

Lesson Plan: Creating Our Little Prayer Corner

Materials Needed:

- A small, sturdy cardboard box (like a shoebox) or a low, stable shelf space.
 - A piece of nice fabric or colored paper to cover the box/shelf.
 - A printed, black-and-white coloring page of a simple icon (e.g., Christ, the Theotokos, St. George, or St. Nicholas). Choose a saint the child might know or find interesting.
 - Crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Gold or yellow crayons are especially nice for the halo.
 - Child-safe scissors and glue or double-sided tape.
 - A battery-operated tealight candle for safety.
 - Optional: A small flower in a tiny vase or cup, stickers (stars, flowers), or a small cross.
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Learning Goals (What We'll Learn Today)

By the end of this lesson, your child will:

- Participate in creating a dedicated space for prayer in the home.
- Recognize that an icon is a special picture that helps us think about God and the Saints.
- Practice fine motor skills through coloring, cutting, and arranging objects.
- Learn the name of the Saint in their icon and one simple thing about them.

Big Idea for this Lesson

We are learning that our whole house can be a "little church," a special place where we can always be close to God. An icon corner is like a window to Heaven that we can have right in our room.

Lesson Activities (The Fun Steps!)

Part 1: The Spark - A Saint's Story (5 minutes)

1. **Gather Together:** Snuggle up and say, "Today, we are going to make a very special, beautiful place in our house for praying. First, let's hear a story about a wonderful friend of God."
2. **Tell the Story:** Read or tell a very simple, short version of the life of the saint you chose for the icon.
 - **For St. Nicholas:** "St. Nicholas loved Jesus so much that he secretly gave gifts to people who needed help. He shows us how to be generous and kind."
 - **For St. George:** "St. George was a brave soldier for God. He was strong and protected people, showing us how to be brave for what is right."

3. **Show the Icon:** After the story, show them the uncolored icon page and say, "This is an icon of Saint [Name]! It's a special picture to help us remember him and how he loves God."

Part 2: The Creation - Making it Beautiful (15-20 minutes)

1. **Color the Icon:** Lay out the coloring supplies. Talk about the colors as your child works. "Let's use this beautiful gold/yellow for the halo. The halo shows us they are a holy saint shining with God's
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love." Let them be creative! The goal is joyful participation, not perfection.

2. Prepare the "Corner": While they color, or after they finish, you can prepare the box or shelf. Lay the fabric or colored paper over it. Say, "We are making a special home for our icon." Let your child help smooth the fabric or tape down the paper.

3. Decorate the Space: Give them stickers to decorate the box or the area around the shelf. This gives them ownership and makes the space truly theirs.

4. Assemble the Prayer Corner:

- Help your child carefully glue their finished icon to the back of the box or prop it up on the shelf.
- Place the battery-operated candle in front of the icon.
- Add any other special items, like a little flower or a cross.

Step back and admire your work together! "Look what a beautiful prayer corner we made!"

Part 3: The Purpose - A Moment of Prayer (5 minutes)

1. Introduce Prayer: Say, "Now that our prayer corner is ready, let's use it! This is a place where we can talk to God, Jesus, and the saints anytime."

2. First Prayer: Stand together in front of the new prayer corner. Turn on the little battery-operated candle. Show your child how to make the sign of the cross.

3. Say a Simple Prayer: Keep it very short and simple. You can say: "Holy Saint [Name], pray to God for us. Amen." Or, you can teach the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

4. Closing: Give your child a hug and thank them for helping create such a wonderful, holy space for your family.

Checking Our Understanding (Gentle Assessment)

- Observe your child's engagement and listen to their comments during the activity. Are they excited? Do they talk about the saint?
- Later in the day or the next day, ask gently, "Can you show me your prayer corner? Who is that in our icon?"
- Notice if the child goes to the prayer corner on their own, perhaps to turn on the light or just look at the icon. This is the best sign that the lesson was meaningful to them.

Making it Fit Our Family (Ideas for adapting)

- **For Extra Support:** If coloring is frustrating, you can use a pre-colored icon print. If cutting is too hard, have the icon pre-cut. The focus can be on assembly and decoration.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Help your child make their own beeswax candle (with significant adult supervision). You could also learn a very short hymn (troparion) for the saint and sing it together during your prayer time.