

I Receive the Bread of Life

Objective: The students will be able to tell the story of the Last Supper and answer affirmatively that the disciples continued to share Holy Communion and that we receive Holy Communion at each Divine Liturgy.

For the Catechist

In the last two lessons the children learned that bread is significant in Jesus' teachings. First, He fed the 5,000 in the wilderness which the children learned in lesson 11. Then He explained to those whom He had fed that they should be looking for food unto everlasting life, namely, Himself, the Bread of Life. This lesson culminates the presentation of the Mysteries received at Baptism. Baptized and chrismated, we are brought to the Lord's Table to share in His Holy Gifts. While Baptism and Chrismation cannot be repeated, the Eucharist can and is repeatedly received throughout the life of the believer.

The bread and wine offered on our behalf become the Body and Blood of Christ during the prayer of the anaphora. The prayer of the anaphora (which is sometimes said quietly by the priest) begins immediately after the priest says, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord," and the people respond, "It is proper and just to worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the Trinity, one in Essence, and undivided."

In the earlier texts, the children learned about Holy Communion as Jesus' special gift to us. They were told the words of institution ("Take, eat. . .") but no attempt was made to try to explain how the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. They were told only the story that they receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, but the children have heard the words of institution at each Divine Liturgy and should be very familiar with them.

In this lesson they are told that they receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. The change effected by the prayer of the anaphora cannot be explained logically. More importantly, that which is to be changed is the *per-*

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Prayer before Holy Communion

Introduction: Learning about the Prospora
Need: Prospora, knife, cutting board, plate; if possible, have priest or deacon assist the presentation

Read Text Aloud: Have students read text aloud.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic:* "Preparing for Holy Communion" Coloring Sheet
- *Group:* "In Behalf of All" Chart
- *Craft:* "Bread of Life" Plaque (continued)

Closing: Prayer before Holy Communion

Come Bless the Lord Icon Packets:

Packet I: The Mystical Supper
Packet II:

Teaching Pic:

- #DL1 Prospora
- #DL2 Wine and Water
- #DL3 Commemorations
- #DL4 Diskos
- #DL5 Censing

son who partakes of Holy Communion. The mysterious change is to occur within us. We are to be changed so that we are nourished for our journey and ever more conformed to His likeness.

Meals as celebrations. Family celebrations mark events of significance—birthdays, anniversaries, important moments of joy or sadness. The family table joins them in a common life. Eating and drinking are more than simply satisfying one's bodily needs. In sharing food and drink, we share our lives. Jesus shared a Holy Supper with His friends. It was at a Jewish Passover meal that Jesus revealed Himself as the Passover Lamb of God Who would free His people, not from slavery to the Pharaoh of Egypt but from slavery to sin by His saving death on the cross. When the Israelites received the Ten Commandments they entered into a covenant relationship with God. A meal sealed the covenant. For Christians, Holy Communion seals the new covenant effected by Jesus Christ. The children will learn about covenants in a later text.

The term Eucharist is mentioned by the teacher for this lesson. It will be explained in lesson 17, "In the Divine Liturgy We Receive."

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted.)

The Last Supper

"All four gospels as well as St. Paul tell us how, just before His death, Christ celebrated a 'last supper' with His apostles: a meal the evangelists are careful to present in the context of the Jewish Passover. Jesus took bread and wine and identified them as His body and blood. He gave us a new ritual to celebrate: one that is not merely symbolic but real, freeing us from the death of sin whenever we participate in it with faith. Henceforth whenever we would receive Communion, we would be truly united with Christ both in our body and our spirit. We therefore call the bread of the Divine Liturgy the 'Lamb.' The Eucharist is truly our Lord, the Lamb of God, the One who suffered, died and is risen, the perfect fulfillment of all sacrifices" (*LLII 57*).

Renewing our baptism

"It is particularly in the Divine Liturgy that the gift of the Holy Spirit given in baptism and chrismation is renewed. At the epiclesis we invoke the Father to send the Spirit anew upon us and upon our offering. St. John Chrysostom describes it as, 'The priest stands, bringing down not fire, but the Holy Spirit: and he offers prayer at length, not that a fire may be kindled and destroy the offering (cf. 1 Kings/Samuel 18:34-39), but that grace may fall upon the sacrifice through that prayer, and kindle the souls of all' (*On the Priesthood 6.4*)" (*LLI 75*).

Nourishing our faith

"The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, the gift from the heart of His passion and resurrection. Both as elements and as action the Eucharist is Christ; who died and rose for our salvation. The Eucharist is truly 'Divine' Liturgy, because it is a mighty work of God undertaken for our sanctification. When we partake of it, we are made one in Christ and united with God: Father, Son, and Spirit. It is called a mystery since the way in which it happens is beyond our comprehension. Nevertheless, by participating in it with faith we can grow continually in our understanding of God's great love for us" (*LLII 57*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

[Gather children at the icon corner.] *Let's continue learning about the Prayer before Holy Communion.* [Read the prayer through commenting on the following sections whenever they appear in the text used in your community:

- transgressions (wrongdoings)
- remission (taking away)
- life everlasting (union with God forever)
- condemnation (judged harshly)
- partaking (sharing in)
- Mystical Supper, banquet, Holy Mysteries, Eucharist (Holy Communion)
- Betrayal of Judas (after the Last Supper)
- Eucharist as truly the body and blood of Christ
- Remember me, O Lord, when you shall come into Your kingdom
(words of the thief on the cross)

Introduction

Last week we learned about Jesus and bread. What was the phrase that I asked you to memorize? (I am the Bread of Life.) The week before we learned another story about Jesus and bread. Who remembers the name of the story? (The Multiplication of the Loaves) Who can tell me the story? (Jesus took five loaves of bread and two fish and blessed them and multiplied them so they fed 5,000 people. There were 12 baskets of leftovers. Jesus told the people, "I am the Bread of Life.")

Today we are going to learn about a special bread, prosphora. It is the bread that the priest uses to consecrate so that it becomes for us the Body of Christ in Holy Communion. [If a priest is available, let him explain the cutting of the prosphora. If not, continue with the brief explanation below. The students will have a more involved explanation in a later year.]

The seal in the center of the loaf has a cross and around it the words IC XC NIKA. This means "Jesus Christ conquers." The priest cuts off the four sides of the loaf so that the seal remains in a square. [Cut off the four sides.] Then the priest pierces with his knife that tall square that represents Jesus [pierce the square] in remembrance of Jesus when on the cross being pierced in the side by the soldier. Blood and water flowed out of Jesus' side, and so at this point wine is mixed with water and placed in the chalice. The priest will later bless and consecrate the wine and water to become the blood of Jesus Christ for us in Holy Communion.

The large piece representing Christ is cut from the loaf and placed on the diskos or gold plate. The side pieces are cut into many little pieces too and placed on the diskos to remember the saints and various people in the Church: the bishops, the sick, those who have died. These are called the commemorative pieces. We remember all who make up the Church, both the living and the dead. By the time we receive the Eucharist, the bread and wine have been consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ and placed together in the chalice. Let's read about how the Holy Communion began.

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I Receive the Bread of Life

Jesus taught us many ways to be united to God. He taught us how to pray. He taught us to follow God's commandments. He also taught us to bless bread and wine and share it at church.

At the Liturgy the bread and wine are brought from the preparation table. This part of our service is called the Great Entrance. When they are at the Holy Table, the blessing begins. After the bread and wine are blessed, they become Holy Communion.

Why do we do this? We do this because Jesus gave His body and blood to His disciples. St. Paul wrote about it in a letter to the Corinthians.

Here is how it happened.

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Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

After the bread and wine are blessed, they become Holy Communion.

Do you know the part of the Liturgy called the Great Entrance? What do you see then? (Altar servers carrying candles, the priest carrying the bread and wine covered with veils) What do you hear then? The priest praying for many, many people, and we sing 'Amen.'

During the meal Jesus took bread and said a blessing. The name of the special holy day was "Passover."

[Read story pausing to ask:]

He said, "This is my body."

*What did Jesus do with the bread? (Jesus took the bread and said a blessing; then He gave it to His disciples.)
What did Jesus say? ("This is my body")*

He said, "This is my blood."

What did Jesus do with the wine? (Jesus took the wine and said a blessing; then He gave it to His disciples.) What did Jesus say? ("This is my blood.")

Then He said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

What does that mean? It means that we are to remember what Jesus did. We are to continue to bless or consecrate bread and wine. And when we do so, Jesus will be present with us. Have you heard these words before? We remember this event as the Last Supper. We celebrate this event on Holy Thursday.



It was a holy day for the Jewish people.

There was a special meal. During the meal Jesus took bread and said a blessing. He gave it to His disciples. He said, "This is my body."

Then He took wine and blessed it. He gave it to His disciples. He said, "This is my blood."

Then He told them, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

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It will bring us eternal life

Jesus gave us the Eucharist so we could be with God now and for all eternity. It is our spiritual bread for life everlasting. Receiving Jesus in Holy Communion is the most important part of our Christian life. Holy Communion is also called "Eucharist." In Lesson 17 we'll learn why. The Eucharist is the most important part of our lives. Why? Two reasons: 1) Jesus becomes present to us and 2) Jesus nourishes us as the Bread of Life.

Let's review: We learned the story of the Last Supper today. Who can tell me what happened? [Assist students.] (The disciples had gathered for a special meal. Jesus took bread and wine, blessed them and gave them to the disciples telling them: "Do this in remembrance of me." Did the disciples do what Jesus asked? (Yes) Do we? If so, when? (Yes, at every Divine Liturgy)

We do what Jesus told us to do when we celebrate Holy Communion. It is our privilege as members of God's people. When you were baptized and chrismated, you were brought into God's family. You received your first Holy Communion right after your Baptism and Chrismation.



When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are united to God in a very strong way. Holy Communion is an important part of our lives. Holy Communion makes Jesus present to us and gives us nourishment. It is the bread that will not perish but last forever.

Holy Communion is the Bread of Life. It will bring us to eternal life.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: Preparing for Holy Communion

Today we learned about the *prosphora* that is consecrated to become Jesus, the Bread of Life, for all of us. Here is a page that shows you the many items that Father uses to prepare Holy Communion. [Read explanations to the children.] You may color this. We learned about the *prosphora* at the beginning of our lesson. [Review what you learned afterward.]



Prospora (Holy bread)

wine & water cruet

Chalice

Diskos

Communion spoon

Lance

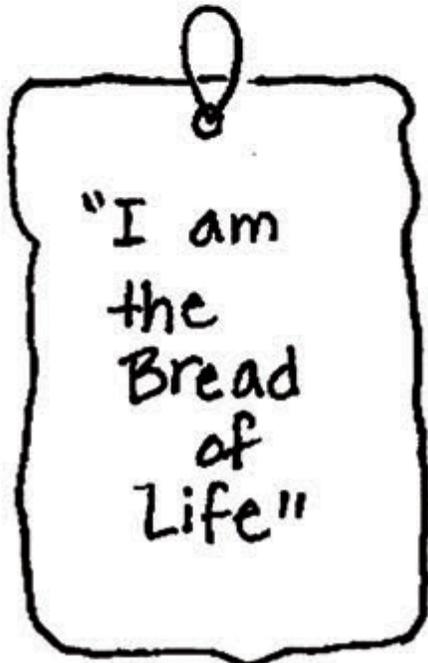
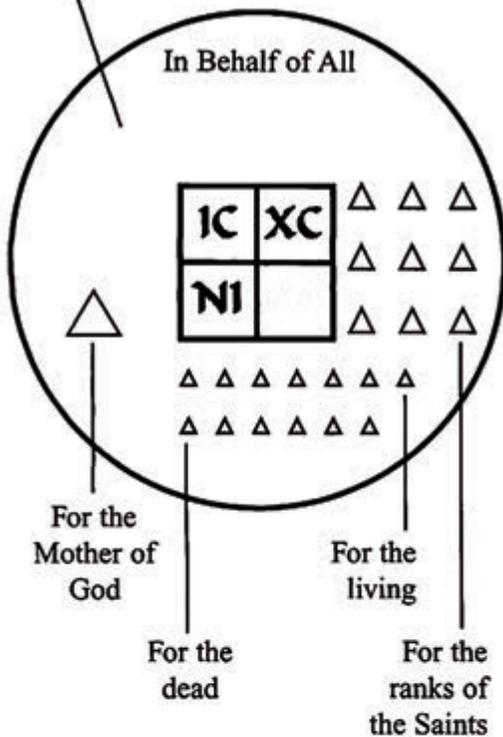
Preparing for Holy Communion

A special loaf of bread, *prospora*, is offered to God and consecrated (or made holy). It will become for us the Body of Christ.

Wine is also offered to God. The wine will become for us the Blood of Christ.

Here are pictures of the items the priest uses to prepare Holy Communion.

Lamb (representing Jesus Christ)



Group: "In Behalf of All" Chart

Materials: Prospora worksheets (4), poster board cut into a 24" diameter circle, markers, scissors

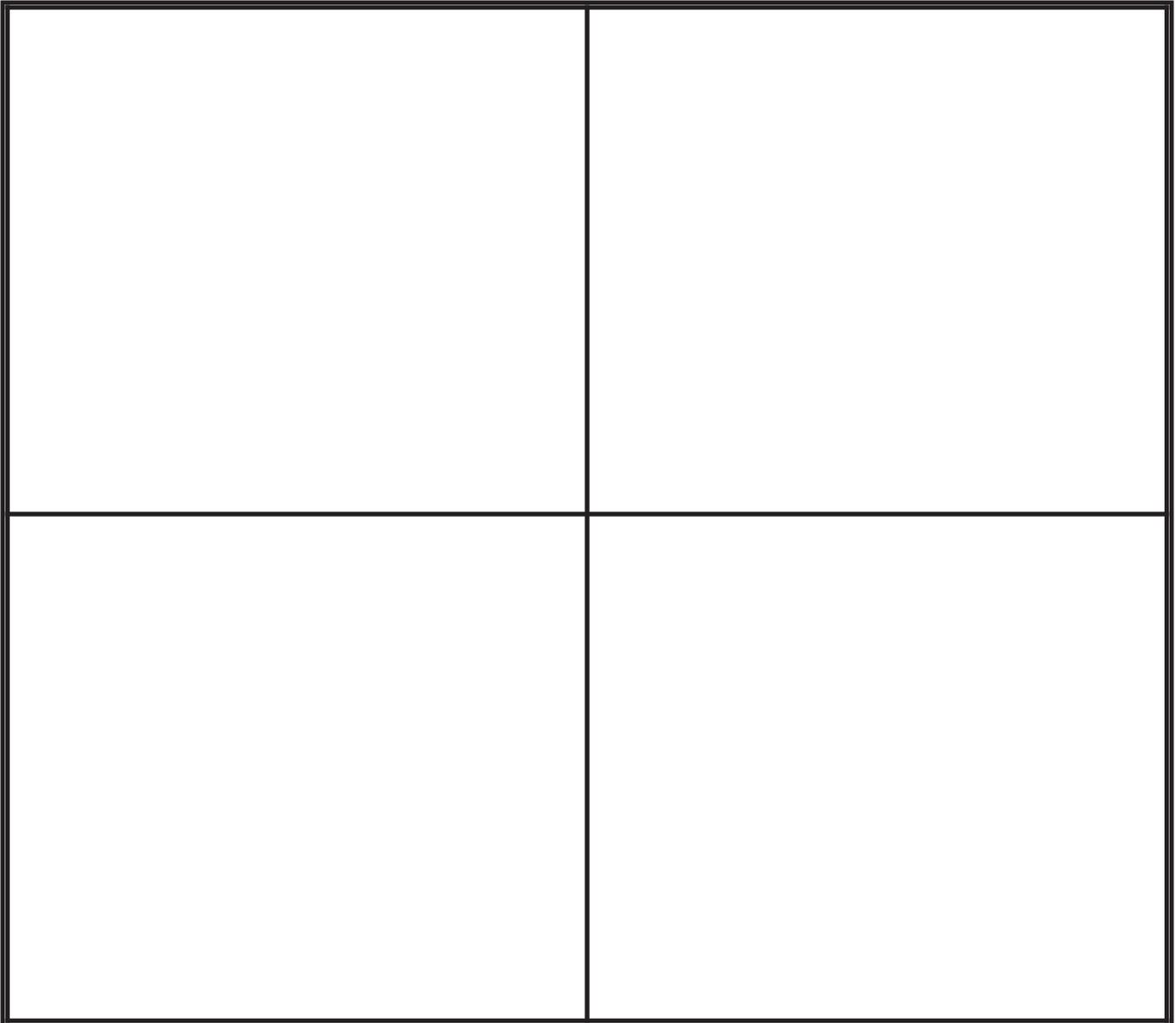
[Copy worksheet 3 five times. Copy worksheet 4 four times. Label the posterboard "In Behalf of All."] Today we learned about Holy Communion, the Bread of Life. The bread is called "prospora" and is placed on the diskos in a special way. Each piece represents someone. For our activity today we'll learn about the pieces and make a chart for our classroom. Each of you will receive a piece to cut out. I'll help you label the pieces and arrange them on our chart. [Follow the directions on the worksheets.]

Craft: "Bread of Life" Plaque (part II)

Materials: Newspaper, tempera paint, permanent markers, acrylic sealant

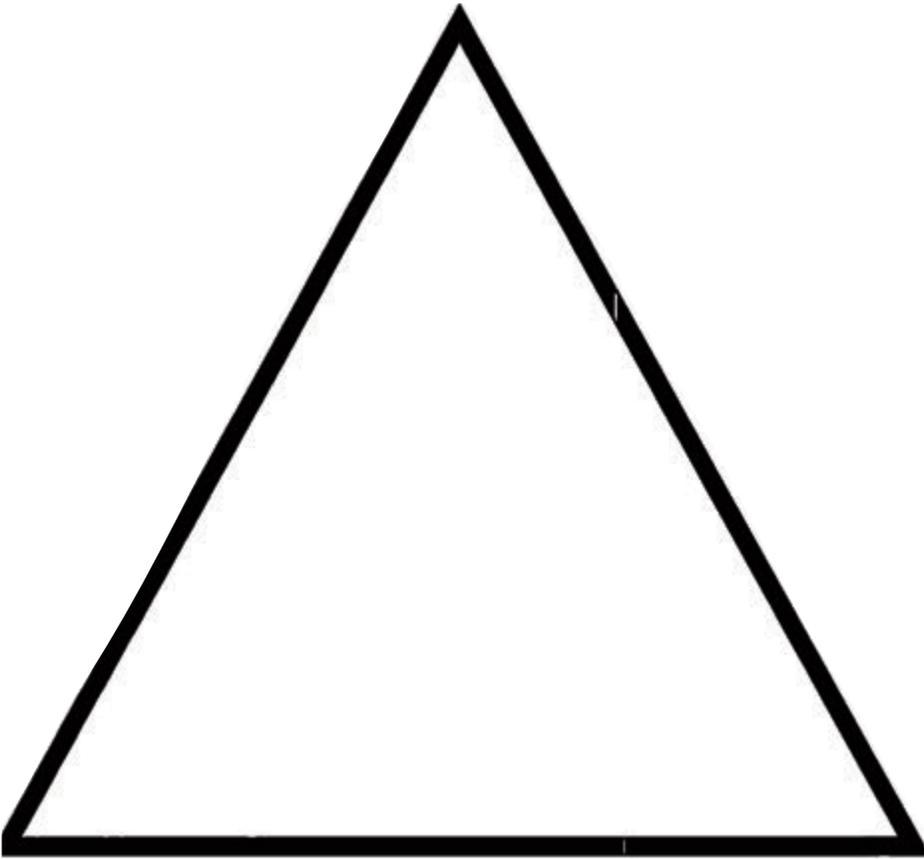
Last week we learned that people all over the world depend on bread for life. Our lesson was about the feeding of the 5,000. We learned the words of Jesus, "I am the Bread of Life." We worked with bread dough and began a craft project. Our lesson today was about Holy Communion Jesus gave to the disciples and to us. The disciples learned what Jesus meant when He said, "I am the Bread of Life." Jesus gives us Himself in the form of the bread to nourish us spiritually unto eternal life. As we finish our project today, remember the great gift Jesus has given us in Holy Communion. It is the bread of life eternal.

Closing: Let's say the Prayer before Holy Communion and think about what the words mean as we pray.

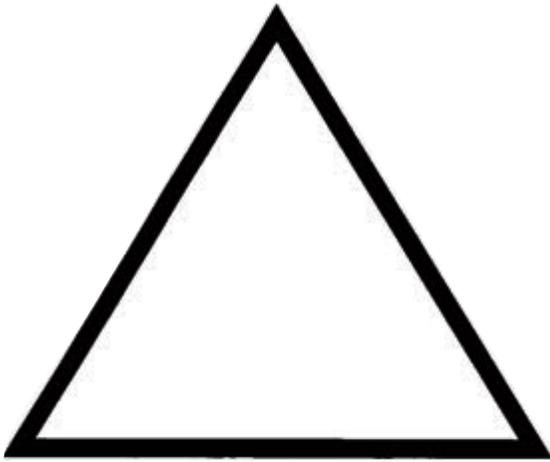


IC	XC
NI	IC

The large square is for Jesus Christ. It is called the "lamb" because Christ is the Lamb of God. ICXC NIKA means "Jesus Christ conquers." Jesus Christ conquered death when He rose from the dead. Label the "Lamb" above with ICXC NIKA.

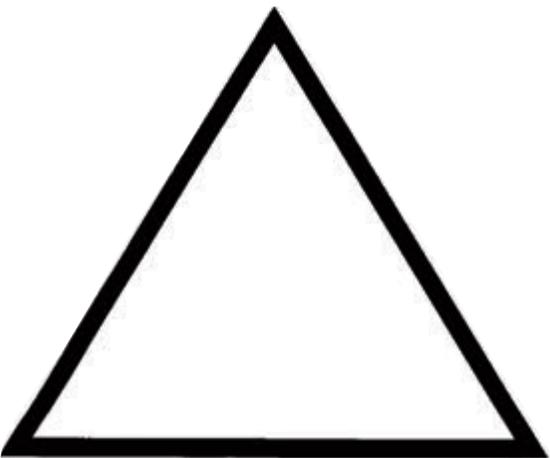
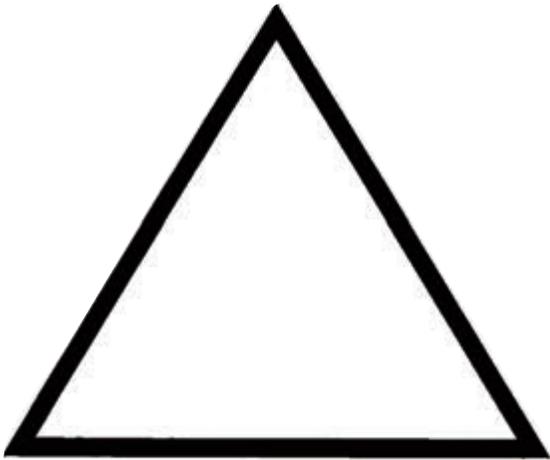


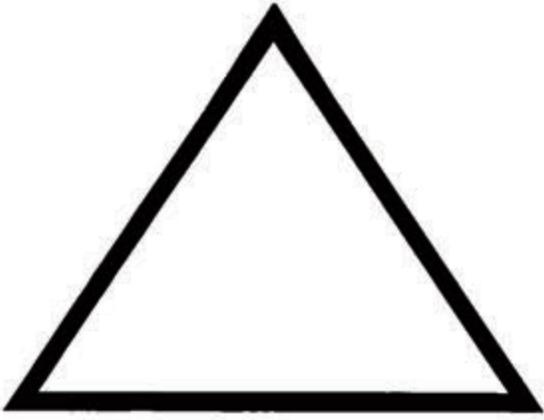
The large triangle is placed on the left side of the "Jesus the Lamb." It commemorates the Mother of God. Label this "Mother of God."



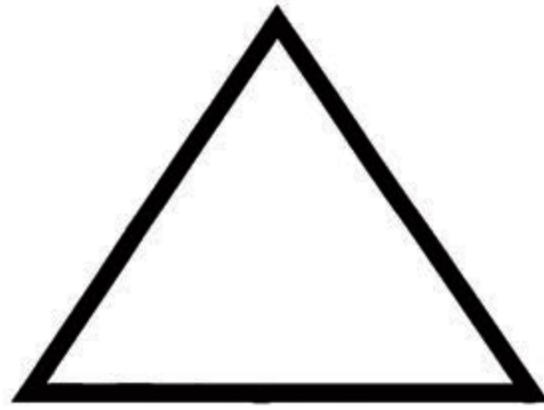
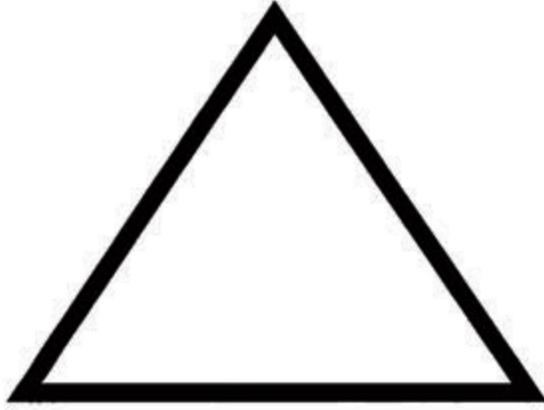
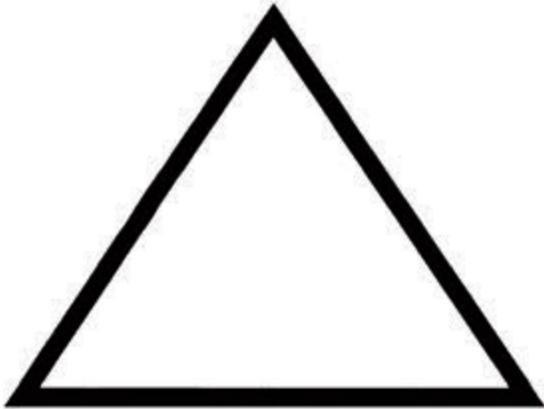
Make nine smaller triangles to represent the nine smaller particles that are placed on the right side of "The Lamb." They commemorate the many types of saints, such as martyrs, apostles, whom we venerate. Label the nine:

1. Angels
(such as Gabriel, Michael, Raphael)
2. Prophets
(Elias, Moses, Daniel)
3. Apostles
4. Hierarchs
(bishops, metropolitans)
5. Martyrs
(those who gave their lives for Christ such as George, Stephen, Thecla)
6. Ascetics
(monks and those who devoted their lives to prayer such as Anthony the Great, Mary of Egypt)
7. Unmercenaries
(those who healed others without pay, such as Cosmas and Damian)
8. Joachim and Anna, and saints of the day
9. St. John or St. Basil (according to whose Divine Liturgy is being performed)





In two rows, the faithful, living and dead, are remembered in two rows below the Lamb. The first row is for the living, and the second is for the faithful who have died. The faithful include the clergy and the laity.



Unit 2 Review

1. *What do we celebrate on Theophany?*

(Lesson 25: We celebrate how the Trinity was revealed when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan.)

2. *What happens at Baptism?*

(Lesson 7 & 8: We receive new life in Christ, become members of the Church, and are cleansed of sin.)

3. *What are the signs of new life we receive in Baptism?*

(Lesson 8: The signs are water, the baptismal robe, and the candle.)

4. *What happens in Chrismation?*

(Lesson 10: We are sealed in our new life with the Holy Spirit.)

5. *How do we become members of the people of God?*

(Lesson 10: We become members of the people of God through Baptism and Chrismation.)

6. *Why is Holy Communion so important?*

(Lesson 13: Jesus becomes present to us and nourishes us as the Bread of Life.)