

Using the Theme throughout the Year 2020

Theme: “For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (John 3:17)

Logo: “The logo this year depicts Christ healing a blind man – Christ is the healer. Unlike others, Christ did not condemn the blind man for his affliction. Likewise, He did not condemn those who had fallen and sinned. Instead, He healed and restored them to a new life and a new opportunity. Once they were healed, Jesus then told them to change their lives and sin no more.” (Fr. Joseph Purpura)



Symbols: Jesus; the Cross; the world; life preserver

Icons: Christ the Savior; The Crucifixion; The Resurrection (Harrowing of Hades)

Book: *The Great I Came's of Jesus* by Anthony Coniaris (pages 111-125)

Prayer: “Thank you, Father, for sending Your Son Jesus, not to judge and condemn us but to save us and make us Your children, partakers of Your very nature. Amen.” (From the book, *The Great I Came's of Jesus* by Anthony Coniaris)

Theme Song: An original theme song, *God Sent His Son to Save the World*, is on our Creative Festivals website

Lesson Plans: Original lesson plans are provided for age levels ranging from preschool to high school on our Creative Festivals website

Throughout the Church School Year: Use the logo and/or symbols on name tags, room signs, letterhead, bulletin boards, posters, and crafts

Crafts: Oriental Trading has several crafts that can relate to the theme



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<https://www.orientaltrading.com/john-16-33-ornament-craft-kit-a2-13798338.fltr?categoryId=550175+1967>



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<https://www.orientaltrading.com/john-3-16-globe-craft-kit-a2-13806638.fltr?keyword=john+3:16+craft+kit>



<https://www.orientaltrading.com/believe-3-crosses-sign-craft-kit-a2-13798136.fltr?categoryId=550175+1967>

Feast Days: Have students research and report on the following Feast days. This can be done as an assignment outside of class, or have the students view Orthodox Christian websites on their phones and use The Orthodox Study Bible while in class. Then have them share their results with the other students.

September- The story of Saint Helen discovering the Holy Cross on September 14 in 325 AD. Remind the students that this is one of the twelve Great Feasts. Encourage them to attend Divine Liturgy on this day.

December- The Nativity of Christ. Find verses in Isaiah that predict Jesus' birth. Mention that the name Jesus means, "God saves." Explain that Christ's birth was the beginning of our salvation. Discuss that Jesus is considered to be "the new Adam" and Mary "the new Eve."

January- The Feast of Theophany which takes place on January 6. Encourage students to attend Divine Liturgy on this day. Discuss several important aspects of our faith that are revealed to us on Theophany: the manifestation of the Trinity, Jesus is baptized to show us what we should do; Jesus sanctified the world through His baptism.

March- Discuss Forgiveness Sunday. Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise are remembered on this day. "The faithful are given the opportunity to consider man's fallen state which is our inheritance, the benefits of fasting which our first parents ignored by

breaking the fast, and the consequences of disobedience which are spiritual death and destruction.” (Orthodox Wiki)

Have students research and report on the Feast of the Annunciation which takes place on March 25. Discuss that by Mary saying “Yes” to God, she enabled our salvation. Encourage students to attend Divine Liturgy on this day.

Since Pascha is on Sunday, April 19 which is after the Creative Festival deadline, talk about the importance of Pascha during Great Lent. Discuss that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is at the center of our Orthodox Christian faith. Mention that Pascha is the greatest of all the feasts. Show students the Resurrection icon. Have them identify the figures in the icon.

(Jesus pulling up Adam and Eve, etc.) Sing the Paschal hymn:

*Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*

Excerpt from a sermon by St. John Maximovich:

<https://www.oca.org/fs/sermons/the-cross-the-preserver-of-the-universe>

“By the Cross, the Son of God having become man, accomplished our salvation...The Cross of the Lord was the instrument by which He saved the world after the fall into sin. Through the Cross, He descended with His soul into hell so as to raise up from it the souls who were awaiting Him.”

Here are some other ideas:

1. Have the students keep a forgiveness journal. Encourage them to write down times when they forgave instead of judged. Ask them to also write down times when someone forgave them instead of judged them.

2. Coloring page with the Samaritan woman at the well containing the theme quote:

http://childrenschapel.org/biblestories/color/john3_17.html

3. Read the story of St. Photini:

<https://ocl.org/orthodox-christian-laity/st-photini-patron-saint-of-ocl/>

4. Have the students find other examples in the bible when Jesus showed mercy upon people without condemning them.

5. Discuss ways that we can unite ourselves to Christ. (Through the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, Holy Communion; through prayer, attending Divine Liturgy and other church services, etc.)

6. Encourage ways students can serve God by helping others through the various ministries of the Church.