

WEEK 4: WORSHIP IN CHURCHES

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

GOALS

What happened that allowed Christians to move from worshiping in the catacombs because of persecution to being able to build churches and worship openly?

LESSON

Tell Story about St. Constantine with Icon and Q&A
See Orthodox Churches

Long ago, there was a man named Constantine. He was a mighty emperor who worked hard to reunite his empire that had been split into multiple areas. On his way to a battle, he and his soldiers saw a cross in the sky and the words, "By this sign you will conquer." Everyone knew that the Cross was a symbol representing Christianity because Jesus had been crucified on a cross. After seeing this, Constantine and his soldiers fought in a battle against their enemy - and won! When the victorious Constantine arrived in Rome, he gave credit to God for his victory against the other army. Constantine was later baptized and became St. Constantine, to us, because he did many wonderful things to help Christians. He made a rule that Christians were no longer going to be killed. He even gave them back all of their stuff! The Christians were amazed and so happy that they didn't have to go into the catacombs anymore to worship God. This was a big deal to them and many churches were built all over the world now that the Christians no longer feared being punished for worshipping God.

Show an icon of Saints Constantine and Helen to your students - it can be an icon you're holding or an icon that you display with your phone, tablet, or laptop. If showing a screen, you can use this or another icon of Sts. Constantine and Helen:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a7/Pedoulas_Konstantin.jpg/1200px-Pedoulas_Konstantin.jpg

Questions for your students as they look at the icon:

Are they wearing fancy or plain clothes? Fancy

Why do you think they were wearing crowns, jewels, and fancy clothes?

Because St. Constantine was an emperor and St. Helen was his mother.

What is between the two of them on the icon? A big cross

Why do you think there is a big cross between them on their icon?

Because St. Constantine saw a cross in the sky & St. Helen found the Cross that Jesus had been crucified on

Did St. Constantine make a rule that nobody could kill Christians anymore? Yes

Did the people have to hide anymore to worship God? No

What did the Christians do when they didn't have to worry about getting into trouble anymore for believing in God? They built lots of churches!

Show your students some photos or videos of some Orthodox churches. Here are some examples:

- Agia Sophia in Istanbul: (Virtual 360 Tour)
<https://www.touristtube.com/Things-to-do-in-Istanbul/Hagia-Sophia-360>
- St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow: (Short Video)
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WEEK 4: WORSHIP IN CHURCHES

1ST - 2ND GRADE

GOALS

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WEEK 4: WORSHIP IN CHURCHES

3RD - 5TH GRADE

GOALS

What happened that allowed Christians to move from worshiping in the catacombs because of persecution to being able to build churches and worship openly?

LESSON

Tell Story about St. Constantine with Icon and Q&A
See Orthodox Churches

Long ago, there was a man named Constantine. He was a mighty emperor who worked hard to reunite his empire that had been split into a western, middle, and eastern area. On his way to a battle to try and reclaim the middle portion of the empire from Maxentius, he and his soldiers saw a cross in the sky and the words, "By this sign you will conquer." Everyone knew that the Cross was a symbol representing Christianity because Jesus had been crucified on a cross. Constantine and his soldiers continued on their way and then fought in a battle against their enemy - and won! When the victorious Constantine arrived in Rome, he gave credit to God for his victory against the other army. He had a statue made of himself holding a cross in his right hand which was placed in Rome where everyone could see it. There was an inscription on the statue that said, "With this saving sign I saved the city from the yoke of a tyrant." Constantine was later baptized when he was dying and became St. Constantine, to us, because he had done so much to help Christians. It was life altering when he made a rule in 313 A.D. that Christians were no longer to be killed. This rule was called the Edict of Milan. He even gave the Christians back their properties and their places of worship. The Christians were amazed and so happy that they didn't have to go into the catacombs anymore to worship God. This was a huge deal to them and many churches were able to be built all over the world because of this new rule that St. Constantine had made in favor of the Christians.

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WEEK 4: WORSHIP IN CHURCHES

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

What happened that allowed Christians to move from worshiping in the catacombs because of persecution to being able to build churches and worship openly?

LESSON

Read: pages 62-67 of "The Orthodox Christian Church Through the Ages"
by Sophie Koulomzin - Followed by Q & A
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000003394477&view=1up&seq=76>
Photo or Video Tour of Some Orthodox Churches

What was going on when Constantine saw a cross in the sky? He was on his way to a battle.

Who did he give credit to for winning the battle against his enemy? God

True or False: *Did Emperor Constantine stop the persecution / killing of Christians?* True

True or False: *The Edict of Milan granted freedom of religion for Christians?* True

What happened when the Christians were no longer persecuted or killed for worshiping God?
They built lots of churches!

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WEEK 4: WORSHIP IN CHURCHES

HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

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Photo or Video Tour of Some Orthodox Churches

What was going on when Constantine saw a cross in the sky? He was on his way to a battle.

Who did he give credit to for winning the battle against his enemy? God

Even though Constantine was not baptized a Christian until he was dying, he played a huge role in helping Christians. How did he do this?

He stopped the persecutions of the Christians and returned all of their places of worship and property to them. He got rid of the circus games that killed Christians. Clergy did not have to serve in the army. He got rid of punishing people by crucifixion as Jesus had been killed. He permitted slaves to be freed by the Church. He would not allow pagan sacrifices in homes. He established Sunday as a weekly day off and Christians were once again allowed to hold important positions in the government.

True or False: *The Edict of Milan granted freedom of religion for Christians?* True

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