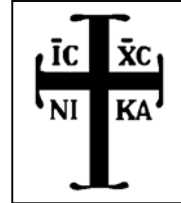


RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Vol. XII, No. 2, Spring 2006

Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div., Director



Dear Clergy, Church School Directors and Teachers,

The New Year has come and gone, Triodion begins before St. Valentine's Day, then comes the Great Fast beginning March 6, Pascha is on April 23 and the Oratorical Festival ends the year. There is much to do and share with our students in the upcoming months, the most important of which is experiencing the Liturgy.

Two levels of Lenten Activities are enclosed for the students and their families. They must be sent home no later than March 5.

Who is the latest person to be martyr that you know? I was surprised to read about the 18-year-old Soldier Martyr Evgeny canonized in 2002 by the Russian Orthodox Church. Evgeny died as a prisoner of war, when he would not take off his cross or give up his Orthodox Christian faith to become a Moslem. He is an modern example to our students that even today we may be called to stand up for our belief in Christ. Will we be as strong and faithful as the Soldier Martyr Evgeny? We can now look to him and call upon him as one who is close to God, to walk with us, to be our reminder that we belong to Christ. [See "New Martyr Soldier Evgeny"]

Phyllis

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2006 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

Theme: "The Festal Menaion"



It's time to begin working on the **Oratorical Festival** presentations! Parishes should have their Chairpersons and dates for the Parish Festivals selected. The Official *St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Manual*, as well as the *Jr & Sr Topics* and *Topic Tips* have been available online from the Department of Religious Education <http://www.religioued.goarch.org/> since the fall. Each chairperson needs a copy of the Manual to make sure everything goes smoothly. In addition, the Fall 2005 Packet included "Conducting a Successful Oratorical Festival" by Presbytera Margaret Orfanakos, National Oratorical Festival Co-Chair. (Also on the webpage) I have added observations from my experiences in our Metropolis. Please make the time to read it. The important dates for our Metropolis are listed below.

Eastern District	Saturday, April 29	St. Nicholas, Bethlehem, PA
Central District	Saturday, April 29	St. Spyridon, Monessen, PA
Western District	Saturday, May 6	St. John, Youngstown, OH
Metropolis	Saturday, May 13	Metropolis, Pittsburgh
Archdiocese	Fri.-Sat., June 2-4	Annunciation Cathedral, San Francisco



Long - Awaited 9th Grade Text Now Ready

Rejoicing in One Lord, Jesus Christ has been available since September. Purchase the Teacher's Book and download the Students' Handouts from the Department of Religious Education's website.

Jr & Sr High

In "Working with Adolescents" Carole Stoica shares her personal experience as a new teacher to explain how she met the challenges in this quote. "This is what the young people are really looking for: a friend, whose honesty they trust, who really accepts them as they are, and who, they feel, is in possession of some convictions and traits that are relevant to their needs." [***Our Church and Our Children*** by Sophie Koulomzin] Must reading for all teachers of teens!

LENTEN RESOURCES

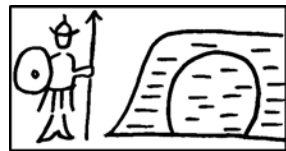
- Check out pages 23-24 of the "YELLOW PAGES" for Religious Education for a list of ideas and resources.
- Go to www.goarch.org / OUR FAITH

Holy Week & Pascha Recall



I have found that students enjoy games and learn while they have fun. In this game students are given one minute to look at a number of objects on a tray. They return to their teams to compile a list of what they remember seeing. Each item represents part of the Lord's last days

How Can We Make the Resurrection Real for Preschoolers?



We know that Preschoolers do not understand the abstract. Try telling the story of the Resurrection while using Picture Books.

Even better, use a 3-dimensional cave with a stone, soldiers, and Jesus wrapped in gauze and our little ones may begin to make a connection.

Family Lenten Activities

Included in this Packet are two Lenten Activities to help our students and their families mark off the 40 days of the Great Fast:

A "Pascha Egg Collecting" Basket

[Grades 2 & up] When a student completes the task on a selected egg, it goes in the basket. The basket should be filled with 40+ eggs at Pascha.



Our Lenten Journey Begins [PreSchool-Grade 1] Students add a piece of the Resurrection puzzle each day that a task is completed.

Pascha Polyglotta

<http://www.srbigham.com/en/index.html>

Last year I only had time to list this site; I learned about it just as I was finishing the Newsletter.

Hear the Orthodox Paschal greeting - "Christ is risen; Truly He is risen!" - in 250 languages, including Klingon & Vulcan.

- See the flag, capital, money, & language(s) of each country.
- Navigate by languages in alphabetical order or by countries grouped into continents.
- Site uses standard technologies.

Orthodox Prison Ministry



Pascha Card Project details are found at www.phyllisonest.com / Church School Director/Projects. Support OCPM with monetary donation for stamps and materials.

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry

V. Rev. Fr. David Ogan

PO Box 822169, Vicksburg, MS 39182

Phone/FAX 601-636-839 / ogand@bellsouth.net

Balloon Review

Let's put a little "pop" into Review Sessions! Place the questions in a balloon and have the students "pop" them to get to their question.



Memory Team Work

Here's a way to help our students work as a team



to memorize a prayers, hymns or Bible verses. Each time the prayer is read, erase a word or two until there are a no words left. The goal: by then the students can recite the prayer without seeing the words.

Check <http://www.phyllisonest.com>
UPDATES will be listed on the
CONTENTS PAGE.

Clergy & Church School Directors: Please inform me of changes in (1) Director, or (2) addresses, phone numbers and emails for either of you. EMAIL is the fastest way to communicate the information from the Archdiocese and Metropolis. For this to occur, I need you to check you email at least weekly. *pmo*

CENTER FOR FAMILY CARE



Expect monthly additions to the Center's website

www.familyaschurch.org

as major update begins.

The newest section of the **ORTHODOX OBSERVER** is

For the Orthodox Family

This is my new part-time job.

RULES OF PRAYER

Prayer Prompts: A Way to Establish Prayer Patterns

offers our students a list of nine "Prompts" to remember to pray throughout the day. The "Prompts" are easy to remember; they are connected to daily events in their lives.



CRAFTS

Ribbon Bookmarks are easy to make for Mother's Day, Father's Day or for Shut-ins. Invite parishioners to donate left over pieces of medium weight ribbon, add some floss and beads or buttons and voila, and attractive bookmark. If all the materials are precut and ready for the students to select and assemble, it's a quick craft.



FEATURING YOUR STUDENTS



Student Spotlight Every 2 or 3 weeks focus attention on one of your student's unique skills, interests and abilities - put them in the "spotlight."

Students will not only gain confidence themselves, but will also learn to recognize and respect the special talents and abilities of others!

CLASSROOM MAKEOVER

Double Duty Bookcases

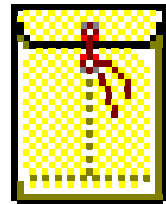
Bookcases pulled away from the walls can be arranged to serve as dividers or more bulletin board space. Find ways to stretch your wall space.

MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE SPRING PACKET

1. Give each Teacher a copy of the Newsletter.
2. Provide teachers with copies of articles that pertain them.
3. Add the originals to the *Notebook of Newsletters/Packets*.
4. Copy of each article in the appropriate folder of the *Reference File*, opt. For details go to www.phyllisonest.com / "Fall 2003 Packet"/ "Church School Reference File"
5. Direct Staff members to the Website for additional materials.

INCLUDED IN THE SPRING PACKET

- Spring 2006 Newsletter
- Balloon Review
- Holy Week & Pascha Recall
- How Can We Make the Resurrection Real for Preschoolers?
- Memory Team Work
- "New Martyr Soldier Evgeny"
- Our Lenten Journey Begins** 40-day Lenten activity for PreSchool-Grade 1 [5 pages]
- A "Pascha Egg Collecting" Basket** for 40-day Lenten activity for grades 2 & up [5 pgs]
- Prayer Prompts: A Way to Establish Prayer Patterns**
- Ribbon Bookmarks**
- Student Spotlight & Double Duty Bookshelves**
- "Working with Adolescents" by Carole Stoica [2 pages]



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