

# BYziKIDS

April 2025  
**MYRRHBEARERS**

Learn, Play,  
and Grow in Faith on  
the Journey to PASCHA!

Build your ByziClassroom and dive into  
the inspiring stories of the Myrrh-  
bearing Women and St. Joanna.

Get ready for the joy of PASCHA with  
an exciting journey full of crafts,  
games, recipes, coloring pages,  
reflections, and activities!



## Christ is Risen! Indeed HE IS RISEN!

The Myrrhbearers told us so!

Dear ByziParents,

The theme of this issue of ByziKids is deeply personal to me. You may know me as a mom, a grandma, an ECF teacher, and a magazine editor. But what many don't know is that I dedicate a significant amount of my time to coordinating the Myrrhbearing Lay Sisters of St. John the Beloved at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, PA. I've been learning from the nuns there how to become a modern-day myrrhbearer.

The Myrrhbearing women, our patrons as lay sisters, carried myrrh to anoint the Body of Christ as He lay in the tomb. Today, each of us lay sisters is called to carry our own myrrh in the form of prayer and good works and anoint the Body of Christ, which is His Church. Some of us are mothers who educate the next generation of believers; some are sacristans; some organize food pantries and prayer groups; some work as missionaries and teachers; and others create vestments and write inspirational resources. Each of us prays and serves in our unique way so that the Body of Christ is lovingly blessed and honored today as it was by the first Myrrhbearers, our patrons.

I want to suggest that each of us carries our own unique myrrh with which we can honor Christ's Body, the Church. Even the youngest disciples of Christ, who often do so without even realizing it, play a significant role in this. They carry hugs, smiles, eyes bright with understanding and wonder to inspire us, or words of the most profound yet simple truth...out of the mouths of babes...

We hope this issue inspires your ByziFamily to recognize your unique myrrh and be ready to carry it along your life journey, empowering you to anoint everyone you meet!

Christ is Risen!  
Enjoy the issue!  
Lynne



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# INSTRUCTIONS

## Red

Suitable for ages  
0-3/infant & toddler

*We like to start early and include everyone in catechesis! Red activities are provided for little brothers and sisters, the tagalongs, who do not require direct instruction but need something to keep them occupied while the rest of the family participates.*

**Our objective** for these littlest members of the Body of Christ is to introduce them to the theme of the day, making positive connections to each other and to Christ through sensory play.

## Orange

Suitable for Pre-Readers;  
3-6 years

*As pre-readers, these children are best served by hands-on experiences, song, and movement as they learn. Although everything from the red level is still applicable, we can adapt the activities to bring them to the orange level by including more hands-on learning and structured play.*

**Our objective** is to present the theme of the day in an engaging way that involves sufficient movement, creativity, and fun to accommodate the activity level of a child of this age.

## Yellow

suitable for early readers;  
ages 7-9 years

*Children of this age are now able to read functionally, so we can begin to teach them foundational theology points with concrete instruction. They can begin to write about topics as well as create paper projects and use other creative mediums. With a more outward orientation and a new awareness of time, history, and community, at the yellow level, they are more capable of collaborating on projects, although any of the above material may also be of interest to them.*

**Our objective** for this age level is to involve the children in group projects and collaborations so that they can begin to understand and interact as part of a bigger faith community,

## Green

suitable for Pre-teens,  
ages 10-12 years

*This age group is now able to read for comprehension and can apply the teaching they have received to their lives and the lives of those around them. Building on the previous stages, the children in the Green level can delve deeper into the story of salvation and begin to focus on how each is called to participate in this plan and see that Christ is the source of our strength.*

**Our objective** is to use reference tools to explain the topic of the month and encourage the student to feel confident in searching for these tools on his own.

## Blue

suitable for young teens,  
ages 13-15 years

*The young teenage student looks outside his family to the broader community and the world, wanting to understand it and participate in it. We begin to introduce community service ideas and encourage parish participation in various ways so that they can serve both their parish community and the Church at large.*

**Our objective** is to provide ideas that encourage students of this age to remain engaged in developing their own spiritual identity and find support within the Church community.

## Purple

suitable for teens and adults;  
Ages 16+

*Learning about the faith isn't just something for childhood, but it is rather a life-long journey that takes us ever closer to God. This group can tackle apologetics, moral life questions, and more challenging concepts and ideas of adult catechesis.*

**Our Objective:** To explore the complex depth of the theme by exploring the writings of the Church Fathers, Scripture, and historical documents. We hope to introduce tools of apologetics, so participants can learn how to defend a position used as a common argument against the theme.



# Building the ByziClassroom



Use this outline to turn this issue of Byzikids into a Sunday School, Small Group or Homeschool Lesson!



1

## PRAY

Use your voices to pray- open your meeting with a prayer.

Use your ears to hear the Word of God- read the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday together and complete the corresponding puzzle from page 12 or 13 to review the reading. It is fun to copy the puzzle onto a large poster so the group can solve it together.

Present the icon lesson from page 7 which introduces the story of Myrrh Bearing Women.

2

## LEARN

Get to know our faith- Review the catechetical lesson on page 18 discussing the Myrrh Bearers and how we too are called to anoint the Body Of Christ in modern times.

Then, turn to page 16 to hear a story about St. Joanna, one of the Myrrh-Bearers, and what life might have been like for her.

On page 9, you can learn a new song to remind us to be Myrrh Bearers to each other.

3

## PLAY

Children love acting out Bible stories! Read Luke 24:1-12 with the children, recounting the story of the women finding the tomb empty and running back to the apostles to share the good news.

Have the children dress up as myrrh bearers, angels and apostles- simple robes and props from home will do. Once everyone is assigned a part, allow them to act out the events of the Resurrection.

## SNACK TIME!

Using refrigerated, premade pizza dough, cut the dough into 1 inch pieces, roll into balls and bake in the oven. Using toothpicks, allow the children to dip the pieces in melted butter and cinnamon sugar to remind them of the myrrh and spices brought to the tomb!



## SENSORY ACTIVITY!

Try out our latest taste-safe sensory activity from page 5 that provides a bright and interactive learning opportunity for the kids. These colored tapioca pearls are simple to make and the texture and appearance will delight children of all ages!





# Sense-Ability

When God created us, He made us both body and soul, meaning we are both physical and spiritual beings. We are not like angels that are just spirits. For this reason, when we use our bodies to help us learn, our spirits are changed as well! Have you played with a sensory bin before?

A sensory bin is a small tub or table filled with items that you can touch, smell, taste or make noise with. They typically include items that are all about a particular theme. When we use our senses to help us learn something, it helps our brain to recall the information better.

## TAPIOCA PEARLS

After the long slog of winter and cold weather, many of us are now looking forward to brighter colors and warmer weather again. This month's sensory experience reminds us that good and beautiful things come after patience and faithfulness.

The Myrrh Bearing women held onto faith and hope despite the scene before their eyes. They had seen our Lord crucified and buried, but rather than despair, they continued to walk forward in the belief that God's plan would supersede the fear that they experienced.

Tapioca pearls start out equally bleak- small, solid white balls with little interest. However, when they are soaked, boiled and mixed with a bit of color, they turn into bright, smooth and squishy delights!

### Supplies needed:

- Large white tapioca pearls
- Food coloring

### Instructions:

To begin, cover your tapioca pearls in cold water and let them soak for two hours. Next, bring water to a boil on the stove and add the pearls into the water, just as you would boil pasta noodles. Turn down the heat to a low boil and allow the pearls to simmer for 30 minutes, stirring frequently. They will begin to turn clear.

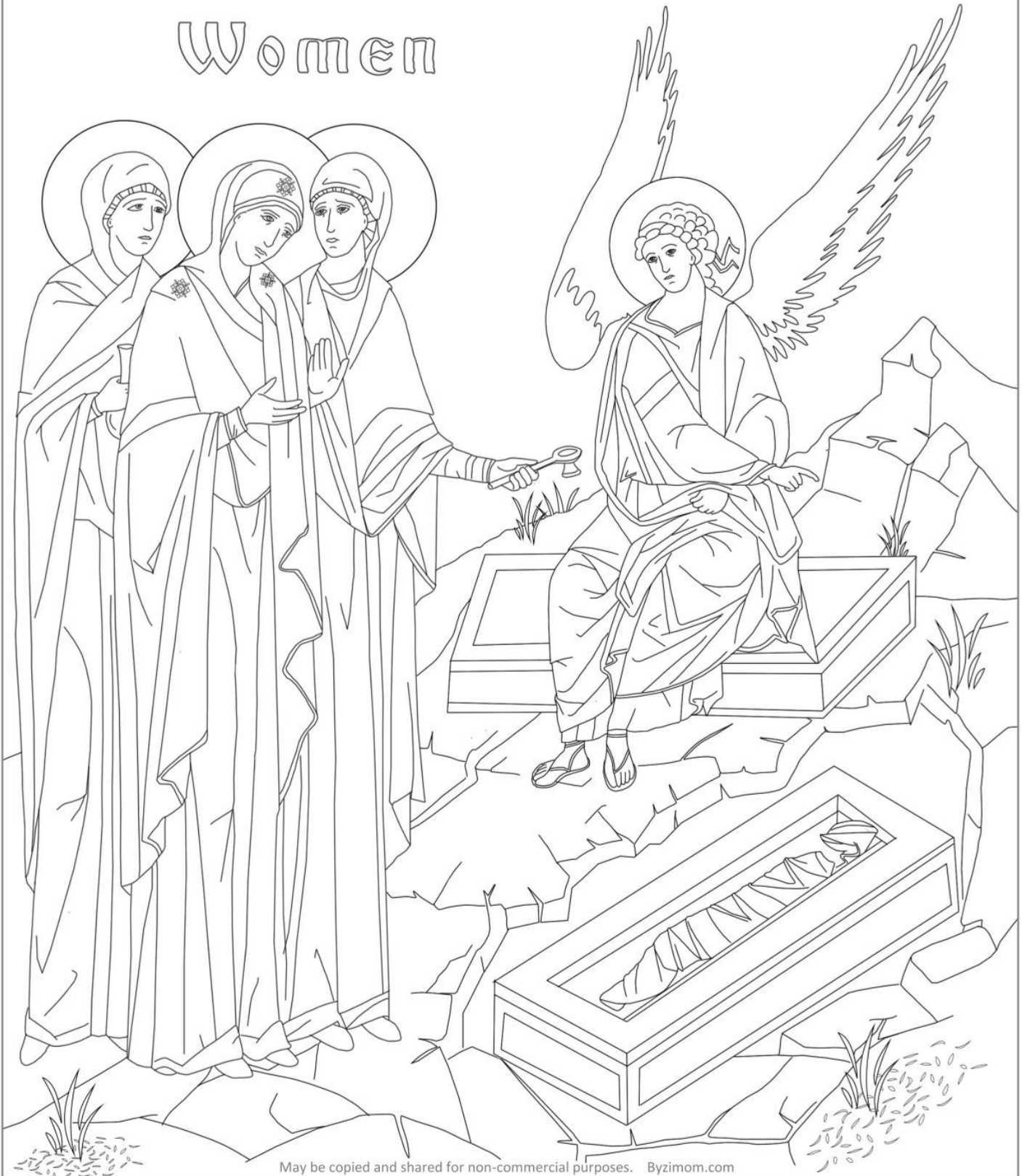
Once the pearls have become clear, strain them in the sink and rinse them with cool water. You can choose to keep the pearls all together and make them one color, or separate them into bowls and use a variety of colors. Add several drops of food coloring and a splash of cold water to your pearls, stirring them together. Allow them to soak for another 30 minutes. After the pearls have soaked in color, rinse them again with cold water to remove excess dye.

The pearls will now be vibrant gems that you can play with! Place them on a tray for your little ones to squish, pour and shape!





# The Holy MYRRHBEARING Women



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[Printer-friendly coloring page can be downloaded here->](#)





# I SPY IN MY LITTLE ICON



By Kim Fritzges



Our Icon this month is the Myrrh Bearing Women. What is a myrrh bearing woman? Myrrh is an oil or ointment that was used to anoint or embalm the dead along with other spices. So a myrrh bearing woman is a woman who is bearing or carrying myrrh. The title myrrh bearing women is given to eight women who followed Jesus in the Bible:

**Mary, the Theotokos or Virgin Mary**  
**Mary Magdalene**  
**Joanna**  
**Salome**  
**Susanna**  
**Mary the wife of Cleophas**  
**Mary of Bethany**  
**Martha of Bethany**

In our icon we see three of these women. The one in the rear is holding a container called an alabastron. The myrrh would have been in this container. Another of the myrrh bearers is holding a long handled censer for burning incense. She would have brought this to cense the tomb.

An angel of God, in white shining robes seated on the tomb's lid, is pointing to the tomb in the cave that is empty except for Jesus' burial clothes known as his shroud.

The women arrived at the tomb very early in the day. Imagine their surprise when they arrived and not only saw an Angel of God sitting there but also an empty tomb! The Angel told them to not be afraid, asked them why they looked for Jesus among the dead, and to go tell the disciples what had happened at the tomb: Jesus had Risen!

## Troparion (Tone 2)

Verily, the angel came to the tomb and said to the ointment-bearing women,

“The ointment is meet for the dead,

But Christ is shown to be remote from corruption.

But cry ye, “the Lord is risen, granting the world the Great Mercy.”

**Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

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*Special thanks to Fr. Innocent Neal at Holy Trinity Church in Wilkes Barre, PA for allowing us to use the Myrrh Bearing Women icon.*



A Feast Day ACTIVITY  
from ByziMom.com  
for Myrrhbearers Sunday

## Myrrhbearers' Spicy, Aromatic Sugar Scrub



Scripture tells us that there were many women who followed Christ throughout His ministry, attending to His household needs, and those of His disciples.

Following the example of His Blessed Mother, they provided him with loving care while He proclaimed God's word.

**The Theotokos** was known to have made him beautiful seamless garments, and was said to have done sewing in order to help provide for the Child Jesus.

**Mary of Bethany** sat at His feet and listened to His heartfelt message while **Martha** cooked meals for Him and for His disciples.

**Johanna Chuza** and **Susannah** took care of His earthly needs, and **Mary Magdalen** anointed His tired feet with oil to thank Him for the forgiveness of her sins.

Legend tells us that **Veronica** ran an inn for travelers and provided the disciples with refreshment and lodging and that she also provided the tableware for the Last Supper.

At the crucifixion, these women were the followers who remained to witness Jesus' death and console His mother. In return, they were the ones who were permitted to bear witness to His resurrection. The Myrrhbearers' role in the plan of salvation may look mundane and ordinary on the surface, much like the water in the stone jars at the wedding at Cana. Still, by offering those services to Christ with love and diligence, He has turned their small acts of loving kindness into the finest wine. With the Myrrhbearers as our example, we, as women of faith, are called to do exactly the same.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup White Sugar
- 1 cup Brown Sugar
- 2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp Ground Cloves
- 1/2 tsp Ground Ginger
- Drop Orange or Frankincense Essential Oil (optional)
- 1 cup Olive oil
- 2 Glass Jars
- Decorative ribbon (optional)

### Preparation

In a bowl, combine white sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, cloves, ground ginger, and a few drops of essential oil, if desired.

When this is well combined, add just enough olive oil to make it into a thick paste.

Put your scrub into clean glass jars, label them and add a decorative ribbon

### Tips

You omit the spices and add different essential oils to make this special sugar scrub anytime!



# CHOIR PRACTICE



By Sylvia Dorham

## MYRRH

(snap fingers)  
Myrrh can clean, myrrh can heal

**CHORUS:**  
Precious oil  
Anointing oil  
Precious oil  
Anointing oil

(rub hands)  
We all have a pot  
of myrrh to share  
**CHORUS**

(stomp feet)  
Your prayer and love  
are myrrh to Christ  
**CHORUS**

(pantomime offering a gift with two hands)  
Give your myrrh generously  
**CHORUS**

(pantomime pouring oil on neighbor's head)  
I'll pour it on you and you pour it on me  
**CHORUS**

(snap fingers)  
Myrrh can clean, myrrh can heal  
**CHORUS**



1, and 5. Myrrh can clean; myrrh can heal.  
2. We all have a pot of myrrh to share.  
3. Your prayer and love are myrrh to Christ.  
4. Give your myrrh generously.  
5. I'll pour it on you and you pour it on me.

Chorus: Pre-cious oil! A - noint - ing oil! Pre-cious oil! A - noint - ing oil!

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Scan the QR Code to listen





# Do You Know Someone Like This?

On Sunday, May 4, we will commemorate the holy women who brought myrrh and other ointments and spices to honor and care for the Body of Jesus after His death. These seven women are listed by name in scripture. Each is unique in their devotion to Christ, but all of them are honored as Myrrhbearers!

Anyone who serves to honor the Body of Christ can be considered a Myrrhbearer. See if you know anyone like these seven women!



The first Myrrhbearer was a single businesswoman. She dramatically converted from a life of sin to become so holy that she is considered to be equal to the apostles. We revere her because of the great love she showed for Jesus and the compassion she had for His sorrowful mother. She was the only woman present beneath the cross to stand with the Theotokos. She was once courageous enough to have preached of the Resurrection of Christ to none other than King Herod!

Women like her are often converts to the faith. They are extraordinarily brave in showing their love for Jesus and will renounce all kinds of earthly things to devote themselves to Him.

**Who is she?**

Mary Magdalene

Tradition tells us she is Jesus' aunt. She is the mother of St. Symeon, who was a leader of the early church in Jerusalem, and had become a martyr under the emperor Trajan. She was also present at the crucifixion, as one of the women who stood at a distance "looking on." She and her husband were disciples of Christ and became missionaries after the crucifixion.

Women like her take their faith seriously and teach their children to love God and spread the faith to all they meet, often going out of their way to talk to people about the love of God.

**Who is she?**

Mary Cleopas

Tradition suggests she was the sister of Joseph the Betrothed and another aunt to the Lord. She was the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John the Beloved and was also present at a distance at the crucifixion. According to the Protoevangelion of James, she was midwife to the Theotokos and therefore she carried myrrh for him both at birth and death.

Women like her welcome children into the world and love the vocation of motherhood very deeply. They realize their vocation is a gift from God and a serious responsibility to raise their children to serve Him. They may be catechists or midwives.

**Who is she?**

(Mary) Salome



As the wife of Herod's steward, she was wealthy and influential among women of her day. She sought Jesus out when in need of healing, and once healed, she followed Him, offering money and help as he traveled around Judea. After the crucifixion, she and her husband became missionaries in Rome. She is also credited with giving a proper burial to John the Baptist. Upon finding out that his head had been disposed of in the landfill outside the walls of the city, she sought it out and buried it herself on the Mount of Olives.

Women like her give all they can to the church and also have a special calling to attend every parastas and funeral, and to pray for departed souls.

**Who is she?**

Johanna Chusa

She was the contemplative sister of Lazarus and Martha, she is considered to be the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with ointment and was chided by Judas for it.

Women like her are called to forsake, or at least temporarily put aside, the usual worldly occupations of a household to enter into deep, contemplative prayer.

**Who is she?**

Mary of Bethany

This woman was the ultimate housekeeper, and another sister of Lazarus and Mary. She saw to it that the Lord and His disciples were well fed and had their household needs met.

Women like her offer deeds of service to God by working at the church, cleaning or baking for others, and donating their time to parish projects. They often find they pray best while at work..

**Who is she**

Martha of Bethany

This myrrhbearer was known to have been a wealthy woman who supported Christ and his disciples. She began to follow Christ after being healed from evil influences.

Women like her use their wealth for the good of others and to support their church in gratitude for all that God has done for them.

**Who is she?**

Susanna



# Caught You Listening

**APRIL 6, 2025**

○ **Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45**

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us about 'servant leadership.'

**Unscramble the sentences.**

great you your whoever be be  
would must among servant  
and be be all first slave must  
whoever among would you of



Icon courtesy of Iconographics

**APRIL 13, 2025**

○ **Gospel: John 12: 1-18**

There are many characters in today's Gospel. Match each person to what they did.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Jesus                    | Anointed Jesus' feet, wiped them with her hair |
| Lazarus                  | Complained about the ointment                  |
| Martha                   | Came to see Jesus and Lazarus                  |
| Mary                     | Went to Bethany and Jerusalem                  |
| Judas Iscariot           | Planned to kill Lazarus                        |
| Crowd of Jews in Bethany | Made and served supper to Jesus                |
| Chief Priests            | Went to meet Jesus with palm branches          |
| Great Crowd in Jerusalem | Was at the table with Jesus                    |



Icon courtesy of Iconographics

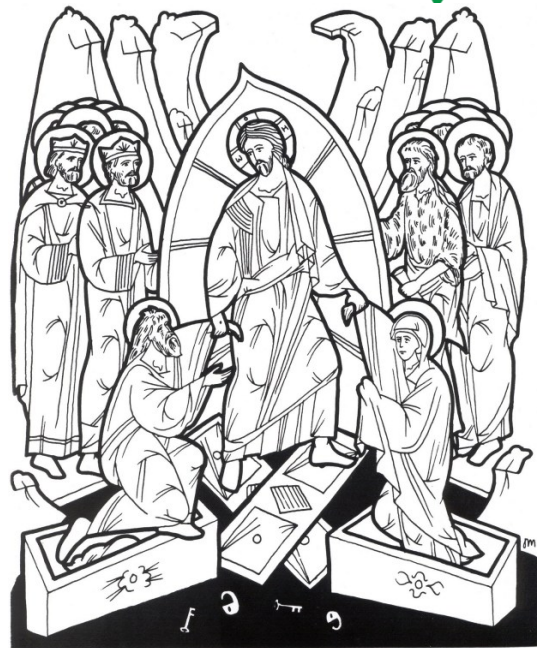


**APRIL 20, 2025**

**Gospel: John 1: 1-17**

Today's Gospel tells us a lot about Jesus Christ. Choose a word to fill in the blanks.

- In the beginning was the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(God Word Light)
- In him was life, and the life was the \_\_\_\_\_ of men.  
(God Word Light)
- But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(God Word Light)
- And the \_\_\_\_\_ became flesh and dwelt among us  
(God Word Light)
- \_\_\_\_\_ came through Jesus Christ.  
(Joy and peace Word and light Grace and truth)



Icon courtesy of Iconographics

**APRIL 27, 2025**

**Gospel: John 20: 19-31**

Crack the code to read what Thomas said to Jesus, and what Jesus said to Thomas.

A few hints are given to get you started.

"{ 4 + | < \$ ! } \$ { 4 & | \$ " - Thomas

"@ + % > > % \$ ! < % ? \* | > % 2 \* | \* ! 1 % } | ? > %  
% } ! } \$ 4 % ? @ % + ( % 1 % " - Jesus

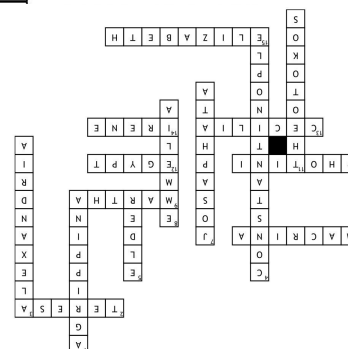
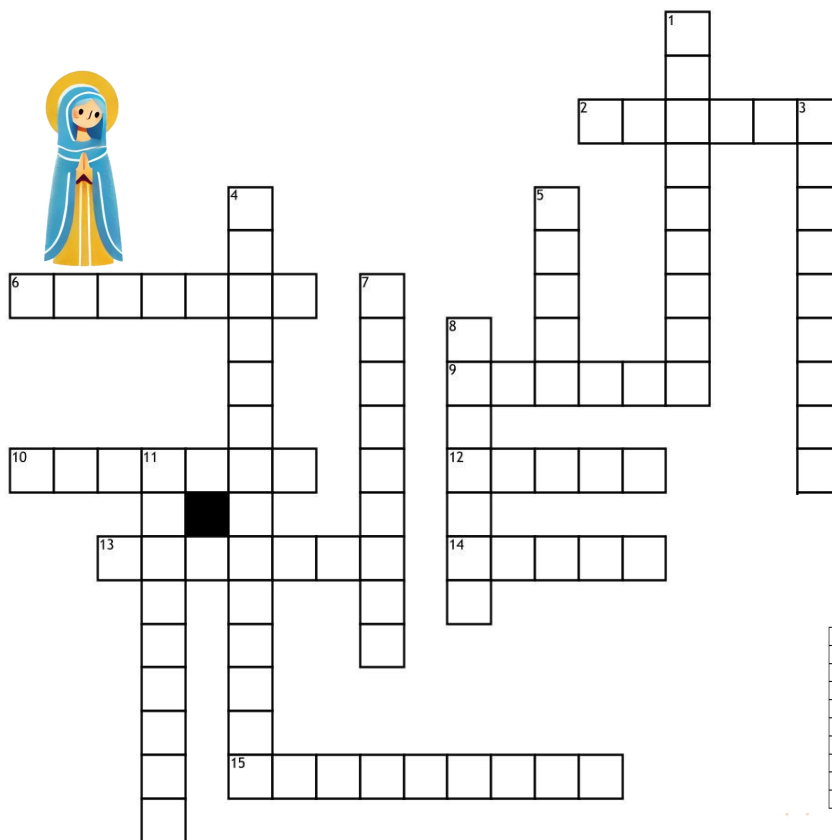
Hints:

! = a      % = e      ( = i      | = o      4 = y



Icon courtesy of Iconographics

# Female Saints



## Across

2. Mother \_\_\_\_\_ of Calcutta helped the poor and dying
6. \_\_\_\_\_ was elder sister of Basil the Great & Gregory of Nyssa & lived a humble, prayerful life
9. one of the myrrh bearers
10. legend uses this name for the woman at the well who speaks to Jesus
12. Mary of \_\_\_\_\_ received the Eucharist from Zosimas
13. patron saint of music, a Roman martyr
14. She is usually called a great martyr because of her great holiness and bravery
15. \_\_\_\_\_ was the mother of John the Baptist

## Down

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was one of many brave martyrs during Roman persecution
3. Catherine of \_\_\_\_\_ converted many to Christ; her symbol is a wheel
4. Athanasia was a widow saint became an abbess and advisor to the Byzantine empress in \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marina the \_\_\_\_\_ was the grandmother of Basil the Great and other saints
7. Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ Michaelina Hordashevskaya loved teaching Byzantine chant in Lviv
8. \_\_\_\_\_ of Caesarea was married to Basil the Elder and mother to Basil the Great; she lived an ascetic life when she became a widow
11. Mary, the Mother of God is the \_\_\_\_\_



# MEANWHILE, BACK IN BYZANTIUM

by Kathryn Reetzke

## St. Athanasia of Aegina

Have you heard of Saints working miracles of healing? I'm sure you have, there are many Unmercenary Healers (healing for no payment) in our faith. Saints Cosmas and Damien, St. Hermione, and St. Luke the Surgeon are just a few. Have you also heard of Saints who worked miracles of healing with their relics or at their tomb sites after they reposed? Some even stream sweet smelling myrrh or fragrances. This tells us the person was truly Holy and loved the Lord.

St. Athanasia was both a healer in life and so were her relics after her repose in 860 AD. Born to pious parents, Nicetas and Marina in Greece, her favorite thing to study was the Psalter. As a youth, while weaving at her loom, St. Athanasia saw a shining star come down and as it touched her heart it created a bright shining light and then disappeared. From that moment, she knew she would enter a monastery.

However, because of the local culture and also a call from the Byzantine Emperor, she was expected to marry. St. Athanasia respected her parent's wishes and married not once, but twice. She was first widowed and then her second husband after years of faithful prayer and fasting in their home, entered a monastery. After his death, the saint gave away her property, became a nun, and founded a women's monastery. The sisters asked St. Athanasia to become the abbess after they had served together for four years. St. Athanasia wore a hair-shirt, acted humbly with the sisters she was in charge of, slept very little, and helped the poor who came to the monastery. Because of her faith and dedication to remove her passions, St. Athanasia was granted the gift of healing by God. After she healed a man's eyes, a crowd of people came to her to receive healing from their physical and spiritual illnesses. From the gifts brought to the monastery by those being healed, she built three churches at the monastery: one dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos, another to the holy Prophet John the Forerunner, and a third to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

However, she did not like the constant attention and wished to live more humbly again, and so she took the two sisters closest to her in spirit (Maria and Eupraxia) and went secretly to Constantinople. She didn't stay hidden for long though, as her holiness attracted both the sick and those in leadership. She even served as an advisor to Empress Theodora II. After 7 years, she returned to the monastery on Aegina.

St. Athanasia fell asleep in the Lord on August 14, 860 in Timia, Greece on The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. May she heal us in body and soul!

Miracles and visions of the saint appeared to the nuns who prayed for the soul of the reposed St. Athanasia. A year after the saint's death, the nuns brought a woman possessed with a demon to the grave. When they dug up the ground, they then noticed a fragrance and removed the coffin. After she touched the coffin, the demoniac was immediately healed. Then they opened the lid of the coffin and saw the saint's incorrupt body, from which myrrh flowed. The priests decided to place her body in church. The holy relics of Saint Athanasia were put into a crypt and became a source of healing to those who visited the monastery.

St. Athanasia is celebrated on April 12th in Slavic Churches and April 18th in Greek Orthodox Churches.



St. Athanasia of Aegina, Greek icon (Public Access)

# Once Upon a SAINT

by Rebecca O'Loughlin



## St Joanna the Myrrh-Bearer

Dearest children,

Joanna leaned forward with interest as she listened to John speak about the arrival of the Messiah her ancestors waited hundreds of years for.

"I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, "make straight the way of the Lord!" John exclaimed.

Joanna nodded. When King Herod Antipas visited other cities, a new road had to be built so he and his servants could travel.

The builders took pains to make the highway as level and straight as possible. But what was the "way" or road of the Lord that John had to "make straight?"

John looked at Joanna through the bars he stood behind. His hair was wild and his body gaunt from fasting all the time. But there was a beautiful light shining through his eyes, and his entire being radiated love. "I speak of repentance, of walking the straight and narrow path of righteousness."

Joanna saw John meant every word about repenting of sin. He believed in it so strongly that he fasted daily and put himself at risk. John had been imprisoned by King Antipas because he had the nerve to tell him that he should not have stolen his brother Phillip's wife, Herodias! However, even King Antipas admired John. Joanna, as the wife of King Antipas' household steward, was able to sit at John's feet even as he was in prison. He told the household amazing things: *The Messiah, Jesus, had come!!*

John smiled with joy. "The Messiah! He cures the lame and heals the blind. I saw him and baptized Him in the Jordan river. The Spirit of the Lord descended upon Him, and the Father's voice said plainly that Jesus is the Beloved Son of God. There can be no doubt. You must go to Jesus when I am gone. He will heal you too."

Joanna thanked John. She had been in pain for a very long time. She loved that he had hope for her healing.

Not long after, her husband, Khouza, came home earlier than he should have. King Antipas was having a birthday celebration and her husband was supposed to stay out all night at the party.

"Wife," he said, "I have hard news for you."

Joanna looked up. Sorrow was in Khouza's eyes.

"At the king's birthday party," Khouza told her, "Salome danced, the daughter of that wicked Herodias. Everyone had too much to drink, and the dance was not a good one, but it made the guests go crazy over her. King Antipas wanted to show off for the crowd. He offered Salome anything she wanted, even up to half his kingdom."



The horror of the offer dawned on Joanna: “What did the girl ask for? Why are you so sad?”

“I am sad for you. I was never an admirer of the baptizer, John, but Salome asked for his head on a plate, and King Antipas had to give it to her or he would have looked like a fool in front of everyone.”

“What?! No! John is dead?”

“Didn’t I just tell you so? His head was chopped off and brought to the party on a platter and given to Salome. I watched her skip off with the head and give it to Herodias. Salome looked like she was giving her mother a bouquet of flowers she’d been awarded. The party is ruined. King Antipas is in mourning.”

Joanna wept.

The next day Herodias dumped the holy John’s head in the field for the animals to destroy. The animals wouldn’t touch it, but Joanna lovingly gathered it up in fresh linens.

She approached Khouza. “Husband, I buried the head of John on the Mount of Olives. He told me once that I should go to Jesus and He would heal me. I would like to tell Jesus the sorrowful news.”

“Go,” Khouza replied. “God be with you.”

It took Joanna several days to get to where Jesus was. She met with Jesus’ followers, who told Jesus about John’s death. Jesus got into a boat alone, full of grief at the loss of his cousin.

“What should I do?” Joanna asked Jesus’ disciples, as she watched Jesus sail away.

“Stay.” Mary from Magdala told her. “The Teacher will return.”

Joanna sat and waited. As she waited, a crowd gathered. Thousands of people, many who were sick.

Jesus returned, and when He saw the crowd, He began to preach about the kingdom of God. Joanna sat and listened. She could easily believe that Jesus was the Messiah. He spoke with the authority of God. But before she knew it, night was approaching.

Jesus’ disciples came to Him.

“Teacher, please. It is getting late, we are far from the city, and no one has eaten. Send the people away.”

Joanna felt a knot in her stomach. While Jesus preached, she had forgotten that she had not eaten either, and she had been traveling all day!

Jesus asked with a twinkle in His eyes, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”

Philip, one of Jesus’ followers, answered him, “it would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each person to have a single bite!”

Another disciple, Andrew, had his hand on the shoulder of a boy carrying a basket. “This boy offers five small barley loaves and two fish, but that cannot feed so many people!”

Joanna rose, thinking to hurry to the marketplace to beat the crowd and approaching night. In addition, she needed to find lodging.

Jesus surprised her by saying: “Have the people sit down.”

Jesus took the loaves from the boy, and looking up to Heaven, gave thanks and broke the bread. He then had his followers give bread to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. Joanna ate her fill, as did everyone else there.

Jesus said to his disciples: “Gather the pieces that are left so nothing is wasted.” Twelve baskets were filled with all the pieces that were left over.

Joanna was amazed. It was just as John had told her. Jesus began to heal the sick, blessing the people who lined up in front of him. Joanna herself joined the line to receive the Teacher’s blessing, and was healed. She had been in pain for so long that it was strange and wonderful to suddenly be free.

Jesus slipped away up the mountain by Himself. The crowd was disappointed, but Joanna was at peace. She knew now that she would follow Jesus the rest of her life.

Joanna is one of the women who carried myrrh to anoint Jesus after He was crucified, and one of the first to hear that Jesus had risen from the dead. She was one of the 120 who chose Matthias to be Apostle in place of Judas Iscariot.

Later, she traveled with Saint Paul and was imprisoned with him, and he spoke highly of her. John Chrysostom called Joanna and the other myrrh-bearing women as “more spirited than lions, sharing with the Apostles their labors for the Gospel’s sake.”

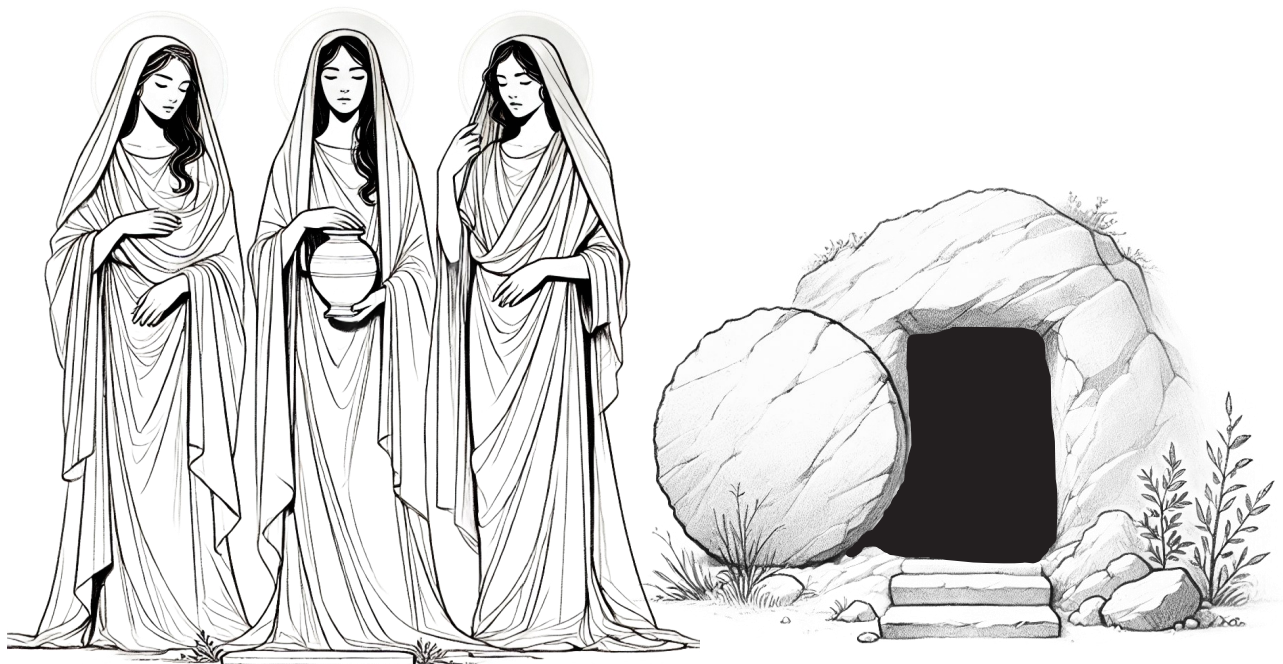
We celebrate the feast of the myrrh-bearing women on May 4th this year. St. Joanna (known as Junia in Greek circles) has her own feast day on June 27th. The head of St. John the Baptist is one of our most treasured relics, with three feast days dedicated to its finding!



# KNOW YOUR FAITH

By Lynne Wardach

## Myrrhbearers



### IMAGINE

It's a beautiful day. You and all of your best friends are having fun in the park when, suddenly, a bully comes by and starts harassing you. He won't stop, and eventually, he pushes you to the ground. When you lift your head, to your surprise, everyone runs away to hide, and you find that you are left alone. You're helpless, scared, maybe even defeated. Then...someone special comes.

They help you to your feet.  
They dry your tears and dress your wounds  
They assure you that you are valued and loved no matter what...just because you're YOU.  
How do you feel about this friend?

When we read the Holy Scriptures about the night that Jesus was arrested, we see that this is precisely what happened to Him. All His friends and disciples were afraid, so they ran away from Him and hid. They were afraid they would be crucified, too! When

they saw what happened to Jesus, they became confused and began to doubt Christ and His mission. They asked themselves,  
"Was He really the Son of God? "  
"Why was He so helpless? "  
"Maybe He wasn't Who they thought He was?"

They were so shocked and confused that they stood by and did nothing as Jesus was arrested, assaulted, and finally hung on the cross. When it was all over His Body was quickly placed in a tomb with a big stone in front of it, without anyone to mourn or to honor it...but then the Myrrhbearers, came.

### WHO WERE THE MYRRHBEARERS?

They were the women disciples who also witnessed everything that happened to Jesus, and I assume they were also afraid, but they did something extraordinary...they loved Him anyway, and that love conquered their fear!



Even if others thought Christ was a failure, a criminal, maybe even a fraud, the women remembered what He preached and the kind of life He lived. They remembered Who He WAS and loved Him for it, no matter what. So they showed respect and love by anointing his lifeless Body when none of the disciples could.

### HERE'S SOMETHING INTERESTING:

Jesus taught us to think of His Church as we think of His Body. When St. Paul wrote his first letter to the people of Corinth, he told them they were all individual members of the body of Christ, each with his own specific job and function!

*1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.*

This means that each person in the Church has their own role to play, and each is as important as the others, and no two are alike.

Just like your brain is very different but just as important to your body as your heart,  
Just like your eye is very different, but just as important to your body as your ear,  
Just as your hand is very different but just as important to your body as your foot...

We must know that what YOU are called to do for the Church is very different but just as important as what the priest, or even the bishop, is called to do!

That love motivated them to leave the comfort of their homes before the break of day to anoint His lifeless Body with myrrh, but...

### WHAT'S MYRRH?

Practically speaking, it's the dried sap from a thorny tree that grows in Northeast Africa and Southwest Asia. When the tree is injured, it bleeds with little droplets of sap, which, when dry, are harvested from the tree. These dried droplets are then steam distilled to form a sticky, sweet-smelling, amber-colored syrup that looks like thick honey.

Myrrh oil is a great cleaning agent because it kills mold and bacteria.

It is helpful to clean wounds because it kills germs that can cause infection.

It helps fight pain because it contains compounds that tell your brain you aren't in pain, even if you are!

AND...Ancient people used it to anoint and honor the bodies of their dead because it had all those excellent properties.

But because of their great devotion to Him and their trust in the Truth He embodied, the fact that He was dead didn't matter to the holy women. They set out to anoint His Body anyway with the most excellent intentions because that's all the women could do.

So, they went forth before sunrise, in the cold and darkness. They didn't wait for daylight and better conditions because their love for Him made this the first action of their day.

They knew the Roman soldiers would be there, and they most likely had reason to fear the soldiers, but in their devotion to Jesus, they didn't consider the danger. Great love does that to a person.

They would most likely have needed help to roll the stone away, but even that obstacle was not too daunting for them. They were determined to do this loving service for the Body of Christ, no matter the cost...and they were met with an awesome surprise. They found He had accepted their gift even before they had offered it.

### WE CAN BE LIKE THEM!

We can anoint His Body, the Church, out of love for Jesus because we KNOW Who He is!

We are not afraid because... we know what happened after three days in the tomb!

At the crucifixion, these holy women were the followers who stood by to witness Jesus' death, console His mother, and bring cleansing ointment to anoint His poor Body.

By their example, we are called to bring order, healing, and refreshment to the Church in many wonderful ways!

We can do things to help cleanse the Church from stains, heal and disinfect her wounds, and alleviate her pain...this is our spiritual myrrh.

I urge you to gather up your courage and get ready to identify your myrrh, be commissioned as modern myrrhbearers, and anoint the Body of Christ with your very own myrrh!

### THIS IS THE MOST EXCITING PART:

When you are not afraid to offer love to Christ's Body, the Church, you would expect Him to be pleased with your efforts and reward you for them! Remember that because of their selfless actions and respect for the Body of Christ, God granted that the Holy Myrrhbearers would be the first to witness His resurrection.

YOU may be the first to witness a resurrection of His Church! What a gift!!!

BE NOT AFRAID to do the work God has planned for you!



Scan the QR code to see the links for the activities

## April Activities Calendar

This month is filled with so many fun and interesting things to do! Visit the Activities Index on the ByziKids page at ByziMom.com for all the links!

<https://www.byzimom.com/byzikids-magazine-extras>

April 1

- Feast of St. Mary of Egypt
- Fr. Zosimas Lion Cupcakes
- St Mary of Egypt Sand Candles
- St. Mary of Egypt Coloring Page
- I Spy in My Little Icon: St. Mary of Egypt & Father Zosimas



April 6

- Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt



April 12

- Lazarus Saturday
- Honor St. Lazarus by making some Lazarus Sweet Buns, then Have a St. Lazarus Mummy Race



April 13

- Palm Sunday
- Get our Willow Treats Recipe
- Palm Sunday Coloring Page
- I Spy: Palm Sunday
- Palm Sunday Crossword
- Palm Sunday Play by Kh. Jocelyn
- Learn the Palm Sunday March, a song by Kh. Sylvia ; Lyrics
- Make Palm Sunday Troparion Bookmarks-we have a handy printable!



April 14

- Great & Holy Monday
- In honor of the readings about the fig tree, add some figs to your meal plan!
- Make Fig-Cookie Bibles!



April 15

- Great & Holy Tuesday
- Wise & Foolish Virgins Oil Lamp Race
- St. Hunna the Laundress
- I Spy: St. Hunna



April 16

- Great and Holy Wednesday
- Go to the anointing service at Presanctified Liturgy tonight!



April 17

- Great & Holy Thursday
- Get the Mystical Supper Coloring Page



April 18

- Great and Holy Friday
- Read our Discussion and learn the Troparion
- Burial of Jesus Coloring Page



April 19

- Great and Holy Saturday



April 20

- It's PASCHAI!
- We have so many activities for you!
- Basket Cover Activity
- Pascha Basket Craft
- Resurrection Icon Coloring Page
- Christ is Risen Greeting Game
- Pascha Procession Maze
- Pascha Basket Blueprint



April 23

- Bright Wednesday & the Feast of St. George:
- Dragon Marionette Instructions
- Dragon Marionette Template
- St. George's Dragon Cake
- Armor of God paper doll
- The Final Battle Song (about the armor of God!)
- St. George Coloring Page



April 26

- Bright Saturday and the Feast of St. Stephen of Perm
- I Spy: St. Stephen of Perm



April 27

- Thomas Sunday

