

**Level:** Elementary School

**Bible Verse:** "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..." (Ephesians 2:10)

**Objectives:**

- **Introduce** the idea that like St. Herman of Alaska, who followed in the footsteps of the first Apostles as a missionary saint, we are all created by God's hand for the purpose of doing good works.
- **Explore** the life of St. Herman of Alaska as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of his canonization this year August 9, 2020.
- **Challenge** students to consider how we can perform good works that show our love and praise to God.
- **Act** by collecting funds with the OCMC Mission Coin Boxes. Throughout Great Lent support the work of the Mission Center so that many more can be empowered to share Christ's love to the world just like St. Herman.

**Overview:**

- Opening Prayer
- Icebreaker - Telephone
- Activity #1 - Read and discuss the Bible Verse, Ephesians 2:10
- Activity #2 - Read and discuss the life of St. Herman of Alaska
- Activity #3 - Picture Arrangement Game
- Activity #4 - Assemble OCMC coin boxes and sing/read the troparion of St. Herman. Offer the students cookies or biscuits following the lesson.

**Materials:** Copies of the St. Herman Alaska icon for each student with crayons or color pencils. Copies of the pictures of St. Herman's life. Optional: Cookies or Biscuits to share with students.

**Note to Teacher:** The Orthodox Christian Mission Center proclaims the Gospel message to all people around the world who are seeking the Body of Christ. Much like the Apostles spreading the Word of God, missionaries are sent to apply their unique talents, experiences, and gifts to serve the church. They go out to different countries to start their ministries as the Lord has prepared them. Their good works of helping people are not for their own glory, but the glory of God. It is important for students to have a foundation for understanding that God created them for a specific purpose, to live a life of doing good works, according to their own gifts, in His name. By sharing with the students, the life of St. Herman of Alaska, whom we honor with his 50th anniversary of his canonization this year, we have a modern role model among the apostles and missionary saints to show us how our good works can glorify God.

**Pray:** *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, we pray for all people from all nations that they may come to know You. Help us to care for the spiritual and physical needs of others around us and around the world. Teach us how to show Your love and peace to others. Grant us the courage to answer Your call. Amen.*

**Icebreaker: Telephone Game**

Have the students sit in a circle in the floor or around a table. Beginning with a designated person by the teacher's choosing, whisper the phrase "Lord have mercy" into their ear without anyone else hearing the phrase. Without repeating it, have that person whisper the same phrase into the ear of the person next to them, and so on until the phrase has gone all the way around the circle. Listen to what the resulting phrase is when it reaches the last person. It is likely that the phrase has gone all the way around the circle. Listen to what the resulting phrase is when it reaches the last person. It is likely that the phrase has changed or may have changed into something different. Try other ways to say "Lord have mercy" for the activity:

- *Senor ten piedad (Spanish)*
- *Bwana hurumia (Swahili)*
- *Meshiro O Zot (Albanian)*
- *Duamme milueu eshte (Romanian)*

**Activity #1:** Read with the students the bible verse or have them repeat after you.  
"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..." (Ephesians 2:10)

**Note to Teacher:** Explain to the students that we are God's handiwork or creation. God made everything and everyone for the purpose of doing good works. This means that when we go to church, pray, help a friend/classmate, or even take care of someone, we do it because we love God who has created us to accomplish the work He has set before us. Through this we draw closer to God and bring others to know Him.

Missionaries imitate the Apostles and Missionary Saints of the Church by leaving their homes to go off to far regions like Albania, Kenya, Romania, South Korea, Guatemala, Sweden and Alaska. Sometimes they go not knowing the people or language they will serve but they go because God has called them. Throughout their lives, they trust that God has prepared them for their ministry. Missionaries may have worked as priests or deacons serving local parishes and are now leading a church community in a foreign country. Some might have been your teachers or youth workers and now they teach indigenous communities the love of God. (Additional examples: doctors, nurses, therapists, etc.) God has prepared them for their ministries as he will prepare you for yours, if you allow Him.

**Discussion Questions:**

- *What are some good works you do?*
- *How do you think God is preparing you to help others?*
- *Why is it important that we do good works?*
- *What good works do you see from people at your Church?*
- *Ask the students to share what good works they think missionaries do when serving in a foreign country.*

**Activity #2:** Pass out the picture of St. Herman of Alaska for coloring. Read to them or have the students take turn reading portions of the life of St. Herman.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. *Who was St. Herman? What was he like?*
2. *Who did God call him to serve?*
3. *What good works did St. Herman do for the glory of God?*
4. *When did God start preparing him for his mission work?*
5. *Why did St. Herman minister to the Indigenous Aleuts?*
6. *What difficulties did St. Herman face? How did God help him?*
7. *What can we learn about being a modern missionary from St. Herman?*

**Activity #3: Picture Arrangement Game**

Attached are 10 pictures depicting the life of St. Herman of Alaska. Print and cut out each image. You may share the pictures as you read to the students the story of St. Herman's life. Shuffle and let the students place them in order. Have them share one thing they remember about St. Herman. This activity can be done with one picture per student or print enough copies of each image for the students to do on their own. **For modification**, please see *Picture Arrangement Game Document*.

**Activity #4: Assemble the OCMC Coin Boxes**

Discuss how these funds will be used to support the ministries of the Mission Center to send people who have answered God's call. Send the boxes home with the students and ask them to fill them and return the boxes at a time you decide upon. Encourage the class to pray for OCMC missionaries and mission priests regularly. Remember if you have cookies or biscuits available to pass them out to the students. If your class meet before Liturgy, plan distribute following the service. Go online to [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org) under **Resources** and click **For Sunday School** tab for digital copies of this lesson.

## *The Life of St. Herman of Alaska*

*Teacher's Page*

### **Feast day: August 9**

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Herman of Alaska, the patron saint of North America, and one of the greatest modern missionaries of our time.

As a young boy, Saint Herman loved going to church and prayed every day. When he was a teenager, he felt a calling to become a monk, so he went to live at the Holy Trinity-Sergius Monastery. One day, the young monk found a cancerous sore on his neck. The pain was terrible. Instead of going to the doctor, Saint Herman went to his cell and prayed with warm tears to the Mother of God asking her to heal him. When he slept, the Theotokos appeared to him in a dream. The next morning, Saint Herman was amazed to see that he was healed and confirmed his devotion to Christ.

After five or six years, Saint Herman moved to Valaam Monastery, located on a large island in the middle of Lake Ladoga near modern-day Finland. He loved the monastery, his brother monks, and Abbot Nazarius. He studied the church, learned how to care for the sick, ministered to the poor and needy, and prayed for the dying ones. One day, Abbot Nazarius was asked to select a mission team to join Russian fur traders on a journey to Alaska and bring the message of Jesus Christ to the native people. He chose Saint Herman to join them. Saint Herman accepted the call of missions with great zeal and set off to Alaska.



It took them almost an entire year to arrive at Kodiak, Alaska. Saint Herman and the other missionaries traveled 7300 miles by foot and boat. This was the longest journey in Orthodox missionary history. They thanked God for keeping them safe and went out to share the message of Jesus. The missionaries built schools, churches, and baptized thousands of the native people, known as Aleuts. The Aleuts welcomed Saint Herman and the missionaries. Over the years, the other missionaries endured hunger, cold, and mockery in their efforts to share the teachings of Jesus Christ with the people of Alaska. The lives of some of the missionaries were lost, some lost faith, and others passed away, but the Lord permitted Father Herman to labor the longest.

Father Herman loved the native people and showed this through his missionary work. He defended the Aleuts before governors and fur traders who abused and forced them into slave work. He nursed and visited the sick, prayed for those who were dying, and comforted those who lost loved ones. He regularly shared the teachings and messages of Christ. His teachings respected and found fulfillment of their native customs and traditions. Above all, Father Herman especially loved the Aleut children and would often bake cookies and biscuits for them. They started calling him "Apa" which means grandfather. He took care of the orphaned and set up a school for them. It is no wonder that the natives loved him and came far and wide to hear him tell the stories of Christ and His love for them.

Those who knew Saint Herman would describe him as a simple monk who was meek, kind, gentle, always with a pleasant smile, humble, and quiet. He wore a deerskin shirt, a faded cassock and boots. Around his body, he carried a sixteen-pound cross every day, like the desert fathers, to show his humility before God. He spent much of his time working, leading services, helping the native people, and struggling to be like Christ. Saint Herman would say, "From this day. From this hour. From this minute. Let us love God above all and fulfill his Holy Will."

*The Life of St. Herman of Alaska**Teacher's Page*

Later in life, Saint Herman made his new home on Spruce Island, a small island covered with forest. Spruce Island reminded him of the beloved Valaam Monastery, so he named it "New Valaam." For his first whole summer, he dug a cave in the ground with his hands and started a garden. By winter a cell was built nearby to keep him warm. He lived there alone for forty years where he prayed and carried out his missionary work. People would often ask him, "How do you manage to live alone in the forest? Don't you ever get lonesome?" He would reply, "No, I am not here alone! God is here, as God is everywhere. The Holy Angels are here. With whom is it better to talk to, with people or the Angels? Most certainly with Angels."

Many people knew Saint Herman as a wonderworker and told miraculous stories of his life. One night, by chance, his disciple Gerasim witnessed him carry a large log so heavy that it normally would have taken four men to carry. Another time there was a flood on the island and it was threatened by a great wave. Everyone was frightened. Saint Herman took an icon of the Theotokos, placed it on the beach and prayed to the Mother of God. The wave never passed the holy icon.

On December 13, 1837, at the age of 81, Saint Herman fell asleep in Lord. His face was filled with a radiant light and nearby inhabitants saw a pillar of light rising about his home on Spruce Island where he was buried. On August 9, 1970, he was officially canonized as an American Saint. He was a true and living example of our faith. Let us follow in his footsteps and give our whole life to Jesus Christ.

**O, Holy Saint Herman of Alaska, pray unto God for us!**

**St. Herman Troparion Tone 4**

O Blessed Father Herman of Alaska,  
North Star of Christ's Holy Church,  
The light of your holy life and great deeds,  
Guides those who follow the Orthodox Way.  
Together we lift high the Holy Cross,  
You planted firmly in America.  
Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ,  
Singing His Holy Resurrection.

# SAINT

# HERMAN



## Mission Sunday: Elementary School Lesson Plan



**Materials:** Printed copies, scissors, plastic bags, paper, and glue.

### Picture Arrangement Game Instructions:

Attached are 10 pictures depicting the life of St. Herman of Alaska. Print and cut out each image. You may share the pictures as you read to the students the story of St. Herman's life. Shuffle and let the students place them in order. Let them share one thing they remember about St. Herman. This can be done with one picture per student or print enough copies of each image for the students to do on their own.

**Modification:** (Modify this activity to meet the needs of your class.)

- Puzzle Works – Make a copy of each image. Cut them into wide stripes or funky shapes. Place each image's pieces in its own bag. Assign one student to each image and have them assemble it by glueing the stripes or shapes to a sheet of paper. Once finished let them discuss their picture and place it in order.

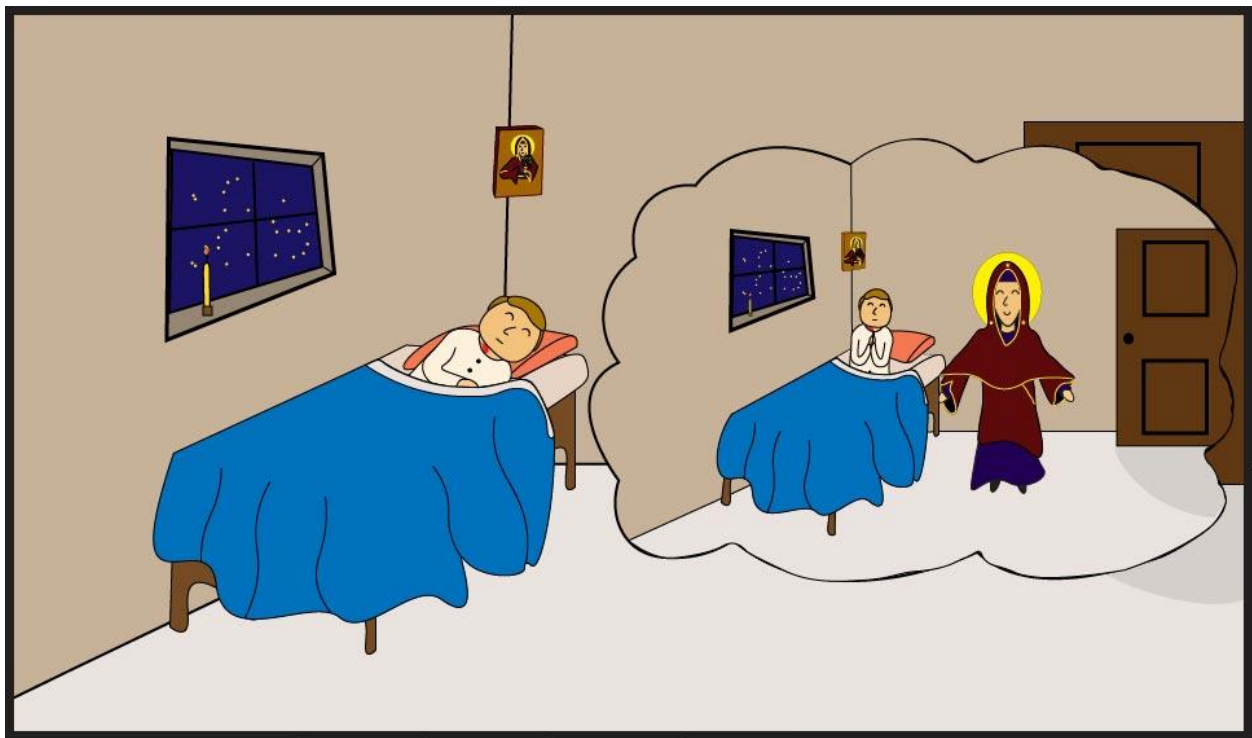
### Picture Arrangement Order

1. At the Holy Trinity-Sergius Monastery a young St. Herman becomes a monk.
2. Sick with a cancerous sore on his neck, young St. Herman prays and dreams of being visited and healed by the Mother of God.
3. Abbot Nazarius blessing St. Herman to join the mission team to Alaska.
4. The mission team arriving to Kodiak, Alaska.
5. The missionaries and St. Herman ministering to the Aleuts.
6. The Aleut children receiving biscuits from St. Herman.
7. St. Herman digging out his cave on Spruce Island.
8. St. Herman speaking with an Angel.
9. St. Herman carrying a log on his back.
10. St. Herman stopping a giant wave by placing an icon of the Theotokos on the beach.

Last picture: A larger image of St. Herman of Alaska.



1. Top: At the Holy Trinity-Sergius Monastery a young St. Herman becomes a monk.



2. Bottom: Sick with a cancerous sore on his neck, young St. Herman prays and dreams of being visited and healed by the Mother of God.





3. Top: Abbot Nazarius blessing St. Herman to join the mission team to Alaska.



4. Bottom: The mission team arriving to Kodiak, Alaska.



5. Top: The missionaries and St. Herman ministering to the Aleuts.



6. Bottom: The Aleut children receiving biscuits from St. Herman.

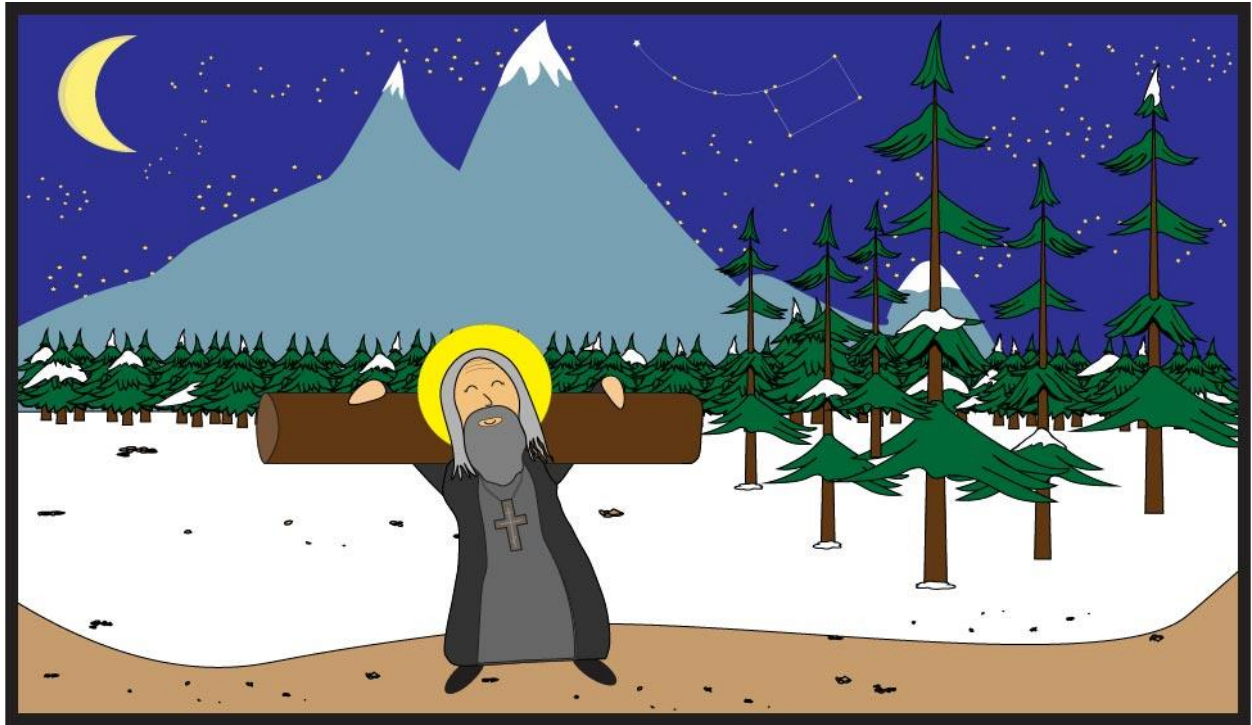


7. Top: St. Herman digging out his cave on Spruce Island.

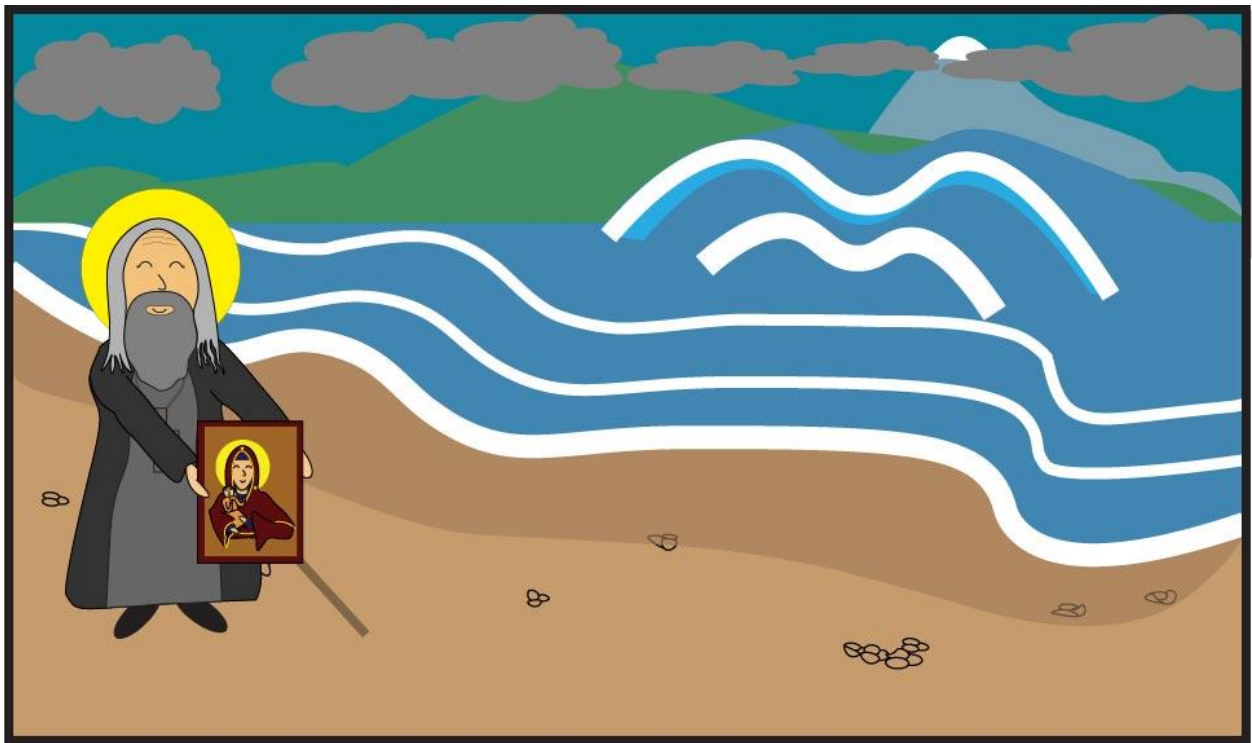


8. Bottom: St. Herman speaking with an Angel.





9. Top: St. Herman carrying a log on his back.



10. Bottom: St. Herman stopping a giant wave by placing an icon of the Theotokos on the beach.

