

Saint Eleutherios, pray for us!



The Children's Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian young people. Copyright 2017 Alexandra Houck.
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The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

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Playing dress-up

Have you ever played dress-up? Did you dress up as a princess? A firefighter? A train conductor? Sometimes it's fun to pretend you are something you aren't, isn't it?



In today's Gospel reading we hear about a different kind of dress-up—and not the good kind! Today, we hear the story of a woman who was sick with a crippled back—she could not straighten up for 18 years. But when Jesus healed her from this awful pain, some people were mad at Him! They argued with Him and told Jesus that He shouldn't have healed her on that day. These people were in charge of the synagogue, where people worshipped God. These people said they worshipped God, but when God (Jesus) did something, they didn't like it. These people were dressing up like they worshipped God, but they were really just pretending!

God wants us to worship Him on the inside and on the outside. As Christians, we don't want to play dress-up. In other words, we don't want to just talk about being Christians and show off that we're Christians. We want to really BE Christians. We want to act like Christians, following our Lord, Jesus Christ. Playing dress-up might be a fun game, but we definitely don't want to *play* being a Christian.

SECRET CODE

The Bible is not written in a secret code— You can pick it up and read it any time. But can you try to figure out what Jesus said to the crippled woman when He healed her?

Hint: Read every 2nd letter, starting at the first letter. When you finish, start again on the letters you have missed.

Y O O M U Y A O R U -
E R S S E I T C F K R
N E E E S F S R

Answer: You are set free from your sickness.

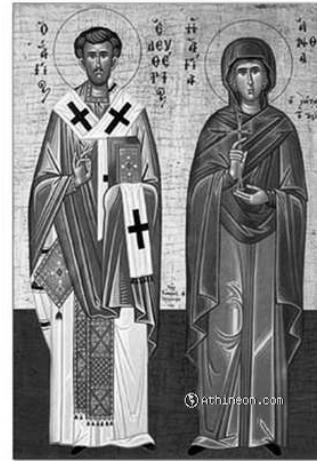
What's in an icon?

Here is another icon of Saint Eleutherios.

You can see his vestments and his Gospel, and you know he was a bishop. He is blessing with his hand, and now he is blessing all of us with his prayers to God!



MOTHER AND SON SAINTS ELEUTHERIOS AND ANTHIA



Saint Eleutherios and his mother, Saint Anthia

Sometimes, just sometimes, kids have trouble listening to their parents when they give them advice.

Sometimes we want to do things our way and nobody else's. But this week we celebrate a saint who listened to his mother and became a great Christian because of it!

As a child, Saint Eleutherios listened to his mother, who told him about our Lord, Jesus Christ. When he was a little older, she sent him to learn from the bishop. Even though he was young, the bishop ordained him to be a deacon,

and then a priest. Soon, he became a bishop, too.

Lots of people were becoming Christians because of Saint Eleutherios, and the emperor (who didn't believe in our one, true God) didn't like it one bit. He sentenced our saint to be killed for the faith. His mother, Anthia, came to visit her son. She wanted to give him strength and to tell him not to give up. For that, she was killed too.

The word "Eleutherios" means "freedom" in Greek. And his life always reminds us that we are always *free* to follow our Lord, Jesus Christ. Even when things are hard, even if people make fun of us, even if we are hurt for it. We can always choose to follow Him!

We celebrate the nameday of these two saints on Friday, Dec. 15th (Dec. 28th, OC).