

# DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### **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 (NO1) and teacher guide (NO5)

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 solved in grades (502).

be covered in grades 6–8

<sup>&</sup>quot;This book is from an older series of textbooks; develop interactive lessons to successfully engage today's youth.

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## Middle School and High School (as of August 2012)

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

#### **Seventh Grade**

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

### **Eighth Grade**

Bible	8 lessons	Come Receive the Light Bible Studies, vol. 2 (lessons 1–8) (BIB421)
Faith/Church	5 lessons	First among Equals: The Ecumenical Patriarchate student zine (M15) and teacher guide (M16)
Life/Faith	6 lessons	Called to Holiness: Saints (forthcoming 2014)
Bible	8 lessons	Come Receive the Light Bible Studies, vol. 2 (lessons 9–16) (BIB421)
Faith/Church	12 lessons	The Sacraments of the Orthodox Church student book (801) and teacher guide (805)

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.

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

Comprehensive 12+ lessons Rejoicing in One Lord, Jesus Christ teacher guide (901) with student

sheet downloads

Faith/Church 5 lessons Seeing Is Believing: Holy Icons (forthcoming 2013)

Christian Life 5 lessons Wealth & Poverty (forthcoming 2013)

Christian Life Pair Lewis, What Do You Stand For (For Teens) (YM651) with Grube,

Church Fathers for Young People (CB350)

**High School B** 

Christian Life 14 lessons Who Is God? Who Am I? Who Are You? student book (1011) and

teacher guide (1012)

Feasts/Liturgy 5 lessons Of Your Mystical Supper: The Eucharist student zine (M11) and teacher

guide (M12)

Faith/Church 5 lessons What is the Church? (forthcoming 2012)

Faith/Church 5 lessons Who Do You Say I Am? The Person of Christ (forthcoming 2013)

Bible Bible study—perhaps Matthew, Acts, or Ephesians—accompanied by

Stylianopoulos, Bread for Life (BIB440)

### 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)
- > The Way of a Pilgrim (Skylight annotated ed.), Books I-II

### Film groups:

- ➣ Icon: Through the Hand of God (Y21)
- ➣ 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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