

2. The Service of Consecration

LESSON PLANS FOR THE CONSECRATION

OBJECTIVE:

To describe and explain the mechanics and meaning of the Service of Consecration, drawing parallels to the service of Baptism & Chrismation. If possible, invite children to fill out a list of names for inclusion in the altar (we need first/baptismal and last name, and it is not necessary that the person be baptized Orthodox.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

Print up the list of names form for each child. We have also provided the text of the Service of the Consecration, for your reference.

NOTES FOR VARYING AGE & GRADE LEVELS:

With younger groups, the emphasis should be on acting out the service, while for older students we should emphasize the meaning and symbolism of the service and its prayers.

THE PLAN

I. OPENING CONVERSATION:

When you were a baby, you were baptized and chrismated. What did that look like? What did it mean?

When we build a church, it has to be baptized too! We call it ‘consecration’. Just as baptism means that a person is dedicated to God, the church will be dedicated to God at its consecration.

Quickly recap the Baptism & Chrismation services, remembering the beautiful candle we carry, and how Father blesses the water, how the baby goes into the water three times, how the baby is chrismated with oil, how the baby is dressed all in white, and how we walk three times around the altar.

2. HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATION:

It’s time to declare the classroom a church, and decide where the altar is, and to declare one person to act as the Metropolitan. The teacher should provide some props: a little box that could pass for a reliquary, a table that can be oiled and then washed down with water, and if you can pull it off — one or two white sheets (one to put over the Metropolitan at the appropriate moment, and one to become the baptismal garment that covers the altar.)

(If you plan this for a day when the weather is lovely, you could take this project outside and really enjoy it. Let a picnic table be the altar, and process all around it.)

We’ll go through the steps of the consecration, and let the kids act them out while the teacher tells them the meaning behind each part.

1. The Vigil before the Consecration

1. The evening before the Consecration, we will clear off the altar and wait for the Metropolitan.
2. He will come and bring the relics of our three martyrs — the same ones we learned about last week. Do you remember who they are and how holy their relics are?
3. He will place them on the altar, and say prayers.
4. They’ll sit on the altar overnight, with a nice candle next to them.

II. Next day: the Service of the Consecration

1. The Metropolitan will come and say prayers, and cense the relics of the Holy Martyrs.
2. He will pick them up and carry them in a process with everyone in it.
3. We will circle the Church three times, which is like drawing a big circle around the Church and saying: everything in this circle is set apart for God!
4. The Metropolitan will knock loudly on the door of the Church and say, “Open the Holy Gates for the King of Glory to enter!” A voice will ask, “Who is this King of Glory?” The Metropolitan will answer: “The Lord of the Powers! He is the King of Glory!” Do you remember this from Pascha? We’ve done it before! Who do you think the King of Glory is? It’s Jesus! Is He coming inside with us? He is always with us, so He was processing with us too.
5. We will all go inside the Church, and the Metropolitan will take the relics up to the Altar. We’ll have a little hole in the altar, and we’ll put the relics in it.
6. Father will give him a long list of names. All of us can put names on the list, of the people we love, both living and dead. And we will pray for them, and they will be sealed up in the altar right there with the Holy Relics because they are so special to us!
7. The Metropolitan will cover the hole with a little board, and seal it up with wax that has been mixed with myrrh. Remember how when Jesus was put in the tomb, the people brought myrrh? This is like a little tomb for the Martyrs and it is sealed up with myrrh and wax.
8. Now they put a white sheet over the Metropolitan’s robes — just like a priest in a baptism sometimes does.
9. They bring soap and a basin of water. The Metropolitan says prayers over the water that the Holy Spirit will come into it. Now it’s Holy Water! They wash the altar.
10. Now they take beautiful-smelling rose water, and pour it over the altar in the form of a cross three times — it is like when we put the baby in the water three times at Baptism!
11. Now the Metropolitan takes oil and pours a cross over the altar and says “Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”. He does this three times. This is the altar’s Chrismation.
12. They wipe the table clean, and glue the icons of the four gospel writers on: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

13. Now they give the altar a beautiful new white garment, like at baptism: they drape it in a clean, white tablecloth.
14. Now the Metropolitan censes the altar, and then the whole church.
15. Then he takes a stick with a sponge at the tip, and dips it in chrism and chrismates the Church! He will paint the oil in the front of the Church, and on four pillars around the corners of the Church.
16. Then the Metropolitan brings the Vigil Lamp out of the Altar and into the Church, where the people will offer oil to fill it, so that the light of Christ will burn in our altar forever.
17. Now the Consecration Service is finished, and we begin the Divine Liturgy.

2. DISCUSSION & WRAP-UP:

To finish up, discuss the elements of Baptism & Chrismation that match up to Consecration:

Circle the table 3 times	Circle the Church 3 times
Holy Water	Holy Water
Dipped 3 Times	Poured 3 Times
Oil for Chrism	Oil for Chrism
Painting crosses on all parts of body	Painting crosses on all parts of Church
Priest covered in white sheet	Metropolitan covered in white sheet
Person wears white garment	Altar wears white tablecloth
Carry the lit candle	Bring out the lit Vigil Lamp
Now you are set aside for God	Now you are set aside for God

If time permits and if students 'get it', allow them to write names on the form, and collect them for submission for the Scroll.

