

Touring the New Christian Education Website:

Tour Guide: Carole A. Buleza

Computer on? Internet connected? You're ready to roll. Navigate to www.antiochian.org/christianeducation . . . Welcome to the home page of our new, improved Christian Education website! Find our logo and you will be reading a letter of introduction that includes information about our office and also about the volunteer Diocesan Christian Education Coordinators. Look below and you'll see several "featured" items—an event, an article, a program, a resource—that are refreshed monthly.

"Press the Button." Move to the right side of the page, and scroll down past the grey boxes, and you'll find four "buttons." For ease of accessing information, we've placed button links to our four most popular programs: "To Tithe is to Share," Creative Festivals, "Let Us Attend" Gospel Program, and "Find Us On Facebook!"

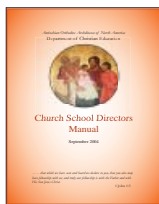
Convenience of Navigation. Return to the grey boxes and discover two ways to access the content of the website. The box labeled, "On Our Site," serves as a category index (such as Resources). The second reads, "Especially for . . . Directors, Parents" etc. and directs you to the area of your special interest. All resources are linked to their own website to make ordering easy.

Linked In. Also for your convenience, each resource reviewed on our website is linked to its publisher to make ordering quick and easy. And every special interest page, "Especially for Parents," is linked to a Facebook page. On Facebook we can easily post news and links, we can respond to questions that you pose, and we can sponsor discussion groups. Unless otherwise noted below, I monitor the Facebook pages.

Just a Sampling. In order to encourage your exploration of the website (if you're not doing so at present), I'll take you on a tour with six stops--each of the special interest pages--and highlight a few items at every stop.

#1: Especially for Church School Directors

Two years ago we created a three-course workshop for Church School Directors which comes with a certificate for completion for the seminar. The **Church School Director Manual** has been completely reformatted and now contains all the materials for the three courses: "Introduction to Church School Ministry," "Curriculum and Resources for the CSD," and "Building Your Staff, Building Your Students." The Manual covers not only organizing a church school, but recruiting and retaining staff, encouraging attendance, and many ideas for a lively Church School. It is a free download in PDF format.



After the Church School Director Manual, the next important PDF-download is "**Essential Resources for Every Church School**," which is found in the right column. These are books, videos and magazines

Thanks to the internet, we have a two-fold blessing: abundant resources, and a community of Orthodox Christians with whom we share our task.

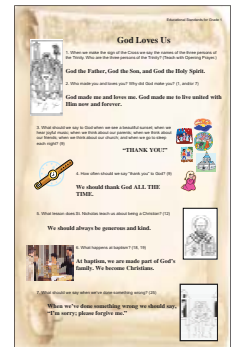


that every teacher should have access to. One of them is "**Teaching Pics**," a set of 80 full-color 8 x 10 photos illustrating aspects of the Sacraments, the Divine Liturgy, Great Lent and Pascha, and Feastdays. Teachers can use these to help illustrate lessons they are teaching; the back of the photo has an explanation, and ideas for additional activities.

In terms of links, the page provides access to the Orthodox Christian Education Commission (our curriculum publisher), the ordering page of the Antiochian Bookstore, the Orthodox Church in America, and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Departments of Christian Education, and to Phyllis Onest's Resource Directory. Kh. Betty Randolph monitors the Facebook page.

#2 Especially for Teachers

Many teachers and church school directors are frustrated by the lack of consistent attendance, and wonder just what the children learned during their time in class. Addressing that situation, the program, "**Knowing Your Faith**," sets out objectives in the form of questions, and prayers to be learned, for each book, Kindergarten through Grade 5, of the OCEC curriculum. For each book, there is a teacher packet, including visual aids and games, parent letter, and scroll for the bulletin board. Find your grade, download the PDF files, and you will have learning goals for your year. Keeping the information in front of the students through the year helps them to easily master the knowledge. A pilot project, "Passport for the Journey," is being developed from this program (see *The Word*, February 2010).



For teachers desiring supplemental material, The Orthodox Church in America Department of Christian Education, has produced a number of "**Mini-Units**" which consist of 1-2 lessons for 3-4 age groups. One example is, "Missions." Their "**Focus Units**" provide 5-6 lessons for 5 different age groups on a single theme. "The Theotokos," is one example, another is "The Nativity Season." These are reviewed and linked to on the Teacher web page.

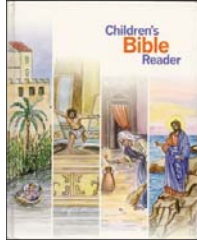


Middle and High School Teachers are directed to the PDF "**Learning Opportunities for Middle and High School Students**." A compilation of reviewed curriculum offerings from all jurisdictions is provided, along with non-traditional ideas, such as building a unit based on the work of the IOCC, or using podcasts as discussion-starters.



#3 Especially for Parents

Until only a few years ago, parents were using Protestant and Catholic Bibles to pass along our sacred stories to their children. Now we have our own, in full color. **The Children's Bible Reader**, published in Greece, is wonderful.



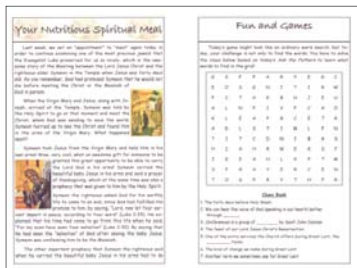
To further assist parents in their task of passing on the faith, "Let Us Attend," was created. The Sunday Gospel is provided in five levels, with discussion questions, to be shared with the child the night before to aid in the child's understanding it the next morning. Ancient Faith Radio also provides it as a podcast. One mother emailed thanking us for the program and noting how good it felt to see her child smile and look up when he recognized the gospel that was being read.



There are several **Ancient Faith Radio podcasts** that parents will be interested in; these are linked to the page. We are fortunate to now have many, many **Orthodox children's books in full color**; these are reviewed here. In addition, Judy Pap-poff, a family therapist, and His Grace Bishop THOMAS have written articles that are found on the page.

#4 Especially for Priests

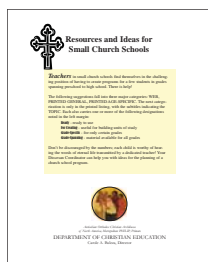
One item that priests may want to investigate is the **Children's Orthodox Parochial School Bulletin**. This weekly, downloadable PDF of several pages, contains an explanation of the Gospel, games and puzzles, and information about saints.



Further down on the page are articles, including Fr. David Barr's, "Church Etiquette, or Some Things You Should Know While in Church," a reprint from *The Word* a few years ago. The Atlanta-based adult tithing program is also available on this page.

#5 Especially for Small Church Schools

The PDF, "Resources and Ideas for Small Church Schools," is a key offering of this page. As small church schools need resources and programs that are flexible, it provides a



review of resources according to whether they are ready-to use, or to be creative with, and whether they are for a single grade or multi-graded.



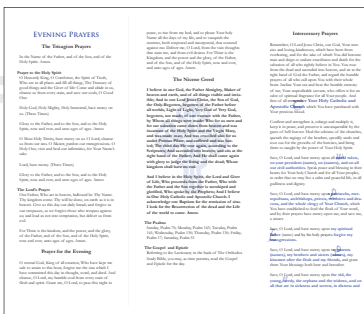
"The Mustard Seed" is a web page devoted to the needs of Small Church Schools. Catherine Sullivan, an associate of the Department, provides the page which has encouragement, ideas, and timely crafts and tips. Catherine is available to email for assistance in solving some of the typical challenges of these schools. She is also the moderator for the Facebook site, "Orthodox Christian Small Church Schools," which can be accessed on the web page.

#6 Especially for Homeschoolers

The Orthodox Homeschooling community is growing. The webpage provides resource reviews of both curriculum-related items and children's books. His Grace, Bp. Thomas has written an article, "Training Up a Child," which is found on this page and gives a listing of resource websites. **The IOCC Prayer Journal** is an excellent project to help children learn about Orthodox humanitarian aid as they learn world geography and cultures.



Materials for assisting parents in passing on the faith will be produced and made available in the next several months. At present, a lovely brochure which contains the **Evening Prayers** from the Orthodox Study Bible, is available, as well as an excerpted edition. Fr. Noah and Kh. Elizabeth Bushelli monitor the Facebook page, Orthodox Homeschooling.



The internet is one of the best things that has happened to Orthodox Christian Education. With the limited budgets of our Church Schools, it is a blessing to be able to offer free programs and materials through our website. The Department is grateful to Timm Wenger for reformatting the website, and Douglas Cramer and Andrew Frishman of the Archdiocesan Internet Ministries Department for technical expertise and continuing support.

Thanks to the internet, we have a two-fold blessing: abundant resources, and a community of Orthodox Christians with whom we share our task. Let's join together as we strive, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, "to educate ourselves and our children in godliness" (Homily to the Ephesians).

