

# We Meet the Lord Jesus in the Holy Place

**Objective:** The students will be able to name three signs of God's presence found on the Holy Table: the Gospel Book, the hand cross and the Tabernacle.

## **For the Catechist**

A sign is something that identifies a location or points to an action. When we see a stop sign, we know to stop. When we see the name of a street on a sign, we know our location. Symbols identify a real experience. A symbol participates in the reality of the experience. Our church has both signs and symbols to help us realize God is with us. This lesson reinforces the meaning of the signs of God's presence in the Holy Place.

In the Preschool book there is a lesson about the Holy Table. The children learned to recognize and name what is on the Holy Table. This year the children will build on this knowledge and learn how these signs point to God's presence in the Holy Place.

One of the psalms praises God's presence in the Holy Place: "O Lord, I love the house where you dwell, the tenting-place of your glory" (Psalm 26:8). We also need to learn to love God's house, our church, because God is there. By encouraging the children to attend the Divine Liturgy and other church services, we are helping them learn to want to be in the presence of the Lord. By learning to want to be with God, they will learn to think about God always. This will help them make the right choices as they grow older.

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

### **Opening:** "O Heavenly King"

[If your priest agreed to tell the children about the signs of God's presence on the Holy Table, have the children go right to the church. Say the opening prayer in church.]

**Introduction:** Coming together at the table  
**Need:** white tablecloth, Bible, and cross

**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:* Our Church
- *Group:* Guess the Word
- *Craft:* Our Church Diorama  
*Alternate:* Build Your Own Iconostasis and Altar kit

### **Closing:** "O Heavenly King"

[Ask children to bring in a picture from home for next week's lesson.]

## **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:* The Four Evangelists

## **Teaching Pics:**

Divine Liturgy (DL 2, DL 8, DL 17)

## **Background Reading**

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

### **The Holy Place**

"The sanctuary and the nave have been given different meanings. The altar area represents the throne of God, become truly present as 'our Father in heaven' who has 'lowered the heavens' to dwell among us in His only Son. The nave, place of the worshipping community, signifies the pilgrim Church on its journey toward the kingdom of God. The goal of this pilgrim Church is to achieve unity with God beginning in this life and culminating in the future world. ('Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.')" (LLII 14).

### **The Altar, The Holy Table**

"The altar is separated from the nave as befitting God's place. It is on a raised platform, set back from the rest of the church and has a screen in front of it. All this serves to remind us that we are NOT God, and God is NOT us. Out of His love for us He comes to us and becomes one of us, but He still remains forever beyond us. As He has willed to come down to us, so even today His Word is read in the middle of the congregation, and the gifts are brought out to the people, both at the Great Entrance and for Communion, for He must come to us; we cannot go to Him without His help. For this reason also, most of the other Mysteries of the Church are celebrated in the midst of the people.

"In most churches today the bema is no longer found. Instead, there is a raised area in front of the icon screen usually extending its width, called the solea. In the center of the solea is a small rounded extension, the ambon, from which the Gospel is read. Again, we see the physical reality of the Word reaching out to us, and not staying 'in its place'" (LW 44).

### **The Gospels**

"The evangelists do not present a photographic reproduction of Jesus' words and deeds. They sketch a portrait of the meaning behind His words and deeds as understood by the Church enlightened through the Holy Spirit. Our understanding of the Gospels and the other Scriptures, as well as the whole pattern of God's dealings with humanity, is aided when we come to appreciate this stance" (LLI 49).

### **The Gospel Readings**

"During the course of the year the Byzantine Churches read all of the four Gospels at divine services. The Gospel of St. Matthew is read from Pentecost to the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14). The Gospel of St. Luke is read from then to the beginning of the Great Fast. The Gospel of St. Mark is read during the Great Fast. The weekday readings of Mark occur at the ends of the periods of Matthew and Luke. The Gospel of St. John is read during the fifty days from Pascha (Easter) to Pentecost, representing the most ancient part of the cycle. Additionally, the Gospel passages recounting special events in our Lord's life are read on the annual commemorating feasts. Only part of the public reading of the Gospel can be heard if attendance is limited to Sundays and Holydays" (LLI 50).

### **The Proclamation of the Good News**

"The Gospels are the Word of God, not because they mechanically reproduce everything that Christ said but because they are written about him under the impulse of the Spirit whom Christ has sent. "I have told you all this while I am still here with you. The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will call to your minds all that I have told you" (John 14:25-26). The Holy Spirit came and 'overshadowed' the Evangelists. He inspired them to verbalize in the best possible way the message of the Gospel.

"The Gospels translate into human language and into human experience the life-giving Incarnation of the Son, who thus became again 'incarnate of the Holy Spirit' in the word of man. God allows us to meet him in his mystery in this other way. The Word of God is now living with us forever in a Book through which he still comes alive in us and will awaken in us the same life that he awakened in its authors and in those to whom he originally spoke" (FG 147).

# The Lesson Plan

## **Opening**

Before beginning, cover your classroom table with a table cloth. Put the Bible and a cross on the table. Then begin, *today we are going to pray at this table. Let's pray, "O Heavenly King."*

[If your priest agreed to tell the children about the signs of God's presence on the Holy Table, have the children go right to the church. Say the opening prayer in church. Use this time with the priest for the introduction. If you were unable to arrange a tour, continue with the "Introduction" below.]

## **Introduction**

*Praying by the table with the white cloth was special today. What else was on that table? (A Bible and a cross) Now we are going to move the Bible and the cross to our icon table. This time we are going to gather around the table and talk about the many important meals we have at a dinner table. Soon it will be Thanksgiving. How many of you enjoy a special Thanksgiving dinner? What are some other special dinners? (Birthdays, Christmas, Pascha)*

*Why do we gather around the table when it is time to eat? (We want to be together while we eat.) At church the same thing happens. We want to be near each other when we worship God. We come together to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. The table we gather around is the Holy Table. Does anyone remember the name of the holiest part of the church? (Holy Place) The Holy Table is in that part, the Holy Place. At the Holy Table the priest offers the gift of bread and wine. Just as we joined together to eat at the table this morning, we join together in church to eat of the Body and Blood of Jesus that was prepared at the Holy Table.*

*Is there anything else on the Holy Table in church? [Arrange for the children to go into church even if your priest is not available. Let the children venerate the icon on the icon table and stop there.] Where is the Holy Table? (On the other side of the icon screen) Are you able to see anything on the Holy Table? [This might be possible in some churches.] (Gospel Book, the cross, the tabernacle, and candles) Let's venerate the icon on the icon table before we go back to our rooms. Let's walk quietly back to the room.*

*Last week we learned that we should kiss the icon on the icon table when we come to church. Does anyone remember why? (To meet and worship God as soon as we come to church.) Today we learned that Jesus is present in the Holy Place. The icon table is right before the Holy Place. That is a good place to go to start worshiping God.*

*Let's turn to our lesson.*

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## *We Meet the Lord Jesus in the Holy Place*



When we come into church, we bow to honor God. We know we are in God's presence. We kiss the icon on the icon table. We may light a candle as our offering to God.

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Unit 2: We Meet the Lord in Church

### **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).*

**... we bow to honor God.**

*Why do we bow when we come into church? (To honor God. God is present in church.) Why should we make the sign of the cross and bow when we enter and leave the church? (To show respect to God)*

*What does respect mean? (To honor, to value, to worship)*

**... the priest takes the Eucharist to the people receiving Holy Communion.**

*In what part of the church is the Holy Table? (In the Holy Place) The Divine Liturgy is celebrated at the Holy Table. What does the priest do at the Holy Table? (Changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus) The priest takes the Holy Communion from the Holy Table to the people who are waiting in the nave of the church. From the Holy Place Jesus comes to us.*

[Have the children name what they see on the Holy Table in the picture. As you read the next page, you might want to have the children turn back to look at the picture again.]

At the front of the church is the Holy Place, the most special part of the church. In the Holy Place there are many signs that show God is with us. Many of these signs are on the Holy Table. The Holy Table is in the middle of the Holy Place. At this table the priest serves the Divine Liturgy. At this table the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. From this Holy Table, the priest takes the Eucharist to the people receiving Holy Communion.

The Tabernacle is also on the Holy Table. The tabernacle is the place in which Eucharist from the Divine Liturgy is kept. Our priest or deacon takes the Eucharist from the Tabernacle to people who are sick and cannot come to church.



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**We listen to the reading of the Gospel during the Divine Liturgy.**

*Who wrote the Gospels? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)  
When do we listen to the Gospel reading? (During the Divine Liturgy.) Who speaks to us in the Gospel? (Jesus)*

**Every time we kiss the hand cross, we worship and honor Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

*We learned in our second lesson that a Savior is a special leader who brings people to eternal life. Why is Jesus our Savior? (He granted us eternal life.) Why should we worship and honor Him? (We want to thank Him for uniting us to God.)*

**We meet the Lord Jesus in many ways in the Holy Place.**

*Name three signs of God's presence on the Holy Table. (The Gospel Book, Tabernacle, and hand cross) What are some ways we meet and worship God through these signs? (Kissing icons, receiving the Eucharist, listening to the Gospel, kissing the hand cross)*

**Activity Tracks**

**Basic: Our Church**

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

*During the past two weeks, we have been learning about our church. Today's worksheet gives you a chance to see how many words you remember. Circle the letters that spell the word. Then list the words at the bottom of the page. [Even if there are two words such as Gospel Book, count it as one. There are ten words in the puzzle.]*

We see the Gospel Book on the Holy Table. We see the icons of Jesus and the four Gospel writers on the front of the Gospel Book. Jesus speaks to us through the words in the Gospel Book. The four Gospel writers are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They tell us about the life of Jesus and about the Good News. The Good News is that Jesus' life, death and resurrection saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life. We listen to the reading of the Gospel during the Divine Liturgy. We listen to the Word of God.

We see the hand cross on the Holy Table. The cross shows us that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead. Jesus gained for us eternal life. Our priest uses this cross to bless us. Our priest gives us this cross to kiss at the end of some Divine Liturgias. Every time we kiss the hand cross, we worship and honor Jesus Christ, our Savior.

We see candles on the Holy Table. They are signs of the light of Christ. The Eternal Light is always burning in front of or near the Holy Table.

We meet the Lord Jesus in many ways in the Holy Place.

**Words to Remember:**

**Hand Cross:** The cross is the most known Christian symbol. It tells us of Jesus' saving death and resurrection. The hand cross is used for blessing.

**Gospel Book:** The Good News of Jesus Christ as told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This book is covered with cloth, precious metal, and icons.

**Holy Table:** Table in the middle of the Holy Place at which the priest serves the Divine Liturgy.

**Tabernacle:** The place in which the Eucharist is kept for those who are ill.

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**Our Church**

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below. They identify what you saw on your visit to the church. Circle the words and list them at the bottom of the page.

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

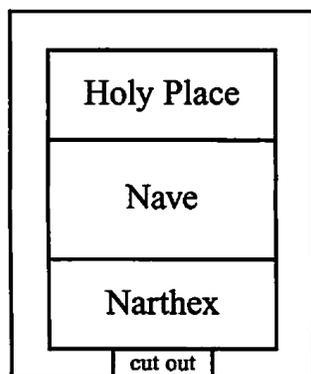
**Words:**

<u>Gospel Book</u>	<u>Narthex</u>
<u>Eternal Light</u>	<u>Tabernacle</u>
<u>Holy Table</u>	<u>Holy Place</u>
<u>Dome</u>	<u>Church</u>
<u>Hand Cross</u>	<u>Nave</u>

**Group:** Guess the Word

*Materials:* "Our Church" worksheet, chalkboard and chalk or large sheet of paper and marker

[ Have the children guess the letters for the words. When a letter is right, add a segment to the drawing of the church—either start with a blank page and add the lines or start with the outline and use a marker to darken the drawing.] *Today we are going to talk about the words we learned. But before we talk about them, we will have to guess what they are. I have some of the words on my desk. I need someone to volunteer. Pick one word, and on the board write a space for each letter of the word. The rest of us will try to guess the letters in the word. A part of the church is drawn each time the guess is right. When we have all the letters, the student who is at the board will tell what he or she learned about that word in today's lesson.* [Follow this procedure until all the words are guessed.]



**Craft:** "Our Church" Diorama

*Materials:* Box that was used last week, "Holy Place" and "Icon Screen" worksheets (copied onto card stock), scissors, markers, and glue

*Today we will furnish our church with an icon screen and a holy table. Have the children color, then cut out the drawings on the Holy Place worksheets. Glue the icon screen in the box on the line between the holy place and the nave. Glue the holy table in the middle of the holy place. Help the children identify the items on the holy table and the icons on the holy screen.*

[If there is time, cover the outside of the box with construction paper.] *Write the name of our church on the side of the box. Let's add one more part to our church. Draw a star in the part of the nave where you and your family sit.* [If you have room, display the churches and Holy Tables around the room for a few weeks before the students take them home.]

***Alternate:*** Build Your Own Church kit

*Materials:* Kit, scissors, contact cement, tape.

Disassemble the book, giving each student some items to cut out and color. Following the instructions given in the book, help the students assemble the model, using contact cement. You may wish to reinforce the joints with a heavy, clear plastic tape. Be sure that students can identify the items on the holy table. If you do not complete the project, set it aside until lesson 9.

### ***Closing***

*Let's make the sign of the cross and pray, "O Heavenly King." We can use our prayer books to help us with the words. [Keep the prayer books available on the icon table.]*

*For next week I'd like you to bring in one picture of any members of your family. [This picture will be used to introduce the concept of image that will be discussed in the icon lesson.] Please remember to bring in a picture.*

**Gospel Book**

**Narthex**

**Tabernacle**

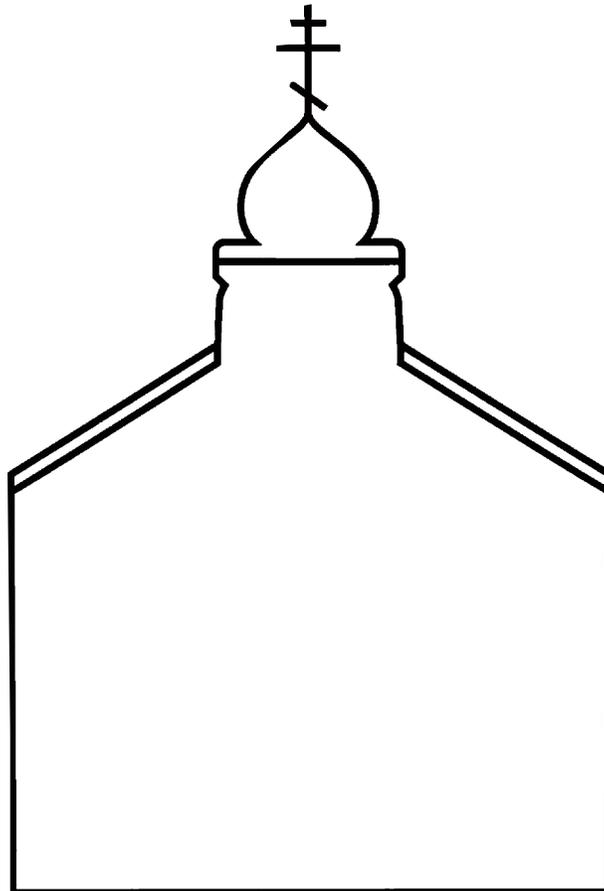
**Holy Table**

**Holy Place**

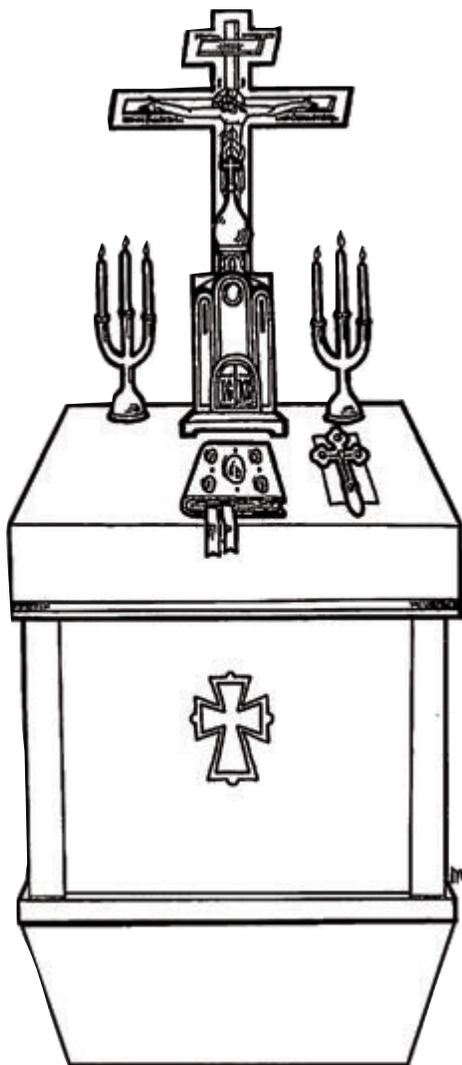
**Eternal Light**

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“Church” Worksheet



Color the Holy Table and the items on it. Cut out your completed drawing, put glue on the tab and paste it into your model in the holy place.



Color the Icon Screen and the icons on it. Cut out your completed drawing, put glue on the tabs and paste it into your model on the line separating the nave from the Holy Place.

