолкла у окна?
Или бури завыванием
Ты мой друг утомлена,
Или дремлешь под жужжанием
Своего веретена?

*Our frail hut is glum and sullen,
Dim with twilight and with care.
Why, dear granny, have you fallen
Silent by the window there?
Has the gale's insistent prodding
Made your drowsing senses numb,
Are you lulled to gentle nodding
By the whirling spindle's hum?*

Выпьем, добрая подружка
Бедной юности моей,
Выпьем с горя; где же кружка?
Сердцу будет веселей.
Спой мне песню, как синица
Тихо за морем жила;
Спой мне песню, как девица
За водой поутру шла.

Буря мглою небо кроет,
Вихри снежные крутя;
То, как зверь она завоет,
То заплачет как дитя.
Выпьем, добрая подружка
Бедной юности моей,
Выпьем с горя; где же кружка?
Сердцу будет веселей.

У лукоморья дуб зеленый

У лукоморья дуб зеленый;
Златая цепь на дубе том:
И днем и ночью кот ученый
Все ходит по цепи кругом;

Идет направо — песнь заводит,
Налево — сказку говорит.
Там чудеса: там леший бродит,
Русалка на ветвях сидит;

Там на неведомых дорожках
Следы невиданных зверей;
Избушка там на курьих ножках
Стоит без окон, без дверей;

Там лес и дол видений полны;
Там о заре прихлынут волны

На брег песчаный и пустой,
И тридцать витязей прекрасных
Чредой из вод выходят ясных,
И с ними дядька их морской;

Там королевич мимоходом
Пленяет грозного царя;
Там в облаках перед народом
Через леса, через моря
Колдун несет богатыря;

В темнице там царевна тужит,
А бурый волк ей верно служит;

Там ступа с Бабою Ягой
Идет, бредет сама собой;
Там царь Кащей над златом чахнет;
Там русский дух... там Русью пахнет!

*Let us drink for grief, let's drown it,
Comrade of my wretched youth,
Where's the jar? Pour out and down it,
Wine will make us less uncouth.
Sing me of the tomtit hatching
Safe beyond the ocean blue,
Sing about the maiden fetching
Water at the morning dew.*

*Storm has set the heavens scowling,
Whirling gusty blizzards wild,
Now they sound like beasts a-growling,
Now a-wailing like a child.
Let us drink for grief, let's drown it,
Comrade of my wretched youth,
Where's the jar? Pour out and down it,
Wine will make us less uncouth.*

*An oak tree greening by the ocean;
A golden chain about it wound:
Whereon a learned cat, in motion
Both day and night, will walk around;*

*On walking right, he sings a ditty;
On walking left, he tells a lay.
A magic place: there winds his way
The wood sprite, there's a mermaid sitting*

*In branches, there on trails past knowing
Are tracks of beasts you never met;
On chicken feet a hut is set
With neither door nor window showing.*

*There wood and dale with wonders teem;
At dawn of day the breakers stream*

*Upon the bare and barren lea,
And thirty handsome armored heroes
File from the waters' shining mirrors,
With them the Usher from the Sea.*

*There glimpse a prince, and in his passing
He makes the dreaded tsar his slave;
Aloft, before the people massing,
Across the wood, across the wave,
A warlock bears a warrior brave;*

*[A grieving princess in a cell,
And faithful wolf that serves her well];*

*See Baba Yaga's mortar glide
All of itself, with her astride.
There droops Kashchey, on treasure bent;*

И там я был, и мед я пил;
У моря видел дуб зеленый;
Под ним сидел, и кот ученый
Свои мне сказки говорил.

Одну я помню: сказку эту
Поведаю теперь я свету...

There's Russian spirit... Russia's scent!

*And there I stayed, and drank of mead;
That oak tree greening by the shore
I sat beneath, and of his lore
The learned cat would chant and read.*

*One tale of these I kept in mind,
And tell it now to all my kind...*

Written by Maryna Orzhynska

-----RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHY-----

Government: Russia is a Federation, a nation made up of partially self-governing states. It is also a Republic, a form of government where ultimate power rests with the people through voting. From 2014 Russia has held 85 federal subjects; they are divided into 8 federal districts but are categorized into oblasts, republics, krais, autonomous okrugs, federal cities, and autonomous oblasts. Different types of provinces have varying amounts of independence, for example republics, usually an ethnic minority group, have the right to be independent with a constitution and legislature.

Industries: While most jobs in Russia are in the services and private businesses, the manufacturing, energy, and mining industries account for a large portion of Russian jobs as well. In manufacturing one of the largest industries is the defense sector which exports weapons, tanks, jets, and air defenses. Russia is also one of the top producers of oil in the world, generating over 10 million barrels per day; this industry is closely tied to Russia's economy. Russia has the world's biggest reserves of natural gas, holding about a quarter of all the world's total gas reserves. The country also produces large amounts of coal, and minerals such as iron ore, zinc, nickel, tin, asbestos, gold, and diamonds, much of these are found in the harsh regions of Siberia that not many are willing to work in.

Agriculture: During the Soviet Union much of the land was owned by state, today many large corporations hold ownership making it difficult for small farmers to find markets for their crops. While most of Russian land is not suitable for farming it grows a few main crops, wheat, barely, oats, corn, sugar, beets, sunflowers, fruits, and berries. **Fishing:** Having a large coastline also makes fishing an important industry, the catch includes pollock, herring, whiting, cod, and perch. **Timber:** The great forestland allows for exporting many tons of wood pulp products like paper and cardboard.

People: Ethnic Russians make up 81% of the total population, according to the 2010 census. Other ethnic groups include Ukrainians and Belarusians, in the west; Ossetians and Chechens, in the Caucasus Mountains; Turkic peoples in the Volga Region; Yakuts and Samoyeds in Siberia; Karenians near Finland border; Tartars near Kazakhstan border. Many of these groups are independent federal subjects under Russian Federation. Since 2017 there were about 144.5 million people in Russia, the population, however, has been decreasing, many are also emigrating for better work opportunities.

Language: Russian is the official language, but the diverse ethnic groups speak more than one hundred languages. Russian is a branch of the Slavic language family dating back to the 6th century, it had developed into East, West, and South Slavic branches; Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian belong to the East group. Old Church Slavonic was used in Rus' since the St. Vladimir's baptism of Russia in 988. The language was combined with Kievan Rus language and became Russian. Later Russian absorbed many European scientific words and phrases. Alexander Pushkin further combined Old Church Slavonic and western European language to create modern Russian pronunciation and grammar.

Faith: Throughout the centuries, religious practice depended on who ruled the country. During tsarist rule, the Russian Orthodox Church was the official religion, other groups were often persecuted. During the Soviet years, the government attempted to eliminate religion and preached Atheism. Today the Russian Orthodox Church has regained its importance in Russian culture. However, other Christian groups are growing and active. Other religions are practiced also: Islam is the second largest religion brought by the Degestani people; small groups of Buddhism can be found near Mongolia; and Judaism which is slowly decreasing since *pogroms*, government-organized massacres of the 19th and 20th century and changing laws allowing them to leave.

Culture: Russian culture boasts centuries of beauty and creativity. During Medieval Times the Russian Orthodox Church influenced most of Russia's art and architecture. In the 17th century Russia was inspired by European culture, however, only the tsars and noblemen could afford to pay for art, music composition, painters, composers, and building construction; such works were often done by hired professionals from Europe, especially France, Italy and Germany. In the Soviet times, the government supported the fine arts, ballet, music, painting, and sculpting but the works had to conform to communist philosophies; anti-communist ideas in things like movies and books were banned. Today Russia is reawakening in its cultural traditions, in many art forms that reflect the history and culture of their land and people.

Music: Folk music was the earliest form expression. Common instruments were the *(left image)*, a triangular three-string instrument, accordion, and the *zhaleika (right)*, a flute-like instrument. Folk music inspired many Russian composers, like Mikhail Glinka and Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Other composers would also try that is nationalistic and reflective of Russian folklore.



musical
balalaika
the *bayan*
wind
classical

write music
history and



Ballet: Russian ballet is often considered the best in the world. The Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow and Mariinsky Ballet in St. Petersburg (left) are both world renowned. Ballet was established in Russia in late 17th century by Jean-Baptiste Landé, who was appointed to teach dance at a military academy for noblemen by Empress Anna. Ballet theaters and companies were established since then and opened to the public; though the ballet has heavily been influenced by Paris by it has also become distinctly Russian in style.

Art: Icons were the main visual art until the 18th century in Russia, from then European-style portrait painting replaced icon painting but only the wealthy could pay an artist to paint elaborate portraits. Ivan Kremskoy brought the *Peredvizhniki*, "wanderers" movement which sought to portray the realities of Russian history and life instead of the traditional conservatism in Russian art. The early 20th century brought more modern art movements, featuring suprematism, a bold art form of featuring geometric shapes like those by Kazimir Malevich. The communist regime supported abstract forms of art by eventually created social realism which showcased bold striking images of political leaders and proud and happy workers. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union icon painting has been a national revival.



Portrait of the unknown Woman, Ivan Kremskoy, 1883.

Literature: Russia produced its greatest works of literature during the 19th century: Alexander Pushkin became the father of modern Russian literature; Nikolay Gogol criticized the greed and corruption of the tsarist rule; Fyodor Dostoyesky exposed nature and peasant life; Leo Tolstoy examined plight of the common man; Anton Chehov wrote short stories and plays; other writers were victims of government persecution - Boris Pastermark who wrote the famous *Dr. Zhivago* novel taking places at the final years of the Romanov Rule and the beginning of the Soviet era; and Alexander Solzhenitsyn who wrote about the horror of the life in *Gulag*, the Soviet forced labor camp system in Siberia.



Russian Cuisine: Russia offers diverse cuisines from over 100 different ethnic groups. Some of its most classic dishes are the *Kholodets*, boiled spiced pork or veal cooked in gelatin; *kasha* a thick dish made from ground or whole grains such as buckwheat, barley, or oats; *blini* (left), made with four milk or milk they look like thin pancakes, topped with honey, caviar, butter, or cream; *pirozhki* small buns stuffed with fillings like boiled meat, cabbage, fish, or onions and eggs; *sirok* a type of cheesecake covered in chocolate; and *zefir*, a marshmallow treat made with walnuts and berries. Favorite soups include *okroshka*, a soup made with *kvas*, drink from rye bread; *shi*, a hot cabbage soup; and *borsch*, a soup of Ukrainian origin made with red beets. The soups are often served with bread and *smetana*, sour cream.

Festivals: The Soviet Era put restrictions on religious practices and religious holidays, thus they would replace abandoned religious holidays celebrations with communist ideals. The most important of Soviet Union holidays was the October Revolution day, president Vladimir Putin replaced this holiday with National Unity Day to celebrate Russian uprising that forced Polish invader out of Moscow. May 1st used to be International Workers day in Soviet times complete with pro-government demonstration and communist speeches. Today this day is public holiday, many go to their dachas or have a family barbeque. Victory day, May 9th, is Russia's most important holiday (right). It celebrates Russia's Victory over Germany in the second Patriotic War (WWII). Local military parades and fireworks are displayed throughout the country, crowds fill the streets, and Russian war veterans wear their uniforms and medals. The Moscow Red Square holds assemblies of schools singing about brave Russian soldiers. The president makes an honorary speech before the grand marching parade of serving soldiers and the display of modern machinery.



about brave Russian soldiers. The president makes an honorary speech before the grand marching parade of serving soldiers and the display of modern machinery.

Written and edited by Mariya

Orzhynska

-----RUSSIAN-HISTORY-----

Time of Troubles

After the death of Ivan the Terrible, his second son Feodor I ascended the throne on May 31st 1584. He took little interest in ruling, thus his closest advisor (and brother-in-law) Boris Godunov took on the role of ruler. Feodor's only child was his daughter who died very young, and when he died in 1598 the Rurikid (the descendants of Rurik) Dynasty of rulers came to an end. Boris Godunov was elected as his successor by the Zemskiy Sobor. When Boris was elected there were rumors that he was a usurper (a person who takes a position of power or importance illegally or by force), some even accused him of the assassination of Feodor's younger brother, Dimitry, who would have succeeded the throne after him. Though Boris had great support while Feodor was alive, he lost his popularity during his own reign. At this time there was great famine, it caused disarray throughout Rus. This created great unease among groups like the Don Cossacks making them lose their

confidence in the throne. False Dimitris started appearing, these were usurpers who claimed to be the dead son of Ivan the Terrible. They used their claim to gain support from among the people and start uprisings.

The first of the False Dimitris came from the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and was supported by the commonwealth and the Papacy to extend their power into Rus. This led to the Polish-Muscovite war. After Boris Godunov died in 1605, False Dimitry entered Moscow and ascended the throne. The usurper and pretender was propped up by the support of the Polish courts and nobility, and publicly converted to Catholicism. Shortly into his reign there was a great uprising in Moscow, he and much of his Polish court were thrown out of the Kremlin and killed. This was the first Polish attempt to seize Moscow by using a false Dimitry.

The Poles soon returned again with a second False Dimitry. They took Moscow once again but gave the throne to the Polish King's son, Prince Wladislaw; Moscow, and Rus were under Polish occupation. By 1611, there was great discontent. The Poles forced the Rus to convert to Catholicism and this outraged most of the people. Polish and German mercenaries started suppressing riots and killed 7000 Muscovites and ended up setting the city on fire. With the help and leadership of Kuzma Minin, a merchant from Nizhny Novgorod, and Prince Dimitry Pozharsky, a Volunteer Army was assembled to retake the Russian throne from the occupiers, in retook Moscow in 1612. The Poles retaliated and laid siege on the Kremlin at the Battle of Moscow. Though the Russian Army held the Kremlin successfully, the Polish forces still ravaged the land burning down towns, killing civilians and clergy. But soon the Poles were defeated and returned back to Poland.

It must be noted, that the Poles were able to take Moscow and Rus with the support of Cossacks and other followers of the False Dimitrys. The False Dimitrys were a weapon that created disunity among the Russian ruling class; many Boyars supported the False Dimitrys, along with Polish occupants, and clever Jesuits (Catholic monastic order). Rus fell because of disunity and was able to rise again through unity.

In 1613 the Zemsky Sobor elected the 16-year-old Mikhail Romanov as Tsar of Russia, ending the Time of Troubles and starting the Romanov Dynasty.

Mikhail the First

Mikhail I ascended the throne on July 22nd, 1613. He was a gentle and pious prince who heeded the council of his counsellors. His first task was liberating Russian lands from Polish and Swedish occupation. Under Mikhail's rule, Russia saw its greatest expansion with the conquest of Siberia. He died in 1645 from illness.

Aleksey the First

Aleksey I ascended the throne at the age of 16 after the death of his father. He first ruled under the guidance of his tutor the boyar Boris Morozov. Boris was later accused of sorcery and was exiled after a riot rose against his faction caused by the implementation of a universal tax on salt. Aleksey reformed and modernized the Russian military and struggled to regain Russia's strength lost during the Time of Troubles through tax and financial reforms. The repercussions of his reforms on the public caused many rebellions. Aleksey carried out a mostly fruitless war with Poland and Sweden. He also famously lamented the regicide (killing of the king) of King Charles the First of England by the Parliamentarians in 1649 and broke diplomatic relations with England. He accepted Royalist refugees and banned English merchants. He considered King Charles a martyr. In 1653 Patriarch Nikon reformed the practices of the Russian Orthodox Church to better match the practices of the Greek Orthodox Church. This brought dissent among the people and resulted in the Old Believer schism. The anathema against the Old Believers, however, was lifted soon after.

Peter the Great

After the short reign of Feodor III, the oldest son of Aleksey I, the 10-year-old Peter was chosen to rule by the Boyar Duma with his mother as regent in 1682. However, since Feodor didn't leave any children and Peter was his younger brother disputes arose. After a short rebellion led by Sophia Alekseyevna, Peter was proclaimed joint Tsar with his half-brother Ivan V with Sophia as regent.

Peter the Great did not become an independent ruler until he was 24 years old. Peter was a great reformer, he modernized the Russian army, modernized the fashion of the courts, adopted the Julian calendar, and pushed members of his family to marry into European royal houses. Peter created the Russian Navy and later captured Ottoman ports at the Azov and Black seas.

Seeking to find allies in the west to face the Ottoman threat to the south, Peter took a large delegation with him to Western Europe called the Grand Embassy. While there, he learned European customs, city-building, dentistry, and most importantly ship building. Peter's affinity towards the west infuriated Sophia and the Streltsy (units of Russian firearm infantry), Sophia took the opportunity of his absence to take control of the throne. Peter was forced to rush home to stop the rebellion though it was crushed quickly before his return. Upon his return many of the Streltsy were executed and publicly displayed. The Streltsy were then officially disbanded, and Sophia was forced to become a nun.

For a short time, Peter made peace with the Turks and went to war with Sweden to establish Russian dominance on the Baltic sea. In 1703 he founded began construction of St Petersburg, which was the capital of the Russian Empire from 1732 to 1918. In 1709 the Swedes attacked Ukraine. The Swedes, considered to have the most powerful military in the world at the time, were defeated at the Battle of Poltava and forced to retreat. This victory over Sweden was demonstrative of Russia's new military might and competence.

Though Peter the Great was deeply religious, he did not like the Patriarch having power of the Tsar, so when it came time to choose a new Patriarch he did not. He instead created the Holy Synod which became the ruling body of the Russian Orthodox Church. Peter died on February 8th, 1725.

Written and edited by Mikhail Moibenko

-----SCOUTING -THEORY-----

Rules of Pathfinders

- 1. Разведчик верен Богу, Отечеству, родителям и начальникам.**
[razvedchik veren bogu, otechestvoo, roditelyam, I nachal'nikam.]
A pathfinder is faithful to God, his fatherland, his parents, and his superiors.
- 2. Разведчик честен и правдив.**
[razvedchik chesten I pravdiv]
A pathfinder is honest and speaks the truth.
- 3. Разведчик помогает ближнему.**
[razvedchik pomogaet blizhnemu]
A pathfinder helps his neighbor.
- 4. Разведчик друг всем, кроме врагов своего Отечества, и лиц нарушающих Божеские и человеческие законы.**
[razvedchik droog vsem, krome vragov svoego otechestva, I lits naroosha-u-shih bozheskie I chelovecheskie zakoni]
A pathfinder is a friend to everyone, except the enemies of his fatherland and people that violate the Divine and human laws.
- 5. Разведчик безприкословно исполняет приказания своих родителей и начальников, и об исполнении приказания тотчас докладывает.**
A pathfinder unquestioningly takes orders from his parents and superiors, and after the execution of the orders immediately reports it.

[razvedchik bezprikoslovno ispolnyaet prikazaniya svoih roditelei I nachalnikov, I ob ispolnenii prikazaniya totchas dokladaivaet]

- 6. Разведчик вежлив и услужлив.** A pathfinder is polite and helpful.
[razvedchik vezhliv I usloozhliv]
- 7. Разведчик друг животных.** A pathfinder is a friend to animals.
[razvedchik droog zivotnih]
- 8. Разведчик чист в мыслях, словах, и на деле.** A pathfinder is clean in thought, word, and deed.
[razvedchik chist v mislyah, slovah, I na dele]
- 9. Разведчик бережлив и уважает чужую собственность.** A pathfinder is careful and respects the property of others.
[razvedchik berezhliv I oovazhaet choozhoo-u sobstvenost']
- 10. Разведчик весел и никогда не падает духом. Он всегда имеет бодрый и веселый вид.** A pathfinder is cheerful and never gives up. He always appears bold and in good spirits.
[razvedchik vessel I nikogda ne padaet duhom. On vseгда imeet bodriy I veselyii vid]
- 11. Разведчик трудолюбив и настойчив.** A pathfinder is hardworking and persistent.
[razvedchik troodolubiv I nastoichiv]
- 12. Разведчик скромн.** A pathfinder is modest.
[razvedchik skromen]

Торжественное Обещание

The Solemn Oath

Даю Торжественное Обещание и скрепляю его своим Словом, что буду исполнять свой долг перед Богом, Родиной, Родителями, и Начальниками, оказывать добрые услуги людям, знать законы разведчиков и им повиноваться.

Dayoo torzhestvenoe obeshyanie i skreplya-yoo yego svoim slovom, chto budu ispolnyat' svoi dolg pered Bogom, rodinoi, roditelyami, i nachal'nikami, okazyivat' dobryi-e oosloogi ludyam, znat' zakoni razvedchikov i im povinovat'sya.

I give my Solemn Oath and strengthen it with my word that I will fulfill my debt before God, my homeland, my parents and leaders, perform good works for others, know the Rules of Pathfinders and obey them.

Camp History

The birth of the idea for a summer camp for Russian children was a result of a youth conference in Chicago in 1959 organized by Archbishop Seraphim. The conference was so successful and so inspiring that it was decided to look for land to establish a summer camp for kids. There they could preserve their Russian language and traditions with the hopes of one day returning to their homeland. The land was found by Archbishop Seraphim in 1960 during a search for suitable property close to Chicago. It was a beautiful place and was almost perfectly placed about an equal distance from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Chicago, Illinois,

where there lived a lot of Russian children. In order to pay for land, the property was divided into 50 lots. The balance of the 72 acres including the lake was to be used for church and a summer camp for children. Archbishop Seraphim named the land Vladimirovo, in honor on St. Vladimir who baptized Russia. ORPR camp was opened the following year in 1961.

The first year of camp was very primitive with a very of children present and was only one week long. Each year improvements which allowed for more children to attend, little added larger tents and kitchen facilities and bathing facilities. building of the church services were held outside in the fresh inclement weather there was a large dining tent that served as Eventually the church was built, and the heavy-duty tents were cabins. Eventually modern bathroom facilities were built, and improved with screen windows and doors.

Originally very basic marching was the norm for flag lowering, after Sergey Sergeevich Schahawskoy arrived the became better organized and colorful.



small group
there were
by little we
Prior to the
air. During
a church.
replaced by
the cabin

raising and
marching

Разведчик - Pathfinders

The word “razvedchik” can be translated as “pathfinder,” meaning a scout. “Razvedchik” however, has another meaning that refers to a specialized military branch, the military intelligence or secret service agency. The branch collects information and uses analysis approaches to assist commanders in making their decisions for operations, missions, and campaigns. The areas of study for analysis can include the operational environment, hostile, friendly, and neutral forces, the civilian population in areas of combat operations, and other areas. Activities run by the branch can be carried out at any time, from peacetime to wartime, they also collect information from any level of specialized units to other troop and civilian branches. Troops are meticulously selected to serve based on their analytical skills and intelligence before being formally trained.

It is not a coincidence that our organization carries the name “razvedchiki,” many activities that are run at camp were designed to develop skills needed for an agent. The game of “kim” is to promote memory skills in the case that one find themselves in the base of the enemy and must report to their allies of the information they recollect; “beg” is for refining attention skills to hidden detail; beg signs are for communicating effectively to your allies without being found out by the opposer; survival skills to be able to endure any unpredictable situation.

-----SCOUTING -SURVIVAL AND NATURE-----

In 4th level you learned an overview of prioritization of skills for survival. In this level we will discuss each step in more depth.

PREPARATION AND MINDSET

As discussed in the previous level attitude is extremely important and will determine your chances of survival. When you have the right mindset you are able to accept the situation and clearly plan out your priorities avoiding fatal mistakes.

If you are lost, think to yourself “stay calm.” If you find yourself in fear or panic, think S.T.O.P:

Stop all physical activity, sit and slow you breathing exhaling an inhaling slowly counting to 3. This will help lower you heart rate and give opportunity to focus and think.

Think. Once you have calmed down think about your situation and anything you can do about it.

Observe look around you, assess the situation, first focusing on injuries then looking at both for the things you have and don't have to face the situation.

Plan make a strategy using your observations, don't be afraid to revise you plans.

Finally **A**ct, no plan is useful unless executed.

You should stay put in your area if it is safe and meets your needs with enough water and the cool/warm temperature depending on the situation; 95% of the time missing persons reported to authorities are found within 72 hours. Staying will help authorities reach you faster and conserve your energy. You should try attract attention to yourself using fires, smoke, mirrors, car tail headlights, etc. Examine any and all tools or objects you have with you, plain objects can be adapted for new purposes (a simple safety pin can make a good fishhook).

Leave your location if you know help will not arrive soon or the location does not meet your needs, in safety, medical help, water supply, etc. If you must leave plan where you will go, and what you need, leave a sign such as a large arrow indicating where you have left.

In a group survival situation, you should assess everyone's strengths and weaknesses including disabilities and medical needs. This helps organize everyone and increase chances of survival. Identify useful knowledge such as: medical knowledge, plant identification, navigation, fire-building, shelter identification/building, familiarity with local terrain, local weather patterns, signaling, cardiovascular fitness and

strength. Sometimes it is wise to choose a leader, this person should take responsibility for making decisions and consult the group before doing so, the person should inspire confidence and positive emotion.

While there is general guide for priorities using rules of three: Shelter, Water, Fire, Food, there is no perfect order for every situation. For example, if there is a serious injury, first aid may be top priority; in extreme cold finding shelter will help fend off exhaustion. Thus, always assess your situation for your needs first. Water from dehydration and shelter to keep from cold or rain are usually top priority, food most of the time will be lower on the checklist as people can survive off of burning bodyfat for up to 3 weeks.

Before heading out into the wild for long periods of time for activities such as hiking it is best to come prepared with a survival kit. While there is no “perfect” set or number of items, you should consider packing:

First aid items, water purification tablets or drops, fire starting equipment (lighter/metal match/matches), signaling items (mirror/heliograph/magnifying glass/whistle), food items (granola bars/canned food), shelter and clothing items (tent/hammock), knife, flexible saw, whistle, sewing kit, compass, fishing kit, candle/flashlight with spare lightbulbs and batteries, solar blanket, single edge razor/blades, water containers.

SHELTER

Shelter helps regulate the body’s core temperature, it is essential for staying warm in cold climates, cool in hot climates, and dry in rainy climates. A good shelter is large enough for a comfortable a night sleep but small enough to be snug and warm to trap body heat. Good shelter should protect against animals, insects and pests, shield the wind and rain, and promote deep sleep which is crucial for maintaining energy and a positive attitude. There are many types of shelters that are built using nearby resources to suit different types of terrain, climates, seasons, and periods of time, you should asses your situation before deciding on you shelter.

In this section we will discuss building a simple temporary shelter in a temperate forest environment, the lean-to, however these guidelines are useful to consider in any situation.

Choosing a location and building guidelines

- Allow yourself plenty of time before sunset to begin making your shelter. If you find yourself in a survival situation after dark, it may be best to use any available space to wait for daylight to make shelter.
- As a rule, you should build so that your entrance faces East to catch the rising sun, however in northern temperate zones you should build your shelter with most exposure to the South to catch most light and heat.
- Make sure you shelter has enough ventilation even in the cold.
- Make the shelter a comfortable size, large enough for sleep but small enough to retain heat.
- Make sure the shelter is built on flat ground with a water and fuel sources nearby.
- Beware of building on low or high grounds, low grounds collect the cold air and frost, while highest hills and ridges are prone to high winds.
- Build near an open space where you can set up signals for rescuers.
- **Do not** build near a lone tree, it can attract lightning.
- **Do not** build in the center of the forest where you can not be seen from air.
- **Do not** build on a game trail of predators.
- **Do not** build in an avalanche or flood zone.
- **Do not** light a fire inside your shelter unless you are sure it has enough free air circulation and is safe from setting the shelter aflame.

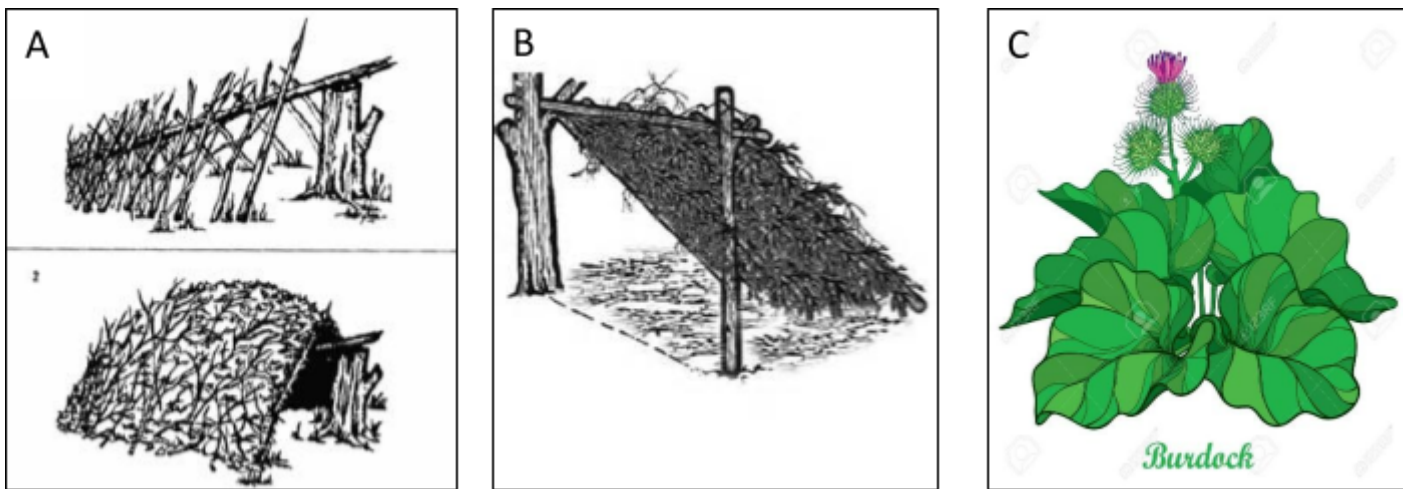
Choosing shelter

Choosing the best shelter requires you to first evaluate the likelihood of rescue and how much time you have before it gets dark. Constructing a time-consuming shelter is best for situations where you are planning to wait for help to arrive or need to heal from injury. Sometimes it is better to build a series of short-term shelters for one night if you need to walk to safety over a few days. If you have only an hour or two of daylight left a simple shelter can be made (or found) of a large pile of forest debris, overhanging branches, beds of dry pine needles, caves, crevices in rock walls, tree roots and fallen tree trunks (check for insects first!) to suffice for one night.

Building a lean-to

There is no wrong way to build a lean-to. The following is just a guide for building a temporary shelter, use the resources you find in your surroundings.

1. Locate a good safe camp area, away from ditches and lowlands that may flood. Find a long strong pole-like branch and lean it on a low branch of a tree or a stump. The leaning branch should be secured and strong enough to withhold heavy weight (test this by jumping on it). The maximum height of the leaning branch should be at your waist to prevent heat from escaping. The length of the branch should allow you lie comfortably with 2 extra feet to spare. Make sure the branches, sticks, and trees you are using are not an insect nest!
2. Find leafy branches, sticks, bark pieces and prop them against the leaning branch on either side of the large branch to create an "A" shape (A). Add some branches horizontally to create a grid-like pattern. If you have any kind of tarp material throw it over the leaning branch, staking it down on either side with rocks or sticks before you add leafy branches.
3. Fill in any exposed parts of the lean-to walls with moss, rocks, leaves, and whatever else you can find to block wind, rain and snow. If you find burdock leaves (C) place neat overlapping rows of them on the leaned sticks walls starting from the bottom before adding leaves.
4. Add bark, sticks, or rocks on top of the leaves to prevent them from blowing away.
5. For more insulation and warmth stuff the inside floor and walls with leaves. Roll around the inside to press the leaves onto the walls of the lean-to and keep adding more, leaves compress easily!



Another option is secure a sturdy branch between two trees using vines or rope, and lean sticks on the attached branch, similar to B. All types of shelters should be low to the ground, at waist level or below to keep trap more heat.

Useful hints:

- You should keep a large pile of leaves near the lean-to to fix leaks on rainy days.
- The lean-to must be unkept routinely, as the leaves can wither and crumble, pile on new leaves regularly.
- For a door you can weave together green branches into a square grid-like door or gather a huge pile of leaves loosely to prop the doorway as you crawl inside; when you let go, they will expand.

FIRE

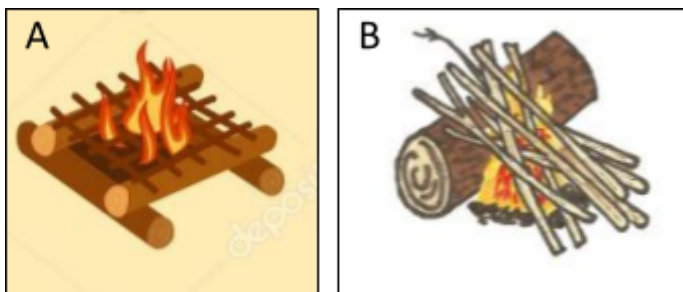
A fire is central to survival and serves many purposes. First it helps maintain body temperature; failure to regulate body warm is a cause for common death in the wild. Fire provides physical and mental comfort. Smoke and light can be used to attract attention for rescue, smoke can also dry food for later consumption. A bright blaze drives away predators or pests and provides light. Heat can dry clothes, boil water, and kill bacteria in food to make it more digestible. Fire can be used to make study tools like baked pots and hardened wood weapons or utensils. A fire can also be very dangerous if left unattended, it can set a forest or grassland on fire, an unvented fire in small enclosed space like a tent can cause suffocation.

Making a fire

A fire has three parts: fuel, air, and heat. Adjust the three variables to fit your purpose: more air can make a brighter signal fire, less air produces hot coals that can burn for hours, different fuels provide different types of smoke.

Tinder and kindling start a blaze. Tinder is anything that glows upon accepting a spark. Natural sources include anything that is bone dry and has a high ratio of surface area to volume. Good woody sources are birch bark, tiny sticks (that can be feathered with a knife), or woodchips and shavings cut from a dry stick with a knife (“shepki”); other sources include cattail heads, moss, dry leaves and grass, and the burdock plant (big leaved plant with prickly heads that are known to stick to fur and clothing, shown above in shelter C). Kindle is the usually the frame of easily combustible small sticks or twigs that burn second after the tinder; these can also be pine-needles, pinecones, and paper. There are many ways of building a fire the following is just a guide:

1. Start by building a square shape out of pieces of sticks or fuel.
2. Lean kindling (tiny twigs) closely together parallel to each other or in a grid-like pattern across the top of the square (A), leaving an air space underneath the kindling. Alternatively, you can use a larger stick and lean the kindling closely together on it (making a lean-to shape B), again leaving an air space underneath.
3. Pile a large amount of dry tinder on top of the kindling (“shepki”).
4. Light tinder from bottom, through kindling.
5. After tinder catches, slowly add kindling right on the flame; blow very lightly, if needed, from the side of the fire to spread the flame to the rest of tinder and kindling. Make sure your head is on the same level as the fire on the ground, but keep you face and body a safe distance away from catching clothes or hair on fire. Do not blow directly on top of the fire, or it will go out.
6. Gradually add fuel (sticks) increasing in size, leaving space for air. This ensures the fire staying lit and get hot enough for larger fuel. Add wood at regular intervals. To make a large fire faster, blow on flame to spread it to fuel when it has gained momentum, keep adding more sticks as the flame consumes them.



Never leave a fire unattended. Always make sure you leave at least a few feet of safety distance from your shelter, branches, and trees in the area when building a fire. Put out the fire by sprinkling water on it and stirring coals until they are not longer hot.

WATER

Water is incredibly important, water is life. You will die if you do not drink water within two or three days. Without water the body quickly deteriorates; blood becomes thicker and makes it harder for the heart to pump. In an extremely hot or extremely cold climate water it is an even greater need for effective functioning; impaired circulation reduces the ability to shed excess heat in hot climates and retain heat in cold climates. As dehydration increases, the body pulls water from cells to keep blood flowing, this damages cell membranes and increases cellular salt concentrations.

It is recommended to drink one gallon of water per person in the wilderness, in hotter climates more may be needed. It is difficult to carry as much water as you need, so you should learn the basics of purifying water found from streams, rivers, etc.

Dehydration

- Losing up to 5% of body fluids causes thirst, weakness, nausea, and irritability. Skin can become flushed, heart rate increased; judgement can be impaired with even up to 2% lost
- Losing 10% causes headaches, dizziness, and tingling in the limbs. You can lose the ability to write and speak clearly. Skin may turn blue and vision can blur.
- Loss of up to 15% severely impairs vision and hearing, swells the tongue, and makes urination painful. You may be unable to swallow and exhibit signs of delirium (disturbance of mental abilities and awareness).
- Losing more than 15% usually results in death.

Many signs of dehydration match signs of fear and panic, when the two combine they strike the body twice as much.

Drink water at regular intervals to prevent dehydration don't wait to get thirsty. It is difficult to drink more than one quart of water at a time without discomfort so it may take a few hours to return the body back to normal state. Always drink water as soon as you notice any signs of dehydration; avoid sport drink, salt, or mineral water as they may interfere with the body's normal absorption of water.

Good sources of water

Unfortunately, most of Earth is covered with undrinkable saltwater, freshwater can be contaminated with microorganisms and chemicals which can cause illnesses. The following is a guide to treating water before drinking:

Fresh-Flowing streams and lakes – must be purified regardless of appearance

Dew- pure when it condenses

Rain- pure before it hits the ground

Snow and Ice – boil to make drinkable

Groundwater that is dug from a hole at the base of a dune - must be purified

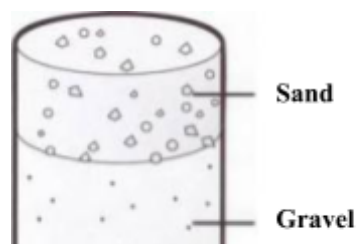
Water stored in plants – vines, barrel cactus, banana, trees, is pure

Bad sources of water include: Urine, blood, seawater, drinks with alcohol, water holes with chemical shine or smell, water from lakes that do not drain.

Purifying Water

Boiling clear water for several minutes will kill microorganisms, but will not remove all chemical impurities, so it is best to be prepared with water purifiers when you go out in the wild these include iodine tablets/drops, chlorine solution, pump or bottle purifiers. You can also make your own sand filter using a simple water bottle.

1. First cut off the water bottle's bottom off.

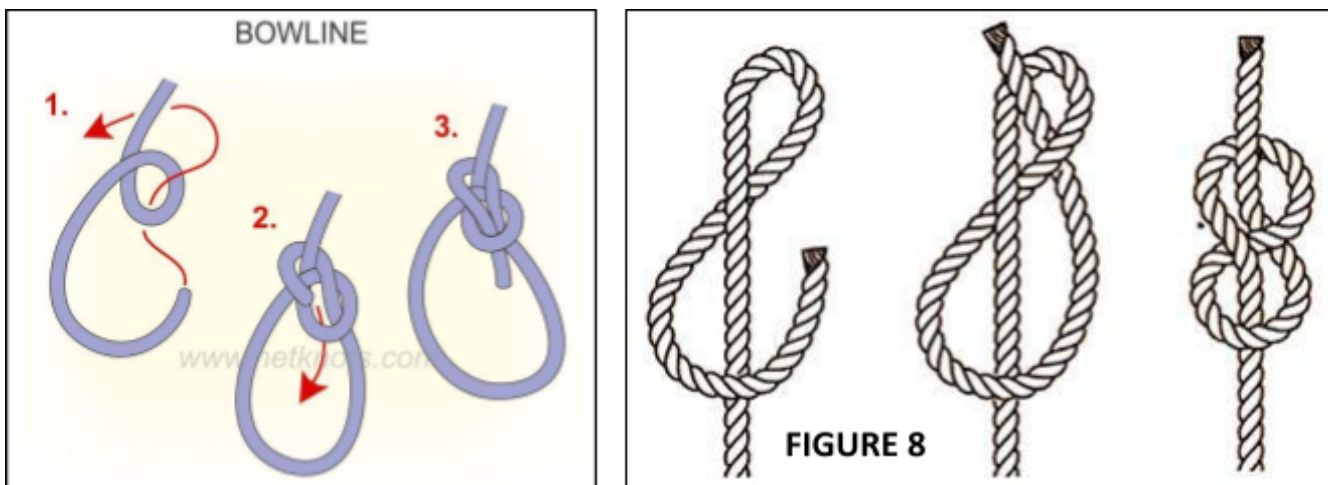


- Next, get filter material to fill into the bottle neck, ideally you should start with ground up charcoal pieces (from a fire), followed by a few inches of small rocks or gravel (these will help the next layer of sand to not mix with the water you filter out), then at least 3 inches of sand topped with larger stones. Optional - use a bandana or cloth to stuff the neck before adding charcoal
- Get some water and pour it through the filter you have created. Clear water should come out clear from the bottom after a few rinses. If the water is not very clear, pass it through the filter again to make it clearer.

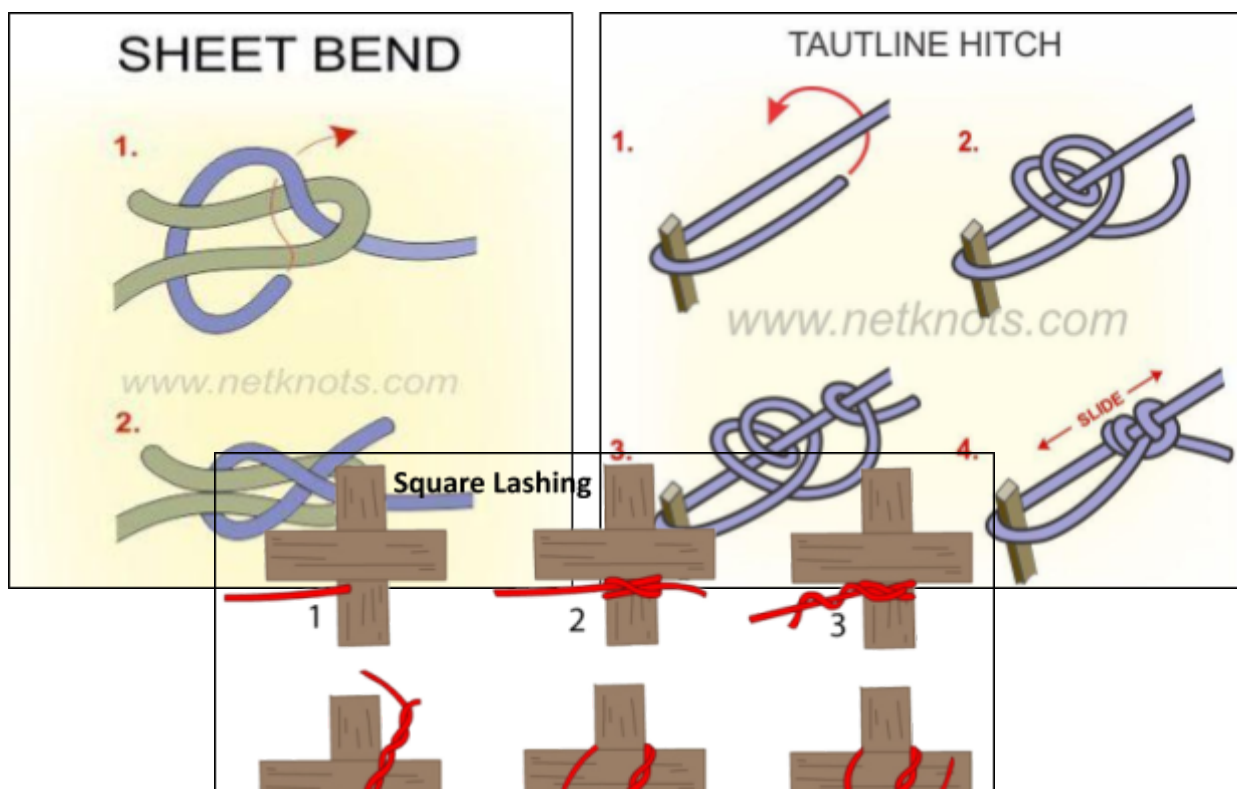
Sand filtration is advantageous being a cost-effective and easy method of purifying large amounts of water. This is because you use materials that are readily available. The other advantage of this method is its effectiveness for getting rid of various forms of contaminants.

KNOTS

Bowline – Secure nonadjustable loop at the end of a knot
Figure 8 – Stopper knot for middle or end of rope



Sheet Bend – Knot used to tie two ends of rope that vary in thickness or material
Taut Line Hitch – Adjustable loop at the end of rope used for tension (such as tying end of a tent)

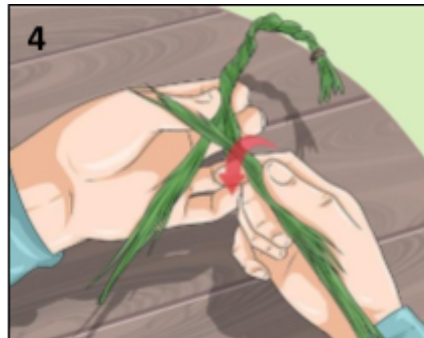
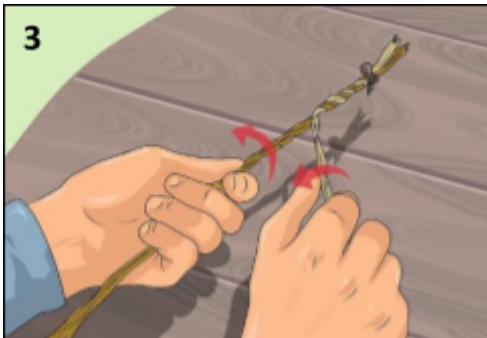


Square Lashing – Used to securely tie one pole to another pole or tree, used in building (useful for lean-to)

Making your own rope

Rope used to be entirely made out of natural materials such as plant stems and stalks, specifically from cotton, sisal, and hemp. If you are without a rope, you can improvise with natural fiber around you.

1. Test possible materials like grass, vine, stringy bark, etc. by knotting a piece, if it doesn't break it is usable.
2. Pick out a few stands and knot them together at the top, divide the stands in half.
3. Twist each stand in the same direction clockwise, you will notice that the motion will cause the stands to wrap around each other, this is the start of your rope.
4. When you get to the ends add new pieces of fiber to each end overlapping by about 3 inches, keep twisting each stand clockwise, they will blend in securely.
5. When you happy with your length tie a knot to the end. You can clean up the rope by cutting off stands that stick out. You can also make the rope stronger with twisting more stand fibers together or twisting multiple ropes



together.

-----SCOUTING-FIRST AID-----

Hypothermia

Hypothermia does not require subfreezing temperatures; it occurs when a person's core temperature drops to a dangerously low level more than 2 degrees below 98.6°F. Hypothermia is life-threatening and can impair muscular and brain function. Symptoms include uncontrollable vigorous shivering, bad coordination, drowsiness, abnormally slow breathing, cool or cold skin on abdomen, chest, or back.

What to do:

1. First, get person to a warm place, out of the cold.

2. Gently help them take off wet clothing and wrap them in blankets.
3. Keep the person in horizontal flat position, apply insulated heat to chest, armpits and back.
4. If the person is responsive give a warm sugary drink to help their temperature rise, be sure there is no caffeine or alcohol in the drink. Do not have them shower or bathe until victim returns to normal mental state.

Stopping Heavy Bleeding

If someone is bleeding heavily, they will not be able to form a clot, and could bleed out
To stop the bleeding:

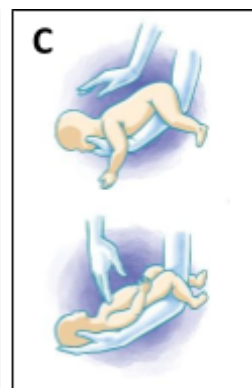
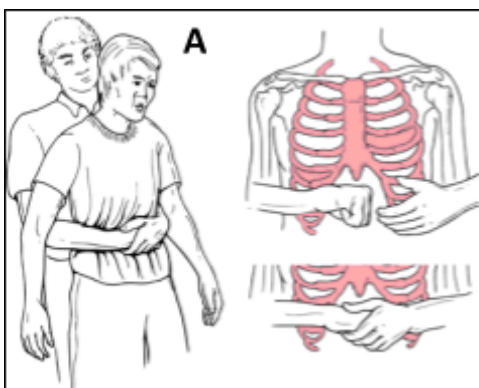
1. Put on gloves and expose the wound, if gloves are not available improvise a barrier.
2. Cover the wound with a sterile cloth or clean dressing, you can also use ripped t-shirt
3. Apply direct pressure using your palm or flat part of your fingers until the bleeding stops. If bleeding does not stop within 10 add more dressing on top the first with the same direct pressure. **Do not** remove the first layer of dressing. Raising the wounded limb over the heart will also help to slow down heavy bleeding.
4. Apply bandage firmly over the dressing to hold it in place call 911 if bleeding cannot be stopped after about 15 minutes.

It's important to recognize the signs of arterial bleeding, as someone with an arterial wound could bleed out and die within minutes. Arterial wounds pulsate as they bleed, and the blood is usually bright red. It is essential to put pressure on the wound right away, add cloth if the cloth you use soaks through, and do not remove the pressure for any reason until medical professionals arrive.

Chocking

The Heimlich Maneuver is a method use to help someone who is choking on a foreign object.

1. First, ask the person "are you choking?" in an emergency situation, the person will **not be able to talk** or breathe, other symptoms include having a weak or ineffective cough, blue-gray skin, panicky look, or showing the universal choking sign (grasping at the neck).
2. Stand behind the victim, wrap your arms around them, place a fist between the person's ribcage and belly button, and place your other hand over the fist. **A**
3. Deliver a quick thrust upward and keep making separate thrusts until the foreign object is dislodged or they can breathe or speak.
4. If victim goes unconscious start CRP (2nd level) and call 911.



For heavier or pregnant victims use chest thrusts.
For infants:

1. Lay the baby face-down on your arm. Hold the baby's

head with your hand to keep his or her neck straight. The baby's legs should be straddling your arm near the elbow. Lean the baby down at an angle. The infant's head should be lower than his or her waist. **B**

2. With the heel of your other hand, strike the baby between the shoulder blades 5 times.
3. If object does not come out. Roll the baby from one arm to the other so that he or she is now laying face up. Keep the head cradled in your hand and the legs straddling your arm.
4. Hold the baby at an angle with his or her head low and give 5 chest thrusts by using two fingers on the breastbone right between the nipples. Push down about an inch 5 times. **C.** Continue with back blows if object is not dislodged.

Fainting

This is for a person who has collapsed suddenly, some signs are pales skin and lips, clammy and sweaty skin.

What to do:

1. Check breathing. Call 911 if breathing has stopped, provide CPR
2. If victim is breathing:
 - Keep them lying flat on their back and raise feet 6-12in
 - Loosen clothing
 - Check for injuries from falling
 - Wipe forehead with cool wet cloth
3. Seek medical care if person does not regain consciousness, fainted for not reason, has repeated episodes, is pregnant or 50 years old, has diabetes or seizures, or experiences loss of control over bladder or bowel.

Stroke and Heart Attack Signs

While strokes are usually associated with older people, anyone can get a stroke at any time. A stroke is caused by a small blood vessel rupture or blockage in the delicate veins that bring blood to the brain, and when a person is suffering from stroke, every second counts.

Signs of a stroke include:

- Severe headaches
- Dizziness and disorientation
- Numbness or sudden drooping on one side of the body
- Difficulty seeing out of one or both eyes
- Difficulty walking.

The symptoms may be sudden and dramatic, or subtle and gradual. To tell if a person is having a stroke ask the following and note their response:

- Ask them to smile and note if one side of their face droops
- Ask them to raise both of their arms and note if one arm drifts downward when held extended, or arms are uneven
- If they cannot repeat a simple sentence such as “the sky is blue” without slurring, using wrong words, or being unable to speak.

What to do:

1. Call 911 while waiting:
2. Monitor breathing, if breathing stops start CPR
3. Position person on their back with head and shoulders slightly raised
4. Loosen clothing
5. Be prepared to turn person to the side to drain vomiting or drooling, if person is breathing place them on their side.

Heart Attack happens when the heart muscle tissue dies because its blood supply has been severely reduced or stopped.

Signs of a heart attack include:

- Chest pain in the center that feels like pressure, squeezing, or fullness. It may also be felt in the jaw, shoulders, arms, or back, jaw (back is more common in women). The pain may last for 5 minutes or comes and goes.
- Sweating or cold sweats
- Light headedness or dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting – more common in women
- Numbness, tingling, aching in the arm – usually left arm
- Shortness of breath – more common in women
- Weakness or fatigue, especially in older adults

What to do:

1. Have person sit, with knees raised and lean against stable support. Try to keep the person calm and **Do Not** allow them to walk
2. Call 911. Do not drive person an emergency room wait for EMS to arrive
3. While waiting:
 - Loosen any tight clothing
 - Ask if person takes any chest pain medication for a known heart condition, help them take it
 - If they are alert, able to swallow, not allergic to Aspirin, have no signs of stroke, and over 16 years old help them take one adult Aspirin, or 4 low-dose baby Aspirins. Crunch the medicine before administering for faster results
 - Monitor breathing. If person becomes unresponsive or stops breathing begin CPR

Responding to Drowning

Drowning is one of the most common causes of accidental death, especially among children. If you're not a skilled swimmer who knows how to swim (with a possibly panicked flailing person) the most important thing to know is that swimming out to help should be the last resort, keep yourself safe first!

Signs of drowning are different from the common belief of active yelling for help, signs may include:

- Panicky movements
- Bobbing up and down in the water with hands outstretched
- Head back mouth open gasping for air
- Dropping beneath surface and not coming up within a reasonable period of time
- Kicking has stopped, and or no movement underwater

Remember: **Reach, Throw, Row and Go**

1. Call for help
2. **Reach:** If the person is near the edge of a pool or dock, lie flat on the ground and try to reach the person. Use a tree branch, oar, towel, or shepherd's hook to lengthen your reach. If you have to, get in the water and hold onto the pool edge or dock while trying to reach the person
3. **Throw:** a safety ring, or other safety devices if available
4. **Row:** get on a boat, if there is one available
5. If nothing works **Go:** If you know how to swim, swim out as the last resort. Bring a rescue safety ring, life jacket, towel, or shirt with you so you can tow the person in. Try to come from behind and grab them under their arms and use your legs to kick. **(A)** Don't put yourself in a position to let them grab onto you because they could drag both of you under.

6. Once you get the person onshore or out of the swimming pool, first aid and rescue breathing should be done as soon as possible. Chances are that by then a trained emergency medical person may be there to help. If not, look for a pulse, listen for breathing, begin CPR if there is no breathing.



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