

Level 4: A Living Temple and Faithful Witnesses

Focus: Behold, A Virgin Shall Bear a Son — Emmanuel, "God with Us!"

Students will focus on the role of Mary the Theotokos, as the living Temple of God, and her relationship to us as "temples of God." Liturgical hymns and verses will be examined as means of understanding the feasts and their relationship to us and to all creation. What does this say about our call to be witnesses to Christ?

Session 1 What is the Nativity Fast?	Session 2 Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State that anticipated events do not always meet our expectations. Give examples of situations when our anticipations are not exactly met. • Acknowledge that sometimes we must modify our expectations. • Describe the expectations of the Old Testament people and what they were expecting in the person of the Savior. • Identify the expectations expressed in the liturgical verses of preparation, especially those of the "Holy Week" of Christmas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the event of Mary's entrance into the Temple. • Explain why or how Mary's cooperation with God was an essential part of our salvation. • List and explain the characteristics of the life of the Virgin Mary that make her an example for us to follow.
Session 3 The "Winter" Saints	Session 4 St. Nicholas of Myra and Lycia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the life and work of St. Romanos the Melodist. • Learn and reflect upon the Christmas kontakion and identify it as the creation of St. Romanos. • Outline the basic structure of the original form of the Kontakion (cf. <i>Saints of All Ages: Vol. IX- Poets and Hymnographers of the Church</i>). • Examine several kontakia of the feasts and list phrases that describe key concepts or theological statements about Christ and the Theotokos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retell the life and works of St. Nicholas • Distinguish the differences and/or similarities between St. Nicholas and popular ideas about Santa Claus. • Recommend several ways in which you and other members of your parish can serve the needs of others, following the example of St. Nicholas.
Session 5 The Ancestors of Christ	Session 6 The Genealogy of Jesus Christ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the faithful people of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the human "family tree" of

Old Testament as God's witnesses.

- **Acknowledge** that these Old Testament witnesses played an important part in preparing us for the incarnation of Christ.
- **Find** and **explain** some of the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of the Savior.

Jesus Christ.

- **Recognize** that the ancestors form a continuous line from the forebearers of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament to the birth of Christ, the promised Messiah.

Session 7 The Prefeast of the Nativity

- **Define** the word "incarnation" using its root "carne" to the coming of God to us "in the flesh"
- **Identify** the Prefeast of Christmas as the week before the Feast of Christmas (the Nativity).
- **Relate** some of the facts about the birth of Jesus Christ **by means of an "interview"** with some of the personalities who visited Him as a newborn.

Session 8 "God is With Us!"

- **Locate** the two genealogies of Jesus Christ in the Gospels.
- **Compare and contrast** these two records.
- **Acknowledge** that, although the genealogies are different, the two versions complement each other.
- **Sing** the Kontakion of the Nativity
- **Discuss** the significance of Jesus' birth "as a little child."