

Peace and Prayer through Icons

Journey of a young apprentice iconographer, Part 1.

Icon of the Guardian Angel

Through the hand of a young apprentice iconographer, as his first icon

1. What made you want to start writing or painting icons?

I've always wanted to do new types of art and I wanted to see what doing an icon was like.

2. Was it your idea or your teacher's to do a guardian angel icon, as opposed to an icon of another angel or saint?

It was my idea. About a week before we started class, the teacher told me to pick which icon I wanted to do. So I picked the Guardian Angel. I wanted to start with one angel in the icon first. I wasn't ready for an icon with two figures in it.

3. When you first went to see your teacher, did you have fears or worries?

At first, I was a bit nervous about doing this. I didn't know exactly what to expect because icons look so hard to do.

4. As you met your teacher and started working with him, at what point did your fears calm down?

I think it was when we started the painting process, after we put the gold leaf on. When we started painting, I felt a bit calmer and thought to myself that I could do this.

5. What were the steps you followed? Can you describe the process?

To start, there was a picture of the original icon. I traced it and I transferred the parts with the traced lines onto the wood. After I finished transferring, I put the gold leaf around the person. As I put on the gold leaf, there were some rough spots but I smoothed them out and it turned out great.



Interview with Chris the young apprentice iconographer



6. Then what did you do?

After I finished smoothing out the leaf, I started painting with the first layer.

7. Which color did you start with?

I started with the red robe that was next to the blue garment. Then, I moved on to the blue part. After that I did the halo. Then, I did the hair and the staff that the angel is holding. Then, after finishing everything on the angel, I moved on to the second layer, then to the third layer.

8. What was the second layer?

The first layer was made up of the medium lines and colors. The second layer was made up of the dark lines on the clothes and on the skin, the color on the face along with the hands. On the hair, the skin color that I used, I also used on the hair. Then the third layer was the lighter lines on the clothes and hands and face. This added light lines and depth. It was creating details of eyes, nose, mouth and eyebrows. After this part was done, I did the words "Guardian Angel" on top. After the words, I painted the border around the whole icon.

9. What was different about doing this than doing another type of painting or drawing?

It was different because, even after I finished my first icon, I felt there was more to it than what I did. So I wanted to explore.

10. In what sense was there more?

After I finished the icon, I thought, what if there's more than creating angels and saints, to know what exactly is more, not just more saints and angels, but more to it like a whole story of what these icons mean and how I could make the people look alive.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Color the icon
of the Guardian
Angel

ICON

The icon is an image written or painted to show Bible scenes from the life of Jesus Christ and major events in the life of the Church and saints. An icon shows us both the saint's physical appearance and spiritual qualities. The priest blesses the icon and it is an important part of prayer in our church and home. When we pray in front of an icon, we ask the saints to help and guide us. The icon is a holy message delivered through the hand of the iconographer.



GUARDIAN ANGEL

A Guardian angel is "an angel of peace, a faithful guide, and a guardian of our souls and bodies" (from the Divine Liturgy). We each have our own guardian angel who is with us at all times and is happy when we follow God's teachings.

Questions for Teenagers

- 1) In looking at the icon of the guardian angel, what are your first impressions?

- 2) Does this angel have a friendly look?

- 3) Why do you think a halo was put around the angel's head?

- 4) When you see this icon, what gets your attention the most?

- 5) When you have fears or worries in your day-to-day life, do you think this icon can bring you comfort?

PRAYER TO OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

O angel of God, my holy guardian, given to me from heaven, enlighten me this day, and save me from all evil. Instruct me in doing good deeds, and set me on the path of salvation. Amen.

Peace and Prayer through Icons -

Journey of a young apprentice iconographer – Part 1.
{Teacher's Edition}

Lesson Objective: For children and teenagers gain an understanding, through the experiences of the young apprentice iconographer, of the role of icons in providing a sense of peace that is conducive to prayer, and to see an example of how to develop one's God-given talents. Another objective is to present the concept of an icon and of a guardian angel.

Introduction:

Introduce the concept of icons and the role of the iconographer in the Orthodox Church.



Explanation. The icon is an image written or painted to show Bible scenes from the life of Jesus Christ and major events in the life of the Church and saints. An icon shows us both the saint's physical appearance and spiritual qualities. The priest blesses the icon and it is an important part of prayer in our church and home. When we pray in front of an icon, we ask the saints to help and guide us. The icon is a holy message delivered through the hand of the iconographer.

Interview:

Read the interview on the first page aloud in class. Have one student read the question and other students take turns reading the answers.

Activity for young children:

Ask the children to color the icon of the Guardian Angel.

Activity for teenagers:

Ask the teenagers to read the interview on the first page. Then read each of the questions on the second page, pausing after each one to discuss their answers, from the perspective of their own talents and experiences.

Prayer:

Prayer to our Guardian Angel.

O angel of God, my holy guardian, given to me from heaven, enlighten me this day, and save me from all evil. Instruct me in doing good deeds, and set me on the path of salvation. Amen.

Explanation. A Guardian angel is “an angel of peace, a faithful guide, and a guardian of our souls and bodies” (from the Divine Liturgy). We each have our own guardian angel who is with us at all times and is happy when we follow God's teachings.