

## **Activity and Craft: Faith - Little Miracles**

Objective: Expose participants to the service of the Lesser or Greater Blessing of Water and the ongoing miracle of Holy Water.

Summary: Many of our youth have never participated in the blessing of water. It is a beautiful and interactive service. It would be ideal to place this session during the Feast of Epiphany. If it is not possible to coincide with the feastday, consult with your priest to discuss when he may be able to join you and celebrate the service of the Lesser Blessing of Water.

The participants will also be able to take home their own holy water in their own holy water containers.

Needed Items:

Text for the appropriate service

Explanation of Epiphany

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/epiphany>

Holy water bottles (purchased or created)

Pre-preparation: Familiarize yourself with the article by Fr. Hopko on Epiphany and the supplemental article about holy water (<http://stmaryofstamford.org/holywater.html>)

Determine if you will purchase holy water bottles or have the participants create their own. There are several sources to purchase the holy water bottles. To create them you will need the following:

- clear sports water bottles
- paper icons (or laminated)
- modge podge
- self-stick foam letters

- water that has been left open to the air for at least three weeks. An open water bottle would be easiest.
- Holy water from the prior year.

Ask your priest if there are any ways that the youth may participate in the service such as holding candles, banners, etc. Also inquire if he will speak to the youth prior to the service concerning what will take place and the importance of holy water. You can also arrange for him to have a Q & A with the youth following the service.

You may want to split this session into two parts based upon your decision to either purchase or make your holy water bottles. If you choose to have the youth make them, schedule a session prior to the service. You or your parish priest can have a discussion about the upcoming service and the importance of holy water while the youth are working on their bottles.

If conducting a pre-service session - begin in prayer.

Ask the participants if they believe in miracles. Allow time for answers. Tell them you are about to show them a little miracle. Show them the regular water that has been sitting out. It should be a bit cloudy or beginning to form algae. Ask them if they know why this happens. Then show them the holy water. Ask them if they can guess how old the water is. Tell them that they could easily drink the holy water - you can even drink some yourself. How is this possible? This is a good opportunity to begin the discussion concerning the blessing of water and epiphany.

Ask the participants how else holy water is used in their life. Indicate that holy water can be a part of their everyday life. They can drink a bit of holy water every day, use their holy water to "bless" items in their home, etc.

Allow them time to choose their icons and letters to make their holy water bottles. Complete the session in prayer - possible singing the Tropar of Epiphany.



A smooth sided bottle is best for the letters and icons to adhere. Ensure to direct participants to hand wash their holy water bottles.



