

Orthodox Prayers

Today you will...

talk about some prayers and songs

practice expressing opinions

listen to some prayers and songs

read an article about a Russian Orthodox monk and some texts of Orthodox prayers

write a personal letter

Pre-Intermediate

Warm-up

1. Look at the Key Words. Which words would you describe as 'prayer'?

If you don't know their meanings, try to guess them or use a dictionary if you need.

conversation, acathistus, apocrypha, baptism, discussion, charity, psalm, message, inspiration, comprehension

Listening / Speaking

2. You will hear five recordings. Which of them are prayers?
Why do you think so?

Use expressions: in my opinion, personally, I think (that), to my mind, it seems to me that, I'm sure that, it can('t) be a prayer because

3. Listen again recordings two and five. Work in pairs. Do your feelings differ after the listening? Try to describe the impressions. When are you relaxed/ excited? Do you enjoy listening something like that? Tell each other.

Example. I feel good when I listen... Such music is great because it makes me...

Speaking

4. Work in pairs. Have you ever heard of people who started to believe in God when they were in danger? If you have, could you explain that?

Example. I know that a lot of soldiers start to pray hard when they are in danger. Probably they...

5. Look at the picture. Answer the questions.

- (1) Can you describe the person in the picture?**
- (2) Do you know his name?**
- (3) What is he doing?**
- (4) What can you say about his character and the way of life?**
- (5) If you had an opportunity, would you ask him a question? Which one?**



Reading

6. Now read the text quickly and check your answers 2-4.

Seraphim of Sarov

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seraphim_of_Sarov)

Saint Seraphim of Sarov (30 July [O.S. 19 July] 1754 (or 1759) – 14 January [O.S. 2 January] 1833), born Prokhor Moshnin, is one of the most renowned Russian monks and mystics in the Orthodox Church. He is remembered for extending the monastic teachings of contemplation and self-denial to the layperson, and taught that the purpose of the Christian life was to acquire the Holy Spirit.

Seraphim was glorified (canonized) by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1903. The date of his death is his major feast day. Reverence for him is not limited to the Orthodox; Pope John Paul II referred to him as a saint in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*.

One of his "spiritual children", Nicholas Motovilov, wrote most of what we know about him today.

Perhaps Seraphim's most popular quotation amongst Orthodox believers is "Acquire a peaceful spirit, and thousands around you will be saved."

Born 19 July 1754, he was baptized with the name of Prochor, after Saint Prochorus, one of the first Seven Deacons of the Early Church and the disciple of John the Evangelist. His parents, Isidore and Agathia Moshnin, lived in Kursk, Russia. His father was a merchant, but Seraphim had little interest in business. Instead, he began a life that was very devout to the Orthodox Church at a young age. According to Orthodox tradition, as a small boy he was healed by a wonder working icon of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary), Our Lady of Kursk. It is claimed that during his life he experienced a number of visions.

In 1775, at the age of 17, he visited Saint Dorothea in Kiev.

In 1777, at the age of 19, he joined the Sarov monastery as a novice (poslushnik). In 1786 he was officially tonsured (took his monastic vows) and was given the religious name of Seraphim, which means "fiery" or "burning" in Hebrew. Shortly afterwards, he was ordained hierodeacon (monastic deacon). In 1793 he was ordained as a hieromonk (monastic priest) and became the spiritual leader of the Diveyevo convent, which has since come to be known as the Seraphim-Diveyevo Convent. Soon after this, he retreated to a log cabin in the woods outside Sarov monastery and led a solitary lifestyle as a hermit for 25 years. During this time his feet became swollen to the point that he had trouble walking.

One day, while chopping wood, Seraphim was attacked by a gang of thieves who beat him mercilessly until they thought he was dead. He never resisted and was beaten with the handle of his own axe. The thieves were looking for money, but all they found in his hut was an icon of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary). The incident left Seraphim with a hunched back for the rest of his life. However, at the thieves' trial he pleaded to the judge for mercy on their behalf.

After this incident Seraphim spent 1,000 successive nights on a rock in continuous prayer with his arms raised to the sky, an almost super-human feat of asceticism, especially considering the pain he was already in from his injuries.

In 1815, in obedience to a reputed spiritual experience that he attributed to the Virgin Mary, Seraphim began admitting pilgrims to his hermitage as a confessor. He soon became immensely popular due to his reputation for healing powers and gift of prophecy. He was often visited by hundreds of pilgrims per day and was reputed to have the ability to answer his guests' questions before they could ask.

As extraordinarily harsh as Seraphim often was to himself, he was kind and gentle toward others — always greeting his guests with a prostration, a kiss, and exclaiming "Christ is risen!", and calling everyone "My joy." He died while kneeling before an icon of the Theotokos at the age of 74.

Reading

7. Read the text more carefully. Are the statements true (T) or false (F)?

- (1.) Seraphim was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century.
- (2.) Nicholas Motovilov was one of Saint Seraphim's sons.
- (3.) In 1775, at the age of 17, Saint Seraphim visited Saint Dorothea in Moscow.
- (4.) Saint Seraphim became popular due to his reputation for healing powers.
- (5.) He was reputed to have the ability to answer his guests' questions before they could ask.

Speaking

8. Your culture. What saints do you know in your city (town)? When did they live?

Reading

9. Saint Seraphim devoted his life to the Russian Orthodox Church. He prayed a lot, and it was very important for him. The prayers have been translated into many languages because the Orthodox live all over the world. Match Orthodox morning prayers to the Holy Trinity in English and in Russian.

(1) Having arisen from sleep, we fall down before Thee, O Blessed One, and sing to Thee, O Mighty One, the angelic hymn: Holy! Holy! Holy! art Thou, O God; through the Theotokos, have mercy on us.

(2) Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

(3) Do Thou, O Lord, Who hast raised me from my bed and from sleep, enlighten my mind and heart, and open my lips that I may praise Thee, O Holy Trinity: Holy! Holy! Holy! art Thou, O God; through the Theotokos, have mercy on us.

(4) Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(5) The Judge will come suddenly and the acts of every man will be revealed; but with fear we cry in the middle of the night: Holy! Holy! Holy! art Thou, O God; through the Theotokos, have mercy on us.

(A) Внезапно Судия приидет, и коегождо деяния обнажатся, но страхом зовем в полунощи: Свят, Свят, Свят еси, Боже, Богородицею помилуй нас.

(B) И ныне и присно и во веки веков. Аминь.

(C) Воставше от сна, припадаем Ти, Блаже, и ангельскую песнь вопием Ти, Сильне: Свят, Свят, Свят еси, Боже, Богородицею помилуй нас.

(D) Слава Отцу и Сыну и Святому Духу.

(E) От одра и сна воздвигл мя еси, Господи, ум мой просвети и сердце, и устне мои отверзи, во еже пети Тя, Святая Троице: Свят, Свят, Свят еси, Боже, Богородицею помилуй нас.

Listening / Writing

10. One of the most famous prayers is "The Lord's Prayer (Our Father)". According to the Holy Bible, the author of it was Jesus Christ. Listen and fill in gaps.

Our _____ (1), which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy _____ (2).

Thy _____ (3) come.

Thy will be done,

On earth as it ____ (4) in heaven.

Give us this day our daily _____ (5).

And _____ (6) us our trespasses,

As we forgive those _____ (7) trespass against us.

And lead ____ (8) not into temptation,

_____ (9) deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the _____ (10), and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Speaking

11. **Discussion.** Work in groups of 4-5 students. Discuss the questions.

(1) What do people pray for?

(2) Can people live without any faith happily? Give as many examples as possible.

Writing

12. **Letter writing.** You have received a letter from your English pen friend Jane who writes:

...I've just seen a movie about Russian festivals. Some of them are religious. Orthodox Easter and Christmas are among popular ones. How could you explain the reasons of their popularity? Do you think that religion is a part of the national culture? Are there many people in Russia that go to the church to pray?

As for the latest news, my elder brother Mark has entered university...

Write a letter to Jane.

In your letter

- answer her questions
- ask 3 questions about her brother Mark

Write about 100-140 words.

Remember the rules of letter writing.

Источники фотографий

<http://club.foto.ru/gallery/images/photo/2009/03/22/1304072.jpg>

<http://www.samara-photo.ru/images/49b427154d1e4.jpg>

http://img-fotki.yandex.ru/get/5504/kliopa-08.8d/0_61cd2_969bb12d_XL

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Источники аутентичных текстов:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seraphim_of_Sarov

<http://www.prayer.ru/other/all-languages.html#E>

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/prayers>