

# Jesus is Our Savior

**Objective:** The students will be able to

- 1) define Savior as a special leader who saves people and
- 2) explain that Jesus is our Savior Who brings us to eternal life.

## **For the Catechist**

When we say Jesus saved us, children might wonder, "From what did Jesus save us?" Jesus saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life. God's plan was to have us united to Him forever, but Adam and Eve broke that union by disobeying God. Jesus united us to God through His life, suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus Christ, our Savior, granted us life.

**God's Plan.** God's plan includes granting us free will. Adam and Eve chose not to follow God's instructions. They separated themselves from God, the Source of Life. Just as a flower cut from the root will die, so too Adam and Eve cut off from God had to die. The biblical accounts in the Old Testament show how people continued to suffer the consequences of the separation from God. But the prophets kept reminding the people that God loves them and God will send a Savior. The prophets told the people to be patient for God's plan to be revealed. The Savior would bring them to eternal life, and unite them to God.

**Our Salvation.** This lesson explains at the children's level the mystery of God's plan. Since children enjoy mysteries, they will be able to relate to the surprise and wonderment of God's revelation: God sent us His Son to restore our unity with God. The mystery as to how the damage of Adam's separation from God would be repaired is revealed through Christ. "For if by that one person's transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one person Jesus Christ overflow for the many" (Rom 5:15).

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

**Opening:** "O Only-begotten Son"

**Introduction:** Discussion of a favorite place

**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:* Jesus Is Our Savior
- *Group:* "Resurrection Icon" puzzle
- *Craft:* "Jesus Is Our Savior" Refrigerator Magnet

**Closing:** "O Only-begotten Son"

**[For Lesson 4 the children will need information about their baptism. At the end of class give the "My Baptism" worksheet at the end of this lesson to each child to take home to complete and return next week.]**

## **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:*  
The Descent into Hades

## **Teaching Pics:**

Pascha (FIO)

## ***Background Reading***

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

### **The Mystery**

"The unknown is frightening but mystery is not simply the unknowable. It is also the hope that what is veiled can be uncovered, at least within the limitations of our nature. St. Paul was able to write, 'God gave me the commission to preach among you His word in its fullness: that mystery hidden from ages and generations past but now revealed to His holy ones' (Cor 1:25-26).

Mystery actually implies that answers to our ultimate questions do exist, although we cannot comprehend them. By the very fact of their existence, mysteries call us to transcend our human nature and point towards the infinite" (*LLII* 11).

### **God's Plan**

"Humanity's choice not to participate in God's plan for the world results in disaster. Adam and Eve lose their companionship with God and their access to the tree of life. They are condemned to eventual death: the men to work by sweat and toil and the women to experience pain in childbearing. They feel the pangs of guilt and lose the beautiful homeland that had been under their dominion. By his act of murder, Cain becomes a person despised, a wanderer without a real home in this world. As sin spreads, God destroys nearly the whole race He had made and restarts it with Noah. Through pride human beings lose the ability to communicate and become strangers to one another 'scattered all over the earth' (Gn 11:9). The results of sin are always death, alienation, and confusion. These tales succinctly tell the story of human history. From the very beginning we develop a habit of acting contrary to our true well-being by rejecting the plan of the Creator. In vain and false attempts to become like God on our own terms, we lost our true likeness to God" (*LLI* 27).

### **The New Adam**

"Elsewhere St. Paul's imagery is not that of the courtroom, but of Eden. Christ is seen as the New Adam, giving humanity a fresh start. In Him we are recreated, brought back to paradise again. We often hear this theme at Christmas as our Church's poetry links Eden and Bethlehem and even see it in our homes where we set up the tree of life with all its exotic 'fruit'" (*WEF* 35).

### **Completion of the Father's Plan**

"The Purpose of Christ's coming among us, then, was to complete the Father's plan for humanity, to restore the likeness lost in the beginning. But this new creation was not meant to end with Christ: it was meant to be passed on to us, just as our physical humanity - and our brokenness - are passed on to us from our first parents. 'God became man,' in the famous words of St. Irenaeus, 'so that man might become divine.' Just as we share the broken humanity of Adam, so too are we meant to share the completed humanity of Jesus. A Christian, then, is one whose imperfect and broken human nature is reconstituted by being mingled with Christ's perfected and deified human nature: grafted into Christ as branches on a vine (cf Jn 15:1-5). Again the anaphora of St. Basil expresses this concisely for us, 'He was found in the likeness of our lowly nature so that He might raise us to the likeness of His glory.'

"The Fathers called this process of recapturing the likeness to God through Christ by the term deification. St. Maximos the Confessor, for example, said that the Christian is to become a living icon of Christ, to become the same with Christ, and must even 'become' the Lord himself, adding, 'if this saying does not appear too strong to some.' Thus for these Fathers the imitation of Christ would not simply mean following His teachings or imitating His actions, but becoming one with Him in a true, organic way. God's way for us is no longer seen as the keeping of the law, but as becoming divine by participation in the divine energies through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit" (STBH 7-8).

### **The Original Plan**

"Christ came to bring all back to the original plan, which was put on hold by Adam's sin. Before Christ, everything was getting more and more 'unglued,' separated, falling further from union and communion. Now another force is at work. Things are coming back together in Christ. The Fathers call this 'Recapitulation' (*anakephaleosis*). Everything finds its proper place again, with Christ as head:

'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He Himself might be preeminent. For it pleased God to make absolute fullness reside in Him and through Him to reconcile all things in His person, whether those on earth or those in heaven making peace by the blood of His cross' (Col 1:15-20, NAB)" (LLIII 16).

### **Christ: The Center of All**

"Christ is the center of all reality: everything is made through Him; everything is revealed through Him; everything finds its fulfillment in Him. This was realized only after His Resurrection and Ascension. We began to see that He came in order that we might have new life, and that we might have the divine likeness restored in us.

"The incarnation is the key to our understanding of the normal Christian life, our spirituality. Christ is not simply the perfect Man to show us that it could be done, but to actually communicate this life to us. He is God who became one of us so that we could bear God within us, so that the likeness could be restored in us as well as in Himself. Christ is the first-fruits of those who were asleep, the first-born from among the dead; we are meant to be the rest of the crop. This is why St. Peter the Apostle could write that we might become sharers in the divine nature:

'His [God's] divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and power. Through these, He has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, *so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature*, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire' (2 Peter 1:3-4)" (LLIII 16-17).

## **Theosis**

"This is what the Eastern Churches call Theosis, the central concept in our spirituality: that we might become deified, divinized, by having the life of God live within us. What Christ is by nature, we are to become by adoption.

"St. Irenaeus originally seems to have made the statement that St. Athanasius and most of the Fathers after him have echoed: 'God became man so that we might become God.' The Word of God takes on our nature so that we might have God's life in us restoring the likeness....

"Christ's followers only realized this at the climax of God's plan for us: the coming of the Holy Spirit" (*LLIII* 17).

# The Lesson Plan

## Opening

[Welcome the children with the Christian greeting according to your jurisdiction.] *Today we will start our prayers by making the sign of the cross and bowing with respect as we say, "In the name of the Father . . . ." Our prayer today is one that you have heard before. We sing [or say] this prayer during the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. [Use the prayer worksheet with the translation for your jurisdiction. Make copies for the students. These copies will be placed in their prayer books as part of the craft in Lesson 4.] Let's begin, "O Only-begotten Son . . . ." How many of you recognize the words? We say this prayer during every Divine Liturgy.*

## Introduction

*Does anyone remember how we are to love God? I'll start saying the Greatest Commandment that we learned last week, but I'll need your help. When I point to a part of my body, I'd like you to point to that same part of your body and say the word with me: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your [point to your heart and let the children say heart], with all your soul, with all your [point to your mind and let the children say mind], and with all your [point to your muscles and let the children say strength]" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus taught us how to grow together in God's love. He showed us how to live so we can be united to God. What does united mean? (Together as one) [Clasp hands together to show one.]*

*Before we turn to our books, let's think about a favorite place. Close your eyes and think about a place you like to be. Okay, open your eyes. I was thinking about the woods near our house, and I was going for a walk with my family. Would anyone else like to describe your favorite place? [Share for a few minutes.] How would you feel if you could never go to your favorite place? I'd probably try to figure out a way to get there again. Would you?*

*Today we are going to read about a perfect place that God created. It is called Paradise. Does anyone know who lived in Paradise? (Adam and Eve) What happened when they disobeyed God? (They lost Paradise.) And they were not united to God anymore. But God had a very special plan to help us. God sent us His son Jesus. Jesus saved us from being without God forever.*

*Let's turn to our lesson.*

2

## Jesus is Our Savior



God created Adam and Eve to be with Him forever. They lived in Paradise. There was no sickness, sorrow, or death. God's plan was for them to be happy. Adam and Eve did not listen to God. They did not listen, just as children do not listen to their parents.

Adam and Eve did not follow what God told them to do. They did what they wanted. They did not stay united to God. What they did brought sin into the world. Now people would have to suffer and die. Adam and Eve, who were made to live forever, would have to die too.

God's plan included a way to save Adam and Eve and all humanity.

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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).

### Our New Life with God

Does anyone know what Savior means?

Why do you think Jesus is our Savior? [Let the children share ideas.] Let's read our lesson to learn about Jesus, Our Savior.

### ... would have to die too.

What was God's plan for Adam and Eve? (To live with Him in Paradise forever) Why didn't Adam and Eve follow God's plan? (They wanted to do what they wanted, not what God wanted.) What happened when Adam and Eve followed their own plan? (They broke away from God.) Just like a flower will die if it is cut from its root, Adam and Eve would have to die because they cut themselves off from God. They cut themselves off from the Source of Life, and the consequence is their death.

### God sent His Son Jesus.

Who were the Israelites? (The chosen people of God) What are commandments? (Rules, laws) Last year you learned about Moses and the commandments. How many commandments were given to Moses? (10) What is a covenant? (An agreement)

### ... brought us to eternal life.

Who did God send? (His Son) What happened after Jesus died on the cross and was buried? (He rose from the dead!) What feast day celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead? (Pascha) Jesus united us to God forever.

Many years after Adam and Eve died, God called a people together. They were His chosen people. They were the Israelites. He made a covenant with them. A covenant is an agreement. He gave them His commandments to follow. God wanted the Israelites to stay close to Him. He told them to let other people know about Him.



God promised that He would send them a Savior, a special leader to save them. God sent His Son Jesus. Jesus is our Savior Who brings us to eternal life.

**F**or God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Jesus showed us how to live by God's commandments. He taught us that we need to forgive those who hurt us. Jesus taught us that we need to ask for forgiveness when we sin. Jesus showed us that God forgives us.

Jesus died on the cross and was buried, but He did not stay in the grave. He rose from the dead! Jesus conquered death by death! God sent us His Son to save us from eternal death. Jesus is our Savior Who brings us to eternal life.

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**...and granting us eternal life.**

*Through Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, God forgave Adam and Eve for choosing their own plan. God gave us forgiveness for all of our sins. Jesus' resurrection united us to God forever. How do we stay united to God? (We love Him and follow His ways.) What are some ways we can show Jesus we thank Him for granting us eternal life? (We can pray, be nice to everyone, follow the commandments, go to church.)*

**Jesus is our Savior Who brings us to eternal life.**

*Why is Jesus called our Savior? (He saved us and brought us to eternal life.) Let's look at the icon on this page. Who is Jesus pulling from the grave? (Adam and Eve) He is saving them and all people from eternal death. He is uniting them to God.*

When Adam and Eve sinned, they brought suffering and death into the world. God sent His Son Jesus to be our special leader, our Savior. Jesus' life, suffering, death, and resurrection saved us and granted eternal life. We want to live each day thanking Jesus for saving us from eternal death and granting us eternal life.



Jesus is our Savior Who brings us to eternal life.

**Words to Remember:**  
**Savior:** A special leader who saves people. Jesus is our Savior Who brings us to eternal life.  
**Israelites:** The chosen people of God.  
**Covenant:** An agreement.  
**Eternal life:** To be in God's presence forever.  
**Eternal death:** Never to be in God's presence.

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**Activity Tracks**

**Basic:** Jesus Is Our Savior  
(This worksheet is in the student text.)

*Today we learned that Jesus did many wonderful things for us. What did Jesus do for us? (He saved us and brought us to eternal life.) Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection saved us. What do we call Jesus because He saved us? (Our Savior) Unscramble the words that tell us how Jesus saved us. Then on the lines at the bottom of the page write a thank you note to Jesus.*

**Jesus Is Our Savior**

I. Read the following sentences. Unscramble the letters and write the correct word to complete the sentence. Use the following words to help with the spelling:

Savior Israelites covenant save Adam listen

- God's plan was to have Adam and Eve live with Him forever in paradise. (madA)
- They did not listen to God. They were no longer with God. (sttel)
- Many years later God called the Israelites together. (lsloratee)
- God made an agreement with them. A covenant is an agreement. (tverlano)
- God promised to send the Israelites someone to save them from eternal death. (vesa)
- God sent them Jesus to be their Savior. Jesus' death and resurrection gave us eternal life. (vsiorS)

II. Write a letter to Jesus to thank Him for being Our Savior.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group:** "Resurrection Icon" puzzle

*Materials:* "Resurrection icon" worksheet puzzle pieces, [Cut along the dark lines to make puzzle pieces and hide them around the room before the students arrive], one 11" x 14" piece of black construction paper, glue, and a marker

*Today we are going to put a puzzle together. The final puzzle will look like the Resurrection icon, but we have to find all the pieces first. I have them hidden around the room. When you find a piece, bring it over to the table so we can complete the picture.*

[Keep the final center piece. When all the other pieces are found, tell them you have the final piece.] *Jesus will complete the picture for us. Now let's gather around the table and glue the pieces together on this heavier construction paper. Let's add the title, "Jesus Is Our Savior." Why is Jesus our Savior? (He saved us and brought us to eternal life.) How did Jesus unite us to God? (Through Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, we were united to God.)*



**Craft:** "Jesus Is Our Savior" Refrigerator Magnet

*Materials:* "Jesus Is Our Savior" worksheet, strip of magnets with adhesive backs, glue, gold sequins, small paper dessert plates

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Today we are going to make a sign for our refrigerator. What do you think our sign from today's lesson should be? (Jesus is our Savior) Let's glue the circle onto the center of the paper plate. Decorate the rest of the plate with gold sequins. Attach two magnets—one at the top of the plate and one at the bottom.*

**Closing**

*For our closing prayer we are going to say the same prayer we said at the beginning of class. This prayer is our way to thank Jesus for saving us. "O only begotten Son. . . ."*

[For Lesson 4 the children will need information about their baptism. Give the "My Baptism" worksheet from the last page in this lesson to each child to take home to complete and return next week.]

## Hymn of the Incarnation

Only-begotten Son and Word of God,  
immortal as You are, You condescended for  
our salvation to take flesh of the holy  
Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, and  
without undergoing change, You became  
man. You were crucified, O Christ God, and  
crushed Death by Your death. You are One  
of the Holy Trinity, equal in glory with the  
Father and the Holy Spirit: save us.

Melkite  
Greek  
Catholic  
Church

## Hymn of the Incarnation

O only-begotten Son and Word of God,  
Thou who art immortal, yet didst  
condescend for the sake of our salvation to  
become incarnate of the holy Mother of  
God and ever-virgin Mary, without change  
becoming man, and being crucified,  
O Christ our God, with death Thou didst  
conquer Death. Thou who art One of the  
Holy Trinity, glorified together with the  
Father and the Holy Spirit: save us.

Romanian  
Greek  
Catholic  
Diocese of  
Canton

## **Hymn of the Incarnation**

O only-begotten Son and Word of God,  
Who, being immortal deigned for our  
salvation to become incarnate of the holy  
Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, and  
became man without change. You were also  
crucified, O Christ our God, and by death  
have trampled Death, being One of the Holy  
Trinity, glorified with the Father and the  
Holy Spirit: save us.

Ruthenian  
Byzantine  
Catholic  
Metro-  
politan  
Province

## **Hymn of the Incarnation**

Only-begotten Son and Word of God, You  
are immortal. For our salvation You chose  
to take flesh of the holy Mother of God  
(Theotokos), the ever-virgin Mary. Without  
change You became human. You were  
crucified, O Christ God, but by death You  
conquered Death. Since You are One of the  
Holy Trinity, equal in glory to the Father  
and to the Holy Spirit: save us.

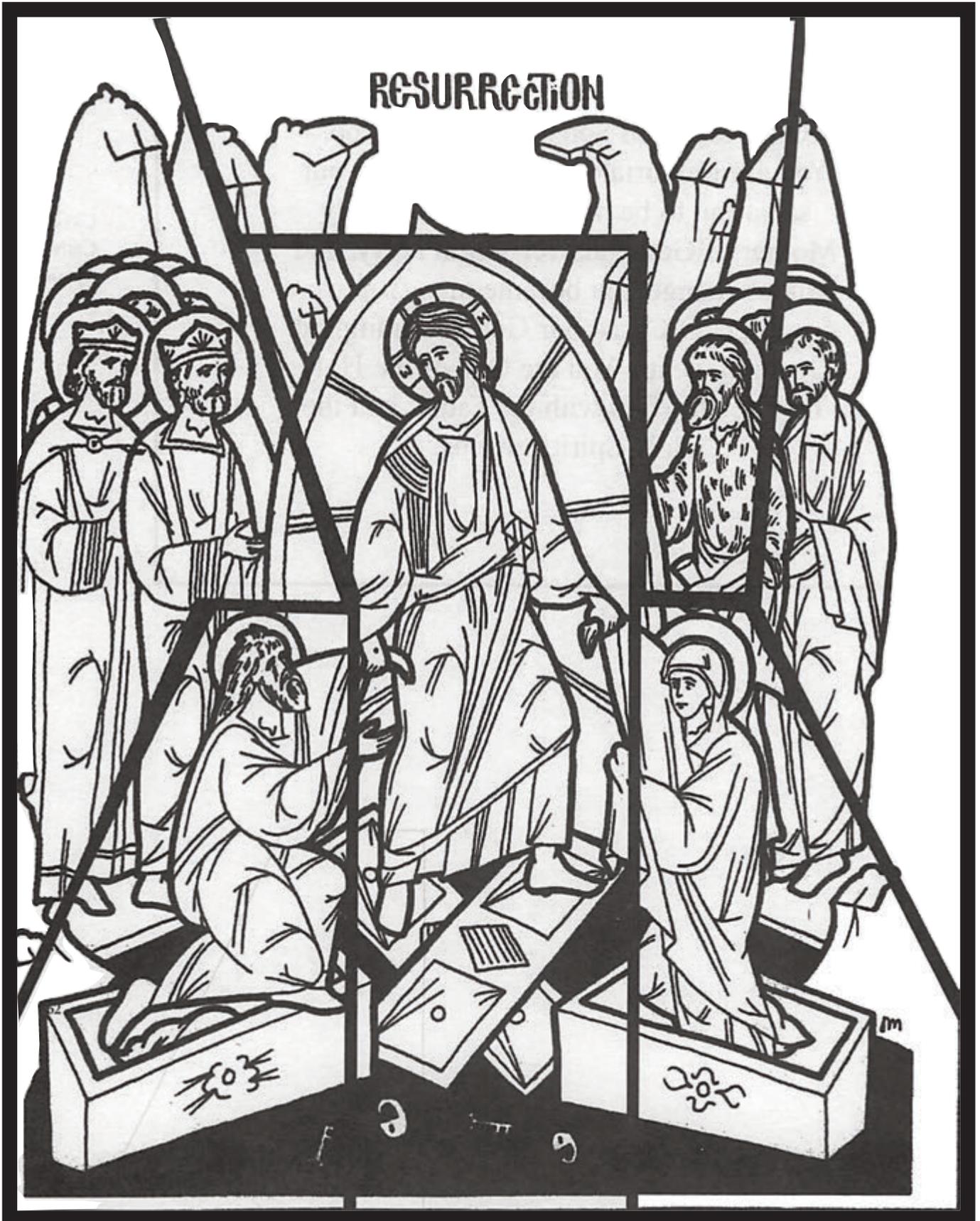
Ukrainian  
Catholic  
Diocese of  
St.  
Josaphat

## **Hymn of the Incarnation**

Only-begotten Son and Word of God,  
You are immortal and You willed for our  
salvation to be made flesh of the holy  
Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, and  
without change You became man. You were  
crucified, O Christ our God and trampled  
Death by death. You are One of the Holy  
Trinity, glorified with the Father and the  
Holy Spirit: save us.

Ukrainian  
Catholic  
Synod

Enlarge this puzzle and paste onto heavier paper. Cut along dark lines to make puzzle pieces.  
Continue with the "Group" activity instructions.





Dear Parents,

Learning about becoming a member of the Church is part of Lesson 4 that we will discuss in two weeks. This year our text, *God Calls Us Together*, emphasizes that we respond to God's call by receiving the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist.

Please help your children learn more about their baptismal day, the day they became a member of the Church. If possible, spend some time looking at pictures and sharing stories. While you are discussing their day, please complete the following information. We will use the information to complete the activity called "I Am a Member of Our Church," part of Lesson 4.

I will collect these completed forms at the beginning of the next two classes. If you would like, send in one or two pictures for the children to share.

Child's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Location (town) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Church of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Godparents' Names \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for helping your children learn more about the day they became a member of the Church.

Sincerely,