HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF IN THE TEMPLE

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Construction of the temple

The word "church" comes from the Greek (κυριακε), house of God. A church or temple is a building dedicated to the service of the true God: An Orthodox church always faces east and is divided into three parts:

The Altar Table is separated by an iconostasis (A large wall or screen of icons) with three doors: the royal (middle) and two deacon (side) doors: In the middle of the altar stands the antimins (a silk or linen cloth depicting the burial of Christ the Savior and sewn with the relics of the saint, consecrated and signed by the bishop); Gospel; cross; a tabernacle in the form of a church, where the Holy Mysteries are always kept, for bringing the Holy Mysteries to the sick. To the left of the altar is the altar or table of oblation, a table for preparing the Holy Gifts for the mystery of the Eucharist: Behind the Throne is the High place where the Bishop stands at certain moments of the service :Only male laymen who have been blessed by the priest may enter the altar. Laypeople are not allowed to touch the Altar or pass between the Altar and the Royal Doors.

The middle nave or the temple of the faithful: Here the believers stand during the liturgy. An icon and a cross are placed on the tetrapod (four-sided table) or lectern in front of the Royal Doors. Kolivo or sweets are placed on the memorial table.

The porch at the entrance to the church was once a place for the prayer of the catechumens (people preparing for baptism) and penitents. Now some mysteries begin there: baptism, weddings.
Upon arrival at church, we cross ourselves three times with a prayer:

God, be Merciful to me a sinner
God cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me
I have sinned countlessly, O Lord, have mercy on me.

We approach the tetrapod, cross ourselves twice, kiss the icon, the cross, cross ourselves a third time and step aside. Passing through the temple opposite the royal doors, we cross ourselves and bow to the Holy Mysteries, that are stored in the Tabernacle: We wait for the beginning of the liturgy in silence, praying concentratedly: We place candles before the icons quietly and reverently; if it is difficult to approach, we pass the candles to those standing in front. If there is no room on the candle stand, we place the candle before the icon to place it later. Having placed the candle, we cross ourselves and pray before the icon to the saint depicted on it. To the greeting “Glory to Jesus Christ!” we respond: “Glory forever!”

During the service, from the opening blessing to the dismissal and blessing of the faithful, it is not customary to leave the temple. Conversations and walking around the temple are not allowed. One should listen silently, attentively and with concentration to the words of the priest, and respond to them; singing along with the choir. We are especially attentive, with spiritual trepidation at the reading of the Gospel; the celebration of the Eucharistic canon (from the Creed to “It is worthy”), the singing of “Our Father” and the communion of the Holy Mysteries. In the Eucharistic canon, when the priest says “Singing the Triumphant Hymn,” at the *Holy mystery* of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ occurs:

When commemorating the persons of the Holy Trinity ("Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"), while singing "Lord, have mercy," "Give, Lord," we cross ourselves: We cross ourselves and bow when with the Holy Gifts; the Gospel; an icon, a cross. When he blesses us with his hand or censes us, we bow without crossing ourselves. After the dismissal, the faithful take turns approaching the cross; then they kiss the cross in the priest's hand, receive antidoron (particles of prosphora) and leave. To the greeting "Christ in our midst," they respond: "And He is and will be." When leaving the church, we cross ourselves three times with the prayer "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."