

Hey  
kids!

JULY  
2019

# BYZI KIDS

Having fun the BYZIKIDS way.

## ALL ABOARD THE NAVE !

*It can be hard to pay attention in church -- even for adults.* God designed children to learn through movement, touch and noise-making. So, when it is difficult to listen to the

prayers and sing all the words, pray instead with your eyes. Even the building you stand within is designed as a prayer. Let it teach you about the kingdom of God and lead you into thoughts of Heaven's glory.

Look up! The room you stand in is called the "nave." Above you, a beautifully painted dome rises. This dome is meant to teach us about heaven where God the Father abides in all his glory. He is surrounded by his angels and the Theotokos. In traditionally built churches, you will also see images of great men and women -- the prophets and apostles who now serve at the Lord's throne praying for the church from Heaven. Many cathedrals have a ring of windows around the dome to let light stream in creating a sense of separation between Heaven and Earth.

Below the windows, you will often see many images of saints. There is no boundary from the images of the saints in the dome and the saints which appear in icons along the walls throughout the nave. This teaches us that we stand among all these saints and are praying with them.

Once you know that the very church building can teach, you can begin asking about all the little details. Ask your parents. Ask your priest. Look at books with pictures of other churches.

Notice how so many churches have similar features. Ask about the purpose of these features.

Did you know that the word "nave" means "boat"? It refers to the ark -- the mighty boat God used to rescue his people from judgment. When we are in the nave, it is like being safe in the ark.

If your parents will let you, it may be fun to bring a compass with you to church someday (but don't pull it out during Liturgy). The compass will reveal that the altar is facing east (or at least as close to east as the builders could manage.) Christians and God's people before them, have always prayed facing East. This is to remember the Garden of Eden -- our true home -- and the hope of Christ's return which will come, like the rising sun, from the East.

The room just outside the nave is called the "narthex." This is like the foyer in a home -- the entrance room. In traditions long lost, people who were not baptized or who had committed serious sins were not allowed to enter into the nave but had to remain in the narthex either until they were baptized or reconciled through confession. Sometimes when very small children are expressing their wiggles and noises too much, their mother or father will take them to the narthex so they do not distract others who are praying. Being wiggly and noisy is not the same thing as being naughty (usually), but being in the narthex can remind us that we are learning to control our passions and always growing in maturity as we move in our spiritual growth from the narthex into the nave and ever closer to the holy place.

> Continued on Next Page

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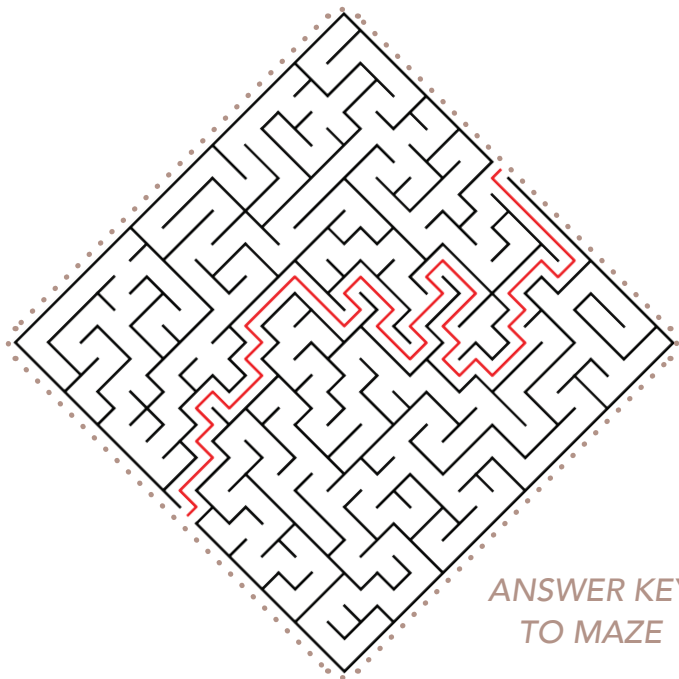
## ALL ABOARD THE NAVE ! CONT.

It is hard to miss the wall of icons at the far end of the nave. This beautiful divider is called the "iconostasis." It represents the gates of Heaven. There are special meanings to the icons on this wall. Jesus Christ and the Theotokos appear on every iconostasis in every Byzantine church. This is because we enter Heaven through them. They are not there as a barrier to keep us out of Heaven but as doors through which we enter.

The sanctuary or "holy place" is behind the iconostasis. It represents the Heavenly Liturgy. Look at the altar. Did you know that in many churches, that square table is made of stone and is built into the very foundation of the building? This reminds us that the foundation of our faith is the altar and Jesus' sacrifice. The altar represents many things. You can learn about it for a long time and still have more to learn.

So, next time your mind begins to wander during liturgy, let your eyes fall on the details of the building and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you from the things you see.

*-Written by Judith Jolma*

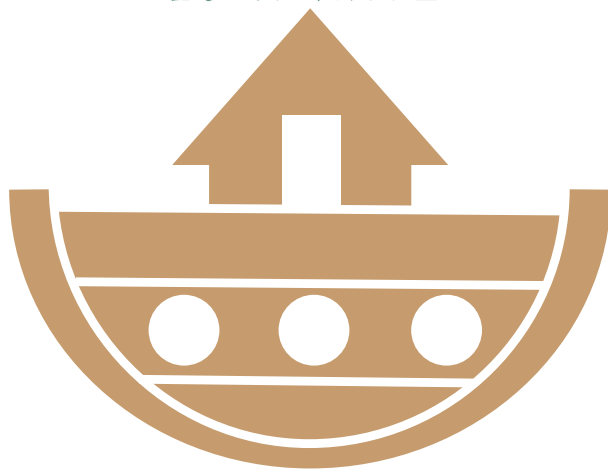


ANSWER KEY  
TO MAZE

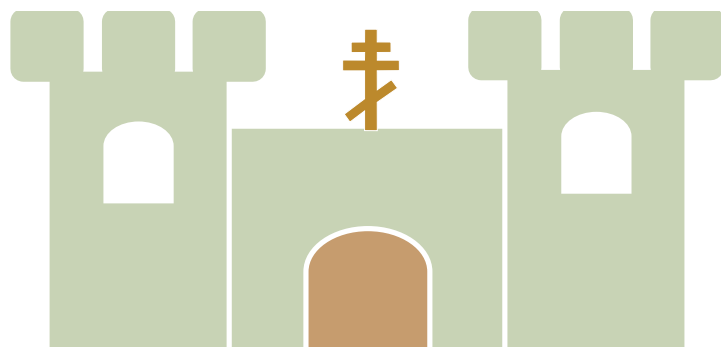
## GOD'S HOUSE IS A CHURCH



## GOD'S HOUSE IS A NAVE



## GOD'S HOUSE IS A FORTRESS



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# Peter & Paul

## THE HOLY PRE-EMINENT APOSTLES

ST. PETER

ST. PAUL



### Hymn

*melody: Joyful, joyful, we adore thee*



1. Let us now with crowns of prais - es Hon - or Pe - ter, hon - or Paul;  
2. Let us now with hymns of glad - ness Hon - or their a - pos - tol - ate,  
3. Let us now with end - less glo - ry Praise the Fa - ther and the Son



Sep - a - rat - ed in the bod - y, Joined as one in faith - ful call.  
Sing their glo - ri - ous E - pis - tles, Laud their com - mon mar - tyr's fate:  
And the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it, Ev - er Three and ev - er One.



Pe - ter, fore - most Gos - pel wit - ness, Paul, with la - bors with - out cease,  
Pe - ter, who for love of Je - sus Bore his death up - on the cross,  
From the mouth of Paul and Pe - ter, From the choir of saints, as - cend



Both now stand in robes of glo - ry At the throne of Christ our Priest.  
And the heads - man's cru - el swordstroke Brought for Paul his gain, not loss.  
Hymns of glo - ry, praise, and bles - sing, Sound - ing now and with - out end.

<https://mci.archpitt.org/>

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# I SPY IN MY LITTLE "I"CON

WHY IS THERE A SUN AT THE TOP OF THE ICONS? AREN'T THEY ALL INSIDE?

## Our Lady of the Sign

There are many different names and titles for Mary, the Mother of Jesus. We call her the Mother of God. She is the mother of Jesus and Jesus is both God and man. Since Mary is His mother, that makes Mary the Mother of God. We call her the Holy **Theotokos**. The word Theotokos comes from two Greek words that mean God-bearer, one who bears (or carries) God. Mary is the one who carried Him for us and carries Him to us.



St Luke 17 C @ byzantinemuseum.gr

There are many different icons of the Holy Theotokos. Tradition tells us that St. Luke himself painted or "wrote" the first icon of the Theotokos.

Sometimes we see her holding her child and pointing to Him. She is showing us the way to Him, guiding us to her Son. We see an example of that in [picture 2](#).

At other times we see icons showing Our Lady holding and hugging her child and He is snuggling close to her cheek. In some icons, our Mother Mary is sitting on a throne in heaven with her child on her lap. She is our Queen in heaven.



Black Madonna of Częstochowa 14C

This month's coloring page is called

["Our Lady of the Sign."](#) We often see icons like this in the sanctuary of a church, over the altar. Our coloring page is taken from the beautiful mosaic in The Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Philadelphia. Let's take a good look at this beautiful icon in [picture 3](#).

In icons of ["Our Lady of the Sign."](#) we see our Lady looking directly toward us. In this icon, she is full length. In some others, we only see her from the waist up.

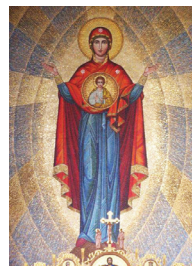
As in all icons of Our Lady, we see her head covered with a veil. All Jewish women of her time covered their heads with a veil. Sometimes the veil is red symbolizing her divine grace. Her clothes are often blue, representing her humanity.

In some icons of this type we may see the letters **MP ΘY**, which is short for "Mother of God." Those letters tell us that it is an icon of Mary.

Do you see the gold stars? How many do you count? Yes, there are three. One on her head and one on each shoulder. These tell us that Mary was always pure before, during and after she gave birth

to Jesus.

In the icon we are studying today, we can see three different kinds of halos. The light around a persons head is just called a **halo** and we can see a halo around the head of Our Lady and around the head of Jesus. Jesus is seen in a circle of light, called an **aureole**. That is a round circle of light around the whole person, not just the head. There is also a circle of light around Our Lady. When the circle is more of an oval, it is called a **mandorla** which comes from the word for "almond." A mandorla is almond-shaped. Sometimes, the light around a person might be called a **nimbus**, which means a cloud of light. These all show that the person is very holy.



Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Philadelphia, PA

We see her hands raised up in a position of prayer. This is called an **oranta** icon or an orans-type icon. The word oranta comes from a Latin word meaning "she who prays." Icons of this type are very old, possibly dating to the first century. An example is shown in picture 4. This icon is in Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv and dates from the 12th century. So, where does this icon get its name, Our Lady of the Sign? It is thought that it gets its name from this Bible quote by the prophet Isaiah from the Old Testament.

**Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)**



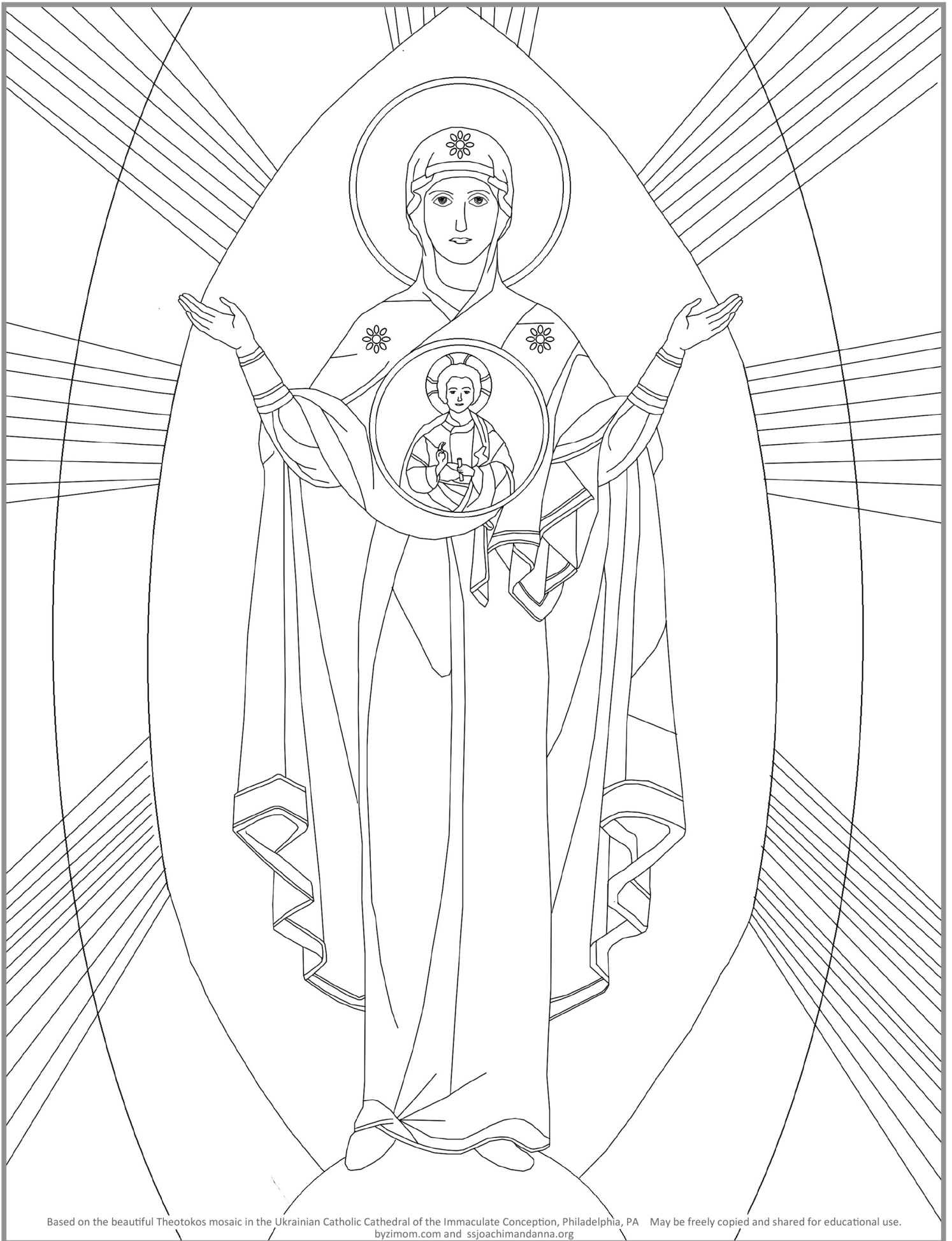
Orans icon in Kiev @ wiki.com

There is one very important thing that all these icons teach us about Mary. She is showing Jesus to everyone The Holy Theotokos ALWAYS leads us to her Divine Son—ALWAYS.

-Written By Julie Luckey

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Based on the beautiful Theotokos mosaic in the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Philadelphia, PA May be freely copied and shared for educational use.  
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# *The Architecture* OF A TYPICAL BYZANTINE CHURCH

Whenever you walk through the doors of a Byzantine Church, you should instantly know that you are in a very special place. It is God's home, a place we call sacred, or set apart from the rest of the world, where we can be still and know that He is there. Because this is such a special place, the architecture inside of our church is special too. It is designed to make us aware of who we are and Who God is, and remind us that we should be always striving to approach Him here on Earth so that we can be made worthy to approach Him in heaven too!

## THE NARTHEX

The first place you step into when you walk in through the front doors of the Church is the Narthex. This is a place where you can take a deep breath and prepare your body, mind, heart, and soul to enter into God's holy presence. You will often find prayer and hymn books, vessels of blessed holy water for use by the congregation, and other items shared by the community in the narthex. Here we can light a candle, ladies who wish to cover their heads before they enter into God's presence may do so here, and parents often take the time to hush their little ones and whisper instructions to them in the narthex before they take their places inside and wait for the Divine Liturgy to begin.

Once you are prepared, you will walk through the doors into the Nave of the church. The word Nave refers to a boat, like Noah's ark, or Peter's fishing boat. In the Nave, the congregation is safely sailing toward heaven as they gather there for Divine Services. It is proper, when you first enter, to proceed up the center aisle to the Tetrapod and venerate the festal icon which is displayed there. The word tetrapod means "four feet" in Greek, because this is always a four-footed table. Traditionally, the priests would display the icon of the feast on the table so even those in the congregation who were not educated in the faith could contemplate it before Liturgy and better understand what was being

celebrated. It is proper to make the sign of the cross, bow before the icon, make the sign of the cross again, venerate (kiss) the icon, then make a third sign of the cross before taking your place in the Nave to wait for the service to begin.

## THE NAVE

Once you have taken your place, you will notice that there is a great big wall with icons all over it which separates the people who are in the Nave from the holy place called the Sanctuary. This is the Iconostasis, or Icon Screen. The purpose of the iconostasis is to remind us that, while we are in the nave, God is physically present in the Sanctuary, and we are separated from His presence by the screen just as we on Earth are separated from the Heavenly kingdom. On it you will see icons, like windows. These holy images of Christ, the Theotokos, various saints and events from the feasts we celebrate in the Church are symbolically looking at us from heaven, waving at us and urging us to continue to strive to meet them in heaven one day! In the center of the screen you will notice two main doors, the Royal Doors. These Royal Doors are very special because they represent the entrance to the heavenly kingdom and for this reason, no one may enter through them except for the priest. On them you will see either icons of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or an icon of the Annunciation to remind us that the attainment of eternal life in heaven comes to us by the fact that Jesus came down to earth to save us and that we can learn about Him through His Word, the Gospels. There are two smaller doors on either side called the deacon's doors, through which the deacon and the others who serve at the Divine Services may pass as necessary. Icons of the Archangels or deacon-saints such as St. Stephen and St. Lawrence are seen on the deacon's doors because the deacons assist the priest just as the archangels minister to God.

To the right of the Royal Doors you will see an icon of Christ the Teacher and, to the left, an icon of the Theotokos. This is always the same in every Eastern Christian Church. On the extreme right of the screen is the patronal icon of the particular

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parish (for example, on our model we see the icon of St. Veronika....so the church with this particular iconostasis would be dedicated to St. Veronika). Just as every church has its own saint to whom it is dedicated, every eparchy has its own particular patron saint too! You will see the icon of the patron of the eparchy to which the church belongs the extreme left of the iconostasis.

Above the entire screen there are often several rows of icons depicting images of the twelve major feasts of the Church, the twelve apostles, the patriarchs, the early Church Fathers, or events from scripture. These icons, or windows to heaven, as they are sometimes called, are all there to remind us of those who live eternally in the kingdom of God and how wonderful our life in heaven will be!

## THE SANCTUARY

Behind the iconostasis is the very special area we call the Sanctuary. It is where the Divine Services actually take place and where Jesus Christ is physically present. Just behind the Royal Doors there is the Holy Table, or main altar. It is covered with festive cloths which are changed to specific colors to reflect the particular feast or fast that the Church is currently observing. On the Holy Table you will see a candelabrum, with candles that are lit during the Services. There is a processional cross and two fans known as ripidia displayed to the rear of the altar. These fans have images of the six-winged Seraphim on them and have been used since the very early days of the Church to remind us of the angelic figures surrounding the original Ark of the Covenant in Old Testament times, and also of the fact that the angels are always truly present around the altar, even if we cannot see them! The Cross and ripidia are carried by the altar servers whenever there is a procession.

You will also see upon the Holy Table the items used by the priest at Divine Liturgy; the Gospel book, service books, a hand cross, all surrounding the central, most prominent Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is the little miniature church in the very center of the Holy Table in which the Body of Christ is perpetually kept. Whenever Christ is present in the Tabernacle you will know by the fact that the sanctuary lamp,

a special candle just outside the Royal Doors, is lit. Look for the sanctuary lamp in your church next time you are there!

One very special item which is always kept upon the Holy Table, without which the Divine Liturgy cannot take place, is a special piece of cloth known as the Antimension, a word which means "in place of the table" because it is literally kept upon the Holy Table. When a new church is dedicated, the bishop of the Eparchy declares that he approves and assumes authority over the church by issuing the antimension, a piece of fabric which not only carries the bishop's signature, images of Christ Crucified, Our Lady of the Sign, and the four Evangelists, but into which are sewn certain relics of the saints so that the Liturgy always occurs upon the actual bones of the martyrs who have so diligently defended her. In order for the priest to authentically celebrate Divine Liturgy, he must do so directly upon the antimension. The use of the antimension prompts us to remember how important it is that the Church adhere to a proper and just chain of authority, with the priest offering obedience to his bishop, who in turn offers obedience to the metropolitan, who is obedient to the Patriarch and Pope, who pledges obedience to Christ, Himself. If there is no antimension, there can be no Liturgy!

There is one more table in the Sanctuary, on the northern wall at which you may see the priest praying before the Divine Liturgy begins. This is called the Proskomedion, or Altar of Preparation because it is the place where the gifts of bread and wine are prepared before they are consecrated into the Holy Eucharist at Divine Liturgy. It is covered in liturgical altar cloths in the same style and colors as on the Holy Table.

Upon it you will see a candle; the chalice and diskos with its cross-shaped cover which has a hanging star inside known as the asterisk (it represents the star of Bethlehem); the Spoon; the lance, which is a special knife used to cut the Lamb (the sacramental bread) into particles; a sponge; and cloths for wiping out the sacred vessels.

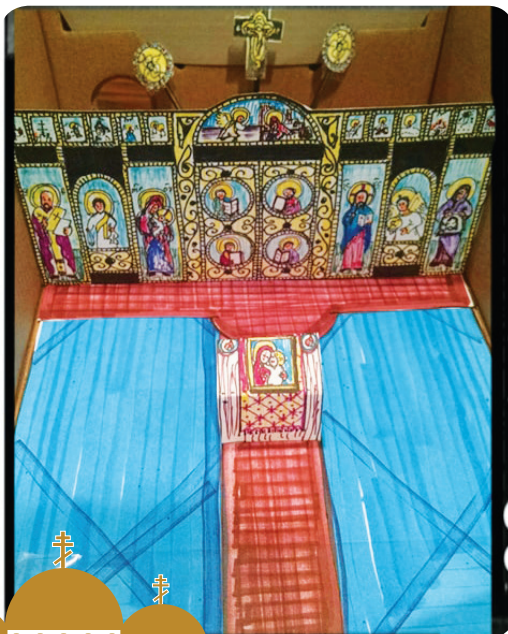
*-Written by Lynne Wardach*

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DIORAMA  
PHOTO BY LYNNE WARDACH (C) 2019

## Church Diorama

### SHOEBOX

#### Directions for making your own Shoebox Church Diorama

1. Find a standard size shoebox.
2. Photocopy the following three pages onto cardstock.
3. Color!!
4. Cut out all the pieces along the thick black lines
5. Fold all tabs along the dotted lines
6. Place the largest flooring panel along the back wall of the shoebox. This will be the floor of the Narthex and the Nave.
7. Place the smaller flooring panel with the curved bump (this is called the ambon) into the box, with the straight edge along the front wall, so the ambon overlaps the "aisle".
8. After folding the tabs back on the two candle boxes, tape (or glue) the candle tabs to the places marked "candles" on the narthex wall. Then slip the narthex wall into your shoe box along the designated line in the floor panel. You may opt to secure this in place with some glue or tape.
9. Slip your iconostasis into place in the same way

as well, just behind the "ambon", securing it in place if desired.

10. Set your tetrapod (with the icon on it) in place so little imaginary believers can venerate it when they enter your little church!

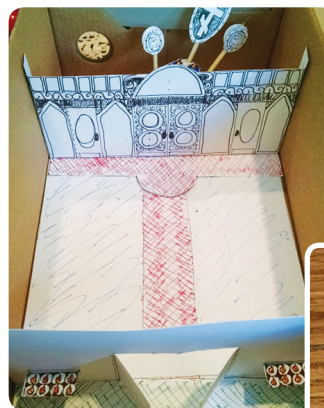
11. Now it's time to work on the sanctuary. Find the Proskomedia table (with the chalice, disks, and cloth) and having folded the front and back along the dotted lines, set it up along the left wall.

12. Note the row of three black dots along the back of the top of the Holy Table, and on the bottom of the Candelabrum. These are where you'll need to poke some holes for your processional cross and ripidia. Begin by making some pilot holes with a needle or straight pin, then use your toothpick to widen them a bit.... but not too much! You want them just big enough to hold the toothpicks straight up.

13. Tape or glue (and allow to fully dry) each of the ripidia and the processional cross to the top of a toothpick, then poke the other end through the back of the candelabrum and into the hole in the back of the altar, so that the cross is in the center and there is a ripidion on either side, and the candelabrum ends up in front of them. Tape, or glue, the back of the candelabrum onto the three toothpicks to hold it up and secure it in place.

14. After folding the tabernacle in half, set it upon the Holy Table.

15. Stand back and take a

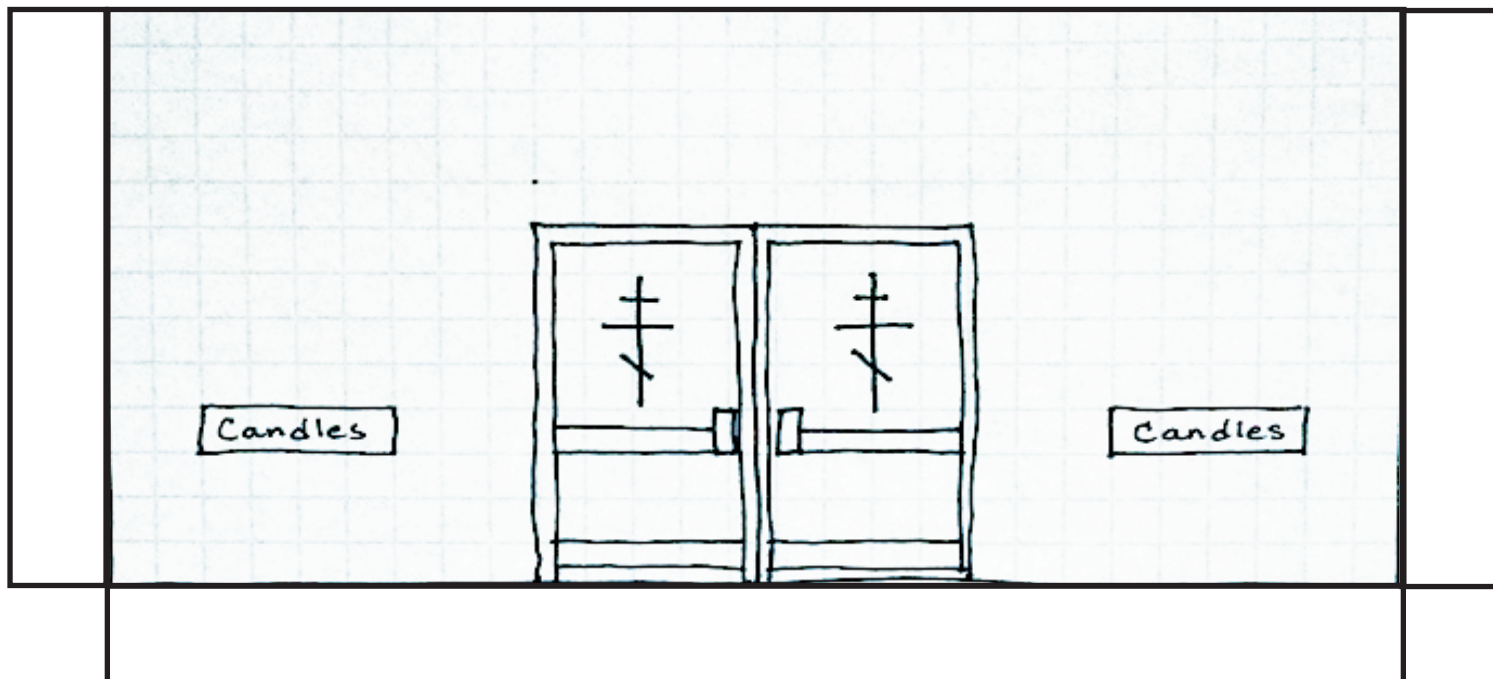


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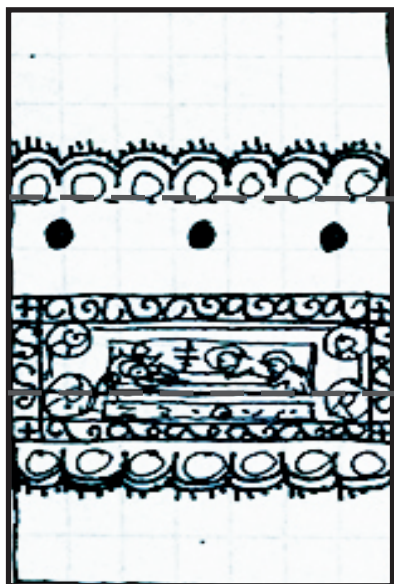
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FANS

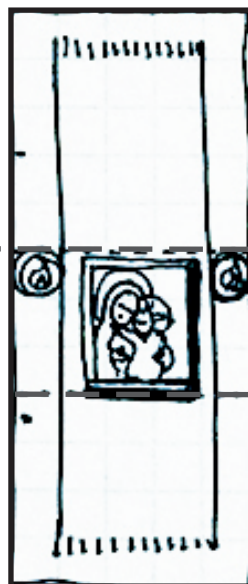
CROSS



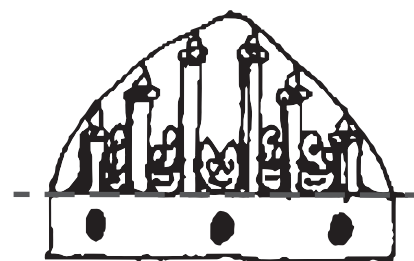
HOLY TABLE



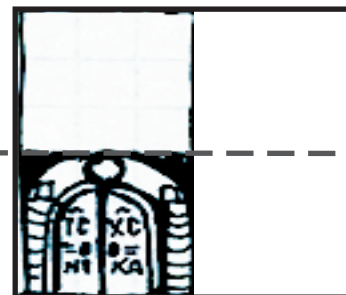
PROSKOMEDIA



TETRAPOD



CANDELABRA

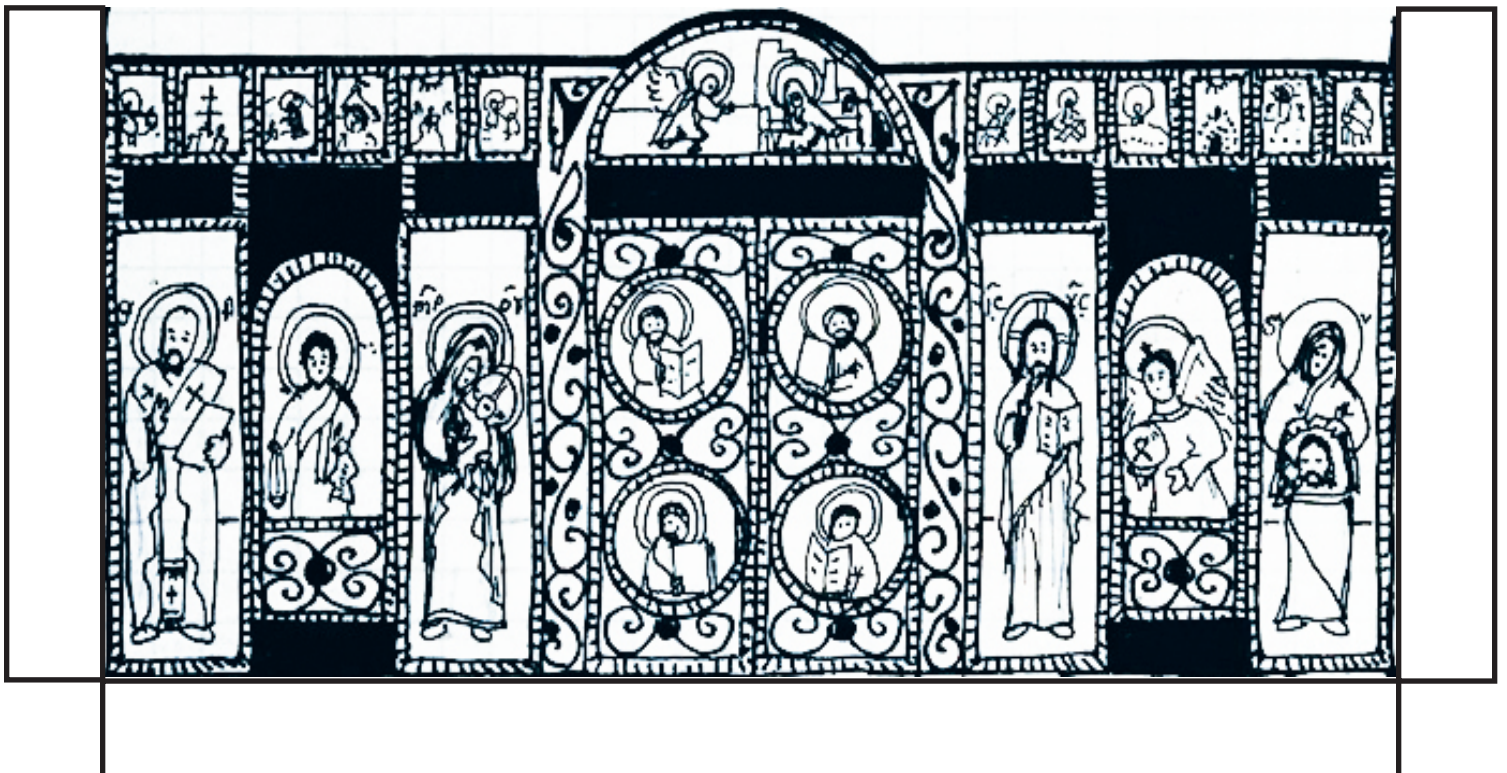


TABERNACLE

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## ICONOSTASIS

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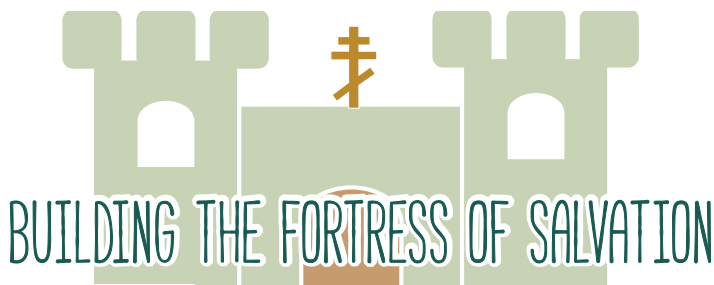
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When a man sets out to build himself a new house, he doesn't just set his bricks into a random pile and hope that it turns into something he can live in. He plans his house carefully and lays a foundation of the strongest and largest bricks down first, then he builds the next level upon the first one, and perhaps a third level upon that. Now, what happens if he sets down a foundation of cracked and broken bricks first? Will it be sturdy enough to hold up his house? Perhaps it will for a little while, but what happens over time, or when a strong wind or storm comes? In order to have a sturdy house, he has to lay down a sturdy foundation; each level being built upon the one laid down before it must be sturdy as well.

Just as it is in building a house, it is with God when he designed the history of humankind. There were many strange and wonderful events that were written about in the Old Testament which, at first glance, might seem very random, but when you look at these events as if they were bricks in the foundation of a great fortress, the Fortress of Salvation, these events are seen as things God chose to build upon so that we would see and recognize His work in our lives. Remember that every event that happened in Old Testament times happened so that those who would read about it in scripture would recognize similar events in their own lives, and give glory to God. For example, do you remember the story of how Moses obtained

the freedom of his fellow Israelites from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt and how they all then fled quickly after the first-born of all the Egyptians had been killed? God sent Moses to tell Pharaoh to let his people go free and because his heart was closed to God, Pharaoh refused. God then told Moses that He was sending the Angel of Death to collect the souls of all the first born in the land, but if the Israelites would paint their doorposts and lintels with the blood of the sacrificial lamb that they would prepare that night, it would be a sign to the angel to leave them alone and the first born of their families would be spared. Once Pharaoh saw what had happened and understood the power of God, he agreed to let the Israelites go free. They ran toward the Red Sea and God told Moses to hold up his staff and when he did so, a miracle happened! The sea actually parted and they all ran across it to the other side as if it was dry land! When the soldiers of Pharaoh tried to follow them and re-capture them, they were all drowned. The Israelites then followed Moses into the land that was their heritage, given to them and meant for them by God and there, they were free.

When we celebrate the Passover in our Church today, we call it Paskha, and celebrate the release of the souls from the slavery of Hades instead of the release of the Israelites from the slavery of Pharaoh. We remember that Hades is that dark void that human souls had to go into upon their deaths due to the sin of Adam and Eve. When the first humans had chosen to listen to the serpent instead of the Father, He was so disappointed in them that He punished them severely. By eating the apple that they were

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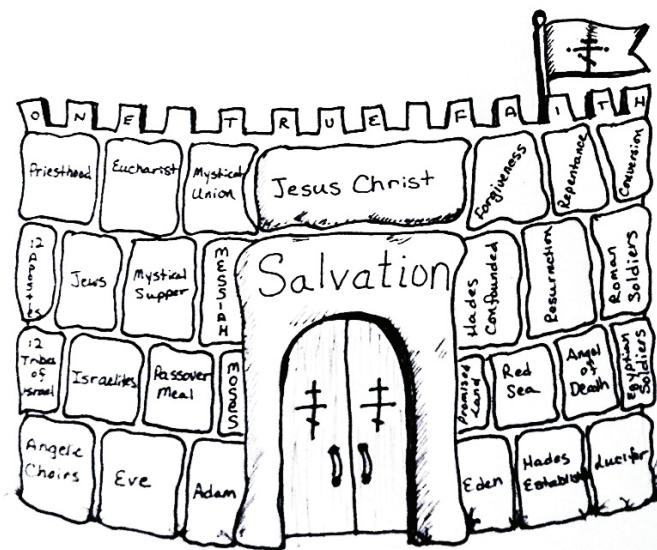
forbidden to eat, they thought they would go behind God's back and make themselves more exalted than God, but now they were cast down and humbled..."for you are dust, and to dust you shall return". They used to walk with God, and would have lived forever in His company, but now they had to die. When they did die they couldn't return home to the Father even THEN, they had to wait. And wait. And wait... for the Redeemer. You see, only sinless beings can be with God in

heaven (remember what happened to the disobedient angels?) Now the souls of all men had to go to a special place. There they would have to wait without the presence of God, until Christ would come. You see, when Jesus came to Earth as a man, He

had two natures. He was all God and all man all at the same time. We remind ourselves of this when we tuck our two little fingers under just so when we make the sign of the cross. Because he was a man, he had to go where the souls of all men go, to the waiting place without God... but wait a minute...He IS God! You can't be in a place without God and be with God all at the same time! For this reason all the souls of the departed who were enslaved there, had to be released into the place that was their true heritage, the place meant for them by God from the beginning. Adam and Eve and all the other

souls of every person who ever lived and loved God, entered into Heaven with Christ that day, never to be slaves to death again. Just as the slave-owner, the Egyptian Pharaoh, changed his mind and wanted the Israelites back, the evil one wants the souls of the dead back too. He hates them because of their faithfulness to Christ, and wants to enslave them and us. He chases after our souls, trying to entice us back to death by sin. But if we stay close to Jesus Christ as the

Israelites followed closely behind Moses, and stand under the cross as they stood under Moses's staff, we will pass through our lives safely. God will see to it that when we make the passage from our earthly lives to Heaven, the evil one who chases after our souls will be drowned in his own misery, and we



will be safe. Remember that the doorposts and lintels of the people of God were painted with the blood of the lamb used for their sacrifice. The new people of God, the people of the Catholic Church, adorn the lintels and doorposts of our souls, with the blood of the real Lamb, Jesus Christ, in the Eucharist. When we receive Him, we mark our souls indelibly, that means permanently, with His Precious Blood, so that all who spiritually "see" us will know that we belong to Him, and we will be safe. The "angel of death" will surely leave us alone.

-Written by Lynne Wardach

ST. PAUL & ST. PETER ARE  
KNOWN AS THE TWO PILLARS  
OF THE CHURCH, THEY ARE  
ALSO BEST FRIENDS.

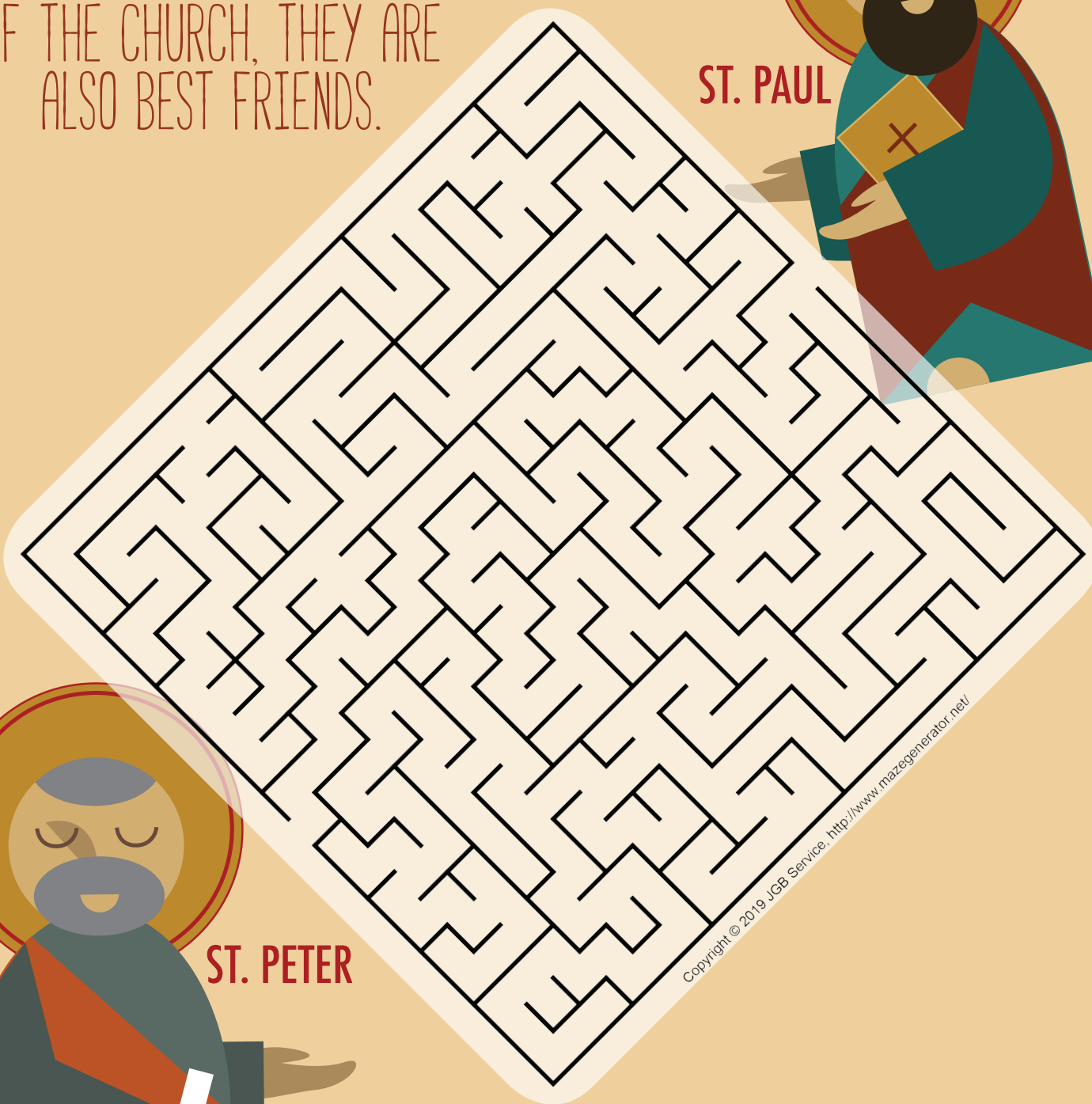
ST. PAUL



ST. PETER



HELP THE TWO FRIENDS  
MEET & EMBRACE!



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# The Catechism of The Ukrainian Catholic Church

This month, we are studying the beautiful icon of Mary over the altar in the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Before we grab our crayons, let's check out what our Catechism has to say about devotion to the Most Holy Mother of God.

Read through the **Table of Contents for Part One, The Prayer of the Church**. Toward the end of **Part One**, you will see **section C**, The Church—A New Creation. See if you can find the page number for the section on Devotion to the Most Holy Mother of God. You will see it begins on **page 109**. Let's read **page 109** through to the bottom of **page 111**.

You will see that among all the saints, the Theotokos holds the first and most important place. Her life is a model for everyone. Our Lady and all the saints forever pray before God. Not only are they in heaven but **"they are also present among us by the grace of God in their relics and icons."**

One way we honor Mary is in her feasts all through the church year. We honor her in the events in her life by our love and our prayers. Can you remember what some of these important events are?

- **Her Conception by Saint Anne**—This is the moment when the Theotokos first was created in the womb of St. Anne. St. Anne carried Mary in her womb for nine months before Mary was born.
- **The Nativity of the Mother of God**—this is when Mary was born—her birthday.
- **Mary's Entrance into the Temple**—when Mary was three years old, her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne brought her to the temple to live so she could be totally dedicated to God.
- **The Annunciation**—When Mary was a young woman, the Angel Gabriel came to her and announced that God chose her to be the Mother of His Son. Mary always did the will of God
- **The Encounter in the Temple**—Mary and St. Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem forty days after his birth in obedience to the law.
- **The Dormition**—Mary's death was not like other deaths. By God's grace, Mary was exalted above all others, and her body and soul were taken to heaven. Her death was as peaceful as sleep. Dormition means "falling asleep."

We not only honor Mary in her special feast days, but also in her icons. There are many different icons of the Theotokos. In some, as in this month's coloring page, we see Jesus in a circle of light representing Our Lord when he was in Mary's womb. In others, we see her holding her child and pointing to Him; showing us the way to Him. Sometimes she is hugging Him and Jesus is snuggling close to her. Sometimes we see her praying, holding her arms up in prayer for us. Have you seen the icon where she is holding her child as He is thinking about how He will someday die for us on the cross?

Look around your church. Which icons of the Theotokos do you see? Always remember to honor her when you enter your church. There is a long tradition among Eastern Catholics of love for Our Blessed Mother. Take a long, loving look at some of these icons and you will see that Mary is looking back at you with love, kindness and gentleness. We can count on her for help and protection.

Written By Julie Luckey

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# The Nicene Creed

Did anyone ever ask you to explain *WHY* you are a Byzantine Christian? There will be many times in life that we Christians are called upon to defend what we believe in. In order to defend your faith, you first have to understand it. *How well do you know exactly what you believe as a Christian?*

When the Christian Church was only just a few centuries old, some theologians became confused about the nature of Jesus Christ. Was He truly God? Is He the same as the Father? Was He simply a really holy human being who was blessed by God the Father? A particular bishop named Arius was very confused. He believed that Jesus wasn't truly God, and he led his congregation into the same errors! The Emperor Constantine had heard of these teachings and was concerned about the errors that were taught among his subjects so he called together over 300 bishops, mostly Eastern, to come to his summer home in Nicea for a council meeting to discuss the matter and end the controversy once and for all. Constantine insisted that there should be a uniform code of beliefs that all Christians should adopt and profess so that no further divisions and controversies like this one could ever arise again. The bishops provided arguments on both sides of the issue, and we know that it was a hotly contested debate, due to the story of how St. Nicholas of Myra, who was one of the bishops present at the council, had been so scandalized at Bishop Arius' proposals that he couldn't contain himself and had slapped Arius in the face! But that's a story for another time.

There was a certain man named Eusebius who was also present at the Council held in Nicea and he wrote a detailed account of the proceedings. He stated that eventually, the heretical idea that Jesus didn't exist before he was born in Bethlehem was condemned. He stated that nearly everyone at the council agreed with the Emperor Constantine that Jesus was "One in Substance" with the Father and had existed with Him before all ages.

There is a legend that tells us that one of the bishops at the council took a lit candle and from it,

lit another candle. He noted that the size, nature and brilliance of each flame was identical, and that nothing was lost from the original flame while everything belonging to it was equally present in the second flame. So it is with the Father and Christ; Light from light, true God from true God.

A rough draft for the creed that we know today was crafted at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, but it wasn't until 381AD, at the Council of Constantinople that the final draft was written which led to the prayer as we know it today. The Creed proclaimed that Christ is "One in Substance" with the Father, and therefore divine and worthy of our worship as God.

As for Bishop Arius however, he received his correction and was subsequently exiled.

*-Written by Lynne Wardach*

## DO YOU KNOW THE NICENE CREED?

*I Believe...*

*In One God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth and 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 of Light, True God of 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 Mary the  
Virgin, and became man.*

*He was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,  
And suffered,  
And was buried....*

*And he rose again on the third day according  
to the scriptures,*

*And He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the  
right hand of the Father.*

*And 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*

*Together with the Father and the Son, He is  
worshipped 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.**

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