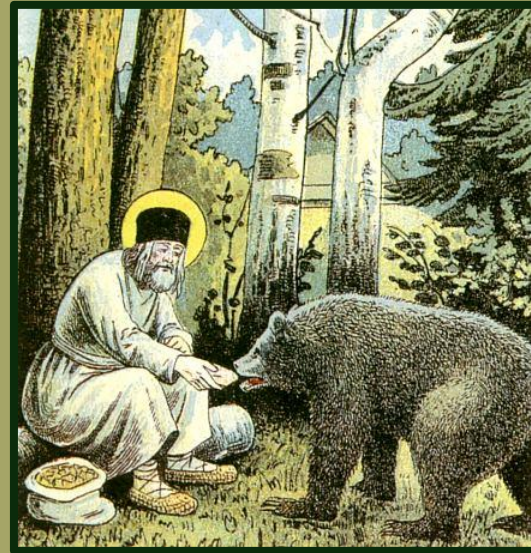
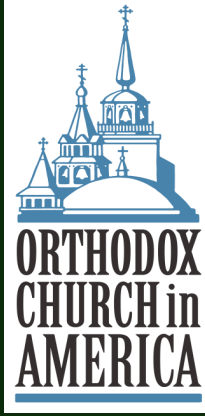


# All of Creation Rejoices: Welcome to the Zoo!

Lesson 4

PreK-5th



## Bear Buddies

Lesson—25 min

Ask students if they have heard about St. Seraphim. Discuss where he lived and when (Russia in the mid to late 1700's). Read the following excerpt from the OCA website about Seraphim's life (link is below if you'd like to read more):

St. Seraphim received the blessing of the new Superior, Father Isaiah, to live alone in a remote part of the forest three and a half miles from the monastery. He named his new home "Mount Athos," and devoted himself to solitary prayer. He went to the monastery only on Saturday before the all-night Vigil, and returned to his forest cell after Sunday's Liturgy, at which he partook of the Divine Mysteries.

Father Seraphim spent his time in ascetical struggles. His cell rule of prayer was based on the rule of St. Pachomius for the ancient desert monasteries. He always carried the Holy Gospels with him, reading the entire New Testament in the course of a week. He also read the holy Fathers and the service books. The saint learned many of the Church hymns by heart, and sang them while working in the forest. Around his cell he cultivated a garden and set up a beehive.

The holy Elder was sometimes so absorbed by the unceasing prayer of the heart that he remained without stirring, neither hearing nor seeing anything around him. The schemamonk Mark the Silent and the hierodeacon Alexander would visit him occasionally. Finding the saint immersed in prayer they would leave quietly, so they would not disturb his contemplation.

His solitude was often disturbed by visits from monks and laymen, who sought his advice and blessing. Receiving a sign that the Lord approved of his desire for complete silence, he banned all visitors. Through the prayers of the saint, the pathway to his wilderness cell was blocked by ancient pine trees. Now only the birds and the wild beasts visited him, and he dwelt with them as Adam did in Paradise. They came at midnight and waited for him to complete his Rule of prayer. Then he would feed bears, lynxes, foxes, rabbits, and even wolves with bread from his hand. Saint Seraphim also had a bear which would obey him and run errands for him.

Complete the lesson activity.

## Lesson Activity

### The Silent Game

Supplies needed: bracelet

One student kneels in the corner and acts as St. Seraphim praying. Their hands are behind their back with a bracelet (acting as a prayer rope in their hand) and their eyes closed. Other students decide if they want to be a monk, a layman, or one of the wild animals that came to Seraphim.

Each student takes a turn to silently try to sneak up and take St. Seraphim's "prayer rope" without him knowing they are coming. If the student acting as St. Seraphim, turns their head and catches the student coming, then it's another student's turn to try to sneak up.

## Seraphim's Life Excerpt from:

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2011/01/02/100008-repose-of-venerable-seraphim-wonderworker-of-sarov>



## Games

### Going on a Bear Hunt—10 min

Supplies needed: bear stickers, print outs, or bear figures/counters

Go over the “Going on a Bear Hunt” song with the students. You can use the video below or go through it yourself with them.

<https://allnurseryrhymes.com/going-on-a-bear-hunt/>

Prior to the game, hide the bears around a room or outside. Students then go on a bear hunt searching for them. Hide more than one bear for each student to find.



### Bear Stomp Hopscotch—15 min

Supplies needed: if outside, chalk to make bear footprints on sidewalk; if inside, print out bear footprints to act as a hopscotch board; bear counters or stones

Set up the bear footprints in a hopscotch board pattern. Then play as you would hopscotch. Throw the stone into the first footprint, then jump over that footprint to the second footprint. Continue on through the hopscotch board. You balance on one foot in single squares and both feet in side-by-side squares. When you reach the end, you turn around and hop back through the board. On the way back to the starting line, the student pauses and picks up their stone. On their next turn, they would throw their stone into the second footprint, jumping over this space. This continues until each square has been used.



## Troparion for Venerable Seraphim of Sarov—Tone 4

Commemorated on January 2

You loved Christ from your youth, O blessed one, and longing to work for Him alone you struggled in the wilderness in constant prayer and labor. With penitent heart and great love for Christ you were favored by the Mother of God. Therefore we cry to you: Save us by your prayers, venerable Seraphim, our father.

## Craft & Snack

### Painted Bear Pebble—25 min

Supplies needed: rock about 2-3 inches in size, dark brown, light brown, and black paint, printed quote of St. Seraphim cut in a strip, modge podge or glue, hair dryers

Say: "You have learned about St. Seraphim of Sarov in your lesson today. St. Seraphim was known for climbing up on a big rock in the forest to pray all night. If he couldn't get to that one, he had a smaller rock in his cell that he would kneel or stand on to pray. He would raise his hands and pray: God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Have students take the dark brown paint and make a large circle head, then two smaller circle ears. Next, use the lighter brown to make a muzzle and inner ears. Then black paint to make two eyes and a nose. Use the hair dryers as needed to speed up the drying process.

Once dry to the touch, turn the stones over and glue the printed quote on the back with modge podge. Talk about how these rocks can go in their prayer corner at home as a reminder of St. Seraphim and his prayer rule.



### Bear Trail Mix—25 min

Supplies needed: Honey Comb cereal, mini marshmallows, Teddy Grahams, M&M's, raisins, cups or bowls

Students assemble their bear trail mix in bowls. While they are snacking, read a book about St. Seraphim's life, such as:

St. Seraphim's Beatitudes: Blessings for our Path to Heaven by Priest Daniel Marshall

St. Seraphim of Sarov by Georgia Kalogerakis

Students can also color an icon of St. Seraphim or a coloring page of a bear as they listen.



### Closing—5 min

If possible, show an icon of St. Seraphim, and ask students: "what is something that stood out to you today about how St. Seraphim lived?" (Guide them to talk about prayer and how St. Seraphim followed God's direction) Then ask them: "how can you follow St. Seraphim's example in your everyday life?" (Pray more, listen to God, trust God, read the Gospels, and attend church)