

**THINK ABOUT IT ... word scramble**

1. The angels who are closest to God are the:

E P R S A M H I

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2. The angels who help judges and kings (rulers) on earth are called:

O T H N R E S

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3. The angels who help people understand God and His Wisdom:

R E C U H I M B

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4. The O T E K S O H T O is an Orthodox name for the Virgin Mary and it means “Mother of God.”

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5. When we sing the Cherubic Hymn, we E R P R S E T N E

\_\_\_\_\_ the angels.

**BONUS QUESTION:**

In the icon on the front of this lesson, Christ is resting His feet on winged circles. The winged circles symbolize (stand for) a certain type of angels. What type of angels do you think they represent?

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# The Cherubic Hymn



*“Lay aside all earthly cares”*

## ANGELS: THE SERAPHIM, CHERUBIM, AND THRONES

*In last week's lesson, we learned that:*

- \* God made "all things visible and invisible."
- \* The invisible world (heaven) includes angels.
- \* The angels serve God and fulfill His will.
- \* Angels are immortal (they do not die).
- \* There are so many angels, that no one could count them.
- \* Angels help people on earth.
- \* Everyone has a Guardian Angel to watch over him or her.

The Tradition of the Orthodox Church teaches us that **there are different kinds of angels, and each type serves God in a different way.** This was explained by St. Dionysius the Areopagite. He said the angelic world is divided into **nine ranks** of three groups with three ranks each. Today we will learn about the first group of three.



The **SERAPHIM** are **afire with love for God and encourage others to such love.** Their name means "flaming." They are closest to God. The prophet Isaiah saw them and said: "And the seraphim stood around Him, each having **six wings**" (Isaiah 6:2).

They are fire-like, "For our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:29); "Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire" (Psalm 103:4).

After the Seraphim, are the many-eyed **CHERUBIM**. Their name means "great understanding." They are **joyful with the knowledge of God and His Wisdom.** Through the Cherubim wisdom is sent down to people and spiritual enlightenment is given to gain knowledge of Him. The Cherubim were the angles who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds who were watching their sheep.

Next are the **THRONES**. They **carry God's judgment from the throne of God.** They serve His justice, glorifying it and helping earthly kings and judges to bring correct judgment.



## THE CHERUBIC HYMN - THE SONG OF THE ANGELS

The Cherubic Hymn is the song of the angels, sung during every Divine Liturgy of the year except those of Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. It occurs after the Gospel reading and midway in the hymn is the Great Entrance.

**"We, who mystically represent the Cherubim,  
And sing the thrice-holy hymn to the Life-creating Trinity,  
Now lay aside all earthly cares,  
That we may receive the King of all,  
Who comes invisibly upborne by the Angelic Hosts."**

Let's understand it. As we live faithfully in the Orthodox way, we come closer to God and we become more like the angels ("represent" them). It is a **great gift of God for us that we are allowed to be His servants, as are the angels.** The Church is heaven on earth, so when we are in church we don't have to worry about anything on earth, so we should "lay aside" our cares (worries). **God has so much love for us that our Lord Jesus Christ became Incarnate (became a man through the Virgin Mary).** By doing this, He identified Himself completely with us by sharing fully in our human nature. He did this for US, not for the angels, who were already in heaven serving Him. But so we can become like them.

## HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

The **Theotokos** is in heaven with the angels. She **is greater than any of them**, because she gave birth to Christ our God. Listen when the choir sings the hymn to her:

**"It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos,  
ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God.  
More honorable than the Cherubim  
and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim;  
without defilement you gave birth to God, the Word,  
true Theotokos we magnify you."**