



Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder

Prayer: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. O Lord, enlighten my mind with the light of understanding Thy Word, and teach me to do Thy will.

Activities: Watch this 2-minute video, talk with your family--see *page 3*, and then create your own picture of the Ladder of Divine Ascent.



Parent explains: What do you see in this icon, *on page 1*? (a ladder, Jesus, people climbing, people falling, angels, demons, St. John Climacus teaching monks) What do we have in common with a hermit and monk who lived 1500 years ago? (we both want to reach God's Heavenly Kingdom one day)

This week in Church we celebrate St. John Climacus (Greek for "St. John of the Ladder"). He wrote a book about people climbing 30 steps up a ladder to reach the Heavenly Kingdom. The book is called *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. It's so helpful for people today that everyone in Orthodox monasteries reads it during Great Lent. Here is an example from St. John Climacus, for how we can avoid sin and work to be closer to communion with God, even if we don't live in a monastery:

"Do all the good you can; do not speak evil of anyone; do not steal from anyone; do not lie to anyone; do not be arrogant towards anyone; do not hate anyone; do not be absent [without good reason] from the divine services; be compassionate to the needy; do not offend anyone [with your unloving behavior]; do not wreck another man's domestic happiness, and be content with what your [family] can give you. If you behave in this way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

Doesn't this sound like other rules we were given? Maybe like the 10 Commandments that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai? Mount Sinai is also the location of Saint Catherine's Monastery, where St. John Climacus went to live when he was 16 years old!