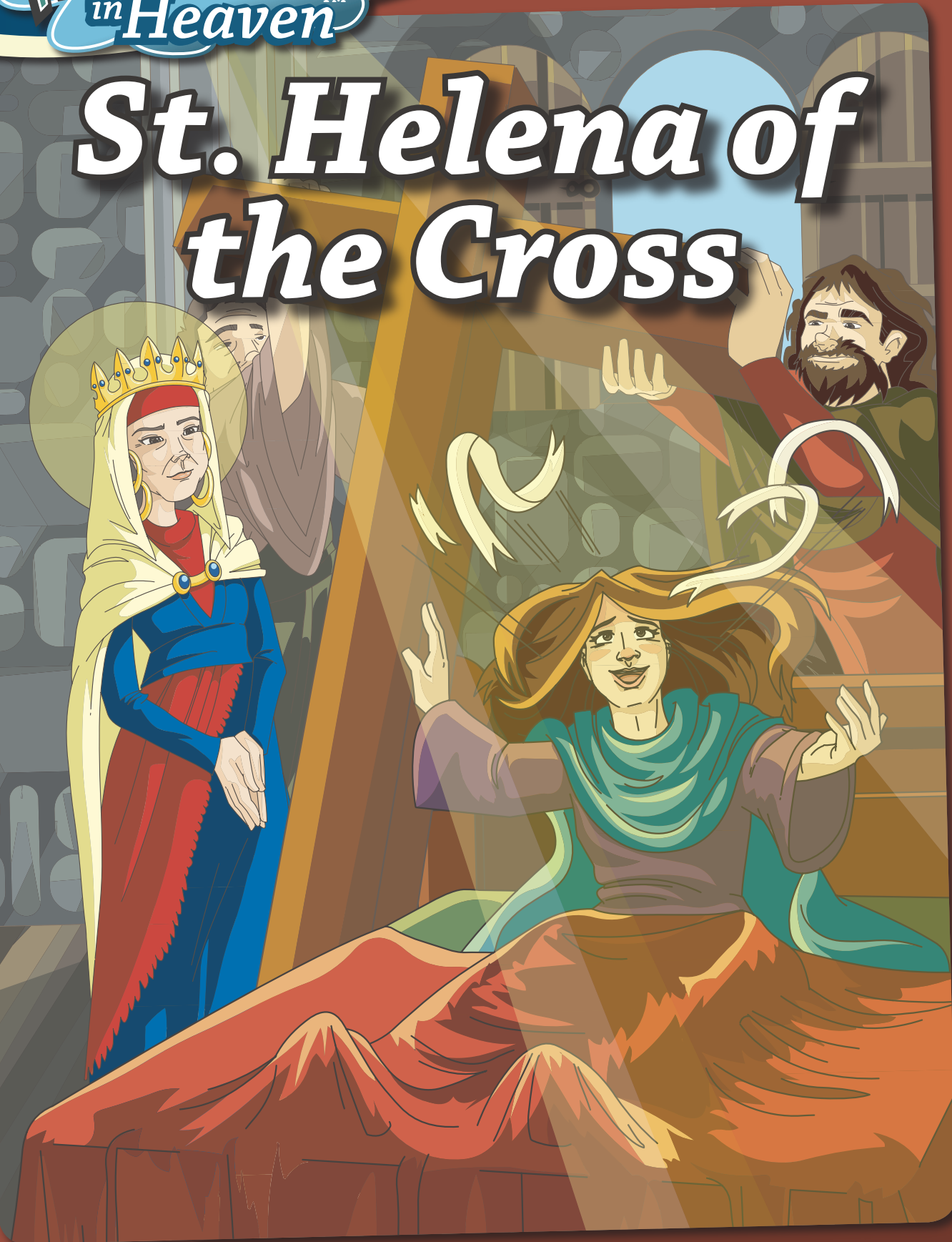




A Catholic Vacation  
Bible School Program  
by Tammy Gabrelcik

# St. Helena of the Cross





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## ***St. Helena of the Cross***

# **Puppet Show**

- Props**
- Puppet theater
  - Needle and cloth to be mended
  - Crown of greenery for puppet (with tape or Velcro dots)
  - 2 puppet-size hammers (with tape or Velcro dots)
  - 2 puppet-size shovels (with tape or Velcro dots)
  - 3 crosses
  - Bright flashlight
  - Portable tape or CD player with holy harp music or other appropriate music to represent the miracle
  - Bed for puppet
  - Blanket taped to a 10" piece of wire (cut wire clothes hanger)
  - 4 signs which read "14 years later", "one year later", "Yeah!", and "Cheer"

**Puppets** Puppets can be found in "Extras" section pages 17-27.

- General Constantius
- Old man
- Baby
- Bishop Macarius
- Emperor of Rome
- Bishop's messenger
- Adult Constantine
- St. Helena
- Servant A
- Sick woman
- Servant B

- Scenery**
- Palace background
  - Humble home of St. Helena
  - Half-built church
  - Outdoor scene for trip to Jerusalem
  - Jerusalem city skyline
  - Tomb with pagan statue and temple
  - Plain tomb with 3 crosses
  - Sick woman's home

# Saint Helena of the Cross Puppet Show (*Continued*)

## Scene 1

**Narrator**

Saint Helena lived in a time when being Christian was against the law in the Roman Empire. Any Christian that was caught by the Roman soldiers would be thrown in jail, tortured, or killed in horrible ways.

**General Constantius**

"Helena my dear, will you marry me?"

**St. Helena**

"I would be honored to become your wife, yes, I will marry you."

**Narrator**

Time passes

*Audience sings during scene change: song St. Helena of the Cross Song to the tune of "This Little Light of Mine". Repeat for each scene change. Led by Narrator.*

## Scene 2

**St. Helena**

"Constantius I am going to have a son."

**General Constantius**

"How wonderful, we shall name him Constantine, and he will become a great man."

## Scene 3

*St. Helena enters with a baby in her arms. Use tape or Velcro dots to attach baby to St. Helena. Constantius looks at the baby.*

**General Constantius**

"What a happy day this is for I now have a new son and I was just told that the Emperor has made me the new Caesar!"



# Saint Helena of the Cross Puppet Show (*Continued*)

## Scene 4

*Caesar Constantius enters stage with laurel crown on head. Crowd cheers as he waves to his subjects.*

*St. Helena appears.*

**Caesar Constantine**

"My Helena, I have some news to tell you. I have decided to marry Princess Theodora. Her family will bring much wealth and power to the Roman Empire." You must leave now and never show your face in Rome again!"

*St. Helena bows to Caesar and slowly and sadly leaves the palace.*

## Scene 5

*Show St. Helena living in a small, humble home mending clothing.*

*Show a sign that reads "14 years later"*

## Scene 6

**Emperor of Rome**

"I crown thee Caesar of Rome"

**Caesar Constantine**

"I am honored to serve Rome, my Emperor."

*Emperor of Rome leaves stage. Servants remain.*

**Caesar Constantine**

"Summon my Mother and bring her to me right away!"

## Scene 7

*St. Helena enters stage. She runs and hugs her son.*

**Caesar Constantine**

"Mother, as Caesar, I give you the title of Augusta. You shall be honored as the mother of the Caesar! This is where you belong my dear mother, by my side always."



# Saint Helena of the Cross Puppet Show (*Continued*)

## Scene 8

*Show a sign that reads "One year later"*

*Hold up a sign for the audience to participate as the crowd. Children in audience should yell, "yeah!!!" when prompted (narrator will need to tell the audience to yell when this sign is held up).*

**Caesar Constantine**

"I announce the Edict of Milan. From this day forward the Christians' religion shall be legal in all of the Roman Empire!" (Cheers from the crowd) "All Christian prisoners shall be released immediately!" (more cheers from the crowd)

**St. Helena**

"My son, you have done a wonderful thing for Christians! The Lord will bless you for this."

## Scene 9

*Show St. Helena with a small group of workers (use servant A, servant B, and old man puppet).*

**St. Helena**

"Rejoice Christians! We are free to worship the one true God. We will begin our service to the Lord this day. Today we will begin building new churches for all Christians rich and poor."

*Show building of church with St. Helena watching.*

## Scene 10

*St. Helena and Constantine on stage.*

**St. Helena**

"My son and Caesar, I have a burning desire to seek out the holy cross on which my Savior died. I will leave for the Holy Land tomorrow. I beg from you, your blessing on this quest."

**Caesar Constantine**

"My beloved mother, you have my blessing and I will give you all the things you need for your journey. Travel safely and God's grace be with you."



# Saint Helena of the Cross Puppet Show (*Continued*)

## Scene 11

*St. Helena and servants with caravan on stage. Characters are walking in a line.*

**St. Helena**

"When we reach Jerusalem we must seek out Christians who will help us find the Holy Cross."

**Servant A**

"Yes, my Lady."

**St. Helena**

"We will search for clues and pray that the Lord will guide us on our quest."

**Servant B**

"Yes, my Lady."

## Scene 12

*Arrive in the City of Jerusalem. City back drop.*

*Old man appears on stage.*

**St. Helena**

"Greetings, my brother in Christ. We are on a quest to find the Holy Cross on which Our Lord and Savior died. Do you know of any such place we should begin our search?"

**Old Man**

"There is a place that is believed to be the Holy Tomb of Our Lord. The pagans buried it with stones and rubbish. They built a temple to their goddess Athena and, if that is not enough disgrace to Our Lord, they put a stone statue of their god Jupiter nearby. Any Christians that visit the Holy place look like they are worshipping these false gods! What a disgrace!"

**St. Helena**

"Why would we find the holy cross at the tomb of our Lord?"

**Old Man**

"It is a custom of the Jewish people to dig a deep hole next to the tomb of the dead and bury the horrible things used to kill the victim. If this is the true place of Christ's burial, then the relic will most certainly be found nearby."

**St. Helena**

"This is of great help to us; we shall rest from our journey and begin with this place in the morning. Thank you, kind man. May the Lord bless you for this."





# Saint Helena of the Cross Puppet Show (*Continued*)

## Scene 13

*Close curtains. Background of site of Holy Tomb with pagan temple and statue.*

*St. Helena and servants approach site.*

**St. Helena**

"What have they done to this holy burial place? Tear down this temple and remove that hideous statue. Smash these pagan things to pieces! When you are done with that we shall begin to dig. Our Lord will guide us to find His true cross."

*Servants begin destroying pagan items. Next they start to dig. St. Helena stands to the side watching and praying.*

*They find the tomb of our Lord and St. Helena slowly enters.*

**St. Helena**

*Yelling out of the tomb:* "We have found it! There are three crosses, the very nails that pierced our Lord and the sign which hung above His holy head! Praise God! But which of these three belongs to Christ? How can we tell, the sign has been separated from the cross?"

## Scene 14

*Close curtains. Enter the Bishop Macarius with messenger.*

**Bishop Macarius**

"I have heard of Helena's discovery of the three crosses in the Holy Tomb of Christ. Take this message to her immediately. Tell her of a very sick woman in the city. Tell her to have the three crosses taken to this woman's home. Each cross should be touched to the ill woman. Our Lord will reveal the true cross. Go and be quick!"

## Scene 15

*Close curtain. Scene of the tomb and three crosses.*

*Messenger runs up to St. Helena, panting hard.*

**Bishop Macarius**

"My Lady, Bishop Macarius sends his greetings and wishes you to take the three crosses to a sick woman in the city. She has been sick for a very long time. Have each cross touched to the ill woman and wait for the Lord to reveal the identity of the one true cross."

*Servants carry crosses to town (attach crosses to puppets with tape or Velcro dots).*



# Saint Helena of the Cross Puppet Show (Continued)

## Scene 16

*Sick woman in bed. St. Helena, cross carriers, and three crosses.*

**St. Helena**

"Bishop Macarius tells us of your ill health. He prays for a miracle for you and for the church. May we touch you with these three crosses. One is the very cross on which our Savior died. Bishop Macarius prays that the true cross will heal you of your sickness."

**Sick Woman**

"The Bishop is a wise and holy man. If he says to do so, then I say to do so."

*The first cross is touched to the woman, nothing happens, the second cross is touched to the woman and still nothing. When the third cross is touched to the woman a bright light is shined, music is played, and the blanket, which covered the woman is mysteriously pulled off with a wire attached to it.*

**Sick Woman**

"Praise God! I am healed!"

*Sick woman gets up out of bed and makes the Sign of the Cross and hugs St. Helena.*

*St. Helena, healed woman and cross carriers process out with the holy cross elevated.*

**Narrator**

"St. Helena was so overjoyed with the miracle of God revealing the true Cross, that she had a church built at the site of the Holy tomb. She placed part of the Holy Cross on display at this church and sent another part of the Cross to her son Constantine and the third part she sent to the Bishop Macarius. Each piece is now a relic displayed in churches. Some small pieces have been given to others for veneration. The cross was hidden and buried for 326 years until with the help of God, St. Helena found this holy relic to share with the rest of the Christians. The Church now venerates this holy cross each Easter. What a special gift from St. Helena of the Cross!"

"The End".





Appropriate for:  
**Preschool, Grade K**

## ***St. Helena of the Cross***

# **Stained-Glass Shrine**

- Supplies**
- Empty Crystal Light Cans (one can makes 2 shrines)
  - Colored permanent markers
  - Glue
  - Small cups
  - Plastic paint brushes
  - Picture of St. Helena of the Cross
  - Scissors
  - Paper towels
  - Optional: newspaper

- Set Up**
1. Fill small paper cups with glue  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way full. Place paint brush in cup.
  2. Place newspaper at each child's work area.
  3. Pre-cut Crystal Light cans with pattern (page 28). Put one shrine for each child along with a picture of St. Helena, pre-cut in an arch shape in each child's work space.
  4. Place colored markers in center of table so children can share.

- Directions**
1. Glue picture of St. Helena of the Cross on the front center of Shrine. This will be the outside of the can.
  2. Wipe any excess glue off of shrine. Glue will impair permanent markers.
  3. Color with permanent markers various colors and shapes making the image of a stained-glass frame around the picture. The teacher may wish to divide the frame with lines for the children to color between if the group is too young to make their own designs successfully.





**St. Helena of the Cross**

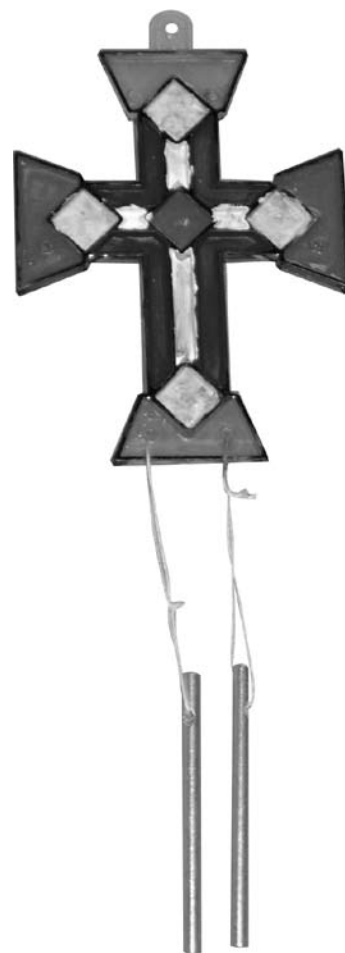
Appropriate for:  
**1<sup>st</sup> Grade & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

# Cross Sun Catchers

- Supplies**
- Cross-shaped sun catchers, one per child (*available at [www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)*)
  - Paint
  - Paintbrushes
  - Paper towels
  - 1 black permanent marker for teacher
  - Small pan of water for washing brushes
  - Optional: newspaper

- Set Up**
1. Place newspaper at each work area.
  2. Give each child one brush, a supply of paint, and one cross-shaped sun catcher.

- Directions**
1. Write child's name on back of cross.
  2. Paint crosses with various colors, washing brushes between colors. Use paper towels to dry brushes as needed.
  3. Let Dry





***St. Helena of the Cross***

Appropriate for:  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

# Sand Art Cross

- Supplies**
- Variety of colored sand
  - Paper funnels, one per child
  - Cross shaped bottles (available at [www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com))
  - Paper plates
  - Small paper cups
  - 1 bottle of glue
  - Permanent marker for teacher

- Set Up**
1. Place 3 colors of sand in small paper cups for each child, one paper funnel, cross shaped bottle, paper plate for catching spilled sand.

- Directions**
1. Carefully pour one color of sand into cross bottle.
  2. Continue pouring layers of different colored sand until the bottle is full.
  3. Write child's name on base of bottle and apply small amount of glue to base of lid. Attach lid and let dry.





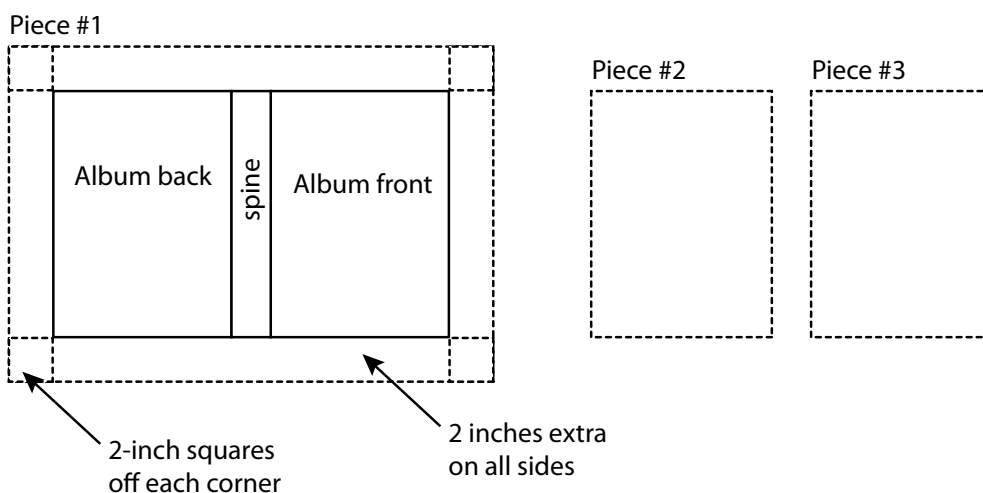
Appropriate for:  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

## *St. Helena of the Cross*

# Prayer Card Album

- Supplies**
- Small, inexpensive photo albums size 6-inch x 5-inch
  - Various fabric with angels, or cross print
  - Glue
  - Paint brushes
  - Scissors
  - Rickrack (zig-zag shaped trim found at any fabric store)
  - Fabric paint
  - Paper towels
  - Optional: newspaper

- Set Up**
1. Pre-cut fabric into 3 pieces. For piece #1, measure the size of the album. Cut fabric the size of the front, back, spine, of the album plus an extra 2 inches on all sides. Cut 2-inch squares off each corner (see illustration below). For pieces #2 and #3, measure the inside of the album's cover and cut to size.

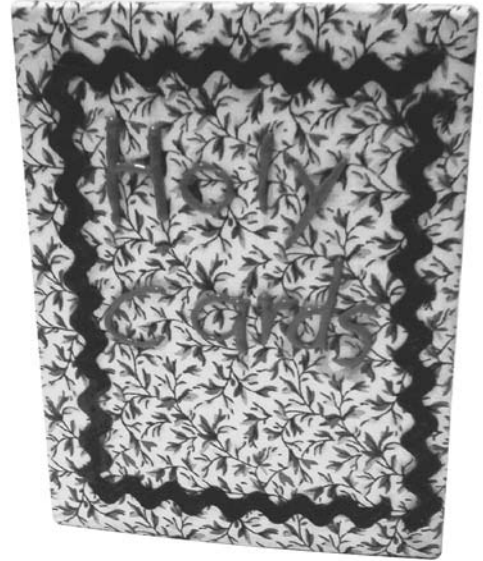


2. Place newspaper on each child's work area. Give each child one photo album, pre-cut fabric, glue in cup with brush. Fill cups with glue  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way full.
3. Place on center of table Rickrack and fabric paint for children to share.

# Prayer Card Album *(Continued)*

## Directions

1. Paint front cover of photo album with glue. Spread out pre-cut fabric piece #1, back side up. Carefully lay album onto fabric, lining up fabric so flaps will fold inside album squarely.
2. Carefully turn fabric and album over. Glue binding edge of album and back. Smooth fabric over binding and back of album.
3. Carefully open front cover of album and glue around the inside edge of book. Fold flaps of fabric inside album and press into the glue. Do the same with the inside of the back cover.
4. Clean up any excess glue as you go.
5. Open front cover and paint glue over entire inside cover of book. Place fabric piece #2 to conceal glued flaps of fabric. Do the same with the inside cover of the back, using fabric piece #3.
6. Decorate the front with Rickrack, fabric paint. Write "PRAY FOR US" or "HOLY CARDS."





***St. Helena of the Cross***

# **St. Helena of the Cross Song**

*Sung to the tune of This Little Light of Mine*

Saint Helena of the Cross,  
She is gonna find.  
Saint Helena of the Cross,  
She is gonna find.  
Saint Helena of the Cross,  
She is gonna find.

Gonna find, gonna find, the true cross.

She looked and looked and looked,  
Saint Helena of the Cross.  
She looked and looked and looked,  
Saint Helena of the Cross.  
She looked and looked and looked,  
Saint Helena of the Cross.

Gonna find, gonna find, the true cross.

She found this awesome relic,  
Saint Helena of the Cross  
She found this awesome relic,  
Saint Helena of the Cross  
She found this awesome relic,  
Saint Helena of the Cross.

Gonna find, gonna find, the true cross.

Music







***St. Helena of the Cross***

# Cross Sugar Cookies

- Ingredients**
- 1 cup of butter
  - 1 cup of sugar
  - 1 egg
  - 2 teaspoons baking powder
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla
  - 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups flour

- Directions**
1. Preheat oven at 350°
  2. Melt butter.
  3. Stir in all ingredients.
  4. Add flour a little at a time. Mix well.
  5. Flour surface for rolling out dough.
  6. Roll out dough to about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thickness. Cut into cross shape cookies.
  7. Bake for 7 minutes.
  8. Cool and use red or purple icing to represent royalty or blood of Christ.



## *St. Helena of the Cross*

# True Cross Scavenger Hunt

- Supplies**
- Clues written on small paper
  - Cardboard Cross

**How to Play** Prepare, ahead of time, seven clues for the scavenger hunt. The first clue should be given to the group. Pick one child to read the clue; for younger non-readers, teacher may read the clue. This clue should have a riddle that will help the group find the next clue. Teacher may need to help the children think out loud to figure out where to look next.

The cross should be hidden in an out-of-the-way place in order not to be seen before the group of children finds all of the clues.



## St. Helena of the Cross

# Memory Verse

### St. Helena of the Cross



2 Kings 13:21

*"But when the man came in contact  
with the bones of Elisha, he came  
back to life and rose  
to his feet."*

—St. Joseph Edition NAB

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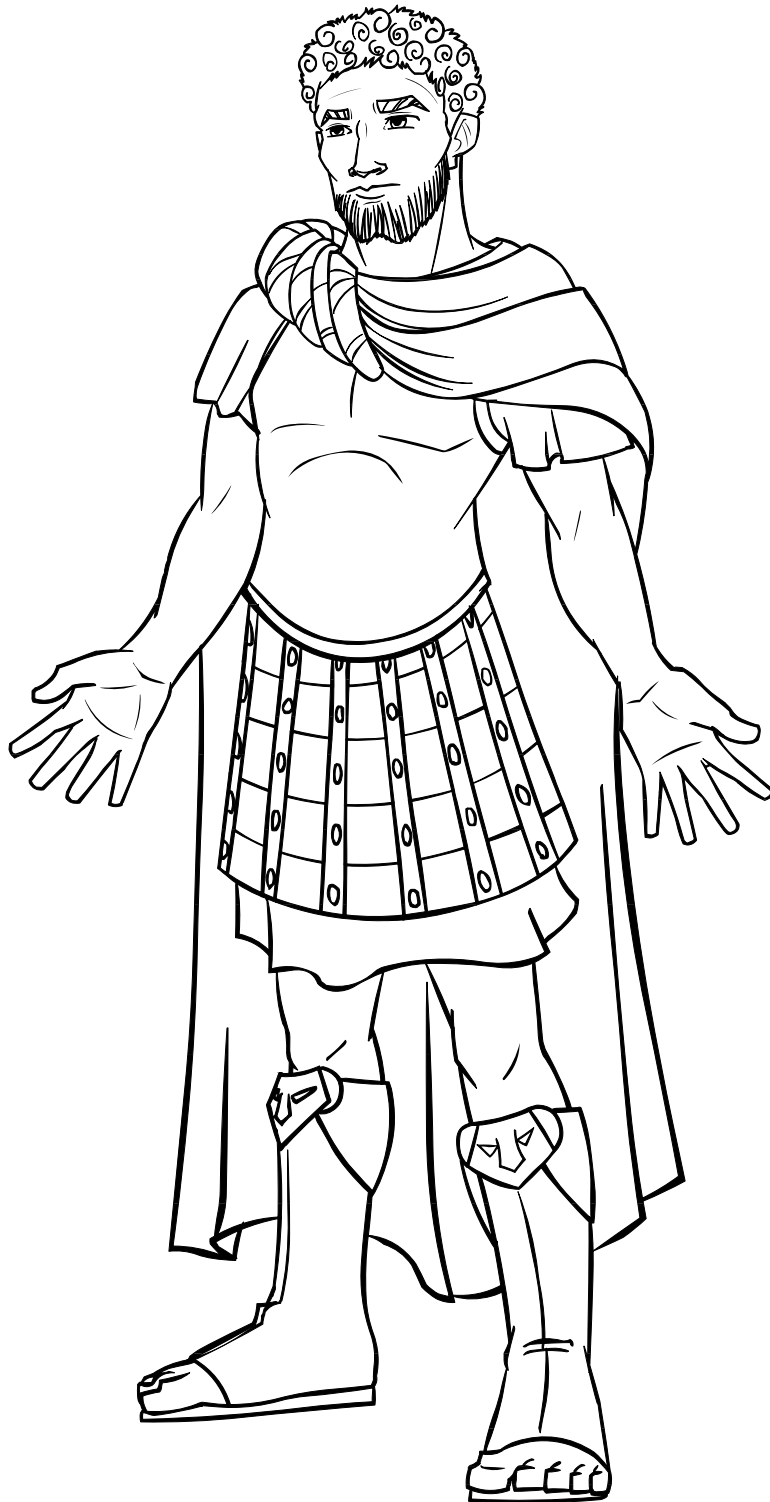


2 Kings 13:21

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with the bones of Elisha, he came  
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# Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show



**General Constantius**

# Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Baby wrapped in blanket**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Emperor of Rome**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Adult Constantine**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Servant A**



## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Servant B**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



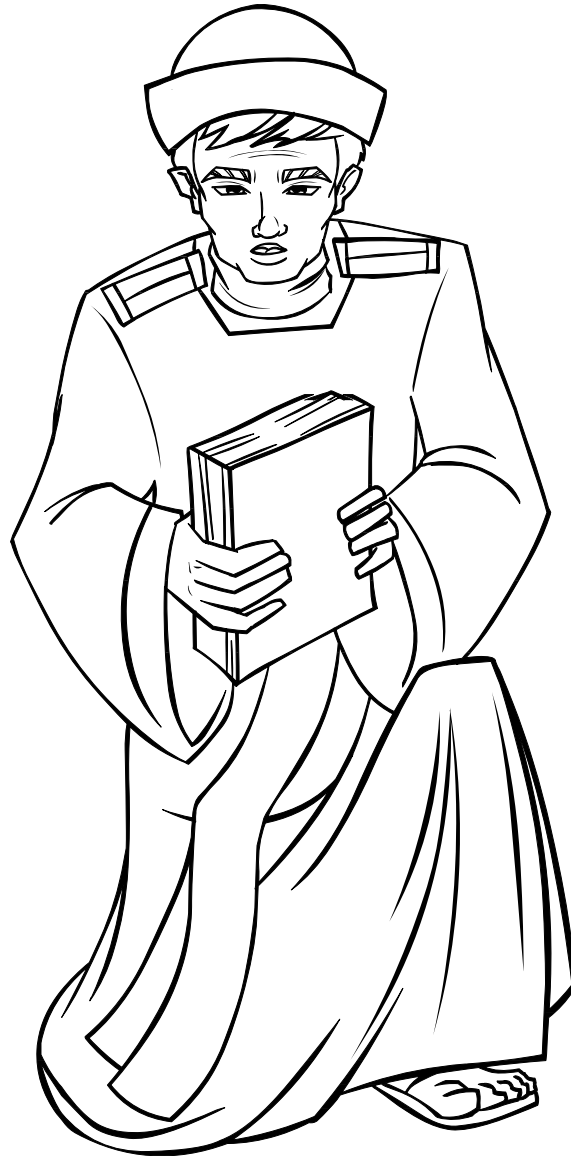
**Old man**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Bishop Macarius**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



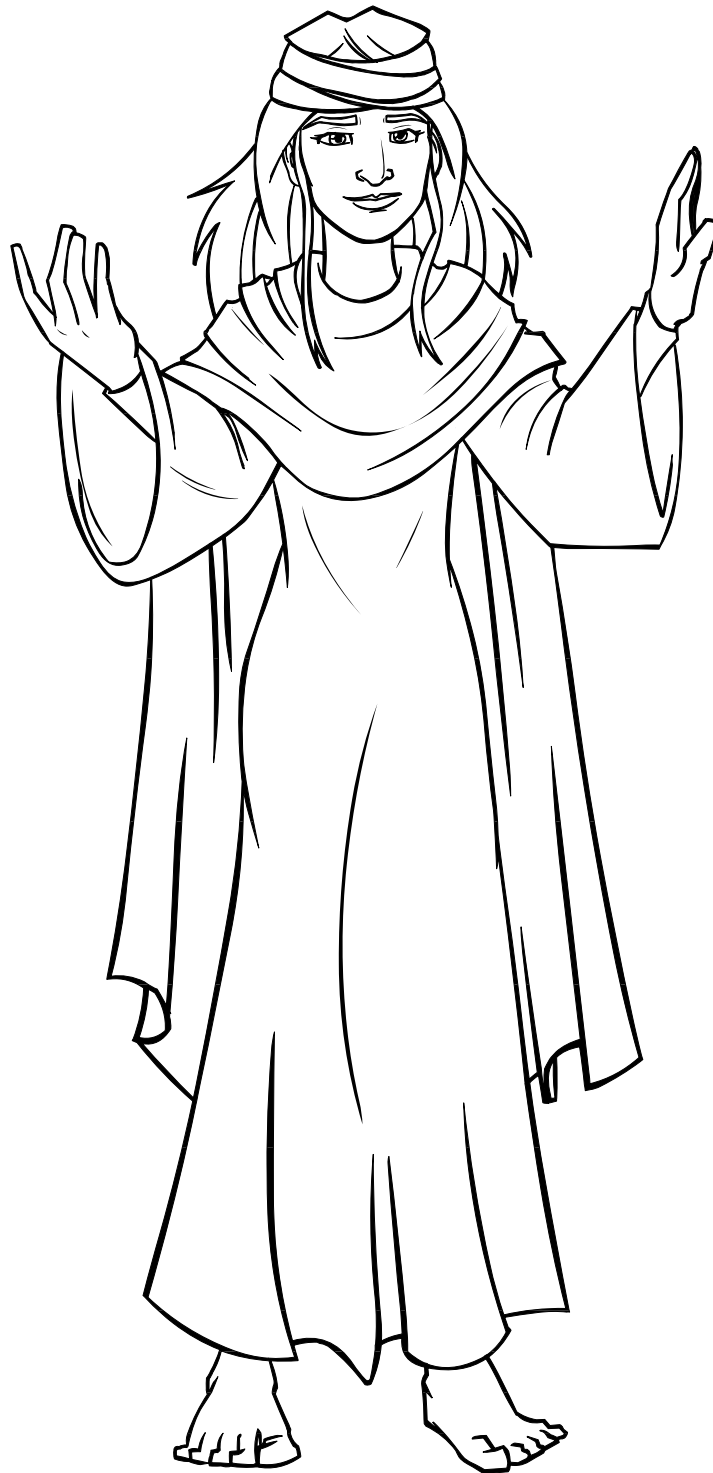
**Bishop's messenger**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**St. Helena of the Cross**

## Puppets for St. Helena Puppet Show (*Continued*)



**Sick woman**

# Stained-Glass Shrine, Crystal Light Pattern

- How**
1. Carefully cut off paper covering.
  2. Wash cans and dry.
  3. Take lids off and turn can upside down.
  4. Take a ruler and permanent marker. Find the middle of the can and draw a line across the middle of the bottom and continue down the sides. Turn the can upright. Using sharp scissors, start on one of the open sides cutting along the line. Cutting the bottom is tricky and may require you to score the rim with a knife and then continue on with scissors.
  5. When all cans are cut down the center, place the enclosed pattern on each half and trim into the arched shrine shape. Precut enough for each child in the group. One can should make 2 shrines.

