SAINT SERGIUS SCHOOL

2026–2027 · YEAR 1

SAINT SERGIUS SCHOOL

LESSON 8

Great Martyr Demetrius — What Is a Martyr?

Date: November 8, 2026

Term: I — Entering the Life of the Church

Book Study: The Law of God — Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy

Lesson Focus: Courageous witness, love, and hope in the Resurrection.



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Introduction
What is courage? Is courage always fighting? How can we be brave and loving?

St. Demetrius of Thessalonica
St. Demetrius lived in Thessalonica during a time of persecution. He confessed Jesus Christ openly, despite the danger. The Church remembers him as a Great Martyr who remained faithful to Christ even when imprisoned.

St. Nestor and Lyaeus — Church Tradition
According to the Church's traditional account, Nestor received St. Demetrius's blessing before facing Lyaeus, a powerful fighter. Nestor prevailed. Both Nestor and Demetrius subsequently suffered martyrdom.

A Great Martyr is especially honoured for remarkable witness to Christ through suffering.

Calendar Note
November 8 is the Year 1 teaching date, not necessarily the liturgical feast day.



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Key Vocabulary
Martyr — A faithful witness to Christ.
Witness — One who testifies to the truth.
Confession — Open acknowledgment of faith.
Great Martyr — One especially honoured for steadfast witness.
Persecution — Mistreatment because of faith.

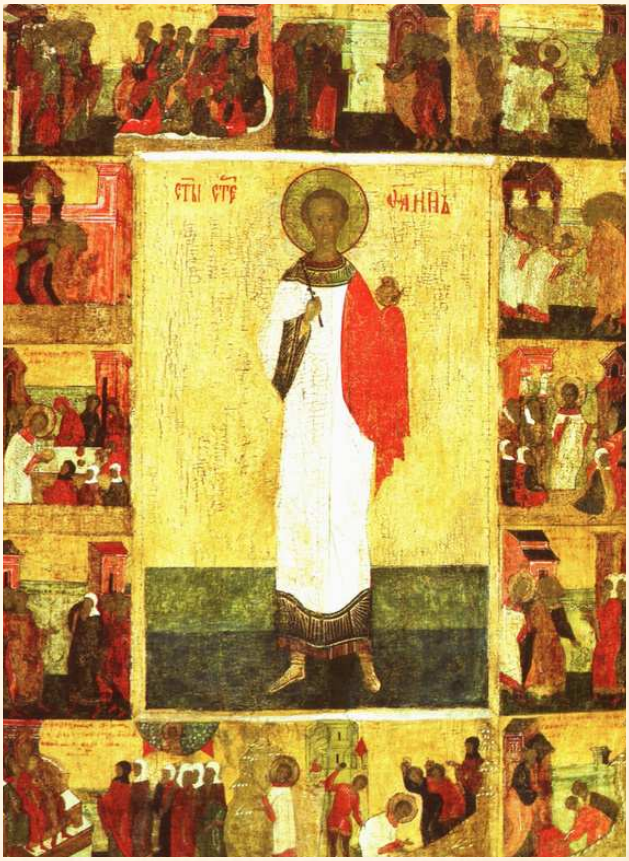
Christian Life Connection
We witness through honesty, prayer, kindness, forgiveness, and love. Never seek danger to prove faith.

Scripture
Matthew 10:32 · Acts 6–7 · Romans 8:35–39

What Is a Martyr?
Martyr means witness. A Christian martyr remains faithful to Christ even through suffering or death.

St. Stephen — The First Martyr
Acts 6–7 describes Stephen's witness and his prayer for those who harmed him.

Hope in the Resurrection
The holy martyrs did not place their hope in earthly power or strength. They trusted in Jesus Christ, Who conquered death through His Resurrection. Because Christ is risen, death does not have the final victory over those who belong to Him.



COURSE WORK

Great Martyr Demetrius — What Is a Martyr?

Discussion Questions

1. Who was St. Demetrius, and where did he live?

2. Why was he imprisoned?

3. What does martyr mean?

4. According to Church tradition, who was Nestor, and what happened with Lyaeus?

5. Who was St. Stephen, and how did he respond to his persecutors?

6. Why does death not have the final victory over Christians?

7. Give two examples of everyday Christian witness.

Reflection: When might you need courage to do what is right?

ACTIVITY

Great Martyr Demetrius — What Is a Martyr?

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COURAGEOUS WITNESS

Christian courage means doing what is right with love and wisdom.

TELLING THE TRUTH

You accidentally break something. How should you respond?

HELPING SOMEONE

A classmate is being bullied. What safe, loving action can you take?

RESPONDING WITH KINDNESS

Someone mocks you for praying. How can you answer calmly?

MY COURAGEOUS WITNESS

Write or draw one way you can show truthfulness, courage, or kindness this week.

Ask a trusted adult for help whenever you feel unsafe.

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Delivery & Differentiation

Lesson Purpose
Students learn that martyrs are faithful witnesses to Christ, whose courage rests in love and the Resurrection.

Early Learners: Jesus loves us; tell the truth, be kind, ask adults for help.
Elementary: Explain martyr, witness, confession, and Stephen's forgiveness.
Older Students: Distinguish biblical witness from traditional hagiography.

Safety Safeguard
Children must not seek danger, provoke persecution, or remain in unsafe situations. Seek trusted adult help.

Activity Guidance
Discuss safe, wise, loving responses to each scenario. Younger learners may draw or dictate; provide separate paper.

Teaching Control
Present Nestor and Lyaeus as the Church's traditional account. Avoid graphic violence.

Main Point
A martyr is a faithful witness to Christ. Because Christ is risen, Christians can live with courage and hope.

TEACHER'S REFERENCE

Answer Key & Resource Control

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Teacher Answer Key

1. A Christian saint from Thessalonica.
2. He confessed Christ during persecution.
3. Witness; a Christian faithful through suffering or death.
4. Nestor received Demetrius's blessing and overcame Lyaeus, according to Church tradition.
5. The first martyr; he prayed for those who harmed him.
6. Christ conquered death in His Resurrection.
7. Honesty, kindness, prayer, forgiveness, safe help for others.
Reflection: Answers vary.

Resource Control

The Law of God, Part I, Chapter 13; Part III, Chapter 57.
Scripture: Matthew 10:32; Acts 6–7; Romans 8:35–39.
Orthodox Sources: OCA Lives of St. Demetrius and St. Nestor; Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada, Great Martyr Demetrios.

Distinguish Scripture from Church tradition. Avoid glorifying violence.

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