

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH



"O Lord, I love the place where Your glory dwells!"
Psalm 26:8

My dear ones, I am asking you from the bottom of my heart to love the church! May the church be dear to you; and, as much as you can, whenever you can, go to church, because this is the place we learn to pray, to confess, to humble ourselves, and to love one another."

-St. Paul the Simple of Egypt

Welcome to *The Dwelling Place*, a feature in a series of monthly newsletters to Eastern Catholic families from God With Us Publications, in collaboration with the team of ByziMoms, who bring you ByziKids Magazine.

Our goal is to educate, equip, and inspire families to participate in their own catechesis and provide the tools to empower them to engage in the evangelization of those they encounter.

Each month, we will provide a set of resources for your parish, family, or homeschool community to use as you come together to explore a new facet of the overall theme for the catechetical year, which is "The Church as our Spiritual Home with God."

We believe that faith education isn't just for kids. It's lifelong! And it's best experienced in a multi-generational environment. In each of our newsletters, we will simultaneously present the same broad topic to various grade levels. While the younger students focus on the aspects which coincide with their elementary skill level, the middle grades can incorporate more "hands-on" activities that impress ideas upon their developing memories. Meanwhile, older students and adults can explore more profound concepts and practical applications of that same topic. Everyone learns together, fostering opportunities for further discussions long after the lessons.

In this September issue, we explore an *Introduction to the Church*. It is essential to understand that when we speak of the Church, we know that we refer to something greater than our parish or even our eparchy! We refer to the entire community of believers committed to the True Faith. Scripture tells us that in the earliest days of the Church, "The community of believers was of one heart and mind." (Acts 4:32). We are of one heart and mind with the entire Church, that is, all twenty-four Churches within the Catholic faith, regardless of our geographic ancestry or rite of expression. As the True Church, we strive to honor the request that Christ made of His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest, that we all be One, even as He and His Father are One. One mind, one heart, one Faith.

We will explore the fact that Christ sent His Apostles who founded them out into the world from the same place after His ascension "to make disciples of ALL nations" and call them all to follow Him. We will learn the names of all 24 Catholic Churches and the Apostle who founded them. We will know how to say, "Glory to Jesus Christ!" in the languages used by those Churches. We will explore the icon of The Mystical Church and discuss how we can respect our different expressions of the same faith and still honor Christ's wish that we all get along as One.

We have suggested a simple agenda for the monthly gathering of your faith family as you put the resources included in this newsletter to use in your parish or homeschool community. We pray that you find these resources an engaging and fun way to come together as a faith family and grow closer to God, your Church, and each other!

Christ is Truly Among Us!

He IS, and He Always Shall Be!!



Scripture Highlight for the Theme of the Month

Jesus prayed for the members of His Church while He was in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Institution of the Holy Eucharist, His Body and Blood, and before He was arrested and led away to be crucified.

This was His prayer for us:

John 17:20-23. *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*”



Our Suggested Agenda

It is our hope that parish families, homeschool communities, or even individual families will gather together monthly to put these lessons to use and grow together in learning about our Eastern Catholic faith. Whether at the parish hall or a family living room, it is an opportunity for all ages to strengthen their faith while they support each other in community! We suggest the following general plan.

1. Prayer together
2. Break into color-coded groups to begin the individual lessons
3. Snack together (Snack Suggestions: Anything that illustrates “parts of a whole” Ex: Pizza; fruit salad; arrangement of veggies on a tray to create a design; A decorated sheet cake for dessert.)
4. Gather back into color-coded groups for game, activity or craft.
5. Come together with all ages to present what you’ve learned to the whole group.
6. Close together in prayer

Let’s Get Started!

Red

Suitable for ages
0-3/infant & toddler

We like to start early and include everyone in catechesis! Red activities are provided for little brothers and sisters, the tagalongs, who do not require direct instruction but need something to keep them occupied while the rest of the family participates.

Our objective for these littlest members of the Body of Christ is to introduce them to the theme of the day, making positive connections to each other and to Christ through sensory play.

Orange

Suitable for Pre-Readers;
3-6 years

As pre-readers, these children are best served by hands-on experiences, song, and movement as they learn. Although everything from the red level is still applicable, we can adapt the activities to bring them to the orange level by including more hands-on learning and structured play.

Our objective is to present the theme of the day in an engaging way that involves sufficient movement, creativity, and fun to accommodate the activity level of a child of this age.

Yellow

suitable for early readers;
ages 7-9 years

Children of this age are now able to read functionally, so we can begin to teach them foundational theology points with concrete instruction. They can begin to write about topics as well as create paper projects and use other creative mediums. With a more outward orientation and a new awareness of time, history, and community, at the yellow level, they are more capable of collaborating on projects, although any of the above material may also be of interest to them.

Our objective for this age level is to involve the children in group projects and collaborations so that they can begin to understand and interact as part of a bigger faith community.

Green

suitable for Pre-teens,
ages 10-12 years

This age group is now able to read for comprehension and can apply the teaching they have received to their lives and the lives of those around them. Building on the previous stages, the children in the Green level can delve deeper into the story of salvation and begin to focus on how each is called to participate in this plan and see that Christ is the source of our strength.

Our objective is to use reference tools to explain the topic of the month and encourage the student to feel confident in searching for these tools on his own.

Blue

suitable for young teens,
ages 13-15 years

The young teenage student looks outside his family to the broader community and the world, wanting to understand it and participate in it. We begin to introduce community service ideas and encourage parish participation in various ways so that they can serve both their parish community and the Church at large.

Our objective is to provide ideas that encourage students of this age to remain engaged in developing their own spiritual identity and find support within the Church community.

Purple

suitable for teens and adults;
Ages 16+

Learning about the faith isn't just something for childhood, but it is rather a life-long journey that takes us ever closer to God. This group can tackle apologetics, moral life questions, and more challenging concepts and ideas of adult catechesis.

Our Objective: To explore the complex depth of the theme by exploring the writings of the Church Fathers, Scripture, and historical documents. We hope to introduce tools of apologetics, so participants can learn how to defend a position used as a common argument against the theme.



Red

(0-3): suitable for ages 0-3/infant & toddler:

We like to start early and include everyone in catechesis! Red activities are provided for little brothers and sisters, the tagalongs, who do not require direct instruction but need something to keep them occupied while the rest of the family participates.

Our goal for these littlest members of the Body of Christ is to introduce them to the theme of the day, making positive connections to each other and to Christ through sensory play.

Teaching Objectives/points: Little ones of this age do not need direct instruction on theological matters. They need a positive, playful interaction with their church family. Remember that these little ones are saints in our midst! Show them the sensory materials & books, allowing them to lead the direction of the play.



Blocks or cups with which to stack and build a church/wall or tower;

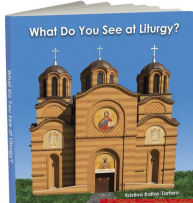
Verse: 1 Peter 2: 5 "you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood..."

Lesson: You can't build a wall, much less a church, with only one block. They need to work together and lean on each other to be strong.



Other Suggestions Include:

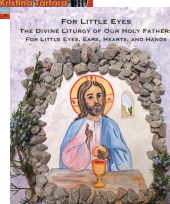
high-quality picture book recommendations that go along with our themes



<https://store.ancientfaith.com/what-do-you-see-at-liturgy/>



<https://store.ancientfaith.com/what-can-i-do-at-divine-liturgy-board-book/>



<https://ecpubs.com/product/for-little-eyes/>



Note to Catechist:

When God created us, He made us both body and soul, meaning we are both physical and spiritual beings. We are not like angels that are just spirits. For this reason, when we use our bodies to help us learn, our spirits are changed as well!

A sensory bin is a small tub or table filled with items that you can touch, smell, taste or make noise with. They typically include items that are about a particular theme. When we use our senses to help us learn something, it helps us to recall the information better. It also provides a stimulating and fun experience with open ended play. There are sensory tables you can purchase online, but even large, flat tupperware containers will work and are very affordable!

It is best to play with sensory bins outside, because they do get messy! But, if you are working inside, lay a flat sheet underneath the bins to help contain the mess and make it a bit easier to clean up. We work hard to make our bins "taste safe," meaning while not ideal for the little ones to put in their mouth, it shouldn't cause any harm. We promise, the experience is worth the work!

This month, we will kick off our theme of beauty in diversity with rainbow rice! Making colored rice is simple! First, get six small, resealable plastic bags- each bag will be a different color. Fill each bag with one cup of rice and one tablespoon of vinegar. To make your colors with a basic set of four food coloring bottles, follow the recipe below: (If you want even more vibrant colors, you can double the number of drops or purchase higher grade food coloring that provides more colors!)



Red: 10 drops red

Orange: 5 drops red, 5 drops yellow

Yellow: 10 drops yellow

Green: 10 drops green

Blue: 10 drops blue

Violet: 5 drops red, 5 drops blue

Once you have added all the ingredients, carefully seal the plastic bags, pressing the air out. Massage the bag to ensure that all the rice is coated evenly with color. Then, spread the colored rice out on parchment paper overnight.

In the morning, stir the rice to break up any clumps. Carefully pour each color into your container; it's fun to start with them all separated into the rainbow. Provide the children with spoons and small cups so that they can move, swirl and pour the rice as they interact with the material.



Orange

(suitable for Pre-Readers; 3-6 years)

As pre-readers, these children are best served by hands-on experiences, song, and movement as they learn. Although everything from the red level is still applicable, we can adapt the activities to bring them to the orange level by including more hands-on learning and structured play.

Our objective is to present the theme of the day in an engaging way that involves sufficient movement, creativity, and fun to accommodate the activity level of a child of this age.



Teaching objectives/points:

These children want to do “what the big kids are doing,” so it is important to help them feel included in the church community and the education process. They thrive on brief instructional education (3 to 5 minutes) and lots of play.

We might say, “Good morning, boys and girls! Welcome to our class, I am so very glad that you are here. Today, our parish is learning about our Church- The One, Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church. The Catholic Church is actually made up of 24 Churches that come together as one! Did you know that?

Let me explain...It's a little bit like a pizza. Who loves pizza? I know I do! If your family orders pizza for dinner, that one pizza is cut into many slices! Each slice is delicious and part of the whole pizza. Each piece might not look exactly the same, but every piece is part of that one delicious pizza!

The Catholic Church is a little like that too. Our Church is ___ (ie Melkite) ___ Catholic! We are one of the 24 churches that make up the Catholic Church. Even though our Church is unique, we are part of the One True Church. God wants all people, in all the world, in all the Churches to be one! He prayed for this before he died on the cross and rose again. We have a coloring page for you that shows how Jesus prayed for us all to be one. We'll take a few minutes to color and then I'll teach you a song about our Church too!



SING ALONG

Sing along with music from ***Khouria Sylvia Dorham***. Sit in a circle with your young learners and listen to the song together and try to sing along! Encourage the children to link arms together and to move as “one,” swaying, leaning back and forth and even standing and moving together as a circle (think “ring around the rosie!”).

Twenty-Four = ONE

CHORUS:

Twenty-four Catholic Churches
But we are one in Christ
Look at history
It's not a mystery
That twenty-four equals one!

The first community of believers
Was of one heart and mind
Then the Apostles went
Where they were sent
And twenty-four came behind!



CHORUS

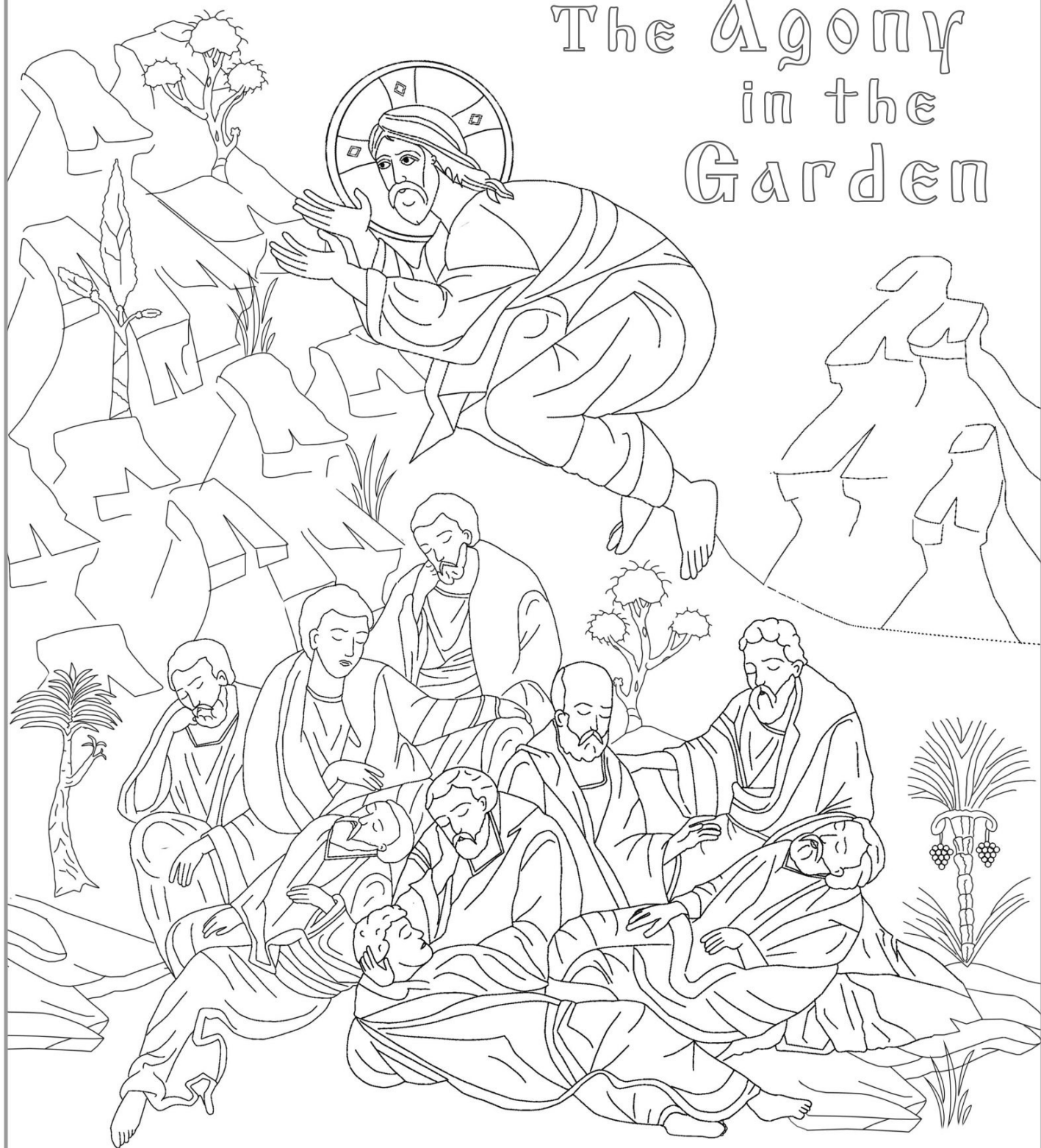
We all speak different languages
We all sing different songs
You're from a different place
You have a different face
But each of us still belongs

CHORUS

Listen [HERE..](#)



The Agony in the Garden



“That all of them may be one, Father, just as
You are in Me and I am in You.” John 17: 21

Yellow

(suitable for early readers; ages 7-9 years):

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Our goal for this age level is to involve the children in group projects and collaborations so that they can begin to understand and interact as part of a bigger faith community,



Teaching objectives/points:



These children are eager learners. They want to please you and show the knowledge that they have. Encourage and foster their desire for unity with God by using positive encouragement, listening attentively to their ideas and answers.

For class, we might say, “Good morning, boys and girls! Welcome to our class, I am so very glad that you are here. Today, our parish is learning about our Church- The One, Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church. The Catholic Church is actually made up of 24 Churches that come together as one! Did you know that?

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We are one of the 24 churches that make up the Catholic Church. After Pentecost, the apostles went into all the world to spread the news of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. Each country that they visited had its own language and culture, but they all received the same knowledge of the saving Grace of God. The apostles established Churches in the places that they traveled to and laid their hands on men to become priests and bishops to lead the people. Even though each Church may look and feel a little different, we are all tied to Christ in His One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic Church.”

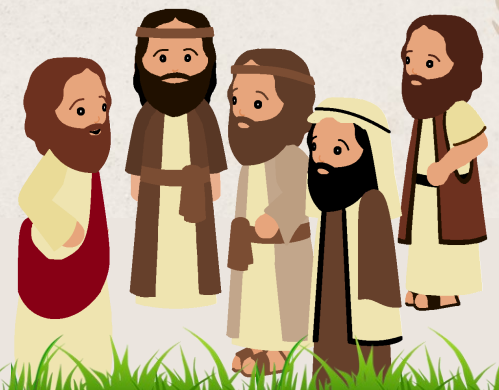
And then segway into the activity that you choose.

WHICH WAY DID THEY GO?



Instruct the children to use their fingers to trace the line from the apostle to the location they traveled to!

FOLLOW THE LINE TO SEE SOME OF THE PLACES THE APOSTLES TRAVELED TO ESTABLISH CHURCHES!



WHICH WAY DID THEY GO?

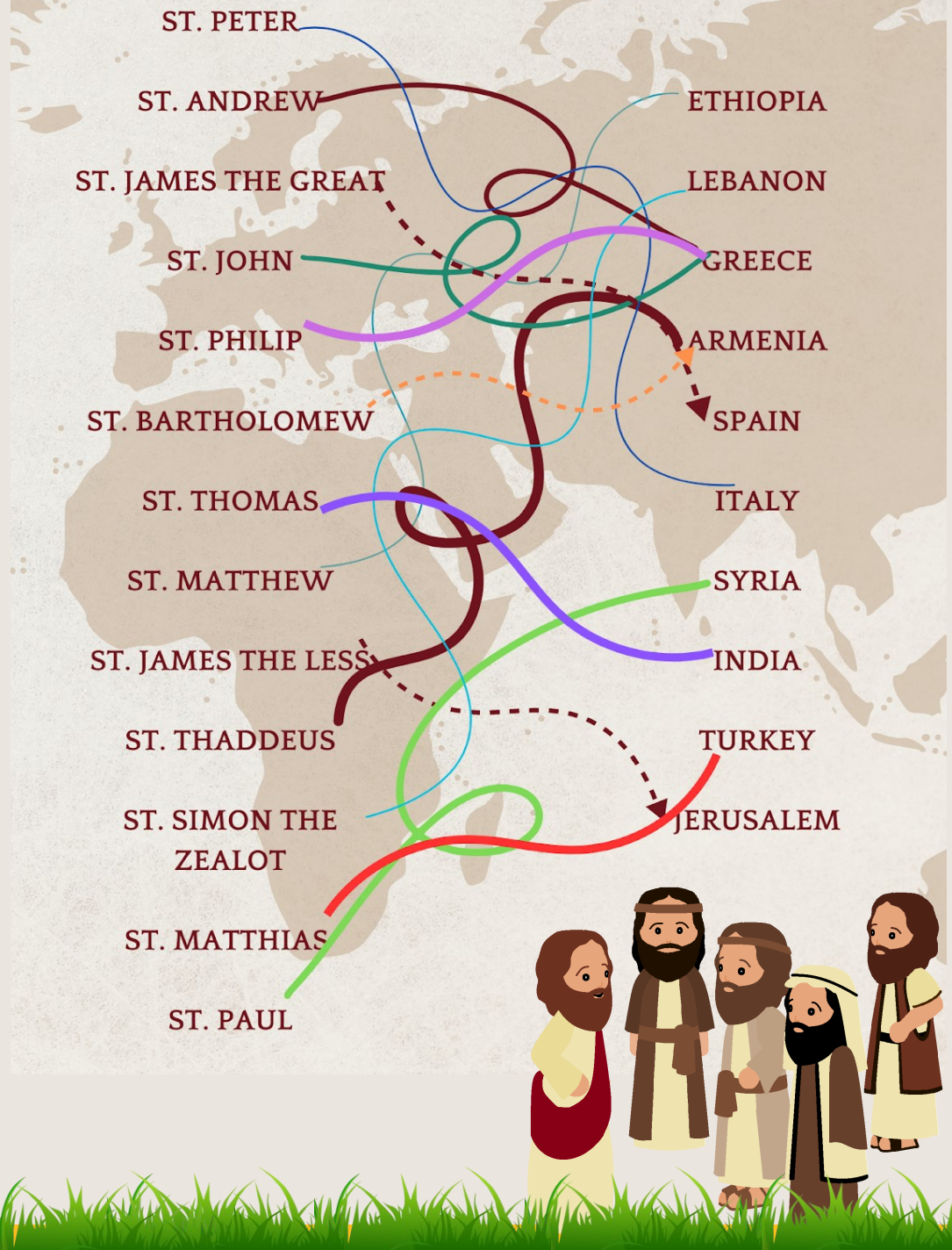


Instruct the children to use their fingers to trace the line from the apostle to the location they traveled to!

The multi-colored lines are better for younger children,

Which way did they go?

FOLLOW THE LINE TO SEE SOME OF THE PLACES THE APOSTLES TRAVELED TO ESTABLISH CHURCHES!



Learn to say

“Glory to Jesus Christ”

in a few different languages.

English:
Glory to Jesus Christ!

Romanian
Slava lui Isus Hristos!

Old Slavonic
Slava Isusu Christu!

Spanish:
Alabado sea a Jesucristo!

Greek
Dóxa ston Christó tou Iisou!

Arabic
Almjd liasue almasih!

Latin
Jesus Christus sit laus!

German
Lob sei Jesus Christus!

French
Gloire soit à Jésus Christ!

Italian
Gloria a Gesù!



Unity Puzzle

Here is a puzzle to complete with 24 pieces...one for each of the Eastern Churches. The names of the Churches are written on one side, and when the puzzle is complete, it will reveal an icon of The Mystical Church on the other side. The following images should be printed on cardstock, with one image on each side, before cutting out the pieces for reassembly. (note to teacher, there is an explanation of the icon in the blue level you can read to be familiar with the symbolism included.)



Unity Puzzle (Continued)

John 17:20-23. "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.



Building the Church Activity



Today's lesson focuses on the many Churches that come together to form the One Holy Catholic Church. In the same way, a building made of many bricks comes together to form a beautiful whole. The diversity of each brick and stone brings more beauty to the finished building, but the bricks are held together for a unified purpose.

To bring this lesson to life for the children, purchase a large amount of red plastic disposable cups or salt cubes. Allow the children to build towers with the cubes or cups. You can allow them to simply play freely with the cups or you can create challenges, such as who can make the tallest tower. You could also write the names of the Churches on the cups and display them together in the tower. It is a simple activity, but one they will have a lot of fun with!

*If you choose red disposable cups, index cards are a helpful purchase to go along with the cups to make your structures more stable.



Green

(suitable for Pre-teens, ages 10-12 years):

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Our objective is to use reference tools to explain the topic of the month and encourage the student to feel confident in searching for these tools on his own.



Teaching Objectives/Points:

For class, we might say, "Good morning, boys and girls! Welcome to our class, I am so very glad that you are here. Today, our parish is learning about our Church- The One, Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church. The Catholic Church is actually made up of 24 Churches that come together as one! Did you know that?"

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Each country that they visited had its own language and culture, but they all received the same knowledge of the saving Grace of God. The apostles established Churches in the places that they traveled to and laid their hands on

men to become priests and bishops to lead the people. Even though each Church may look and feel a little different, we are all tied to Christ in His One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic Church." And then segway into the activity that you choose:

Building the Church Activity:

This group will also enjoy the "Building the Church" cup stacking activity described in the yellow level.



WORD SEARCH

NAMES OF CHURCHES:

There are 24 different Catholic Churches! See if you can familiarize yourself with the names of these various churches as you search for them in this puzzle.

CHALDEANGKSWEPAXFFCSGJFZZBBGQ
 NKVRTDHDZXRICQPVSYROMALABARWBBDH
 PPCVVMKDNAOUPJNCFUFVOHKIYONEKM
 EPTTEITUBKYLMSKHSEPUCTHRCKIBHFS
 VBJRDXBPZELAETKUJXUCAJTQAXNHW
 JJKIWITIXAFUHNMTZYVRRRAJFPLMWNK
 NUZZSDAAXFHREKIXCUAGDSC LORAXWO
 ZNBQGLQXLMNHUNGARIANEMQKODCZXR
 UFDXDSODXOVZDWMNNIOPWJSXIEETHB
 WJXMLSWVUAITHKDDHDZDDBQAOPDSIZ
 QFARRXGFA BOLMARONITEPJXVNUOWDL
 MNCRWKKWVKYMBISJWCJQE QZN XJNVRB
 VIZCONCTYVBWLA AWXWAMETEHJKIGNT
 LZLCZIRSENCENGNGQGVME LKITEANDU
 HKBWBDEPHFJGLLZIE THIOPIANBNEUB
 NPDZXWGRRLNLQEATTAJQWENDSSXYCGO
 DXPFZXJZECEBUKRBDNGREEKLYNJNWP
 KCR RUTHENIANPY SUIZESPWEJRRECWY
 OLROHPZXWAVQXMQJSLVIPDAIOURLYJ
 RLAOJIUWCEHXFEQLCISVWSLIMSIGQZ
 TMUDAITIBOCGJQEJMRAXQABA ASTKDC
 TOAAETOQMS PBFYMGIFCNISARLIRTNNG
 UKRAINIANWJT TMI OUH LVJUNMAAEQCU
 LPYIXTYAYZOUITPYUTNDGGIENNAFKZ
 YBTNHZIXNMHWECQVQTMNMDANKTNLZT
 MTMNLCSYRIACJWKGGZSIRINIAAQYZR
 FIFPSETDHTJNGJODXWQTNPCARKUKTO
 CUCEGYECMRVQRFDXWQMWPVJNAUNQAM
 NHEFP GQDLBULGARIANJJDOALVOJT TA
 TKAPDLMIKWRFSC EGYWRJRMHQBBHWVN

SyroMalankara	ItaloAlbanian	SyroMalabar
Belarusian	Macedonian	Ukrainian
Ruthenian		Hungarian
Ethiopian	Bulgarian	Eritrean
Croatian	Chaldean	Romanian
Maronite	Melkite	Syriac
Albanian	Armenian	Coptic
Greek	Slovak	Russian
Roman		



MAKING DISCIPLES GAME

Objective: Familiarization with the Names of the Various Eastern Churches

This game is played somewhat like North-South-Central. Players line up at a starting point designated as Jerusalem. The playground has 6 landmarks, each designated as a particular Ritual Family: Latin, Alexandrian, Antiochene, Armenian, Chaldean, and Byzantine. These may be marked off with chalk, or designated by hanging a sign on a tree or lamppost, bench, corner, or any other designation you like. Upon each of these, you can hang a flyer with the names of each of the Churches that use that rite. These can be as follows:

Latin	Alexandrian	Antiochene	Armenian	Chaldean	Byzantine
Roman	Coptic Eritrean Ethiopian	Maronite Syriac Syro-Malankara	Armenian	Chaldean Syro-Malabar	Albanian Belarusian Bulgarian Croatian Greek Hungarian Italo-Albanian Italo-Greek Macedonian Melkite Romanian Russian Ruthenian Slovak Ukrainian

All of the players are Missionary Apostles. They line up at a starting point designated as Jerusalem and the leader (Jesus) calls out one of the Churches (EX: "Apostles, go and found My Ethiopian Church!") and all the Players/ Apostles rush to the designated landmark for the Alexandrian Church.

Once they are there, they are "safe". You may choose to set a timer and those who have not reached the landmark in the designated time, or the LAST one to reach the correct landmark in time, may go to their heavenly reward (they're out...maybe sit on a bench and watch the others). This continues until all the players are out. The winner is designated a saint for the day.



THE SENDING FORTH OF THE APOSTLES AND THE FOUNDING OF THE 24 VARIOUS CATHOLIC CHURCHES

STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY : REBECCA O' LOUGHLIN



The myrrh-bearing women told Jesus' followers
that Christ had risen from the dead.
Can it be true? Is the tomb empty?
Is Jesus risen as He said?

- Do you see the empty tomb?
- Can you point out the Myrrh-Bearing women?
- What time of the day is it? The Gospels say that the Myrrh-Bearing women went to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark. After they saw the empty tomb, they went to tell the Apostles. In the picture the sun is just starting to rise, to show the Apostles that the Son of God has also risen.
- What do the Peacocks in the picture tell us? In the early Church a peacock was thought not to decay, so it became a symbol of the Resurrection.



Simon the Zealot locks the door.

Philip prays and wipes his eyes.

Big James jumps: "Are the Romans coming?"

Matthew weeps: "Why did Christ die?"

Andrew says: "Maybe Jesus has risen!"

Jude and Bartholomew hope so too!

Little James shakes his head in sorrow.

Thomas grumbles, "It can't be true!"

- Do you see the empty tomb?
- How do you think the Apostles are feeling in this picture?
- What do the willow trees represent? "We sat and wept by the streams of Babylon and dreamed of our true home. We hung our harps upon the willow bows, we knew no song nor poem" (Ps 137:1-2). The psalm speaks of the sorrow of the Chosen people, who as captives in a foreign land felt far from God. Willows here represent sorrow, and separation from God. Do you think some of the Apostles felt far from God, and even abandoned?
- What do the deer represent? "As the deer longs for running water, so my soul longs for You, O God." How does this play into how the apostles felt knowing Christ had died? Do you long for God?



Peter and John knock on the door,
The others let the two men in.
Peter says: "The tomb is empty!"
"I saw the linen cloths!" John grins.

- Peter and John each tell part of the resurrection story. What do you think they are saying? Peter is telling about the empty tomb. In the Gospel of John, John tells of arriving at the tomb with Peter, seeing the linen clothes, and then going in and really *seeing* them, so that he believed (John 20:4-8).
- The passage in Greek indicates that John looked closely at the linen cloths and saw in them something that made him believe. What might he have seen?
- What does the eagle represent? "But they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Imagine how Peter and John's hearts must have soared to see that Christ was risen!
- On the top of the picture is a red banner with the letters IC XC NIKA. What do the letters mean? *Jesus Christ Conquers.*
- Do you see the image of Christ on the linen cloths? Did you know that the linens were owned by the empire of Constantinople in the early Church? Every Good Friday the Resurrection linen cloths were processed and displayed for the people to honor. To this day we have an icon of the shroud that we process around the Church with on Good Friday, and we bow and kiss His wounds.



Jesus appears. No doors can stop Him!

"Do not be afraid." He said.

See," says Jesus, "where the nails have pierced me?"

Jesus eats. "I am not dead!"

"It is Jesus!" eleven men shout!

"He has truly risen from the dead!"

They celebrate and full of joy
Jesus feeds them, breaking Bread.

- Above Jesus' head are the Greek letters ΙΧΘΥΣ (IXTHUS). What do they represent? What do the fish mean? ΙΧΘΥΣ is Greek for "fish." The fish is an early Christian symbol that meant: I - Iesus/Jesus; X - Xristos/Christ; TH/Θ - Theou/God's; U/Y upos/Son; S/Σ - Soter/Savior.
- The artist chose to paint blue and red coming from Christ's heart. Where is this in the Bible? "One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" (John 19:31). Tradition holds that the side piercing went into Christ's heart, so in order to illustrate Christ's deep love and mercy, the water and blood are shown as from Christ's heart.



Jesus calls the men “apostles,”
Because to all the world, they’re sent:
Proclaiming that God forgives our sins,
That God has made a new covenant;
Baptizing all nations in the Name
of the Father and His only Son,
and in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.
We are His Church; in God, we’re One.

- In the picture, what places are the apostles going to? [China, India, Greece, Lebanon, Ethiopia](#). Where else did the apostles go? [Rome is missing!](#)
- Can you point out some of the different types of paths the Apostles would have had to go? [Rocks, desert, forest...](#)
- What is one important “path” that’s missing in the picture? [The Sea is missing. Some of the Journeys involved sailing on boats where they wanted to go.](#)
- This picture has doves holding olive branches in the picture. Do you remember another Bible Story with a dove and olive branch? How does the story of Noah’s arc reflect this story? [The olive branch was a symbol of hope and new life. Noah was going out to begin a new world for God. The Apostles were starting a new Church.](#)

Blue:

suitable for young teens, ages 13-15 years

The young teenage student looks outside his family to the broader community and the world, wanting to understand it and participate in it. We begin to introduce community service ideas and encourage parish participation in various ways so that they can serve both their parish community and the Church at large.

Our goal is to provide ideas that encourage students of this age to remain engaged in developing their own spiritual identity and find support within the Church community.

Teacher Objectives/Points:

For class, we might say, “Good morning! Welcome to our class, I am so very glad that you are here. I’m looking forward to getting to know you and hearing what you have to say.

Today, our parish is learning about our Church- The One, Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church. The Catholic Church is actually made up of 24 Churches that come together as one! Who was already aware of that? (allow them to elaborate)

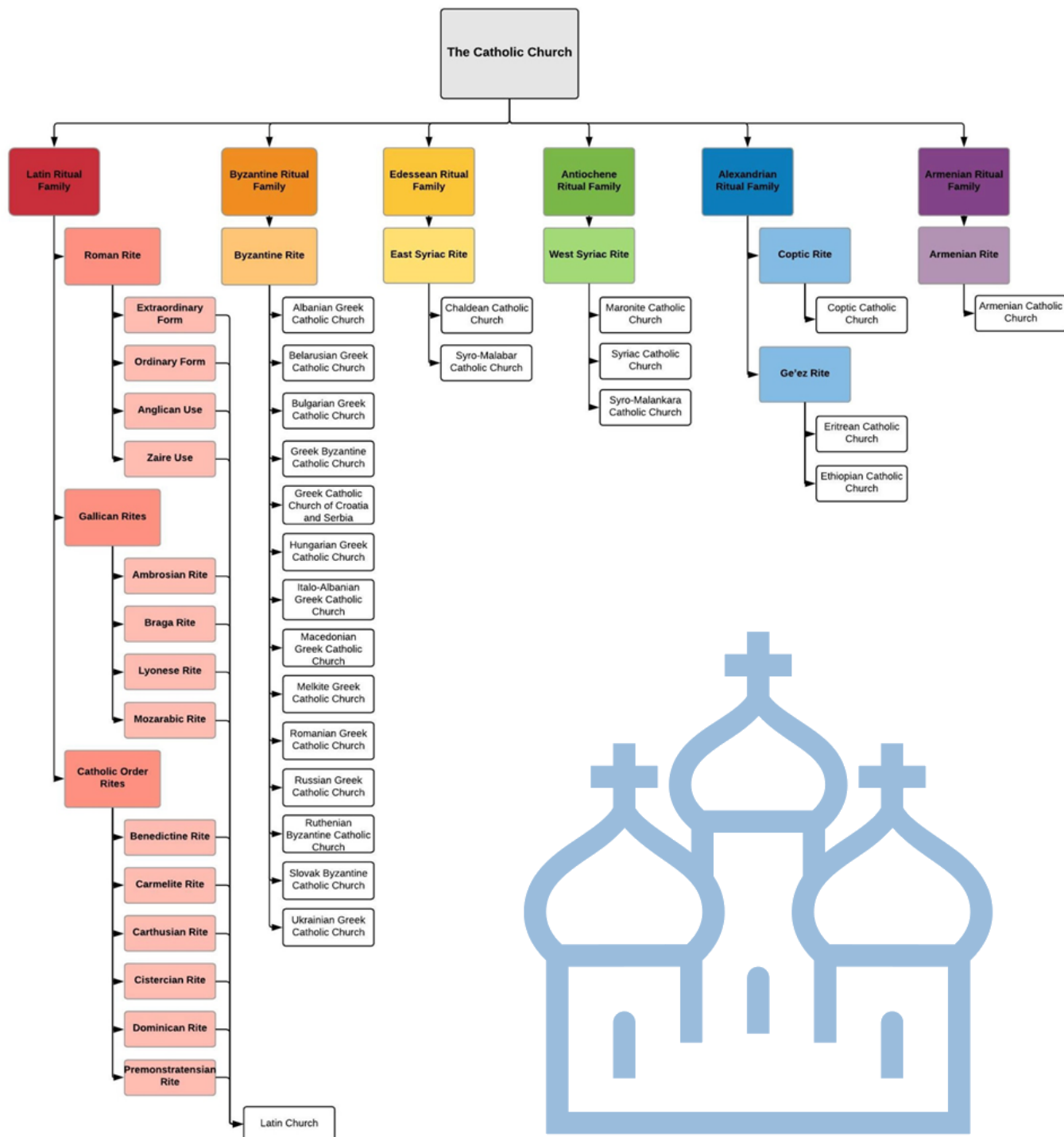
Our Church is ___(ie Melkite)___ Catholic! We are one of the 24 churches that make up the Catholic Church. After Pentecost, the apostles went into all the world to spread the news of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. Each country that they visited had its own language and culture, but they all received the same knowledge of the saving Grace of God. The apostles established Churches in the places that they traveled to and laid their hands on men to become priests and bishops to lead the people. Even though each Church may look and feel a little different, we are all tied to Christ in His One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic Church.”

It is important for us to know our faith well so that as we become adults, we can embrace the faith as our own and not just “something our parents tell us to do.” Today, we’ll look at the symbolism within the icon of the Mystical Church, the whole Church, and then we can work on a welcome packet (or brochure) that you could use to tell a visitor to our parish about our own particular Catholic Church.”



The Catholic Church

This is a helpful graphic to show this age group the variety of churches.



THE MYSTICAL CHURCH ICON



As we take time this month to reflect on both the diversity and the unity of the Catholic Church, we choose to highlight the above icon of the Mystical Church. This icon is rich with symbolism and meaning for us. We find Christ, the Theotokos, Apostles, clergymen, teachers and even laymen traveling together in a boat. The sail and its flag blow in the wind as the boat traverses a stormy sea.

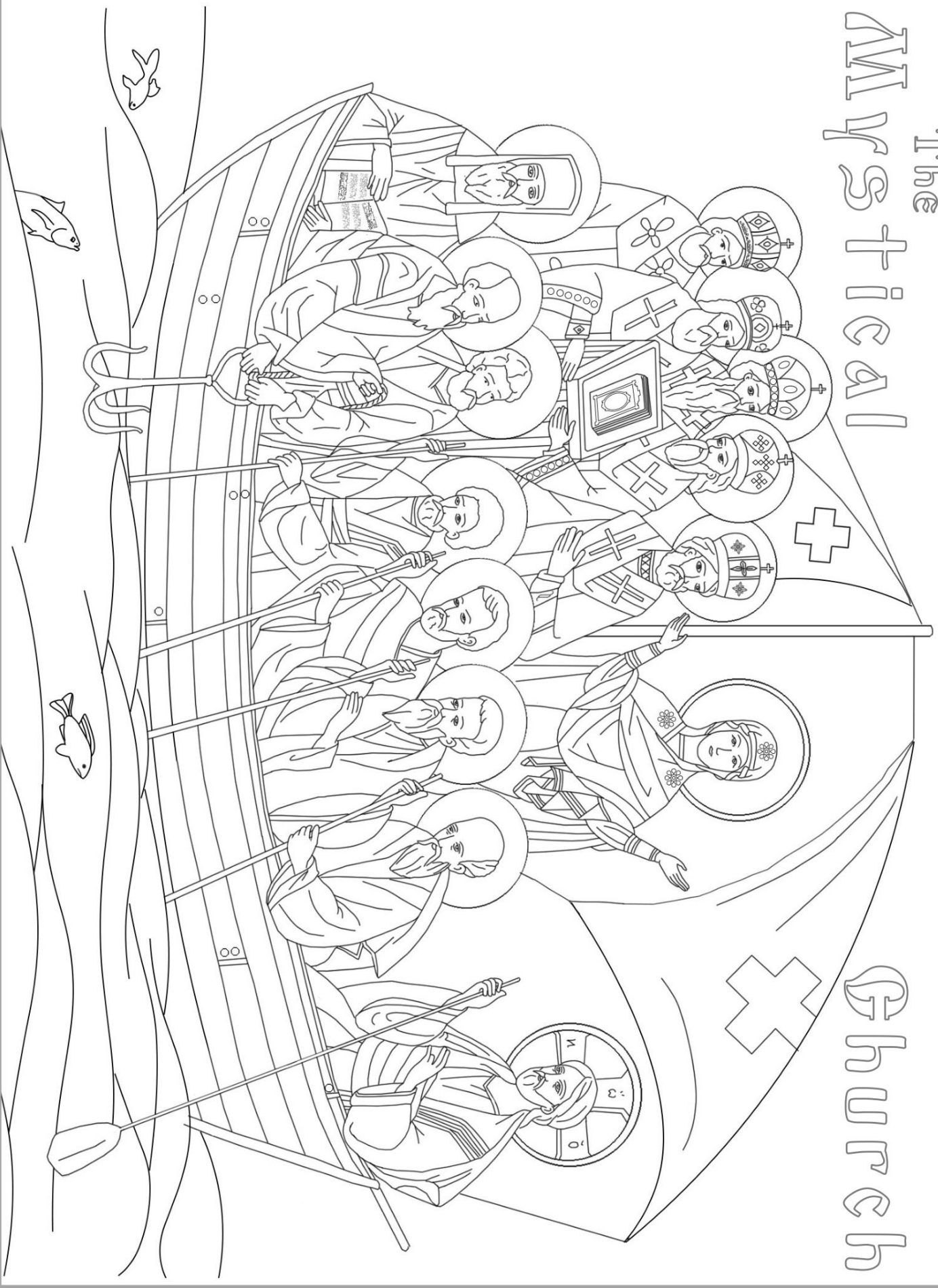
First, consider the boat, representing the Church. A boat's keel runs along the entire base of the ship, providing stability and strength. For us, the keel symbolizes the Holy Mysteries, our opportunities to participate in Divine Grace. The Truth and teachings of the Church are the smooth planks that encompass the boat. The rudder of the boat determines the direction that a ship will sail and Christ sits with his hand on the rudder, directing us towards salvation. The sail is filled with the wind of the Holy Spirit, sustaining the Church throughout history. The choppy waters represent the hardship and trials of our present life on earth, yet the ship sails smoothly ahead with a solid foundation.

Now let us consider those in the boat. We have already pointed to Christ, always the Head of the Church, directing our path. The second most prominent figure is the Theotokos, our intercessor and protector, her arms outstretched in fervent prayer for the people of God. We see Saints Peter and Paul holding a church, emphasizing their key roles in establishing Christ's Church on earth after His resurrection. St. Peter is associated with gathering in all of the Jewish people and St. Paul is credited with spreading out the Gospel to all Gentiles. Their presence in the icon signifies the Church as a place for all people and they are surrounded by their helpers in this mission- apostles, bishops and saints.

Finally, let us consider the man who clings to the sail of the ship, one foot in and one foot out of the boat. We too may find ourselves in this position. We may question the teachings of the Church or fall into sin that separates us from Her. But if we cling to the ship of the Church, held firm by her Tradition, Holy Mysteries and the Word of God, we are sure to join the saints seated safely inside the protection of the ship directed by Christ, the Holy and Apostolic Catholic Church.

The Mystical

Ghurch



Activity Suggestions :

- **Discuss the symbolism in our icon of the month, the Icon of The Mystical Church.** A coloring page is provided for the children to work on as you discuss.
- **Create Welcome Packets** to leave in the vestibule for those who are visiting the parish. Include things like: a pamphlet about the Byzantine Church; Card with times of services and contact information for the parish office; printed invitation to coffee hour after the Liturgy; etc.
- **Create a welcome brochure** that explains the history of your own parish and Church. Be sure to include history as well as current service times and ministry opportunities!
- **Discuss Serving in the church:** Invite members of the clergy or ministries to come and talk with the kids about opportunities to get involved with the church. Encourage teens to become greeters or assist the elderly and disabled into the church from their cars/buses. Assist those who need help to the front for receiving the Eucharist. Walk them to coffee hour and back to their cars after the services. Teach them to welcome newcomers, point them to the welcome packets, invite them to coffee hour afterward, and answer any questions.



Purple:

suitable for teens and adults ages 16+

Learning about the faith isn't just something for childhood, but it is rather a life-long journey that takes us ever closer to God. This group can tackle apologetics, moral life questions, and more challenging concepts and ideas of adult catechesis.

Our Objective: To explore the complex depth of the theme by exploring the writings of the Church Fathers, Scripture, and historical documents. We hope to introduce tools of apologetics, so participants can learn how to defend a position used as a common argument against the theme.

Teaching Objectives/points: For class, we might say, "Good morning! Welcome to our class, I am so very glad that you are here. I'm looking forward to getting to know you and hearing what you have to say. Today, our parish is learning about our Church- The One, Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church. The Catholic Church is actually made up of 24 Churches that come together as one! Who was already aware of that? (allow them to elaborate)"

Our Church is ___(ie Melkite)___ Catholic! We are one of the 24 churches that make up the Catholic Church. After Pentecost, the apostles went into all the world to spread the news of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. Each country that they visited had its own language and culture, but they all received the same knowledge of the saving Grace of God. The apostles established Churches in the places that they traveled to and laid their hands on men to become priests and bishops to lead the people. Even though each Church may look and feel a little different, we are all tied to Christ in His One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic Church."

It is important for us to know our faith well so that we can not only grow in our own faith journey, but that we can evangelize and teach others along the way. Today, we'll look at the symbolism within the icon of the Mystical Church, the whole Church, and then we'll discuss a common objection that you may come across in your own minds or from your friends. At this level, the icon study from the blue level as well as the graphic on page 25 are helpful discussion starters





Why Are We Catholic?

Understanding the True Meaning of Unity

Lynne Wardach

How do we know that it is important to God that we adhere to the universal Catholic faith?

Let me ask you...

Suppose you are sentenced to death.

Suppose it is an unjust punishment.

What would you pray for if you had one last chance to speak to God in prayer before your death? What would be serious and important enough to pray for at that time?

Let's consider what Christ prayed for in the garden of Gethsemane before HE was arrested

John 17:1-10 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I have been glorified in them.

*"I am no longer in the world, and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You, Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, **that they may be one even as We are.***

*"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. "I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "I do not ask You to take them out of the world but to keep them from the evil one. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. "For their sakes, I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; **that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.** "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, **that they may be one, just as We are one;** I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

Jesus begged His Father THREE TIMES that we be ONE CHURCH, as He and the Father are one. Do you think that Jesus and His Father disagree about anything? Do they hold separate opinions on how we humans are to act to glorify God? Would one of them say yes to something the other discourages? ABSOLUTELY NOT! Christ wants His Church to behave in the same way!

The Church should strive to be ONE, as the Trinity is ONE! We are modeled after our God! We can see that it is God's will that we be like Him in our worship and come together when we pray with our whole soul and with our whole mind. We hear this at the Divine Liturgy when the priest prays,

Priest: And grant that with ONE voice and ONE heart we may glorify and praise Your most honorable and sublime Name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever!

We must keep in mind that although it is essential that all the members of the True Church be united in faith, they don't all have to look or act alike. Each of the 24 Catholic Churches can and do look different! They each speak their own liturgical language and carry out unique cultural traditions, yet they are ONE in adherence to the true faith. To illustrate this point, St. Paul used the analogy of a human body to explain how the true Church functions and how it makes a complete, functional, and perfect whole when each part comes together.

Romans 12:4-5 Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

Just like an eye can't function on its own but contributes something to the body that no other body part can, each of us has a unique contribution to make to the Body of Christ, His Church. Nobody else can do our part, yet we aren't complete when we stand alone. We need all the other members of Christ's Body the Church, to do our part perfectly.

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

St. Paul tells the people of Corinth that blessings will follow when many join in prayer!

2 Corinthians 1:11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

He also instructs people to come to the Church to receive anointing and blessing from the elders rather than pray on their own when they are sick and need healing.

James 5:14-15 Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

We are assured that prayer with others gains God's favor!

Matthew 18:19-20 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Living a moral, Christian life isn't easy, especially today when so many live as they please and disregard God's laws altogether! We live in an environment that is very unfriendly to Christianity, and it is vital to look to others for support and encouragement. Here we see St. Paul encouraged the Hebrew Christians to come together for worship.

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Like them, we should also continue coming to Church as a community for Divine Liturgy, even though we see so many around us today are in the habit of neglecting it.

One thing is certain, Psalm 133:1

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!



Defending the Dwelling

We are living stones upon which our Church is built, each on the foundation of another and as a foundation for the ones to come.

We are only as strong as the weakest stone in the foundation, so St. Peter stresses here that we owe it to the Church, to the others who will build upon us, to strive to be as strong and perfect as we can be.

Read this together to strengthen your resolve as a Church, or as a simple stone in the foundation, to be the best Christian you can be.

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:4-5

1 Peter 2

New International Version

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. **2** Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—

5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6** For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

8 and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority,

14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

15 For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves.

17 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.

20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him, who judges justly.

24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

25 For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.



These lessons were lovingly and prayerfully crafted for your ByziFamily by the ByziMoms who work in unity to bring you ByziKids Magazine.

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To see more of our feast day activities please visit the ByziKids page at ByziMom.com.

Let us know what you think of The Dwelling Place! Contact us: ByziKids@gmail.com



We, the ByziMoms who collaborate to produce ByziKids Magazine believe...

- * that today's world does not strive to provide a culture of respect toward God, His Church, or His teachings.
- * that Eastern Christian families are in dire need of fellowship and resources for teaching the littlest members of the Body of Christ about Him and His will so that they may become the next generation of the true Church.
- * that Byzantine Children deserve resources that speak to their little hearts and souls in the language of their own culture as Eastern Christians.
- * that these resources should be shared with anyone and everyone who can use them, regardless of their affiliation with any particular Church or jurisdiction since we understand and respect that Christ's final plea to His Father was that we all be **One**.
- * that these resources should provide our children with lessons that appeal to the same five senses that were consecrated to Christ by their chrismation, and that the lessons be should be fun as well as educational!

Finally, we the ByziMoms who collaborate to produce ByziKids Magazine believe that this is a wonderful way for us to multiply the talents we were given, share the things we have learned in the education of our own children, and thereby glorify God.

We hope you enjoy our publication.

