**Presentation of the Theotokos (Middle School)**



Lesson Plan:

1. Open with prayer.
2. Review the story:

Several of the early Christian writings of Syria tell us that Mary, the Theotokos was brought to the Temple at age three to be educated, in fulfillment of a vow made by her parents, Joachim and Anna. Joachim and Anna had prayed for the birth of their daughter.  The feast was instituted in the late 4th century.

Mary and her parents approach the Temple in joy, accompanied by Mary’s small friends.  Zachariah and the Temple virgins meet her in the Temple courtyard.  The Temple is divided into three sections: the outer porch or courtyard, the Holy or nave where only Jews can come to pray and worship, and the Holy of Holies, behind a curtain, where only the high priest can enter, and he only once a year on the Day of Atonement.  But, little Mary climbs directly up the steps and into the Holy of Holies, astounding all the people and even the angels.

Mary stayed at the Temple and grew up there, studying and worshipping.  She left the Temple at about the age of 15, when she returned to Nazareth and was betrothed to Joseph.

1. For contemplation:

What does Mary entering the Holy of Holies symbolize? (one possibility – that she who entered the Temple was preparing to become the house of the Lord)

What is now the true Temple? (the Church, the Body of Christ – I Cor. 6:19)

The Ark of the Covenant was lost at the time of the Babylonian Captivity, who is now the Ark? (Mary, as she enters the Holy of Holies)

The ark was surrounded by carvings of what? (cherubim) Mary is hymned each week in the Megalynarion as what? (more honorable than the cherubim…)  So Mary is the newly recovered Living Ark, fulfilling the Old Testament and prefiguring the New Covenant.



