



Resources for Teaching
our budding rocks of faith

Holy icon crafts

Craft ideas for teaching young Orthodox Christian children about Holy Icons



SILVER ENGRAVED ICON

This craft is meant to imitate silver engraved icons. Teaching points that can be emphasized through working on it are: Holy icons can depict our Lord Jesus Christ and His mother, the Theotokos. In icons, both the Theotokos and Christ have a halo around their heads, to signify their holiness. There are letter symbols around them with special meanings (MP ΘY for the Theotokos, meaning “Mother of God”, IC XC for Jesus Christ, meaning “Jesus Christ”).

The craft is based on a 14th - century icon of the Theotokos Hodegetria from Serbia, now in the National Museum of Serbia. While making the craft, the Theotokos Hodegetria icon can be briefly discussed, and this is why a large copy of it follows the craft images in this file. With an adult’s help, the children will notice there is a painted surface and a silver engraved surface on the icon, a look they will recreate when completing the craft.

Materials

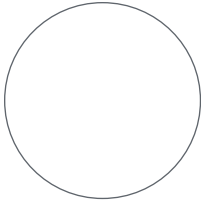
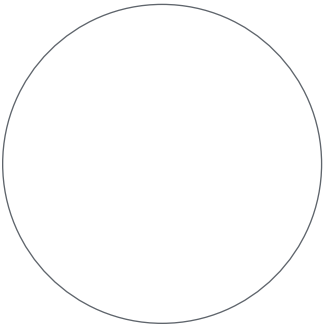
- Cardboard (used cardboard postal boxes work well), cut into rectangles, one for each child. Use the pattern on the following page as a guide.
- Aluminum foil, cut into pieces, one for each child - the pieces should be large enough to cover the cardboard rectangles and overlap all-around by at least 0.25 inch
- Small icon print-outs (see following pages)
- Pencils, glue stick - optionally scotch tape and liquid glue (see options below)
- Craft gems (optional but recommended)
- Gold mirror board (optional)
- Embroidery floss and colored paper (optional)

Instructions

- Each child receives a cardboard piece, a piece of aluminum foil and a small icon print-out.
- Center the cardboard piece on the aluminum foil piece and glue.
- Fold the overlapping parts of the aluminum foil over the cardboard and glue in place. Turn the cardboard piece over, so the aluminum-covered side faces up.
- Cut the small icon all around, so there is no white background left.
- Glue the Theotokos and Christ image in the center of the aluminum-covered cardboard.
- Use the pencils to engrave the halos and decorative shapes around the images. It is best if the pencils aren’t very sharp, otherwise they might tear the aluminum foil and the cardboard. The older children could additionally try engraving the MP ΘY and IC XC symbols.
- If you wish, instead of engraving the halos on the aluminum foil, you can cut small circles out of gold mirror board (patterns on following page) and glue them on the aluminum foil before the Theotokos and Christ image, to make golden halos. These can be engraved after being glued on the icon.
- The children can embellish their icon with craft gems, if they want (they usually do!).
- If desired, tape a piece of embroidery floss on the back of the icon for hanging, and glue a rectangle cut out of colored paper over everything, to make the back look neat.



PATTERNS



ICON CUT-OUTS





Theotokos Hodegetria, 14th century icon, unknown painter, National Museum of Serbia [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theotokos_Hodegetria_14th_c_Serbia.jpg

ICON BOOKLET

While making this craft, we can point out that, on holy icons, we can see our Lord Jesus Christ, His mother the Theotokos, angels, and Christ's friends, the Saints. Additionally, we can mention that icons can always be kept with us, and used when we pray.

Materials

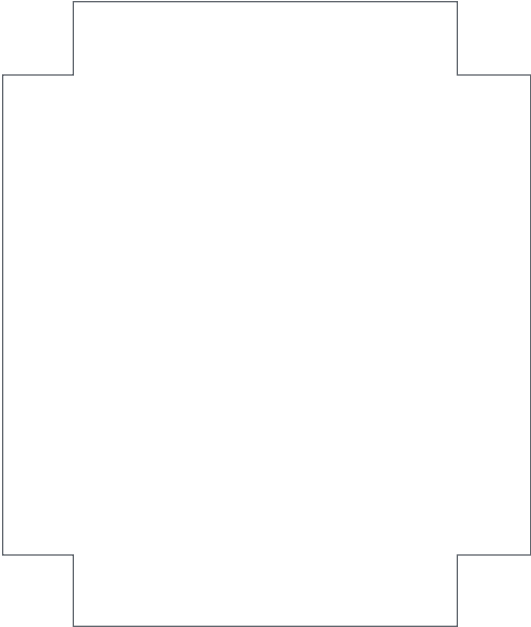
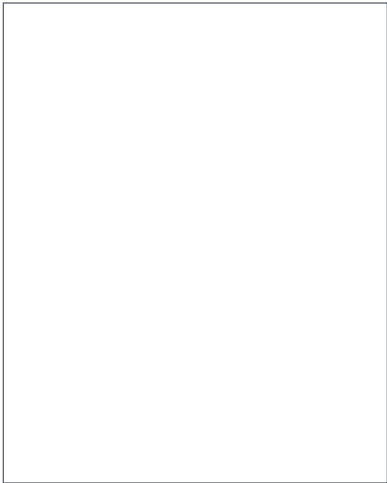
- Cardboard (used cardboard postal boxes work well), cut into rectangles sized 2" x 2.5", two for each child. You can use the pattern on the following page as a guide
- Decorative paper, cut into a cross shape following the template in the following page, one for each child
- Glue stick
- Ribbon or embroidery floss
- Icon strip (see following pages), one for each child

Instructions

- Each child receives two cardboard pieces, two decorative paper pieces, an icon strip and a piece of ribbon or embroidery floss.
- Place the decorative paper piece face-down. Center the cardboard piece over it. Glue in place.
- Fold the overlapping decorative paper over the cardboard and glue in place. Repeat with the second cardboard piece.
- Fold the icon strip accordion-style.
- Glue one of the unprinted sides on one cardboard piece and the other unprinted side on the remaining cardboard piece, as shown in the photo.
- Use a drop of glue to secure a piece of ribbon or embroidery floss on the center of the icon book back cover.
- Wrap the ribbon around the icon book and tie in the front.



PATTERNS



ICON STRIPS

My icon book



My icon book



ICONS:

Christ the Saviour (Pantokrator), 6th-century encaustic icon from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, anonymous artist [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spas_vsederzhitel_sinay.jpg)

Theotokos of the Passion, 17th century, anonymous artist [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theotokos_of_the_Passion.jpg)

Deisis, 18th-century icon by anonymous artist, Greek Orthodox Church and Museum, Miskolc, Hungary, photo by Szilas [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deisis_with_chosen_saints.jpg)

The following four crafts can be used on any occasion. You can choose any of the icons provided, or replace them with your own, keeping in mind that the craft patterns are designed for a 2" x 2.5" icon. One idea is to search online for the patron Saint of each child, and provide them with their own patron Saint icon to make. If making the crafts for Sunday of Orthodoxy, it is a good idea to use the images of the Restoration of the Icons, found on the last page.

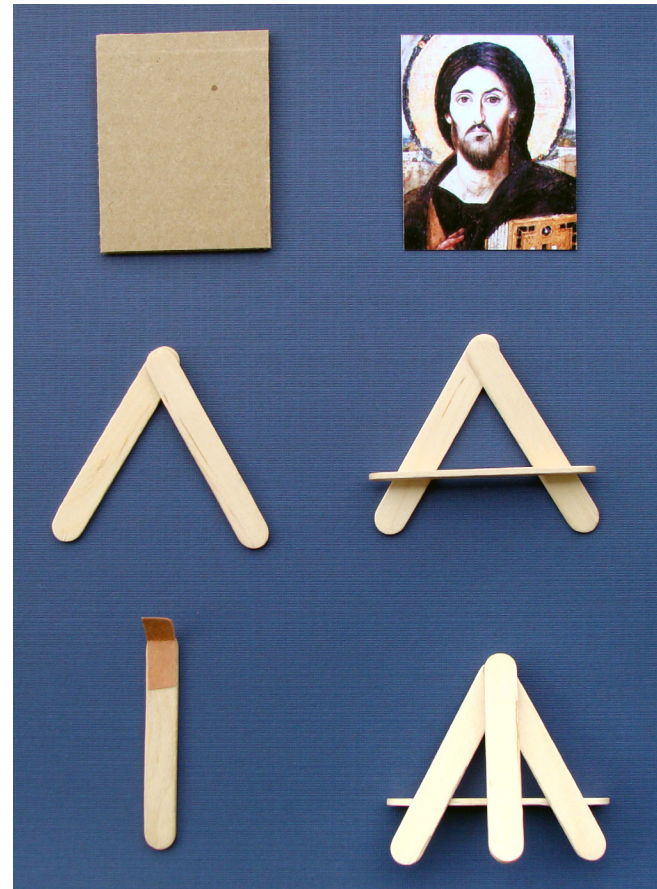
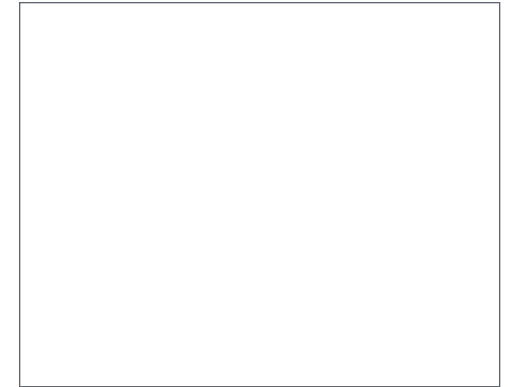
MINI EASEL AND ICON

Materials

- Cardboard (used cardboard postal boxes work well), cut into rectangles sized 2" x 2.5", one for each child. You can use the pattern on the right as a guide.
- Mini craft sticks
- Small piece of plain paper
- Tacky glue
- Mod Podge
- Mini icon print-outs, one for each child

Instructions

- Each child receives one cardboard piece, four mini craft sticks, one icon copy.
- Glue two craft sticks together at the top as shown in the photo.
- Glue third craft stick across the two previous ones, as shown. Wait for a minute or two for the glue to dry.
- Cut a small paper rectangle, fold it in half, and use it to connect the fourth craft stick on the back of the triangle, as shown. Stand the mini easel up and squeeze on top with your fingers to make the connection sturdier.
- Let dry for a few minutes.
- In the meantime, spread a thin layer of Mod Podge on the cardboard and paste the icon on it.
- Cover with another thin layer of Mod Podge. Let dry completely.



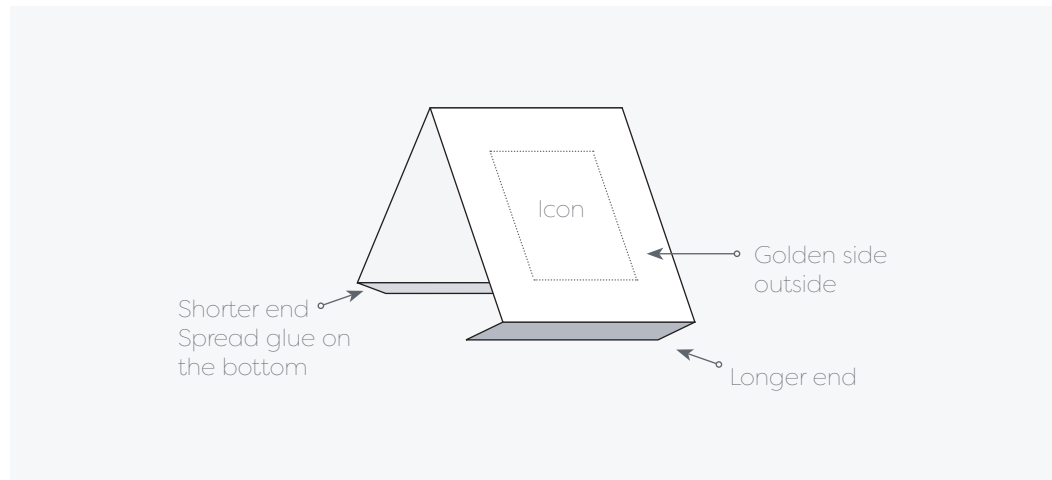
FREE-STANDING GOLDEN ICON

Materials

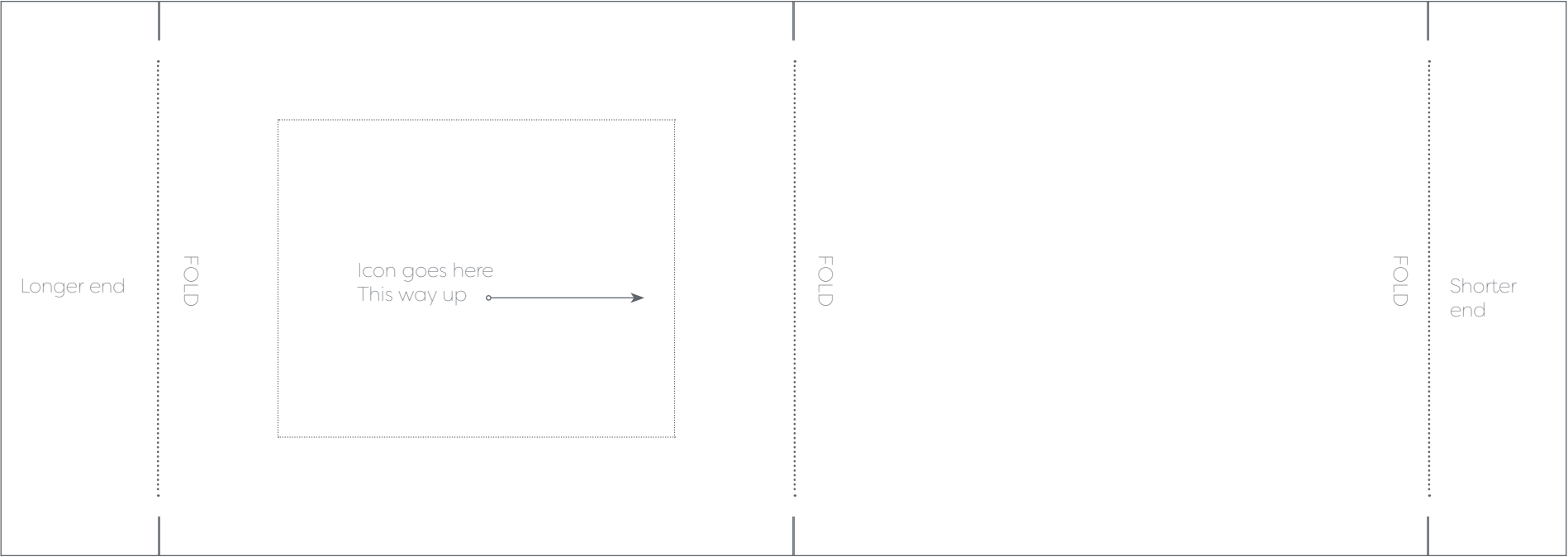
- Gold mirror board, cut into strips following the pattern on the following page, one for each child
- Golden doilies, preferably rectangle, but circles work too
- Mini icon print-outs, one for each child
- Craft gems (optional)
- Glue stick

Instructions

- Pre-score the mirror board strips so that they are easy to fold. Refer to the illustration below and the pattern on the following page, and use a ruler with a very blunt knife (such as a butter knife).
- Each child receives one strip of mirror board, one doily and one icon print-out.
- The child glues the icon on the strip of mirror board, at the specified spot (see illustration and pattern). Then, h/she cuts pieces out of the doily and glues them on the icon border to decorate it.
- Glue the outermost parts of the strip together, as shown in the illustration. Note that one end is shorter than the other. Tuck the shorter end inside.
- Craft gems can be used as extra embellishment, if desired.



PATTERN



RIBBON-FRAMED ICON

Materials

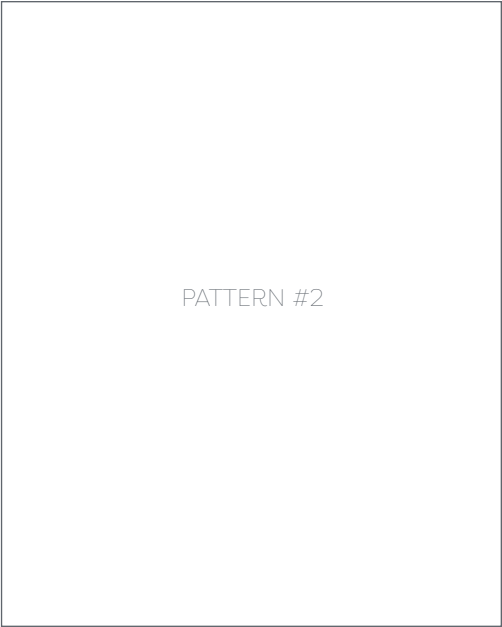
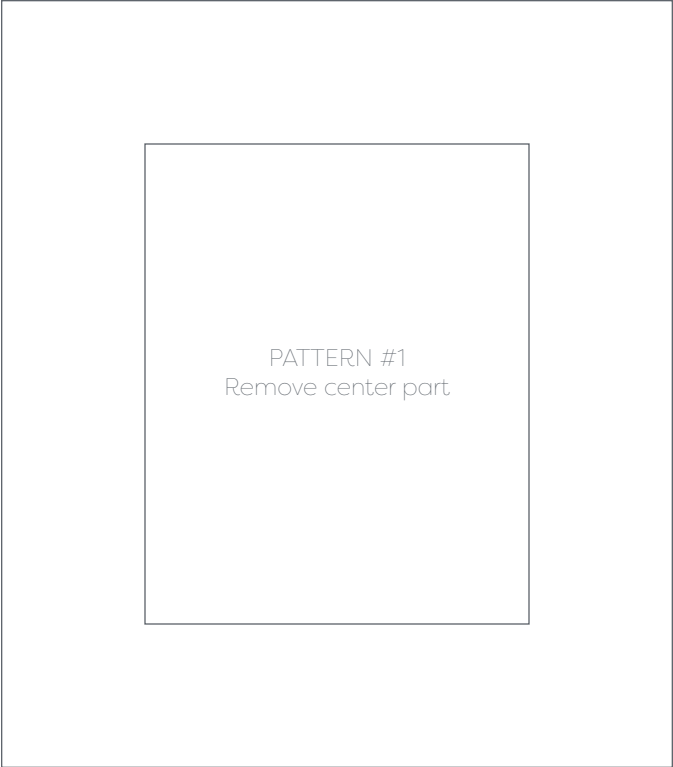
- Cardboard (used cardboard postal boxes work well). Use Pattern #1 on following page to cut out rectangle frames, one for each child
- Golden ribbon
- Mini icon print-outs, one for each child
- Poster board, any color. Use Pattern #2 on following page to cut out rectangles, one for each child
- Scotch tape
- Craft gems (optional)
- Embroidery floss (optional)

Instructions

- Each child receives one cardboard frame, one poster board piece, one icon print-out, and a long piece of ribbon.
- Tape one end of the ribbon on the cardboard frame.
- Wrap the ribbon all around the frame to cover it up entirely. If you run out of ribbon, tape the end on the back of the frame and start with a new piece.
- Once the frame is covered, secure the free end with a drop of glue and a piece of tape.
- Glue the icon on the center of the poster board rectangle.
- Tape the poster board rectangle behind the frame.
- Craft gems can be used as extra embellishment, if desired.
- A piece of embroidery floss can be taped on the back of the icon for hanging, if desired.



PATTERNS



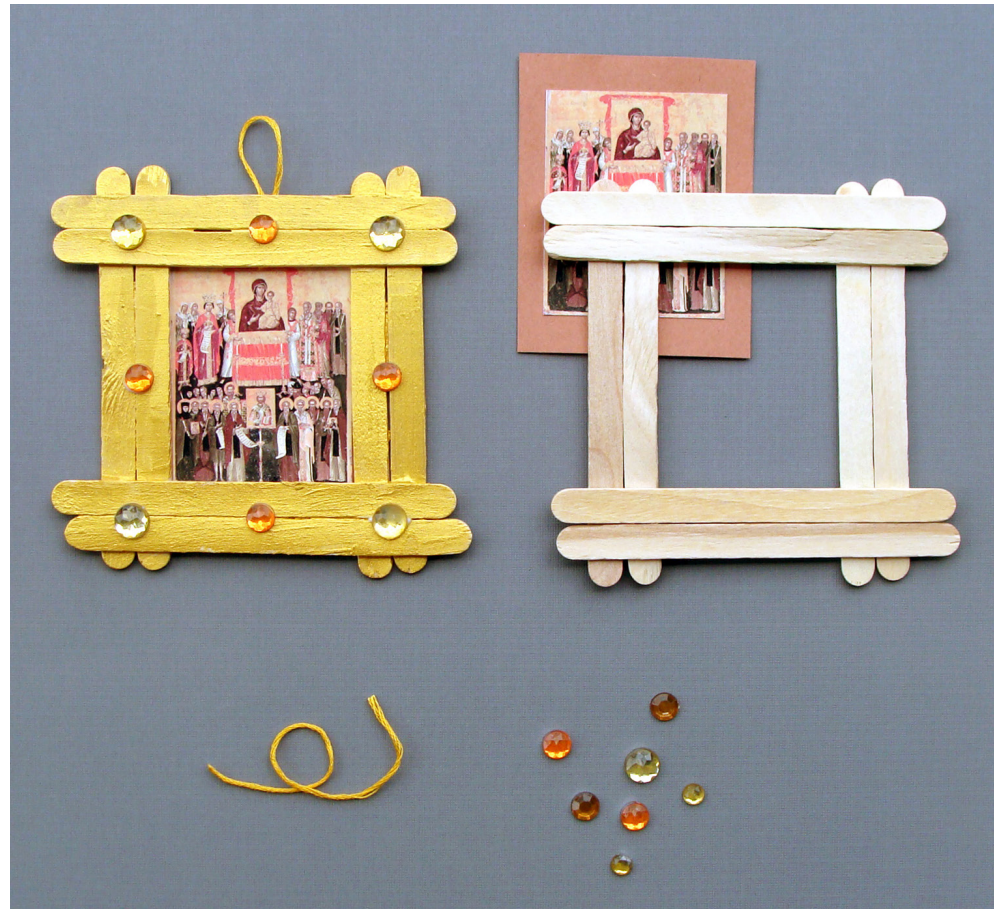
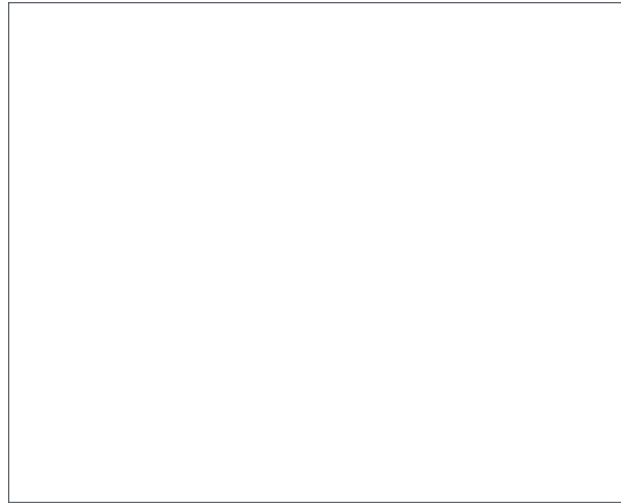
POPSICLE STICK-FRAMED ICON

Materials

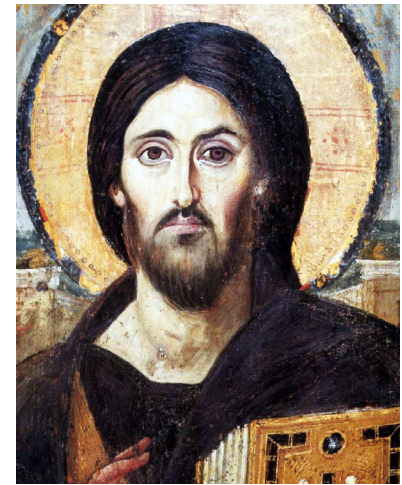
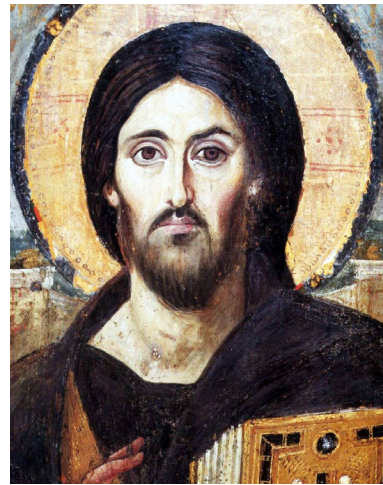
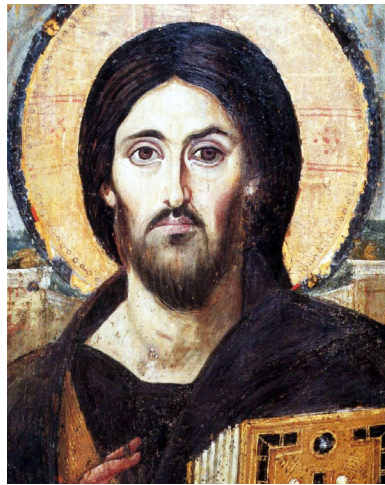
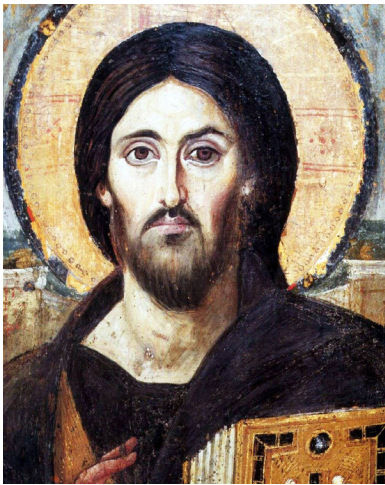
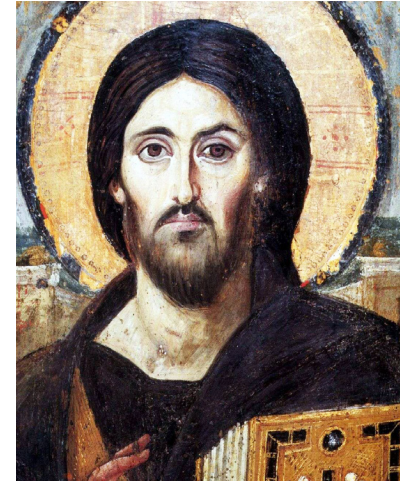
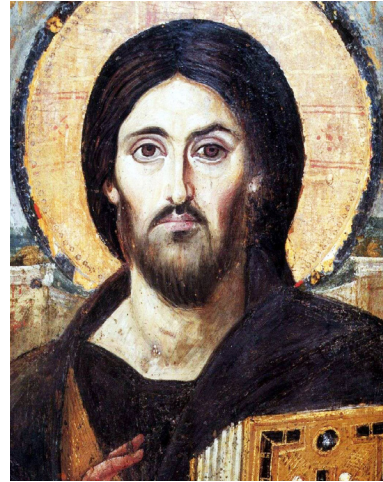
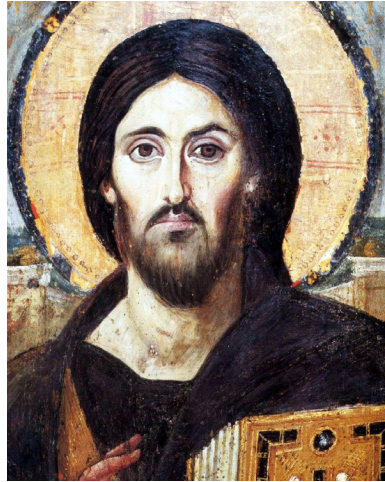
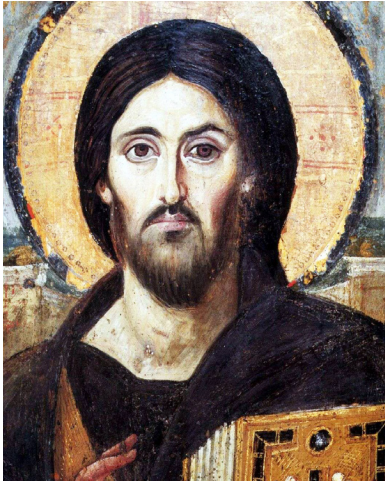
- Popsicle sticks, four for each child
- Gold acrylic paint or gold markers
- Mini icon print-outs, one for each child
- Poster board, any color. Use the pattern on the right to cut out rectangles, one for each child
- Tacky glue and glue stick
- Craft gems (optional)
- Embroidery floss (optional)

Instructions

- Even though children love painting with golden paint, if you are doing this craft at Sunday School, and want to use paint, it may be a good idea to pre-paint the popsicle sticks golden, so the kids' clothes won't get dirty. There is no need to do this if you are using markers.
- Each child receives one poster board piece, one icon print-out, and four popsicle sticks.
- Glue the icon on the center of the poster board rectangle.
- Using the icon rectangle as a guide, glue the popsicle sticks together as shown in the photo. Only the icon should show behind the popsicle sticks, not the poster board.
- Paint the popsicle stick frame golden, either using paint or markers. Let dry.
- Glue the poster board rectangle behind the frame.
- Craft gems can be used as extra embellishment, and a piece of embroidery floss can be taped on the back of the icon for hanging, if desired.



MINI ICONS - CHRIST PANTOKRATOR



Christ Pantokrator, 6th-century encaustic icon from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, anonymous artist [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spas_vsenderzhitel_sinay.jpg)

MINI ICONS - THEOTOKOS OF THE PASSION



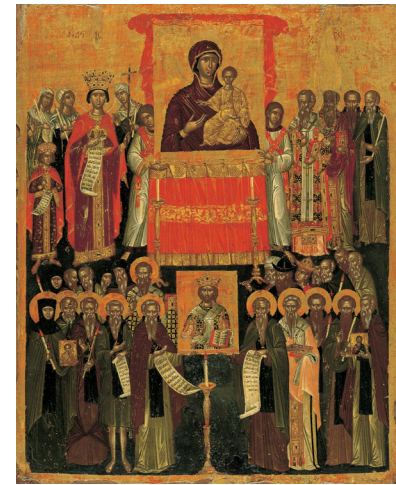
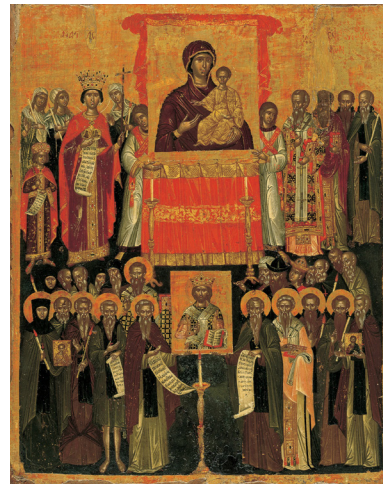
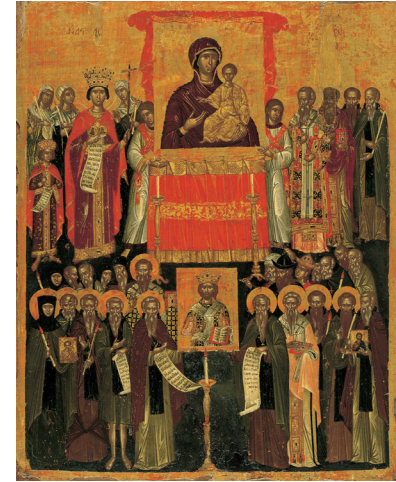
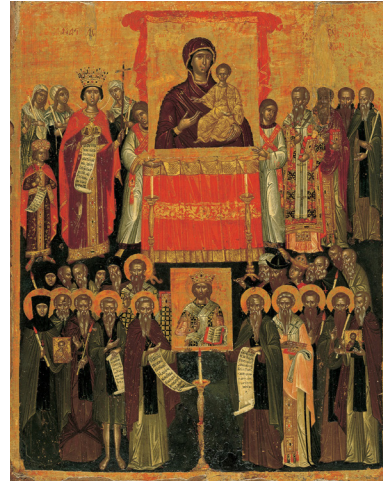
Theotokos of the Passion, 17th century, anonymous artist [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theotokos_of_the_Passion.jpg)

MINI ICONS - DEISIS



Deisis, 18th-century icon by anonymous artist, Greek Orthodox Church and Museum, Miskolc, Hungary, photo by Szilas [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deisis_with_chosen_saints.jpg)

MINI ICONS - RESOTORATION OF HOLY ICONS



Restoration of the Icons, 16th-century, anonymous artist, Benaki Museum, Athens Greece, photo <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/FgE33gHO-3V1Q> [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Restoration_of_the_Icons_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)



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