

# Our New Life with God

**Objective:** Students will be able to state that Jesus showed us how to live our new life with God and how to love everyone.

## **For the Catechist**

Having friends and becoming part of a group are important for children in the third grade. They are ready to establish peer relationships and become active in group activities. The children discover themselves with and through others.

This social nature of man was created by God. From the very beginning "The Lord God said: 'It is not good for the man to be alone'" (Genesis 2:18). Children in Grade 3 start discovering this need to be together with other people

In the earlier grades of this series the children have been asked to look to the Trinity to learn how to share love and to belong to each other. This year the lessons ask the children to continue to think about this community of love as they learn about the establishment of the Church.

The theme of this year's lessons is identified in the book's title, *God Calls Us Together*. In Unit 1 the children learn the Church is the people of God who follow Jesus as their Lord; the Church is the Body of Christ on earth. Throughout the year they discover that we as members of the Church are called to enter into a loving relationship with God and with each other. We are responsible for establishing God's community of love.

Included in Unit 6 are the Feast of the Ascension and the Feast of Pentecost. Grade 3 is the first year to include these feast in the "Observances." Before His Ascension Jesus promised the apostles, "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20). The Pentecost icon reminds us that together the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit sent to bring new life to the Church. Use these lessons to help the children appreciate God's love for all of us who come together to form the Church.

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

**Opening:** "Our Father"

**For all prayers in the opening and closing of each lesson, consult "Liturgical Texts for Jurisdictions" included in Part 2 (page 55) of this *Teacher Manual for Grade 3*. Use the approved wording for your jurisdiction.**

**Introduction:** First day introduction

**Need:** leaves cut from patterns, pencils, and a paper bag

**Read Text Aloud:** Have students volunteer to read the text. Use questions in the teacher manual to discuss the lesson with the students.

### **Activity Tracks:**

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

- *Basic:* The Greatest Commandment

- *Group:* Reenacting the Story of Zacchaeus

- *Craft:* "Prayer Book" Cover

**Closing:** "Our Father"

### **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:*

Icon of the Holy Trinity and  
Icon of the Sign

## **Background Reading**

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

### **Love One Another**

"God invites us into a relationship with Himself, but He reveals Himself as a community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are invited into this primary community. The famous icon of the Holy Trinity under the form of the hospitality of Abraham (cf Gn 18:1-15) portrays three angels seated around a table. By the harmony and blending of the lines of their bodies they form a circle, a unity open, inviting us to join this community of life and love. By our hospitality to one another we become god-like. The psalmist exclaimed, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is, when brethren dwell as one!' (Ps 132/133:1). The distinguishing mark of the Christian faith remains love for one another (cf Jn 15:17; 1 Jn 4:7-13) in the image of the Trinity" (*LLI 6*).

### **Relationships**

"The Christian vision affirms that relationship, not individuality, is characteristic of the image of God. In the Trinity, there are not three individuals, but three persons, known by their relationships. We are made in that image. We are not meant to be individuals so much as to be persons, and there is a big difference. Individuality separates: we define ourselves in terms of what makes us different and separates us, leading to a disharmony. Persons are known by their relationship to one another. So when we want to know who we are, we should not look to what separates us from others, but what brings us together, because we are in the image of the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (*LLIII 14*).

### **Images of the Church**

"The Church expresses its thoughts on its own identity chiefly through imagery. In the various idea-pictures of the Tradition, the Church seeks to make concrete its experience of union with God. A few of the most significant images are:

*"Icon of the Trinity* - The unity of the Church is built on a solid foundation: the unity of God in the Holy Trinity. The Church is the historical expression of the work of the Trinity, and its life mirrors the life of God. Hence, our vision of the Church is closely connected to what we know of the mysteries of the Trinity. The Church is an icon of the Trinity and in a very real sense mirrors and reflects the life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Church functions, 'led by the Spirit... to make God the Father and His incarnate Son present in a sense visible, while ceaselessly renewing and purifying herself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit' (*Church in the Modern World 21*). The Second Vatican Council taught, 'The universal Church is seen to be 'a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (*Constitution on the Church 4*).

"The Church must show the world the meaning of living in relationship, one person to another, as the Three Persons in God live in each other. The Church does not exist except as a group of people united in their belief in Christ, for 'where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst' (Mt 18:20). Just as the identity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit comes from the relationship each has with the others, so the identity of the members of the Church flows from the relationship of love which generates life and produces good works. In doing so they present the Church as an image of the Trinity" (*LLI 66*).

# The Lesson Plan

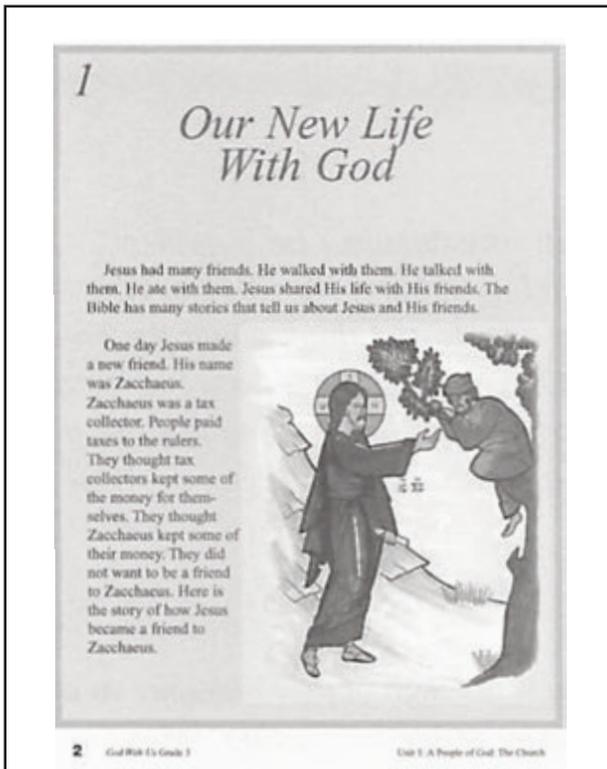
## Opening

[Welcome the children with the Christian greeting according to your jurisdiction.] *Let's gather around the icon corner. Does anyone know the name of this icon? (Holy Trinity) We will start our prayers this morning with a moment of silence while we look at the angels and think about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now we will begin to pray the "Our Father." What do we do first? (We make the sign of the cross.) We gather our first three fingers together as one to remind us of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let's pray together: "In the name .... Our Father. ..."* [Use the translation for your jurisdiction.]

## Introduction

[Before the students arrive, place a construction paper leaf and pencil on each desk.] *Welcome to all of you. I am very happy to see you today, and I am sure you are happy to see each other. Many of us already know each other, but today we are going to get to know each other better. Please write your first name on the leaf on your desk. Then I will collect your leaf and put it in this paper bag.* [Give the students a minute to write their names. As you collect the leaves, say their name and "Glory to Jesus Christ."] *Now I want you to think of something you can do with a friend. Maybe it is something you did this summer with your friend. When I call the name on the leaf I take from the bag, I want you to share the activity you can do with a friend. Ready?* [After you say the name, ask the student to say the activity. Then, give the student the leaf and continue with all the names.] *Thank you for sharing some great activities. Now let's get to know each other even better. I am going to ask two of you to exchange leaves.* [Touch the desk of two students and have them exchange leaves. Continue to do this until all students are recognized.] *Now move closer to the person whose name is on the leaf. Introduce yourself by your name and identify one activity you like to do.* [Give students a few minutes even if they already know each other.]

*Talking to each other is a good way to start to become friends. Did you know Jesus had friends too? We are going to read about one of Jesus' friends, Zacchaeus. The story is in the Bible. What is the Bible? (A book that teaches us about God) The Bible stories tell us how Jesus lived. Should we live the way Jesus did? (Yes) Jesus loved everyone. If we follow Jesus, we will love everyone too. If we love the way Jesus does, we become united to God. What does united mean? (To come together as one)* [Clasp your hands together to show united.] *Let's read our lesson that teaches us how to love one another.* [Collect the leaves at the end of class and use them for name tags for the next class.]



## 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).

### Our New Life with God

What is the name of this lesson? ("Our New Life with God") What do you think it means? (Living the way God wants; following God's way)

### Here is the story of how Jesus became a friend to Zacchaeus.

Before we read the story, let's talk about why Zacchaeus did not have friends. What was his job? (Tax collector) Why didn't the people like tax collectors? (They thought they kept the money for themselves.) Listen closely to the story to find out what Jesus thinks of Zacchaeus.

Jesus said, "**Zacchaeus, come down quickly for today I must stay at your house.**"

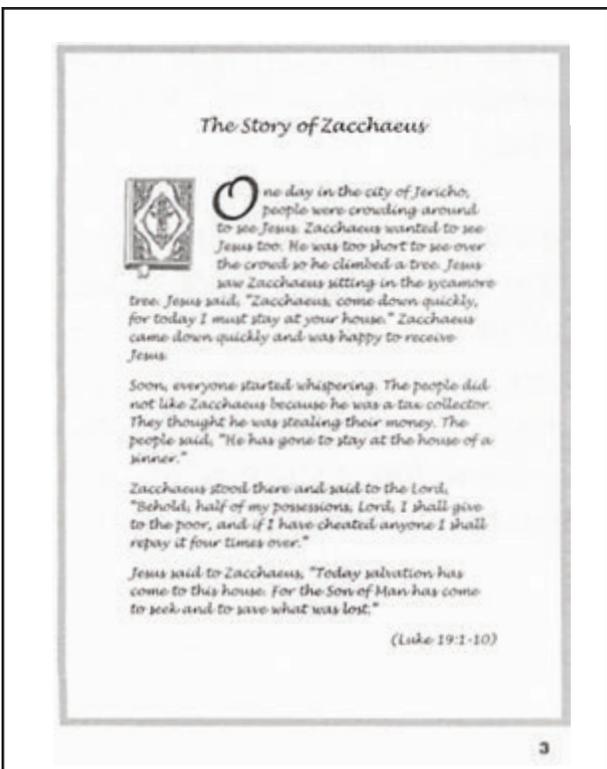
Why did Zacchaeus climb a sycamore tree? (He wanted to see Jesus.) How would you feel if Jesus said He wanted to stay in your house?

**... if I have cheated anyone I shall repay it four times over."**

What did Zacchaeus tell Jesus he will do? (He will give to the poor and will give back money he took.) "Four times over" means he will give back four times more than he took. If he took one dollar, he will pay back four.

**... and to save what was lost."**

Jesus called to Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his house. What did Zacchaeus say he will do now that He is a friend of Jesus? (He will give to the poor and pay back money he took.)



## We are to love everyone.

What does it mean to live a new life with God? (We are to live the way God wants.) Who shows us how to live our new life? (Jesus) Whom should we love? (Everyone)

## Jesus taught us how to live our new life with God.

Last year you learned about the 10 rules God gave us. What are they called? (The Ten Commandments) You also learned the Greatest Commandment, the one we just read. Let's read that together again. [Read aloud.] What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself"? (Be nice to other people in the same way you want them to be nice to you.) God gave us the Greatest Commandment to tell us how to grow in love with Him and our neighbors.

Now we have to do what Jesus tells us. Will that be hard? Why do you think it might be hard? What would the world be like if we all followed the Greatest Commandment? (Peaceful and loving) That is the way Jesus wants us to live.

Jesus invites everyone to a new life with God. In our new life with God, we are to love as God loves. We are to love everyone.

Through the Mystery of Baptism we begin our new life with God. We become united to God. God wants us to continue to grow in our love of Him and each other.

Jesus teaches us how to love. He shows us how to be friends with everyone. He tells us how to grow closer to God. Jesus helps us follow God's commandments.



**O**ne day a man asked Jesus, "Which is the first of all the commandments?"

Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'"

"The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

(Mark 12:28-31)

Jesus taught us how to live our new life with God.

**Words to Remember:**  
**Zacchaeus:** A friend of Jesus  
**Commandments:** Rules given to show us how to grow in love of God and our neighbor.

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## Activity Tracks

### Basic: The Greatest Commandment

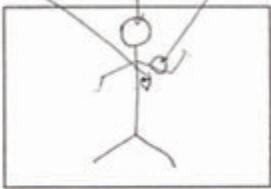
Jesus taught us the Greatest Commandment to tell us how to grow in our love of God and of each other. Let's read the words together. [Read aloud using their books.] Today we are going to draw ourselves while we think about how we are to live. [Encourage the reluctant drawers to use stick figures. Tell them to draw a line from mind to the head to represent "mind," another to the chest to represent "heart" and a third to the muscle in their arm to represent "strength."] Let's read and complete the first part before we draw our pictures. [Read and complete each section separately.]

**The Greatest Commandment**

I. Fill in the blanks with the words below the commandment.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."

heart      mind      strength



II. In the space above, draw a picture of yourself. Draw a line from the words listed for the commandment to that part of your body.

III. In the space below, draw a picture of you and a friend. Show yourself helping your friend in a way that you would want your friend to help you. Some examples could be helping with school work or household chores.



"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).

**Group:** Reenacting the Story of Zacchaeus

*We listened to a Bible story today. What was the name of the tax collector in that story? Let's try to act out that story. Who do we need to act out this story? [As the students name Jesus, Zacchaeus, and the townspeople, ask for volunteers to play the parts.] Let's pretend that chair is a tree. Zacchaeus, sit in the tree and try to make it look as if you are trying to see someone. Townspeople, you gather around Zacchaeus so he can't see through you. Now Jesus start walking near the tree. Townspeople, look happy that you are seeing Jesus.*

*Jesus: Zacchaeus, come down from that tree. I want to stay at your house tonight. [Tell the person playing Jesus to say these words or something similar.]*

*Zacchaeus: Do you mean me? Okay!*

*Townspeople: I can't believe Jesus likes Zacchaeus. Doesn't He know he is a thief? All tax collectors are thieves. [Encourage the students to complain.]*

*Zacchaeus: Thank You, Jesus. I will give money to the poor. If I cheated anyone, I will give them more money that I took. I'll give them four times more money than I took. Thank You, Jesus, for coming to my house.*

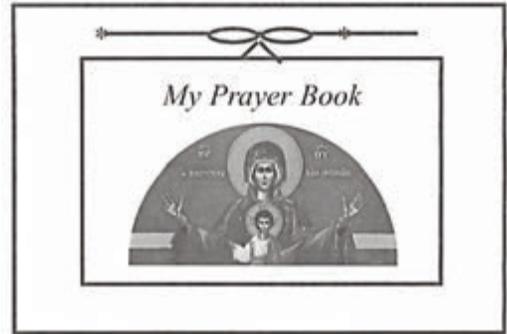
*Jesus and Zacchaeus smile and walk around the room one more time while the townspeople keep whispering, pointing, and gossiping.*

[Praise and thank the students for the performance.] *All of you were great! Are the townspeople being unkind in this story? Why? What would they want Jesus to do? (They want Him to ignore Zacchaeus.) What does Jesus do? (Jesus calls to Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus answers.) Jesus calls to us also. He wants us to walk with Him and follow Him every day even if our friends want us to ignore Him. What is Jesus asking us to do for other people? (Be kind; Treat them the way you want to be treated.) [If there is time, encourage the children to talk about ways to be nice to everyone.]*

**Craft:** “Prayer Book” Cover

**Materials:** Icon of the Sign, prayer book worksheet, construction paper, yarn (24-inch length per student), glue, hole punch.

*Jesus taught us how to love God and how to love one another. What are some ways we can show God we love Him completely? (By going to church and praying) Praying is a special way of being with God. When we pray, we are thinking about and talking with God. This year we are going to learn some new prayers. Today we are going to make a cover to keep a copy of the new prayers we learn. By the end of this year, each of you will have your own prayer book.*

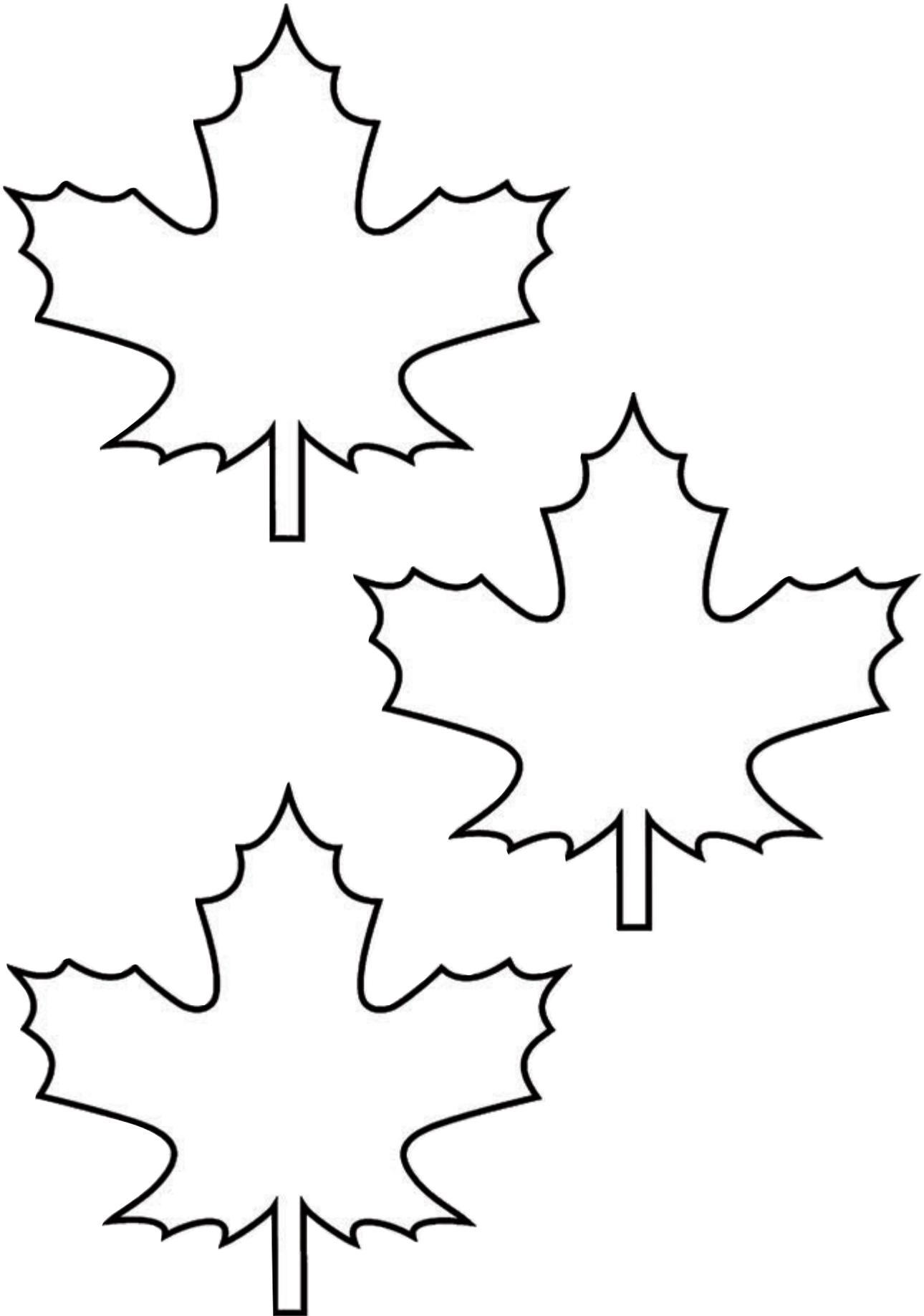


[Give each child a copy of the cover for their prayer book and a piece of construction paper. This cover will be pasted on the construction paper folded in half from the top down.] *Let's look at this icon. [Hold up the Icon of the Sign.] This is the Icon of the Sign. Who do we see in this icon? (The Theotokos and Jesus) It is called the Icon of the Sign: the sign is Christ—God becoming man. This icon helps us remember God is with us. We see the Theotokos with her arms raised, a way to show she is praying. We will put this icon on the front of our prayer books because the Theotokos' prayerful life is a perfect example for us to follow.*

*Fold one piece of construction paper in half—from the top down. Glue your icon to the front of the cover. Punch two holes [1/2 inch from the top and 2 inches from each side] below the top of the fold. Pull the yarn through the holes and tie in a bow on the front side. This is the cover for your prayer book. On the back of this cover, write your name. Each time we learn a new prayer, we will put a copy of it inside our cover.*

**Closing:** *Let's say our closing prayers. Stand quietly for one moment and think about our heart, mind, soul, and strength joining together to thank God. Let's start our prayer with the sign of the cross and say the "Our Father."*

[Dismiss the children with the Christian greeting according to your jurisdiction.]



# MY PRAYER BOOK



# MY PRAYER BOOK

