

# BASIL

FOR THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



## PREPARATION

Plant 1/4 inch deep,  
in full sun



## GROWING SEASON

Wait to plant until  
after threat of frost  
has passed



## HARVEST & BRING

Bring your basil to  
church on  
September 14th!

## THE STORY BEHIND THESE SEEDS:

We bring our basil to church, along with many other gardeners on September 14th, as we remember how Saint Helen found the Life-Giving Cross of Christ under a mound where sweet basil was growing. Three crosses were unearthed where Christ was crucified. In order to discover which one was the cross Christ was crucified on, all three were placed against a dead man in a passing funeral procession. When he touched the Life-Giving Cross, he came back to life!

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### BIBLE

Read and discuss  
Christ's crucifixion in  
the Gospels

2

### SAINTS

Who is Saint Helen?  
Who is Saint  
Constantine?

3

### PILGRIMAGE

Where was Christ  
crucified? Can you find  
it on the map?

## LESSONS & CONNECTIONS

Each year, when we plant our basil in our home garden, we re-tell the story of Saint Helen going on a pilgrimage to find Christ's Cross under the sweet, fragrant basil. In our humble, little garden, we are living our faith as we pass on this illuminating tradition to the next generation, our children.

### WHAT IS A PILGRIMAGE?

It is a journey, usually a long one, made to a sacred place. Have you made a pilgrimage with your family to someplace special like a monastery or to another country like Israel? Could you plan a virtual pilgrimage via the internet and search for photos of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, or another place you'd like to learn more about?

### WHAT DOES BASIL MEAN?

It means "flower of royalty." Why do you think it is called this? The person that named this plant wanted everyone to remember that it grew above where Christ's Cross had been buried over time.



### HOW LONG WAS CHRIST'S CROSS BURIED BEFORE SAINT HELEN FOUND IT?

Create a timeline using fax paper and tape it to a wall. You can use the timeline both for this lesson and for future lessons. Start by marking your timeline with the birth of Christ and the crucifixion of Christ. This is also an opportunity to talk about how we date events according to B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (anno domini, which means "in the year of the Lord").

Then have your child research the time period when Saint Helen lived and mark it on your timeline. Finally, ask your child to estimate how long the Cross had been buried before Saint Helen found it.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

*The Queen & the Cross: the Story of Saint Helen*  
by Cornelia Mary Bilinsky

*Holy Week and Pascha* by J Euphemia Briere

*The Life of Christ in Icons* by Marina Paliaki

*The Tale of Three Trees* by Angela Elwell Hunt

*The Lenten Covenant* by Leonidas Contos

Pascha Passports ~ Search online for "Lenten Embassy"

