

WEEK 24: HEAR - CHURCH BELLS / CENSERS

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

GOALS

Why do we ring bells?
Why do we use a censer during services?

LESSON

Listen to church bells and a talanton with the lesson on church bells
Show provided visuals in conjunction with your lesson on censers

CHURCH BELLS:

Some Orthodox churches have bells and some do not. A long time ago, people did not wear watches on their wrists or have phones they could pull out to look at the time. Many people lived and worked near their church and the bells were used to tell people it's time for the Divine Liturgy to begin! They would stop what they were doing and walked to the church.

Additionally, the bells were used to let everyone know, who were not at church, when special moments were happening during a service.

The bells were always rung for a specific purpose and not simply to hear pretty bells ringing.

You can watch a talented lady ringing the church bells in Alaska here:

<https://youtu.be/hrj8Twuip18>

At monasteries, they use a wooden board, called a talanton, and bang it with mallets to let the monks or nuns know it's time for church or for other moments at the monastery. You can watch an example of a monk impressively using a talanton here:

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CENSER:

(Show visuals during your lesson)

A censer is a metal container used for burning incense and is suspended on four chains with twelve bells. The deacon or priest will use it during the Divine Liturgy and at other services. The bells on the censer draw our attention to the deacon or priest who is swinging it in the church. They swing the censer in reverence of the saints on the icons and all of us present. The incense coming out of the censer represents our prayers rising to heaven - and we will talk more about this in an upcoming lesson.

Let's look at a picture of a censer and learn more about it!

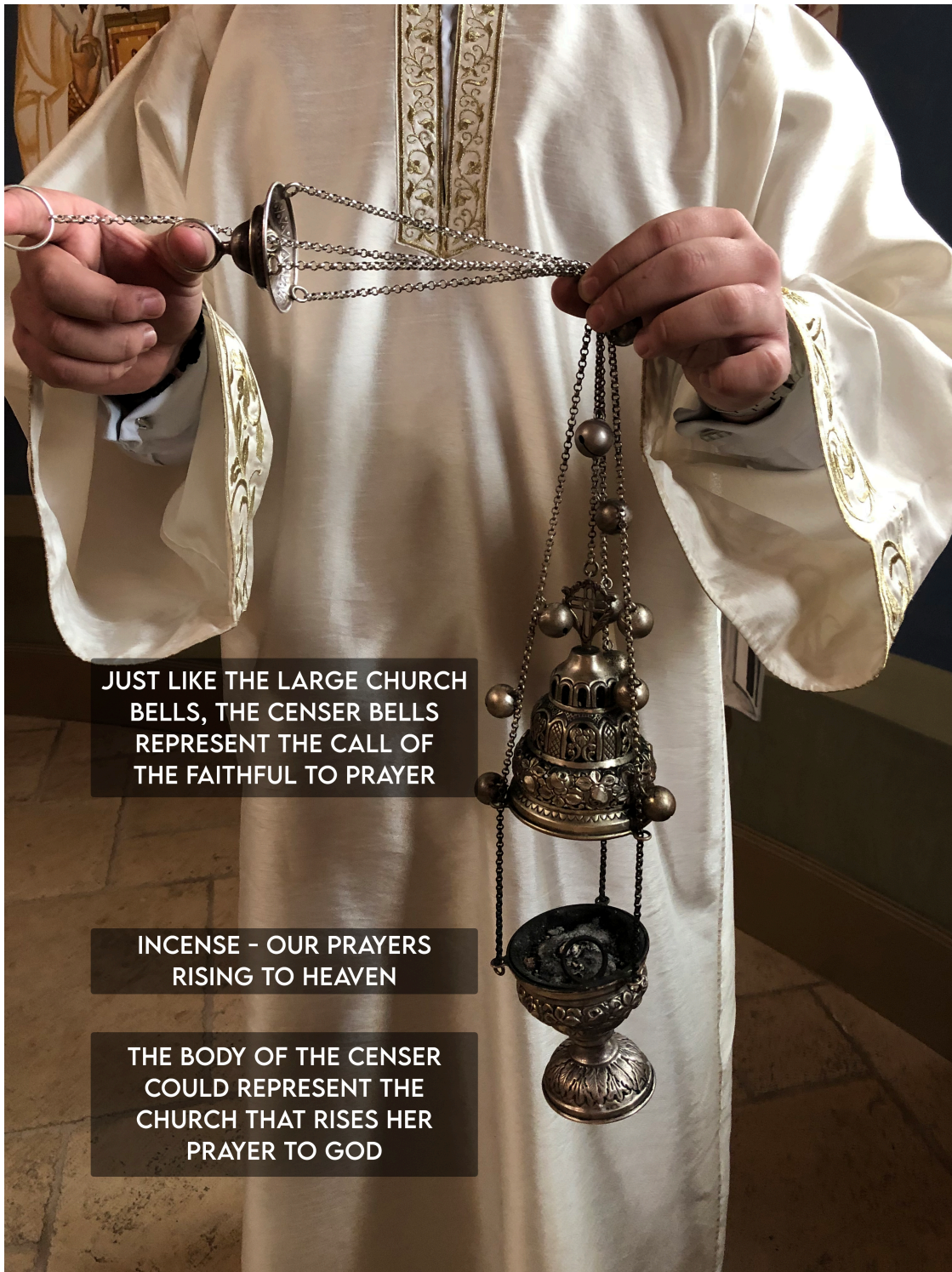
- A censer has a special bowl at the bottom that holds the burning charcoal and incense.
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- The incense represents our prayers rising to heaven.
- The bells on the censer are just like the large church bells and represent the call of the faithful to prayer.

Some families also have a smaller censer that they use in their home for their prayer time. It doesn't have any bells or chains on it though. It is usually placed on the family altar. The incense burning in our home censer also represents our prayers rising to heaven.

There is also another kind of censer called a "katzion" that is usually used in the monasteries and by the priests in parishes especially during Holy Week.

REVIEW:

- Why do Orthodox churches ring bells? (To tell everyone it's time for the service to begin and to tell them important information)
 - What does the burning incense in the censer represent? (Our prayers rising to heaven)
 - Why is the base of the censer in the shape of a small church? (Because the whole Church prays together)
 - Why are there bells on the censer? (To remind us that it's time to pray)
-



JUST LIKE THE LARGE CHURCH BELLS, THE CENSER BELLS REPRESENT THE CALL OF THE FAITHFUL TO PRAYER

INCENSE - OUR PRAYERS RISING TO HEAVEN

THE BODY OF THE CENSER COULD REPRESENT THE CHURCH THAT RISES HER PRAYER TO GOD

HOME CENSER



WEEK 24: HEAR - CHURCH BELLS / CENSERS

1ST - 2ND GRADE

GOALS

Why do we ring bells?
Why do we use a censer during services?

LESSON

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Additionally, the bells were used to let everyone know, who were not at church, when special moments were happening during a service.

The bells were also used to let everyone know when someone in the community had died or warn people when they were about to be invaded by enemies. The bells were always rung for a specific purpose.

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CENSER:

(Show visuals during your lesson)

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Let's look at a picture of a censer and learn more about it!

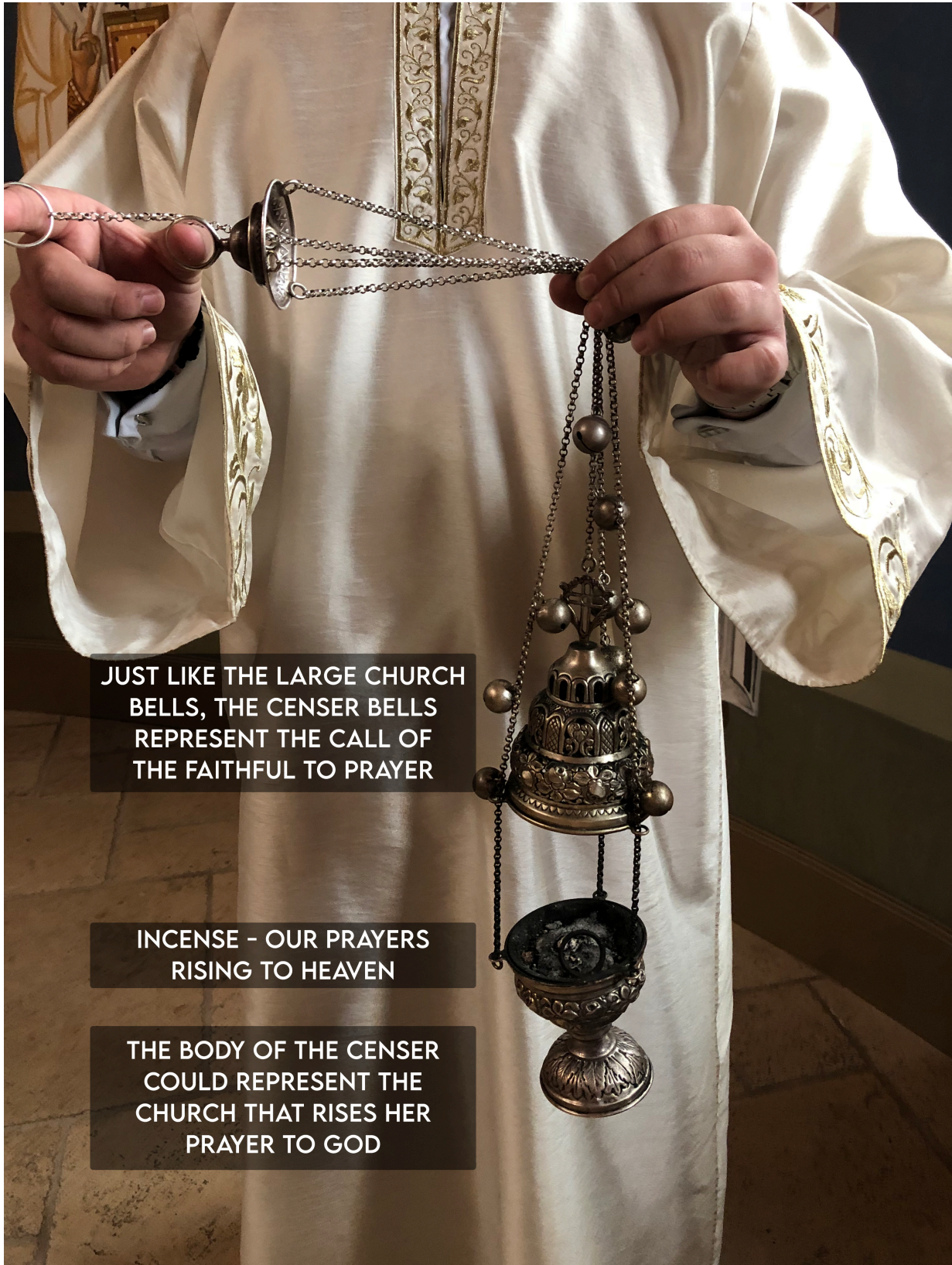
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Some families also have a smaller censer that they use in their home for their prayer time. It doesn't have any bells or chains on it though. It is usually placed on the family altar. The incense burning in our home censer also represents our prayers rising to heaven.

There is also another kind of censer called a "katzion" that is usually used in the monasteries and by the priests in parishes especially during Holy Week.

REVIEW:

- Why do Orthodox churches ring bells? (To tell everyone it's time for the service to begin and to tell them important information)
 - What does the burning incense in the censer represent? (Our prayers rising to heaven)
 - Why is the base of the censer in the shape of a small church? (Because the whole Church prays together)
 - Why are there bells on the censer? (To remind us that it's time to pray)
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INCENSE - OUR PRAYERS RISING TO HEAVEN

THE BODY OF THE CENSER COULD REPRESENT THE CHURCH THAT RISES HER PRAYER TO GOD

HOME CENSER



WEEK 24: HEAR - CHURCH BELLS / CENSERS

3RD - 5TH GRADE

GOALS

Why do we ring bells?
Why do we use a censer during services?

LESSON

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Show provided visuals in conjunction with your lesson on censers

CHURCH BELLS:

It used to be more common for Orthodox churches to have bells than it is today. You can still find bells at some churches, but most of the bells that exist today are found at older churches. The bells had a practical as well as an informational purpose to them. People used to live in much smaller communities and they lived, as well as, worked near the church. Only recently has it become commonplace that everyone carries a watch or a phone that tells the time. The church bells used to be used as everyone's watch and were rung to tell people that it was time to stop what they were doing because a service was about to begin - or for those who could not attend the service, the bells would tell them when special moments were happening inside the church.

The church bells were also used to communicate with the nearby people about those who had died in the community or other important information since email and phones did not exist like they do today. The bells of the church were used for specific purposes as a way to communicate to the community.

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CENSER:

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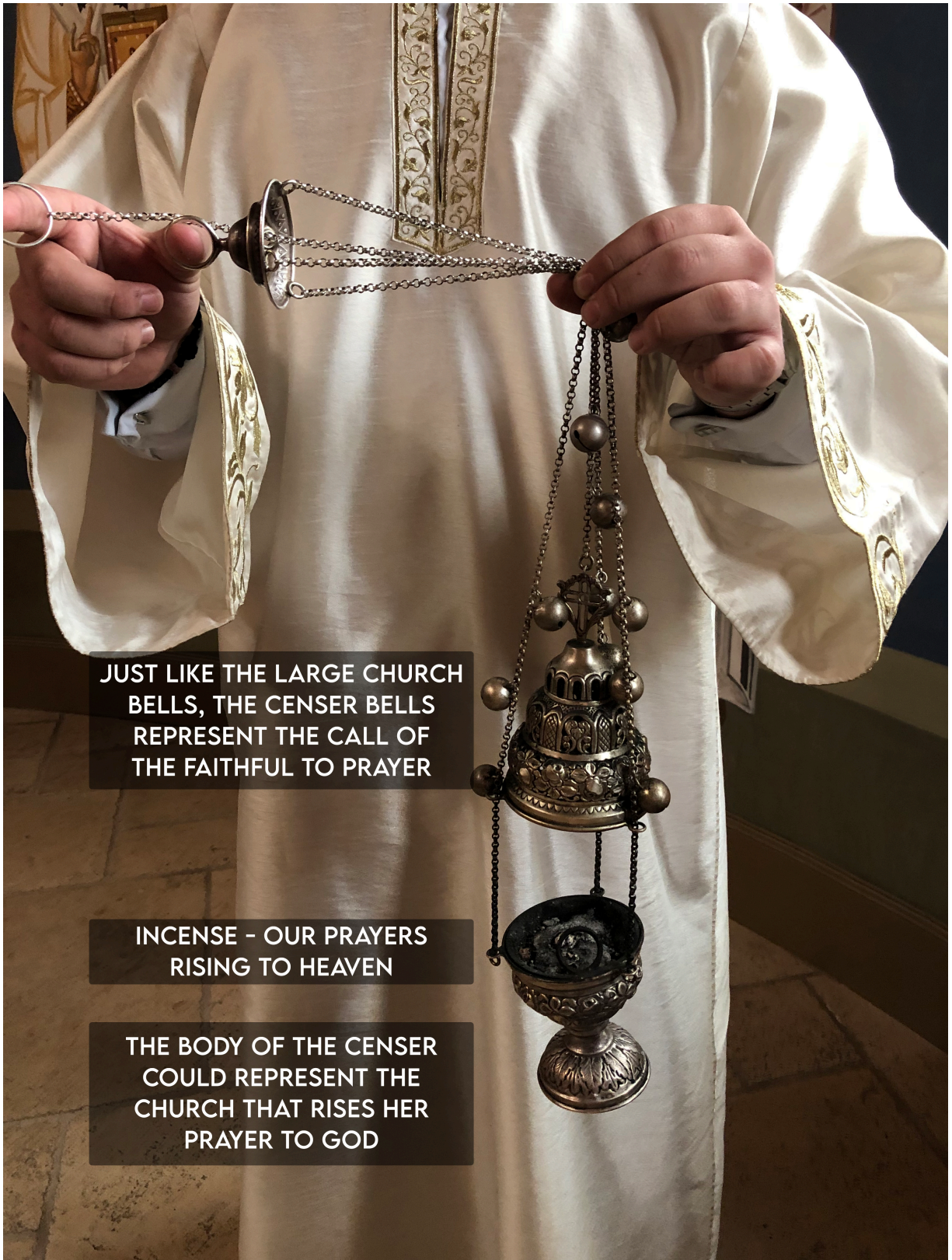
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REVIEW:

- Why do Orthodox churches ring bells? (To tell everyone it's time for the service to begin and to tell them important information)
 - What does the burning incense in the censer represent? (Our prayers rising to heaven)
 - Why is the base of the censer in the shape of a small church? (Because the whole Church prays together)
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INCENSE - OUR PRAYERS RISING TO HEAVEN

THE BODY OF THE CENSER COULD REPRESENT THE CHURCH THAT RISES HER PRAYER TO GOD

HOME CENSER



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MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

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LESSON

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CHURCH BELLS:

Historically, church bells have been used as a way to communicate with the people in a community. Long before watches, emails, newsletters, and phones existed - the church bells provided practical information to the people about when services started, when important moments were happening inside the church for those who could not attend the service, when someone in the community had died, when invaders were approaching, and other information. They were always used for specific purposes and were not used as pretty background music to the surrounding area.

The bell ringers were trained people who used specific ways of ringing the bells in order to communicate with the community. Everyone in the community understood the language of the bells. There were times when one bell was rung, three bells, or all the bells and all of these had specific meanings to the people. Bells were rung quickly or slowly. They were rung solemnly or with joy - all depending on what information needed to be conveyed.

We don't tend to live in small villages anymore, at least not here in the United States, and few of us live close enough to our parish that we would hear the bells ringing. For the most part, modern technology has replaced the communication of the church bells, but there are still some churches who have and use their bells.

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“When the temple (church building) is censed, the priest or deacon will move in a sunrise (clockwise) direction, moving to his right as he censes in order the Holy Table (altar), sanctuary, Iconostasis, walls of the temple, clergy and faithful. There are two types of censuring: a Greater Censing (which encompasses the entire temple and all the people therein), and a Lesser Censing (which, depending upon the liturgical context, consists of censuring only a portion of the temple and the people.)” - Orthodox Wiki, Censer

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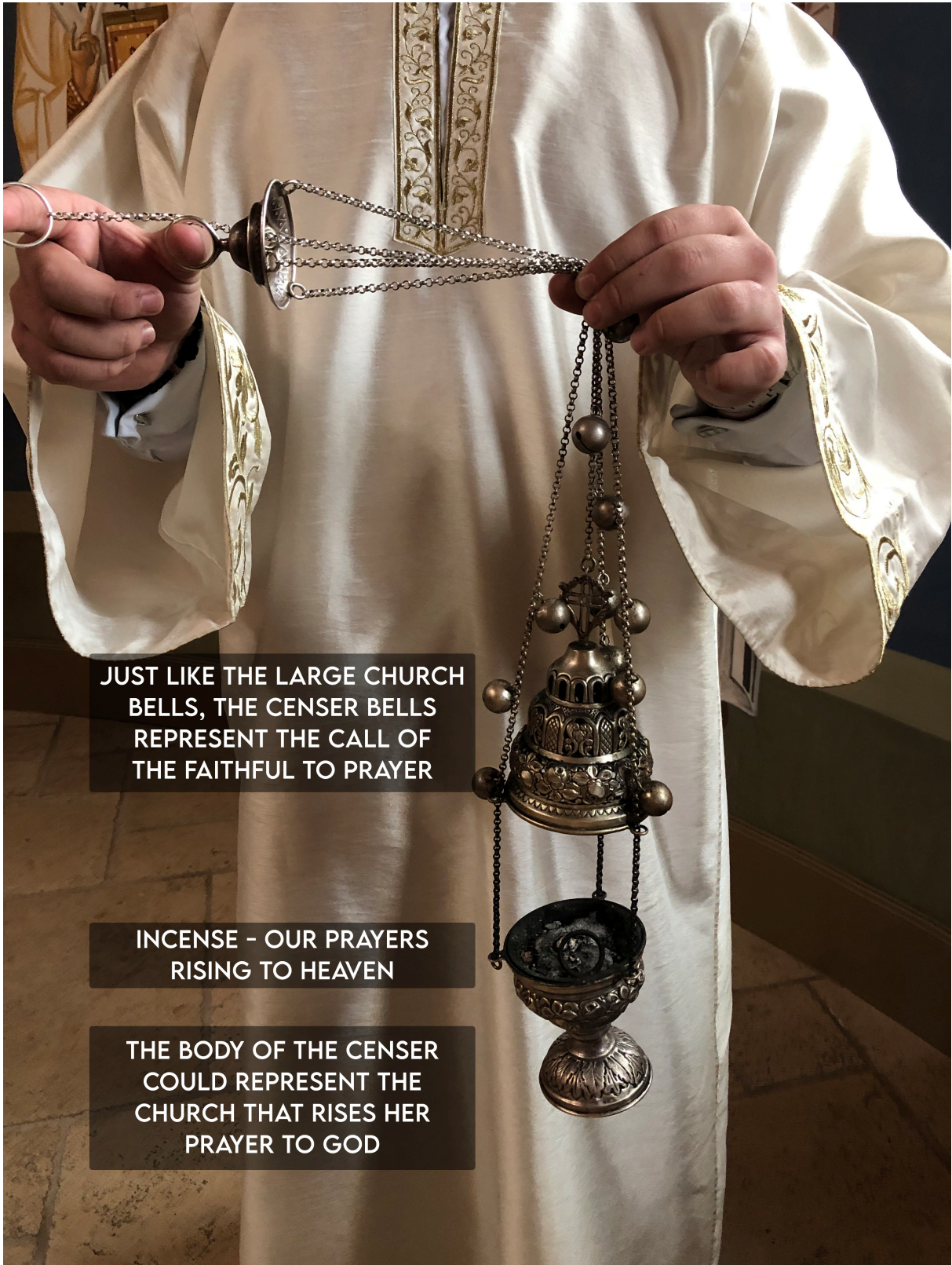
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HOME CENSER



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HIGH SCHOOL

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The bell ringers were trained people who used specific ways of ringing the bells in order to communicate with the community. Everyone in the community understood the language of the bells. For example, in a Russian community, a slow rhythmic, unhurried striking of one bell would usually announce the beginning of a service. This is called the “Blagovest” or “The Announcement.” Another example is called the “Perebor” or “The Toll” and it was the slow tolling of each bell, beginning with the largest to the smallest. It ended with a striking of all the bells at once. This was done when someone had passed away in the community.

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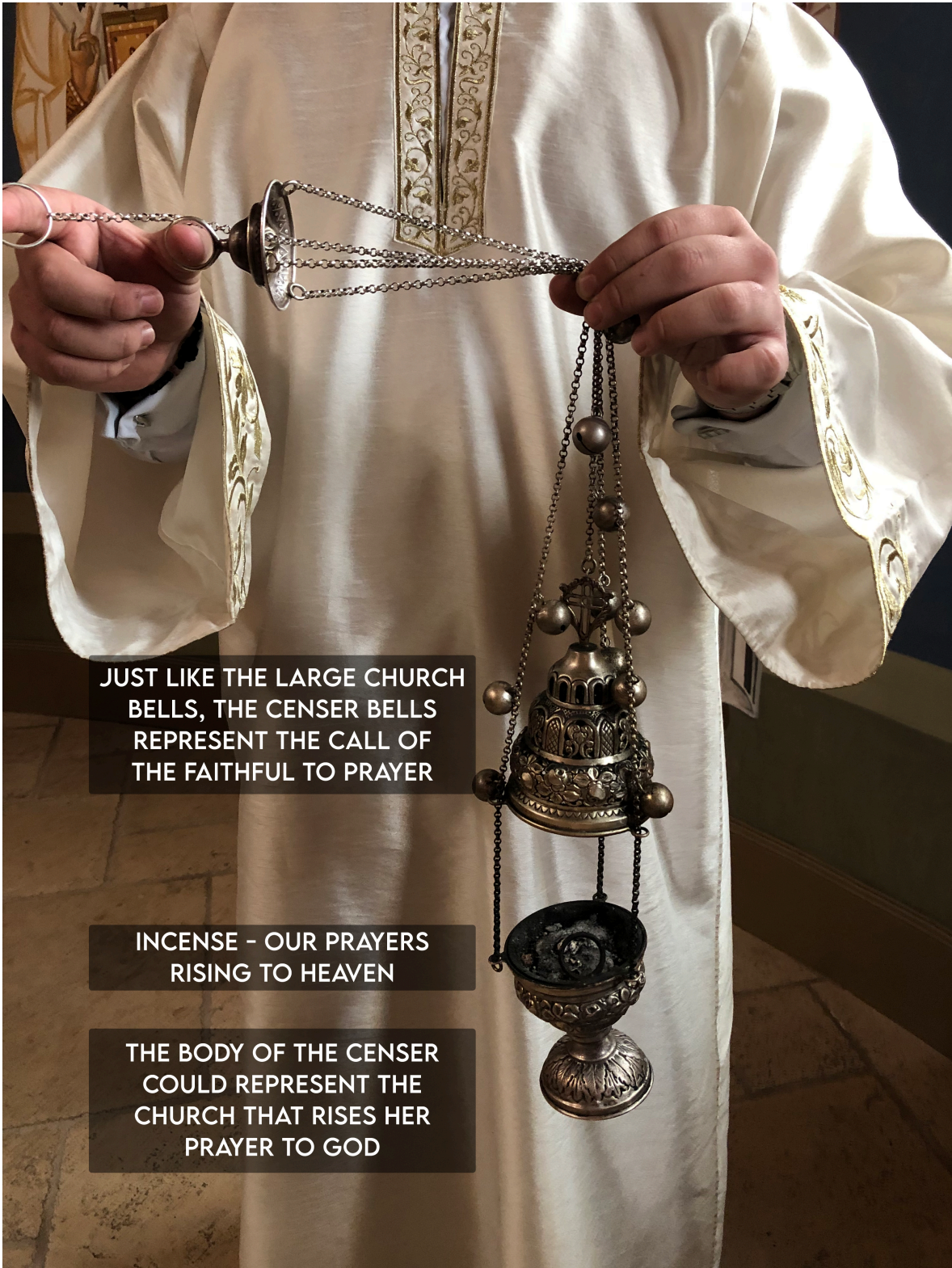
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INCENSE - OUR PRAYERS RISING TO HEAVEN

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HOME CENSER

