

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS ONLY A SAMPLE. THE COMPLETE  
ACTIVITY BOOK HAS 88 PAGES. IT INCLUDES AGE APPROPRIATE  
READINGS, FULL COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS OF EVERY FEAST,  
COLOURING ILLUSTRATIONS, READING COMPREHENSION AND  
WRITING ACTIVITIES, WORD SEARCHES AND CROSSWORD  
PUZZLES.

**THE TWELVE GREAT FEASTS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**ACTIVITY BOOK FOR CHILDREN**

Mostly suitable for ages 8 - 12

Written by Ioana Dimitriu

Illustrated by Ana-Maria Lemnaru

SECOND EDITION

2017

**LENGUA VIVA**

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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If you wish to place an order, please send an e-mail to [info@LenguaViva.ca](mailto:info@LenguaViva.ca) or call us at (613) 304-1433.



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## Table of Contents

Foreword to the First Edition	4
Foreword to the Second Edition	5
1. The Nativity of the Most Pure Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary	6
2. The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross	14
3. The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary into the Temple	20
4. The Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ	24
5. The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ	32
6. The Meeting of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple	38
7. The Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady the Birth-Giver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary	44
8. The Entry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into Jerusalem	51
9. The Ascension of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ	58
10. The Holy Pentecost or the Descent of the Holy Spirit	64
11. The Transfiguration of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ	72
12. The Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary	78
Review	86
Bibliography	88



## Foreword to the First Edition

The Church Calendar opens with the Feast of the Nativity of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, the Birth-Giver of God, celebrated in September, and concludes with her Dormition in August. Four of the Great Feasts are in honour of the Mother of God, and eight are celebrated in honour of her Son and our Lord. The Resurrection is not usually considered part of The Twelve, as it is the Feast of Feasts, the Eighth Day, the fulfilment of all Feasts.

In this activity book, the stories of the Twelve Feasts are retold in language that is accessible to younger audiences, while the word games and the writing activities are designed to engage younger as well as older children. The colouring illustrations were created by a young Romanian artist who drew her inspiration from the Byzantine iconographic tradition, though they are slightly stylized in order to appeal to young viewers. This publication is appropriate for use in various group settings, such as Sunday school, vacation Bible studies and summer camps.

It is with gratitude that I present this English edition of the first publication of *Lengua Viva*. This activity book was originally published in Spanish, with the blessing of His Eminence Alejo of Mexico City and All Mexico, for the children in the missions of the Diocese of Mexico of the Orthodox Church in America. The English edition has been published with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Irénée of Ottawa and Canada.

I am thankful to God for being my source of inspiration and for guiding me along the way. I would also like to thank the monastics who have reviewed the draft versions for theological and language accuracy. My thoughts and prayers are especially with the children in the village of San Esteban, Hidalgo, Mexico, who motivated me by showing a vivid interest in learning about our faith, and to whom I owe the inception of this project.

Glory to God for all things!

*Ioana Dimitriu, PhD*

## Foreword to the Second Edition

It is with joy and gratitude that I present this Second Edition of *The Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church. Activity Book for Children*. The very positive feedback to the First Edition received from Sunday school teachers, priests, parents, and students has encouraged us to make this material available once again.

In the Orthodox Christian calendar there are numerous feasts in honour of The Lord, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Archangels, and the Saints. Opinions regarding the number of the Great Feasts differ. Some include the Resurrection of the Lord among the Twelve Feasts, even though the Holy Pascha is considered above all the other Feasts. We have preferred to give this topic—Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha—a special attention, by covering it separately in another Activity Book which will be published this Spring.

This Second Edition contains the same eight Great Feasts in honour of the Lord, and four Great Feasts in honour of the Holy Virgin, with revised text and colour illustrations. The key to most of the activities, such as, the multiple choice questions, and the crossword puzzles, can be found on our website [www.LenguaViva.ca](http://www.LenguaViva.ca)

Many thanks to all those who expressed interest and appreciation for our humble efforts, as well as to those who have contributed through their comments and suggestions to the publishing of this Second Edition.

Glory to God forever!

*Ioana Dimitriu, PhD*



## **THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST PURE MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY<sup>1</sup>**

Gregorian Calendar: September the 8<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: September the 21<sup>st</sup>

Saints Joachim and Anna are the Righteous Ancestors of God. They did not have any children after having been married for many years. This made them very sad. They were despised by the community, because being barren was a shame in those times. Joachim was a rich and very generous man. He did not keep for himself and for his family all that he gained, but he always gave gifts to the Temple and to the poor.

One day, when Joachim wanted to make a big offering in the Temple once again, his intended gifts were not accepted, because he had not given any children to the people of Israel. Crushed and embittered, he went into the desert where he spent forty days and forty nights without eating or drinking, nourishing himself by prayers, and waiting for an answer from God.

Anna too felt very sorrowful. One morning while praying, she asked God in tears to visit her. Then she went for a stroll in her garden and sat underneath a laurel tree. When she lifted her eyes, she saw a nest of sparrows up in the tree and said lamenting: “O me! I am a curse before the children of Israel! They sent me away from the Temple of the Lord with reproaches and mockeries! I am not even like the birds, because even the

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<sup>1</sup> This event is not mentioned in the Holy Scripture. Our sources are the Apocryphal Gospel of Saint James, and the Church Tradition.

birds give fruit before You, O Lord! I am not even like the waters, because even the waters give fruit before You, O Lord! I am not even like the earth which blesses You with its fruit, O Lord!” All of a sudden an angel of the Lord appeared before her and said: “Anna! Anna! The Lord has heard your prayers! You will give birth to a girl! The whole world will talk about her!” Anna was very happy to hear the good news. She replied joyously: “Glory be to God! I promise to offer my daughter to the Lord so that she should serve Him all the days of her life.”

Then the angel of the Lord also appeared to Joachim and said: “Joachim! Joachim! The Lord God has heard your prayers! Anna will give birth to a girl!” Joachim too rejoiced greatly. Immediately he asked his servants to bring him ten spotless lambs for the Temple offering, twelve calves for the priests, and a hundred kids for all the people of Israel.

While Joachim was coming home with his flock, he saw Anna standing by the gate. She ran towards him, hugged him and said: “God has blessed us! We shall have a daughter!” And they both entered their house.

Nine months later, Anna gave birth to a daughter. They named her Mary. Day after day, the girl was growing and was becoming stronger and wiser. One day, Anna lifted her baby girl to see if she would stand up. Mary took seven steps and returned to her mother's bosom. Then Anna told Mary that one day she would take her to the Temple to dedicate her to God in fulfillment of the promise that she had made.

On Mary's first birthday, Joachim organized a big celebration. He invited the priests, the scribes, the wise men and all the people of Israel. During the party Joachim asked God to bless his daughter. The great priest blessed her in the Name of God

saying: **“O God in the Highest, look down upon this girl and give her the greatest blessing of all!”**

Mary’s parents—the Holy, Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna—were exceedingly glad. Later that evening, Anna took the girl to her room and rocked her to sleep while giving thanks to God and singing Him a beautiful hymn with love and joy.<sup>2</sup>



### ACTIVITIES

**1. Anna’s prayer.** According to the text, “Anna too felt very sorrowful. One morning while praying, she asked God in tears to visit her.” Imagine Anna’s prayer to God, and write it below:

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<sup>2</sup> A hymn is a song of praise or thanksgiving.



**2. My prayer.** According to the text, Anna was “giving thanks to God and singing Him a beautiful hymn with love and joy.” You too have received many blessings from God. Your life, your health, your family and your friends are gifts from God. Are you grateful to God? Write a prayer in which you thank Him for all that He has given you, and also for what He has not given you, because He knows best what we need, and what is not good for us.

God, I thank you for \_\_\_\_\_

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ANCESTORS	ANGEL	ANNA	BARREN	BLESSING	CALVES
FORTY	GIFTS	GOD	JOACHIM	KIDS	LAMBS
LAUREL	MARY	OFFERING	PRIESTS	SHAME	SPARROWS



#### 4. The Nativity of the Mother of God. Solve the Crossword Puzzle!<sup>3</sup>

##### Down

- 1) Mary's father.
- 3) Number of days Joachim fasted.
- 5) Joachim asked for it from God when Mary turned one.
- 6) These animals were a gift to the people.
- 7) Joachim and Anna belonged to the people of...
- 8) Joachim's nourishment in the desert.
- 9) Anna's song to God.
- 10) Mary's father gave gifts to them too.
- 11) Mary's mother.
- 15) These animals were Joachim's offering to the Temple.
- 16) How did the Righteous Ancestors of God celebrate Mary's first birthday?



##### Across

- 2) Birds up in the tree.
- 4) In what month do we celebrate Mary's birthday?
- 8) Who blessed Mary in the name of God?
- 11) Who spoke with Anna in the garden?
- 12) Gift given to God in the Temple.
- 13) Joachim gave gifts to the Temple and to the people.
- 14) Joachim gave these animals to the priests.
- 17) Joachim went there to pray.

<sup>3</sup> Check your answers online at [www.LenguaViva.ca](http://www.LenguaViva.ca)

## **THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS**

Gregorian Calendar: September the 14<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: September the 27<sup>th</sup>

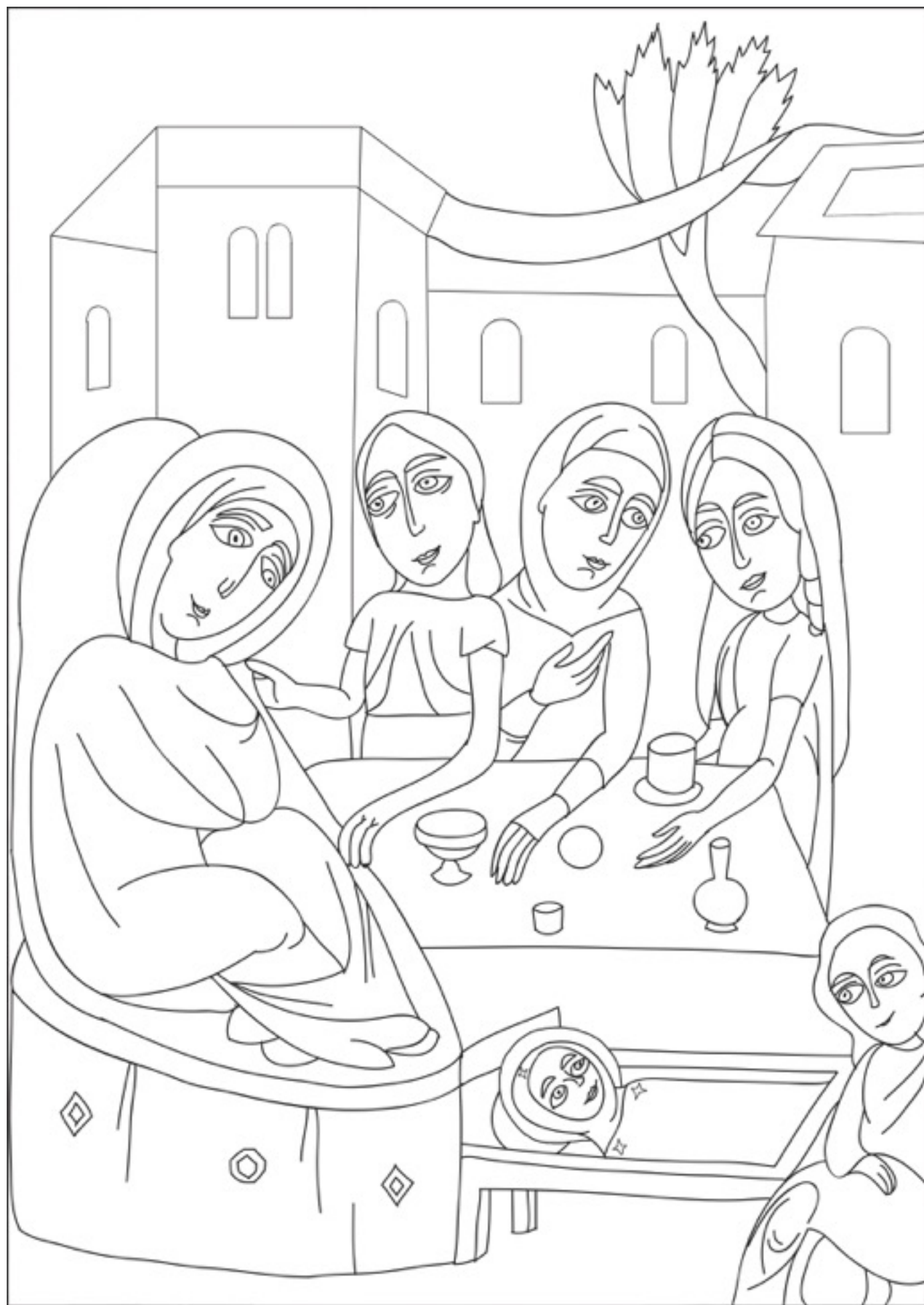


About thirty years after Christ's Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven, tragic historical events took place in Jerusalem. In A.D. 70,<sup>4</sup> the tenth legion of the Roman army destroyed the city including its precious Temple. It is likely that during these events of destruction, crosses on which the condemned had been crucified were ploughed under.

Three centuries later, in the year 326, Saint Helen, the mother of the Holy Emperor Constantine, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She took with her a team of archeologists, and with the blessing of Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem, she began to search for the Cross on which the Saviour had been crucified. Three crosses were

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<sup>4</sup> A.D. means *Anno Domini*, "in the year of our Lord."



found. Saint Helen and Bishop Macarius thought that the best way to find out which one was the Cross of Christ would be through a miracle. A young Jewish man who was very ill was asked to touch the crosses. **He was healed when he touched the true Cross.**

**This is how Saint Helen and Bishop Macarius identified the Cross of the Saviour.**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of September of the year 355, the Holy Cross was raised for the first time before the faithful in the Church of the Resurrection of the Lord. This church was built in Jerusalem by the order of the Holy Emperor Constantine the Great. Several pieces of the Holy Cross were given to emperors, kings, and Christian churches in Constantinople and Rome. Later on, the Persians stole the Cross, but in the year 629 Emperor Heraclius recovered it again, and he took it to Jerusalem. By the will of God, that event also occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of September.

It was then that the celebration of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross became official for the whole Roman Empire. This is one of the most ancient celebrations of the Christian Church.

Unlike the other Great Feasts of the Church, the Day of the Cross is celebrated with fasting because it reminds us of the Passion and the Death on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.



## ACTIVITIES

### 1. The Sign of the Cross

a. **How do we make it?** We should always make the sign of the cross with our right hand. We must join the first three tips of the fingers—the thumb, the index, and the middle finger—and bend the other two in our palm. The three joined fingers symbolize the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The other two fingers symbolize the two natures of Christ: the divine nature and the human nature. When we begin the sign of the cross, with the three joined fingers we touch our forehead—to sanctify our thoughts; then our chest—to sanctify our feelings; then our right shoulder, and then, the left one—to sanctify our bodily forces. In this way, we unite our spirit (or our mind), with our soul (or our heart) and with our body. While making the sign of the cross, the Orthodox Christian says: “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” This is the ancient way in which early Christians used to cross themselves. The word “Amen” means “so be it.”

b. **What does it mean?** The cross reminds us of the Incarnation, the Death, and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we cross ourselves and call on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we get in contact with God and receive power from Him.

### c. When do we make it?

- ☆ when we begin or end a prayer
- ☆ when we thank God
- ☆ when we are in danger and ask for His help and protection
- ☆ when we pass by a church, to venerate the holy place
- ☆ when we venerate an icon
- ☆ if we remember something evil, we cross ourselves and ask God to forgive us
- ☆ when we are afraid, and ask for God’s mercy

In what other situations do you cross yourself?

**2. People and places.** Choose **all of** the correct answers:**A. Helen:**

- a. saint
- b. mother
- c. empress
- d. queen

**B. Constantine:**

- a. the first Christian emperor
- b. saint
- c. king
- d. founder of Constantinople

**C. Macarius**

- a. king
- b. bishop of Jerusalem
- c. Roman soldier
- d. saint

**D. Heraclius**

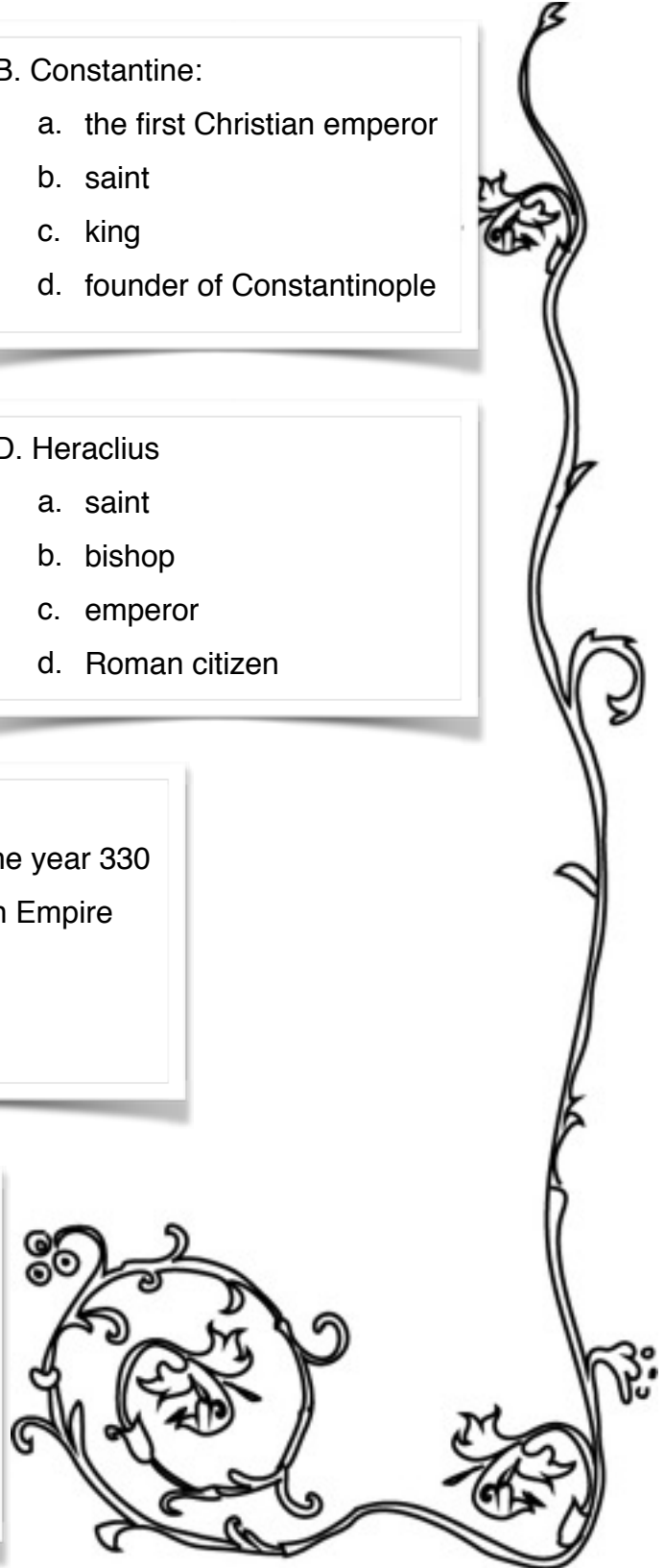
- a. saint
- b. bishop
- c. emperor
- d. Roman citizen

**E. Constantinople**

- a. was called Byzantium until the year 330
- b. was the capital of the Roman Empire
- c. is today the city of Istanbul
- d. is in Turkey

**F. Golgotha**

- a. city close to Jerusalem
- b. sea
- c. mountain where Jesus was crucified
- d. a girl's name





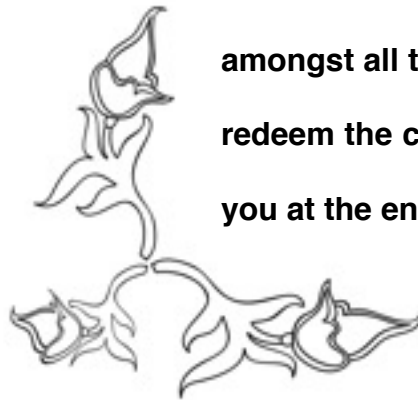
**THE ENTRY**  
**OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY**  
**INTO THE TEMPLE**

Gregorian Calendar: November the 21<sup>st</sup>

Julian Calendar: December 4<sup>th</sup>

When the Virgin Mary was three years old, her parents Joachim and Anna decided that it was time for them to fulfill their promise to God. Joachim called for several other girls to escort the Virgin Mary into the Temple. Each one of them was carrying a lit lamp to light Mary's way and to give her strength so that she would not change her mind and turn back.

Upon arriving at the Temple, the priest greeted, kissed, and blessed her. Then he said to her:



**“The Lord has magnified your name  
amongst all the generations! God will  
redeem the children of Israel through  
you at the end of this era!”**

God gave His Grace to the Virgin Mary. The people of Israel loved her. This is how the Virgin's life began at the Temple. She lived there like a dove, being fed by the hand of an angel of the Lord.

The Most Pure Virgin Mary remained at the Temple until her early teenage years.

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. Troparion of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple.

Complete the text with words from the list:

Creator God Virgin Christ rejoice salvation will Temple

Today is the prelude of the good (1)\_\_\_\_\_ of (2)\_\_\_\_\_, and of the preaching of the (3)\_\_\_\_\_ of mankind. The (4)\_\_\_\_\_ appears in the (5)\_\_\_\_\_ of God, in anticipation proclaiming (6)\_\_\_\_\_ to all. Let us (7)\_\_\_\_\_ and sing to her: "Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the (8)\_\_\_\_\_ 's dispensation!"

### 2. What do you remember from the story? Answer the following questions:

a. Why did Joachim and Anna take the Virgin Mary to the Temple?

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b. How old was Mary when her parents took her to the Temple?

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c. Who accompanied her on the way to the Temple?

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d. What did the priest say to her when he welcomed her to the Temple?

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e. Who fed her while she lived at the Temple?

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## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

Gregorian Calendar: December the 25<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: January the 7<sup>th</sup>

Joseph was a skilled carpenter and a stone mason. He would spend several months away from home, travelling from one construction site to another. When he returned home from one of his long trips, he was greatly surprised to find Mary expecting a baby.

Joseph wept bitterly, thinking that Mary had made the terrible mistake of having a relationship with another man. At the same time, he felt guilty for not having protected the Virgin, and he reproached her saying: “Why did you let yourself be humiliated like this, you who lived at the Temple and received food from an angel of the Lord?” Upon hearing the lamentation of her fiancé, the Virgin also began to weep and said: “Please, believe me! I am pure and no man has ever touched me. This is a great mystery. It is difficult to explain how it happened exactly.”

In those days, an unwed<sup>5</sup> expectant mother was in danger of being stoned to death by the people, as a punishment for her sin. Joseph decided to break the engagement with Mary in secret so that he would not have to accuse her of unfaithfulness before the whole community. Having decided to leave her the next day, he went to sleep. During the night, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying: “Do not be afraid to marry the Virgin! Mary is with child by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son whom you will name Jesus. He will save His people from their sins.” Joseph woke up and gave thanks to God.

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<sup>5</sup> “Unwed” means “not married.”

Shortly after that, Caesar Augustus, also called Octavius, the Emperor of the Roman Empire, decreed a census of all the inhabitants of the region of Judea. For this reason, Joseph had to go to Bethlehem, the town of his ancestors, also known as “the city of David.” He travelled with his wife Mary and all of his family members. The journey lasted three days.

Mary travelled seated on a female donkey. While they were approaching Bethlehem, the time came for the Virgin to give birth. The town was full of people who had come to register, and for that reason nobody had room for them to stay. Someone showed them a cave on the outskirts of the town. In that cave, the travellers found an ox, a donkey and a manger. It was there that Jesus was born.

Not very far from there shepherds were watching their sheep during the night. They suddenly saw a brilliant light. The glory of God was shining around them, and an angel of the Lord appeared to them and said: “Fear not, for I am bringing good tidings to you and to all the people! Christ God, the Saviour of the world, has been born today in the city of David! You will find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, sleeping in a manger.” The shepherds suddenly saw a multitude of angels singing to God this song of praise: **“Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will among men!”** The shepherds went to see the New-Born Child. They told Mary and Joseph what the angel had said to them about Jesus. Then they went back glorifying and praising God for everything that they had seen and heard.

According to tradition, three wise men, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar travelled from far away lands to venerate the Holy Infant. Gaspar, the oldest among them, was the King of Tarsus, a city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea which is today part of Turkey. Melchior, the middle one, was coming from Arabia, and Balthasar, the youngest, from Africa, probably from Saba, in Yemen, or from Ethiopia.

The three men were very studious and wise. They knew about a new King to be born from at least three sources: the prophecy of Isaiah in the Old Testament; a dream that they all had had; and the new and brilliant star that had appeared in the sky. This star travelled before them and guided them to the place where Jesus had been born.

When they arrived there, the Three Wise Men knelt down before the Holy Infant, adored Him and offered Him their gifts. Gaspar gave Him gold. Melchior gave Him incense, and Balthasar, myrrh.



**ACTIVITIES**

**1. Word Search.** Find the listed words in the puzzle below. They may be hidden in normal or reverse order, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Highlight or circle them.

ANGELS	ANIMALS	CAVE	CHILD	DECEMBER	GOLD	JESUS
MANGER	MARY	MYRRH	NATIVITY	SHEPHERDS	STAR	

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      U
      O
    E P M
    B O A
  A Y J R J
  S N V Y C
    R C C I R U C
    A A L J M Z H
  G T V S I Z A Q J
  V S E W U R Q L T
    V T P S C M S E D S D
    N D A H Y S A E B B J
  P T U I R Y D X N J M K Y
  C D L R U T R A I G Y E F
Q L D H B Q I E W Y J E Z C Y
O Z U C X A V H J R V A R C E
G A H X Z R B I P M A N G E L S D
      T E H
      A H M
      N S V

```

**2. Guess!** Match the names of the Wise Men, their place of origin and the gifts that each of them gave to Jesus, to the definitions below:

Name	Place of origin	Gift	Definition
			Aromatic resin used in pagan worship
			Scented oil extracted from a prickly tree and used to anoint the dead before burial
			Precious metal symbolizing royal richness and power

**3. Troparion of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.** Complete the text of the troparion with the words below:

stars Sun glory God Nativity light wisdom

Your (1)\_\_\_\_\_, O Christ our (2)\_\_\_\_\_, has shone to the world the (3)\_\_\_\_\_ of (4)\_\_\_\_\_. For by it, those who worshipped the (5)\_\_\_\_\_ were taught by a star to adore You, the (6)\_\_\_\_\_ of Righteousness, and to know You, the Orient from on High. O Lord, (7)\_\_\_\_\_ to You!

#### 4. The Nativity of Our Lord. Solve the Crossword Puzzle!<sup>6</sup>

##### Across

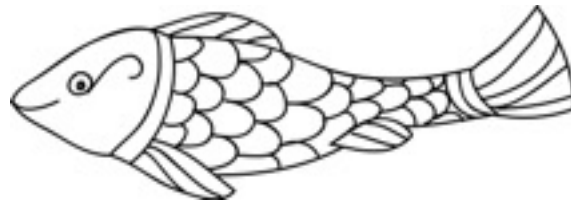
2. What did Joseph give to God as soon as he woke up?
4. Where was Jesus laid to sleep?
6. The Virgin told Joseph that what had happened to her was great.
8. What was that region called?
9. Where did Joseph travel with his family?
11. The Virgin is with child by Him.
12. One of the gifts of the Wise Men.
14. Which Old Testament prophet had foretold the Birth of the new King of Israel?
16. 1. Feast of the Lord celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup> or on January 7<sup>th</sup>
18. Where did the Virgin gave birth?
19. Mary travelled seated on it.
20. What guided the Wise Men to Bethlehem?

<sup>6</sup> Check the answers online at [www.LenguaViva.ca](http://www.LenguaViva.ca)

## THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

Gregorian Calendar: January the 6<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: January the 19<sup>th</sup>



In the desert of Judea there lived a humble man whose name was John. He was a cousin of Jesus. Elizabeth, a relative of Mary, was John's mother, and the Priest Zacharias was his father. John lived in solitude and extreme poverty in the desert. He ate wild honey and locusts, and he clothed himself with the skin of a camel.

John was spending all the time praying and preaching repentance. He was preparing the people for the coming of the Messiah by telling them to repent of their sins and change their way of life. Crowds of people were going to listen to his sermons in the desert. Many confessed their sins, and John baptized them in the Jordan river. However, he told them: "I am baptizing you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

John is considered the greatest prophet of all time, because he announced the good news of the coming of the Saviour. John is "the voice of one crying in the desert: **'Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight its paths!'**" At the beginning, John did not know the Saviour of whom other prophets had also spoken before him. What he knew for sure was that the Saviour would be much more powerful than him. John said that he was unworthy of even unleashing the strap of the Saviour's sandals, which meant that he did not consider himself worthy of being even the Lord's slave.



In those days, Jesus travelled from Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to the Jordan river to be baptized by John. When John saw Him, he said: “You are the One who should baptize me!” Jesus did not need to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, because He did not commit any sin. Jesus is perfect God and perfect man. However, He wanted John to baptize Him so that the law would be fulfilled. He showed Himself obedient and humble. We must follow His example.

John baptized Jesus. When the Lord came out of the water, the sky opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. At that moment, a voice was heard from the Heaven saying: **“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”**<sup>7</sup>

The word *theophany* means the visible manifestation of God to humankind. On this Feast of the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate Theophany, the fact that God showed Himself to us so that we may know Him. This is a very important moment in the history of our Christian faith. It is for the first time that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit manifested Themselves together. God revealed Himself as being the Holy Trinity, the Three Divine and Pre-Eternal Persons United in One Godhead. John the Baptist gave testimony that he saw the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and that he heard the voice of the Father from the Heaven.



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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 3:17 (The Gospel according to the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, Chapter 3, verse 17).



**ACTIVITIES**

1. **What do you remember from the story?** Answer the following questions about the text that you have read:

a. What is the second Feast of the Lord according to the Church calendar?

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b. Where did John live?

---

c. Who were John's parents?

---

d. What was he eating in the desert?

---

e. What was John wearing?

---

f. What was he teaching the people?

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g. Why is he called "the Greatest Prophet"?

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h. Why is he called "the Baptist"?

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i. Did Jesus need to be baptized? Why?

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j. What happened when Jesus came out of the water?

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**2. Interpretation.** The Theophany of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is one of the Twelve Great Feasts that the Church celebrates every year. Explain why this is one of the most important events in the history of our Christian faith.

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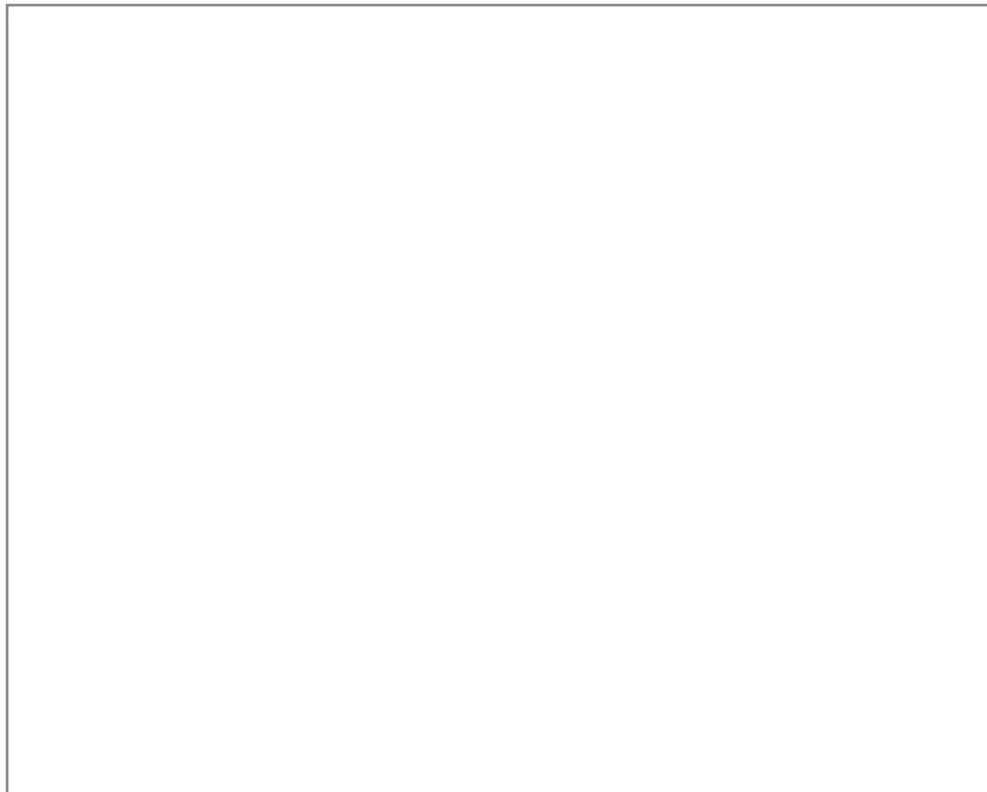
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**3.** The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the shape of a dove. Draw the image.





**THE MEETING  
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST  
IN THE TEMPLE<sup>8</sup>**

Gregorian Calendar: February the 2<sup>nd</sup>

Julian Calendar: February the 15<sup>th</sup>

Forty days after the Nativity of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph took the Infant Jesus to the Temple of Jerusalem. According to the law which Moses had received from God and had given to the people of Israel, the parents had to take their first male child to the Temple to dedicate him to God. The custom included presenting two young pigeons or two turtledoves as an offering to God.

In those times, there lived a very old man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. He was just and very wise, and he loved God. He lived with the hope that God would free his people. God had promised Simeon—by the voice of the Holy Spirit who was speaking to him mysteriously in his heart—that he would not die before seeing with his own eyes the Messiah, the Saviour whom the prophets had foretold.

On that day, the Holy Spirit told Simeon to go to the Temple. He obeyed. When the Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph entered the Temple, Simeon received Baby Jesus in his arms. Instantly the elder understood by revelation of the Holy Spirit that this Child was the Messiah for whom the people of Israel were waiting, and that He was the

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<sup>8</sup> This event is mentioned in the Gospel according to the Holy Apostle Luke, Chapter 2, verses 25-35.

Saviour of all the nations of the world. While holding the Holy Infant in his arms, Simeon praised God by saying:

***Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,***

***According to Your word;***

***For my eyes have seen Your salvation***

***Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,***

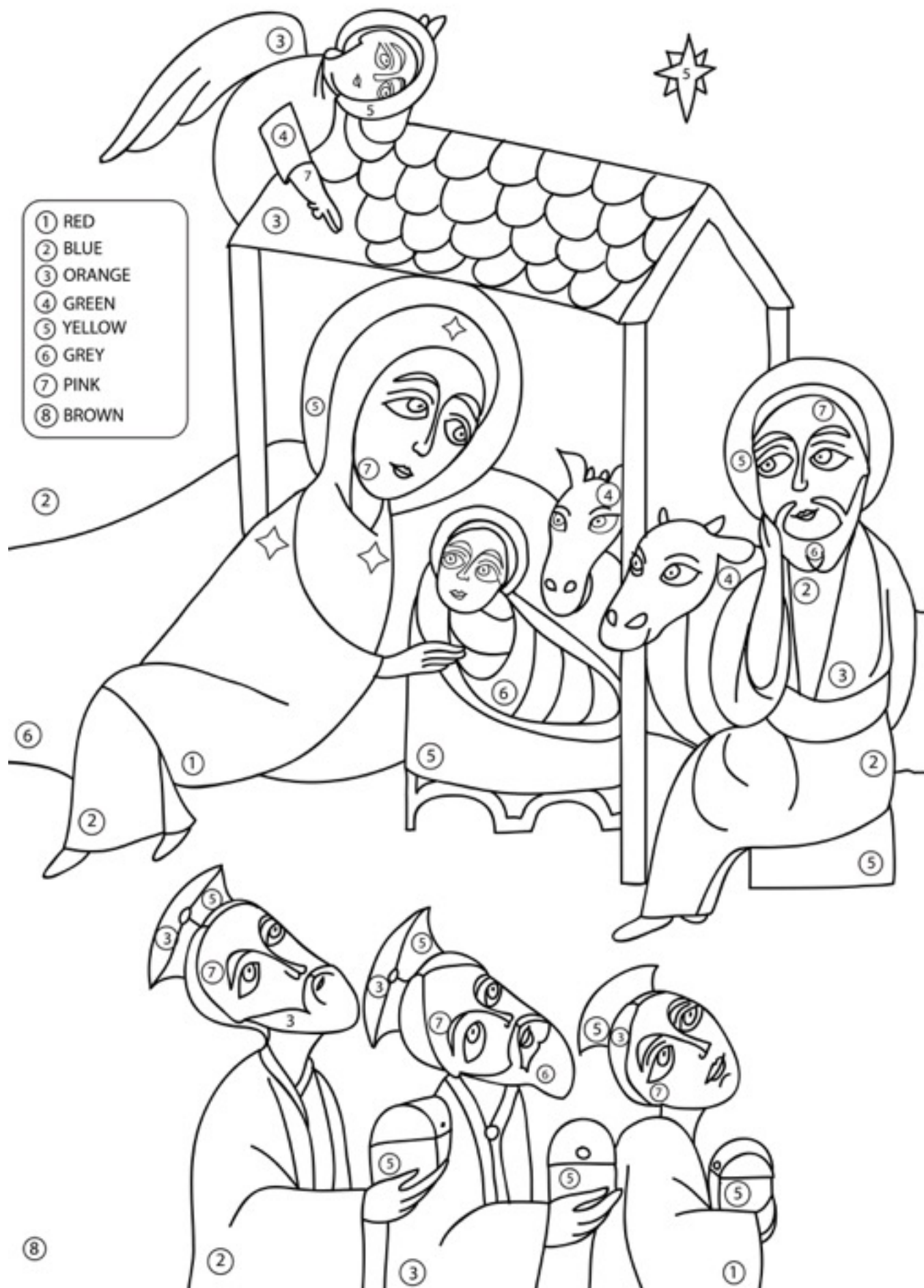
***A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,***

***And the glory of Your people Israel.*** (Luke 2:29-32)

Simeon spoke with Mary and Joseph about Jesus, and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit he foretold the Holy Infant's future. He told them that God had sent Jesus into the world so that many in Israel would be saved. Some would receive Him with joy, but others would be against Him; in this way the heart of every one would be revealed. Then Simeon addressed the Virgin Mary to whom he foretold the pain caused by her Son's suffering: **“Mary, this will make you suffer as if a sword pierces your heart.”**

At the Temple lived a very old woman whose name was Anna. She was an extremely pious woman who was fasting, praying, and praising God day and night. Anna was a prophetess. She drew near to adore the Holy Infant and give thanks to God. During a long time after this encounter, Anna spoke about the arrival of the Messiah with all those who were coming to the Temple to pray. She was telling them that He is the Saviour promised by God to the Israelites, and that He is the Creator of heaven and earth.





**2. Interpretation.** The Meeting of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple is one of the Twelve Great Feasts that the Church celebrates every year. Explain why do you think the Church considers this to be one of the most important events in the earthly life of our Saviour.

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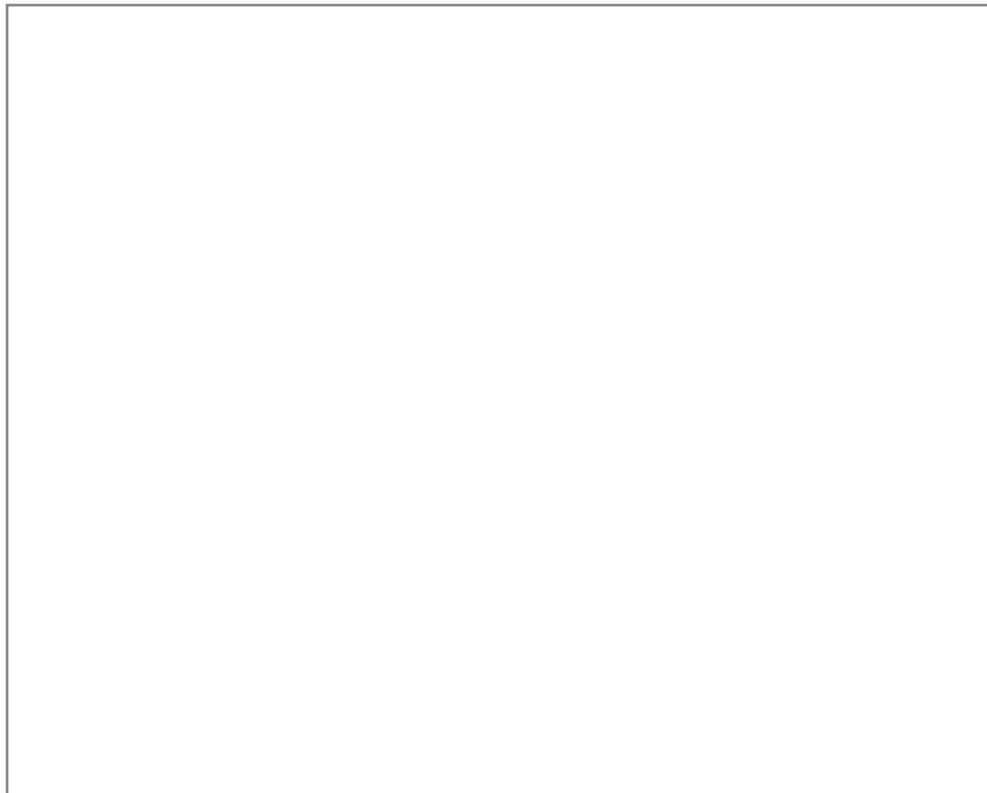
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**3. Draw an image** of the offering that parents had to make at the Temple, according to the Mosaic law.





**THE ANNUNCIATION**

Gregorian Calendar:

March the 25<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: April the

7<sup>th</sup>**OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY,****THE BIRTH-GIVER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY**

The Virgin Mary lived at the Temple of Jerusalem from three years of age until she reached the age of puberty. When she became a teenager, the priests gathered together to decide what to do with her, because she was becoming a woman and could no longer live at the Temple.<sup>9</sup> To seek an answer from God, the High Priest entered into the altar and prayed. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Zacharias, go and gather all the bachelors of the nation, including the widowed men. Command everyone to appear with their staff. Pray and you shall see a sign on the staff of the man whom God chooses to be the Virgin's fiancé."

Messengers left to all the corners of Judea. The men gathered in Jerusalem and upon hearing the trumpet of the Lord, all the single men arrived at the Temple. Zacharias took their staves inside the Temple and prayed on the altar. When he gave every one of them their own staff back, he saw that a white dove took off from the tip of Joseph's staff and flew toward the sky. The High Priest considered this to be a divine sign that God had chosen Joseph to be betrothed to Mary.

When Joseph heard the news, he said trembling: "I am a very old man. What shall I do with a girl who is younger than my own grandchildren? Why do you want people to mock me?" Then Zacharias replied: "Do not oppose the will of God! Do not disobey so that nothing bad may happen to you or to your family!" When he heard the

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<sup>9</sup> According to the Jewish tradition, a young woman is considered impure during a few days every month, and for this reason she must not enter the Temple.

words of the priest, Joseph took Mary with him to his house in Nazareth. The Virgin lived there and took care of Joseph's younger children who were still living with him.

When the Virgin Mary had turned sixteen, the priests asked her to weave the veil for the Temple. One day she left her work for a little while and went outside to fill up the jug with water, when she suddenly heard a voice saying: **“Mary full of grace! The Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women!”**<sup>10</sup> The Virgin, not knowing where that voice was coming from, entered the house trembling and continued her work.

Then the Archangel Gabriel, the Lord's messenger, appeared to her and said: “Mary, do not be afraid! God has chosen you to conceive a Son in your womb by His Holy Spirit. You shall give birth to a Son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He shall be great! He shall be called the Son of the Most High. God shall give Him the throne of His father David, and His Kingdom shall have no end.” Then Mary asked him: “How shall this be, since I have not known a man?” The Archangel replied: “The Holy Spirit shall rest upon you, and the power of God shall cover you. That is why the Holy Child who will be born of you shall be called the Son of God. Your kinswoman Elizabeth will also have a son, even though she is very old. People thought that she could not have children, but she is six months with child. With God, nothing is impossible.” The Virgin replied with excitement and joy: “Behold the servant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word!” She gladly accepted to do God's will.

A few days later, Mary went with haste to a town of Judah which was in a mountainous region to visit Elizabeth, the wife of the priest Zacharias. Upon hearing Mary's greeting, Elizabeth felt her baby leap with joy in her womb. Elizabeth, filled with

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<sup>10</sup> The Gospel reading on this day is Luke 1:24-38.

the Holy Spirit, told Mary in a loud voice: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this honour granted to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to visit me? God has blessed you because you believed in His promises.”



And Mary said:

***My soul magnifies the Lord,***

***And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.***

***For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;***

***For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.***

***For He who is mighty has done great things for me,***

***And holy is His name.*** (Luke 1:46-49)

Three months later, Mary returned to her home.



## ACTIVITIES

1. **People and places.** Choose all of the correct answers:

A. Orthodox Christians celebrate this Feast on March the 25<sup>th</sup> or on April

B. Zacharias was:

G. Virgin Mary got pregnant by:

H. God's Messenger:

- a. Joseph
- b. another man
- c. the Holy Spirit

- a. is the Archangel Gabriel
- b. gave good news to the Virgin
- c. called her “blessed among women”

**2. Magnificat.** The joyous response that Mary gave Elizabeth while talking about the Archangel Gabriel's visit, is known as "Magnificat." Learn Mary's answer by heart and then write it down below.

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**3. The Names of God.** In her joyous response, Mary uses at least three different words to refer to God. What are they?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Interpretation.** How did the Virgin Mary react when the Archangel Gabriel told her that she will have a child? Did she oppose God's will? Reflect upon Mary's attitude.

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**THE ENTRY  
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST  
INTO JERUSALEM**

It is celebrated on Palm Sunday, a week before the Resurrection

In the spring of the year 34, many people were going to Jerusalem, as it was customary, to celebrate the Jewish Feast of Passover. This feast commemorates the liberation of the Hebrew people from their slavery in Egypt.

On a Sunday, a few days before the Passover, Jesus was going to Jerusalem accompanied by friends and followers. As He was drawing near the Mount of Olives, He told His disciples: "Go to the next village, and near its entrance you will find a young donkey. No one has ridden it before. Unleash it and bring it here." The disciples asked Him: "What should we do if the owner of the donkey asks us why are we taking it?" Jesus answered: "Tell him that the Lord needs it."<sup>11</sup>

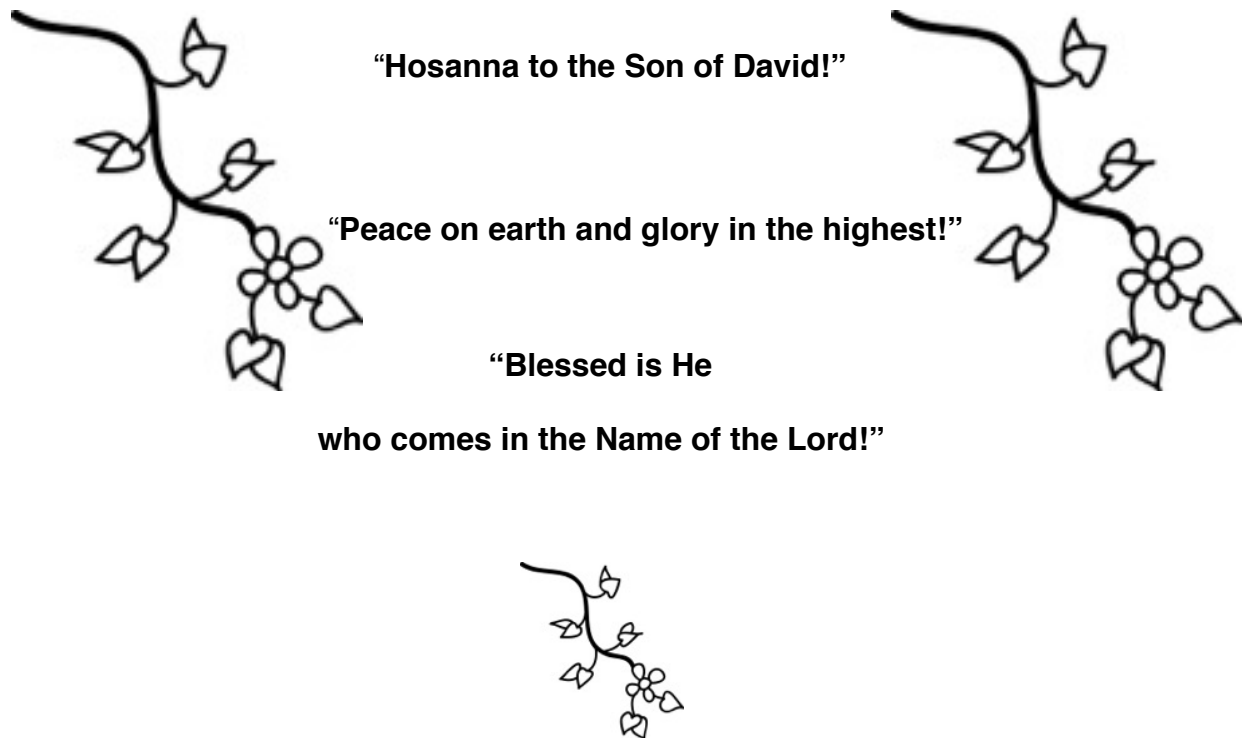
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<sup>11</sup> This event is mention in Matthew 21:1-11, 15-17.

All of this happened as Jesus had said. The disciples went to the village. While they were unleashing the donkey, the owner asked them: “Why are you unleashing the donkey?” They answered that the Lord needed it and that they would bring it back soon.

The disciples put their cloaks on the donkey. Jesus sat on it, and they all continued their journey to Jerusalem. A multitude were accompanying them. Those who were going ahead placed their own cloaks on the Lord’s path. Others cut palm<sup>12</sup> branches and started waving them as a sign of welcome and enthusiasm. People were praising God for the miracles that Jesus had done and which some of them had seen with their own eyes. Jesus had recently raised Lazarus who had been dead for four days.

They were all shouting joyfully:



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<sup>12</sup> Since palm trees do not grow in colder climates, the tradition in Eastern Europe is to bless branches of pussy willow on Palm Sunday.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **True or false?** Decide whether the following statements are true or false, according to the story that you have just read. Correct the false statements.

	Statement	T	F	Correction
a.	Jesus arrived at Jerusalem in winter.			
c.	The Lord walked all the way to Jerusalem accompanied by His followers and friends.			
d.	He was 33 years old when He entered Jerusalem surrounded by people.			
e.	The Jewish Pascha is related to the liberation of the people of Israel from the Babylonian slavery.			
f.	The disciples stole a donkey.			
g.	People were enthusiastically throwing flower petals, breadcrumbs and grains of rice on the Lord's way.			
h.	People were asking Jesus many questions along the way.			
i.	People were happy for having seen the miracles that Jesus had done.			
j.	The multitude considered Jesus the King of Israel.			
k.	His followers were crying out: "Peace on earth and glory in the highest!"			

## ACTIVITIES

1. **What do you remember from the story?** Answer the following questions about the text that you have read:

- a. What Great Feast does the Church celebrate in February?

\_\_\_\_\_

- b. Where was the Temple in this story located?

\_\_\_\_\_

- c. What did parents have to do according to the Mosaic law?

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. Who went to the Temple on that day?

\_\_\_\_\_

- e. Why did Jesus's parents go to the Temple?

\_\_\_\_\_

- f. Whom did they meet there with?

\_\_\_\_\_

- g. Who was Simeon?

\_\_\_\_\_

- h. What did this prophet know about Baby Jesus?

\_\_\_\_\_

- i. How did Simeon and Anna know the divine mysteries?

\_\_\_\_\_

- j. What did Simeon say to the Virgin Mary?

\_\_\_\_\_





**2. Word Search.** Find the listed words in the puzzle below. They may be hidden in normal or reverse order, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Highlight or circle them.

BRANCHES	DONKEY	EARTH	GLORY	GOD	HIGHEST
JERUSALEM	KING	LORD	MIRACLES	OLIVES	PALM
PASCHA	PRAISES	SUNDAY	TREES	PEACE	PEOPLE

Jesus exhorted the eleven to be His Apostles and told them to spread the good news of the coming of the Son of God into the world. He also told them about the wonderful gifts that the believers would be blessed to receive. He said:

*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mark 16:16-18)*

The word *apostle* means “the one who is sent away,” a messenger or an ambassador. Christ’s Apostles received the mission of making the Gospel and the Name of Jesus Christ known in the whole world so that the people would believe, repent, and turn to God.

It was on a Thursday, forty days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus appeared again to His eleven Apostles and asked them to remain in Jerusalem until

they would receive the Holy Spirit. Then He went to the Mount of Olives together with them. They were: Andrew and his brother Peter, James the Greater and his brother John, Phillip, Thomas, Bartholomew also named Nathanael, Matthew, Jacob or James the Less, son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Thaddaeus, son of James.

There the Lord raised His hands and blessed them. Then He ascended into Heaven surrounded by a cloud and became invisible. While the Apostles were watching Him, they saw near them two men in white clothes who said: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? The Lord Jesus Christ, who has ascended into Heaven, shall come again the same way you saw Him go.”

The Apostles realized at once that the two men dressed in white were angels. They became very happy and returned to Jerusalem. They remained in the city for several days praying and waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of God.



### ACTIVITIES

1. **Dialogue.** Imagine the dialogue that took place between Jesus and the Apostles, when He appeared to them after He resurrected from the dead.

Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas: \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	:	_____
_____	:	_____
_____	:	_____
_____	:	_____
_____	:	_____
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## 2. SOLVE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE!<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Check your answers online at [www.LenguaViva.ca](http://www.LenguaViva.ca)

**Across**

3. The Lord told them to do this in the whole world.
5. Jesus appeared and blessed them using this word.
7. The disciple touched it and believed.
11. The Good News.
12. Jesus ate it.
13. The Name of the Lord.
14. The Lord ascended there.
15. The believers would be blessed to receive them from God.
16. The Apostles saw two men in white clothes.
17. The Old Testament prophecies were about Him.

**Down**

1. The Ascension is always celebrated on this day of the week.
2. How did the Apostles spend the days following their return to the city?
4. The disciple who doubted that Jesus was alive.
6. How many disciples witnessed the Lord's Ascension?
8. Jesus appeared, even though they were locked.
9. Sent away as a messenger.
10. Feast celebrated 40 days after Christ's Resurrection.
13. The city where the Apostles gathered together.

**THE HOLY PENTECOST****or THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

It is celebrated on a Sunday, fifty days after the Resurrection

Fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the twelve Apostles were gathered together in a house in Jerusalem, for the celebration of the Jewish Feast of Pentecost.<sup>14</sup> These are their names, in the order in which they were called by the Lord:

1. Andrew;
2. Peter, Andrew's brother;
3. James the Greater;
4. John, James' brother;
5. Phillip;

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<sup>14</sup> The Greek word "Pentecost" means "fifty." The Jewish feast of Pentecost commemorates God's giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, 49 days after the Exodus. The Christian Feast of Pentecost refers to the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, fifty days after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. Thomas;
7. Bartholomew, also named Nathanael;
8. Matthew;
9. Jacob or James the Less, son of Alphaeus;
10. Simon the Zealot;
11. Judas Thaddaeus, son of James;
12. Matthias, who had been chosen to replace Judas Iscariot.<sup>15</sup>

All of a sudden they heard a great noise like thunder coming from the sky and filling the whole house. Then they saw **tongues of fire** appearing and placing themselves above each one of them. They were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and started speaking in foreign languages.

At that time of the year, multitudes of Jews were going to Jerusalem from many parts of the Roman Empire to celebrate Pentecost. The Jews were arriving from different regions and were speaking different languages. Upon hearing that terrific noise, people drew near to see what was going on. All were surprised that they could understand what the Apostles were telling each and every one of them in their own language.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostles to speak in languages that they had never learnt. People were amazed. Some understood that it was a miracle. Others were mocking the Apostles, saying that they were drunk. Then Peter stood up and related to them the life and miracles of Jesus Christ, who had died on the Cross and had risen on

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<sup>15</sup> Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus by telling the Jewish priests where they could find Him, in exchange for thirty coins of silver. When he understood that the priests were going to put Jesus to death, Judas was tormented and could not bear the guilt. In despair, he hanged himself.

the third day. Peter declared before the multitude that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is also true and eternal God.

Since the Day of Pentecost, Jesus Christ has been living through the Holy Spirit in the Apostles, in His followers and in all those who are loyal to Him. The Apostles received many gifts from the Holy Spirit: the gift of speaking in foreign languages, that of healing the sick, of prophesying, and many other divine powers that helped them in their missionary activity of spreading the Christian faith in the world.

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. Prayer to the Holy Spirit

- a. We begin Matins with this prayer to the Holy Spirit. Learn it by heart!

**O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,**  
who are everywhere present and fill all things,  
**Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life:**  
come and abide in us,  
and cleanse us from every impurity,  
and save our souls, O **Good One!**

- b. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity. In the prayer above, He is invoked under different names. What are they?

\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\* \_\_\_\_\_

c. In the prayer above we ask three important things from the Holy Spirit. Imagine that you explain these petitions to a younger child. How would you express these wishes to make the child understand what you mean?

"We ask the Holy Spirit to \_\_\_\_\_, that is, to \_\_\_\_\_.

We ask Him to \_\_\_\_\_, which means \_\_\_\_\_.

We also ask \_\_\_\_\_. This means that \_\_\_\_\_."

## 2. Solve the crossword puzzle!<sup>16</sup>

**3. The Four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.** Some of the Apostles wrote about their experiences during the time that they spent with the Messiah. Other followers of the Son of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write about Christ's life and teachings, but they had not known Him personally. Their narratives are called "Gospels," which means "the Good News." The Gospels tell about the coming of Christ into the world. The Son of God became man so that man may be able to become God through the Divine Grace.

In the first centuries, the Church Fathers chose four of those narratives and included them in what today we know as the Bible. The authors of the four Gospels are called Evangelists. Matthew and John were also Apostles of Christ.

Write the names of the Evangelists in the table below.

**4. An E-mail to my friend.** Imagine that you are one of the Apostles who were present in Jerusalem on Pentecost. Write an email to your friend describing your experience on that day.

### Across

2. He came upon them.
5. Jesus is divine like the Father.
6. A divine power or gift.
7. What does Pentecost mean?
8. The Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit.
10. Apostle John's brother.
11. The Holy Spirit descended upon them.
12. It looked like tongues.

### Down

1. The First-Called Holy Apostle.
3. The Apostles started speaking in many different ...
4. The Apostles spread this faith in the world.
5. The Apostles received them from the Holy Spirit.
8. Apostle Andrew's brother.
9. Jesus had been nailed to it.

<sup>16</sup> Check your answers online at [www.LenguaViva.com](http://www.LenguaViva.com).



This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

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## TRANSFIGURATION



**OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**

Gregorian Calendar: August the 6<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: August the 19<sup>th</sup>

One day, Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, to Mount Tabor. There, on the top of the mountain and before the three Apostles, the Lord changed His appearance. His face was shining like the Sun, and His clothes were white like the light.

At that very instant, Moses<sup>17</sup> and Elijah<sup>18</sup> appeared talking to the Lord. When Peter saw them, he told Jesus: “Lord, it is good for us to be here! If You wish, I will make three tents here: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” As Peter was talking, a cloud came and rested upon them, and a voice was heard from the cloud saying: **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”**<sup>19</sup>

Upon hearing the words of God, Peter, James, and John were greatly afraid and threw themselves to the ground. Christ touched them and told them not to be afraid. When they lifted up their eyes, the disciples did not see anyone else beside them other than Jesus. He told them not to mention the event to anybody until the day when He, the Son of Man, would rise from the dead.

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<sup>17</sup> Moses had been a spiritual leader of the people of Israel. With God’s help, he had parted the Red Sea so that they could cross it and escape from the slavery into Egypt. On Mount Sinai, Moses had received the Ten Commandments written by God on two stone tablets.

<sup>18</sup> Elijah had been a prophet and a miracle worker who had lived about nine hundred years before Christ.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 17:5.

**ACTIVITIES****1. SOLVE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE!<sup>20</sup>****Down**

1. What did the disciples feel when they heard the voice?
2. Leader of the people of Israel.
3. Church Feast celebrated in August.
4. The Lord's clothes turned this colour.
5. This disciple is also one of the Evangelists.

**Across**

5. One of the disciples who were with Jesus.
6. The name of the mountain where Jesus was transfigured.
7. The prophet who appeared beside Jesus.
8. The Lord's face was shining like it.
9. What did they hear?
10. It came and rested upon them.
11. The disciple whose name means "rock."
12. The voice said that Jesus was His beloved...

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<sup>20</sup> Check your answers online at [www.LenguaViva.ca](http://www.LenguaViva.ca)

**2. Hymn.** Complete the text of the hymn below with the words from the given list:

God prophets Elijah illumination fire forever Transfiguration Creator

Moses who saw (1)\_\_\_\_\_ and (2)\_\_\_\_\_ who rode in his chariot of (3)\_\_\_\_\_ and crossed the skies without being consumed, when seeing You, O Christ, in the cloud of the (4)\_\_\_\_\_, testified of You as the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ and the fulfilment of the Law and the (6)\_\_\_\_\_. Grant us also Your (7)\_\_\_\_\_ together with them, O Master, so that we may sing to You (8)\_\_\_\_\_!

**3. People, Places, and Events.** Choose all of the correct answers:

A. Which of the following disciples witnessed the Transfiguration of the Lord?

- a. Peter
- b. James
- c. John

B. Who was conversing with Jesus on Mount Tabor?

- a. Abraham and David
- b. Moses and Elijah
- c. Adam and Eve

C. What elements are related to the Prophet Elijah?

- a. the chariot of fire
- b. one of the Gospels
- c. Mount Tabor

D. What elements are related to Moses?

- a. The Red Sea
- b. The Ten Commandments
- c. slavery in Egypt



**THE DORMITION  
OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD  
AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY<sup>21</sup>**

Gregorian Calendar: August the 15<sup>th</sup>

Julian Calendar: August the 28<sup>th</sup>

Three days before the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, God sent Archangel Gabriel to announce to her that she was going to move to Heaven. When the Mother of God heard the news, she returned home happily and prepared candles and incense for her burial. Then she went to Mount of Olives to pray. While she was praying, a great miracle occurred: every time she made a prostration before God, all the trees bent their branches in honour of the Holy Mother of Life.

The Virgin went home and prayed again. She was surrounded by female friends and the myrrh-bearing women. Suddenly **ACTIVITIES**

1. **True or false?** Decide if the following statements are true or false, according to the story that you have just read. Correct the false statements.

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<sup>21</sup> The Dormition of the Mother of God means her death and her ascension with her body into Heaven. This event is not mentioned in the Holy Gospels, but it is part of the Church Tradition. Several Church Fathers of the first centuries of Christianity wrote about this event. They are: Saint Modestus of Jerusalem, Saint Andrew of Crete, Saint German of Constantinople, and Saint John of Damascus.

AUGUST BODY BURIAL FAREWELL GABRIEL  
 GOSPEL INCENSE LIFE MARY MIRACLES PAUL  
 SKY TEARS THOMAS TOMB TREES VIRGIN

	Statement	T	F	Correction
a.	God sent the Archangel Raphael to announce to the Virgin Mary that she was going to depart from this world.			
c.	The Virgin became very sad when she heard the news.			
d.	Mary went to pray to the Mount of Olives.			
e.	The twelve Apostles arrived to bid Mary farewell.			
f.	The Apostle Paul had not met Jesus Christ.			
g.	Mary asked forgiveness from all.			
h.	Mary delivered her spirit to her Son Jesus Christ.			
i.	Jesus Christ honoured the Dormition of His Holy Mother through many miracles.			

	Statement	T	F	Correction
j.	The Holy Apostle Thomas arrived after the burial.			
k.	The Apostles opened the tomb, and Thomas kissed the Virgin's feet.			

2. **Word Search.** Find the listed words in the puzzle below. They may be hidden in normal or reverse order, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Highlight or circle them.

### 3. Prayers to the Mother of God.

- a. Memorize the prayer below and say it every day:

Rejoice, Virgin Mary, full of grace!  
O Theotokos, **the Lord** is with you!  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is **the Fruit** of your womb,  
for you have given birth to **the Saviour** of our souls!

- b. Christ's Names.** In the previous prayer God is invoked under three different names. What are they?







## THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

It is celebrated on a Thursday, forty days after the Resurrection

A few days after the Resurrection of the Lord, the eleven disciples were gathered in Jerusalem. Thomas had said that he would not believe that Jesus was alive unless he saw the nail marks on His hands and put his fingers in them, and place his hand into the wound in His side. At that very moment, Jesus appeared in the midst of all, even though the doors were locked, and said: “**Peace to all of you!**”

The disciples were afraid, thinking that they were seeing a ghost, but Jesus showed them His hands and His feet to assure them that He was truly alive, a man of flesh and bones. The Lord also invited Thomas to touch Him and said: “Do not be unbelieving, but believing!” The disciple touched Him and believed. Others still doubted.

Jesus reprimanded them for their lack of faith, and asked them to give Him something to eat. He did not need to eat, but wanted to show them that He was not a ghost. They gave Him a piece of grilled fish and some honeycomb, and He ate them in front of everyone.

## **REVIEW**

1. Complete the table below with the Feasts and the corresponding dates:

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### About the Author

Ioana Dimitriu was inspired to start writing children's books with Orthodox Christian content, after having worked as a youth volunteer during a mission trip to Mexico.

Her 13-year-old daughter, Janina, is a constant source of joy and inspiration. Ioana is amazed at the way children approach God with a pure heart and understand divine mysteries intuitively. She hopes to contribute to their understanding of God by explaining some of the Orthodox Christian teachings in an accessible language, and through engaging activities.

Ioana holds a Doctorate in Spanish, and is currently taking Theology courses at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Canada. She works as a Spanish teacher and a freelance Romanian-English-Spanish translator.



### About the Illustrator

Ana-Maria Lemnaru is a graduate of George Enescu University of Arts in Iași, Romania. She obtained a Master of Arts Degree in Illustration from Manchester School of Arts in the United Kingdom.

Ana-Maria explores both traditional and digital artistic forms of expression. She sees art as a way of offering original, profound, and valuable realities to the public.