









## FOLLOWERS – LESSON PLAN

Age	Term	Mod.	Module Theme	Module Title	Lesson Number and Title
6	2	4	CELEBRATIONS	Songs of Mary	20: All creation rejoices in You

Use the syllabus framework to complete above. Infants: 20 minutes; Juniors: 30 minutes; Middles & Seniors: 45 minutes  
(Mod. = Module Number, Module Theme - in the heading, Module Title - uppercase in the cell, Lesson Num [NO. column] and Title)

							
Verbal V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Logical L	Spatial S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kinaesthetic K <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Musical M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Intra - personal P1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter - personal P2	Natural N

Tick the appropriate box(es) above [ copy this: ☒ ] for the modes of learning being used in this session.

**Prayer:** All of Creation rejoices in thee, O full of grace: the angels in heaven and the race of men, O sanctified temple and noetic paradise, the glory of virgins, of whom God was incarnate and became a child, our God before the ages. He made thy body into a throne, and thy womb more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in thee, O full of grace: Glory be to thee.

**Starter:** On the board write vertically the letters that spell MARY. Demonstrate writing the name MARY on the board first so the children have a model to follow. Ask the children to copy the letters that spell MARY. Encourage the children to find with you descriptive words that start with each letter.

**Learning objectives:** To understand that the Holy Virgin Mary is called Theotokos, the "God-bearer", and the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. To learn that we venerate the Theotokos and show Her great honour, we believe that the Virgin Mary is an image of the Christian goal of becoming Christ-like. To join in singing the "All Creation Rejoices in You" hymn.

### Core Activities and Learning

1. The teacher will tell children that the hymn "All Creation Rejoices in You" is sung throughout Great Lent during the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great following the consecration of the Holy Gifts. It tells of how God prepared the Holy Virgin (after her years of formation spent in the temple) to become a sacred temple herself, the dwelling place of God become flesh. The eternal God, the divine Logos, the Ancient of Days, Who in His divine essence is invisible, completely beyond our abilities of perception and beyond the limitations of created space and time was contained within the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and through her willing obedience to the will of God. The Virgin Mary is represented as being a variety of contained sacral spaces: a temple, a garden, and a throne. The teacher will remind children that in our Orthodox Church, a special place of honour is given to the Mother of God the Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, who is venerated by the Orthodox as being more honourable than the Cherubim and more glorious, beyond compare, than the Seraphim. The teacher will explain to children that the Holy Theotokos is honoured because she is the supreme example of the cooperation between God and Man. God, Who always respects human freedom, did not become incarnate without her free consent which, as Holy Scripture tells us, was freely given: "*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word*" (Luke 1:38). The teacher will tell children that the Most Holy Virgin herself prophesied through the Holy Spirit "*For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; for He that is mighty has done to me great things*" (Luke 1:48-49). From these words we understand that the exceptional honour accorded to the Mother of the Lord is intentional and appointed by God Himself. This exceptional honour that is accorded by the Orthodox Church to the Ever-Virgin Mary forms the veneration of the Mother of the Lord. We honour the Mother of God because she is the Mother who gave birth to the Son of God and the first one who intercedes for the world in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity. She helps us in the conquest of salvation by her holy prayers.

2. The teacher will tell children the story of the Icon of the Mother of God of Three Hands. A great fighter against the iconoclasts (people who engaged in the destruction of holy icons), St. John Damascene was accused of being an enemy of the state in which he lived, and as punishment, the Caliph ordered that one of his hands be chopped off. Afterwards, St. John took the severed hand, prayed in front of the icon of the Theotokos and fell asleep. According to the tradition, because of his prayers before the icon, the Virgin Mary healed St. John Damascene by miraculously re-attaching the severed hand. In honour of and gratitude to that healing, he made a silver votive offering in the shape of a hand and placed it on the icon itself in such a way that it appears that the Virgin Mary has a third hand. St. John Damascene accepted monasticism at the St. Sava the Sanctified Monastery and offered his wonder working icon to the monastery. The teacher will tell children the story of an icon that depict a very complex narrative, such as "All Creation Rejoices in Thee." The author of this late 16th century icon is Dionysius who tried to translate hymns into iconography. St John Damascene, the author of this hymn, is shown on this icon with a scroll in his hand. He is the closest figure to the Mother of God, as if he is the one who sings this hymn to her. Here we see Angels, Apostles, High Priests, bishops, holy monks, hermits, prophets, holy women, right-believing princes and princesses. The Mother of God is shown with a big halo around her, which is called a "mandorla". All these people are focused on prayer to Jesus Christ and His Mother.

3. The teacher will invite the children to join in singing the hymn "All Creation Rejoices in You".

**Resources: Icons:** "All Creation rejoices in you.jpg." "John Damascene.jpg", Icon of the "Mother of God of Three Hands.jpg",

**Review:** The Theotokos is the source of joy for all who venerate her in both her icons and hymns and our hearts.

**Follow Up:** In the next session we will learn more about Christian living – Listening to God.