



December 2023

NEW CREATION



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"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, powered by 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 educational levels. While the younger students focus on the aspects that 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.

We hope to shower you with abundant resources for each monthly theme. This does not mean that we anticipate you will use every single resource, but rather that you will choose the projects and activities that best suit your group's needs. We know that our communities vary widely across the US and the world! With an assortment of choices, you will find the perfect combination of education and fun for all those involved.

In this December issue, we explore the Church as A New Creation.

In the first issue of The Dwelling Place, we learned that we who are members of the universal Church are ONE in Christ and that each of us has an important and irreplaceable role to play within the Church. In the second issue, we continued to examine ourselves, the Church, as being the Body of Christ, with different organs that function together to keep that Body alive and well. Today, we will explore the nature of the Church even further. We will examine the concept that the Church is a New Creation of God. We will explore how each member of the Body of Christ is initiated into the Church by the Mystery of Baptism, and when this happens, we are created all over again, fresh and new! When we are immersed into the baptismal waters, we are buried with Christ, and when we emerge, so too do we arise with him and become living testimonies to His resurrection and eternal life! We cast off the sinful ways of the world to unite ourselves with Christ, walking in the newness of life, continually being nourished and recreated for eternity with Him.

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.

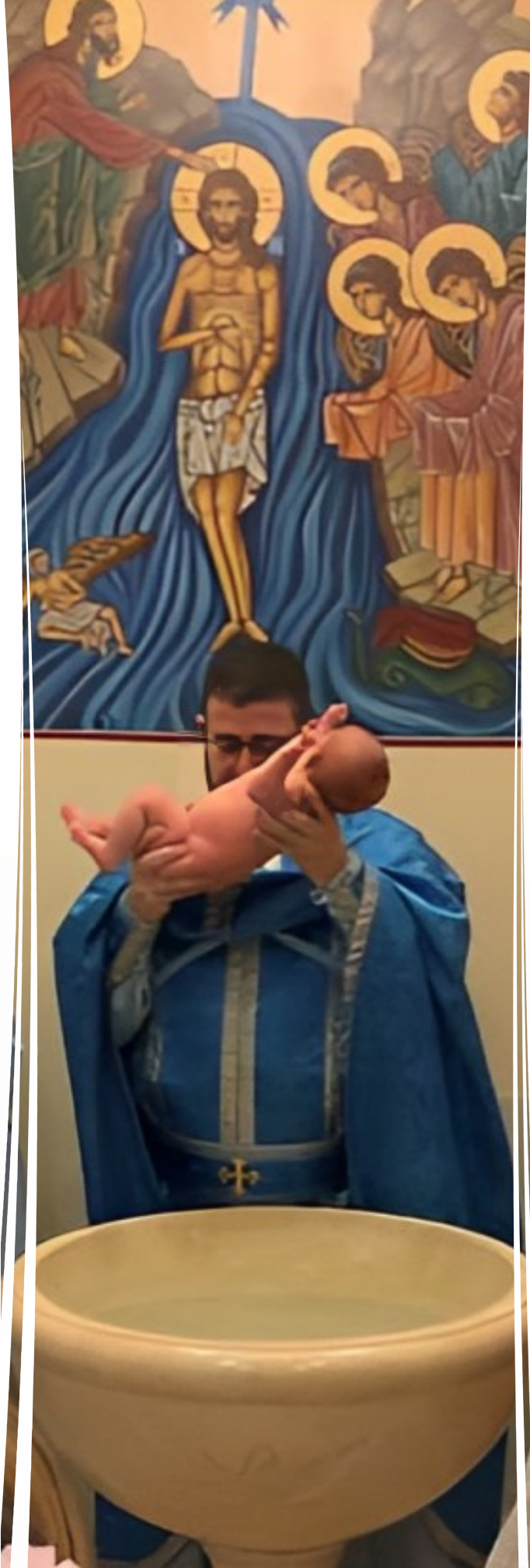
Our objective is to provide ideas that encourage students of this age to remain engaged in developing their own spiritual identity and find support within the Church community.

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.



To remind us of our baptisms, we suggest the following opening prayer:

A CHILD'S RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Adapted from the Rite of Baptism in the Byzantine Church

Children can understand the concept of choosing good over evil as they grow in age. Your family may decide that the time is right to review the renewal that took place in each of you when you presented yourselves to receive the mystery of Baptism according to the Church, and take responsibility for the promises that were made in your name.

The following is taken directly from the Church's official rite of baptism but has been slightly modified for use at home or in a parish school setting. This revised text is not meant to be used for the conference of a sacrament but as a personal reminder of the promises made by the child, through godparents speaking on their behalf, to Christ.

All turn to face west to address the enemy, as to face east is seen as facing the direction of God in Heaven.

Parent/Leader: Do you reject the evil one, all his works, all his fallen angels, all forms of service to him, and all his empty promises?

Response: I do reject him!

Parent/Leader: Do you reject the evil one, all his works, all his fallen angels, all forms of service to him, and all his empty promises?

Response: I do reject him!

Parent: Do you reject the evil one, all his works, all his fallen angels, all forms of service to him, and all his empty promises?

Response: I do reject him!

Note that we reject three times because we do it to the highest degree...make no mistake. We mean what we say.

Parent/Leader: Have you rejected the evil one?

Response: I have rejected him!...(three times)

All turn to face east as we turn away from evil and address God!

Parent/Leader: Do you join yourself to Christ?

Response: I join myself to Him!...(three times)

(again, three times as a sign that we mean what we say!)

Parent/Leader: Do you believe in him?

Response: I believe in Him as my King and as my God!

Recite the Creed:

This is the official proclamation of what we Christians must believe. We recite this as a proclamation that we believe it too and declare ourselves to be faithful members of the Church.

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, the only begotten, born of the Father before all ages.

Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in essence with the Father. Through Whom all things were made.

For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; and suffered, and was buried.

He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures: He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He is coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Creator of life, who proceeds from the Father.

Who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the Prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I profess one baptism for the remission of sins.

I expect the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Parent/Leader: Have you joined yourself to Christ?

Response: I have joined myself to Him!...(three times)

Parent/Leader: Then bow in worship.

Response: I bow before the +Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: Trinity, one in being and undivided.

Parent/Leader: Blessed be God, Who wants all men to be saved and to come to know the truth, now and forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Parent: Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Parent/Leader: O Master, Lord our God, call Your servant, **name**, to Your holy Illumination, and deem him(her) worthy of this great grace of Your holy baptism. Wash away his(her) old self and renew him(her) to everlasting life. Fill **name** with the power of Your Holy Spirit to be united to Christ and no longer to be a child of natural descent but rather a child of Your kingdom.

Through the love for mankind and grace of Your only-begotten Son with Whom You are blessed together with Your most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and ever.

All: Amen.



Quote for the Theme of the Month

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”



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
4. Back into color-coded groups for game/activity/craft
5. Gather together to present what you've learned to the large group
6. Close together in prayer

Snack Suggestion:

When thinking about baptism, foods you can dip or dunk come to mind. May we suggest serving apples with caramel dip? We can explain that the apples represent the ancestral sin of Adam and Eve, and when we "baptize" them in caramel, they become so much sweeter!

Let's Get Started!

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.

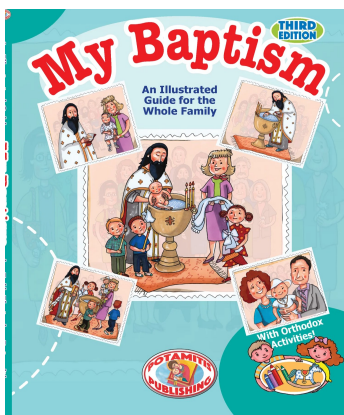
Our goal for these littlest members of the Body of Christ is to introduce them to the theme of the day, making positive connections to each other and to Christ through sensory play.

Teaching Objectives/points:

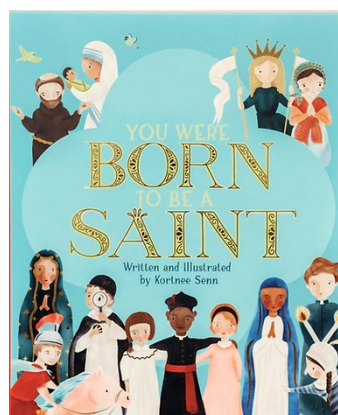
Little ones of this age do not need direct instruction on theological matters. They need a positive, playful interaction with their church family. Remember that these little ones are saints in our midst! Show them the sensory materials & books, allowing them to lead the direction of the play. They will show you how well they know and love our Lord in their own little ways!

Suggestions Include:

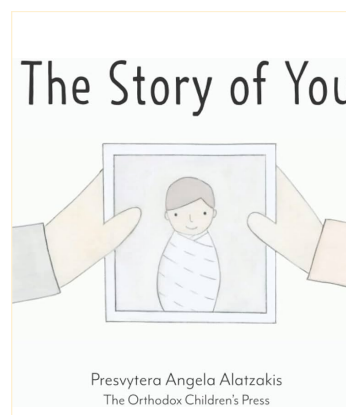
High-quality picture books and toys recommendations that go along with our themes:



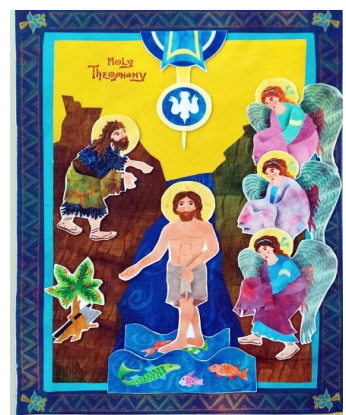
<https://potamitis.us/collections/hard-bound-books/products/my-baptism>



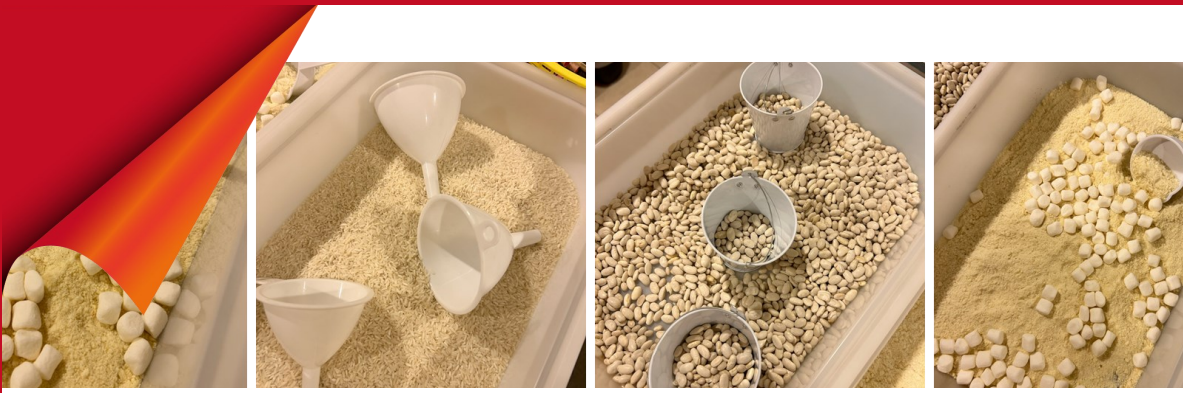
<https://www.studiosenn.com/product-page/preorder-you-were-born-to-be-a-saint-hardcover-book>



<https://www.amazon.com/Story-You-Angela-Alatzakis/dp/0991216458>



<https://www.drawn Apart Designs.com/orthodox-pebbles/theophany-learning-set>



Activity : Sensory Bin

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!

As we look at baptism making us a new creation, let us remind our littlest learners that at our baptism, we are truly made as white as snow. Their ears have heard us recite Psalm 51, verse 7 in our prayers..."Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow," and we bring this idea to life for them with an all white sensory bin.

There are many options to create an all white sensory bin: instant mashed potato flakes (dry, not prepared), marshmallows, white navy beans, rice or cotton balls make a great combination of textures for their small hands to grasp, scoop and pour. Provide them with small bowls, funnels and spoons to assist in their play and enjoy watching them become immersed in the experience!

ORANGE

(suitable for Pre-Readers; 3-5 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. For this age group, you can include the suggestions from the red level and then add on the coloring page and song provided.

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 becoming a new creation in Christ through our baptism! You were baptized when you were a little baby. Your mom and dad brought you to the church to become a new creation in Christ.





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!").

We were far from God and dirty with sin
Distorted and ugly without and within

Then we heard God's word:

Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit
He cannot enter the Kingdom of God

What will you do when you hear it?

CHORUS:

We will go down, down, down into the water
We come up, up, up a new creation
We will go down, down, down in baptism
We come up, up, up transformed.

Now remade in the image of Christ
A new creation, I give him my life.

CHORUS

Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit
He cannot enter the Kingdom of God

What will you do when you hear it?

Have you been baptized?
If so, you are a new creation in Christ!
Clap along with the beat of this song,
or use a drum, if you have one.
What hand motions do you
think would match the words?



YELLOW

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

Because children of this age are now able to read functionally, 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 than previously 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 red or orange material may also be of interest to them.

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 your most eager learners. They want to please you and show the knowledge that they have. Encourage and foster this desire for unity with God with 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 becoming a new creation with Christ through our baptism. Do you remember the day you were baptized? Probably not! Most of us were baptized when we were babies. It can be fun to talk to your parents about your baptism day and look through the pictures.

When we are baptized, we become a new creation in Christ. He unites with us and makes us His sons and daughters.



A Baptismal Ornament Craft

This month would be a perfect time to reminisce a bit with your children about the day they were baptized. Show them the photographs and videos and let them know that it was important to you to have brought them to the fullness of membership in the Church as a brand new creation and to have them freed from ancestral sin brought to us by our first parents, Adam and Eve. The waters of baptism perform both those actions for us, and by it, we are introduced to our life as a true Christian.

You may choose to have the children renew their baptismal vows today so that they can know that they have freely made this declaration of faith for themselves. It helps the children to take ownership of that decision as they grow old enough to understand it, and nurture their souls accordingly, as they have promised.

You may also want to mark the occasion of the renewal of the children's baptismal vows by having them make this little commemorative ornament! It can be packed away with the Christmas things and be brought out each year, and perhaps hung on the Christmas tree to remember the occasion.

We use a scallop shell, a longstanding symbol of the sacrament of baptism, because the shell was often used as an instrument to pour water over the head of the catechumen. Because shells are often symbols of a journey or traveling to a new place, perhaps the scallop shell symbolizes the journey the soul will take as a new creation as well.

You Will Need

- Scallop shell, one per person, with a hole drilled into the top of the shell; parents help required (these can be bought at most craft stores or in the aquarium section of most pet shops)
- Old nail polish, or craft paint
- Permanent Marker
- Ribbon for hanging
- **Optional:** Craft store pearl beads, one per person
- Gold marker for decorating the edge of the shell

Optional Materials: Rather than use an actual scallop shell, you may choose to use this printable paper scallop! Just print, then decorate and write the information on it, punch a hole in the top, and thread your ribbon for hanging as desired.



Instructions

Each person should take their shell and thinly paint the outer surface with nail polish or craft paint and allow it to completely dry.

While the paint is drying, discuss the day each of the children was baptized. Tell each of them the date of their baptism and let them know that it should be a special day for them, like their birthday and their name day! Have the children practice writing their full name and the date on which they were baptized on a sheet of paper so they can write it nicely later on.

Once the paint is completely dry (this is very important!), take the permanent marker and have them write their full name and the date of their baptism on the inside of their shell.

Once this is completely dry, paint over the entire shell, inside and out, with clear nail polish, or spray it with varnish to seal and protect their work.

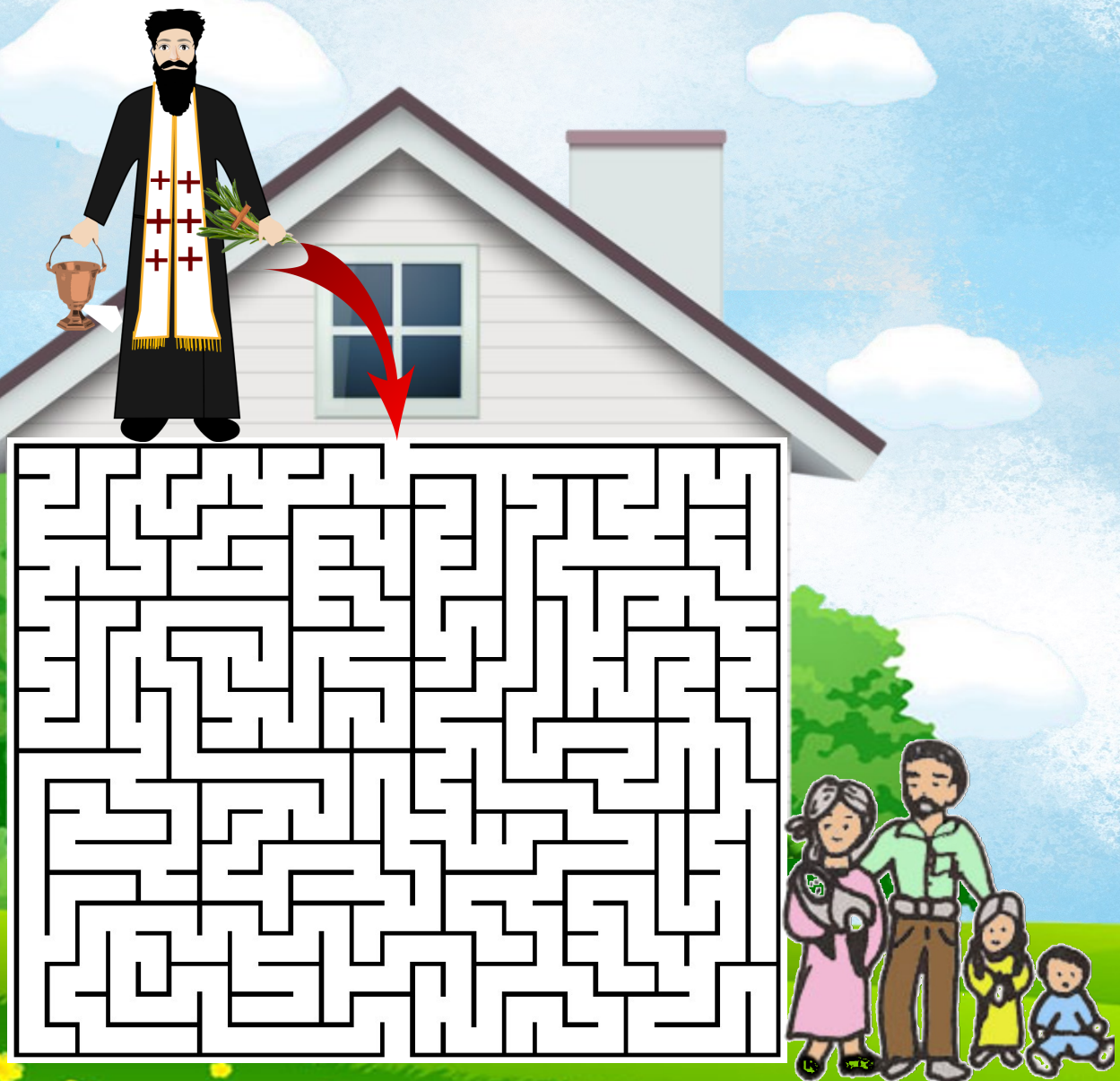
Once the shells are completely dry, you can hot glue a craft pearl to the top of the inside of the shell for decoration, perhaps apply some markings to the edge of the shell with a metallic gold marker, thread the ribbon through the hole that was drilled into the shell, and hang it up to enjoy!



House Blessing Maze

When Father was blessing your house,
you forgot to lead him through your house with a candle.

Now he has gotten lost.
Help him find his way out.



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 especially 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.

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 baptism and becoming a New Creation in Christ. Our baptisms brought us to the fullness of membership in the Church as a brand new creation and freed us from ancestral sin brought to us by our first parents, Adam and Eve. The waters of baptism perform both those actions for us, and by it, we are introduced to our life as a true Christian. And then segway into the activity that you choose:

House blessing Maze from the yellow level

Etching Activity

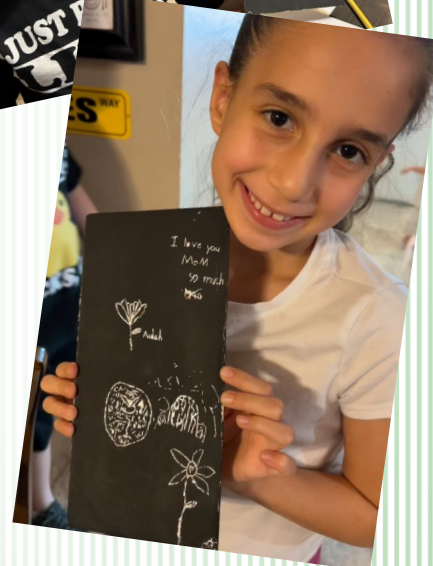
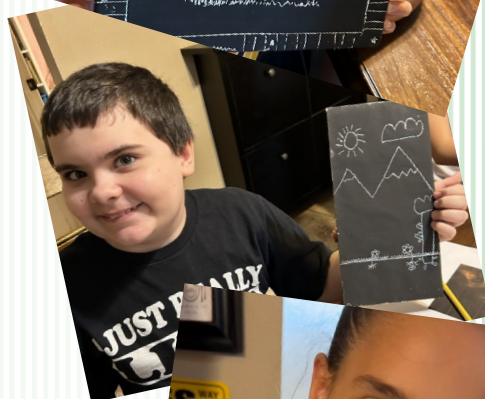
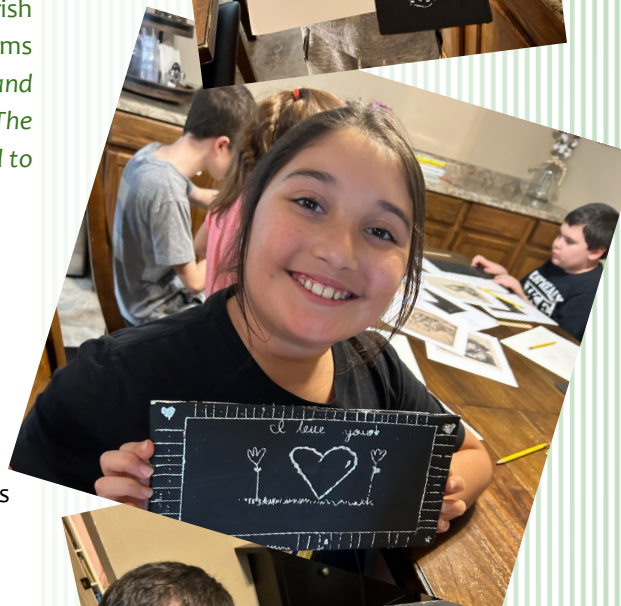
God made all of creation out of nothing. From darkness and death, He brings us to new life. In this fun craft, we can recall the gift of God creating something beautiful out of darkness.

Supplies needed:

- ☐ Pieces of cardboard (great way to recycle a shipping box!), one per child
- ☐ Foil- enough to cover one side of the cardboard piece
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Foam paint brush
- ☐ Black acrylic paint
- ☐ Dish soap
- ☐ Toothpicks
- ☐ Popsicle sticks

To prepare this craft, cover one side of your cardboard piece with foil. Gently tape the foil on the back side of the cardboard so that you have a smooth, shiny surface. Next, mix a couple drops of dish soap with your black acrylic paint. Cover the foil with the paint and soap mixture using a foam paint brush. Allow this to dry for several hours, overnight is better.

For the activity, give each child their prepared piece of cardboard, a toothpick and a popsicle stick. Instruct them to lightly scratch the black paint off to allow the foil to shine through in a design of their choosing. They might do a pencil drawing first to make a plan before they start etching. Once they have made their new creations, put the artwork up on display!



Body of Christ



We were slaves. We were slaves to sin.

We thought only of self.

We wanted comfort, food and fun,

Nice houses, drink and wealth.

- You might think that the Israelites would want to be rescued. But they often complained to Moses, telling him to leave them alone and let them be slaves. They were comfortable living in their slavery: “What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?’” (Ex 14:11-12).
- How is sin a kind of slavery?
- Do we ever feel comfortable in our sin?
- God calls us to overcome the sinful masters of ours, just as he called the Jews to overcome their slavery.



These things seem good, but often aren't,
 Like eating lots of sweets.
 God didn't like to see us sick,
 Grabbing every treat.

- On the upper left of the picture is the plant tares, on the upper right is the wheat. They look alike when young, but not when mature plants. Tares is poison, wheat is a food. Do you remember the parable? (Matthew 13:24-43). We sometimes mistake bad things (tares) for good things (wheat).
- Do you think that boy in the picture is behaving well? Why or why not? Do we behave like this sometimes?
- Is chocolate tares or wheat? Movies? (It depends, of course!)
- Why did God want the Jews to be free from slavery? Why does He want us to be free from the slavery of sin?
- God wants us to be free so that we are capable of worshiping Him: "Let my people go, so that they may worship me" (Ex 9:1).



God gave Moses a heavy law,
Some rules to help us live.
He hoped we would choose love not self,
To help, serve and forgive.

- The burden of the Mosaic law was heavy (literally, since they were stone tablets, figuratively, because they were hard, meant for a people who clung to slavery). In contrast, God's law is light: "My yoke is easy, My burden is light" (Matthew 11:13).
- How do we keep the old law in a new way? How is the Old Law heavier than the New Law?
- It is no longer required to keep kosher laws such as abstaining from bacon. Instead of abstaining from pork we abstain from gluttony and excess.
- Binding tefillin (a rope on which the Torah is attached) on our arms and head when reciting the blessing for the law was a requirement in the Mosaic law. This binding of tefillin was a sign that the law should be bound in our heads, hearts, and actions, but when the Law was written in our hearts by Christ, spoken to us by the Holy Spirit, this physical action was no longer needed. "After those days," said the Lord, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:32).
- The Israelites were required to rest on the sabbath. Orthodox Jews cook, clean, and even tear toilet paper in advance to avoid doing work on the sabbath day. Jesus taught us that the sabbath rest was meant for us to rest in Him, and that we are permitted to serve others on the sabbath. How can we keep the Sabbath today without going overboard and being unduly burdened?



But still we floundered, often failed.
 So Christ showed us the way.
 He gave His Body up for love
 And taught us how to pray.

No longer were we slaves to sin,
 Nor merely followed rules.
 In Christ we hear the Spirit speak
 Into our hearts, His “Fools.”

- The Israelites struggled even after being freed by Moses. They worshiped the golden calf, they complained to God. God said: “And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out” (Ezekiel 11:19). Think of the heart of stone and the stone tablets on which the law is written. The law of Moses was hard, though needed for a time.
- How can we combat our own struggles and temptations to sin? Sacraments, fasting, practicing saying no to temptations, offering up small mortifications. Ask your guardian Angel to help you. That’s his job!
- What is a “Fool for Christ?”
- How does Christ look like a Fool to the world? He became an infant and was born in a stable to be worshiped by shepherds instead of a powerful king. He was all-powerful, all-wise, could move mountains... but chose to die in humility to show His love for us.
- How can you hear the Holy Spirit speak into your heart? Your conscience.



“Cast off the old man!” We are told,
Take off the man of sin.
As new man, you belong to God,
His light dwells deep within.
Avadim Hayinu. Slaves.

Avadim Hayinu. Slaves.
We dressed in rags of filth.
But when Christ purchased all
our souls,
He clothed us with Himself.

Now baptized in the Name of God,
Our sin has drowned indeed,
In waters we have shed the old,
Heavenly Food we now receive.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (2 Cor 5:17-24).

- How do we die to self and put off the old man in Baptism? “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life” (Rom 6:3-4). Through baptism we are united to Christ’s Cross and His salvific act is applied to each person. The stain of original sin (Adam and Eve’s sin) is erased, we are washed with Christ’s blood and become white as snow, and are marked with an unerasable sign on our souls that says we belong to Christ. We are required to remain faithful to this mark that declares us to be sons and daughters of the Most High God.
- Avadim Hayinu. This is Hebrew for “we were slaves,” and is repeated at the Passover by the Jews. Jesus Himself would have recited these lines before He died on the Cross. He was about to make the ultimate sacrifice, the laying down of Himself for us, so that we could cross our own Red Sea and be freed from sin.
- The Israelites walked through the Red Sea and escaped its waters, but the Egyptian soldiers drowned. The Israelites left behind slavery to head toward the promised land as people free to worship the Lord. They ate manna in the desert. These things are typology for Baptism (death to sin and slavery) and the Eucharist (manna).



So set your mind on holy things:
You are a Child of God.
His peace and grace reign in your hearts,
In Christ's footsteps we trod.

“There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). The young man in this picture is Kendrick Castillo. He was a faithful Catholic, loved the Knights of Columbus (hence the symbols at the top of the picture), and intended to join them after graduating highschool. He died May 7, 2019 in Denver Colorado at age 18. A few months prior, he had been talking to his dad about the hypothetical situation of a shooter coming to his high school. He told his dad that he would willingly die to save others, because he was raised to imitate Christ. He had his opportunity to prove himself, and he saved his entire class and school by immediately throwing himself upon the shooter that came into his classroom. Kendrick was the only casualty. We may not be called to throw ourselves in the line of fire, but when Christ is written on your heart, our response to others must be radically changed: “I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other” (John 13:34). Kendrick’s life is being reviewed in the first step of sainthood in the Catholic Church (notice that Kendrick has only a hint of a halo, rather than a formal one in the depiction, because his sainthood is believed, but not officially declared).

- “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18). When we are Baptized we are Baptized into the glory of Christ, clothed in His radiance. But there is room to grow and get rid of our old ways, hence we are transformed “from glory to glory.” As we become more perfect, we more clearly reflect the image of Christ. What do you need to work on to become more like Christ?
- How can you serve others like Christ did?



THEOPHANY TROPARION:

This is a very special song that we sing on the feast of Theophany. We will sing it when Father comes to bless our homes as well, so it would be a good idea to begin to learn it! Here is how it goes:

At your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord,
worship of the Trinity was revealed;
for the Father's voice bore witness to you, calling you his beloved Son,
and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words.
O Christ God, you appeared and enlightened the world.
Glory to you!

At your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord,
worship of the Trinity was revealed;
for the Father's voice bore witness to you, calling you his beloved Son,
and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words.
O Christ God, you appeared and enlightened the world.
Glory to you!

GREETING FOR THEOPHANY:

Let us learn this Theophany greeting too!




In Ukrainian:
Христос хрестився!
В річці Йордані!
Khrystos khretyvsya!
V ritci Yordani!

In Old Slavonic:
Christos Khreshchayetsya!
Vo Yordani!

When someone says:
Christ is Baptized!
You say:
In the Jordan!

In Greek:
Χριστός βαπτίστηκε!
Στην Ιορδανία!
Christós vaftístike!
Stin Iordanía!

In Russian:
Христос крещен!
в Иордании!
Xhristos Kreshchen!
V'Jordaniji!

In Arabic:
المسيح عمد! في الأردن
Almasih emd!
Fi al'urdn!

In Romanian:
Hristos este botezat!
In Iordan!

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 exploring the concept that the Church is a **New Creation** of God. We will explore how each member of the Body of Christ is initiated into the Church by the Mystery of **Baptism**, and when this happens, we are created all over again, fresh and new! When we are immersed into the baptismal waters, we are buried with Christ, and when we emerge, so too do we arise with him and become living testimonies to His resurrection and eternal life! We cast off the sinful ways of the world to unite ourselves with Christ, walking in the newness of life, continually being nourished and recreated for eternity with Him.

And then segway into the activity that you choose from the following pages.



Discuss the symbolism in our ICON OF THE MONTH



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At your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed. For the father's voice bore witness to you, by calling you His beloved son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words. Oh Christ God, who has appeared to us, and enlightened the world, glory to You! (Troparion of the Theophany)

This month, as we discuss the new creation that we are through the Mystery of Baptism in the Church, we highlight the icon of Christ's baptism. Theophany, which means "revelation of God," is celebrated each year on January 6th. At our Lord's baptism, the Holy Trinity was revealed to us and is shown in this icon rich with meaning. We know the story of our Lord's baptism from the Gospels, described in Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34. Let us look at how the icon reflects the story and the Truth that we need to know about this event.

First, look at St. John the Baptizer. Clothed in rough clothing, we can see the texture of his tunic and his messy hair and beard. He lived ascetically in the desert and preached the coming of our Lord. He stands at the right hand of Jesus, significant because it is the same place that Elijah stands in the Transfiguration Icon. Both Holy Prophets, Elijah and John, point to Christ in a moment of profound revelation of God. St. John bows down to Christ as he baptizes Him. He is present to hear the voice of the Father announce, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Both Heaven and Earth rejoice at this revelation of the Trinity. On the opposite bank of the Jordan River, we see the angels invisibly present at our Lord's baptism. Three angels, representing the three persons of the Trinity, veil their hands to receive our Lord's body with love and honor. Behind them, we see the mountain peaks, calling to mind the Old Testament stories of Abraham and Moses' encounters with God on mountains as well.

Now we come to the central figure in the icon- Jesus our Lord. Standing in the river, his descent into its cool water is a foreshadowing of his death and resurrection to save us all. He stands naked as the new Adam and a stark contrast to the first Adam who ran and hid, ashamed of his nakedness in the Garden of Eden. Jesus, both God and man, is restoring humanity to our union with Christ. Christ looks down at the Jordan River, extending his hand in blessing over the waters of all the earth. Jesus did not need to be cleansed of any sins, rather Christ is cleansing the waters of all the Earth. The waters of the river reverse direction, harkening to Psalm 114:3, "the sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned back." Jesus is setting all things right and beginning a new creation: we are made adopted heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Above Jesus' head, we see a dove surrounded by a mandorla, the radiant blue circle. The mandorla (which means "almond" in Italian because that is its most common shape) represents the glory and majesty of God beyond what can physically be witnessed or painted. Continuing up the center of the icon, we see a second mandorla, a semi-circle this time, representing the opening of the Heavens and the Father's voice coming down from above. Together, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are depicted in this icon, revealing God to us all. A reality beyond understanding yet shared with us here.

Prepare your Home for the Annual House Blessing

As we explore our theme this month, we realize that our newly blessed home is our Domestic Church as a New Creation! Home is our family's fortress. It is the safe haven that we return to each day after we interact with the world, both good and bad. It makes sense that we should keep it clean, both physically and spiritually! Just as soap and water clean our floors and furnishings, this blessing can rid our homes of anything that could pollute our souls.

2 Chronicles 7:16 For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

2 Samuel 7:28-29 And now, O Lord God, you are God and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.

It is customary for Eastern Catholics to arrange for our priests to bless our homes each year at the feast of Theophany. Now that you are older, you can participate in the preparation of your home for the blessing. It is customary to clean your home to the best of your ability and prepare your icon corner with the following materials:

- An icon of the theophany
- A crucifix
- A lighted candle
- Extra Holy Water
- A list of everyone in the household for whom you would like to pray
- A stipend for the priest, or consider inviting him to stay for dinner afterwards!



Before the priest arrives, be sure that each room in the house is accessible and well lit. Make sure there are no obstacles in any of the hallways and that the doors to all of the rooms are open.

After greeting the priest at his arrival, lead him to the icon corner, where the service may begin.

You may want to print out the following for each member of the home.

As he goes throughout the house, you may choose to accompany him to serve as a guide.



The Byzantine Prayer

for the Blessing of Homes at The-

The family gathers around the icon corner, an icon of the Theophany, or a crucifix. A blessed candle should be lit, phones and electronics should be turned off, and holy water kept handy. You may designate someone from the family to lead the priest throughout the house at the blessing portion of the service.

Priest: Blessed is our God always, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

+Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, Have mercy on us! (3)

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us of our sins. Master, forgive us our transgressions. Come to us Holy One, and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord have mercy! (3)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Priest: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory, now and ever and forever.

Reader: Amen.

Troparion, (Tone 1): *At Your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed, when the Father's voice bore witness to you by calling you His beloved Son, and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God, Who appeared and enlightened the world, glory to You!*

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Reader: Lord have mercy.

Priest: O God our Savior, the True Light, Who was baptized in the Jordan by the Prophet John, and Who deigned to enter under the roof-tree of Zacchaeus, bringing salvation to him and to his house: do You, the same Lord, keep safe also from harm those who dwell herein; grant to them Your blessing, purification and bodily health, and all their petitions that are unto salvation and Life everlasting; for blessed are You, as also Your Father Who is from everlasting, and Your All-Holy, Good and Life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen.

And the Priest shall bless the whole house with Holy Water, chanting the troparion: At Your baptism in the Jordan ...

Priest: May He Who condescended to be baptized in the river Jordan by the Forerunner and Prophet John, for our salvation, through the intercessions of His immaculate Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind!

Reader: Amen.

The Priest proclaims:

Grant, O Lord, a prosperous and peaceful life, health and salvation, and the furtherance of all good things to all Your servants (Names) who dwell herein, and preserve them for many years.

Reader: (sings) God grant them many years! God grant them many years! God grant them many blessed years! In health and happiness, in health and happiness. God grant them many blessed years!



Make a Decorated

HOLY WATER JAR

The use of holy water comes from the ancient practice of the mikvah, or bath, performed ritually by the Israelites before entering the Temple.

It is also mentioned in the Old Testament book of Numbers 5:17, which says,

“And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it in the water.”

The Apostolic Constitutions from the fourth century mention sacramentals and give the formula for blessing water and oil. In our Church today, holy water is usually blessed during the Theophany/Epiphany feast and can be taken home by the faithful for use in their domestic churches.

Such a special sacramental should be kept in a special jar. It need not be an expensive jar, but lovingly and carefully prepared is best. You can make one for your domestic Church!

You will need

- A glass jar or bottle, saved from the recycling bin, washed and thoroughly dried.
- A tight-fitting lid or cork for this container.
- Photocopied icon print of the icon of the Theophany or a patron saint
- Sequins, beads, old nail polish, etc for decorating the jar
- Glue
- Decorative ribbon to tie around the neck of the jar

Instructions

All during Philip's fast, we watch for empty jars with smooth faces, like maple syrup comes in, with pretty screw caps with no writing on them. On the occasion that they do, we would paint over it with spray paint or even with nail polish to cover the writing, or use a recycled cork to stop the jar.

We then print out an icon, sometimes of the Theophany, sometimes of a patron saint, from the internet, sized to fit the face of the jar. Mix a half-and-half mixture of glue and water, and use a paintbrush to affix your icon to the jar. Now, you can use some straight craft glue (or hot glue if you prefer) to decorate the jar with sparkly craft jewels or sequins. You may tie a piece of pretty ribbon to the neck of the bottle as a finishing touch.





Let's Explore What Happens at **THE GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS**

When you attend the vigil liturgy for the feast of Theophany, be sure to sit in front, as close to the vat of water as possible, and pay very close attention. Something extraordinary is about to happen!

First, Father will give it three blessings with a lighted three-branched candle saying:

“Great are you, O Lord, and wonderful are your works; no word suffices to give praise to your wonders.”
...and God will hear him calling to Him.

Then he will bend over the water three times and make the sign of the cross with his breath and say:

“O Loving King, come now and through the descent of the Holy Spirit, sanctify this water.”
...and then the Holy Spirit will come!

Then, Father will continue to ask God to do many wonderful things for us through this water.

“Grant it the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan.”

...as if it was water from the Jordan River itself! When we are baptized with water, it sanctifies us and makes us holy. When Christ stepped into it to receive baptism, he sanctified the water instead of water sanctifying HIM! Father asks God for this grace when we use this holy water.

Make it a fount of incorruptibility, a gift of sanctification, a redemption of sins,
...if we use it, it will help cleanse us of our sins! Let's use this holy water as reverently and often as possible!

a healing potion for illness, and a destroyer of demons.
...it will heal diseases and scare away demons!...I like that!

Make it immune to hostile powers, and fill it with angelic power so that all who drink and receive of it may be purified in soul and body, cured of ills, sanctified in their homes, and given every befitting grace.

...Cures ills, cleanses of evils, scares away demons and calls down the holy angels, AND brings us EVERY BEFITTING GRACE! Wow!

For you are our God, who through water and the Spirit rejuvenated our nature grown old by sin.

...Everything in nature reveals something about the One who created it. God has given us water to refresh and cleanse us so that we can, in turn, understand how His grace can do so, too! Water is a very versatile and valuable tool in the hands of God.

You are our God, who drowned sin in the waters at the time of Noah.

...see how He used the rainwater to cleanse the earth?

You are our God, who, on the sea and at the hands of Moses, delivered the Hebrews from the bondage of Pharaoh.

...see how He used the water of the Red Sea to protect the Israelites as they ran away from their Egyptian captors?

You are our God, who split the rock in the wilderness so that the waters gushed out, and the valleys overflowed, and the people were satisfied.

...see how He grants water, refreshment, and life to those who need it?

You are our God, who, with fire and water and at the hands of Elijah, delivered Israel from the errors of Baal.

...remember how He used the presence of water to show His ultimate power and authority when He lit Elijah's sacrifice ablaze, and the priests of Baal could not do so? Even when their sacrifice was dry!

Then Father will make the sign of the cross in the water with his hand three times, saying each time:

Wherefore, O Master, sanctify this water by your Holy Spirit.

And then he will ask God:

Grant sanctification, blessing, cleansing, and health to all who **touch** it, are **blessed** with it, or who **partake** of it.

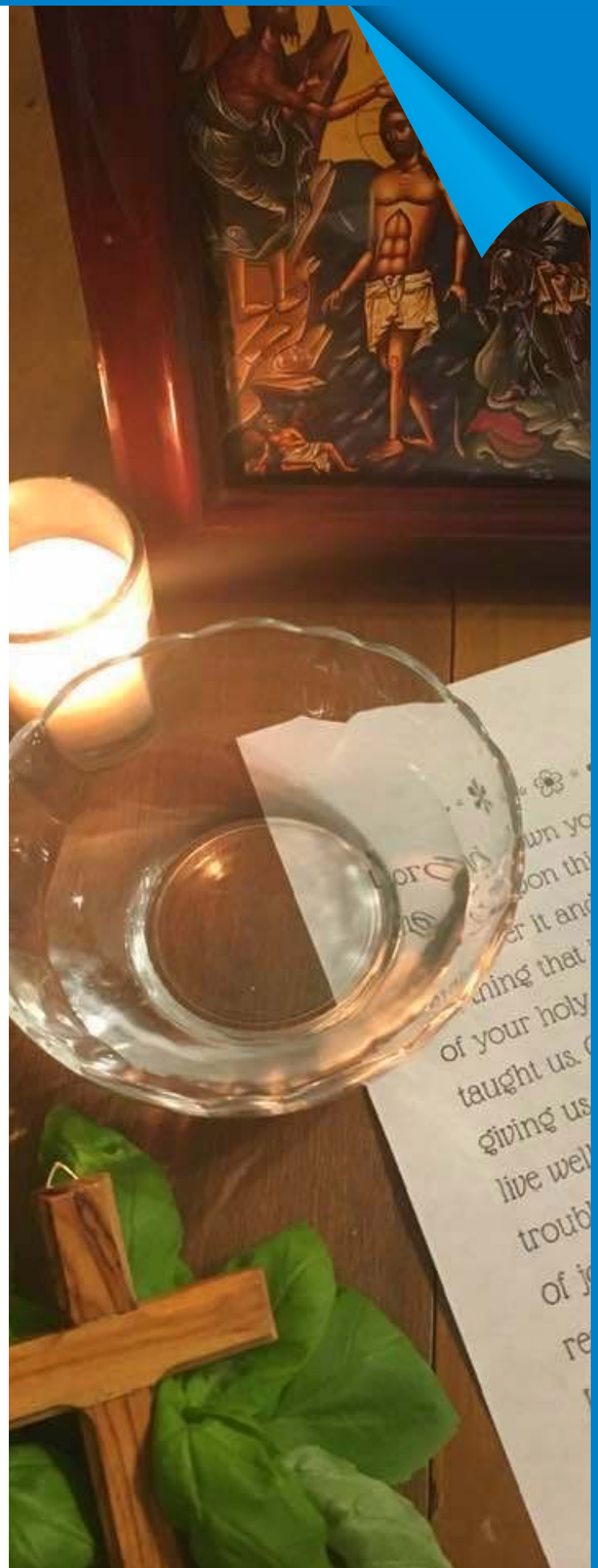
O Lord, save your servants, our civil authorities. Keep them in peace within your protective shadow, granting them all salutary requests and eternal life.

May your all-holy name be glorified by the elements, by men, by angels, by all that is visible or invisible, together with the + Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Then we will all say, "Amen."

When the service is over, you may go forward and receive a blessing with this powerful water, drink of it, and even take some home with you to use as you need it, and receive all of the protection, cleansing, and healing that was promised in Father's prayer!

Before you go, make a fitting bottle or jar to take your Blessed Water home with you.



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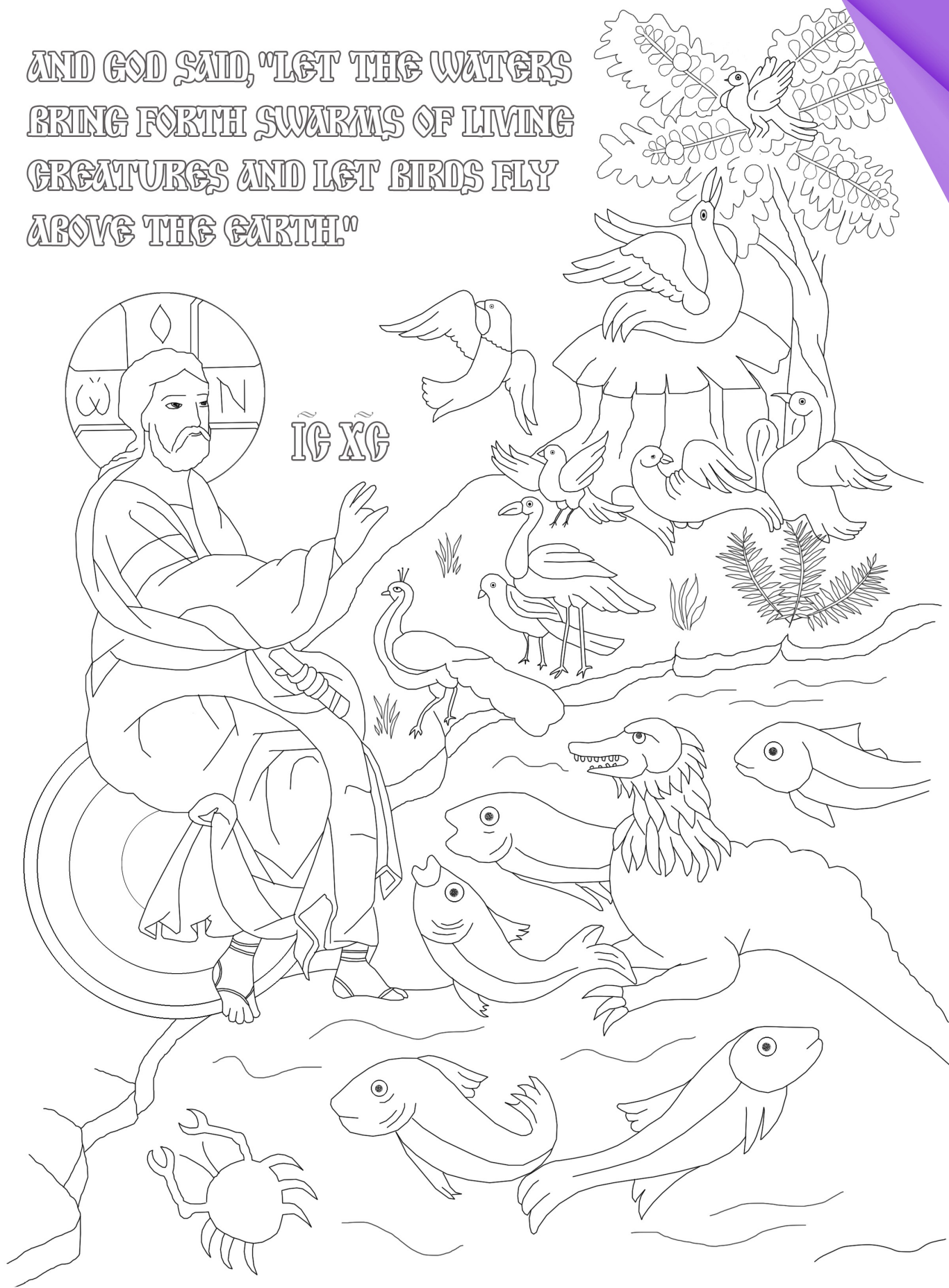
(suitable for teens and adults ages 16+):

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 goal for this adult group is 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 exploring the concept that the Church is a **New Creation** of God. We will explore how each member of the Body of Christ is initiated into the Church by the Mystery of **Baptism**, and when this happens, we are created all over again, fresh and new! When we are immersed into the baptismal waters, we are buried with Christ, and when we emerge, so too do we arise with him and become living testimonies to His resurrection and eternal life! We cast off the sinful ways of the world to unite ourselves with Christ, walking in the newness of life, continually being nourished and recreated for eternity with Him.



AND GOD SAID, "LET THE WATERS
BRING FORTH SWARMS OF LIVING
CREATURES AND LET BIRDS FLY
ABOVE THE EARTH!"



Based on an icon written by Michael Kapelock of Archangelicons.com

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Why baptisms should be public and always occur during the Divine Liturgy.

What is Baptism? Ritual immersion has always been a part of Jewish culture and is thought to be the root of the Mystery of Baptism. We see many instances in scripture where the people of Israel had to ritually purify themselves after becoming “unclean” by various activities and circumstances. In Jewish tradition, they would immerse themselves in a ritual bath called a mikveh to consider themselves “clean” again and enter into normal contact with others without fear of transferring the “unclean” status to others.

The Church teaches that there are two main reasons for the Mystery of Baptism in the Christian Church:

1. The Forgiveness of Sins; A continuation of the Jewish notion of purification

Acts 22:16 And now, what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

2. Initiation; A means for becoming a member of the True Church

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body -whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

But many other things about Baptism are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures to help us understand its importance. For example,

1 Peter 3:15:20-21 to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it, only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes **baptism that now saves you also**—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the second century, St. Irenaeus had this to say about salvation and baptism:

“Baptism is the seal of eternal life and our rebirth in the Spirit of God, so that we become not only the children of men but also the children of the Eternal God.”

~Excerpted from the Apostolic Demonstrations

Baptism saves us. It allows us to become not simply true followers of Christ, but each of us is reborn in Him, and we all become His family. By doing so, we become family to each other and can hope for everlasting life in His kingdom. We see more about the kingdom in the following discourse between Jesus and the Pharisee, Nicodemus.

John 3:3-8 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’...



How can a person be born again? First, let's consider a birth in the flesh. When infants emerge from the waters of their mother's womb and are borne into the world, the entire family rejoices! The little ones are examined from the top of their heads to each of their ten little toes. Each of their senses and reflexes is tested and confirmed, and then they are wrapped in a warm blanket, embraced and nourished by their mother, and fawned over and welcomed by their families who come from near and far to see the new member of the family. It is the same for all babies of all ages and cultures!

Now, let us consider a birth in the Spirit. When parents bring their children to Church for the Mysteries of initiation, the babies are immersed three times in the waters of the Baptismal font, which symbolize both the waters of the womb and the descent into death for three days, along with Christ, crucified. The children carry ancestral sin with them into the water and emerge, just as Christ emerged, resurrected from the tomb on the third day, in a glorified state! The child is born again, and this time, of the Spirit.

But the newly illumined infants aren't left all alone! The children are then examined, and their senses sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation. Then, they are wrapped in a white garment and nourished, not from an earthly mother, but from Christ Himself!

Participation in the life of the Most Holy Trinity becomes a reality for us through the Holy Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist.... As a person, after birth, begins to breathe and then receives nourishment in order to live, so the newly baptized, born to new life in the baptismal font, begins to breathe by the Holy Spirit and receives the nourishment of Holy Communion in order to grow in Christ. Through the prayers and sacred actions of the liturgical rite of each of these Mysteries, the Church leads the faithful... into an understanding of the Mystery and perceiving it as a single, unified action of God's grace. This is why in the tradition of the Eastern Church, these three Holy Mysteries are celebrated together.

~Christ Our Pascha; The Holy Mysteries of Christian Initiation; section 408

A final thought. Once the infant soul is born of the spirit, emerging from the waters of baptism and sealed with holy Chrism, the child should then be fawned over and welcomed by the rest of the Church family as an integral part of the community, just as in a physical birth! When initiation ceremonies occur at times other than during the corporate worship service, we miss the



The New Creation as a Perpetual Creation



We read the account of the very first day of creation in the book of Genesis;

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

He speaks of His act of creating through the prophets in the Old Testament;

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

He speaks to us of it again in the New Testament, through St. Paul, *2 Corinthians 5:17*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

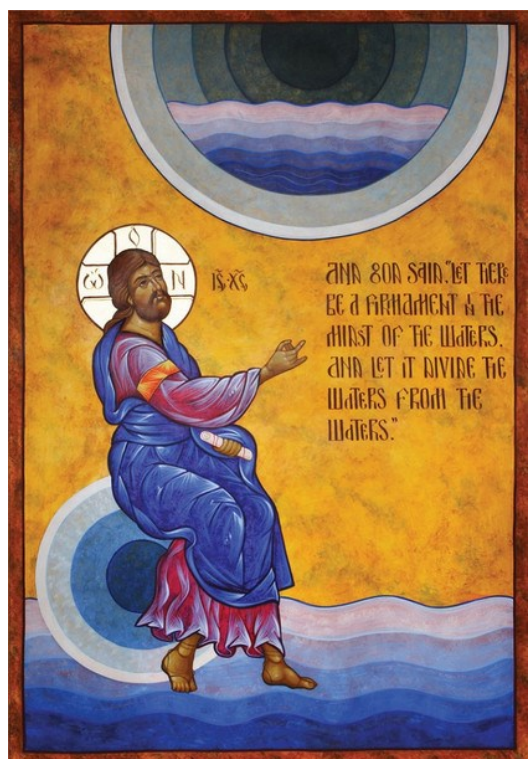
He also speaks of the new creation that is still to come through St. John the Evangelist in the book of Revelation;

Revelation 21:5-7

*And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son.*

God didn't just create for six days and take His rest for eternity; He keeps creating! He continues to create new individuals and forms of life and sustain the lives He already created by providing them with everything they need in each moment by His word.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.



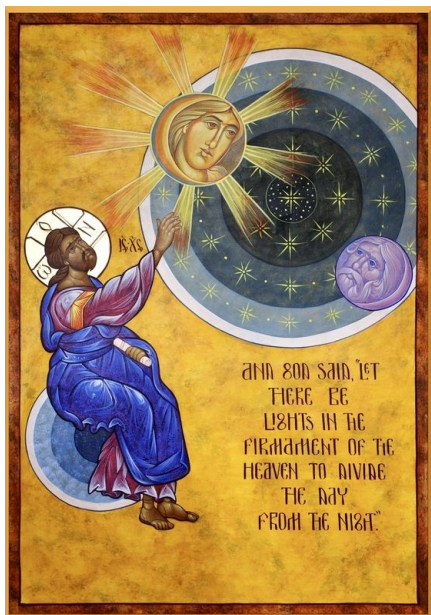


Christ reminds us of this when He says,

Matthew 10:29-30 Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

St. Paul also preached that Christ was present at the creation of the universe and that he continues to maintain His creation perpetually, moment by moment.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.



2 Corinthians 4:16-17 Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly, we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

If we understand this to be accurate, we can rejoice in the fact that God will protect and provide for our needs, and we can have confidence that He will sustain us throughout our life.

Lamentations 3:22-24 Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his Compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him."

So when the world looks dark and scary, remember God's words to the prophet Isaiah are His words to us all, and take comfort.

Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.



Creation icons by
Michael Kapeluck



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.