



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2012-2013

Recommended Texts for Sunday Church Schools

The Department of Religious Education is continually developing new materials to replace older textbooks and fill gaps. Our current focus is on junior high and high school, and in the coming years we will turn to the elementary school materials. We realize that many parishes have been, of necessity, using a variety of texts from the DRE as well as those from other sources. The following recommendations will help parishes integrate new texts into their existing Church school curricula, use existing materials to their best advantage, and adapt or reorganize if needed.

Preschool

Use our textbooks and supplements in a two-year cycle:

God Loves Us teacher binder (N10)

Reaching for Jesus student book (N01) and teacher guide (N05)

What We See and Do in Church student book (K01) and teacher guide (K05) were originally written for kindergarten, but they may also be appropriate.

✂ Include story time from a children's Bible (catalog page 51: BIB501, BIB511, or BIB502) and appropriate storybooks, creative spiritual play, and Bible activity and coloring sheets (for end-of-class time). See catalog page 28 supplementary classroom resources, page 33 for reproducible coloring and activity books, and pages 39–50 for story books and individual coloring books.

Elementary School

The comprehensive textbook series for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's curriculum at the elementary level is *Living Our Orthodox Faith*. Each grade level has a student text and a teacher guide. Grades 1–5 each include a unit (that appears at the end of the book) of feast days for use throughout the liturgical year. Music and lyrics are included as noted, either in the teacher guide or in a separate songbook. A single CD (K26) contains all of the songs for all grade levels.

Kindergarten *Happy With God* student book (K16) and teacher guide (K20)

First Grade *Me and My World* student book (110), teacher guide (115), activity book (126), and songbook (120)

Second Grade *Loving God* student book (211), teacher guide (215), and songbook (220)

Third Grade *Sharing God's World* student book (320) and teacher guide (325)

Fourth Grade *Growing with God* student book (410) and teacher guide (415)

Fifth Grade *God Calls Us* student book (520) and teacher guide (525)

✂ Alternative: *Parables of Our Lord* student book (510) and teacher guide (515)

✂ Throughout the year, choose 5 or more topics from *Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days* student book (501) and teacher guide (505); coordinate so that other topics from this resource can be covered in grades 6–8

✂ This book is from an older series of textbooks; develop interactive lessons to successfully engage today's youth.

✂ Please note that the DRE has not developed lesson plans for these books, which are published by other organizations.



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Middle School and High School (*as of January 2011*)

Each year, choose 4–5 units (about 25 lessons) from the following options, depending on the length of the unit and the time allotted for class. Many lessons may fill two class sessions. Longer books can be divided into two units to keep the approach fresh for both students and teachers. As we create new zines and teacher guides, the selection of units available will expand, providing more flexibility.

These four aspects simplify and replace the 15 strands described in the original *Living Our Orthodox Faith* scope & sequence chart. On average, each year includes the following units:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Bible: | 1–2 units |
| Christian Life/Ethics: | 1 unit |
| Feasts/Liturgy: | 1–2 units |
| Faith/Church: | 1–2 units |

✍ Throughout the year, choose 5 or more topics from *Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days* student book (501) and teacher guide (505); coordinate so that topics are not repeated in grades 5–8

✍ Textbooks from our older series (such as *The Sacraments*, *Teenage Ten Commandments*, and *The Creed*) include excellent texts and reading questions—but they do not have interactive components to which today's youth are accustomed. Teachers can make these units engaging, current, and educationally sound by planning lessons using the “shared Christian praxis” approach:

1. Focusing activity

The focusing activity draws the students' attention to the theme of the class session, using a story, allegory, or symbol. It is an introduction, and is not the heart of the lesson itself. Spend no more than 5–10 minutes on it.

2. Name present praxis

Help students to identify a part of the Orthodox Tradition or their current way of life, which was alluded to in the focusing activity.

3. Reflect on present praxis

Help students to inquire about and consider the implications of this part of their life and the Orthodox Tradition.

4. Access the Christian story and vision

Segue into the content of the lesson. If the students have not read the assignment, this would be the time. This can be done in a couple of ways. First, give the students 5–10 minutes to read silently on their own. Second, ask a few students to read a crucial paragraph or two aloud to the class.

5. Appropriate the story and vision

Help students to make the story *their own*. Allow students to retell the story in their own words, and to respond and to interact with it in an authentic way.

6. Decision for lived response

Students take what they have learned and consciously decide how this lesson can be put into practice and bear fruit in their lives from this point forward.

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Sixth Grade

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|---|
| Christian Life & Faith | 4 lessons | <i>Facing Up to Peer Pressure</i> student book (M01) and teacher guide (M02) |
| Feasts/Liturgy | 4 lessons | <i>For to Us a Child Is Born</i> student zine (L184) and teacher guide (L184-1) |
| Feasts/Liturgy | 6 lessons | <i>Heaven on Earth: The Divine Liturgy</i> student zine (M09) and teacher guide (M10) |
| Feasts/Liturgy | 5 lessons | <i>Journey through Holy Week</i> student zine (L183) and teacher guide (L183-1) |
| Christian Life & Faith | 5 lessons | <i>Honesty</i> student book (M07) and teacher guide (M08) |
| Christian Life & Faith | 5 lessons | <i>Stewardship: Serving in God's World</i> student book (M03) and teacher guide (M04) |

Seventh Grade

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|--|
| Bible | 5 lessons | <i>A Lamp to My Feet: Introduction to the Bible</i> student zine (M13) and teacher guide (M14) |
| Bible | 8 lessons | <i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 1 (lessons 1–8) (BIB420) |
| Feasts/Liturgy | 9 lessons | <i>Journey through Great Lent</i> student zine and teacher guide |
| Christian Life & Faith | 6 lessons | <i>Knowing Christ</i> student book (M05) and teacher guide (M06) |
| Bible | 8 lessons | <i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 1 (lessons 9–16) (BIB420) |

✂ Ensure that students learn and understand the Nicene Creed—perhaps as a class opener or closer, building it up phrase-by-phrase over a season or the entire year. Coniaris's *The Nicene Creed for Young People* (CB055) includes age-appropriate discussion questions.

✎ You may also choose to adapt readings and discussions from *The Creed* student book (1101) and teacher guide (1105). *Heaven on Earth* (M09) includes a feature on the sections of the Creed and its scriptural bases.

Eighth Grade

| | | |
|--------------|------------|---|
| Bible | 8 lessons | <i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 2 (lessons 1–8) (BIB421) |
| Faith/Church | 5 lessons | <i>First among Equals: The Ecumenical Patriarchate</i> student zine (M15) and teacher guide (M16) |
| Bible | 8 lessons | <i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 2 (lessons 9–16) (BIB421) |
| Faith/Church | 12 lessons | ✎ <i>The Sacraments of the Orthodox Church</i> student book (801) and teacher guide (805) |

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High School A (the year most of your students will be freshmen)

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|---|
| Comprehensive | 12+ lessons | <i>Rejoicing in One Lord, Jesus Christ</i> teacher guide (901) with student sheet downloads |
| Faith/Church | 5 lessons | <i>Seeing Is Believing: Holy Icons</i> (forthcoming) |
| Christian Life | | ✂ Pair Lewis, <i>What Do You Stand For (For Teens)</i> (YM651) with Grube, <i>Church Fathers for Young People</i> (CB350) |
| Faith/Church | 5 lessons | <i>Who Do You Say I Am? The Person of Christ</i> (forthcoming) |

High School B

| | | |
|----------------|------------|--|
| Christian Life | 14 lessons | <i>Who Is God? Who Am I? Who Are You?</i> student book (1011) and teacher guide (1012) |
| Feasts/Liturgy | 5 lessons | <i>Of Your Mystical Supper: The Eucharist</i> student zine (M11) and teacher guide (M12) |
| Bible | | Bible study—perhaps the Gospel of St. Matthew, Acts of the Apostles, or the Epistle to the Ephesians—accompanied by Stylianopoulos, <i>Bread for Life</i> (BIB440) |
| Faith/Church | | ✂ <i>The Way of a Pilgrim</i> (Skylight annotated ed.), Books I–II |

Possibilities for High School Years C and D (in addition to Bible study)

Book groups:

- ✂ Bezzerides, ed., *Christ at Work* (selected essays) (YM800) and Study Guide (YM801)
- ✂ Bloom, *Beginning to Pray* (FL500)
- ✂ Bouteneff, *Sweeter than Honey: Orthodox Thinking on Dogma and Truth* (FL056)
- ✂ Corbman, *A Tiny Step Away from Deepest Faith* (YM805)
(a challenging book of exploration for mature classes with strong teachers)
- ✂ Gillet, *The Year of Grace in the Lord* (FL761)
- ✂ Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, vols. 1–4 (FL005–FL008)

Film groups:

- ✂ *Icon: Through the Hand of God* (Y21)
- ✂ *Jesus of Nazareth*
- ✂ *Ostrov (The Island)*

If your parish does not have a GOYA group, you could adapt its curriculum for the religious education setting.

The DRE's annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival has thought-provoking topics and recommended reading lists. Even if students choose not to deliver a formal speech for the festival, the preparation and reading help them cement their understanding of the role of the Faith in their lives.

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*** * "The Way, the Truth, the Life," published by the O.C.E.C., contains topics students covered through the eighth grade - the Creed, the Divine Liturgy, Morals & Ethics, Feast Days, Saints & more. It comes with two forms of lesson plans - standard & cooperative learning. I highly recommend this book for the lower high school grades. Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div.**