

GRADES: MIDDLE SCHOOL

To Tithe



TO TITHE IS TO SHARE
TO TITHE IS TO CARE

Dear Student,

As an Orthodox Christian, we care about our faith and our church. One way we do this is by contributing to the weekly collections. We aim to bring in ten percent of what we earn and receive. This is called a "tithe."

These pages are arranged for each month between September and May. They feature four saints who exemplify four traits that help us care for our faith--stewardship, thankfulness, dedication to God, and trust.

We need to care. We need to share.
To tithe is to share. To tithe is to care...
Have a hand in your church!



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The Habit of Tithing

Since the time of Jesus,

the people of God have tithed. In fact, 18 centuries before Jesus, Abraham tithed, in thankfulness to God who had helped him win a battle. This is recorded early in the book of Genesis, which is the first book of the Bible.

A tithe is $1/10$ of all we earn, or receive as gifts. It isn't difficult to figure out. If you earn \$1, you keep \$.90, and bring \$.10 for the collection. If you earn \$10, you keep \$9 and bring \$1 for the collection.

When you do this, you are being a good steward of what God has provided for you—all we have comes from God and is given to us for our wise management. You also trust God to provide for your needs. Finally, you have taken a step on the road to realizing that your whole life is to be given to God.

Do the Math



Choose all of the following that apply to you:

1. Think about your allowance and determine what $1/10$ would be.
2. Think about what your wages are and determine what $1/10$ would be.
3. When you receive money as a gift, think about what $1/10$ would be.

When we tithe, we build stronger churches, and more churches. We share because we care. . .



St. Helen

Exemplar of Stewardship

Helena was born in about the year 250 A. D. She was probably born in the city of Drepanum, located in Bithynia, which was then a province of the Roman Empire. It is believed St. Helen, or Helena, was the daughter of the innkeeper there, who bettered her station in life

by marrying a Roman soldier of some importance when she was about twenty years old. Several years later, while living in what is now Serbia, she gave birth to her son, the famous Constantine the Great.

In 293, Helena's husband Constantius was made assistant to the ruler, he was persuaded to divorce his Christian wife in favor of someone more suitable in station to his new position. He married Theodora, who was the stepdaughter to the Emperor Maximian.

Helena continued on alone to raise her young son Constantine, who, fourteen years later, be-



came the Caesar at the death of his father.

Helena had always prayed fervently for the conversion of her son to Christianity, but these prayers were not answered for another six years after he was elevated to his new position. A good steward is one who cares well for what God provides.

St. Helen was a good steward, in caring for the son God gave her.

Rather than using her resources on herself, she used much of her wealth performing many acts of charity. She built new churches around the Roman Empire, which her son now ruled.

And then, at the age of sixty, Helena determined to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She found the site of Calvary, and the three wooden crosses of the Crucifixion were found. On this site, Helena used her personal funds to build the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Patriarch Jacob

Exemplar of Thankfulness

Jacob was the third of the Old Testament Patriarchs. He is the son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham. The three, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are all ancestors of Christ, and called "patriarchs."

While Jacob was traveling, he stopped to sleep for the night. He dreamed of a ladder that was set up between heaven and earth. The Lord stood above the ladder. He promised Jacob that the land on which he had fallen asleep would one day be his and his children's.

Jacob, who was renamed "Israel" by God, became the father

of a very large family, which came to be known as the 12 tribes of Israel. That is why we call him a "patriarch."



When Jacob awoke, he said, "Surely, the Lord is in this place—it is the gate of heaven. If the Lord keeps me safe and provides for me until I return home. I will give a tenth of all the Lord gives to me" (Genesis 28).

God kept His promise. In returning a tenth, or tithe, to God, Jacob was thankful to the One who provides for us. We, too, give thanks by giving a tithe to God. It is our tradition.



Patriarch Jacob

Exemplar of Thankfulness

January

In returning a tenth, or tithe, to God, Jacob was thankful to the One who provides for us. We, too, give thanks by giving a tithe to God. It is our tradition.

Make a cross-word using words that tell what you are thankful for. How do YOU thank God?

T I T H E
T H A N K F U L

Saint Artemius

Exemplar of Dedication to God

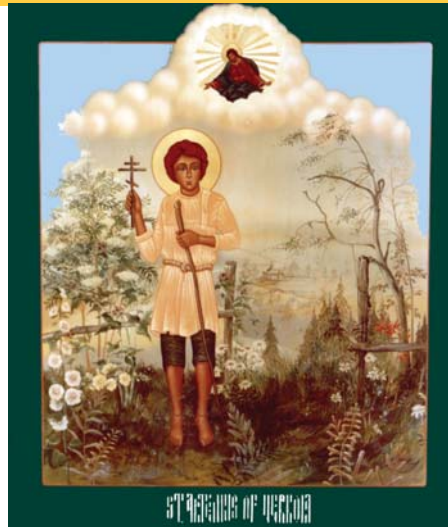
Artemius was born in a small Russian village in 1532. Like most Russians then, he was the child of poor peasants who worked land someone else owned.

Artemius probably had little or no schooling, and from the earliest age helped his father farm the land. In those days, every family member worked so all might eat.

From what we know about him, St. Artemius showed all of the Christian virtues.

He was a quiet, obedient son from an early age. He loved God. He served God as we are called to do, through the work God has given us, and the life we are to live in the best way that we can.

One day, St. Artemius was out working in the fields with his father as usual. A wild storm came up, and in a freak accident, he was killed by a bolt of lightning. This happened on June 23rd, 1545, when he was only about 12 years old.



Even though the people of Russia were Orthodox, many of them were very superstitious. When someone died like this, people thought it might be because that person was wicked, or had committed some horrible act and was being punished.

So, St. Artemius was not given the usual Orthodox funeral, and was not even buried. Instead, he was just left laying in a clearing, with a few pine branches laid over him. Years later he was found in the field; his body had not decayed. This is typically a sign of a holy person.

As Orthodox, we do not judge whether a person is holy or not by the manner of their death. Through prayer, and the touching of his relics, many have become believers, and many have been healed.

St. Artemius feast days are October 15, and June 23. There is a shrine to St. Artemius at Antiochian Village Camp.

Saint Artemius

Exemplar of Dedication to God

March

Artemius was holy, even as a child, because he was dedicated to God. Is it good to be dedicated to God? What does that mean?

Use the saint's story, and your own thoughts to make an acrostic appropriate to the phrase.

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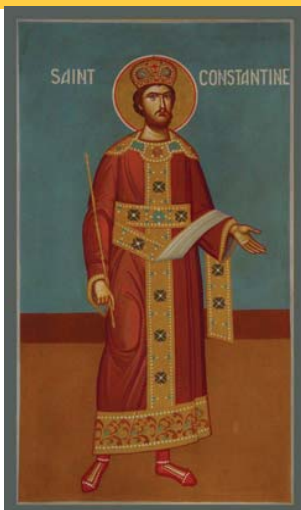
Saint Constantine

Exemplar of Trust

Constantine was the son of St. Helen, and the general, Constantius. In the year 312, Constantine was marching into battle one day, not sure whether he could win or not, for his foes were very powerful. Marching at the head of his troops, Constantine saw before him a vision in the hot Italian sun: a cross with the words upon it in Latin, "Hoc Vinces" ("By this Sign You Will Have Victory)."

This was clearly a sign from God. Then, the following night, Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream, telling him of the power of the cross.

Constantine now felt confident, for he had seen God's power and glory. He had his troops make a banner; on it was the cross. He had his soldiers place crosses upon their shields. With the cross in front, Constantine led his troops into battle and vanquished the mighty enemy. He knew, however, that it was not he who had been responsible for the victory. When he returned to Rome in triumph, he placed that



same banner of the cross in the hands of the Senator's statue which stood in the square. This symbol of faith and trust was a sign of how he would reign over his kingdom.

After this, Constantine ruled his kingdom well. He not only stopped all persecution of Christians, but eventually made Christianity the empire's religion. He gave freedom to all religions, and made laws that greatly improved the status of women, slaves, criminals, and children.

Out of his new faith came a greater trust in his Creator, and with God's help he was able to rule his kingdom well for over thirty years. Constantinople, now Istanbul, Turkey was the city from which Constantine ruled. The very famous basilica, Hagia Sophia, was built in Constantinople.

Constantine shares his feast day with his mother, St. Helena, and iconographers often depict both on an icon. Their feast day is May 21st

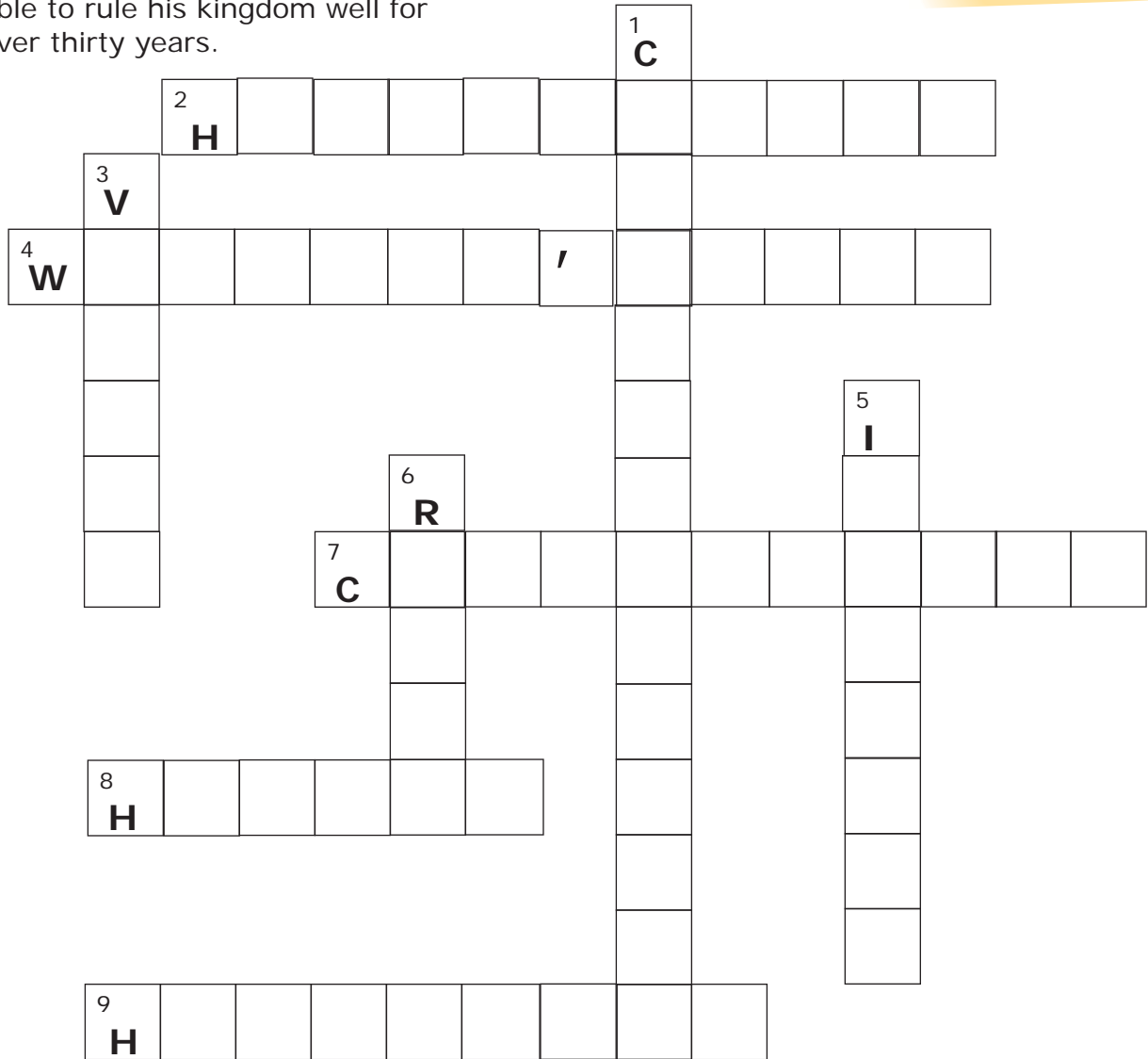
Saint Constantine

Exemplar of Trust in God

May

With his new faith came a greater trust in his Creator, and with God's help, St. Constantine was able to rule his kingdom well for over thirty years.

Use the clues below, and the saint's story to solve the puzzle.



Across

- 2 The name of the basilica in the capital city
- 4 How Constantine ruled well (3 words)
- 7 The emperor who trusted God
- 8 The emperor's mother
- 9 Latin for, "by this sign you will have victory" (2 words)

Down

- 1 The city of the Eastern Roman Empire from which the Emperor ruled
- 3 What Constantine saw before marching into battle
- 5 Present day name of the capital city
- 6 The name of the Empire



Tithe . . .

it's amazing