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INTRODUCTION

"... of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom"
(Acts 6:3)

"Whoever does not understand how to smile should not open a store."
(Chinese Proverb)

The catechetical ministry in a parish today consists of many aspects. Some are concerned with the development and management of programs, others with the relationships existing between parents, clergy, teachers, and others involved in these programs. Some aspects - too often overlooked - are concerned with the personal growth of the catechists. In one way or another they concern you, the coordinator.

This handbook is an attempt to both suggest a vision for parish catechesis in our Church today and survey the varied tasks connected with coordinating a church school program in our diocese. We will provide a broad overview of catechesis in the diocese, the parish, and the Church as a whole. This section is to help us see our ministry in the wider context of the entire life of our Church.

We will then try to focus on some specific tasks connected with the running of a church school through the Church year as well as to suggest resources for the coordinator to work with and pass on to the catechists. This section will include models for action and resources to be used in the parish. It can become your working guide during the catechetical year.

Throughout the book you will find questions for reflection to help relate the vision to your specific parish situation. It is best if these sections are reviewed with your pastor or priest in charge so that you can grow in a common perception of the Church's catechetical ministry. If you are working with a co-coordinator or assistant coordinator it is equally important that you go through this book together if you would share one vision. Finally, when you pass this ministry on to someone else, expect to go through this material with them so that the vision you have worked to implement may be continued without confusion.

Many chapters include duplication masters for forms used in the church school program. These pages are bordered for easy identification and are specially listed in the Index of Forms at the end of the book. To duplicate these for parish use, simply white out the page number and photocopy.

The way this book is paginated is designed to facilitate replacing individual pages and chapters without repaginating the entire work. Each chapter is paginated separately. The first number designates the chapter, the second specifies the page within the chapter. Thus 25.2 indicates page 2 of chapter 25.

The handbook is meant to be a practical tool. Therefore we can expect it to be changed regularly. New resources become available, new ideas for programs are developed in parishes. By communicating these new concepts and materials to the diocesan office, you can help others grow as you have in the exercise of this ministry in our Church. Put the diocesan Office of Educational Services on your program's regular mailing list so that we can learn from you.

We hope this resource is of help to you and that you will let us know any new ideas or materials you are using.

In this ministry,

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VISION
UNIT ONE - YOU
1. YOU, YOUR CALLING AND THE LORD

The spiritual basis of all ministry

When a person aspires to paint icons in the Eastern tradition, he or she does not begin by studying techniques, developing skills, or enhancing their creativity. Rather the iconographer begins by prayer and fasting: focusing on the divine life within so that their ministry may reflect that life. The aim of iconography is, after all, not to paint pictures but to provide a window to heaven.

In much the same way we are beginning our examination of the catechetical ministry, not by proposing techniques or resources, but by inviting, you to look at your relationship with God, who is calling you to this ministry. For catechesis, like iconography, seeks to provide a window to heaven for those who participate in it.

THE HEART OF MINISTRY

When Christ called the Twelve to be His disciples, the Gospel of Mark says that "He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve to be with Him; these He also sent out to preach" (Mk 3:13-14). Here in the ministry of the apostles we see a pattern which is equally true for our own:

1. The Lord calls "to Him those whom He desired": Our ministry as catechists is a gift from the Lord. It is not simply something that we do to help out the priest or the parish; rather it is a commission we receive from the Spirit of God who has gifted us with the ability to serve in this way.

2. The call to this or any ministry is essentially an invitation "to be with Him": This intimacy with the Lord is at the heart of any Christian service because it is at the heart of Christian life. We are made one with Him because we share in His life, His ministry, and His Holy Spirit.

3. We are called "to be sent out to preach" because of and from within our relationship with the Lord: This is why the Byzantine Churches have always considered as its theologians, not those who had an abstract or professional knowledge of doctrine, but those who knew the Lord in a personal way and wrote out of this relationship.

4. The Church’s Tradition always assumes that this relationship is not lived out in isolation, but always within the community of the Church: The Church is the place where a person’s relationship with God is engendered and nurtured. In the same way it is in the Church that our ministries are situated: we teach, not in our own name, but in the name of the Community.

And so the catechist is called first to deepen a relationship with the Lord according to the Tradition and mind of the Church so that the catechist can then reflect that relationship according to that Tradition in his or her ministry.

Questions for Reflection

1. How much time per week do I have for my own spiritual life?

2. What in my current way of life is oriented to consciously fostering my personal growth in the Lord?

3. How can I judge whether my personal experience of God is a reflection of the Church’s authentic experience of God (Holy Tradition)?

WHERE WE MEET THE LORD

The elements of our Church’s regular spiritual life are those mentioned by Christ in the sermon on the mount: “When you give alms ... When you pray ... When you fast ...” (Mt 6: 2-18). In our Byzantine Tradition we observe several particular expressions of these observances which have nourished countless generations in our Church:

* Prayer - Including (a) regular daily prayer, according to one's personal Rule of Prayer (the style and duration which has been judged best for you at this time in your life); (b) Observances of the festivals of the Church cycle, both in the community worship services and in the home; and (c) Intercessory prayer for those entrusted to your care in this ministry.
• Fasting - Observance of the regular fasting days and seasons of the Church according to your ability and circumstances of life.

• Almsgiving - Sharing of your time, abilities and material resources in accordance with the Gospel precepts and your position in life.

All of this should be determined with the help of an Elder or Spiritual Guide, one who knows both you and the Church Tradition.

HELP FROM THE CHURCH AT LARGE

A number of resources exist to help you develop a familiarity with the Eastern Church's basic Tradition of spiritual life. First of these are the living resources of our community, those opportunities for gathering in the Body of Christ to explore our spiritual heritage.

One significant program helping people in our diocese discover how our spiritual Tradition touches our individual lives is the Theosis Program, which combines interparish retreats and prayer days with ongoing prayer, study, and support groups in the parish. This program has been introduced into several parishes of our diocese and has helped many come to a deeper awareness of their spiritual heritage.

Many parishes have organized their own adult enrichment courses, such as Bible studies, Theology Days, and the like. In addition, our diocese, in cooperation with other Byzantine dioceses in this country, is sponsoring a uniform cycle of courses on Eastern themes (see Chapter 18, "Forming Your Catechists", below). Like the Theosis Program, these courses are often held on an interparish basis.

In addition to these living experiences, there are a number of published resources which can help us to grow. These are often available from parish bookstores or directly from the publishers. A few significant titles are given in the Bibliography in Chapter 27.

If your in our spiritual tradition is still unsatisfied, you may be interested in one of the academic courses available in certain areas of the country. Most prominent are the University of Scranton Center for Eastern Christian Studies, Scranton, PA; Holy Cross Theological School, Brookline, MA; and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY. A graduate program of Chicago's Catholic Theological Union is conducted in the summer at Mount Tabor Monastery, Redwood City, CA. If none of these is accessible, consider enrolling in one of the guided reading correspondence courses available. Consult the Office of Educational Services for current details on such programs.
VISION
UNIT TWO - YOUR CHURCH
The development of the Melkite patriarchate and our diocese

The way we look at the catechetical ministry is intimately related to the way our Church has come to see itself. This touches a number of aspects of our activity: what we do, what our priorities are, how we act. The Church is the place where God's life comes to us, especially in the holy mysteries, and so our personal experience of God and our teaching must always be in the context of the Church's Holy Tradition. Now let us look at how our understanding of that Tradition has developed in the way that it has.

In the first six centuries of Christian history, our Church, the patriarchate of Antioch, lived a full and richly creative Christian life. After the Islamic conquest of the Middle East, the fortunes of our Church changed. Opportunities for expansion and development were taken away one by one. Our Church began to look increasingly to the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, for leadership and protection. Antioch came more and more under the wing of the imperial capital and the ways of our Church were often adapted on the model of the practices of that city.

In the fifteenth century Constantinople itself fell to the Islamic Turks and the ties Antioch had developed lost their force. Since Constantinople too was captive, it could not help its neighbor to the south. The condition of our Church declined in the next two centuries to its lowest ebb. There was little education, even among the clergy, and the Church barely maintained its existence.

**LOOKING WESTWARD**

By the seventeenth century the impulse for Church renewal in the West brought about by the Protestant Reformation was beginning to reach our community. Due to the pressures brought about by the European powers, Turkey admitted Western clergy to its empire in order to help the local Christians. It was in the course of this activity that our Antiochian Church became deeply polarized over the issue of union with Rome. A number of our people, including several hierarchs, came to feel that union with Rome was the course our Church should now adopt. Others insisted on maintaining the ties with Constantinople. As a result, a segment of the Byzantine Church of Antioch united with Rome and the Melkite Greek Catholic Church came into being as an entity distinct from the Orthodox patriarchate.

Another result of the Western presence in our Church was the gradual adoption of Western methods in administration, teaching, lifestyle, and even liturgy. This process, called "latinization", was never desired by the most enlightened leadership in the Church because it is a statement that one has to be Roman to be truly Catholic, and this is a basic contradiction of what the Church is all about. If it is to be Catholic (reflect the fulness of the Gospel), it must embrace every authentic expression of the Tradition, not just one.

Nevertheless, this latinizing process continued through the nineteenth century until many of the most basic aspects of our legitimate Tradition were obscured, if not completely changed. This was most evident in those places where contact with Western Catholics was most frequent, such as the major cities in Lebanon or the Western countries to which Melkites had emigrated.

**REDISCOVERY OF OUR HERITAGE**

This process began to be reversed earlier in this century in certain areas. Church leaders began to work for "delatinization": the restoration of our true heritage. At first this took place in the area of worship: statues were removed from churches, icons installed, the full cycle of divine services reestablished. Then other areas of our life began to be restored: Church discipline, spirituality, theological thinking.

When the Second Vatican Council took place in the 1960's, it supported and encouraged this delatinizing process. Speaking of the various aspects of our Tradition, the Council Fathers instructed:

"Easterners themselves should honor all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an even greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. If they have improperly fallen away from them because of circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways."  

*(Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, 6)*

Shortly after he arrived in this country to lead our Church in America, Archbishop Joseph Tawil - who was himself one of the Fathers of the Second Vatican
Council - issued a pastoral letter to all the Melkites in his diocese. This letter, *The Courage to be Ourselves*, identified several of the issues facing our Church and became a milestone in the restoration of our proper Tradition in the spirit of the Council. Most of the changes we have experienced in the past 20 years are the effect of this movement toward restoration.

And so our personal spiritual lives and our catechesis as well have been undergoing a good deal of change in recent years: not in the interest of "modernization", but of restoration. According to the mind of the Church, we can fulfill our mission effectively only if we are true to our appropriate Tradition, for only in such a way can we show the Church as truly Catholic, bearing the fullness of the Spirit's gifts to God's people.

CONSEQUENCES FOR CATECHESIS

The aim of catechesis is to foster the divine life within us in the arena of the Church. This happens most authentically when we promote participation in the life of our Church as it is meant to be. Our goal as catechists, then, is to enable people to enter fully into the life of our Church through its proper expressions of Holy Tradition.

Our Church is in the process of restoring aspects of our Tradition which have been allowed to fade away. And so, to be an effective minister in our Church today we must be committed to this process of rediscovery. As the Council Fathers recognized, this process is not always easy. It demands, as they said, "taking pains": something we are rarely eager to do! People have to give up certain ways of acting, of thinking, of worshipping which have become habitual. That is never easy.

Some parishes have fully entered into this movement and people have become comfortable with it. In other communities, parents, parishioners, even catechists may not be convinced of the necessity of delatinization or be aware of all it entails. In still other parishes, they may have yet to hear of this dynamic for the first time. While the specific strategies we employ will differ, based on the level of restoration which the parish has attained, the commitment to this rediscovery of our authentic Tradition is universal and no parish or group can exempt itself from its consequences.

First of all, catechetical programs must not do anything to oppose or counteract this course which has been set and approved by the highest Church leadership. For example, Western devotions, music, styles of prayer, etc. cannot be promoted in a catechetical program which is seeking to be faithful to our Church's movement toward the recovery of its own ethos.

Secondly, catechetical programs must take steps to make people aware of what our proper Tradition actually is. For example, priority should be given to making the entire cycle of the Church year known and appreciated, rather than abandoning those observances not popular in American culture (ie anything other than Christmas and Easter). People should learn how to participate fully in all our liturgical services, to know the troparia of Sundays and feasts, to be introduced to the Church Fathers, the history of our own Church, and the present state of Eastern Christians throughout the world.

Thirdly, coordinators need to remember the importance of this aspect of the Church's life when recruiting, training or observing catechists. The catechists our Church needs today must be people who are open to this direction our Church has taken. Individuals who are more comfortable with the piety of the pre-Vatican II Roman Church or contemporary Western directions such as fundamentalism cannot be expected to catechize in the Tradition. If such persons are interested in being catechists, their perception of Eastern Christianity must be studied and evaluated carefully before they are incorporated into the catechetical team.

Another way of helping people to identify with their own Church is to utilize exclusively Byzantine resources and resource persons for special parish programs such as missions, retreats, and the like. A number of people in our diocese and other nearby Byzantine groups can be called upon in this way. The Office of Educational Services makes available annually a list of available special programs conducted by members of our Church.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do I have an understanding of what it means to be an Eastern Christian in a western culture?

2. How far do I feel my parish has gone in the delatinizing process in the areas of church decor, liturgy, discipline, way of life?

3. How well does our catechetical program support understanding of this process?
Some of the basic resources available to help us understand the background of our Church and its mission of rediscovering and restating our Tradition are the following:


*Almanac of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church* (Le Lien, Beirut, 1986)

*Bearers of the Mysteries: A Guide to the Local Church* (Educational Services, West Newton, MA 02165)

**THE EPARCHY OF NEWTON, OUR "LOCAL CHURCH"**

In discussing the history of our Church we spoke of the patriarchate of Antioch, the Great Church of Constantinople and our own diocese in the United States. And yet, when many people in our community speak of "their church", they are referring to their local parish and only to their parish. In seeking to reflect the actual life of the Church in this matter, the catechist must recognize that "our Church" does not just mean "my parish", but something more.

In both Eastern and Western understandings, the term "Church" properly refers to a community of people forming one family in Christ under the fatherhood of the bishop who is Christ's representative as visible head of the family. This is what we call today a diocese or eparchy. Each local Church (diocese) is meant to live in a right relationship with other local Churches, to be "in communion" with them. Thus the local Church is at the same time one around its bishop, and yet not fully one unless it is in communion with its sister Churches. At the same time, the various families of Churches (patriarchates) fully express their unity only when they are in full communion with one another.

While a family understanding of the Church continues in the minds of many people in our parishes, circumstances have tended to make them also limit their idea of this family to their own parish. In our American Melkite experience, many of the structures which usually reinforce the sense of local Church were simply absent for many years.

Geographically, our parishes are spread over an area perhaps 100 times as large as the entire patriarchate of Antioch. A geographical area that contains two or three dioceses abroad may contain the same number of parishes here. This has served to isolate parishes from one another and, as a consequence, to alienate them from their own Church.

Another, even more important factor contributing to this isolation is the fact that, for the greater part of their history, many of our parishes were part of other local Churches. Because our numbers did not approximate those of western Catholics, we were not given a diocese of our own for many years. Because of ethnic differences, our parishes were not entrusted to the other Byzantine Catholic bishops in America, who stressed their ethnic identities. Rather our parishes were incorporated into local Roman Catholic dioceses. Rarely did these parishes have any occasion to look beyond the confines of their local area and, as a result, even our own clergy and people began to see their communities as some kind of ethnic parish within the local Roman Catholic Church.

**CHANGING TIMES**

Not all these factors are still with us. The increased speed of communication has brought parishes, which are still geographically distant, closer to one another. More importantly, with the establishment of our own episcopate in 1966, a far greater cause of isolation was eradicated. For the first time in our history in this country we were a true local Church.

Not all the members of our Church, however, have interiorized this change. Even many active parishioners have yet to feel themselves as members of one Church with other Melkites throughout the diocese. Usually their idea of Church is limited to their own parish. Sometimes, however, people still think in terms of the local Roman Church in their area, of which they have not been a part for over twenty years!

For effective ministry in our diocese, catechists must be aware that they are part of that local Church which is the eparchy of Newton. Thus catechists should be encouraged and helped to participate in the various programs of our diocese which bring together people from different parishes in a common experience of their Church. These include:

- The Annual Convention
- The Society of Publicans
- The Theosis Program
- Ambassadors (Young Adults Organization)
In the same vein, catechists should be enabled to take advantage of interdiocesan activities, such as the catechist formation and adult enrichment courses sponsored by the various Byzantine dioceses participating in the ECDD (see "Forming Your Catechists", below). In this way not only are they enriched for their ministry by deepening their understanding of our spiritual Tradition, they also come to experience this Tradition as the commonality that binds us in a special way to other Byzantine Churches.

Finally, catechists should be made aware of the services available through the diocesan Office of Educational Services which has been established to help our parishes respond to their call to nourish the faith of their members.

To assist in maintaining this sense of oneness, the following resources are available through our diocese:

- **Sophia** (Journal of the Eparchy of Newton)
- **The Link** (Newsletter of the Office of Educational Services)
- **The Light** (Newsletter of NAMY)
- **Ambassadors** (Newsletter of the diocesan young adults' organization)

A useful resource for learning about the various Eastern Catholic Churches, both Byzantine and non-Byzantine, represented in this country, is David Petras, *Eastern Catholic Churches in America* (Eparchy of Parma, Parma, Oh, 1986).

**Questions for Reflection**

1. What is the general level in your parish of awareness of and attitude towards your eparchy? What are the reasons for these attitudes?

2. How much are your catechists aware of the interparish activities and services available in our diocese or in neighboring Byzantine dioceses?
3 - THE STORY OF CATECHETICS IN OUR CHURCH

A survey of the development of Christian catechism

In discussing the history of our Church, we noted the effect of the Protestant Reformation in stimulating, first, the response of the Roman Church and then, through the work of Western missionaries, the union and latinization of our own Church. The Reformation also had a strong effect on catechesis, one that was to last for hundreds of years.

In the Reformation catechesis began to be identified with formal schooling. Since the Protestants stressed Bible reading for all (something made possible by the invention of the printing press), it was important that all should be able to read. Schooling became more widespread so that people would be able to read the Bible. And religious instruction became an essential part of the program of these schools.

This instruction was generally conducted through the use of catechisms, the question and answer manuals which expounded Christian teaching in the form of "right answers" to doctrinal questions. This was an age of religious confrontations and people had to know the right answers in the doctrinal disputes of the times.

Although these two models were begun by Protestants, Roman Catholics quickly adopted them to bolster their positions. Catholic schools and catechisms were developed along the lines of Protestant models and these became the standard vehicles for Catholic catechesis until the twentieth century, having a longer life in the Roman Church than among the Protestants who originated them.

Another significant form arose in the eighteenth century because of the industrial revolution in England. There children were pressed into service in factories, prohibiting them from attending school. The answer: Sunday schools, which were designed to insure the entire basic education of these child laborers, secular as well as religious. Again, Roman Catholics developed similar programs when attendance at parochial schools could not be assured.

The long-term effects of these programs was to insure that Catholics began to assume that:

(a) religious education was for children, and that
(b) this was meant to be conducted in parochial schools

(c) using the question and answer catechism.

OTHER APPROACHES

While these methods are the ones many of us are most accustomed to, they certainly are not the historic model for catechesis in our Church. In the early Church formal catechesis was chiefly directed at adults, and through a number of means. The first formal program, the catechumenate, was designed to prepare people for baptism and incorporation into the community of faith. Subsequent formation was accomplished for the community through the prayers and preaching at the liturgical celebrations. The individual was formed according to his or her particular needs through contact with a spiritual father. Children were instructed by their parents and the entire culture supported their efforts.

In the twentieth century each of the assumptions and directions of the last 500 years has been challenged in turn. As Christians moved away from a confrontational relationship (Catholic "vs." Protestant) and the secularist challenges to all religion arose, the need for right answers was replaced by the need to stimulate basic faith. As a result the traditional style catechism was replaced with more attitudinal models. A number of factors made parochial schooling less common than it once had been. Finally, the developing understanding of the history of catechesis made it clear that Christian formation was not primarily for children, but in fact was chiefly meant to be directed to adults.

Just as the development of these forms in the sixteenth century eventually affected our Church in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, the trend away from them in the twentieth century has also affected us. In fact, since Eastern Christians stress spiritual growth as a lifelong process (theosis), it makes even less sense for us to retain a model which equates Christian education with childhood. And so, beginning with the organization of catechetical ministry in our diocese, the trend has been to see adult catechesis as the main form of this activity. The following statement to that effect was approved by the archbishop and the diocesan pastoral council in 1978, redirecting the catechetical priorities of the diocese away from the school-children model of catechesis.
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A TOTAL VIEW

The goal of the Christian life, as intended by God, is theosis, the divinization of the believer. We are "to become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). The Greek Fathers stressed that this participation is in fact a process, one that begins with the mystery of baptism but will not be complete until the resurrection of the dead at the Last Day. From the psychological standpoint, an important aspect of this process is the coming to awareness that we have indeed "put on Christ." One of the patristic names for baptism was, in fact, photismos or illumination. Thus the dynamics of Christian education consists in making the illuminated conscious of the light enkindled in them by the Holy Spirit. "In your Light we shall see Light." Or as St. Simeon the New Theologian has it, "we who have been divinized by grace and by adoption in Baptism are also to be divinized in awareness and knowledge."

This realization of the magnitude of our calling may be brought about by a number of means. One of them is surely formal Christian education. As the baptized person is gradually introduced into a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, he grows, more conscious of the gift of divine life he has received.

WHO SHOULD BE EDUCATED?

For some time the application of this principle in the Western Church has been directed mainly to children, chiefly through parochial schools. While young believers certainly need to be formed in the tradition of the Church, an over-emphasis on children in Christian education has actually been counterproductive to that formation. This approach has lead to the unavoidable conclusion that once a person outgrows school age he is no longer in need of Christian formation.

This approach is clearly foreign to the practice of the East where the first catechetical schools were for adults and where the continual formation of adults by a spiritual guide is still a living practice. Furthermore, in the current renewal of the Roman Church the primacy of adult religious formation has again been stressed. Thus the General Catechetical Directory, the current policy guidelines for Roman Catholic religious educators throughout the world, states:

"...catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All the other forms, which are
indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented
to it" (#20).

The National Catechetical Directory of the
United States declares the active faith is a free
response to God's grace; and maximum human
freedom only comes with the self possession and
responsibility of adulthood. This is one of the
principle reasons for regarding adult catechesis as
the chief form of catechesis to assign primacy to
adult catechesis does not mean sacrificing cateche­
sis at other age levels, it means making sure that
what is done earlier is carried to its culmination in
adulthood (#188).

INFORMATION OR
FORMATION?

The Western identification of Christian edu­
cation with the schoolroom had a second
unfavorable consequence; it tended to equate
Christian education with the communication of
information on religious topics. Intellectual knowl­
dge of correct doctrine, especially in controversial
areas, was stressed rather than the spiritual
formation of the person which became something
for the few so inclined.

In contrast the earlier - and more authentically
Eastern - approach had been to foster a more
integrated type of knowledge by a more all-
embracing "program" of participation in the life of
the community and individual formation by a
spiritual father. This type of Christian education
fostered, and continues to nourish a knowledge of
God in the biblical and Eastern sense of experience
in and through relationship. The revival of this type
of education in our Church would depend on the
raising up of a new generation of spiritual fathers
but also on the integration of all the formational
vehicles in a given community. Thus liturgical life,
community directions and priorities must be seen
as educative: contributing to the formation of the
community members as much as, if not more than,
formal programs. It is, after all, relationships and
interactions rather than programs which truly
educate.

As such, effort must be taken to harmonize all
pastoral activities with the goals of Christian
education, both to overcome explicit contradic­
tions and also to unify all the educational
experiences in the Church, formal or not.

A TRUE COMMUNION

The identification of religious education with the
classroom has also tended to isolate age groups
from one another. Combined with the practice of
dealing with each age and sex group separately
even on the social level, this custom provided its
own kind of segregation, even dividing families into
special interest groups.

The Church, on the other hand - especially in
the East - has always seen itself as unifying its
people. The concept of a parish family which
gathers at one Liturgy to share the one Loaf and
the one Cup is still the model structure of a church
community in our tradition. Accordingly, every
effort must be made to bridge generation gaps in
the catechetical programs and other experiences of
the community. By bridging together young adults
and their elders, by mobilizing adults in the
community to care for its children, the parish
catechetical program can demonstrate that unity
which is the Church's chief priority.

Placed as we are, an Eastern Church living in a
time of the renewal in Western circles, it is doubly
incumbent upon us to insist on an integrated and
wholistic approach to Christian education on the
three levels mentioned above. Christian education
must be seen as a total effort, involving all age
groups, especially adults, coming together in an
integrated experience of growth within the total
Church community. To mount such an all-
embracing and integral educational effort in our
eparchy, all the formational agencies and resource-
persons at our disposal must work together.
Catechetical programs, liturgical life, the lifestyle
fostered in our communities and the programs and
resources we may develop need to be harmonized.
Only when this is a reality will we be able to foster
an awareness of our Christian calling with one
mind and one heart.

Consequently, it is the policy of this eparchy
that:

A. Christian education be recognized as
intended for all believers, especially adults, and
that programs are to be developed which aim at the
formation of the total community in a family
manner.

B. The wholistic vision of Christian education as
embracing formal programs, liturgical life, personal
formation and community lifestyles be recognized
and that this recognition be expressed by the
coordination of all formational efforts in the
eparchy, pastoral life, seminary, publications,
youth ministry, liturgical commission, educational
services, convention and such others as may be
developed.
Our vision of catechetics, like our vision of the Eastern Tradition, is in a time of restoration. All Christians have come to realize that catechesis isn't just for children any more. All believers need to be able to participate in an ongoing program of religious education appropriate to their age level and state of life. First of all, this means that a living parish would provide catechetical opportunities for:

- Adults
- Senior Citizens
- Recent Immigrants
- Families (parents, children, teenagers)
- Young Adults
- Newlyweds

Secondly, while parishioners' chronological ages and family status can be easily identified, their level of spiritual development is not so easily ascertained. They may be nominal Christians with little interest other than doing the minimum, or they may be beginners in the Christian life. They may be motivated to deepening their experience of the life in Christ or be ready to grow into ministry. A living Church provides opportunities for people in all age categories at these various stages of spiritual development:

Evangelization - through Retreats, Missions, hospitality to visitors, parish open houses, guest preachers, visitation of homes, catechumenate, etc. - to bring people to make a commitment of faith.

Catechesis - through Bible studies, courses or lectures on spirituality, history, and the like, ongoing Theosis groups, parish library, etc. - to nurture the faith of those already committed.

Preparation for Ministry - through courses and programs preparing people for marriage and parenting and for service to the community as a catechist, cantor, reader, server, parish council member, deacon.

Although you may be involved in only one facet of such a total program, you should be aware that parish catechesis includes a number of other components as well. Your efforts should be harmonized with those of people working in these other programs so that it is clear to all that our Church has a clear vision of its mission in the community.

In some parishes program coordinators and catechists working on different levels meet from time to time to insure the commonality of their vision. Such a gathering could be a dinner meeting at the beginning of your planning season, at which time program objectives could be shared and all ministering in the parish can gain an understanding of what is being done at other levels.

The following works describe in detail the history and vision of catechesis in the Eastern Churches:


ECDD, *Discerning Your Call* (God With Us Publications, Mc Kees Rocks, PA, 1985)

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Questions for Reflection

1. Do most of the people in my parish still see Christian education as meant for children? What has been done or could be done to help change that?

2. What elements in your parish ministry represent:
   (a) the evangelization type of program?
   (b) the nurturing type of program?
   (c) preparation for ministry?

3. On what levels (adults, families, teens, etc) do these efforts operate?
In one sense, catechetical activity in our diocese began many years ago. Parishes conducted church school programs, missions and youth activities. Wider activity began with the establishment of St. Basil's Seminary in Methuen, Massachusetts. Here faculty and students involved in parish programs developed an initial catechetical text designed to supplement existing materials.

With the establishment of our episcopate in 1966 other resources were developed: an adult education bulletin and, in cooperation with other Byzantine Catholic dioceses, the God With Us catechetical series for children. During this time the diocesan council was urging the establishment of an educational department in our Church. At first this took the form of a committee of the diocesan council. Later a part time office was established and, in 1983, this office was upgraded to a full time ministry for our Church.

The Office of Educational Services presently consists of a full time director, a volunteer committee for the design and implementation of programs, and a number of associates from various parishes in the eparchy who are working on different projects.

Currently the following services are offered to our parishes by this office:

A - Parish Services:

1. Consultation on Parish Programs - the director is available to visit and observe the church school or other programs, participate in their development or assist in their evaluation;

2. Workshops and Courses - retreats, catechist formation, cantor training, and adult enrichment offerings are available. A list is published annually;

3. Coordinators' Conferences - periodic telephone conference calls networking parish catechetical leaders;

4. Media Library - a lending library specializing in Eastern subjects with a concentration on video cassettes;

5. Catechist Recognition - certificates for long and/or meritorious service awarded to parish catechists.

B - Communications:

1. Catechetical Page - information articles on religious education themes appearing from time to time in Sophia;

2. "The Link" - informational newsletter for catechists issued periodically from the office.

C - Prayer Ministry

1. Society of Publicans - a network of church members committed to daily prayer for the spiritual renewal of our parishes;

2. Interparish Days of Prayer - coordinated periodically by parish Theosis groups.

D - Renewal Programs

1. Antioch - a parish initiation program consisting of a retreat and continuing study group;

2. Theosis - an interparish retreat focusing on Eastern spirituality, followed by ongoing parish-based support groups and leadership formation;

3. Family Fellowship Days - opportunities for parents and children to gather for common prayer, fellowship, and learning experiences around common themes.

E - Training Ministry

1. Catechetics Courses - in St. Gregory's Seminary priesthood and diaconate programs;

2. Resources for Parish Ministry - parish council and cantor's training.

F - Publications

Catechetical texts, books, audio and video cassettes, and pamphlets (write for current catalog).
G - Interdiocesan Activity

1. Participation in the Eastern Catholic Diocesan Directors of Religious Education association (ECDD) - developing new resources and encouraging common activity;

2. Interdiocesan Catechist Formation Program - spiritual development and adult enrichment courses for parishes of all Byzantine dioceses.

Questions for Reflection

1. How aware are your parish catechists of the services of the Office of Educational Services?

2. How frequently in the past year has your parish taken advantage of them?
One of the more important developments in catechetics in our Church in recent memory has been the growing spirit of cooperation between the various Byzantine Catholic eparchies in the United States and Canada. As of this writing, there are ten such dioceses in the U.S. and another seven in Canada. Yet, until recently, there was little interaction among them. How did this come about?

One of the characteristics of Byzantine Churches, in contrast to the Roman, is that each national Church is relatively autonomous. While all Byzantine Churches employ the same liturgical and spiritual Tradition, each has its own body of bishops, language, and musical heritage. And so, when Byzantine Christians emigrated to the New World, they came both speaking and praying in different languages. When parishes and, later, dioceses were established, it was on the basis of the national Churches from which the immigrants had come. In time, all these Churches would move to the use of English in worship and life, but their structures remain separate.

Currently the following Churches exist in North America, all sharing a common Byzantine Catholic heritage, but differing in structure, ethnic origin, and particular uses:

**Melkite:** Newton (USA)  
Montreal (Canada)

**Romanian:** Canton (USA)

**Ruthenian:** Pittsburg  
Passaic  
Parma  
Van Nuys (USA);  
Unionville (Canada)

**Ukrainian:** Philadelphia  
Stamford  
Chicago  
Parma (USA);  
Winnipeg  
Toronto  
Edmonton  
Saskatoon  
New Westminster (Canada)

**EFFORTS TOGETHER**

In 1970 representatives from the Melkite and Ruthenian dioceses in the United States began discussing the possibility of common catechetical action. Out of this discussion, the *God With Us* series was envisioned and developed. Over the next ten years, representatives from these dioceses worked together to produce this material. In time, representatives from several other dioceses became involved in this cooperative venture.

With more dioceses committed to this work and with the completion of the eight grade series, diocesan catechetical personnel formed an ongoing organization, the ECDD (Eastern Catholic Diocesan Directors of Religious Education) conference. Working as an arm of the Eastern Catholic Bishops' Conference of the United States, the ECDD continues to publish catechetical resources and now also conducts regional catechist training and adult enrichment programs in many areas (see Chapter 18, "Forming Your Catechists", below).

Similar cooperation has developed among parishes in several places. Clergy gatherings, missions, and youth activities are frequently held in common to the benefit of all. When members of different parishes meet, they begin to realize that there are other Christians and also other parishes in their area which share the same Byzantine Tradition. This awareness provides important support for people who otherwise feel alienated and isolated in the vast majority of Western churches in this country.

In particular, local cooperation can be of especial use to catechists. Parishes working together can give catechists the support they need in ways they cannot do working separately. Periodic catechists’ days, special programs or workshops bringing people together from several parishes in an area enable catechists to share problems, solutions, ideas and projects. In some areas catechists meet together regularly for spiritual growth in parishes, while elsewhere they gather for regional conferences. In some places this cooperation exists between several Byzantine Catholic parishes; in others both Catholic and Orthodox catechists, who share the same Byzantine tradition, meet from time to time for similar interchanges.
In addition there are other kinds of activities which could be sponsored on an interparish basis in a given area. Byzantine parishes of several jurisdictions could develop a common media resource center for their area to pool their present resources and purchase materials which could serve all their churches. Neighboring parishes could also form a "leadership pool" by identifying and enlisting persons in their churches and community with special skills who could provide training or assistance to catechists in specific skills or subject areas. Parish church school staffs could plan common End of Year Celebrations, participate as a body in one another's patronal feasts or engage in other activities together, highlighting the commonality of the Byzantine heritage we all share.

To initiate such activities, meet with all the clergy and parish coordinators involved and establish a special committee to administer any interparish programs. This is especially important in the case of something quasi-permanent, like a library. It will help insure that what you begin will continue after your ministry has ended.

Questions for Reflection

1. Are there any other Byzantine Catholic parishes in your general area? In what do they resemble your parish? In what do they differ?

2. What about the Orthodox parishes in your area? What do you know about them?

3. What advantages do you see in cooperation with any of these parishes? What can possibly be done together? What must be done separately?
VISION

UNIT THREE - YOUR PARISH
Before we speak about catechesis in the parish, we need to look at the parish itself. What is a parish all about? What is the parish supposed to be accomplishing? Our answers to these questions will determine what our expectations of catechesis in the parish is meant to be.

For many people, the parish is a building where one picks up religious services: weddings, baptisms, memorials, character references, and perhaps Sunday Liturgy from time to time. In this view, the parish is basically a supermarket. One comes to take from it what one needs: one is not more committed to it than to any store.

The Church's model of itself is very different. According to the Scriptures, the Church has a number of aspects which determine its life. Every gathering within the local Church is meant to reflect these dimensions as its priorities. As a Christian people we are committed to:

**... BE A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY**

"You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may proclaim the perfections of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

1 Pt 2:9

All Christians know themselves as Christ's royal priesthood, but Eastern Christians in particular see ourselves as a worshipping people. "We are a Church that celebrates the Divine Liturgy," was the Russian Patriarch Alexei's definition of his Church. That explanation holds true for all Eastern Churches.

**... SHARE LIFE TOGETHER**

"And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and the prayers. ... And all who believed were together and held all things in common, and would sell their possessions and goods, and distribute them among all as anyone had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread in their houses, they took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favor with all the people."

Acts 2:42-47

Most parishes have a social life, but the Church's vision of community includes much more. The Christian way of life is built on family relationships: God is our Father in heaven, the bishop and the priest whom he sends are earthly fathers. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. The Church is the heavenly family and all the aspects of ordinary family life should be paralleled in Church life: sharing, support, love, mutual concern.

**... PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL**

"Jesus said, 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...'"

Mt 28:19-20

The Church has a mission to spread the Gospel. This means, first of all, bringing people into the Christian life (evangelization) and, secondly, teaching them the Lord's way of righteousness (catechesis). This aspect of Christian life is at the basis of our own ministry in the Church.

**... OF SERVICE TO THOSE IN NEED**

"Now after Jesus had washed their feet and put on His garments, when He had reclined again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord and you say well, for so I am. If, therefore, I the Lord have washed your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another. For I have given you an example that, as I have done to you, so also you should do.'"

Jn 13:12-15

The Church is expected to extend the love of Christ in a special way to anyone in need, whether they are members of the community or not, after the model of the Good Samaritan. Parishes should, therefore, have some form of outreach to the poor in appreciation for the inestimable riches we have received in Christ.

**... ORDERED FOR GROWTH**

"You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are citizens with the saints and members of God's household; you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as
the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole structure is closely fitted together and grows into a temple holy in the Lord."

Eph. 2:19-21

Order in the household of God is attested to in the New Testament. While we are all one in Christ, our unity does not mean that there is no hierarchy among the gifts that God gives to His people. Structure, however, is itself a gift given to enable the Church to grow. Thus leadership exists "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12), rather than to replace them as servants of God as often happens when the clergy are the only members of the local community who use their gifts for ministry. Thus parishes should have forms of training for ministry (eg parish council, cantors, catechists, etc) as part of their regular activity.

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For more on this vision of parish life, illustrated by activities in our communities today, see Bearers of the Mysteries: a Guide to the Local Church (Educational Services, West Newton, MA 02165, 1988).

LIVING THIS VISION

Each Christian community is meant to live out this vision of the Church as a people who worship, who support one another in fellowship, who serve those in need, and who provide opportunities for bringing people to the Lord (evangelization), for nurturing them once they have committed themselves to Him (catechesis) and for preparing them for ministry. In practice this means that the priorities of parish life must reflect major commitments to worship, to serious fellowship, to instruction on levels ranging from basic spreading of the Gospel to ministry training, and to serving the needy. It is the responsibility of the bishop through the pastor, with the cooperation of the parish council, to see that the life of the community manifests these commitments, harmonized around an understanding of the Church consistent with our Holy Tradition.

As in family life, the actions of the community often "teach" more effectively than any formal words of instruction. While formal catechetical programs can support a community's life, they cannot replace that life. Thus all the teaching or evangelization or fellowship will have no meaning if, for example, visitors are ignored or there is no outreach on the part of the parish community to the fallen away.

Questions for Reflection

1. Review your parish bulletins or newsletter for the past year. According to the bulletins, what is your parish's commitment to worship? Is it the heart and reason for other activities? Does that come across in the way feastdays or other liturgical observances are publicized?

2. According to your bulletins, how important do catechetical programs seem to be in your parish? Do they include the three types of teaching mentioned above (evangelization, catechesis, and ministry training)?

3. What is your impression of the quality of fellowship and the commitment to serving the needy which your parish is living? What examples of these sides of Christian life in your parish are you aware of?

INTEGRATING THE VISION

To many people the many needs suggested above will seem impossible to fill. Yet, in even the smallest parish these needs exist. Is it possible at least to make a beginning in these areas so that those who might be interested in their spiritual growth can be met on the appropriate level?

One way of meeting these needs that is particularly suited to our Church's worship tradition concerns the major Feasts and Fasts of the liturgical year. We can devise a schedule surrounding these celebrations which brings together all the above mentioned elements, assuring a total catechetical experience of how the Church sees itself. The following suggestions relate to a children's program, but can be adapted for other age groups as well.

It is possible, using these commemorations as lynchpins, to construct a catechetical calendar which would combine the liturgical celebrations, fellowship, evangelization, catechesis, and service projects in various ways so as to insure that participants are exposed to all these aspects of Christian life. In addition, arranging your year in this way reinforces our Church's basic orientation to worship as Christ's royal priesthood.

In connection with the Feasts, preparatory instructional programs would explain the meaning of the feast and the way it is celebrated as well a
involve the participants in preparing items used in the celebration. This may take the form of special sessions in the church school program or Activity Days in which a full morning or day long program may be developed to focus on these festivals.

Fast periods provide ideal occasions for highlighting evangelization programs such as a 'Jesus Day' in which the orientation is to motivating participants to personal commitment, perhaps culminating in a Penitential Service with the availability of confessions. People customarily associate almsgiving with fasts, so these days also enable us to feature service programs such as collecting funds, making gifts, visiting the sick or elderly, and the like.

Finally, the feasts themselves generally mean heightened liturgical celebrations to which various types of social gatherings can be attached. These too can include instructional segments. The celebration of the parish nameday, for example, may include lessons or programs highlighting the parish history, the contributions or reminiscences of various members, an open house in which parishioners have the opportunity to describe their church life to visitors, and the like. The opportunities are numberless and the effect always supportive of promoting the Church's vision of itself in a harmonious and integrated way.

THE CHURCH CYCLE

The festal cycle of the Byzantine Churches includes a number of feasts and fasts. The most prominent, besides the weekly celebration of Christ's resurrection, the Lord's Day, are:

* The Feast of Feasts (Pascha) - which includes the Great Week, which preceeds it and commemorates the events of the Lord's passion, Bright Week, which follows it and continues the festivities, and the rest of Paschaltide, the forty day period during which we make daily remembrance of the resurrection.

* The Twelve Great Feasts - which commemorate other events in the life of Christ and the Theotokos, as follows:

1. September 8, Nativity of the Theotokos
2. September 14, Exaltation of the Holy Cross (a fast day)
3. November 21, Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple
4. December 25, Nativity of Christ
5. January 6, Holy Theophany
6. February 2, Encounter of Our Lord in the Temple
7. March 25, Holy Annunciation
8. Sunday before Pascha, Palm Sunday
9. 40 days after Pascha, the Ascension of the Lord
10. 50 days after Pascha, Pentecost
11. August 6, Transfiguration of Christ
12. August 15, Dormition of the Theotokos

Closely allied to them are the Fastas, periods of varying lengths which prepare for these celebrations, namely:

1. The Great Fast, 40 days before the Great Week, preparing for the paschal commemorations.

2. The Christmas Fast, in preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth. It is sometimes called Philip's Fast, because it begins on November 15, the day after St. Philip's feast. Today in many Churches the actual start of fasting is often deferred until December 10.

3. The Fast of the Theotokos, the first fourteen days of August, in preparation for the feast of Mary's Dormition.

4. The Fast of Peter and Paul, from the end of Pentecost week until June 28, the eve of the saints' feast.

In addition there are a number of other commemorations during the year of events in the life of Christ or the Theotokos as well as Church history and the memory of saints which may be spotlighted in your parish. In our diocese these often include:

- December 4, St. Barbara
- December 5, St. Nicholas
- April 23, St. George
- July 20, St. Elias
- The feastday of your parish patron
- The feastdays of individual or family patrons.
The first call for anyone ministering in the Church is to be one with the Lord by living the life of the Church. This holds true for the monk, the bishop, the cantor, and all. But what is the specific calling of the catechist? What is the Lord asking us to do for His Body?

Many people see being involved in a parish catechetical program as similar to baking for the annual bazaar or selling raffle tickets. For them it is a task: something to be done to keep the parish running smoothly. They might offer to "help out" by taking a class, but usually their commitment is not that deep and their attendance erratic or short-lived.

From the beginning, being a catechist has been seen as a specific ministry in the life of the Church: a calling, a vocation. Teaching is one of the many ministries listed by St. Paul in his catalogs of ministries in the Church, along with apostles, prophets, healers, pastors, bishops, deacons, and presbyters. What makes these functions "ministries", rather than jobs or tasks, is that they are exercises of the Holy Spirit's gifts to God's people. As Paul notes,

"We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us: ... if it is to teach, we should teach ..." (Rom 12: 4-7).

All of us have received the Holy Spirit at our christening and so we all have been made members of Christ's Body. We all have different gifts through which we can exercise one or another function in the Body. As we become aware of our various gifts, we experience the call to put them at the service of the Body. And so, if you have a good voice and are attracted to the Church's liturgical worship, you can reasonably conclude that you have been gifted to serve as a cantor or Church singer.

In the same way, if you have communication skills appropriate to teaching at one or another level as well as a heart open to the Church's Tradition, the Lord is telling you through your gifts that He wants to use you as a catechist in His Church.

LAYPEOPLE AS CATECHISTS

Sometimes people have been given the impression that catechesis is the business of the clergy, and that lay catechists are simply helping out the pastor in a jam, because he cannot handle the overflow. While the clergy are ultimately responsible for seeing that catechesis remains faithful to the Church's Tradition, this does not mean that bishops and priests are the only ones gifted by the Spirit to catechize.

In the early days of the Church there was a special order of catechists who were especially responsible for instructing converts. As the centuries passed, the Western Church generally identified teaching with the clergy. In the last few centuries even those groups of laypeople who wanted to devote themselves to the catechetical ministry were obliged by Church authorities to live the monastic life as nuns or brothers. Laypeople taught only in the absence of clergy or religious, as in the missions.

In the Eastern Churches this was not the case. Laypeople continued to teach, even on advanced levels, without being obliged to adopt a quasi-monastic lifestyle. Often one person was employed by the church to serve both as cantor and as catechist. Even today in some places it is the trained lay catechist, rather than the clergy, who are authorized to preach in the churches.

Today many are recognizing once more that being a catechist is not simply a task for which we volunteer. Rather it is:

(a) a ministry of the Church
(b) to which certain people are called
(c) by being gifted with God's grace:
(d) a ministry which they are to exercise in harmony with the entire Body of Christ which is the Church.

SCHOOLMARM OR SHEPHERD?

As we know, since the rise of Protestantism in the West, religious education has been more and more considered the task of the school, whether it be a day school or Sunday school format. As a result our model for catechesis is too often assumed to be the
While professional teachers are indispensable to our programs because of their group management and communication skills, we still must recognize that our model catechist is not the classroom teacher but the pastor. The task of the classroom teacher is often seen as communicating a knowledge of this or that subject. The task of the catechist is more than that. Like the pastor, the catechist is a leader of worship. In the catechetical session he or she leads the prayer sessions. In the regular liturgical life of the parish, the catechist serves as role model for the students. Children know when their catechist is at Liturgy, at vespers, at other services and whether they are participating or not.

Like the pastor, the catechist may be drawn into the lives of the students - their joys, their problems, their home life - both to share and sometimes to counsel. Like the pastor, catechists may find special moments outside the formal class time to witness their faith to both the students and their families. Like pastors, catechists have been given a charge: a group of people to whom they minister and for whom they have a responsibility to the Lord. The parish priest may have 100 families in his charge while the catechist has three. Still, there are more similarities between catechist and pastor than between catechist and public school teacher.

What qualities do we look for in a priest? - these are the same qualities we look to find in a catechist, since both are called by God to a ministry of the word. We rejoice in priests whose conduct at the Liturgy and whose preaching show reverence and preparation; the same is true for the catechist’s “liturgy”, the catechetical session.

Likewise we expect pastors to do more than preside at a weekly Liturgy: we want them to be concerned for our lives, to manifest the love of Christ by the way they love their parishioners, to share the word of God, not just in church, but in everyday circumstances as well.

The same is true of the committed catechist, whose contacts with the students go beyond the meeting room. “My teacher came to the ballgame!” may be a more directly meaningful sign of love to the student than the effort invested in preparing a lesson. The students who sense and know that their catechist is concerned about them are more likely to hear the lesson when it is presented than the students who see it as another class on a day when they shouldn’t have to be in school. By talking to each student regularly outside of the catechetical session, telephoning them (and their parents) regularly and sending them a note from time to time the catechist manifests a pastoral concern in a way even children can appreciate. By praying for each student by name daily and inviting the students to pray for you in return we raise that concern to the level of our vocation as members of Christ’s royal priesthood.

The catechist in the deepest sense of the term, then, is not simply a volunteer who signs up to do a task, but one who has been entrusted by the Lord with a pastoral charge and gifted by His Spirit with the skills needed to exercise that ministry for His people.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why did you first become involved in the catechetical ministry?

2. Has your reason changed since that beginning or is it still the same?

3. Which aspects of your catechetical activity reflect the “schoolmarm” model of catechesis? Which follow the “shepherd” image?
8 - THE MINISTRY OF COORDINATION

The coordinator is the mortar holding the program together.

As we have seen, the ministry of teaching is one of the gifts St. Paul identifies as having been given to the Church. The same apostle also listed “helpers and administrators” among these gifts (1 Cor 12: 28), along with miracle workers and speakers in tongues! In a parish catechetical program these administrative gifts are needed to work together with the gift of teaching to assure a workable and effective catechetical ministry in the parish.

After the pastor, the person who most directly affects the success or failure of the parish catechetical program is the coordinator. The coordinator provides the mortar of support which enables the catechists to exercise their ministry in an affirming and enriching environment. Sometimes this support consists of seeing that the catechists have the supplies they need or that their activities are publicized in the parish community. At other times this support may involve promoting the catechetical program to the church council, parish organizations or parents. Building a sense of community among the catechists is another important kind of support the coordinator renders. Even a committed catechist’s ministry is enhanced when there is a strong sense of community among the catechists encouraging one another and helping one another. This does not happen on its own. This is where the coordinator comes in.

In some parishes the coordinator may be a full time church worker trained for this service and employed by the parish. In most of our communities it is a volunteer position to which a person commits a certain amount of time. They may or may not be compensated for their work. In some communities there are several area coordinators, each one responsible for a certain area of catechetical ministry (church school, teens, sacramental preparation, adult formation) with one person, perhaps an assistant pastor or deacon, as overall coordinator. Whatever the structure, coordinating tasks must be undertaken by someone for the program to succeed.

A COORDINATOR IS ...

The tasks involved in coordinating a parish program will be discussed later. Here we will reflect on some of the attitudes and personal qualities concerned with being a coordinator. For the coordinator to be an effective “mortar” in the program, he or she must know the material side of the program (what is supposed to happen) as well as the content side (what is supposed to be taught). Perhaps even more importantly, he or she must know the people side: who is involved, how they interact, and how they can be brought together. Thus the ability to form supportive relationships is essential to this kind of ministry, as it is to the ministry of the clergy (cf 1 Tm 3).

While administrative skills and familiarity with the Tradition are areas in which people expect to be trained, most of us feel that the way we relate to others is simply “the way we are”. And so the first area in which a coordinator should look for growth and development is often the last one we would naturally wish to examine!

Look at the people who work with you in the parish program. What do you think of them? Are they brothers and sisters to be supported or problems to work around? What about the students and parents? Are the obstacles to be overcome in putting on a “successful” program? Is the pastor someone to be short circuited or kept away from the program? The contribution of mortar in building a wall is to take stones of all sorts of shapes and sizes and bind them together into a whole. Each stone retains its own shape and size, and those very characteristics give them their place in the wall. Without the mortar they would simply be a pile of unconnected stones or even a fragile balance of potentially abrasive units. But because mortar is more flexible than stones, it can fill in the gaps, make up for the odd shapes of the stones, and make them into something bigger and more solid than they could ever be on their own.

Questions for Reflection

1. How did you get to be a coordinator: who asked you, for what reason, under what circumstances?

2. What were you told the job would entail? Was that an accurate description?

3. What gifts for coordination do you have? What gifts do you need?
How to assess your approach to leadership

Serving as a coordinator in a parish catechetical program makes you a parish leader. You may be called upon to give direction in a number of areas relating to the program. You may be expected to deal with a number of interpersonal issues involving clergy, parish council members, catechists, aides, parents, and students. All these roles make different kinds of demands on the coordinator and bring into play different kinds of leadership skills. It is important for the coordinator to be aware of the kinds of leadership skills he or she possesses and what style of leadership he or she is more likely to employ.

Unless we are employed in a managerial position we are not likely to have thought about ourselves in this way. We are more likely to see how others in leadership positions act in various situations; but an understanding of our own leadership style is important if we are to function to the best of our ability in this ministry. This is why many religious groups have begun taking leadership assessment programs from the workplace and applying them to situations in the Church.

The most basic distinction made in these assessments is between task-oriented people and person-oriented people. Some leaders are more concerned about the job to be done; others give morale a higher priority and may let the task remain undone in order to provide team support to coworkers.

Another distinction found in leadership assessment programs concerns the way in which the leader approaches a task. Some tend to be directive or autocratic: spelling out in detail what is to be done and indicating the specific procedures to be followed. Others are more likely to consult or take a consensus of opinion before setting policy. Still others take the laissez-faire approach and provide no direction at all. Which is "the right way?" Which is your way?

First of all, there is no one right way. At times each of these approaches may be the most appropriate due to the task at hand or the type of persons involved. In an emergency, for example, we do not stop to take a consensus: decisive and directive leadership is needed. If we were seeking to build up a sense of team ministry, on the other hand, such an approach would be foolish: fellowship cannot be legislated. More often than not, the best approach blends both styles as we seek to implement goals which depend heavily on popular support. And so we need to be able to suit our leadership style to the situation at hand.

In Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources (Third edition, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, Inc, 1977) the following combinations of styles are indicated in their situational leadership theory of management. "High task/low relationship leader behavior is referred to as 'telling', because this style is characterized by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of followers and tells them what, how, when, and where to do various tasks.

"High task/high relationship behavior is referred to as 'selling', because with this style most of the direction is still provided by the leader. He or she also attempts through two-way communication and socio-emotional support to get the follower(s) psychologically to buy into decisions that have to be made.

"High relationship/low task behavior is called 'participating' because with this style leader and follower(s) now share in decision making through two-way communication and much facilitating behavior from the leader since the follower(s) have the ability and knowledge to do the task.

"Low relationship/low task behavior is labeled 'delegating' because the style involves letting followers 'run their own show'. The leader delegates since the followers are high in maturity, being both willing and able to take responsibility for directing their own behavior."

A Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description questionnaire based on this theory is available from Learning Resources Corporation, 8517 Production Avenue, San Diego, CA 92121; (714) 454-3193 (in California), (800) 854-2143 (elsewhere).

Another popular tool for assessing leadership styles is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator used in many schools and businesses. The following questionaires, while not as exhaustive, give an idea of what such inventories are like. You may wish to complete these questionnaires with your parish priest or with other
members of your catechetical team and then compare notes to assess the accuracy of your self-evaluation. What conclusions do you draw from the comparison?

WHo Am I As A LEADER?

The list below contains thirty words describing leadership characteristics. Select the five that best fit you and write them in the spaces below. Include the list number of each characteristic in the parentheses which appear next to the blank spaces.

1 - kind  16 - sentimental
2 - decisive  17 - impatient
3 - clever  18 - opinionated
4 - helpful  19 - businesslike
5 - feeling  20 - follower
6 - unpredictable  21 - respectful
7 - dreamer  22 - risking
8 - disciplined  23 - manager
9 - leader  24 - planner
10 - innovative  25 - prophetic
11 - free  26 - creative
12 - precise  27 - traditional
13 - peacemaker  28 - coordinator
14 - concerned  29 - new ideas
15 - organizer  30 - caring

The five characteristics that best describe me are:

1. (#)
2. (#)
3. (#)
4. (#)
5. (#)

B - New circle the five numbers on the chart below which represent the words you selected to describe yourself:

Caring-type Characteristics:
1 4 5 13 14 16 20 21 27 30

Directive leader-type Characteristics:
2 8 9 12 15 18 19 23 24 28

Creative-type Characteristics:
3 6 7 10 11 17 22 25 26 29

Are you more typically a caring person, a directive leader, or a creative type? Caring people tend to be sensitive to the emotional tone of the group. They are generally warm toward people. To them other people's feelings may be more important than accomplishing a task at hand. They are inclined to respect the past and keep it alive in a healthy way. They are especially good to have around when tempers get heated. They make good arbitrators.

On the other hand, caring people have difficulty planning creatively about the future. They don't oppose change necessarily, but tend to be more concerned about people's present needs and about continuity with the tradition of the past.

Directive leaders are a necessary part of every group. They are generally interested in organization and getting the job done. They tend to order past, present and future into a process, and make decisions based on what can be done now. They are good people to have around to keep things running smoothly.

Directive leaders tend, however, to become impatient and upset with others, especially those who they feel are not bearing their share of the responsibility.

Creative people tend to be less concerned about what has been and even about what is. They are most inclined to apply their efforts to what can be. In the Church, they are the ones questioning the old. They make suggestions about new ways of doing things and new things to do. They are necessary for planning and projecting the future and also help the group from becoming complacent.

But creative people need help in implementing their plans. They tend to be less well organized and thus need the practical collaboration of others for support.

### LEADERSHIP STYLE INVENTORY

Circle the number on each 1-to-5 Continuum which you feel indicates your true feelings about the statements at either end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Most people are lazy by nature and would rather play than work.</td>
<td>Most people are industrious by nature and like to work as well as play.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Very few people are willing to shoulder responsibility.</td>
<td>Most people are eager to take on responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Most people need a great deal of direction in order to perform their work properly.</td>
<td>Most people, if they understand and agree with the objectives involved in their work, need very little direction.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Most people do not care what happens to the organization but care only about what they will get out of it.</td>
<td>Most people have the best interests of the organization at heart.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very few people have the creative ability to help solve the organization's problems.</td>
<td>Creativity in solving the organization's problems is spread widely among people but seldom developed or utilized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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SCORING

Add up the numbers you have circled. You must answer each question for this total to be meaningful.

If your score is:
- 5-9, you're very autocratic
- 10-13, you're somewhat autocratic
- 14-16, you're a mixture of autocratic and developmental
- 17-20, you're somewhat developmental
- 21-25, you're very developmental

In an autocratic style, the leader makes all the decisions and demands or expects compliance.
In a developmental style, the leader abdicates any directive role and the group makes all the decisions.
In a mixed style leader and group work together in decision making. The leader serves more as a facilitator.

(Based on McGregor's "Hy" theory of management in Coordinator's Specialization Course, Diocese of Camden, Camden, NJ, undated)

Which style is more appropriate to the following tasks in the catechetical program:
- (a) Choosing curriculum material.
- (b) Deciding on an end-of-year celebration.
- (c) Dealing with a discipline problem.
T-P LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Each of us is aware of the difficult conflict whenever task and person both need high priority. This instrument is designed to help you become aware of your own priorities. The following items describe aspects of leadership behavior. Respond to each item according to the way you would most likely act if you were the leader of a work group: (A) always; (F) frequently; (O) occasionally; (S) seldom; (N) never. Circle the appropriate letter.

A F O S N - 1. I would most likely act as the spokesperson of the group.
A F O S N - 2. I would encourage overtime work.
A F O S N - 3. I would allow members complete freedom in their work.
A F O S N - 4. I would encourage the use of uniform procedures.
A F O S N - 5. I would permit members to use their own judgment in solving problems.
A F O S N - 6. I would stress being ahead of competing groups.
A F O S N - 7. I would speak as a representative of the group.
A F O S N - 8. I would needle members for greater effort.
A F O S N - 9. I would try out my ideas in the group.
A F O S N - 10. I would let the members do their work in the way they think best.
A F O S N - 11. I would be working hard for a promotion.
A F O S N - 12. I would tolerate postponement and uncertainty.
A F O S N - 13. I would speak for the group if there were visitors present.
A F O S N - 14. I would keep the work moving at a rapid pace.
A F O S N - 15. I would turn the members loose on a job and let them go for it.
A F O S N - 16. I would settle conflicts when they occur in the group.
A F O S N - 17. I would get swamped with details.
A F O S N - 18. I would represent the group at outside meetings.
A F O S N - 19. I would be reluctant to allow the members any freedom of action.
A F O S N - 20. I would decide what should be done and how it should be done.
A F O S N - 21. I would push for increased production.
A F O S N - 22. I would let some members have authority which I could keep.
A F O S N - 23. Things would usually turn out as I had predicted.
A F O S N - 24. I would allow the group a high degree of initiative.
A F O S N - 25. I would assign group members to particular tasks.
A F O S N - 26. I would be willing to make changes.
A F O S N - 27. I would ask the members to work harder.
A F O S N - 28. I would trust the group members to exercise good judgement.
A F O S N - 29. I would schedule the work to be done.
A F O S N - 30. I would refuse to explain my actions.
A F O S N - 31. I would persuade others that my ideas are to their advantage.
A F O S N - 32. I would permit the group to set its own pace.
A F O S N - 33. I would urge the group to beat its previous record.
A F O S N - 34. I would act without consulting the group.
A F O S N - 35. I would ask that group members follow standard rules and regulations.
SCORING

Read these questions slowly and carefully. Do one step at a time.

A - For questions 8, 12, 17, 18, 19, 30, 34, and 35 write the number "1" in front of the question if you responded "S" or "N".

B - For all other questions, write the number "1" in front of the question if you responded "A" or "F".

C - Circle the number "1"s which you have written in front of questions 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 18, 19, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, and 35.

D - Count the circled number "1"s. This will reflect your concern for people. Record your score in the "P#" blank in Figure 2 and mark the corresponding spot on the P-Scale as shown in Figure 1-A.

E - Count the uncircled number "1"s. This will reflect your concern for task. Record your score in the "T#" blank in Figure 2 and mark the corresponding spot on the T-Scale as shown in Figure 1-B.

F - Draw a line connecting the number on the T-Scale to the number on the P-Scale (see Figure 1-C). The point of intersection on the middle scale will indicate how well you balance your concern for tasks with your concern for people. This is a profile of your leadership style.

(Reprinted from Coordinator's Specialization Course, Diocese of Camden, Camden, NJ, undated)
Questions for Reflection

1. Do these exercises help you discern some strengths in yourself which can help your ministry in the catechetical program?

2. Do these exercises help you discern some areas in which you would need help?

3. Are these the same strengths and weaknesses you identified in the questions in chapter 8?

4. Now redo these exercises for your pastor and others on the catechetical team who might supplement your strengths in the program. Are there some tasks at which these others would be more effective than you? Are any of them people whom you might train as assistant coordinator or eventual replacement?
No matter how efficient you may be, you know that, as a volunteer or part-time coordinator you have a limited amount of time to give to your program each week. Most coordinators say that they are happy to be able to set aside one evening's worth of time each week for the program. How can you possibly achieve all that needs to be done?

The answer, of course, is that you can't. No one can. But we can give thanks to God for giving us whatever time and abilities we have received for this ministry and then set about using them in the most efficient way possible. One approach which many have found useful involves the following steps:

1. Identify Your Priorities - What areas of concern or tasks in the program need special emphasis at this time? This will vary from parish to parish, depending on the condition the program is in.

2. Take a Time Inventory - Record how the time you have to give to the program is actually spent. You may be repeating some tasks needlessly because you don't have a written procedure for them. You may be doing some things which should be delegated to others. You may be fragmenting your limited energies by taking on other parish responsibilities as well. Making a written record of the time you spend on the program as you spend it for two or three weeks will help you see where it is actually going.

3. Budget Your Time - This often means rearranging your time commitment in the light of the priorities you have determined in #1 above. In some situations there may be little possibility of change, at least all at once. But identifying the areas where change is needed is the first step to a gradual rearrangement of your time distribution.

4. Carefully Consider New Demands - Often active parishioners are always asked to take on new tasks. Never decide on the spot or feel that you must say yes to be "nice". Think over every request, evaluating it in terms of the time you have available. Don't be afraid to say no to new projects which will rob energies needed for your present commitments.

BUDGETING PROGRAM TIME

Some aspects to the parish program may be considered more important in one season than another. The following list may help coordinators with very limited time to arrange the year well enough in advance that things do not creep up unawares.

(a) SUMMER - Concentrate on:

- Determining Potential Class Lists and contacting parents with reminders of your upcoming program;
- Ordering Materials for the fall and preparing your catechists' working resources (see Chapters 14 and 15);
- Basic Formation of any catechists you have recruited (see Chapter 18).

(b) FALL - Concentrate on:

- Parent Involvement, to draw parents of your students into partnership in your program (see Chapter 21);
- Classroom Visitation, to insure that catechists are functioning effectively in terms of personal relationship and curriculum use (see Chapter 20).

(c) WINTER - Concentrate on:

- Reviving Interest, as most programs tend to sag after the Christmas holidays.
- Catechist Recognition, to acknowledge that your present catechists see that they are appreciated and the entire community realizes the importance of this ministry (see Chapter 19);

(d) SPRING - Concentrate on:

- Planning Your Calendar and Budget for the coming year (see Chapters 23 and 27);
- Catechist Recruitment, by firming up any recommitments by present catechists and seeking out potential additions to your staff (see Chapter 17);
- End of year activities, to assure an upbeat climax to your season.
WHAT TO DELEGATE

Even full-time coordinators cannot do all the tasks required for a catechetical program alone. It goes without saying that persons who have a limited amount of time to devote to their ministry can even less afford to do everything themselves. You need to share responsibility.

One way of doing this is by having several people serve as program coordinators. Each will have the same level of authority, but be responsible for different areas of the parish's catechetical ministry (e.g. church school, youth ministry, adult education).

A further sharing of responsibility within each of these areas can occur when people serve as co-coordinators or assistant coordinators, with one person handling the decision making concerns, another dealing with formation and a third concerned with all the management tasks.

Another model is useful when only one person takes the responsibility for coordinating the program, but delegates specific tasks to others. The following types of tasks are often identified as the likeliest candidates for delegation:

* Areas you are least qualified to handle (e.g. if you are not musically gifted, it is logical to entrust the music in your program to another);

* Details you most dislike (these can drain your energy quicker than anything else);

* Details that keep recurring (and, therefore, can be given to another along with a step by step recipe for action);

* Minor decisions that keep recurring (a slightly more sophisticated version of the above);

* Details that require the largest single block of your time (and, therefore, can take you away from more creative aspects of ministry to a significant degree).

Delegating is also a way of preparing a person to assume more responsible activity in the life of the Church: “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12). Therefore, when we delegate responsibilities to a specific individual we should keep in mind his or her own level of development and delegate responsibilities that will:

- Provide some variety;
- Most engage the person’s interest;
- Develop the person’s potential;
- Contain the right degree of challenge;
- Give a clear objective to reach;
- Provide a series of successes.

Clarity is essential in delegating tasks unless you wish both of you to be frustrated later on. The following concerns are often mentioned as necessary to define before letting another person run with a project with which you are concerned:

* Define the objective;
* Specify the amount of money available;
* Identify the individuals available for assistance;
* Define the limits of the person’s responsibilities;
* Identify the amount of authority accompanying the responsibilities;
* Indicate the target completion date;
* Decide on check points and progress reports.

Questions for Reflection

1. List three types of tasks which you would be interested in delegating to an assistant coordinator. Indicate which of the reasons mentioned above most apply in each instance:

   a) because
   b) because
   c) because

2. Did you choose only the things you dislike doing (and does this mean you have all possible skills?)

3. Choose a specific task to delegate. Write up your choice specifying the seven particulars mentioned above.
As we have mentioned before, coordinating a parish program is like being the mortar in a wall; but mortar tends to disintegrate a lot faster than stones! And so the coordinator must come to grips early on with what the first monastics called "acedia" and what people today label as "burnout". Because of the many demands involved in ministry, people often just get tired of it all. This is especially true in the case of professional teachers in the catechetical program. They often feel that their entire life is built around children and they simply have no time off.

The following stages are often identified in this process:

1. One's physical well being is affected by fatigue, loss of sleep, reliance on coffee or cigarettes as stimulants, susceptibility to colds and flu, lingering illnesses due to lack of resistance;

2. Increasing irritability and crankiness with people;

3. Intellectual burnout: one becomes tired of dealing with problems, ideas, or even the repetitive, non-challenging aspects of the ministry;

4. Loss of enthusiasm for the ministry itself: one becomes pessimistic about one's own efforts and the work of others.

The following steps are often suggested to reverse these trends:

1. Evaluate your physical condition: find out what takes away your energy and what revitalizes it. See how exercise and an improved diet can help you regain your energy.

2. Focus on the positive aspects of your life: activities that you enjoy, friends who reinvigorate you. Make time for them: they contribute to your effectiveness for the Lord's service.

3. Use the pleasurable aspects of your ministry as "coffee breaks" to relax when you are doing more stressful tasks.

4. Examine the negative, stress-producing side of your ministry. Rearrange your schedule or your areas of responsibility to avoid these aspects if possible.

5. Refrain from taking on new commitments unreservedly. Especially do not agree to do church tasks that interfere with the time you have to devote to your ministry, such as baking cookies, working bingo, or serving on the parish council. You have a limited amount of time to give to your parish; keep your energies focused on your special calling. You are asking for stress if you regularly take on more than you can reasonably accomplish.

6. Take time for spiritual growth. Explore what God is doing in your life and in the Church. The more aware we are of God's continual presence in our lives, the less likely we are to be overwhelmed by circumstances.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do you expect to stay in this ministry? Why? Why not?

2. What tempts you to quit?

3. Who will replace you? Is there a structure to assure continuity in your ministry, or is that "the priest's problem"?

4. What do you do to handle stress? Does it work?

TAKING A SABBATICAL

Many times people, who know that they are gifted by God for this ministry and see it as more than a casual involvement, nevertheless recognize that they need a break from active service for a period of time. This need for periodic breaks to revive our spirits was recognized in the Old Testament Sabbath. And so, if you find that you don't want to abandon the catechetical ministry forever, but need a rest, consider the following principles:

1. Make it a complete rest from all parish activities. If you simply redirect your time into working with the same people on other tasks, you won't have a rest at all.
2 - Use the time for re-creation in terms of spiritual growth, relaxation and play in the spirit of the weekly Sabbath.

3 - Don't take time off without providing for a replacement. Too often people work themselves too hard then, when they can't take it any more, dump the program on the priest. Make sure you have your replacement lined up six months before he or she will take over the program. Work along with this person in the intervening time and slowly help them to become acclimated so that there will be continuity in the program.

4 - Write your own Program Manual. Before you leave as coordinator, put together a step-by-step manual of your entire program so that your successor(s) will know what has been happening. It is wise to do this from the beginning of your service as none of us has any guarantee on life or health. Someone may have to take over without adequate preparation and such a written manual will be of the greatest help.
STRATEGIES
UNIT FIVE - ON THE LEVEL OF DIRECTION
12 - YOUR TASKS AS COORDINATOR

The responsibilities involved in directing a catechetical program.

The coordination of a parish catechetical program, of whatever size, has a number of dimensions. Each of these aspects utilizes different skills and presumes different abilities. They may all be done by one individual, in which case that person is probably a paid church staff person. In communities where these tasks are done by part time or volunteer ministers, several people may assume various parts of the supervisory role. In either case, the goal of parishes committed to strong catechetical programming should be to see that all these tasks are the responsibility of someone in the community.

A catechetical program coordinator's responsibilities are often seen in terms of:

(a) direction,
(b) formation, and
(c) management.

By "Direction" we mean decision-making in the program: who determines what will happen on the various levels of catechesis in the parish. By "Formation" we mean, besides the implementation of programs directed at general parish membership, those aspects of teaching done by the supervisors themselves, eg. the training of catechists. Finally, by "Management" we mean the attention to logistics which can be expected in any program.

The individual tasks are many. The next units in this book will be devoted to an examination of some of these tasks. They are listed here so that you may gain an overview of the aspects in coordinating a program. For fuller treatments of individual topics, see the chapters indicated.

A - On the Level of Direction

1 - Program Planning (see Chapter 13)

The determination of programs needed in the community, both regular ongoing programs (such as the church school, sacramental preparation, adult enrichment, etc.) and special programs (such as retreats, feastday observances, end of year celebrations, etc.)

2 - Curriculum Design (see Chapter 14)

The selection of materials for use in church school programs, from pre-school through high school levels as well as family programs. Note: the use of certain materials is mandated in the diocese, as explained in chapter 14.

B - On the Level of Formation

3 - Catechist Recruitment, Training, and Support (see Chapters 15, 16, 17)

Working with your catechetical personnel is the most important aspect of program coordination. It involves communicating a sense of ministry, providing the spiritual and pedagogical resources needed for the work at hand, and supporting the catechists in their commitment to the Lord in the catechetical ministry.

4 - Working with Parents (see chapter 18)

It is essential to the success of your programs for children and youth that parents develop a commitment to the values and goals you are promoting. Organized programs (such as orientation days, open houses, parenting programs), church school parents' associations, or pastoral visitations help to involve the entire family in the effort of catechesis.

5 - Working with Persons with Special Needs (see Chapter)

Every program has some students who do not fit into the average categories (catch-up students, language problems, erratic attendees). Special approaches may have to be taken in these circumstances.

C - On the Level of Management

6 - Class Design and Scheduling (see Chapter 23)

The placement of catechists and students in appropriate groupings, the combining of classes, and the involvement of substitutes should follow standard patterns to insure consistency.

7 - Records (see Chapter 24)

The development of efficient systems of record keeping, registration, and calendar formation for your programs.
8 - Promotion (see Chapter 25)

Keeping your program highly visible to the parish at large through written communications, displays, and presentations helps make the entire community feel a part of what you are doing.

9 - Facilities (see Chapter 26)

The selection and arrangement of facilities appropriate to your program helps provide a supportive atmosphere to catechist and student alike.

10 - Resources (see chapter 27)

Your program should include a library stocking the various supplementary resources called for in your curriculum and the equipment necessary to use them as well as items for the personal enrichment of the catechists.

11 - Finances (see chapter 28)

What you should expect from the parish as a whole in terms of financial support and what the parish should expect from you in terms of an appropriate budget and accountability.

Questions for Reflection

1. Based on the tasks indicated above, write your own job description, listing those tasks for which you accept responsibility.

2. Go through the list again. Determine who is to be responsible for the tasks you do not undertake.
Planning is an essential part of any serious organizational effort, and the parish catechetical program is no exception. While many aspects of Church life are a given (there will be a Christmas, whether we plan for it or not), we need to determine how and where to deploy our energies so that the growth of our community in the Lord will best be served. The following eight principles suggest a way of discerning an appropriate course of action when planning a catechetical program.

FIRST PRINCIPLE - PLAN REGULARLY AND EARLY

Often in parishes there is very little, if any, long term planning. People plan one event at a time without regard for the wider picture of the Church's ultimate purpose, or the integration of individual projects into the total effect of church life.

Some aspects of your program, such as your basic calendar, or beginning and ending procedures, may be planned a year in advance. Other elements, such as special programs may be scheduled three or six months in advance, depending on the success or failure of similar programs earlier in the season. In any case, basic planning should be done at least six months in advance. Thus planning for the fall should be done the previous spring.

Goals should be reviewed regularly with a view to changing or extending them, depending on how effectively they have been implemented or how impractical they may have turned out to be. Just because a goal was once set, that does not mean that it was automatically implemented or can be. Thus some churches schedule a major planning session in the spring to set their schedule for the next fall and the entire next year, whenever possible.

SECOND PRINCIPLE - PLAN THROUGH PRAYER

Undergirding any church planning, for Christians, should be prayer. Is this project in harmony with what the Lord is asking of His people? Do we have any indication that this is or is not according to the mind of the Church? Where do we see the Lord in this action? Christian planners need to ask these questions at every step of the planning process, especially at the beginning. Include a significant prayer time in your planning sessions.

One way of raising the consciousness of planners to the necessity of such prayer is by beginning the session with the Service for the Beginning of Work, found in Appendix C.

THIRD PRINCIPLE - RECALL YOUR ESSENTIAL MISSION AND MAJOR OBJECTIVES

Every specific goal in program planning must relate to the basic aims of the Christian life. Thus, for example, we would not imagine giving doorprizes to encourage church attendance: this runs counter to the spirit of the gospel call to give oneself to the Lord. Accordingly, we need to keep before our eyes the relationship of any individual program to the more basic purposes of the Church.

In our Tradition we take it as given (a) that the aim of Christian life is theosis, the sharing in the divine nature; (b) that theosis is fostered through participation in the life of the Church, particularly the mystical life of the liturgy; and (c) that the general objectives of catechesis are to affect believers' behavior, knowledge and attitudes in such a way as to dispose them to share in this life.

Thus specific programs in the Church must be designed with this aim in mind: to so dispose the participants that they will be motivated to deepen their sharing in the sacramental life of our Church.

And so in every step of planning we need to look at all sides of an idea in relation to these given principles. What are the positive effects in relationship to the Church's basic goals? What are the negative effects? What might be the long term consequences? What other perspectives might be considered?

Questions for Reflection

1. How might the following programs dispose or detract students from deepening their commitment to the life of our Church?
A - Teaching children all prayers in Arabic;
B - Introducing rock music in the liturgy;
C - Incorporating prostrations, incense and chanting into the classroom prayers.

2. What do you think would best dispose teenagers to participate in our Church's liturgical services?
   - Having a Teen Liturgy just for them;
   - Insuring them action roles in the regular parish Liturgy;
   - Conducting a church school class on the history of the Liturgy.

3. Would any of the suggestions above run counter to the Church's basic views on liturgy?

FOURTH PRINCIPLE - ASSESS THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Before planning any specific program, you must determine what needs you are trying to meet by gathering and analyzing data about the community. This means determining the background, knowledge, values, expectations, concerns, pressures, and cultural environment of the people involved. Effective planning must be people-centered since, although there is such a wealth of spiritual riches in our Church's Tradition to be shared, people can only interiorize what they are ready to absorb.

Besides people's individual needs, the church planner must consider the life of the community as a whole: where are they in their life together, in their journey of faith. Usually there are many sub-groups in a parish - the descendants of the founders, new immigrants, converts - and each group has a different set of expectations as to what Church is supposed to be. Perhaps you will need to run a different kind of program for each group, while still challenging them to accept one another and see the value in each other's approach.

Data gathering is the approach by which we collect the information needed to design an appropriate program for any given group. The chief methods, each with advantages and disadvantages, are (a) by written instruments, (b) by interviewing, and (c) by observation and memory. Some may be more appropriate in some situations than in others.

Written Instruments (questionnaires) are especially useful for gathering data from large groups of people who do not come together at any one time (such as the congregation in a parish with several Sunday Liturgies). They are also important as a follow-up to a general discussion, as many people are reluctant to speak their mind in gatherings lest they offend some of their fellow parishioners.

When designing a written instrument remember that the sharpness of the question determines the usefulness of the answers. Thus avoid questions to be answered "yes" or "no", unless you add "why" or "explain your answer". At the same time you need to check the tone of your questions: do they imply which answer is "the right one"? Finally, you must also decide how anonymity or asking for signatures will affect the answers you get.

Remember that many (most?) people don't take questionnaires seriously unless they have evidence that some action will result to their advantage.

In any case, be aware that data collected by such a written instrument is only part of what is needed to plan a program.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which of the following questions is the most effective/least effective in gathering data preliminary to planning?
   (a) "Would you attend a youth group if we began one at St. X's? ( ) Yes; ( ) No; ( ) Maybe."
   (b) "If a Youth Group were begun at St. X's, would you be more likely to join if:
      ( ) You had transportation
      ( ) The group met on Sunday evening
      ( ) The group met on a school night
      ( ) My friend (name) wanted to join.
   (c) "If you could pick the persons who would be your group advisors, whom would you pick (choose three parishioners, please)? Give you reasons for each pick.

2. Design a questionnaire to gather data for a possible children's summer learning program. Refer to the above criteria in writing your instrument.

Interviewing - Conducting personal conversations with individuals gives the data gatherer another side of the
picture. Personal interviews can give you an insight into the other's experience of Christian formation, the parish, or relationships with certain groups in the parish. On the other hand, since there is no anonymity, the person may attempt to please the interviewer.

Group discussion may get people thinking about topics which they had not thought of before, especially if it follows upon an engaging presentation.

Another commonly used technique to stimulate such thinking in group settings is brainstorming. Everyone identifies, without discussing in detail, the needs, objectives, or procedural steps which they envision. The facilitator compiles a list of these suggestions. Brainstorming is not for the purpose of discussion or decision making, but for generating data and helping participants get a clearer idea of the directions in which they might proceed.

In either case, face to face discussion is useful if it enables people to freely share their experiences and helps build a climate of mutual trust. Beginning attempts to facilitate such discussions should always be followed by the opportunity to put in writing things people would be reluctant to say aloud.

Observation and Memory - You too have a past experience with these people if you have been their fellow parishioner for any length of time. You will have your own reactions to what they say. Use what you know, but be aware that your own expectations may color your interpretation. Sometimes another person should interview certain people with whom you have had previous experience.

Once you have gathered as much data as you can through conversations, questionnaires, group discussions, and the like, you must analyze it. In this process you will collate the information you have gathered, analyze it for trends and priorities, then narrow the field to determine which specific needs to address at this time. The following four steps are helpful:

(a) Collating - Here you put all the answers to the same question together.

(b) Seeking Trends - Now you compare the responses, looking for similarities and differences. If you detect a trend in the responses, try writing a summary "answer" for each question which reflects the trend(s).

(c) Analyze Trends - What is underlying these answers? Does the trend of responses to one question explain the answers to another? Does the questionnaire indicate real concerns or problems?

(d) Narrow Down - Are there several possibilities? Do you need to choose one? Will your choice be based on the number of possible participants or the importance of the issues to some persons' lives?

Going through this process works best when it is a group effort. In this way you have the insights of several persons analyzing the input. You may also need to issue a second questionnaire after you begin narrowing down the options. Here the questions must be even more specific than in the first questionnaire.

FIFTH PRINCIPLE - IDENTIFY SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

You can now design a program with a specific focus based on the input which you have generated. Begin by writing a statement of purpose which spells out your aims for this particular activity. This statement of objectives should:

(a) Identify the problem, based on the analysis gathered above;

(b) Specify "the who" - a definite target group (if you are planning for children, a specific age group should be indicated);

(c) Specify "the what" - the desired behavioral goals your program is meant to generate, the desired action which should result to enable persons to do something more effectively;

(d) Be realizable in a specified period of time ("the when");

(e) Be measurable as much as possible so that we can know when the objective has been attained (Note that, while our ultimate spiritual objective, theosis, is not measurable and is ultimately dependent on our prayerful response to the grace of the Holy Spirit, other objectives, such as interiorizing a specific attitude or learning a specific behavior, are measurable.)

(f) Be clear and concise so that all participants can have a concrete understanding of the program's aims;

Thus, after a parish questionnaire has determined that people want to learn some new liturgical hymns, your statement of objectives for a new music program might be: "To help the bulk of the congregation learn
one new chant each month". You have determined the who, the what, and the when.

Having a clear objective enables the planners themselves to maintain a clear focus for their activities. Coming to a clearly understandable objective helps prevent participants from developing contrary expectations and resulting frustration. It also gives us a basis for evaluation after the stated time so that we can know whether or not we succeeded.

SIXTH PRINCIPLE - DESIGN A STRATEGY

Once you have determined your measurable objective, your next step is to agree on how that objective will be carried out in actual events. Thus in terms of the above objective, we might decide to realize it "by rehearsing for ten minutes at the end of each Divine Liturgy".

To achieve the most practical strategy the following criteria are often suggested:

(a) Is there enough time to prepare and/or present it?

(b) Does it utilize the appropriate human resources in the community?

(c) Are any materials needed available and/or affordable?

(d) Does the strategy maximize participation and creativity on the part of the participants?

SEVENTH PRINCIPLE - SPELL OUT THE PROCEDURAL STEPS

In this phase you detail all the steps of your program - what happens when, who does what, etc. - to organize the efforts of those involved. Ordinarily procedural concerns include:

- Time (date and time period)
- Place (space use and arrangement)
- Group Dynamic (ice breakers, interest centers, etc.)
- Program Design (techniques)
- Materials and equipment
- Publicity (advance notice, recruiting and registration)
- Leadership functions (specific descriptions)

To apply these steps to our music program, we would address issues such as, How would the music be made available? Who would duplicate and distribute

IMPLEMENTING YOUR STRATEGY

The following procedural steps are common to most events. The planner should expect to record these steps and then determine who will be responsible for implementing them. Use this page as a checklist in helping others prepare events and programs:

Beforehand:

1. Contact all necessary people committed to participation (teachers, students, parents, clergy, guest speakers)

2. Set the date. Make sure that you avoid conflicts with other activities, avoid crowding one or another time of year with activities while leaving other times empty, and insure that activities are appropriate to the season and the needs of the parish.

3. Select and reserve the location of program, class or meeting.

4. Arrange for publicity (printed, mailed, the pulpit, bulletin board).

5. Secure needed supplies (audio visuals, tables and chairs, stationary goods, classroom supplies, name tags, registration blanks, handouts, etc.)

6. Determine who will perform basic tasks, eg open up, set up, register, conduct the opening and closing prayer, and start the session.

During:

1. Insure that the program begins on schedule.

2. Arrange for introductions, announcements.

3. Be available for problems.

4. Continually evaluate the course of the program and the participants' response.

After:

1. Secure participants' evaluation (teachers or facilitators and students).

2. Put the facility in order and lock up.

3. Set a time to reflect on the evaluations and implement findings into the next session of this type.
it? Who would do the actual teaching? Would various choir members take turns demonstrating the chant while others were placed strategically throughout the congregation? How long would the choir need to master these pieces themselves before introducing them to the congregation?

EIGHTH PRINCIPLE - REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The last step in the planning process is to determine whether you achieved your objectives, whether the program was successful in terms of what you were hoping to achieve. Thus the evaluation looks at accomplishment and effectiveness. It is possible, however, that a program may positively accomplish a change of behavior but negatively affect attitudes. This is often the case when children are obliged to learn or act in a certain way: we achieved our goal of getting them to participate in vespers, but they have come to hate it! Thus evaluation must assess both the behavioral and attitudinal effects of any program.

Evaluations can be made in a number of ways, such as:

(a) Interviews of participants;

(b) Observation by program leaders;

(c) Involvement of selected participants with planners in an evaluation meeting.

In planning any program each planning step should be summarized in writing in as much detail as possible. This is of great importance for future programs. If you choose to repeat a successful program, you have an excellent basis from which to work: you need not start from scratch each time. If elements in the program did not work and need to be revised, you will have an accurate record of that as well. Perhaps most importantly from a Christian perspective, you have something concrete to pass on to a successor rather than obliging him or her to start from scratch.

The form on page 13-7 can be duplicated and used regularly in planning sessions for your catechetical programs.
1 - Method of Assessing Needs - Informal conversation; staff observations.

2 - Writing an Objective -
   a) - Identify the Problem: - limited awareness of liturgical music
   b) - Identify the Who: - by entire congregation
   c) - Identify the What: - increased knowledge of liturgical chants
   d) - Identify the When: - regularly through the year
   e) - Identify the Measure Desired: - learning Sunday troparia and kondakia
   f) - Stated Objective: - TO help the bulk of the congregation learn one new chant each month, beginning with the Sunday troparia and kondakia

3 - Strategy: - BY rehearsing for ten minutes at the end of each Divine Liturgy.

4 - Procedural Steps: -
   Time - monthly after each Liturgy, in alternate months
   Place - in church
   Dynamic - after announcements, priest invites cantor to conduct session
   Design - rehearse chant for one month before use in Liturgy; use consistently in Liturgy during next month
   Materials Needed - copies of determined pieces in Sunday bulletin
   Publicity - mention in Sunday bulletin, pulpit announcements two weeks prior
   Leadership Functions - cantor to lead; choir to learn previously and serve as 'ringers' in the congregation

5 - Method of Evaluation - informal conversation; discussion at parish council after first month

6 - Suggestions for New Program - hold before Liturgy instead so piece is fresh in people's minds
PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE

1 - Method of Assessing Needs -

2 - Writing an Objective -
   a) - Identify the Problem:
   b) - Identify the Who:
   c) - Identify the What:
   d) - Identify the When:
   e) - Identify the Measure Desired:
   f) - Stated Objective: - TO

3 - Strategy: - BY

4 - Procedural Steps: -
   Time -
   Place -
   Dynamic -
   Design -
   Materials Needed -
   Publicity -
   Leadership Functions -

5 - Method of Evaluation -

6 - Suggestions for New Program -
A major element in the conduct of any catechetical program is the curriculum, which provides the content for the session in which it is employed. The choice of curriculum, therefore, is a basic aspect of program planning. In one sense, however, the local community does not have an unrestricted choice in this matter. Like the texts of our liturgical services, the content of our catechetical programs is meant to reflect, not simply our own preferences, but the Tradition and mind of the Church. In our situation this means that, whenever possible, all materials employed should reflect the Tradition and direction of the Byzantine Churches (see Chapter 2, above).

In many western Churches, Catholic and Protestant, catechetical materials (and worship materials, for that matter) are produced commercially without any specific connection to the structure of the Church itself. In other Churches, including our own, many curriculum materials are produced by the Church itself and so are an actual statement of the faith of the entire community. Some materials, such as the *God With Us* series, are produced by a number of Byzantine Churches together (see Chapter 5); others are published by our own diocese. All these resources are approved by all the bishops of the respective Churches. We believe that catechesis, like liturgy, is a function of the Church, not of each individual catechist or group of catechists. This is why many curriculum materials are mandated (obligatory) in our Church in the same way that the typicon of our Church prescribes the liturgical services for the parish. These items are indicated in the listing below.

A number of other materials discussed below are produced by one or another Eastern Church, Catholic or Orthodox. They are recommended because they reinforce the basic orientation of our Church toward reappropriation of our entire Tradition. Since there are few difference between the various Byzantine usages, at least at the church school level, we are able to use many of them without adaptation.

The local community does choose which services to schedule and when to serve them. Likewise you will need to determine which elements of the program outlined below you will implement and the format in which you will employ them. The circumstances will vary in each group, depending on the lifestyle of the community and their readiness for learning. As with the liturgical typicon, there are more materials available than you can use. You need to match the appropriate material with a format which will facilitate learning in your community.

Having a proper liturgical text does not automatically guarantee good liturgy. The liturgical ministers must 'get inside' the text, know it from within, and be able to communicate it and relate it to the spiritual life of the congregation. The same is true of our catechetical resources. We must come to know our materials well and be able to use them to full advantage, as they were meant to be used, so that they can provide effective catechetical experiences for the participants. This demands formation of those catechists who will be using any resource whenever a new resource is introduced or a new catechist is brought into the program (see Chapter 18).

**OBTAINING YOUR MATERIALS**

In too many parishes the ordering of catechetical texts is left to the last minute. Then the priest or coordinator badgers the supplier to provide immediate delivery. As a result sessions are delayed or begun without the appropriate texts. The right time to order materials for any class is well in advance of the first session. Ideally, you should have all your materials on hand a month before the first class. This means you should place your order seven or eight weeks in advance. Thus texts needed for mid-September should be ordered by mid-July at the latest.

Many people wait until the last minute before ordering so that they get the exact number of books they need. In most cases this is being imprudently prudent, as they are sacrificing readiness for the price of a handful of books. If you really have an excess, most suppliers will accept returns if the material is still in good condition.

In any event, it is advisable to order twice as many books as you need for your church school classes. Most children and teens and not a few adults will forget their books at least some of the time. Each class should have two sets of books for each student: one to take home and one to leave in the classroom. In that way "I forgot my book" will not mean that the session must come to a halt.
When you are using a text for the first time there is another important reason for ordering early. Most of the resources we use in our programs presume the use of supplementary materials such as films, Bible story books, and the like. When your basic text arrives a few days before the first class, you have no time even to scan the text to determine what other resources you need. As a result the catechist cannot present the lesson as it was intended.

Plan on obtaining your books by the beginning of August. As soon as they arrive, go through them to determine what other resources are called for. Most texts have a "Materials Needed" section in the introduction so that you won't have to read each text through. Then order these supplementary resources as well.

CURRICULUM PUBLISHERS

The first step in becoming familiar with available materials is to become familiar with the publishers listed below. Write for their catalogs and obtain copies of those materials which interest you. The following are the major publishers of catechetical material for the Eastern Churches:

Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese
Christian Education Department
358 Mountain Road
Englewood NJ 07631

Byzantine Seminary Press
PO Box 7626
Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Commission on Religious Education
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate
3355 Ridgewood Road
Akron, OH 44313

Educational Services
19 Dartmouth Street
West Newton, MA 02165

God With Us Publications
PO Box 505
McKees Rocks, PA 15136

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
Religious Education Department
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02146

Light and Life Publishing Co
4836 Park Glen Road
Minneapolis, MN 55416

New Life Publications
285 French Hill Road
Wayne, NJ 07470

OCA Religious Education Department
PO Box 675
Syosset, NY 11791

OCEC
PO Box 69, Colvin Station
Syracuse, NY 13205

OCEC Subscription Service
PO Box 1502
Desloge, MO 63601

St Vladimir's Seminary Bookstore
575 Scarsdale Road
Crestwood, NY 10707

Stylite Publishing, Ltd.
Available from:
Protection Church Bookstore
95 Mountain View Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

FAMILY CATECHESIS

Adult Instruction Program on the Sacraments of Initiation (Educational Services) - Catechesis for parents planning to baptize a child. Includes a leader's guide and two participant's texts, one of which is also available in Arabic. Mandated in our diocese.

A Guide for the Domestic Church (Educational Services) - An introduction to family practices through the year. Useful for instructing new families and for parents who wish to implement Byzantine family prayer in their homes.

Anthony Coniaris, Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home (Light and Life) - Close to 100 suggestions for family centered activities to reinforce the young child's church experience, the liturgical seasons, etc.

Anne Gallagher, Nurturing the Seed of God-Life (Educational Services) - Suggestions for introducing religious practice to infants from birth to 30 months. Includes five activity cards graded according to the child's development.

Mary Lafter, God Made a Beautiful World (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese) - Thirty one-page stories on family and church life for pre-nursery and nursery
children. Originally intended for class use, it is more useful as a home resource.

*Parental Guide for Celebrating Faith* (God With Us Publications) - A seven-theme program based on the Nicene Creed designed to bring primary children to a personal acceptance of faith.

*A Guide for the Preparation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (God With Us Publications) - A seven-theme program for parents to prepare their primary age children (6-8 years) for their first confession.

Constance Tarasar, *Feasts and Families: 1, The Season of Christmas* (OCA Religious Education Dept) - Suggestions for celebrating the Christmas-Theophany season in the home. The text is complemented by a supplement containing patterns for an Advent calendar, Jesse tree, and iconographic creche.

**PRE-SCHOOL RESOURCES**

Basic Curriculum (Recommended):

*The Wonder of It All* (OCEC) - A basic program for nursery-3 year olds based on pre-liturgical themes introducing the child to the wonder of life and creation.

*God, My Friends, and Me* (OCEC) - A continuation of the above program for nursery-4 year olds, emphasizing relationships among friends, family and God.

*Together With God* (OCEC) - An introduction for kindergarten-5 year olds to the church building, liturgical gestures, the Divine Liturgy and some major Church feasts.

(Note: Many prefer using the *God With Us* first grade text, *Discover*, in their pre-school class and *Together With God* in the first grade.)

Supplementary:


*Byzantine Coloring Book I: Liturgical* (Byzantine Seminary Press) and *Our Church* (Stylite Publishing, Ltd) - Basic coloring books on the church building and the Divine Liturgy.

**PRIMARY THROUGH JUNIOR HIGH:**

Basic Curriculum (Mandated):

*God With Us Series* (God With Us Publications) - The official eight-grade series for all Byzantine Catholic dioceses in the United States and several in Canada. For descriptions and learning objectives, see Chapter 15.

Sacramental Preparation:

"Pre-Christmation Catechesis" in *General Policy for the Administration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation* (Educational Services) - Suggestions for catechizing children who may have been baptized but not chrismated on three levels (primary, intermediate, and junior high).

*A Guide for the Preparation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (God With Us Publications) - A seven-theme program for parents to prepare their primary age children (6-8 years) for their first confession.

Constance Tarasar, *We Return to God: A Manual for Preparing Children for the Sacrament of Penance* (OCA Religious Education Dept) - A text designed for parents working with their children in preparation for first confession. More useful with older children (8-10 years old) than the above, as it presumes the child will read the text.

Both the above resources must be adapted for group use.

John Boojamra, "Penance and Confession", in *All Together Now* (Antiochian Archdiocese) - A five-session program for primary and intermediate children (7-11) on sin, repentance, and confession, including instruction on how to prepare for this mystery and to participate in it.

*Parental Guide for Celebrating Faith* (God With Us Publications) - A seven-theme program based on the Nicene Creed designed to bring primary children to a personal acceptance of faith. Originally designed to help parishes phase out First Communion observances, the program is also useful as a summer program or for initiating into your regular program children who have no previous catechesis. A Teacher's Guide for group use is available from the Office of Educational Services.

Stewardship Programs:

*Did You Ever See a Steward?* (Concordia, 3558 S Jefferson Av, St Louis, Mo 63118; 1-800-325-3040) -
A program for primaries on the basic sense of Christian stewardship of creation. Includes sound filmstrip (also available on VHS videocassette), planning guide, and coloring book.

*Learning to Give* (OCA Department of Stewardship) - Suggestions for introducing this topic with children on five levels of development, beginning with nursery age. Includes a 12-minute sound filmstrip and an idea booklet, *Giving Children the Opportunity to Give*.

**Vacation Programs:**

*And Jesus Said...* (CORE, Romanian Episcopate) - A five day program on Old Testament stories and the parables of Christ with lesson plans on four levels (pre-school through junior high).

*Saints and Celebrations* (CORE, Romanian Episcopate) - A second vacation school series on the Great Feasts (Ascension through Dormition) and saints days of the summer.

*All Together Now* (Antiochian Archdiocese) - Six five-session mini courses on various topics (the beatitudes, Christian witness, belonging to the Church, the church building, confession, and creation) for different levels. Appropriate for a one week summer program or other use.

*Baptism and Chrismation* (OCEC) - An eight-session program on the mysteries of Christian initiation on four age levels (preschool through high school) on concept/activity cards. Originally designed for the non-graded or combined-grade situation, this program, now out of print, is useful for an experienced catechist designing a program on these mysteries.

Other short-duration programs can be formed from the OCEC and Greek Archdiocese curricula (see Chapter 16).

**Supplementary:**

*Build Your Own Church: A Paper Construction Kit* (Antiochian Archdiocese) - A cut-and-assemble model of the exterior of a Byzantine church building, useful as a project when studying the meaning of the church building (eg in *God With Us* books three and five).

*Byzantine Coloring Books II, III and IV: Feastdays, Sunday Gospels, and Parables* (Byzantine Seminary Press) - Three iconographic coloring books containing images for these celebrations and pericopes.

*Come Bless the Lord* (God With Us Publications) - Forty 8 1/2 x 11 icon prints of the great feasts and major saints. Each print includes a detailed explanation printed on the back of the print and in a separate booklet as well.

*Coming to Worship and A Visit to the Sanctuary* (OCEC) - Two plastic design storyboard sets on the icon screen, holy table, prothesis, and Divine Liturgy enabling students to place the items in these scenes in their proper locations. Useful for reinforcing lessons on the church building and the Divine Liturgy.

*Icon Packets* (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese) - Three separate packets, each containing 20 3x4 prints, of icons of the Life of Christ, the Miracles of Christ, and the Saints.

Sophie Koulovizin, *God Is With Us: Bible Stories for Children* (OCA Religious Ed Dept) - Thirty two-page stories from creation to Pentecost useful for primary classes.

Leslie Merlin, *Courage for a Cross* (Friendship Press, available from Light and Life) - Six brief stories about the difficulties encountered by a boy growing up Christian in the Soviet Union. Themes include icons, wearing the cross, witness, and the celebration of Pascha.


*Lenten Lotto* (OCEC) - A board game teaching the basic biblical and historical events celebrated during the Great Fast and the Great Week.

*Lenten Workbook* (OCEC) - An activity book based on the themes, services, and practices of the Great Fast and the Great Week.

*Saints for All Ages* (OCA Religious Ed Dept) - A ten-booklet series on various saints grouped thematically (eg women martyrs, new apostles, Church Fathers, monastics, hymnographers, etc). Useful to supplement classes from the sixth grade on.

*We Pray to God: A Prayerbook for Children* (OCA Religious Ed Dept) - A 24-page booklet of basic daily and seasonal prayers (OCA text) with a brief explanation of prayer for children.
While the following materials are not assigned to any grade level, they are listed in an increasing order of sophistication:

**General Topics:**

*On the Upbeat* (OCEC Subscription Service) - An appealing magazine in tabloid format covering contemporary issues, Bible studies, Church life. Useful for input in youth group meetings as well as basic level class material. Ten issues yearly, c. four articles per issue.

*Second Helpings* (OCEC) - A two volume anthology of 40 articles from past issues of *On the Upbeat* treating a wide assortment of topics from basic Christianity to liturgy to contemporary questions.

For other articles from previous issues of this magazine consult the Office of Educational Services.

**Liturgy:**

*Come Let Us Worship* (St Basil's Seminary, available through Educational Services) - First of two 'liturgical catechisms' covering topics including the concept of worship and the church building. While out of print, copies can be procured from the OES along with lesson plans for class use.

*Sacrifice of Praise* (St Basil's Seminary, available through Educational Services) - Second volume in the series, presenting the Divine Liturgy, and the liturgical year.

**Sexuality and Personhood:**

The first supplementary track in *Becoming* (book seven of the God With Us series) discusses this topic from a Christian perspective in four lessons covering the following themes: sexuality is of God and therefore good; it is touched by sin and therefore broken; it is transfigured by the victory of Christ in the mystery of marriage, and - as witnessed by monasticism - its ultimate destiny is to be transfigured in the Kingdom.

**Scripture:**

*The Bible: An Introduction* (OCEC) - A six-session text on scriptural basics, including the makeup of the two Testaments, the cultural background, and the life of Christ. No teacher's guide available.

*Jesus the Word* (OCEC) - A ten-chapter treatment of the formation of the Gospels, the infancy and theophany narratives, and the temptation in the wilderness, connecting these passages with liturgical use and the commentary of Church Fathers.

*Jesus the Teacher* (OCEC) - Companion volume to the above, focusing on the call of the disciples, the sermon on the mount, and the messianic mission of Christ.

"The Beatitudes", in *All Together Now* (Antiochian Archdiocese) - A five-session program on this summary of the messianic proclamation.

**Spirituality:**

"Christian Witness", in *All Together Now* (Antiochian Archdiocese) - A five session program on the concept of bearing witness and scriptural examples. Appears to be based in part on *Called to Be Witnesses* (OCEC), a 17 segment series of concept cards which also includes segments on the martyrs, confessors, and monastics in Christian history. Originally intended as a follow-up to the unit on the mysteries of initiation (see Vacation Programs).

*The Jesus Prayer* (Educational Services) - A six-session introduction on learning to pray the Jesus Prayer. Teacher's guide and participants' leaflets.

**Personal Development:**

The God With Us catechetical series was developed in response to a request from our bishops for a religious education program which would express the faith of the Byzantine Catholic Churches. It was developed by the religious education offices of five of these dioceses, including our own. Since then it has been endorsed and/or mandated by most of the 17 dioceses in the United States and Canada.

The program, offering materials for grades one through eight, is based on the primary forms of Holy Tradition (Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the liturgical life of the Church) which are presented in ways to enable the students to grow in their awareness of God's presence among us and in their commitment to the Lord.

THE LESSON FORMAT

Each lesson plan in the catechist's handbook begins with an introduction specifically for the catechist's own enrichment. This introduction provides the spiritual background on which the catechist should reflect before planning the session. When the lesson's message is part of the catechist's own spiritual life, the lesson becomes vibrant and alive.

The actual class presentation consists of the following basic movements:

* Opening Prayer - in the icon corner
* Review of the previous lesson
* Experience - The students participate in preparatory learning situations. By recalling significant events or actually becoming involved in an experience, they are prepared to hear the lesson theme.
* Message - Scriptural and liturgical texts unfold the doctrinal content of the lesson. It is here that the students reflect on the Word of God.
* Response - Prayer and life responses flow from the message presented. Responding to the Word of God is expressed by praying spontaneously or by joining in the public prayers and chants of our Church.
* Activity - To provide an opportunity for the students to express their understanding of the message, various reinforcing activities are suggested. The activity is meant as a concrete expression of what the students have assimilated during the session.

THE COORDINATOR'S ROLE

The chief tasks of the coordinator in regards to the implementation of this program are twofold. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to see that the program is being implemented properly and that its educational objectives are being accomplished. Proper implementation of the program means that the content is being expressed in accordance with the way it is intended and that the full dynamics of the lesson plan are being followed.

In many parishes the catechists are not themselves familiar with Byzantine spirituality. Hence the need of spiritual formation (see chapter 18). Those who are not trained teachers also need help mastering the lesson plan format. Many catechists without this help spend the session simply reading and coloring. When the students express boredom, they blame the program! And so one of the coordinator’s chief responsibilities is seeing that the catechists know how to use the material.

The presumes that the coordinator be familiar with the materials as well. Minimally, this means being familiar with the dynamics of the lesson plan format outlined above and the educational objectives of each year. These objectives indicate what the student who regularly participates in the program should have learned. Use the following pages as your guide in classroom visitation and reporting to parents. Make copies available to your catechists so that they are clear as to what they are expected to communicate.

The coordinator should also be familiar with the supplementary resources needed for each grade. Each catechists' handbook contains a list of materials needed. These are reproduced below. Each program also presumes the use of audio visual resources. Since the series was first devised some of these resources have gone out of print or become outdated. We have listed below a number of suggested additions or replacements to this list. You should insure that the parish acquires copies of these resources and that the catechists know how to use them.

NOTE ON THE RESOURCES LISTED

Various segments of the following sets of filmstrips/videostrips are used in more than one grade of the God With Us series. If your program has
a limited budget, you might wish to purchase these first.

Abraham and Moses (Grades 4, 6)
Canon Bible Filmstrips (Grades 1, 2, 3)
The Commandments (Grades 4, 7)
The Greatest Adventure (Grades 4, 6)
My Name Is Jesus (Grades 4, 6)
Old Testament Episodes (Grades 6, 7)
Our Friends in Wooster Square (Grades 1, 2)
Paul and the Early Church (Grades 5, 6)
Understanding Scripture (Grades 6, 8)

OTHER HELPS

The educational objectives given on the following pages have been reworked in the form of a Parents' Booklet. Given at registration, this booklet can give the students' families an idea at a glance of what your goals are for each year in the program.

Parents can be shown how well their children are progressing in achieving these same objectives by the Progress Reports suggested. Duplication masters for both these resources are given in Chapter 24.
BOOK ONE: DISCOVER

This program introduces the child to the gradual discovery of creation in the light of faith. Its aim is to help the child slowly acquire a sense that God at the heart of his entire world. All of life is a gift for which we render thanks to God. This person-oriented focus shows the ultimate meaning of life as a communion of love with a personal, loving, caring God and with all mankind.

God is presented as the Father who created us, loves us, and cares for us and is forgiving when we do wrong. Jesus Christ is God’s Son, the greatest gift of the Father, who reveals His father to us. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father through the Son, is present and working in the Church today. This mystery of God’s love is celebrated in the feasts of the Nativity of Christ, of Pascha, (crucifixion and resurrection), and of Pentecost.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:

1. God the Father is the source of all goodness
2. Jesus is His Son, who shows us the Father
3. The Holy Spirit is active today in the Church
4. We honor God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
5. The Bible is God’s Word to us
6. Christmas is the celebration of Jesus’ birth
7. Pascha is the celebration of Jesus’ death and resurrection
8. Pentecost is the celebration of the Holy Spirit

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

1. Know the catechist and fellow group members
2. Thank God for all His gifts
3. Make the sign of the cross, a metany, and a prostration
4. Venerate the Scriptures and icons
5. Pray the Lord’s Prayer and the doxology from memory
6. Pray the Prayers before and after meals
7. Sing the Trisagion and the basic responses from the Liturgy
8. Sing "Christ is Risen" and exchange the paschal greeting

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. God loves, cares for, and forgives us
2. We are called to love and forgive one another
3. Prayer is a turning to God in thanksgiving for His love
4. The icon corner is a special place for prayer, to be approached reverently
5. The Bible is a holy book, to be listened to attentively
6. Pascha is our greatest feast, to be celebrated with joy
7. We have confidence before God because the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts
A - God With Us Resources (all available from God With Us Publications):

* Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)
* Cassette tape for Grade One
* Posters for Grade One

B - Other Resources:

* Arch Books (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S Jefferson Ave, St Louis, MO 63118; 1-800-325-3040; available from most religious bookdealers):
  
  The Boy Who Ran Away
  The Great Surprise *
  The Secret of the Star
  The Most Wonderful King
  Two Men in the Temple

  * Also available in an Arch Book Sound Filmstrip

* Bible Slides (Teleketics, 1229 S Santee St, Los Angeles, CA 90015, 1-800-421-8510) Sets of twelve slides and a script (primary-level) for reading:

  Zacchaeus
  The Prodigal Son
  Jesus Has Risen

  * Canon Bible Filmstrips (Logos Program, 1405 Frey Road, Pittsburgh, PA, 15235; 412/372-1341) - Scriptural stories on mini-filmstrips with audio cassettes. Also available in the Show 'n Tell Phonoviewer format.

  Jesus Is Born
  Zacchaeus Meets Jesus
  The Prodigal Son Returns
  Jesus Goes to Calvary
  Jesus Is Alive Again

* Our Friends on Wooster Square (Telekletics) Muppet-style characters present basic faith concepts in story and song in three VHS volumes, each with four 15-minute segments:

  Vol 1 - "Feelings" (for lesson 16), "Sharing" (for lesson 9), "Love of God" (for lesson 14)

  Vol 2 - "Special" (for lesson 1)

  Vol 3 - "Help" (for lesson 9)

* Stories from Luke Street (Brown-Roa, PO Box 539, Dubuque, IA 52004; 1-800-922-7696) Filmstrips based on the Gospel of St Luke for primaries:

  Segments on the crucifixion and the resurrection.

* Superbook (Victor King Video, PO Box 708, Northbrook, IL 60062; available from many video outlets and religious bookdealers) Cartoon-style VHS video presentations:

  Vol 8, Jesus, Segment 1, "The First Christmas"; Segment 3, "The Best News Yet" (crucifixion and resurrection)

C - Craft Materials:

* Butcher paper
* Burlap for banner
* Construction paper (various colors)
* Crayons
* Felt
* Felt markers
* Flowers
* Glue
* Incense
* Large pieces of newsprint
* Old magazines (for pictures)
* Pencils
* Poster paper (22"x18")
* Scissors
* Stapler and staples
* Yarn
The child has been called by Jesus to be His follower. His response is one of belief in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As God has acted throughout the saving history of mankind, He acts for the child in the sacramental life of the Church. In this program the child begins to be aware of this life. He is introduced to the mysteries of baptism, chrismation and the Eucharist and is helped to see himself as one with Christ through these mysteries. He joins with his friends in Church and says "Our Father", forming Church in prayer, service and love.

The child participates in celebrations of the Annunciation, Theophany, and Holy Thursday, in addition to the festivals introduced last year.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:

1. We are called 'Christians' because we are one with Christ through faith and baptism
2. Jesus' twelve disciples are those whom He called to follow Him
3. Mary is the Mother of God
4. The Theophany celebrates Jesus' baptism in the Jordan
5. We receive the new life in Christ through baptism
6. The signs of the new life we receive in baptism are water and the baptismal robe
7. In chrismation we are sealed in this new life with the Holy Spirit
8. In the Divine Liturgy we remember Jesus and He becomes present to us
9. In the Eucharist we are nourished by Jesus, the Bread of life.
10. Sunday is the Lord's Day, the celebration of Jesus' resurrection

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

1. Perform the practices taught in the first grade (see Book One, above)
2. Exhibit appropriate behavior on entering the church and receiving Communion and blessed bread
3. Pray the troparion "Hail O Mother of God", the Nicene Creed, and the Prayer before Communion from memory
4. Sing the liturgical hymns presented (First Antiphon, All of you, We praise you, One is holy, We have seen the true light, Let our mouths be filled, O heavenly King)
5. Recite the two "Great Commandments"

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. Our baptism is a personal call from God to follow Him
2. The Holy Spirit, who came to us at our chrismation, will never leave us
3. The Divine Liturgy is our thanksgiving for the gift of God's love
4. Because we are part of God's family, we love God and each other
5. Because we are part of God's family, we celebrate the Lord's Day and the Great Feasts
Materials Needed

A - God With Us Resources (all available from God With Us Publications):

* Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)
* Cassette tape for Grade Two
* Posters for Grade One

B - Other Resources:

* Arch Books (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S Jefferson Ave, St Louis, MO 63118, 1-800-325-3040; available from most religious bookdealers):

  - The Boy Who Gave His Lunch Away *
  - Kiri and the First Easter *
  - The Most Wonderful King
  - The Fisherman's Surprise
  - The Man Who Changed His Name
  - Mary's Story *
  - Mary's Story
  - A Baby Born in a Stable
  - The Great Escape *

  * Also available in Arch Book Sound Filmstrips

  + Also available in Arch Book Videocassettes (VHS)

* Canon Bible Filmstrips (Logos Program, 1405 Frey Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235; 412/372-1341) - Scriptural stories on mini-filmstrips with audio cassettes. Also available in the Show 'n Tell Phono-Viewer format.

  - Jesus is Born
  - The Wise Men Follow the Star
  - Jesus Chooses Helpers
  - Jesus Feeds 5000 People
  - The Last Supper

* Our Friends on Wooster Square (Teleketics, 1229 South Santee Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015; 213/746-2916) Muppet-style characters present basic faith concepts in story and song in three VHS volumes, each with four 15-minute segments:

  Vol 1 - "Joy" (for lesson 11)
  Vol 2 - "Give" (for lesson 5); "Love of Neighbor" (for lesson 17)
  Vol 3 - "Faith" (for lesson 9)

C - Craft Materials:

* Butcher paper
* Candles
* Cardboard cylinders (eg from wax paper)
* Construction paper
* Contact paper
* Crayons
* Doll house (or carton)
* Felt markers
* Glass container
* Glue
* Masking tape
* Paint brushes
* Paper bags (brown)
* Paper plates (small)
* Paper towels
* Pencils
* Pictures (from old magazines, catalogs, etc)
* Rulers
* Salad oil
* Scissors
* Seeds (corn, lima beans, pumpkin)
* Sewing scraps (felt, wool, yarn, ribbon, string)
* Shelf paper
* Stapler and staples
* Styrofoam balls
* Wood (5"x7" pieces)
* Wrapping paper
* Writing paper
BOOK THREE: TOGETHER

By Grade Three the child is ready to establish peer group relationships and engage in group activities. In addition to any groups or organizations he may belong to, he belongs to Jesus' group, the Church.

Book Three leads the children to see the importance of coming together as God's People, faithful to God and united in belief, love, and service. Together we believe the Good News of salvation. Together we join in praying, listening to the Word, and breaking bread in the Eucharist. Together we serve one another in a bond of love.

We see the Church made visible in the church building and realized in the local community, under the leadership of our hierarchs. We see the Church as the communion of saints called to share fully, as does the Mother of God, in the divine glory of God's kingdom.

The children are introduced to the Church's celebrations of this mystery of God's love in Great Lent and the feasts of Holy Thursday, Holy Friday, Ascension Thursday, Pentecost, the Sunday of All Saints, and the Dormition of the Theotokos, in addition to the previously introduced celebrations of Christmas, Pascha, and Pentecost.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The Child should come to know that:

1. The Church is the People of God: Jesus' disciples who follow Him as their leader.
2. The church building is divided into the vestibule, the nave, and the sanctuary.
3. The signs of God's presence in the church building are the holy table with the tabernacle, the gospel book, and the cross.
4. Icons are the holy images which remind us of God's presence in His saints.
5. Worship is the Church's grateful remembrance of what God has done for us.
6. Service to one another is the way we imitate Jesus who came not to be served, but to serve.
7. The Great Lent is our 40-day period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in preparation for Pascha.
8. The Mystery of Repentance is our way to receive God's healing grace when we come to Him for forgiveness.
9. The saints are those who have been filled with God's love and are with Him in glory.
10. The Dormition of the Mother of God recalls that she was taken from earth to heaven at her falling asleep.

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

1. Perform the practices taught in the first and second grades (see Books One and Two, above).
2. Identify the name of the parish church and the major elements of the church building (vestibule, nave, sanctuary).
3. Identify the Holy Table and what is on it (tabernacle, gospel book, cross).
4. Venerate icons in the appropriate manner.
5. Recognize differences in the Church's lenten worship.
6. Pray the Prayer of St Ephrem the Syrian with prostrations.
7. Identify the meaning and use of the holy shroud.
8. Sing the liturgical hymns presented (Antiphons and Entrance Hymn from the Divine Liturgy, Let my prayer rise like incense, We bow in worship, and The Noble Joseph).

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. Through his baptism he is a part of God's People, the Church.
2. He is part of one community with the entire parish.
3. The church building and its furnishings reflect the presence of God.
4. Faith is trust in God's loving concern for us.
5. Service is how we act out our love for God.
6. Repentance is a turning to God in order to come closer to Him.
Materials Needed

A - God With Us Resources

* Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)
* Cassette tape for grade three

B - Other Resources:

* Arch Books (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S Jefferson Ave, St Louis, MO 63118, 1-800-325-3040; available from most religious bookdealers):
  - The Good Samaritan
  - The Great Surprise
  - Jon and the Little Lost Lamb
  - Little Benjamin and the First Christmas
  - The Strange Young Man in the Desert
  * Also available in Arch Book Sound Filmstrips

* Canon Bible Filmstrips (Logos Program, 1405 Frey Road, Pittsburg, PA 15235, 412/372-1341) - Scriptural stories on mini-filmstrips with audio cassettes. Also available in the Show 'n Tell Phono-Viewer format.
  - Friends Bring a Sick Man to Jesus
  - Jesus Is Born
  - A Pharisee and Publican Pray
  - Zacchaeus Meets Jesus
  * The Children's Bible (Golden Press; available through most religious bookdealers)

* Christmas Tales (Don Bosco Multimedia, 475 North Ave, Box T, New Rochelle, NY 10802) - Two 30-minute programs on one VHS cassette:
  - The City That Forgot About Christmas (a parable about recovering the meaning of this feast)
  - I Will Take You to the Christ Child (Marionettes retell the story of the nativity)

* Our Friends on Wooster Square (Teleketics, 1229 South Santee Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015; 213/746-2916) - Muppet-style characters present basic faith concepts in story and song in three VHS volumes, each with four 15-minute segments:
  - Vol 3 - "Friends" (for lesson 1); "Faith" for lesson 11 or 12

C - Craft Materials:

* Artificial flowers
* Balloons
* Butcher paper
* Candles
* Church calendar
* Colored chalk
* Construction paper
* Magazines
* Masking tape
* Newspapers (local and diocesan)
* Paint (tempera)
* Paint brushes
* Paper cups
* Paper fasteners
* Paper lunch bags
* Paper plates
* Paper towels
* Shelf paper (white)
* Stapler and staples
* String
* Yarn

* Individual boxes for each student containing:
  - Crayons
  - Felt markers
  - Glue or paste
  - Pencils or ballpoint pens
  - Ruler
  - Scissors
BOOK FOUR: PROMISE

The drive to explore new things characterizes the fourth grade child. To some extent he realizes that he is growing and wants to know how to grow even more. Book Four guides the growing child to an awareness that God has given the promise of life and that He fulfills it in the person of His Son, Jesus. In Christ we find the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the One on whom the basis of our moral lives is founded.

The students are led as people of faith to a deeper awareness of divine life by being introduced directly to the living world of the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels. Each student receives a copy of the New Testament which becomes a source of prayer during this year. Special stress is laid on the Exodus and the Ten Commandments, the two Great Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Beatitudes. Sin and repentance are expressed in terms of faithfulness and presented in the light of Peter's betrayal and Christ's forgiveness after the resurrection.

The feast of the Transfiguration is introduced and likeness to the glorified Christ (theosis) is presented as the goal of Christian living.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:

1. The Bible is the inspired word of God
2. The Exodus was the God-led deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt
3. The Law was given by God to the Israelites as a covenant sign that they were His special people
4. Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises to the Israelites.
5. The feast of the Theophany celebrates God revealing Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
6. Jesus has given us a New Commandment: to love one another as He has loved us
7. The feast of the Transfiguration celebrates Jesus' glory as Son of God

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

1. Perform the practices taught in previous grades.
3. Distinguish between the Old and New Testaments.
4. Distinguish between the types of New Testament books, particularly the epistles and gospels.
5. Name the four gospels.
6. Recite the Ten Commandments.
7. Identify elements of the biblical accounts in the icons of the nativity, the theophany, the crucifixion, and the transfiguration.
8. Exchange the paschal greeting
9. Chant psalms in the traditional manner.
10. Sing the liturgical hymns presented (God Is With Us, the beatitudes, and the kondakia of the theophany and pascha)

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. The Scriptures are to be reverenced as the word of God
2. The first three Commandments are a call to put God first in our lives
3. The remaining Commandments are a call to love our neighbor
4. God loves us faithfully even when we do not follow His way
5. Prayer and fasting are important aspects to our lenten discipline and the ongoing Christian life.
**Materials Needed**

**A - God With Us Resources:**

* *Come Bless the Lord* (icon packet)

**B - Other Resources:**

* **Abraham and Moses** (Brown-Roa, PO Box 539, Dubuque, IA 52004; 1-800-922-7696) - An eight filmstrip series on these Old Testament figures directed at intermediate and junior high students:
  - *Infancy of Moses and Vocation of Moses* (for lesson 5)
  - *Exodus* (for lesson 6)
  - *Covenant* (for lesson 7)

* **The Bike** (Teleketics, 1229 South Santee Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015; 213/746-2916) - A 13-minute film reflecting on respect for the property of others and the meaning of justice and fidelity. Appropriate for lesson 9.

* **The Challenge of the Beatitudes** (Brown-Roa) - Eight sound filmstrips on the beatitudes as Jesus’ plan for realizing the kingdom of God:
  - *What Is a Beatitude?* (for lesson 18)

* **The Commandments** (Brown-Roa) - Ten sound filmstrips giving the historical background and contemporary applications of the commandments. Also available as VHS videotrips:
  - *How Do We Celebrate the Way of God? - First, Second and Third Commandments* (for lesson 8)
  - Titles on remaining commandments appropriate for lesson 9:
    - *Who Can Guide Us?* (Fourth Commandment)
    - *How Precious Is Life?* (Fifth Commandment)
    - *What Are Weddings About?* (Sixth Commandment)
    - *What Is Being Honest?* (Seventh Commandment)
    - *How Good Is Your Work?* (Eighth Commandment)
    - *Are We Covetous or Content?* (Ninth, Tenth Commandments)
  - *Why Tell of Sinai and the Upper Room?* (covenant, for lesson 10)

* **The Greatest Adventure** (Hanna-Barbera, available from Tabor Publishing, PO Box 7000, Allen, TX 75002, 1-800-527-4747) - Six animated enactments of Old Testament stories on VHS format with accompanying books and activity book:
  - *Noah and the Ark* (for lesson 7)

* **Jesus Speaks - the Parables** (Family Films, available from Brown-Roa) - Eight sound filmstrips designed to introduce the parables to children:
  - *Humility and/or God’s Forgiveness* (for lesson 20)

* **The Lord’s Prayer** (Twenty-Third Publications, PO Box 180, Mystic, Ct 06355, 1-800-321-0411) - A sound filmstrip using Bible stories to illustrate themes of the Lord’s Prayer: praise, trust, salvation, & forgiveness (for lesson 17).

* **My Name Is Jesus** (Brown-Roa) - Ten sound filmstrips presenting the life of Christ in animated form:
  - *My Friends and Followers* (for lesson 14)
  - *I Am Risen and With You* (for lesson 24)

**C - Craft Materials:**

* Burlap
* Church calendar
* Dowels
* Envelopes (white)
* Felt
* Flower pot
* Hangers
* Linoleum
* Magazines
* Masking tape
* Stapler and staples
* Construction paper (white and colored)
* Currogated cardboard
* Icon prints of Christ, the Nativity and the Theophany (3×5") for each student
* Newspapers (local and diocesan)
* Shelf paper (white)

* Individual boxes for each student containing:
  - Crayons
  - Pen and pencil
  - Felt markers
  - Ruler
  - Glue or paste
  - Scissors

15-10
BOOK FIVE: SHARE

In grade five children are striving to become more active initiators in their lives and so the order of the Father's plan for mankind is presented to them as a call to participate in its fulfillment. The children are presented with the model of Mary's response to God's call to her and shown that they too were called to say 'yes' to God at their baptism.

In book five the students are introduced to Christian stewardship by exploring the many different ways in which Christians share the Good News and minister to one another in the Church, in accordance with the particular gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit. They see Christians responding in ways as diverse as martyrdom, monasticism, and ministry. They see the variety in the Church brought together in the Liturgy, represented in the church building, and imaged in marriage: one body of Christ. All this is a witness that they too will be gifted to become active parts of this same Body.

In book five the students are introduced to the following scriptural and liturgical elements important in our Tradition: the mysteries of holy unction, crowning, and priesthood, the resurrection gospels, the akathist to the Mother of God, the Canticle of Mary, the life of the early Church, the conversion of Paul, and a number of the saints and other heroes of Eastern Christianity.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:
1. We are incorporated into Christ in the mystery of baptism.
2. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the mystery of chrismation.
3. In the mystery of holy unction we receive strength and healing when we are sick.
4. In the mystery of marriage a couple becomes an image of God in their love and faithfulness.
5. In the mystery of holy orders (priesthood) men are set apart for ministry in the Church.
6. A saint is someone who has lived a good life in Christ and is recognized by the Church as being with the Lord.
7. The iconography in the church building represents our relationship to God and the Church.

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:
1. Locate, read, and comprehend the designated New Testament passages.
2. Look up and cross reference entries in the Study Guide.
3. Become familiar with the Church's liturgical calendar.
4. Find information on his or her patron saint.
5. Prepare a report on one of the saints indicated.
6. Explain the meaning of the following terms: apostles, martyrs, bishops, deacons, missionaries, monks, nuns, spiritual guides, hymnographers, iconographers.

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:
1. Like the saints, they too have been called to share the divine life they have received.
2. We should expect to grow and mature spiritually as well as physically.
3. Spiritual growth comes when we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.
4. The Spirit gives a variety of gifts to members of His Church.
5. All of us with our diverse gifts are one in Christ.
Materials Needed

A - God With Us Resources:

* Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)

B - Other Resources:

* Good News of Christ (Brown-Roa, PO Box 539, Dubuque, IA 52004; 1-800-922-7696) - 24 sound filmstrips in sets of six on the life and work of Christ (also available in Spanish):


* Icons: Images of God (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Communications Dept, 10 E 79th St, New York, NY 10021) - A 29-minute videocassette (VHS) of the NBC documentary on the painting and use of icons in the Church (for lessons 21 and 22).

* Where God Walked the Earth (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Communications Dept) - A 58-minute videocassette (VHS) of the BBC documentary on the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, site of the Burning Bush (for lesson 18).

* Paul and the Early Church (Roa) - An 8-sound filmstrip series on the early Church:

  * Witnesses in Jerusalem (for lesson 5)
  * The Road to Damascus (for lesson 7)
  * Mission to Europe (for lesson 17)

* The Sacrament of Holy Baptism (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education, 50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02146) - The mystery of baptism as an integral part of our Christian life. The audio cassette has two tracks, one for children and another for adults (for lessons 8 and 9).

C - Craft Materials:

* Burlap
* Church calendars
* Construction paper (white and colored)
* Crayons
* Dowels
* Felt
* Felt markers
* Glue or paste
* Hangers
* Magazines
* Masking tape
* Newspapers (local and diocesan)
* Pens and pencils
* Poster board
* Rulers
* Scissors
* Shelf paper (white)
* Stapler and staples
* Writing paper
* Yarn
BOOK SIX: RESPOND

By grade six children are striving to surround their lives with order, collecting and arranging information as well as their belongings. At the same time, as they continue to establish their own identity, they look to heroes as leaders in the business of living. Thus book six introduces the Old Testament as it tells the story of the People of God. Themes of covenant, promise, election, and fulfillment are explored through the great figures of that story. The great heroes of faith in the Old Testament are looked at as models and forerunners pointing to the one foundation, Jesus Christ.

The story continues in the Church as the various Traditions within Christianity develop. The Church's past is seen as a prolog to the present and a reminder that we are now part of that story, called to serve the Lord in our own day as members of His Body.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:

1. God's dealings with the Israelites prepared for the coming of Christ.
2. The Bible records God's promises (Old Testament), their fulfillment in Christ (Gospels), and the beginnings of His kingdom in the Church (Acts, Epistles).
3. The Old Testament includes books of the Law, of Jewish history, wisdom books, and the writings of the prophets.
4. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's prophecies.
5. God used the ministry of St Paul to extend the Church to many nations (the gentiles).
6. The five apostolic patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem are the mother Churches of all Christians.
7. The Fathers of the Church were the first great Church leaders after the time of the apostles.
8. Ecumenical Councils are gatherings of all the world's bishops to teach and direct the Church.
9. Our Church's heritage is the Byzantine tradition, derived from the Greek speaking Churches of eastern Europe and the Middle East.

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

2. Chant psalms in the traditional manner.
4. Recognize and identify the major figures of the New Testament (John the Baptist and the Twelve Apostles).
5. Recognize and identify important Church Fathers and missionaries.
6. Research the beginnings of his diocesan and parish story.
7. Locate on the timeline these moments in sacred history.

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. We grow in the context of our family and Christian community.
2. The stories of our family and Church are our stories as well.
3. The events recorded in the Old Testament served to prepare for the coming of Christ.
4. Christ is the only way to the Father, the highpoint of sacred history.
5. The various icons of the Theotokos reveal different aspects of her importance to the Church.
6. The apostolic Tradition is the heart of the Church's understanding of sacred history.
7. Our Church has taken a long journey through history to reach twentieth century America.
Materials Needed

A - God With Us Resources:

- Bible Lands Colorprint Map (American Map Company, available from God With Us Publications)
- Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)
- New American Bible (Nelson edition)
- Student's Atlas of the Bible (American Map Company, available from God With Us Publications)

B - Other Resources:

- Abraham and Moses (Brown-Roa, PO Box 539, Dubuque, IA 52004; 1-800-922-7696) - An eight filmstrip series for intermediates on these Old Testament figures: Call of Abraham and/or Sacrifice of Abraham (for lesson 7) Vocation of Moses (for lesson 9)
- Eastern Catholics (Don Bosco Multimedia, 475 North Ave, Box T, New Rochelle, NY 10802) - The story and life of St Ann's parish, West Paterson, originally produced for WOR-TV, New York (for lesson 25).
- The Greatest Adventure (Hanna-Barbera, available from Tabor Publishing, PO Box 7000, Allen, TX 75002, 1-800-527-4747) - Six animated enactments of Old Testament stories on VHS with texts and activity books: Moses and/or Joshua and the Battle of Jericho (for lesson 9) David and Goliath (for lesson 11)
- History of the Church (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Religious Education Dept, 50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02146) - Four sound filmstrips on Orthodox history: Part I, The Beginnings to Nicaea I (for lessons 20, 21, and 22) Part II, Nicaea I to the Crusades (for lessons 22 and 23)
- Kings and Prophets (Brown-Roa) - A ten filmstrip series on major Old Testament figures: David, Shepherd of Judah and/or David, King of Israel (for lesson 11) Jeremiah, the Reluctant Prophet (for lesson 12)
- Paul and the Early Church (Brown-Roa) - An eight filmstrip series on the apostolic Church: Witnesses in Jerusalem (for lesson 17) Good News to All Nations and/or Beginnings in Galatia (for lesson 18)
- The Traveler (Brown-Roa) - A ten filmstrip panorama of Church history through the eyes of a modern traveler: I Begin in Jerusalem: The Church and the Synagogue (for lesson 18) I Pass Under the Shadow of the Roman Eagle: The First 300 Years (for lesson 20) I Gain the Favor of the Emperor: The Peace of Constantine (for lesson 21)
- Understanding Scripture (Brown-Roa) - A ten filmstrip series on the development of and the styles of writing in the Bible. Designed for high school students, it may be useful with a motivated group at this level: How the Bible Was Put Together (for lesson 5) Advice from the Sages (for lesson 12A)

C - Craft Materials:

- Burlap
- Church calendar
- Crayons
- Dowels
- Felt
- Felt markers
- Glue or paste
- Hangers
- Magazines
- Masking tape
- Construction paper (white and colored)
- Newspapers (local and diocesan)

- Pens and pencils
- Poster board
- Rulers
- Scissors
- Shelf paper (white)
- Stapler and staples
- Wood (for tryptich)
- Writing paper
- Yarn
BOOK SEVEN: BECOMING

The growing adolescent of grade seven is beginning to develop a desire to find purpose in life. He asks himself questions with the hope that he can find meaning in some of the issues that are beginning to bother him.

In response, book seven fosters an awareness that our aim in life is to fulfill God's plan by growing in the image and likeness of our God. It presents the Christian worldview that all creation is in a process of becoming, a process which will be complete only in the kingdom to come. This plan is shown to have been frustrated by sin from the beginning, leaving us with a fallen and broken creation. In Christ, however, all is made new by His triumph over sin and death. We now can live in hope and assurance that God's plan can be achieved in our lives as we make our way to the life of the world to come.

As this plan is unfolded, the student is challenged to relate it to his personal life by keeping a spiritual journal.

Most lessons in book seven contain a supplemental "Icon Study" segment. By focusing on icons connected with the year's theme, the students learn to see the deeper character in Byzantine iconographic representations.

The book also contains two separate supplementary tracks, either or both of which can be used either during the course of the year or as a separate program. The first, "Growth in Personhood", applies the dynamic of creation/fall/recreation/kingdom to the area of personal development and sexuality. The second, "Relating to the Elderly", applies the same fourfold dynamic to the questions of aging and enables the students to experience the subject firsthand through service.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:

1. The meaning of the Scriptural accounts of creation is that God made all things in His wisdom and power and therefore they are all good.
2. God created us in His image and likeness.
3. The brokenness we experience in the world is the result of sin.
4. Sin and its effects have been present to mankind from the beginning.
5. Christ came so that we could fulfill our true nature ("God became man so that man could become God").
6. Through the holy mysteries we share in Christ's victory over sin and death.
7. God works even in death to bring us closer to Himself.
8. Life after death continues the choices made for or against God while on earth.
9. The final stage in our growth will take place at the resurrection.

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

1. Begin to incorporate the Christian worldview into his reflections on life issues (personal journal).
2. Read and comprehend the passages from the Church Fathers in the text.
3. Practice the format for private prayer time provided.
4. Participate in and understand the purpose of the service of vespers.

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. Everything, including ourselves, is a gift of God.
2. Since everything is also touched by sin, we must always strive to find God's purposes for them.
3. Because we have been united to Christ in baptism, our purpose in life is to grow according to God's image and likeness.
4. Prayer is our most basic way of growing in our relationship to God.
5. The writings of the Church Fathers are an important means to understand God's ways.
6. Icons represent spiritual realities which also help us understand God's plan for us.
7. God always works for good for those who love Him.
8. Because God is with us we can approach life in the confident assurance of His presence.
Materials Needed

A - God With Us Resources:

Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)

B - Other Resources:

The Commandments (Brown-Roa, PO Box 539, Dubuque, IA 52004; 1-800-922-7696) - Ten sound filmstrips giving the historical background and contemporary application of the commandments. Also available as VHS videostrips:

* How Do You See God? (for lesson 2)
* Who Can Guide Us? - Fourth Commandment and/or What Are Weddings About? - Sixth Commandment (for Track One, Lesson 3)

Free to Choose (Brown-Roa) - An eight filmstrip series on the basic choice for personal growth every person makes. Choosing to understand ourselves and cooperate in building the kingdom of God brings us closer to our God-given purpose. Also available as VHS videostrips:

* Understanding Our Needs (for lesson 5)
* Understanding Our Behavior (for lesson 7)
* Getting What You Want in Life and/or Choosing Weakness (for lesson 9)

A Fuzzy Tale (Mass Media Ministries, 2116 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21218) - An animated tale about the need for human relationships and what happens when they are missing. Available as a 16 mm film or VHS videocassette (for Track One, lesson 2).

Kenilworth Caterpillar (Alba House, 2187 Victory Blvd, Stated Island, NY 10314) - Filmstrip parable of resurrection using the familiar butterfly motif (for lesson 21).

Let's Talk About You (The Christophers, 12 E 48 St, New York, NY 10017) - A six-segment videocassette program (VHS) on life issues:

* Who Is God? (for lesson 1)

Old Testament Episodes (Don Bosco Multimedia, 475 North Ave, Box T, New Rochelle, NY 10802) - Twelve 12-minute programs on the ages before Christ illustrated in a semi impressionistic style. Available as filmstrips or VHS videostrips:

* God Creates the World and Man (for lessons 2 and 3)

C - Craft Materials:

* Burlap
* Elmer's glue
* Felt
* Felt markers
* Magazines
* Masking tape
* Newspapers
* Pens and pencils
* Poster board
* Ready mounts for slides
* Scissors
* Stapler and staples
BOOK EIGHT: JOURNEY

The final book of the God With Us series addresses itself to the young Christian who is continuing to develop values in reference to his expanding life situation. To assist him in this, book eight presents an overview of our Church's Byzantine spiritual tradition, a lifestyle in harmony with the Christian worldview presented in book seven. We see the many aspects of our liturgical and ascetical heritage as examples of God With Us: the Holy Spirit acting in the Church.

In book seven we stressed that the world - including ourselves - is in the process of becoming: that it is not yet all that it is meant to be. Belief in this process has led Christians to recognize that life is a journey, a moving toward the union with God which is our fulfillment. Faith in Christ is, in fact, a process of continually trusting in His direction on our lifelong journey. It is acceptance of His Church as the community that has accepted God acting in Christ. The eighth grader begins opening himself to the adult Christian life to the degree that he sees the varied elements of Church life as personal encounters with the God who is calling him to the completion of his journey in the Kingdom.

Most lessons in book eight also contain a supplemental "Liturgical Study" segment. Here various aspects of the Divine Liturgy are considered as they relate to the principal theme of the chapter. The Liturgy is seen, not simply as one aspect of Church practice, but as the summation of our entire life in Christ.

The Educational Objectives for this year are:

A - Cognitive - The child should come to know that:

1. God's love for mankind is revealed directly in the events recorded in Scripture and in a hidden way in all His creation.
2. The highpoint of this revelation is Jesus Christ who reveals the Father and bestows the Holy Spirit on His believing people.
3. The various forms of Tradition are ways in which the Holy Spirit guides the Church in the Christian life.
4. A Spiritual Guide is someone who helps us discern the meaning of Tradition for us today.
5. The mysteries of repentance and holy unction are important ways in which Christ sustains and supports us in our weaknesses as we journey to Him.
6. The first result of being faithful to the Christian life is that we reflect the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
7. The ultimate result of being faithful to the Christian life is that we will be deified.
8. Deification (theosis) is the process by which believers are transformed into sharers in the very life of God.

B - Behavioral - The child should be able to:

1. Attempt to incorporate the Christian worldview into his plans and directions (personal journal).
2. Read and comprehend the passages from the Church Fathers in the text.
3. Name five of the outward forms of Tradition.
4. Identify the Great Feasts of the Church and tell what each of them celebrates.
5. Continue the practice of the private prayer time format begun in the previous book acts.
6. Demonstrate beginning acquaintance with the basic Rule of Prayer of the Church (A Book for Prayer).
7. Demonstrate beginning acquaintance with the Jesus Prayer.

C - Attitudinal - The child should reflect an appreciation that:

1. Human life has an ultimate purpose: life with God.
2. The lifelong journey of life in Christ presumes a lifelong commitment to growth in the Lord.
3. The community of the Church is where we turn to experience the love of God.
4. The Church's worship is a kind of "heaven on earth", a foretaste of the Kingdom to come.
5. The principal elements of the Church's spiritual practice are ways of experiencing the presence of God in our lives.
6. Mutual love is essential to living the Christian life.
7. Family life and the priesthood are primarily opportunities to serve one another in Christ.
8. Sharing our earthly belongings (hospitality) and our spiritual treasures (evangelization) are the chief ways in which Christians serve one another in Christ.

15-17
Materials Needed

A - God With Us Resources:

Come Bless the Lord (icon packet)

B - Diocesan Resources:

A Book for Prayer (Educational Services, 19 Dartmouth St, West Newton, MA 02165) - An introduction to the Byzantine Churches' basic rule of prayer for laypeople (for lesson 10)

C - Other Resources:

The Divine Liturgy (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education, 50 Goddard Av, Brookline, MA 02146) - A two-segment videocassette presentation (VHS) of the liturgical rite with appreciations by students at Holy Cross Theological School.

A commentary and guidebook is included. Elements will be useful in the liturgical study segments of each lesson. The catechist must preselect the segments, however, as the lessons do not take the parts of the Liturgy in consecutive order.


Understanding Scripture (Brown-Roa, PO Box 539, Dubuque, IA 52004; 1-800-922-7696) - A ten filmstrip series on the development of and the the styles of writing in the Bible. Also available on VHS videotrips:

Gospels: Portraits of Jesus (for lessons 3 or 9)
The Synagogue: Origins of Lectionary Readings (for lesson 9)
The pre-school, grade school, and summer school curricula outlined in the two previous chapters provide more than enough material for a strong children's catechetical program. However, you may find particular areas of need in your community which are not contained in this material. This chapter attempts to suggest units on some of these themes from two major Eastern Christian sources.

The Orthodox Christian Education Commission, OCEC (PO Box 69, Colvin Station, Syracuse, NY 13205) is a catechetical coordinating and publishing agency representing 11 Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States. For a number of years it has published a church school curriculum as well as supplementary resources. The following themes are drawn from lessons in the OCEC curriculum as well as that produced by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education (50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02146).

**PRIMARY LEVEL (grades 1-3)**

- **Akathist Hymn:** The Church Unites Us (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 31
- **Altar Bread:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 17
- **Angels:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 4
- **Churching of Infants:** God Loves Me (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 15; Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 11
- **Death:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 22
- **Divine Liturgy:** We Worship God in Church (OCEC), the first 22 lessons of this book treat of the Liturgy section by section.
- **Faith:** God Loves Me (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 21
- **Fasting:** God Loves Me (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 26; The Church Unites Us (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 29
- **Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 11
- **Feast of the Hypapante:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 13
- **Feast of the Holy Cross:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 24
- **Feast of Holy Week:** God Loves Me (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 28; The Church Unites Us (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 33
- **Feast of Lazarus Saturday:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 22
- **Feast of Palm Sunday:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 25; We Learn About God (OCEC), lesson 23
- **Feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy:** The Church Unites Us (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 32
- **Guardian Angels:** God Loves Me (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 22
- **Namedays:** The Church Unites Us (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 27
- **Parish Nameday:** The Church Unites Us (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 28
- **Praying for the Sick:** Living in God's Family (OCEC), lesson 21
- **Singing in Church:** God Loves Me (Greek Archdiocese), lesson 13

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (grades 4-6)**

- **Baptism and Chrismation:** Our Life in the Church (OCEC), lessons 1-11 treat of these mysteries section by section
- **Divine Liturgy:** Our Life in the Church (OCEC), lessons 12-22 treat of the Liturgy section by section.
- **The Four Evangelists:** Jesus, the Promise of God (OCEC), lesson 10
- **Feast of the Hypapante:** Jesus, the Promise of God (OCEC), lesson 5
The Old Testament in Our Worship: *In the Beginning* (OCEC), lessons 28-30

The Parables: *Parables of Our Lord* (Greek Archdiocese), Twenty five gospel parables explained

The Psalms: *In the Beginning* (OCEC), lessons 25 and 28

Temptation: *Jesus, the Promise of God* (OCEC), lesson 11, 12)

**JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL (grades 7-8)**

Acts of the Apostles: *The Young Church* (OCEC), This entire program is a study of the book of Acts

Bishops: *Worship in the Orthodox Church* (Greek Archdiocese), part 1, lessons 14, 15

Church History: *Heroes for Truth* (OCEC), The 18 chapters of this volume cover the history of the Church in the first millennium; *New Frontiers* (OCEC), this companion volume treats of the Orthodox Churches after 1054.

Funerals and Memorial Services: *Worship in the Orthodox Church* (Greek Archdiocese), part 2, lesson 6

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In addition, many of the themes treated in the *God With Us Series* are also treated in the Greek and OCEC books. You may wish to refer to these texts for supplementary ideas for your regular lessons as well.

Finally, a number of special lessons and activities drawn from various sources may be found in Appendix B of this book.
This fall the OCEC Manual for Grade 1, *Living in God's Family* was replaced by a new manual called *God Loves Us*. Questions were raised by some teachers as to why the change was made - some liked the old manual better than the new, some liked the new one better than the old; which reaffirms the fact that no manual can or should stand alone as the only guide for the teacher. One first grade teacher decided to combine both into her lesson plans, along with *What We See and Do In Church* (A Manual from the Greek Archdiocese).

Below is a cross reference of the three Grade 1 Manuals to help you in deciding which one you like best - or how to use all three together.

To order *God Loves Us*, write to OCEC, P.O. Box 69-Colvin Station - cost of Teacher Manual is $7.00; Student Manual is $6.00 + shipping and handling.

To order *What We See and Do In Church*, write to Department of Religious Education, 50 Goddard Ave. Brookline, MA 02146-7496 or call (617) 566-2329.

### TITLE OF PUBLICATION: WHAT WE SEE AND DO IN CHURCH (WWSADIC) - Publication of the Greek Archdiocese

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- **God Speaks to Samuel**
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- **God's Son is Our Saviour**
- **God Blesses New Members of His Church**
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- **Thomas Sees and Believes**
- **A Lesson on the Road**
- **An Early Breakfast with Jesus**
- **Jesus Goes Back to Heaven and Sends God's Spirit to Us**
- **Apostles do Jesus' Work**

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- **Noah's Ark**
- **Five Senses**
- **Angels**
- **Adam and Eve**
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- **Jacob's Ladder**
- **Moses**
- **Prophet Samuel**
- **Presentation/Iconostas/Annunciation**
- **Nativity**
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- **Epiphany**
- **Baptism**
- **Communion/Proskomedia**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Holy Orders**
- **Love/Marriage/Family**
- **Jairus' Daughter**
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- **Good Friday/Pascha**
- **Resurrection**
- **St. Thomas Sunday**
- **Road to Emmaus**
- **Disciples/Fishermen**
- **Ascension/Pentecost**

### Cross Reference with
- **GLU**
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16-5
17 - RECRUITING CATECHISTS

Strategies for Involving Parishioners as Catechists in Your Program

In churches of every description - Eastern or Western, historic or reformation, large or small, urban or rural - the recruiting of catechists is the major problem facing church school coordinators. This is a crucial issue as the person of the catechist is the single most important element in any program. A number of factors have been suggested as being the causes of this situation:

1. Being a catechist is not a role valued in the congregation or by the pastor;
2. Religious education is not a high priority in the parish;
3. Few in the congregation see the church school in action;
4. Catechists feel isolated and neglected;
5. Too many (or too few) students to deal with;
6. Little parental support leading to erratic attendance by students;
7. Inadequate facilities, equipment and other resources;
8. Little sense of satisfaction or accomplishment evident;
9. Lack of training or support leading to catechist not succeeding in assignment;
10. Serving in the church school demands more time than a person may have to give;

All of these reasons are true and your parish program may be suffering from any number of them. In some parishes church school classes are dispensed with for any number of reasons, often because a social has been planned for the same time! In other parishes religious education receives little interest from the parish council, negligible funding, and no visibility to the whole parish. We would be hard pressed to find catechists who would be willing to serve under such conditions.

However, even where these situations do not exist, recruiting catechists is a perennial problem, leading us to see other, even more basic reasons at the heart of the matter:

11. For a number of reasons, most parishioners have been led to believe that to be a good Christian one need simply be a spectator rather than a participant. One reason is that many see the most important aspects of church life, including worship and administration as well as service, as the province of the clergy. "We're not smart enough" or "That's what we pay him for" are often the reasons given for this attitude. People who do get involved are often seen as 'religious fanatics', even by fellow parishioners. Thus the readiness of parishioners to serve as catechists is generally equal to the level of faith and discipleship as a whole in that parish.

As people become more aware that all believers are called to participate actively in all dimensions of the Church's life (cf. Chapter 6, "What Is a Parish Community?", above), the number of people open to serve as catechists will grow. And so the first step in catechist recruitment, as it were, is the raising of parishioners' consciousness concerning what it means to be Church. Intensive preaching, parish renewal and adult enrichment programs, and a good deal of one-on-one discussion is needed before that attitude spreads through a large sector of the community.

12. Whatever the percentage of parishioners committed to service in the parish, there is often a tendency toward competition between various parish activities for the good workers. Frequently leaders have the good of their own programs at heart and do not see any wider needs in the parish. Similarly, since "George" will always say yes, everyone asks "George" to take on yet another task. The result is that "George" does it for a while, then gets so burned out that he won't accept any more responsibilities in the parish. Then we look for a new "George".

Parish leaders need to evaluate their needs together and coordinate their recruiting activities so that all those in the parish who are willing to serve will be placed in the best way possible. Leaders need also realize that certain tasks - and being a catechist is certainly the chief of them - are so demanding that a person who has accepted to serve in this way should expect other parishioners to respect this commitment by not asking them to roll grape leaves, sell raffle tickets or otherwise divide their energies.

13. Our lifestyle is continually changing. Where a few years ago mothers of church school students were prime prospects for recruitment as catechists, today most of them are working outside the home. Some are also single parents with little time to themselves. And so we need to direct our attention to other subgroups in the parish as well: the two principal
Person in both these groups generally have more time to devote to the service of the parish family as they do not yet (or no longer) have families of their own to care for. In addition, both groups are "naturals" for involvement in the church school as younger persons are often seen as role models for children and senior citizens as surrogate grandparents. This is especially important in our society in which children are often not part of the extended families in which such figures would traditionally have been found.

Realizing that all these obstacles must be overcome to make a significant difference in your catechist recruitment, we will offer here some procedural suggestions for recruiting. If these are followed without dealing with the above problems, you may experience some success, but probably not much. Implementing them should go hand in hand with working to raise the awareness of the entire community to what Church is really all about.

In discussing recruiting procedures it may be helpful to see them in terms of the classic questions of news reporting: who, what, why, when, and how.

WHOM DO WE RECRUIT?

The potential catechist must, first of all, be a Person of Faith who is committed to living the life of our Church and who has made its way of life and teachings their own. Persons whose commitment to the Church is more social than spiritual or whose personal beliefs exclude aspects of the historic faith or of our particular Tradition should not be asked to serve.

Those who evidence a desire to deepen their knowledge or skills for ministry in the Church by attending courses or by personal reading and who seem disposed to accepting the guidance and direction of the pastor and coordinator should be considered seriously as prospective catechists, as this ministry in the Church involves as much learning as teaching.

Believers whose creativity and imagination have made them teachers, whether naturally, as in the home, or professionally, in the classroom, may be particularly gifted to deal with particular age groups which would respond to these gifts. Thus a person comfortable with music, dance and storytelling would be particularly suited to primary grades. A person skilled in craft projects or drama may relate well to secondary or junior classes. Someone who can guide without patronizing or dictating would be especially appreciated in a high school group. A person who can help others synthesize their own experiences and the Tradition of the Church can be an invaluable catechist for adults.

WHO DOES THE RECRUITING?

Often it is the parish priest or coordinator who is the recruiter of catechists. Too often this means waylaying a prospect after Liturgy, giving them an inadequate idea of what is involved, and - since it often a last minute kind of activity - being content with having plugged another hole in the dike.

One way which has often succeeded in increasing the number of volunteers is to increase the number of recruiters. By bringing more people into the process of enlisting catechists we raise their awareness of the nature of ministry in the Church as well as of the needs of the parish. Often this generates a number of spokesmen who can plead the cause of the catechetical program more effectively than any one person can do. Likely candidates as "associate recruiters" are:

* Present Catechists - Discuss the above criteria for catechists with those presently involved in the program and invite each one to suggest one of their personal friends who might be suitable as a catechist. Ask them to open the subject with their friend and see if they are willing to learn more about what is involved. Then you take it from there.

* Parish Council - The recruiting of volunteers for all grades of ministry and other forms of parish activity should be a regular priority for the church council. If the council takes up this responsibility seriously it will surface more interest than can at first be absorbed.

FOR WHAT ARE WE RECRUITING?

One of the obstacles to recruiting catechists, mentioned above, is that many people simply do not have the time (or the inclination) to commit themselves to preparing classes every week for an entire year. They may accept under duress but often simply don't show up for every session. The more varied interests people have, the more this is likely to be the case. One way of dealing with this problem is by offering alternative forms of service which do not
demand such a weekly commitment. Several options are possible, such as:

* Short-term Teaching - In this model people commit themselves to teach only one part of the school year. This may mean all fall, all spring, or summer school. It may also mean two or three out of the usual six units or quarters of the curriculum. Thus two teachers may be used in one class, with each teaching an alternate unit in the curriculum.

While alternating units or quarters may be a good idea, alternating every other Sunday is not. This deprives the students of continuity as this week's teacher usually does not have a clear idea of what last week's teacher stressed or required.

Even when catechists have made commitments to teach all year long, the alternating unit plan might prove successful if at least part of the catechist's "unit off" would be devoted to skills enrichment.

In any case, indicate a clear beginning and ending time for this commitment. New teachers could be invited to attend staff meetings at once, although they do not begin teaching until the fall. Catechists should be urged to complete a predetermined time in the program (eg through the school year) before considering recommitment or dropping out.

* Topic Teaching - Another approach to short-term teaching is teaching by topics. People with particular interests may be asked to teach particular topics to various groups. Thus a person who has lived in or toured the Holy Land may be asked to give the classes on bible lands or the saints associated with these places in the fourth or sixth grades. Similarly a person who is good at crafts may be asked to handle the activity portions of some classes, especially if the regular catechist is all thumbs in such pursuits.

* Student Teaching - Often teenagers become restless in church school. They are at an age when they seem to be in continual activity and sitting in a class doesn't often fit their needs. They may be used as aides and even as occasional teachers in the younger grades. They will certainly learn more about the topic than they did when they were students in those grades and they might learn more than they would in a high school class as well. This would be most successful if several teenagers collaborated on a lesson. The coordinator could supervise and the regular catechist would not need to be present. This should not exempt them from any teen guidance-oriented sessions, however.

HOW DO WE RECRUIT?

The immediate strategy for catechist recruiting involves the following steps:

1) Determine Your Needs - Immediately after Pascha, begin discussing the next year's program with your present catechists. Determine who will be available to serve next year and which classes they would prefer to teach. You should ask teachers at this time to let you know within the month if they will be available for teaching next year, if they wish a year off, or if they want to leave the program altogether. There will always be contingencies which may affect their decision at a later date, but this will at least give you a general idea of how many new teachers you will need for the fall.

You may have dedicated volunteers whom you feel need a break, or who should be retired gracefully or transferred to other duties. Discuss these cases with the pastor, then approach each one personally and share your thoughts with them before they have renewed their commitment.

Determine what additional workers you may need because of program expansion (eg for adding pre-school or high school groups to your program).

2) Pray About It - The next task in personnel recruitment is prayer that the Lord make manifest the gifts that He is giving to the community through the various members of the parish. This prayer is the first way in which we can discern whom the Lord is calling to serve in parish ministry. The more who are involved in committed prayer that people acknowledge their gifts (clergy, parish council, present catechists), the more will such gifts be manifested in a survey or in other ways. We are not speaking here of a pro forma 45 second prayer at a parish council meeting, but a firm commitment to ask the Lord for the gifts He has promised.

Just as we pray for the development of gifts, we ought also to pray for discernment on the part of the those responsible for accepting people to be catechists. Many times people are enlisted because of their good will rather than any clear sense that they are called to be catechists. We need to pray that recruiters be guided by the Lord's call rather than the needs of the moment in inviting others to serve in this way.

You might schedule one or more group prayer times (eg on Sunday afternoon) or designate certain days on which all present catechists and parish council members commit themselves to fast and pray for this intention. The degree to which this is done will be
related to the group's stance on the role of prayer in their own lives and the life of the parish.

3) Coordinate Your Quest with Other Parish Needs - The next step in such a program should involve the determination of available persons for all parish activities. This may include a parish-wide interest survey (see the sample at the end of this chapter), followed by an evaluation of the responses by the parish council. In the spring an interest survey form, along with a return envelope, could be mailed to each individual member 16 and over. Perhaps this call to service in the Christian community could be connected with the Lenten summons to a more intense Christian life. The purpose of this survey is to make people aware of the needs of the parish, and of the possibilities for service of all types which exist in your community.

The results of this survey would then be discussed by the parish council and a design for next year's structures sketched out. Care should be taken that the gifts of as many people as possible be put to use and that the same old faces not be expected to do everything. In one sense this session should resemble an athletic league's draft session where coaches share recruits among the various teams.

A parish interest survey such as this is the best way for a new pastor to discern who is interested in ministry in the parish. Larger parishes or parishes with a high proportion of transients could conduct this survey annually or at least every other year. Smaller or more stable parishes could do it less frequently. In either case new parishioners could be given the questionnaire whenever they join the community.

The most important side to such a survey is the degree with which the parish leadership implements the results. And so initiating this process presumes that there are no doors which are closed in the parish. Often certain tasks or ministries seem to be the private preserve of certain individuals: "This is so-and-so's kitchen", or "Mr X has always taken care of that here". When you invite people to express an interest in serving in new ways, you must be willing to give up a proprietary system such as this. One way parishes have done away with this system is by having all ministries in the parish operate for specific terms.

These steps should be followed by (a) a direct invitation to those responding to your questionnaire, offering them the positions determined by the council; and (b) training programs for each of the ministries envisioned. Catechist training will be discussed in Chapter 18.

4) Personal Visits - In this, the most individual approach, the recruiters would visit prospective catechists and carefully explain what is involved in the program and invite them to seek guidance in prayer as to whether the Lord may be asking them to give of themselves in this way;

Both the "why" and the "what" of this ministry (see below) should be clearly explained. If sincere prayer and discernment have been employed, the person should be made aware of this, not to make them feel guilty if they do not comply, but to witness to the importance of this ministry in the life of the Church. All one's cards should be laid on the table so the person can make a responsible decision. The ECDD program, Discerning Your Call: An Introduction to Catechist Formation, can be of help here (see below).

5) Promotional Strategies - A number of other techniques are generally used to publicize program needs. These may be done independently of the above mentioned survey, but more profitable if this kind of information gathering precedes them:

* Letters - from the pastor and/or coordinator inviting people to become involved in the catechetical program;

* Phone Calls - clearly a more personal approach; also, more of your staff could get involved in the process of inviting others to join them in this ministry;

* Pulpit Pleas - here again, depending on the wishes of the pastor, the catechists themselves can witness to the satisfactions (and problems) they have experienced in this ministry as part of your invitation;

In these various ways of reaching out, remember to be accurate, brief, clear, and interesting. Do not limit your recruiting to a single time or a single means. Various studies have shown that 62% of all ideas are remembered and worked on only after they have been presented six times! It is said that an idea or fact presented once to 100 people is forgotten by:

25 people - 24 hours later;
50 people - 48 hours later;
85 people - 4 days later;
98 people - 2 weeks later.

Remember: Repeat, Be interesting, Repeat.

6) Observation - the prospective catechist may be invited to visit the program in action, to see the various classes and the other kinds of activity involved.
7) Covenant - the person should be presented with a concrete job description and asked to sign a covenant with the community spelling out their responsibilities and what they can expect from the parish. A sample Covenant is given at the end of this chapter. You should add the particular requirements of your program (and stick by them).

WHY SHOULD THEY SERVE?

Many good ideas on this subject may be found in the chapter on the vocation of a catechist in Discerning Your Call. In addition, the following ideas may prove food for thought.

When Christian parents have a child they are expected to bring that child to church to be presented to the Lord. The child is offered to God in the sight of the entire community which welcomes its newest member. In this way the community accepts a kind of responsibility for the Christian upbringing of its children, a point that many pastors make regularly at both churchings and christenings. Providing catechetical opportunities to its children is one way in which the parish fulfills this responsibility. The congregation should be reminded of this fact when you are recruiting catechists.

Another aspect of this ministry often overlooked in recruiting catechists is the children's need for pastoring. In many instances the catechist may be the only one of the Church's ministers who has regular dealing with the children of the parish. This makes them de facto "pastoral assistants" which can be especially helpful in situations of family disintegration, loss or death. Needless to say, one does not talk about this aspect of the catechist's service if we are trying to make it as brief a commitment of time as possible.

WHEN SHOULD RECRUITING BE DONE?

Early!
Early!!
Early!!!

Your time frame for catechist recruitment and "basic training" should be the spring before their service is expected to begin. If you are doing an interest survey, it should be taken during the Great Fast. The recommitment of current catechists and the invitations to potential catechists should be begun after Pascha. The "basic training" of new catechists should be a project for the summer.

How often do we hear coordinators say at the end of August, or even the beginning of September, that they still need volunteers. What does this itself say to the parish about the quality of your parish program? Should there be parents in the community who sincerely want Christian formation for their children, would they be encouraged to think that the parish catechists had two weeks notice and no instruction? It would be preferable in such circumstances to limit the classes to those you can organize within an appropriate margin of time to allow for at least basic preparation.

+ + +

Finally, as mentioned above, success in catechist recruitment often depends on the total vision of Church current in the parish: is religious education a value, does it have a high profile in the parish, is it important to the parish leadership, etc. The more prominence your program has in the parish, the more interest is likely to be aroused. Thus many parishes devote a regular page or column in their newsletter to the catechetical program. In other parishes the program itself produces a publication to keep the program before everyone's eyes on a regular basis.

Questions for Reflection

1. We all remember the picture games we played as children in which we had to find how many mistakes there were on the page. In the same vein read the following actual catechist recruitment notice which appeared in a parish bulletin at the end of August. In light of what has been said above, how many "errors" can you find in this announcement:

"Sunday School needs two volunteers who are willing to commit themselves to teach our children. Books and Teacher's Manual provided. See X now!"

2. How different is the way catechists are recruited in your parish?

USING *DISCERNING YOUR CALL*

The kind of catechist recruitment represented by the above bulletin notice is a "no-win" situation - for all concerned. Anything less than a full presentation of the Church's expectations for a catechist may get you
a volunteer, but not one who is in for the long haul. And when a person, who was told that being a catechist basically means one hour a week, begins to hear about staff meetings, ongoing formation, and workshops, they will likely either ignore you or head for the nearest exit. Giving a clear and honest picture of what catechetical ministry is all about will limit the number of people who respond to your call, but it is more likely that those are the people who will hear the Lord’s invitation and respond wholeheartedly.

To help you present an honest picture of catechesis in our Church, the association of Eastern Catholic Diocesan Directors of Religious Education (ECDD) has prepared a program entitled Discerning Your Call: an Introduction to Catechist Formation. A part of ECDD’s full scale catechist formation program (see Chapter 18), this first segment is designed as a faith-sharing experience between the potential catechist and the coordinator in which you attempt to help volunteers assess whether or not the Lord may be calling them to the catechetical ministry.

The program design, described in the Facilitator’s Guide, is as follows. The recruiter, who presumably has already discussed the needs of the parish with the volunteers, gives them a copy of Discerning Your Call and reviews with them the broad outline of what is involved in catechist formation (chapter one). The volunteer is then assigned to read the succeeding four chapters and to prepare responses to the reflection questions in each chapter.
PARISH INTEREST SURVEY

That we may become more united in the love and service of the Lord in the coming year, please complete and return this survey to the church. Thank you.

1 - Name:  

2 - Home Phone:  

3 - Address:  

4 - Business Phone:  

5 - Date of birth:  

6 - Marital status:  

7 - # children at home:  

8 - Member of this parish since:  

9 - Occupation:  

Working hours:  

Briefly describe your job duties:  

10 - Parish Activity  

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<tr>
<th>Served Formerly</th>
<th>Now Serving</th>
<th>Interested in Future Service</th>
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<td>Youth Advisor</td>
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<td>Charitable Ministry</td>
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<td>Men's/Women's Society</td>
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<td>Young Adults' Group</td>
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<td>Other (specify)</td>
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</table>
10 - Interests and Abilities God has given me include (please circle):

Arts & Crafts  Bookkeeping  Bus or Truck License  Carpentry
Child Care  Computers  Cooking & Baking  Drama
Electrician  Housekeeping  Interior Decorating  Landscaping
Money Management  Nursing  Photography  Plumbing
Roofing  Sales  Secretarial Skills  Singing
Sewing  Other Languages (Specify):

Teaching (Specify level):

11 - Other areas in which you feel you can contribute:

12 - I am available to help: ( ) Regularly  ( ) Occasionally  ( ) For Special Programs

13 - Highest level of schooling (specify college degree and field):

14 - List any courses in religious education, leadership training, or related skills taken in the last five years:

15 - Remarks:
A COVENANT WITH THE LORD

and

MY PARISH

Serving as a catechist is a high calling, a ministry. It is both demanding and rewarding. Those who accept a call to this ministry should do so fully aware of what they are undertaking as well as the support they can expect from the Church which calls them.

A - Our diocese expects parish catechists to:

1. Keep your own faith growing, and set an example for your students by regular participation in the divine services;
2. Attend catechist formation and adult enrichment sessions as well as catechists' staff meetings to improve your perception of our Tradition and your teaching skills. Since catechesis is a ministry of the Church, catechists should be able to accept the guidance of the parish priest, coordinator or resource persons made available to them;
3. Love your students and pray for them regularly;
4. Make careful preparations and plans for each class you teach, following the suggested lesson plans in the curriculum provided (two hours preparation for a weekly class is a generally accepted guideline);
5. Prove our church's concern for your students by regular attendance at classes. Contact the coordinator, at least one week in advance whenever possible, when you need a substitute;
6. Be prompt. We encourage you to be in your meeting area from five to ten minutes before the scheduled beginning of class to welcome early arrivals and be ready to begin the class promptly.
7. Recognize that your appointment is for one full church year and that only significant changes in your circumstances of life should prompt you to terminate your service before that time. You should be prepared by late spring to notify the coordinator whether you will be able to serve during the following year.

B - As a catechist, you can expect the church to:

1. Love you and pray for you and your work. There are people in all our parishes throughout the diocese who are members of our diocesan prayer league, the Society of Publicans, who are committed to praying for you regularly.
2. Pay registration fees for any catechist formation courses or workshops you attend. If you need child care to enable you to attend, please contact the coordinator.
3. Provide the mandated diocesan curriculum materials along with the resources stipulated use in the curriculum. If you need help in using the curriculum, or feel a need for supplementary materials, contact the coordinator.
4. Make substitutes available. We do not want you to feel guilty when you need to be away from church on Sunday. We want to support you by taking care of your class when you cannot be present.
5. Provide any equipment (VCR, cassette player, filmstrip projector, etc.) or supplies which you may need for your lesson. Please request these from the coordinator in advance.
6. Provide administrative support (attendance checks and incentives, parental communications, forms, etc.) as needed.

Catechist

Coordinator

Pastor
As we know, since the rise of Protestantism in the West religious education has been more and more considered the task of the school, whether it be a day school or Sunday school format. As a result our model of catechesis is too often assumed to be the classroom and the model catechist is the classroom teacher.

While professional teachers are indispensable to our programs because of their group management and communication skills, we still must recognize that our model catechist is not the classroom teacher but the pastor. The task of the classroom teacher is often seen as communicating a knowledge of this or that subject. The task of the catechist is more than that. Like the pastor, the catechist is a leader of worship, both the prayer sessions in the class and - as role model - the regular liturgical life of the parish. Children know when their catechist is at Liturgy, at vespers, at other services and whether they are participating actively or not.

Like the pastor, the catechist may be drawn into the lives of the students - their joys, their problems, their home life - both to share and sometimes to counsel. Like the pastor, the catechist may find special moments outside the formal classtime to witness their faith to both the students and their families. Like pastors, catechists have been given a "charge": a group of people to whom they minister and for whom they are responsible to the Lord. The parish priest may have 100 families in his charge while the catechist has three. Still, there are more similarities between catechist and pastor, than between catechist and public school teacher.

CATECHISTS' SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Which model we follow has consequences as to how we view the formation of catechists. If our model for catechesis is the classroom, we will stress classroom techniques; if we follow the pastoral model suggested above, our formation will have a different emphasis. It will stress the interior conversion and growth to which every serious Christian is called and which is particularly expected of anyone serving the Church in ministry. No one can help others grow in the Christian life without living it themselves.

Related to this is the fact that, at this time and place in the life of our Church, we have come to realize that we do not know our spiritual heritage as we ought. Most of us were not raised in a living experience of authentic Eastern Church life. We need to rediscover what is authentically Eastern Christian, sometimes from scratch. The number of catechists who freely admit that they did not know anything about the contents of the books they are teaching from bears witness to this.

These needs have determined the structure of the Interdiocesan Catechist Formation and Adult Enrichment Program sponsored by the ECDD (see Chapter 5, above), who also publish most of the materials used in our parish programs. The program concentrates on raising awareness of our Eastern spiritual heritage and applying this awareness to discern the vision of our catechetical curriculum. The basic theology, liturgy, spirituality and ethics of the Christian East become the focus for reflection and application to the catechetical session.

The ECDD program (which actually begins with the recruiting segment, Discerning Your Call, mentioned in chapter 17, above) presents this material in the following courses, each of which consists of six topic sessions:

1. Elements of Holy Tradition - A look at Tradition as the ongoing operation of the Holy Spirit; an examination of various outward forms of this Tradition (Scripture, Church Fathers, creeds and councils, liturgy and iconography) and how the Spirit works in them.

2. Introduction to Eastern Theology - A reflection on the basic teachings of the Nicene Creed: the mystery of God, God's self-revelation, Christ as the fullness of that revelation, and the Spirit as the presence of God with us now. The Church, the Body of Christ, and the life of the world to come are also discussed.

3. Introduction to Eastern Spirituality - The Byzantine approach to faith, worship and prayer along with the place of asceticism community and service as our personal response to God's self revelation are considered.

4. Introduction to Eastern Liturgy - The spirit informing our liturgical tradition, the
daily and yearly cycles in Byzantine worship, liturgical space, and the roles of the liturgical ministers in our Tradition are presented along with a basic exploration of the Divine Liturgy.

5. Holy Mysteries: the Sanctification of Life - This course presents our Church's theology of the sacraments and other of the Church's blessings which sanctify important moments in our life.

6. The New Testament - These sessions reflect on the history and development of the New Testament as well as its message both for its original hearers and for us today.

7. Prayer - What is meant by personal communion with God? Various styles, characteristics, and practices of prayer will be reviewed as our part in that communion.

8. Christian Morality - The Eastern approach to this subject relates righteousness of living to the holiness of life which is ours through baptism.

9. The Divine Liturgy - The various elements which make up the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, their development and significance for our prayer life are considered.

10. The Old Testament - Topics for these sessions include how the Church sees the Old Testament, its place in Christian life, and how its types are fulfilled in the New Testament.

11. Church History - Major periods considered include the apostolic Church and the age of the martyrs, the golden age and monasticism, the missionary period and adaptation to culture, the pluralism, fragmentation and movements to unity in the Church, and the Church in America.

12. Deification, Main Theme of the Church Fathers - How the Eastern Church understands the purpose of humanity drawn from the biblical teaching on creation, the fall, our re-creation in Christ, and our participation in this new creation.

13. Spirituality and Personal Growth - The development of a personal prayer life, the recognition of the presence of God in daily life, and of sin and reconciliation form the basis for this course.

These courses are given in a variety of formats in centers serving Byzantine parishes throughout the country. In areas where there are several parishes in geographical proximity, courses are offered on an interparish basis. Such a model enables catechists to become acquainted with their counterparts in other Byzantine parishes and to share ideas with them. (With some minor variations, all Byzantine dioceses in this country mandate the God With Us Series for grade school catechesis.)

Where such cooperative offerings are not possible, courses may be offered for an individual parish. In either case the six sessions may be held in all day seminar, half day or evening formats.

Finally, where no formal course is offered, catechists may participate by viewing and discussing videotaped presentations at their staff meetings. Privately produced cassettes may be obtained through the Office of Educational Services media library (see Appendix D).

CATECHISTS' TECHNICAL SKILLS

While the professional classroom teacher is not our chief model in forming a catechist, teaching skills are nonetheless essential in the conduct of the catechetical session. The pastor, whose ministry involves much more than serving at the altar, is still expected to know how to conduct services expertly. Likewise the catechist, whose service is not limited to the catechetical session, still needs teaching skills to make that session a learning experience for all. What teaching skills should the catechist be expected to develop?

The most basic skill expected of the catechist is the ability to use the curriculum material. This presumes familiarity with a number of elements in the catechist's handbook:

a) The content of the curriculum (what is to be taught, how it relates to our spiritual heritage and to the rest of the curriculum);

b) The methodology of the lesson (the meaning of the various movements and how to conduct them);

c) The psychology of the students' age group and what to expect from them;
d) How to obtain and use the resources indicated in the catechist’s handbook (films, videos, music, projects, etc);

Catechists need to acquire some familiarity with this material before taking charge of a catechetical class. Each summer all new catechists should be "walked through" their handbook either personally, by the coordinator or an experienced catechist, or through a workshop on the "Use of the God With Us Series". This workshop should aim at familiarizing the new catechists with the elements in the curriculum mentioned above as well as which of the resources utilized in the curriculum the parish has available and how to use them. This would include cassette players and projectors, library, filmstrips, videos and other resources.

Such a workshop is available upon request from the Office of Educational Services. It also could be organized by the parish staff, perhaps utilizing the help of professional teachers in the parish who are not catechists themselves.

For the first year of their service, beginning catechists should also be assisted in lesson planning on a regular basis so that their knowledge of the basics of the curriculum be assured.

SKILL ENHANCEMENT

After the catechist has mastered the basic material which they are to teach, a number of other supplementary technical skills may be considered:

e) How to develop motivational techniques (eg games, awards, fieldtrips, etc), deal with disciplinary problems, special needs, and the like.

f) How to choose supplementary programs and resources to augment the curriculum without losing the original focus.

Two courses in the ECDD curriculum address some of these issues. They are:

1. Forming a People I - This course presents the goals of catechesis and some principles of learning. It also discusses the various ways in which adults, teens and children learn.

2. Forming a People II - In this course catechists study the particular needs of the age group with which they are working along with resources and techniques for effective catechesis.

In addition to these courses the Office of Educational Service makes available to parishes a number of audiocassette, videocassette and filmstrip programs addressing such areas as:

* how to use films, filmstrips, and slides in catechesis;
* lesson planning;
* effective questioning techniques;
* classroom communication;
* how to use mobiles, puppets, dioramas;
* understanding the learning process;
* forming goals and objectives for learning;
* techniques of discipline.

These programs, which may be studied individually and/or discussed at staff meetings are listed in the media library catalog (Appendix D).

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By utilizing a plan such as this several goals are achieved. New catechists are given basic hands-on instruction on how to use the materials they are expected to employ before they enter the classroom. They are helped through that sometimes traumatic first year, which offers more assurance that they will return for a second year. They quickly become part of the catechetical team through participation in the ECDD courses as they grow in awareness of our Church's spiritual Tradition. After they have acquired the basics of using our curriculum, they move on to skill enhancement through participation in inservice programs. With these added skills and the experience they have acquired they can more confidently apply the curriculum to their own particular circumstances.

Questions for Reflection

1. What kind of formation did I receive in becoming a catechist? Was it sufficient? Would I have wanted more? less? something different?

2. Considering the above outline, what would I consider missing? overstressed? understressed?

3. What can be done to begin offering such a program for our catechists?
How can all these elements come together for the training of volunteer catechists? Where do we begin? The following schema attempts to integrates these elements in a way which is accessible to most catechists.

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<tr>
<th>TIME OF YEAR</th>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring before beginning ministry</td>
<td>&quot;Discerning Your Call&quot;</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer before beginning ministry</td>
<td>Initial Catechist's Workshop</td>
<td>Basic familiarity with curriculum material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout first year of ministry</td>
<td>One-on-one lesson planning</td>
<td>Increased familiarity with curriculum design</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participation in ECDD course</td>
<td>Spiritual growth for more effective ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent years of ministry</td>
<td>Participation in ECDD courses</td>
<td>Spiritual growth for more effective ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inservice programs at staff meetings</td>
<td>Skill enhancement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Closely allied with the concept of catechist formation is the support of those persons who have made the commitment to serve their Church in this way. While formation programs aim at giving catechists the concepts and skills needed in their ministry (and also assuring the Church that the catechist is teaching out of the Tradition), support frameworks have slightly different purposes. The first is related to the catechists' need to know that they are not sent out alone in their task. The volunteer should feel that the parish community, the clergy, and the other catechists are supporting their efforts, not undercutting them or leaving them to face problems alone. Therefore part of the support framework involves recognition of their commitment, encouragement of their efforts, and evidence that the parish leadership is willing to deal with problems encountered by the catechist.

Another side of catechist support involves decision making and the parish program. The catechist needs to have a sense of the "ownership" of the program, to have input into decision making, and, conversely, to have the limits of their control of the program clear from the start. When discussing programming and vision, this "power sharing" is necessarily tied to the catechists' level of personal formation. However, even when catechists are at a minimal level of spiritual awareness, there are areas of responsibility (generally procedural) which can be shared. When the catechist feels like an unpaid hired hand, commitment to the program will soon fade.

A third area of catechist support involves the catechists' personal lives. When the parish leadership and the rest of the catechetical team are strong in their support of the individual's efforts, that sense of affirmation spills over into the catechist's daily circumstances. As relationships flourish, participating in the work of the team becomes more important than simply accomplishing the task of catechesis: it involves encouragement for living as well.

CATECHIST RECOGNITION

The story is often told of the husband who comes into the kitchen to find his wife in tears. Asked what is the matter, she replies, "You never tell me that you love me!" "Woman," the husband answers, "I told you that twenty five years ago. If I change my mind about it, I'll let you know!"

Like the wife in the story, most church volunteers suffer from a lack of appreciation. Sometimes church professionals (eg the clergy) presume that parish programs are as important to parishioners as to the staff, and so forget to show appreciation. At other times the parish clergy may be so busy that recognition of volunteers gets lost in the shuffle. The coordinator should be especially attentive to the recognition afforded catechists and insure that they are not forgotten by the parish as a whole. Some important ways to acknowledge the gift of themselves which catechists make to the parish are:

* **Public Blessing of Catechists** - conducted by the priest, generally at the end of the Sunday Liturgy just prior to the beginning of the church school season, perhaps in conjunction with registration for the catechetical program. Each year parish priests receive a homily outline from the Office of Educational Services along with copies of the blessing prayer (see Appendix C). Coordinators should discuss with the priest ways of making this an effective recognition of both your program and the contribution of your catechists.

* **Newsletter and Pulpit Announcements** - The activities of the catechetical program, including thanks to the catechists involved, as well as the profiles ("catechist of the month") and witnesses of the catechists, should be published in every issue of the parish newsletter and/or regularly mentioned by the priest in the Sunday announcements.

* **Workshop Fees** - The parish should expect to pay the usually modest fees charged for attendance at programs for catechists and, when possible, to provide transportation as well.

* **Cards and Gifts** - Everyone likes tangible signs of recognition. They do not have to be elaborate, but the thought behind them should be clear. Once each season the coordinator should help classes send appreciation cards to their catechist, signed by all class members. This also helps the students recognize the gift of themselves which the catechists are making (many
children think the catechist is paid, like their school teacher!). In the same vein, an appropriate gift from the parish would be in order at least once a year. Proper all-around gifts include religious items (books, icons, crosses, magazine subscriptions, etc.) or edibles (fruit baskets, cheese trays, pastries).

* Catechists' Bulletin Board - One useful way of communicating information to catechists before the church school session is a strategically placed bulletin board (eg. on your supply closet). It is also an effective way to recognize catechists for special efforts among themselves. Posting thank-you cards, posters or photos can be an effective part of your support system.

* Serving Sunday Coffee - If your program is conducted during the parish coffee hour, don't force catechists to pass up this bit of refreshment. Arrange for someone to serve the catechists either before other parishioners or in a separate place before classes start. Little things mean a lot.

* End-of-Season Recognition - The end of the season should be marked by a celebration of your catechists' efforts (and their families' patience!) during the year. Discuss with your pastor ways of publicly recognizing their gift at a Sunday Liturgy. One way is to invite the catechists to come forward at the end of the Liturgy, thank them publicly and offer the Prayer of Thanksgiving from the prayerbook. Some parishes recognize their catechists and other workers in similar ways at annual Parish Nights.

* Recognition Certificates - Catechists who have served for multiples of five years or more are entitled to certificates which are available from the Office of Educational Services upon your request. These certificates, signed by the archbishop and the director, may be given by the parish priest during this general recognition or awarded by the archbishop during his regular parish visit. A similar certificate may be given in the name of the parish to each catechist at the end of the year. A sample may be found in Chapter 24. In any case a letter of appreciation is regularly sent from the diocesan office to all catechists at the end of the season.

Sometimes clergy, coordinators or even catechists don't like this kind of public recognition. In these cases it is good to remind them that such notice is another way of conveying to the parish that the catechetical program is important (it's not just baby sitting!). Recognition is given to achievement in all areas of life and what is not recognized is not considered important. In the church recognition is certainly given to donors. They get annual statements and thank you's and often their name on bronze plaques, their names published in Sophia, and maybe a church "knighthood". If this is the only kind of recognition offered in the parish, the lesson is clear: giving money is important, being a catechist isn't.

**REGULAR STAFF MEETINGS**

The second and third aspects to catechist support (developing a sense of "ownership" and encouragement for living) are the aim of Catechetical Staff Meetings which should be held on a regular basis in the parish. While some parishes hold biweekly meetings (generally focusing on formation), a monthly meeting is the most regular format for this type of gathering.

The Staff Meeting provides a forum for keeping catechists informed of any matters which concern them and for planning future events affecting the program as a whole. It enables the sharing of problems and successes as well as the interchange of ideas in order to affirm each catechist's efforts. It also provides the opportunity for inservice study of new resources, techniques, and ideas.

Not all these elements can form a part of every meeting. Therefore, just as we develop a lesson plan and curriculum for the catechetical sessions, we need to do the same for the regular staff meeting. We can set aside specific meetings for planning and organization and others for nurturing skills and addressing the problems faced by the catechists. Thus the first meeting of the year will probably be procedural: to iron out any problems connected with the new season, to confirm the calendar set up be the coordinator for the rest of the year, and to assign the responsibilities for special programs (eg. a St. Nicholas Celebration). These meetings should not be the occasion for annually reinventing the wheel: starting every procedure from scratch. If every project develops its own program guide (see Chapter 13) and evaluation procedure, there is no need to start each year with a clean slate when planning regularly repeated activities.

By the same token the last meeting of the season should be evaluative. This is a time for considering the past year's successes and facing its problems with a view to improving things next year. It is also the
time to celebrate the commitments of the past year's staff (see Recognition, above).

Other meetings during the year can be devoted to a combination of enrichment and business related goals, as suggested in the outline that follows. If we aim for eight monthly meetings during the season, this leaves us the possibility of six sessions which may incorporate inservice enrichment. If your catechists have access to the ECDD Catechist Formation/Adult Enrichment Program, you can concentrate on skill-enhancement in your staff meetings. If these meetings are your only times for formation, you will need to combine both content and skill enrichment in these sessions.

A model suitable for a combination enrichment/business meeting is outlined below. It envisions a 90-minute session, which in fact presumes a two hour gathering when allowing for arrival and social time.

The coordinator need not, in fact should not, be responsible for all the segments on your agenda. Different individuals may lead the prayers, do the enrichment presentation, and conduct the business segment. The more people have to prepare for a meeting, the more they will invest in its success.

The agenda should never be sprung on the group at the last moment. Catechists should have the opportunity to contribute to its formation. Once agreed upon, it should be posted well in advance as a continual reminder.

Not every item needs to be discussed by a whole group in which there is mutual trust. Topics that do not need group discussion should be handled privately or delegated to a committee or responsible individual in the group. Make sure that all agree with this procedure, however.

Besides the resources listed in Chapter 27 and in the Media Library Catalog section, the following may be used as the basis for the enrichment section in catechetical staff meetings:


**TEACHING TEAMS**

Another way of helping catechists feel that they are not alone in their ministry is by situating them in a teaching team in which they share responsibility for the conduct of the program in their group. There are a number of ways in which catechists can work together in a session. Responsibility can be divided according to:

- **Skills** - Match a catechist who is a good presenter or storyteller with one who is good at music or crafts. They would then divide the lesson according to these abilities.

- **Students** - Those pupils who need more individualized instruction because of their limited catechetical background, attention span or other learning problems might be assigned to one catechist who gives them more personal attention.

- **Time** - Catechists used to working together can spell one another either within the session or on alternate units. While many catechists might prefer having every other Sunday off, it is preferable to split time according to units or topics (see Chapter 17, above).

One ready made catechetical team might be a husband and wife who make the commitment to work together. One advantage to this system is that they are used to working together and can communicate more freely than people whom you might match. They also have more opportunities to share ideas than any planned catechists' meeting. The most significant benefit which comes from team teaching is that students have the opportunity to see a Christian couple sharing their faith and ministry together. If parish activities are dominated by members of either sex, that witness is most important.

On a different level, many parishes have found that teenagers, whose stage of growth may make them impatient students, enjoy the activity of helping in the classroom. This permits them to use some of that bottled up energy for service and to serve as role models for younger students. In the process, they will surely learn more about themselves and the curriculum material than they did as students!

One caution, however: teenagers should never be given a class as a catechist or be asked to work with a beginner in the classroom, but as a helper to an experienced catechist. The catechist may then judge that the helper can take part of a class on their own,
but always under supervision. In any case, the coordinator should make it quite clear that any such assignment should be discussed with the coordinator in advance.

### CATEchetical Staff Meeting

1. **Opening Segment (10 minutes)** - should include the following:
   - a) Prayer
   - b) Welcome
   - c) State the purpose(s) of the meeting
   - d) Summary of decisions taken at previous meeting

2. **Enrichment (30 minutes)** - eg. presentation by priest, coordinator or a teacher on:
   - * A skill such as using AVs, drawing, or questioning in the classroom;
   - * Viewing and discussion of a video on a similar theme; OR
   - * Discussion of a reading assignment on a similar theme.

   *(In the latter instances you may allow 10 minutes to view the segment or to read or review the material and then allow 20 minutes for discussion.)*

   You may choose to discuss only selected parts of any given resource. In that case, you should indicate in advance which chapters will be discussed by the group and which should be read on one's own. You should also prepare specific discussion questions if none are included in the resource you are using. Include a question as to how the material presented might tie into the overall schema of your parish program.)*

3. **Break (10 minutes)**

4. **Program Business (30 minutes)** - Plan on scheduling only 1 or 2 business items per meeting, unless you plan on extending the meeting time to two hours.

5. **Closure (10 minutes)** - Should include the following:
   - a) Summation of decisions taken;
   - b) Evaluation of the meeting;
   - c) Determination of time, place, and business items for next meeting;
   - d) Closing Prayer
Assessing the effectiveness of catechetical personnel

One of the principal mechanisms for catechist support at our disposal is the classroom visitation by the priest and/or coordinator. It is only by taking part in all the classes in the parish program that the coordinator will be able to see and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Observing the catechist in the classroom enables the coordinator to determine what resources are required or need to be replaced. More importantly, it permits the coordinator to appreciate the catechist's own personal qualities so that they can be employed to best advantage in the program.

Several coordinators report that some catechists in their programs resent the coordinator's visits. If this is the case, the catechist may feel threatened by the manner in which the evaluation is conducted. Evaluation is designed to support rather than tear down the catechist and should be conducted in a positive and affirming way.

Some catechists, however, prefer to do their own thing in the classroom and see such visits as interference. If so, they are forgetting that catechesis is by definition a passing on of the faith of the Church. It is not a personal testimony alone: it is a ministry in and for the community. Like the divine services, the catechetical session is meant to be a 'liturgy', a public work. The catechist, therefore, cannot operate as a lone ranger.

One of the chief criteria for a coordinator's evaluation of the class session should be how well it conveys the content and spirit of the Church's curriculum. Our eparchy, along with the other Byzantine Catholic dioceses in this country have put forth a common program, the *God With Us* series as their catechetical message to children (see Chapter 15). The catechist is expected to follow its direction in the classroom and it is the coordinator's task to evaluate, among other things, how well this statement of our Church is being enfleshed in the catechetical sessions.

In addition to curriculum content, the coordinator should be attentive to the atmosphere of prayer in the group. The icon corner, as the focus of prayer, is important to examine in this context. Is it a significant worship center or an old Sunday bulletin taped to the blackboard? Is prayer a formality or the climax of the session? Does prayer in the group reflect the riches of our own prayer Tradition or not? Are the liturgical chants envisioned in the program employed in the group prayer? Prayer, both in the session and beyond, is meant to be the goal to which the instructional aspect leads, and the catechist's approach to prayer is of special importance to the success of the catechetical program.

To assist the coordinator in making an evaluative visit of sessions in the parish program, the questionnaire on the following pages is offered. The coordinator, like the newspaper restaurant reviewer, should be able to make several visits to each class before giving an evaluation. More than one visit would enable the coordinator to develop a sense of how the class is progressing. The visits could be discussed during a one-to-one meeting of coordinator and catechist.

**ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCES**

The personal conference is another important elements in a catechists' support system. Here both the coordinator and the catechist have the opportunity to discuss matters which might be out of place in a group setting. Thus, in the extended family atmosphere of many parishes, catechists might be uncomfortable discussing a problem student when that student's relatives are part of your staff. Such conversations also allow the coordinator to share his or her impressions of the group after an evaluation visit.

These meetings should be supportive, affirming sessions in which both coordinator and catechist seek to improve the effectiveness of their service rather than to score points on one another. Like that other overseer, the bishop, the coordinator should be an enabler: one who helps the field worker release more of his or her capabilities for the service of the community.

The coordinator should make an effort to afford catechists the chance to discuss their classes privately on a monthly basis. Immediately after the catechetical session is one opportunity to do this. Make a list of your catechists and schedule appointments with one or two of them each week. Alternate these face to face meetings with telephone calls so that each catechist - even those who might not bring problems up on their own - have a regular hearing.
Another important use for individual conferences is to assist the catechist with lesson planning. This is especially necessary for beginning catechists. New catechists should have help in planning every lesson for the first year. This could be done by the coordinator, by another catechist (especially one with previous experience with that material), by a former catechist, or by a professional teacher who is not a catechist. Many full-time teachers who are reluctant to face another classroom on the weekend would not be averse to sharing their skills in this way. Such meetings should be held at least once for each unit in the text. The master catechist would:

* ascertain the catechist's understanding of the dynamics of the lesson;
* share past experience as to the effectiveness of the elements in the lesson plan;
* point out the required materials needed in advance;
* suggest alternative activities, visuals, etc.
CLASSROOM VISITATION CHECKLIST

Class observed: Catechist: # of visits this year:

1. Which lesson from the curriculum was in progress?

2. What was the message of this lesson in the Catechist's Handbook?

3. What specific process was used in developing the lesson?

4. What tools or resources were in use by the teacher?

5. What tools or resources were in use by the students?

6. What skill(s) were being developed?

   ( ) Reflection on a Scripture Passage  ( ) Reflection on Church Fathers  ( ) Group Work
   ( ) Awareness of a Basic Teaching  ( ) Knowledge of hymnody  ( ) Discussion
   ( ) Familiarity with liturgical rites  ( ) Facilitation of Prayer  ( ) Use of the Bible
   ( ) Understanding of iconography  ( ) Memorization  ( ) Other (Specify):

7. Give a brief description of the activity:

8. What percentage of time was teacher activity (circle)? 20% 40% 60% 80%

9. What percentage of time was student activity (circle)? 20% 40% 60% 80%

   (The ideal is teacher 20%, student 80%.)

10. Check if the following were in evidence:

    ( ) Appropriate setting (including icon corner)  ( ) Sense of confidence or intimacy with God
    ( ) Clear communication of the message  ( ) Independent Learning
    ( ) Sense of wonder, beauty, joy conveyed  ( ) Creative Expression
11. Did the catechist:

( ) Possess a knowledge of the material

( ) Establish a climate of respect for individual freedom and a sense of responsibility

( ) Utilize a variety of activities

12. Check which teaching aids were used during the lesson:

( ) Charts ( ) Records
( ) Films ( ) Slides
( ) Filmstrips ( ) Tapes
( ) Photographs ( ) Transparencies
( ) Posters ( ) Videos

13. Indicate what the learners were doing during these activities which were clues that they were learning:

14. In your opinion was the atmosphere and activity true to the expectations and spirit of the interdiocesan *God With Us* program? Explain.

15. Commendable features of the session:

16. Recommendations:

Date: Coordinator:
The parish catechetical program can take up a great deal of time and energy: planning classes, outings, catechist formation, and the like. Unless we direct some of our attention and energies to the parents of the students in the program, however, our efforts will have minimal results. Children, after all, are not autonomous. They do not come to the church on their own, they do not stay for class on their own, nor do they enter into the program as fully as they might without parental support and encouragement. For the church school program, parents are a fact of life, but like those other "facts of life", are often denied.

In fact, for many years parental involvement was discouraged in both parochial schools and parish religious instruction programs. For generations in this country and even longer in the Middle East (where religious schools were for a long time the Christians' only hope of advancement), parents were encouraged to send their children to others for their Catholic education. After all, the religious formation of children came to be seen as something only Father, Brother or Sister could do. The clergy thought so and the parents agreed.

Parents, being concerned with working and trying to adapt to a rapidly changing world and new lifestyles, have been quite comfortable with this system. This has been especially true of immigrants who have faced even greater adjustments in their daily lives. As a result, many parents have abdicated their role as the primary educators of their own children. Even in places were enrolled in much less intense church school programs, rather than in parochial schools, parents continue to assume that the Church (sic) will do the job.

Parental involvement in your program may take a number of levels. We will address the following here: awareness and support of your efforts, participation in programs for your students, participation in programs with your students, and programs specifically directed at parents.

There are also people in many parishes who regard the church school as pious baby sitting. In too many cases they are right. But if you have a worthwhile program, you need to make parishioners aware of how good it is. Otherwise, people will go on thinking that church school is coloring book time. The first step in stimulating parental involvement, then, is creating a sense of awareness of your program among the entire parish. There are a number of traditional ways to do this, such as the following (explained in detail in chapter 25):

* Bulletin Board - Erect a large church school bulletin board where people will see it, eg in the parish hall where people have their coffee hour. Place the students' pictures on it on their birthdays or namedays, photos of group activities, examples of their work as the year progresses, and other items related to the program. If the board is eye-catching and personal, it will stimulate interest.

* Church Bulletin - Insert a church school page in your parish bulletin featuring your catechists, students, and programs on a regular basis. The more visibility, the better for making your program perceived as important to parish life.

* "Commercials" at Liturgy - The Sunday service is still the best time to reach the greatest number of people at once. Involvement of the church school program on Sunday morning may range from the service opening the church school year, to class nameday observances to frequent mention by the priest.

**STIMULATING PARENTAL SUPPORT**

In addition the following programs specifically addressed to the parents of your students can help make them aware of our Church's vision and your efforts at implementing it:

* Orientation Program: Devote the first two Sundays of your church school year to orientation. The Sunday before you register students could feature a homily on the importance of Christian education (an outline on this subject is sent to parish priests every year) and the blessing of catechists (see Appendix C). This would begin to gear people to the imminent start of your program.

One program for your registration Sunday could include:

A - Special refreshments after Liturgy
B - A presentation by the coordinator introducing the catechists and describing the plans for the coming year.

C - Breakdown into grade groups. Each catechist could register the students (see chapter 24), introduce them to one another, if needed, and speak to both students and parents about the curriculum overview for the year. At this time catechists should stress their need for the parents’ support in insuring regular attendance and completion of any assignments that may be given. If this is put on as personal a basis as possible you have a better chance of insuring cooperation. Many people would ignore the priest’s request for support (he’s paid to be there), but be sensitive to volunteers.

D - Conclude with the Prayer Service for the Opening of School (see Appendix C).

An alternative program could be:

A - Special refreshments after Liturgy

B - Separate presentations for parents and children. The children could be taken by some of the catechists, be taught some chants, shown a film, and/or given the opportunity to share about their summer. The entire group of parents could be introduced to each catechist, who could explain their interest in the program, giving a personal witness of what it means to them. They could also explain elements of their grade level, using the basic information booklet in Chapter 24 and the synopsis of the year in the beginning of their catechist’s handbook for that purpose.

Another level of the presentation, which could be made by the coordinator, could include an explanation for the need of praying with their children and of continuity in attendance as well as a look at the parent’s role in supporting the lesson (books for the primary grades of the God With Us series have this feature built into each lesson).

One complaint to forestall at the beginning of the year is the tendency for parents to ask, "What did you do in class today?" The reply is generally, "Nothing," and parents become convinced that the program is a waste of time. Rather suggest that they ask, "Which chapter did you work with today?" and then reinforce its contents.

C - Bring both groups together for the Prayer Service for the Opening of School (see Appendix C).

D - Facilitate registration at tables manned by your secretary or assistant coordinator and some catechists. The coordinator should be free to answer any questions which may arise at the tables. A basic information sheet including the time of class, calendar, staff roster, and program policies and procedures would help clarify some of the usual questions as well as convey a sense that we know what we’re doing.

* Church School Open House: Even if your parents have no other contact with the program, they should be invited to an open house scheduled six or eight weeks after classes begin. Parents would be invited to visit their children’s classes and view their progress and work for part of the session. During the rest of the class period they could meet with the priest and/or coordinator to discuss the need for continuing support of the program during the holiday and winter seasons.

* Theophany Celebration: Every program that breaks for Christmas needs a shot in the arm to begin the rest of the year’s activities. The feast of the Theophany provides the perfect occasion for this rejuvenation. It would be in the best interests of the program to defer any group party from Christmas to this feast so that you would have a "carrot" to suspend before the noses of your students. That’s life.

Celebrate by blessing the classrooms, giving icon cards and the blessed water to all the children, sharing special refreshments (zlaybe), and reminding them of the resumption of classes. At this time discuss the progress to date with the parents and invite their evaluation of your program.

* End of Year Celebration: Your final meeting in the spring should be a time of thanksgiving, celebrating through prayer and festivity, such as a family picnic, what has passed. Your closing ceremony could include recognition certificates for catechists and students, but not "graduation" as we never are finished growing in the Christian life. Giving every student recognition at this time (even if it is as "most joyful", ie boisterous, student) is important for maintaining a positive response from your families.

INVOLVING PARENTS IN YOUR PROGRAMS

Besides giving all parents - and all parishioners - an awareness of your program, you will also want to involve as many parents as possible as participants in the program. We want them to become involved, but what do they want? Perhaps a way to start is by a Needs Assessment, a process by which they express their own concerns. This could be done in writing.
(see page 21-6), but preferably in person. Schedule a meeting during the children's class time two-thirds of the way through the year. Offer refreshments. Introduce the aim of the meeting as trying to determine what the parents would like to see happen in next year's program. After that brief introduction, divide the parents into table groups, preferably by the grades their children are in, to discuss the question and come up with at least three specific recommendations. This will insure something of a consensus. Have each group choose a reporter to share the results of the discussion with the whole group. Then discuss these recommendations and any other questions which may surface. You will also quickly see which of the parents are sincerely interested in your program. But ... be prepared to follow up as much as possible on their recommendations or to show where their suggestions violate an important principle.

You will definitely want to recruit some parents as catechists provided that they meet the criteria called for by the responsibilities of this ministry (cf Chapter 17). Other parents may be invited to serve as classroom aides, assisting the catechist on a regular basis. This becomes a kind of back door to further involvement in the program, especially for people who do not feel they have the skills needed for serving as a catechist but whom you feel have the potential.

You may find that still other parents will be willing to serve on an occasional basis, taking responsibility for or helping with socials, outings, parties, and the other special events in your calendar, providing refreshments for the classes, and the like. Organizing a group of parents to relieve your catechists of these tasks will be most appreciated by them, needless to say. It also gives a chance to take part to those parents who are not ready to verbalize their faith because of their background or facility in the English language. Your opening day orientation is the best time to make parents aware of such needs and how they can be of help.

Some parishes have organized the parents of their church school students into Parents’ Associations which take responsibility for these auxiliary events in the church school calendar. Allowing such an organization a degree of autonomy in certain specified areas such as socials fosters among the parents a greater sense of responsibility for the program than 'helping out' could achieve. As parents mature in such a structure they could take the responsibility for visiting non-participating parents and promoting the program to them. After all, no one sells as well as a satisfied "customer".

FAMILY LEARNING SESSIONS

Besides involving parents as helpers, the Church does well to provide opportunities for parents to learn along with their children in family formation experiences. Such intergenerational activities do more than communicate information or even attitudes about the Church, they build up the spiritual family which is the Church as a community of natural families. Such programs may be held on an occasional basis, such as once a month or in conjunction with the Great Feasts of the year. It is even possible to structure your entire church school program intergenerationally.

A monthly or feastday program utilizing four blocks of time lasting from 4 to 5 hours may look like this:

1 - Open with a Gathering Time (games and/or refreshments)

2 - Conduct a joint learning session on the theme chosen

3 - Separate children and adults for a second session. Have a planned recreation time for the children during which the parents are given ideas for implementing the theme of the day in their homes during the weeks ahead.

4 - Close with vespers or another liturgical service.

An ongoing church school program involving parents may feature monthly parents’ meetings during the class period to review the children’s lessons for the coming month. This will help parents who wish to support their own children's learning. If two grades meet every Sunday, even a full 8-grade program could be covered every month.

PARENTING SESSIONS

Another important way of working with parents consists in holding special classes for them on issues relating to their own vocation as Christian parents. These kinds of sessions are often the most popular because they deal with topics which may be on the minds of your parents. While the children are in class provides an ideal time for offering such sessions. It may be on a regular monthly basis or as mini-courses of four or five sessions two or three times each year. If you use the latter approach, schedule your most controversial topics at the weakest point in your attendance as a further stimulus to participation. Thus if you find the time after Christmas or Pascha
as your low points, schedule an interesting parenting class at that time.

If you have good communication with your parents, they will suggest topics for such sessions themselves. The following topics and resources will provide you with ample material for two years worth of such sessions:


- **Family Relationships** - How do your relationships with one another affect the way your children will relate? Work through Fr Chuck Gallagher's Marriage Encounter mini-courses, Evenings for Parents and Parents are Lovers (W H Sadlier Co, 11 Park Place, New York, NY 10007).

- **Introducing Pre-Schoolers to the Faith** - When and how do you begin teaching children our faith and life? Study and discuss Anne Gallagher, Nurturing the Seed of God-Life (Educational Services).

- **Media and Family Life** - What influence does TV have on your children and what does this do to their Christian life? Read and discuss one of Kevin Perrotta's studies, Television in the Christian Home (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Religious Education Dept) or Taming the TV Habit (Servant Publications, PO Box 7455, Ann Arbor, MI 48107).

- **Raising Children in a Secular Age** - What must Christian families do to raise their children as Christians in today's secular environment? Study and discuss Kevin Perrotta, "The Loss of Christian Peoplehood" in Bearers of the Mysteries (Educational Services).

- **Sex Education** - How and when should Christian parents teach about sex and the Christian moral stance? Study and discuss Connaught Marshner, Decent Exposure (Wolgemuth and Hyatt, PO Box 1941, Brentwood, Tn 37027).

**NON-PARTICIPATING FAMILIES**

There are basically two types of parents in the parish family who have not made personal commitments to their children's religious formation. Some will send their children to a program in church or school, but not get involved themselves. Then there are parents who will not even do that. Some even consider themselves as good church members. There are several recurring reasons for this behavior:

- Belief that attendance at a Roman Catholic parochial school is sufficient formation;

- The parents' own impaired spiritual growth;

- Acceptance of secular values from society (eg the weekend is for sports or other recreational activities);

- Natural laziness.

The only way to reach these people is to go out to them. A Visitation Program is the only way to communicate with people who do not communicate with you. We must go to their homes, as fundraisers do, and solicit their cooperation. In many parishes people expect the priest to visit such families, while the priest expects the coordinator to deal with families concerning church school attendance. As a result nothing gets done.

One suggestion often used by Evangelicals is to set one evening or Sunday afternoon for a massive visitation. The priests, deacons, parish council, catechetical staff and even interested parents and children could be invited to participate. They would go out in groups of two or three as the apostles did for a set period of time. A sample program might be as follows:

A - Begin with the Service for the Beginning of Any Work (Appendix C) at the church.

B - Divide into mixed groups (cleric, council member, catechist or parent) and receive the assignment to visit one or two homes.

C - Go as a friendly visit, even taking a gift (cookies or an icon print for the child). Share your feelings on the program and how much it has meant to you as a parent or catechist, or how much you feel the need to pass on your Tradition in these troubled times. Leave your program information material, even if they have already been distributed, and attempt to get a specific commitment from the parents to attend the bring their children to the next session.

D - Meet back at the church for refreshments and an evaluation of your efforts.
E - The evening before the next session, call the parents and remind them of their commitment.

Be prepared to reschedule some visits to families who will not be available on the determined day or to involve people willing to visit who themselves have commitments at the time you have selected.

If a community commits itself to this kind of program once or twice a year, and it becomes known as a regular feature of parish life, each visit will generate some results.

FAMILY PROBLEMS

It is not uncommon that families who have little energy to devote to their children’s religious education are in fact having problems in their life together. When you notice erratic attendance which your calls and reminders do not affect, notify your priest. Suggest to him that the families in question may be having problems in their own relationships, finances, health or other aspects of their life. His reaching out to these families can help draw them into the caring community which the Church is meant to be. Your attentiveness to these signs can have a significant effect in their lives.

For Your Reflection

1. What do you presently do to stimulate parental involvement in your program?

2. What one thing would you do next to assure their support?

3. What is the attitude of your catechists to parents who do not regularly support your program?
Needs Assessment Form

Compose a cover letter indicating your purpose in soliciting parents' responses and your procedure for returning the completed form (collection basket, return envelope, give to the child next week, etc.).

Collate the responses for each grade level. Allow the catechists to review the collated responses (rather than the individual forms). Make parents aware of the responses and what you intend to do in response either in the parish bulletin or a separate letter or discuss at a meeting.

We Need You . . .

Dear Parent:

Please take some time within the next few days to complete this questionnaire. First, list the grade levels of your children. Then proceed through the questionnaire, using the code to indicate your perception of your child's response to the program.

1. Please list the grade levels of your children in the program, starting with your youngest child.

2. Using the following code, answer the questions for each child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   a) Your child's overall attitude toward the catechetical program
   b) Your child's satisfaction with the catechist.
   c) Your child's sense of identity as a Melkite.
   d) Your child's sense of identity as a member of this parish.
   e) Evidence of your child's learning doctrine.
   f) Evidence of your child's positive attitude toward God and the Church
   g) Evidence of your child's willingness to pray
   h) Improved participation at the Liturgy.
   i) Indication of an awareness of the Lord as a friend.
   j) Sensitivity to the needs of others.

3. For you as a parent, what has been the most effective aspect of the program this year?

4. What part of the program needs the most improvement?

5. Do you have any further recommendations concerning the program?
Dealing with special categories of students in your program

An area which is not often considered in the average parish until the need is at hand is that of how to deal with special cases: students who, in one way or another, do not fit into the average parishioner category for which the catechetical curriculum is designed. Usually, when such needs are realized, people shrug their shoulders and try to forget about them. Is there anything that the church school can do in these situations?

**CATCH-UP STUDENTS**

From time to time students will be registered in the parish program who have had little or no religious formation whatever. It may be that parents realized their child's need later than usual, or that the parents themselves are newcomers to the Church. Whatever the reason, the older child will feel uncomfortable and out of place when he or she does not know what the others in their age group knows. And so it is important, especially for the third grade child or older, that they are given the opportunity to catch up. Someone should be prepared to serve as a catechist for such cases. Perhaps a professional teacher, who does not want to take a regular class in the program, would be willing to work with your catch-up students when the need arises.

An introductory program for such students should include:

- **A Basic Presentation of Faith** - Utilize the *Parental Guide for Celebrating Faith* (God With Us Publications - cf Chapter 14) to present the Nicene Creed, the fundamental expression of the historic Christian faith.

- **Sacramental Preparation** - If the child has not been baptized, utilize in full the lessons on the mysteries of Christian initiation from the *God With Us series*. Further help on this topic may be drawn from the eparchy's pre-baptismal catechesis for parents. See your pastor for this latter material.

- **Behavioral Objectives** - Work on assuring that the child can perform the behavioral objectives appropriate to his or her age (cf Chapter 15). While the other children in the group may have forgotten the cognitive information, they probably remember how to make the sign of the cross, say the Lord's Prayer, look up New Testament references, etc. Catch-up students should be given the chance to learn these practices before joining their age group.

**ERRATIC ATTENDANCE**

In every parish there are children who have been in the program for some time but never keep up with their group because of erratic attendance at classes. They become frustrated when they do attend because they are behind the others. The catechist becomes frustrated from going back to the beginning each time a straggler is present. The regular students become bored because they've heard it before.

When poor attendance is the result of illness, you may wish to have an aide take the appropriate work to the child. In any case, parents should be informed of what they can do to help the child keep up. Others in the group should be invited to sign a get-well card, regularly if the child is absent for a lengthy period, and can be encouraged to call unless the parents object.

More often, however, erratic attendance is a pastoral problem, because it indicates that the child's parents are unable or unwilling to attend regularly. These cases should be brought to the pastor's attention so that he may visit and encourage the families involved. Since he is involved with many other things, you may have to bring this to his attention several times.

If pastoral visitation or calling brings no change in behavior, you may wish to consider having a special class for these erratic attenders. Lessons should be self-contained (ie not expected to be continued next week) and centered on the basics of the gospel and Church practice. Again, material on the Creed, basic behavioral objectives from the *God With Us series*, and the Great Feasts of the liturgical year provide ample material for such classes.

**LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION**

When children immigrate to the United States they quickly learn English. However, it is often not as quick as we would think. Most younger children need...
one or two years before they are fluent enough in English to be considered on a par with other students. If theirs is not a family which encourages reading, their use of the language may be limited to ordinary conversational speech.

Even when children have a conversational knowledge of English, it is not likely that their religious vocabulary would be in English. People tend to continue to pray and express themselves religiously in their first language. In many parishes the custom of Arabic language services persists, and so the parents may never learn even the most basic prayers in English themselves. Even if they attend English services, they often are not able to associate the phrases they hear in English (e.g., Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) with the ones they learned in their first language. Hence those parents who try to teach their children to pray would rarely do so in English, even if they have been in this country for a few years. And so it is best to assume that the child has no experience with an English religious vocabulary.

When you have immigrants in your classes, it is always good to enlist the aid of others in your community who speak both languages as helpers. These persons can determine whether the children have any religious knowledge and/or whether they can equate their English-language learning with what they may have learned at home or overseas. If you doubt that the children can understand the catechist, the second-language aide may be employed to translate the lesson for as long as is necessary.

It is best to test the reading of all foreign-born students to determine if they are capable of understanding their grade level text. If not, perhaps other students could be enlisted to help by taping the lesson of the week. This will build community among the students as well as help comprehension.

At present the only bi-lingual resource available for use in the church school curriculum is the New Testament. An edition featuring English and Arabic translations in parallel columns is available through the Office of Educational Services.

DISABLED STUDENTS

It is said that approximately 12.5 percent of our population consists of handicapped persons, many of whom are unable to learn by conventional means. How can we adjust our catechetical programs to provide for the spiritual needs of the hearing impaired, the chronically ill, the neurologically impaired?

It may be that parents of special students are reluctant to put their children in a class not conducted by a certified special ed teacher. If this is the case, consider arranging for the parents themselves to learn the curriculum so that their children not be deprived of the ordinary religious formation in our Church.

Is there a special ed teacher in your parish or in another church who might be willing to help in special circumstances? If so, provide them with a copy of your curriculum material so that they can become familiar with it. Should there be families in the parish with children in need of special attention, you may let them know that this special ed catechist is available.

STEP FAMILIES

The ever increasing number of divorced and separated couples in our society means that we may have students in our programs who are the children of such households. The various custody and visitation arrangements their parents have concluded may mean that they are part of your catechetical program for a limited time each year. They may be living with a parent in your community but be with the other parent at the time of your church school program. Every effort must be made to work with the parishioner-parent to provide them with the tools they need to assure the basic religious formation of their child. Any assistance offered in this vein may also offer the single parent or the blended family a needed sense of community support in their own life as well.

The illustrations from family life in our basic catechetical curriculum presume an intact nuclear family. Catechists should be made aware that not all their students may come from such families. Catechists should also be sensitive to the feelings of
children who may sense that they are responsible for the breakup of their parents' marriage and firmly discourage this opinion. When confronted with the issue of divorce, catechists should be prepared to say that, while God wants marriages to last as long as His love for us lasts (always), He is not angry with those whose marriages do not last, especially if they are trying to follow Him in their lives.
The first task on the administrative level of coordinating a church school program concerns the arrangement of classes. This involves:

* Determining the makeup of the class
* Matching the curriculum to the class
* Designating the catechist(s), aides, and substitutes
* Arranging the schedule to include the required number of classes as well as special events

The most basic element in classroom management is providing for consistency in student groupings. This is especially important when the arrangement of church school classes does not follow public school grade levels. In ongoing programs you should try as much as possible to assign students to groups on the basis of the material they have covered. This presumes good record keeping on your part (see next chapter) and communication among the catechists. The child's previous experience in the program should be documented and that information passed on to the next year's catechist. If at all possible the catechist should spend time with the teacher who worked with this group the previous year to learn about the students and the way the class was organized. The coordinator should arrange such meetings if the catechists do not do it themselves.

BEGINNING A PROGRAM

Some parishes, while having a substantial number of children, may not have mounted a catechetical program before. When the program is begun they have a considerable number of children in the various grades who have little or no previous formation. Since each book in the curriculum builds on the preceding program, it would not be effective to start an older group on the material of the regular class.

In such circumstances, it is advisable to begin every group with the presentation on the Nicene Creed in the Parental Guide for Celebrating Faith (see Chapter 14). Children in grades 2-4 could then be brought through Books Two (sacraments) and Three (church), at least in highlight form. Older children should work through Book Four (New Testament) before attempting any other program. Before leaving the program they should cover Book Eight, the summary of Christian life.

By following this cycle for the first two years of a new program you will assure that the children have at least had a basic exposure to the principal elements of the Christian life (Creed, sacraments, and Scripture).

COMBINING CLASSES

Smaller parishes or parishes with small church schools often feel they cannot mount the full eight-grade program. There may be only one or two children in each grade or gaps of several years between the age groups. By the same token, there may be only a few persons ready to serve as catechists. How can our curriculum be adapted to such circumstances?

Having a small number of children in the program is not necessarily reason for combining classes. Erratic attendance in a class of three, however, is likely to so frustrate catechists and students that little learning will result. If you must combine classes, the following principles should be employed:

* Do activities together which depend on group participation, such as learning chants, or celebrating liturgical and other occasions. In these times have older children take responsibility for helping the younger. This in itself is a learning experience.

* Separate according to age groupings for concept retention activities as much as possible. Thus in a Pascha Activity Day program, for example, middle school students could work with younger children in coloring eggs or learning the troparion of Pascha while dividing into separate groups to reflect on the meaning of these activities.

* Maintain age groups together until the entire curriculum has been covered by all involved. This demands good record keeping if next year's catechist is to know what the class has already covered (see Chapter 24).

* Divide the curriculum as the follows:

Group One - OCEC preschool material, Discover (First Book).
Group Two - Life, Together (Books Two and Three).
Group Three - Promise (Book Four).
Group Four - Share, Respond (Books Five and Six).
Group Five - Becoming, Journey (Books Seven and Eight).

* Arrange for independent study when you have large age gaps. If you have 10 or 15 children grades 3 and under, a similar group in high school, and only one or two in between, do not ignore these few. Arrange for independent study and tutoring at the appropriate grade level. This may be done at another time than the group classes. You may then allow them to serve as "junior aides" in the younger classes.

By naming your classes after patron saints, you avoid the identification with school classes. Thus five groups could be named as follows:

Group One - Guardian Angel (preschool, first grade)
Group Two - St Barbara (second and third grades)
Group Three - St John the Theologian (fourth grade)
Group Four - St George (fifth and sixth grades)
Group Five - Ss Constantine and Helen (seventh and eighth grades)

Icons of these patrons can be placed in the class icon corner and individual icon prints or buttons distributed to each member of the class. Many parishes observe the name day of the class grouping by involving the group in the Liturgy of the day in a special way.

SMALLER PROGRAM GROUPINGS

In small parishes (50-75 members), especially if they are without facilities of their own, a church school program seems impossible to mount. When one or two families with children become involved and see no effort to provide instruction for their children, they likely will not remain in the parish. If they have an interest in their children's spiritual life and the parish offers no program, it would be wrong for them to remain. What can be done in such circumstances?

One simple way of providing an opportunity for learning even for one or two students is to base the weekly lesson on the Sunday Gospel which all hear together. In many parishes people step forward to stand under the Gospel Book. The children can be taught to do this, then leave during the homily for the church hall or vestibule where one or two catechists deliver a lesson based on the Scripture they have just heard. Alternate the teaching responsibility between two or three people so that no one misses the full Liturgy or is committed to participation more than a month at a time. It also provides variety for the children and build relationships between the children and adult members of the community. It also provides an effective children's ministry to young people whose parents may not bring them to a church school class because they attend parochial school.

Another approach is to gather all the children together for a single presentation by the catechist. The children can then be divided according to ages. Younger children working under the supervision of one or two teenagers (prepared in advance) could work on a simple craft project related to the presentation. Older children could work directly with the catechist doing more advanced work. The advantage to this approach is that it gives teens (who are presumably few in number as well) a responsibility and a learning experience in the church as well as providing for the needs of the smaller children.

A third approach has the catechist meeting with the younger children for a presentation while the older children are allowed to go to a supervised reading nook where appropriate materials (books or videos) are provided. Halfway through the session the groups change places. The older children meet with the catechist while the younger visit the reading nook. The advantage to this is that people who may not be ready to teach a lesson or supervise a creative project may be more comfortable reading or watching a video with the children. This, too, can be effective provided that these persons are taught how to lead such activities creatively.

Thus, while the full curriculum may not be practical with four or five children, this does not mean that these children cannot be given meaningful learning experiences based on the liturgical cycle of feasts and readings.

DESIGNING A CALENDAR

A year-long calendar is essential for proper planning, management and coordination of activities in the church school for two important reasons. The first concerns the integrity of the program itself. The principal elements of a well-rounded program are many, based on our vision of Church (see Chapter Six, above) and of catechesis. In order to reflect this vision the parish catechetical program must strive to integrate these various elements into a coherent experience of Church. This demands that we not consider only one project at a time without reference to others, but that we see how all our activities throughout the year come together as a whole.
The second reason concerns the need of people to be prepared mentally and psychologically to see the program as a whole. This demands that the calendar be prepared as early as possible and circulated as widely as possible among all the members of the parish (clergy, parish council, parents and students, active parish groups) to enable people to begin thinking through the year ahead.

Your calendar will reflect a number of concerns:

* The Church’s liturgical cycle
* Any Parish-wide activities, such as the bishop’s pastoral visitation
* The requirements of the curriculum, such as the number of lessons in the book
* Desired additional elements, based on our vision of Church and the requirements of youth ministry

Prior to planning your calendar you need to compile the following data:

1. An accurate calendar for the coming catechetical year (this usually overlaps two civil years)
2. A listing of all civil holidays which might affect your programming (eg Labor Day, Thanksgiving, etc)
3. A listing of the Great Feasts and Fasts of our Church
4. A listing of all regularly occurring parish activities (eg parish council meetings) and annual activities (eg the bazaar or picnic)
5. A listing of any special events planned in the parish (eg anniversary celebration)
6. A listing of any diocesan or interparish events (eg convention, NAMY retreat, ECDD adult enrichment program)
7. A listing of any activities in the wider community important to your parishioners (eg ethnic festivals)

Into this framework you will insert the following:

* Your registration/orientation date
* Your regular class sequence (26 lessons in the God With Us sequence)
* Any special aspects required in the curriculum (eg visit of the priest, confessions)
* Any other special projects of your program

In addition to the 26 class sessions envisioned in the curriculum, the church school program should include several special events. The following are the most common and effective supplements to the full scale church school calendar:

September - Registration and opening of church school
December - St Nicholas Day party (December 6); Confession Service for the Christmas Fast
January - Theophany celebration (reopening of classes)
February - Lenten Penance Service (often on Cheesefare Sunday)
March - Confession Service for the Great Fast
April - Lazarus Saturday Activity Day
May - End-of-year Celebration (Pentecost)

Once your schedule has been determined, a master calendar should be prepared and distributed throughout the parish. It should list each day on which classes will be held as well as each special event along with the date, time, place, and any cost or preparation involved.

Some parish councils prepare calendars for one or two years in advance. If this is the case in your community, your catechetical calendar should be prepared as part of this master calendar. If this is not done in your parish, you would do well to prepare your catechetical calendar early in the spring, so that other parish organizations will have your calendar to go by as they plan their activities.

A sample coordinator’s calendar integrating all these aspects of the church school program with the liturgical cycle and the coordinator’s personal activities is found in Appendix A. Blank planning calendars for catechists may be obtained from God With Us Publications, 225 Olivia Street, McKees Rocks, PA 15136.

MOVABLE FEASTS

To help you in planning, the following dates for the (Western) paschal cycle has been prepared. This may help you assign lessons and otherwise determine those elements in your calendar which depend on Pascha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cheesefare Sunday</th>
<th>Pascha</th>
<th>Ascension</th>
<th>Pentecost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>Mar. 26</td>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>May 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>Apr. 15</td>
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Ascension - May 24
Pentecost - June 3

1991

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 10
Pascha - Mar. 31
Ascension - May 9
Pentecost - May 19

Cheesefare Sunday - Mar. 1
Pascha - Apr. 19
Ascension - May 28
Pentecost - June 7

1992

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 21
Pascha - Apr. 11
Ascension - May 20
Pentecost - May 30

1993

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 13
Pascha - Apr. 3
Ascension - May 12
Pentecost - May 22

1994

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 26
Pascha - Apr. 16
Ascension - May 25
Pentecost - June 4

1995

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 18
Pascha - Apr. 7
Ascension - May 16
Pentecost - May 26

1996

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 9
Pascha - Mar. 30
Ascension - May 8
Pentecost - May 18

1997

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 22
Pascha - Apr. 12
Ascension - May 21
Pentecost - May 31

1998

Cheesefare Sunday - Feb. 14
Pascha - Apr. 4
Ascension - May 13
Pentecost - May 23

1999
24 - INITIATING AND KEEPING RECORDS

Recording data on personnel and programs for the church school

There is no need to be concerned with record keeping if you have absolute certitude that you will be working with the parish program for many years to come. If, however, you are mortal like the rest of us, you know that there are any number of reasons why you may leave it: your own health or that of a loved one, relocation, change of interest or role in the parish, etc. And unless you perversely want the next person to start from scratch like you may have done, you need to keep a permanent record of all that you do in the program.

The permanent records each program should maintain are the following:

* Permanent Catechist Records (detailing the training and experience of each of your personnel)
* Permanent Student Records (listing their class attendance and achievements)
* Permanent Inventory of Equipment and Resources (see Chapter 27)
* Permanent Financial Records (see Chapter 28)
* Program Log

Forms for the first two types mentioned are found at the end of this chapter. It is suggested that they be duplicated on sturdy card stock and kept in three-ring binders in a secure place. Since most parish records today are computerized, you may wish to do the same with the church school records. You should still keep printouts handy, especially as meetings are often held away from the computer.

Another binder should be kept as a Program Log, recording whatever events you conduct. It should include a copy of the Program Planning Guide (see Chapter 13) as well as your evaluation for each event along with copies of any promotional material (letters, bulletin notices, flyers, etc), handouts or lesson plans used in the program. You will not have to reinvent the wheel each year when it is time to repeat the program.

NON-PERMANENT RECORDS AND FORMS

In addition some records are used regularly throughout the program season. At the end, they may be destroyed and at least some of the information transferred to the permanent records. Of these the following are needed when you register students at the beginning of the church school year:

* Registration Form (for enrolling children in the program)
* Get Acquainted Form (for introducing students to one another on registration day)
* Church School Calendar (listing the year’s classes and other events)

Some parishes also distribute a Program Book to parents at this time, detailing the objectives of the program for the year ahead. Forms for the Program Book given at the end of this chapter are based on the expectations in the God With Us Series (see Chapter 15) and are arranged for printing on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper folded once as a booklet.

The following forms are intended to be used during the course of the church school year:

* Attendance Chart
* Performance Chart
* Progress Reports

As with the Program Book, the information on the Performance Chart and the Progress Reports are based on the objectives of the series.

The Progress Reports given in this book are designed for the end of the year in that they list all the objectives of the year’s text. It is recommended that you issue progress reports more frequently (at least two other times during the year), as these serve to encourage further attendance and progress. These intermediate reports can follow the same format, but would include only those objectives which have been covered at the time.

During the year two other forms are helpful:

* Class Lists, giving the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the members of each group (including the catechists)
* Mailing Lists, and here again the computer can help. Prepare several sets of mailing labels for each class both for the students and their
parents within a month of registration. These will be useful to send reminders to absentees and to announce special events.

The last group of forms is concerned with the winding down of your year’s program and includes:

* A Certificate of Completion for those who attended faithfully throughout the year

* A Certificate of Recognition for those who attained the objectives of the year’s program

* Evaluation Forms for the families and the catechists

* A Report to the Diocese on the year’s program

The way you begin and end the year’s activities is important in that they convey to parents a sense of the importance of the program to the parish and the seriousness with which the staff is working for their children. See Chapter 21 for models of Registration-Orientation and End-of-Year programs.
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton  
Religious Formation Program  
Registration

Family Name___________________Address_____________________Telephone_______________________

Father's Name___________________Mother's Name_______________________

If either parent is not living with the family, indicate name, address, and telephone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children's Names</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Baptism</th>
<th>School &amp; Grade</th>
<th>Special Needs</th>
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If this is your child(ren)'s first year in this program, please circle his or her name above.

Family Covenant

We realize our responsibility to see that our children are raised in the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. In registering for the Religious Formation Program in this parish, we agree to see that our children regularly attend both the Divine Liturgy and the classes. We will do all we can to reinforce in our home the lessons taught in this Program. We realize that those involved in this Program give of themselves on a voluntary basis. We will do our utmost to assist them by seeing that our children arrive on time and remain until they are dismissed.

Parent's signature(s)

( ) Fee paid
GETTING TO KNOW YOU

I like people who

I'm happiest when

Wouldn't it be great if

I get really angry when

I think I'm pretty good at

If you want to make me feel good, tell me that

Compared to most people, I am different because

I wish God

To me, a beautiful person is

What I like about Church is

The one thing I wish I could do better is

I wish religion class was

I get excited about

My name is
### Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton
### Religious Formation Program
### Attendance Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade or Group Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Catechist’s Name</th>
<th>Semester</th>
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<th>Student</th>
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**Attendance Codes:**
- P (present)
- A (absent)
- E (excused)
- L (late)
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton
Religious Formation Program
Performance Record

In the spaces below record the student's mastery of the grade objectives listed on your progress report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
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Progress Codes: E (excellent progress) VG (very good progress) G (good progress) I (needs improvement)

(Numbers refer to the grade objectives listed in Chapter 15 which should be duplicated on the reverse of each of these forms for each catechist.)
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton
Religious Formation Program
Student's Permanent Record

Name_________________________________________ Date of Birth______________

Address________________________________________ Telephone________________

Father's Name____________________ Mother's Name__________________________

If either parent is not living with the family, indicate name, address, and telephone:

If either parent is not a member of this parish, please specify church affiliation, if any:

Child's Date and Place of Baptism:

First enrolled in Religious Formation Program: School & Grade:

Special Needs:

Date of withdrawal: Reason:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Group/Grade</th>
<th>Program Evaluation</th>
<th>Catechist</th>
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General Remarks (please indicate date of each notation. Continue on other side):
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton  
Religious Formation Program  
Catechist's Permanent Record

Name_________________________________________ Telephone (home)____________

Address___________________________________________________________________________

Occupation______________________________________Telephone (work)________________

Catechetical Experience: Date of first involvement in parish program: ________________

Length of service in program: Amount of time available to catechetical ministry each week:

Responsibilities in the program by year (indicate grade level if applicable):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Have you any other teaching experience (specify if professional or in other parish programs):

Please indicate any courses you may have taken in the past in any catechist formation or adult enrichment programs:

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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Place Taken</th>
<th>Year Taken</th>
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On the other side of this page, please indicate any special skills you may have. These may enrich the catechetical program in ways you have not imagined.
God grant you many years!

In the catechetical ministry this year.

In recognition of your dedicated service to this parish

Presented To

Certificate of Appreciation
Religious Formation Program

in recognition of faithful attendance

at the parish

This Certificate Is Awarded To

"... keep to what you have been taught.
and know to be true."

2 Timothy 3:14

Pastor

Catechist
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton
Religious Formation Program
Catechist's Year-End Evaluation

We are stewards of God's creation. This means that we are accountable to God for how we use the gifts we have been given. Christ's parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:12-27) reminds us that, first, our gifts are intended to be used and developed. Secondly, they are to be used for the Giver and His Kingdom. Thirdly, we are accountable to Him for what we do with these gifts.

In the parable the servant seems surprised that he is accountable in this way. He doesn't seem to know what was expected of him. We in the catechetical ministry have something of an edge on him: there are certain expectations of which we are aware. And we can evaluate ourselves in the light of these common expectations with a view toward improving our efforts next year and thus rendering a more creditable account of our stewardship.

A - About Your Role

1. Has serving in the catechetical program been what you expected it to be? Explain.

2. Did you feel prepared for this service? If not, what could have been done to help you feel more prepared?

3. Did the training or formation experiences provided help you in your understanding of our faith or your role in communicating it to others?

4. Do you feel that adequate supervision time and energy was available to you from the pastor and/or coordinator?

5. How well were your particular talents and abilities utilized in the program this year?

6. Did you feel your contribution was appreciated by the parish leadership, the parents and/or the parish as a whole?

7. How could support for catechists be improved in your parish setting?

8. How could your catechetical team support one another more during the coming year?
B - About the Program

9. All things considered, what one thing do you feel is truly a strong point about the parish program?

10. What do you feel is truly a weak point about the program?

11. What one thing should your catechetical team concentrate on doing more of, doing better, or changing this coming year to make the overall program more effective?

C - About Your Class

12. What was your principal goal for the group this past year?

13. How successfully was it realized?

14. What would you do differently next year?

15. Other comments:
The Parish Religious Formation Program exists to help you, the parents, in raising your children in the love of God and the knowledge of His ways. Your input is important if our efforts are to have increased success. Please take the time to complete this questionnaire and return it to the parish at your earliest convenience.

A - Your Impressions

1. For you, as a parent, what was the most effective aspect of the parish religious formation program this past year?

2. What part of the program needs the most improvement?

3. Did you receive adequate information in advance about the direction and the schedule of the year's program?

4. Did you receive sufficient notice about special activities during the year?

5. Was opportunity to give input on how the program was functioning available to you during the year?

6. Would you be interested in formation sessions designed for parents while the children are attending their classes?

7. Would you be willing to help in the program next year? In what capacity?
B - Your Child's Impression

8. How would you rate your child's overall attitude toward the parish program?

9. What was your child's attitude toward the teacher?

10. Using the following codes: 1 = Good, 2 = Fair, 3 = Poor, please indicate:

( ) Your child's sense of identity as a member of the Church

( ) Your child's sense of identity as a member of this parish

( ) Your child's attitude toward God and the faith

( ) Your child's willingness to pray

( ) Your child's participation in the Liturgy

( ) Your child's sensitivity to the needs of others

11. Do you have any further recommendations concerning the program?
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton
Religious Formation Program
Year-End Diocesan Report

Parish Name____________________________________________Year_________________

Address____________________________________________________________________

Coordinator____________________________________Telephone__________________

Number of staff_____________ Number of Students___________________________

A - Your Catechists:

1. How great was your turnover among the catechists from last year to this:

2. When did you recruit your new catechists?

3. Did you utilize the ECDD Recruitment Program (Discerning Your Call) in this process?

4. Please indicate the catechist formation opportunities afforded this past year:

   ( ) Initial Catechist’s Workshop

   ( ) ECDD Adult Enrichment course(s)

   ( ) Other (please describe):

5. Please indicate any catechist support activities you conducted:

B - Your Families

6. How would you rate parental support of your program?

7. What can be done next year to increase that support?

8. Please indicate any activities involving parents you conducted:
C - Your Classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Catechist(s)</th>
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Please indicate any material, other than the *God With Us* curriculum and materials recommended there, which you used in your classes which could be useful to others:

Please indicate any special activities (other than the class sessions) you held during the past year and include any printed material when sending this report:

- ( ) Blessing of Catechists
- ( ) Opening Service/Orientation Program
- ( ) Parents' Open House
- ( ) Theophany Observance
- ( ) Church Patronal Day
- ( ) Other Feastday Programs:
- ( ) Penance Service/Confessions
- ( ) St Nicholas Observance
- ( ) End of Year Celebration
- ( ) Class Patronal Days
- ( ) Activity Days

( ) Other Special Events:

Have you any requests from or suggestions to the Diocesan Office at this time:
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton

Religious Formation for Children
GRADE EIGHT (TEXTBOOK: JOURNEY)

Summary of Doctrine:

The final book of the God With Us series addresses itself to the young Christian who is continuing to develop values in reference to his expanding life situation. To assist him in this, book eight presents an overview of our Church's Byzantine spiritual tradition, a lifestyle in harmony with the Christian worldview presented in book seven. We see the many aspects of our liturgical and ascetical heritage as examples of God With Us: the Holy Spirit acting in the Church.

In book seven we stressed that the world - including ourselves - is in the process of becoming: that it is not yet all that it is meant to be. Belief in this process has led Christians to recognize that life is a journey, a moving toward the union with God which is our fulfillment. The eighth grader begins opening himself to the adult Christian life to the degree that he sees the varied elements of Church life as personal encounters with the God who is calling him to the completion of his journey in the Kingdom.

Most lessons in book eight also contain a supplemental "Liturgical Study" segment. Here various aspects of the Divine Liturgy are considered as they relate to the principal theme of the chapter. The Liturgy is seen, not simply as one aspect of Church practice, but as the summation of our entire life in Christ.

Prayers To Be Learned:

Continued use of a daily Rule of Prayer
Introduction to Fasting
The order of the Divine Liturgy

Sacraments Presented:

All the sacraments and related services are reviewed in general
Each sacrament is also the subject of a special lesson in reference to the journey of Christian life

Feastdays Celebrated:

The Lord's Day, Pascha, and the Twelve Great Feasts are reviewed
Your Child and Character Start

Children. We welcome the opportunity to help our children and families to learn about and understand the teachings of Christ. We can partner with you to support and strengthen your child's faith formation at home. We can also encourage your children to take part in religious education classes and other activities.

Religious Formation in Our Church

The Church's mission is to provide spiritual formation for our young people. This involves teaching them about the Catholic faith and helping them to live out its principles. We believe that religious education should be a part of everyday life, not just something that happens in a classroom. This is why we encourage families to participate in religious education programs and events.

Our Approach to Religious Formation

We believe that children learn best through hands-on activities. Our approach to religious formation involves incorporating prayer, reflection, and hands-on activities into the curriculum. We also provide opportunities for children to share their own faith stories and experiences. This helps them to connect with the teachings of the Church and to see how they can apply these lessons in their own lives.

Be Our Partner in Religious Formation

We invite you to be a part of your child's religious formation. This can include helping them to prepare for their religious education classes, supporting them in their faith journey, and being a model of faith for your child. Together, we can nurture the faith of our young people and help them to grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith.
GRADE ONE (TEXTBOOK: DISCOVER)

Summary of Doctrine:

This program introduces the child to the gradual discovery of creation in the light of faith. Its aim is to help the child slowly acquire a sense that God at the heart of his entire world. All of life is a gift for which we render thanks to God. This person-oriented focus shows the ultimate meaning of life as a communion of love with a personal, loving, caring God and with all mankind.

God is presented as the Father who created us, loves us, and cares for us and is forgiving when we do wrong. Jesus Christ is God’s Son, the greatest gift of the Father, who reveals His father to us. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father through the Son, is present and working in the Church today.

Prayers To Be Learned:

- Sign of the Cross
- Doxology ("Glory to the Father...")
- Lord's Prayer
- Prayers Before and After Meals
- Trisagion ("Holy God...")

Feasts Celebrated:

- Nativity of Christ (Dec 25)
- Good Friday
- Pascha
- Pentecost

GRADE SIX (TEXTBOOK: RESPOND)

Summary of Doctrine:

By grade six children are striving to surround their lives with order, collecting and arranging information as well as their belongings. At the same time, as they continue to establish their own identity, they look to heroes as leaders in the business of living. Thus book six introduces the Old Testament as it tells the story of the People of God. Themes of covenant, promise, election, and fulfillment are explored through the great figures of that story. The great heroes of faith in the Old Testament are looked at as models and forerunners pointing to the one foundation, Jesus Christ.

The story continues in the Church as the various Traditions within Christianity develop. The Church’s past is seen as a prolog to the present and a reminder that we are now part of that story, called to serve the Lord in our own day as members of His Body.

Prayers To Be Learned:

- Continued use of the Psalms
- Beginning use of Stichera and Troparia

Sacraments Presented:

- All seven are reviewed

Feastdays Celebrated:

- Feasts of the Incarnation (Dec. 25, Feb. 2, Mar 25)
- Feasts of the Theotokos (Sept. 8, Oct. 1, Nov. 21, Aug. 15)
- Feasts of St. John the Baptist (Sept. 23, June 24, Aug 29)
- Feasts of the Twelve Apostles
- Feasts of the Seven Ecumenical Councils
Pentecost
Pascha
Good Friday
Holy Tuesday
Annunciation (Mar. 25)
Theophany (Jan. 6)
Nativity of Christ (Dec. 25)
Ecclesiastical Calendar:

Pascha
Annunciation (Mar. 25)
Theophany (Jan. 6)
Nativity of Christ (Dec. 25)
Ecclesiastical Calendar:

Suitable Prayers:


Salutation to Mary (Hail, Mother of God) (2)
Nicean Creed

Prayers to be Learned:

and joy.

in Church and says "Our Father", learning Church in prayer. Service
as one with Christ through these mysteries. He joins with the brothers
baptism, the Church, and the Eucharist, and is helped to see himself
Eucharist, or Holy Communion, the Church with the others. For the child
accept this information and that its story of mankind, he has for his child
The child has been called by Jesus to be His follower. His response

Summary of Doctrine:

GRADE TWO (TEXTBOOK LIFE)

GRADE FIVE (TEXTBOOK SHARE)
GRADE THREE (TEXTBOOK: TOGETHER)

Summary of doctrine:

Book Three leads the children to see the importance of coming together as God's People, faithful to God and united in belief, love, and service. Together we believe the Good News of salvation. Together we join in praying, listening to the Word, and breaking bread in the Eucharist. Together we serve one another in a bond of love.

We see the Church made visible in the church building and realized in the local community, under the leadership of our hierarchs. We see the Church as the communion of saints called to share fully, as does the Mother of God, in the divine glory of God's kingdom.

Prayers Taught:

- Invocation of the Holy Spirit ("O heavenly King...")
- Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian

Sacraments Presented:

- Baptism
- Chrismation
- Eucharist
- Repentance
- Priesthood

Feasts Celebrated:

- Nativity of Christ (Dec. 25)
- Great Lent
- Holy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Pascha
- Ascension Thursday
- Pentecost
- Sunday of All Saints
- Dormition of the Theotokos (Aug. 15)

GRADE FOUR (TEXTBOOK: PROMISE)

Summary of Doctrine:

Book Four guides the growing child to an awareness that God has given the promise of life and that He fulfills it in the person of His Son, Jesus. In Christ we find the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the One on whom the basis of our moral lives is founded.

The students are led as people of faith to a deeper awareness of divine life by being introduced directly to the living world of the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels. Each student receives a copy of the New Testament which becomes a source of prayer during this year. Special stress is laid on the Exodus and the Ten Commandments, the two Great Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Beatitudes. Sin and repentance are expressed in terms of faithfulness and presented in the light of Peter's betrayal and Christ's forgiveness after the resurrection.

Prayers To Be Learned:

- Use of the Bible in prayer
- Beginning use of the Psalms
- The Ten Commandments
- The Beatitudes

Sacraments Presented:

- Repentance

Feasts Celebrated:

- Nativity of Christ (Dec. 25)
- Theophany (Jan. 6)
- Annunciation (Mar. 25)
- Great Lent
- Good Friday
- Pascha
- Transfiguration of Christ (Aug. 6)
Melkite Greek Catholic
Eparchy of Newton
Religious Education
Progress Report

Other comments:
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator

Date:

Catechist

---

Grade One Progress Report

E - Excellent  VG - Very Good  G - Good  I - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:
- ( ) Knows the catechist and fellow group members
- ( ) Can thank God for all His gifts
- ( ) Can make the sign of the cross, a metany, and a prostration
- ( ) Can venerate the Scriptures and icons
- ( ) Can pray the Lord's Prayer and the doxology from memory
- ( ) Can pray the Prayers before and after meals
- ( ) Can sing the Trisagion and the basic responses from the Liturgy
- ( ) Can sing "Christ is Risen" and exchange the paschal greeting

Religious Knowledge:
- ( ) Knows God the Father is the source of all goodness
- ( ) Knows Jesus is His Son, who shows us the Father
- ( ) Knows the Holy Spirit is active today in the Church
- ( ) Knows we honor God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- ( ) Knows the Bible is God's Word to us
- ( ) Knows Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth
- ( ) Knows Pascha is the celebration of Jesus' death and resurrection
- ( ) Knows Pentecost is the celebration of the Holy Spirit

Religious Feeling:
- ( ) Appreciates that God loves, cares for, and forgives us
- ( ) Appreciates that we are called to love and forgive one another
- ( ) Appreciates that prayer is a turning to God in thanksgiving for His love
- ( ) Appreciates that the icon corner is a special place for prayer, to be approached reverently
- ( ) Appreciates that the Bible is a holy book, to be listened to attentively
- ( ) Appreciates that Pascha is our greatest feast, to be celebrated with joy
- ( ) Appreciates that we have confidence before God because the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts

Other:
- ( ) Enjoys learning in class
- ( ) Respects and loves others in the class
- ( ) Shows willingness,alertness, and creativity in group activities
- ( ) Pays attention in class appropriate for age
- ( ) Respects order and procedure in class activities

Attendance: Class was held ___ times for this evaluation period. The child was absent ___ times.
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator

Catechist

Date:

Grade Two Progress Report

E - Excellent VG - Very good G - Good I - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:
( ) Can perform the practices taught in the first grade
( ) Exhibits appropriate behavior on entering the church and receiving Communion and blessed bread
( ) Can pray the Proper of "Hail O Mother of God", the Nicene Creed, and the Prayer before Communion from memory
( ) Can sing the liturgical hymns presented (First Antiphon, All of you, We praise you, One is holy, We have seen the true light, Let our mouths be filled, O heavenly King)

Religious Knowledge:
( ) Knows Jesus' twelve disciples are those whom He called to follow Him
( ) Knows Mary is the Mother of God
( ) Knows the Theophany celebrates Jesus' baptism in the Jordan
( ) Knows we receive the new life in Christ through baptism
( ) Knows the signs of the new life we receive in baptism are water and the baptismal robe
( ) Knows in chrismation we are sealed in this new life with the Holy Spirit
( ) Knows in the Divine Liturgy we remember Jesus and He becomes present to us
( ) Knows in the Eucharist we are nourished by Jesus, the Bread of life.
( ) Knows Sunday is the Lord's Day, the celebration of Jesus' resurrection

Religious Feeling:
( ) Appreciates that at our baptism God has called each of us to follow Him
( ) Appreciates that the Holy Spirit, who came to us at our chrismation, will never leave us
( ) Appreciates that the Divine Liturgy is our thanksgiving for the gift of God's love
( ) Appreciates that, because we are part of God's family, we love God and each other
( ) Appreciates that, because we are part of God's family, we celebrate the Lord's Day and the Great Feasts

Other:
( ) Enjoys learning in class
( ) Respects and loves others in the class
( ) Shows willingness, alertness, and creativity in group activities
( ) Pays attention in class appropriate for age
( ) Respects order and procedure in class activities
Melkite Greek Catholic
Eparchy of Newton
Religious Education
Progress Report

Other Comments

Attendance: [ ] Class was held — please list evaluation points. The child was absent:
- [ ] did not participate in class activities
- [ ] participated in class activities
- [ ] showed initiative in discussions and contributed to group activities
- [ ] showed initiative in discussions
- [ ] behaves or listens in class
- [ ] Before leaving the class

Other Comments:
- [ ] Appreciated that responsibility is a virtue to God. I want to come closer to Him.
- [ ] Appreciation that effort is how we can earn love from God
- [ ] Appreciation that faith is to trust in God's loving concern for us.
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator

Date:

Catechist

Grade Three Progress Report

E - Excellent   VG - Very good   G - Good I - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:
( ) Can perform the practices taught in the first and second grades
( ) Can identify the name of the parish church and the major elements of the church building (vestibule, nave, sanctuary)
( ) Can identify the Holy Table and what is on it (tabernacle, gospel book, cross)
( ) Venerates icons in the appropriate manner.
( ) Recognizes differences in the Church's liturgical worship
( ) Can pray the Prayer of St Ephrem the Syrian with prostrations
( ) Can identify the meaning and use of the holy shroud
( ) Can sing the liturgical hymns presented (Antiphons and Entrance Hymn from the Divine Liturgy, Let my prayer rise like incense, We bow in worship, and The Noble Joseph)

Religious Knowledge:
( ) Knows the Church is the People of God: Jesus' disciples who follow Him as their leader.
( ) Knows the church building is divided into the vestibule, the nave, and the sanctuary.
( ) Knows the signs of God's presence in the church building are the holy table with the tabernacle, the gospel book, and the cross.
( ) Knows icons are the holy images which remind us of God's presence in His saints.
( ) Knows worship is the Church's grateful remembrance of what God has done for us.
( ) Knows service to one another is the way we imitate Jesus who came not to be served, but to serve.
( ) Knows the Great Lent is our 40-day period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in preparation for Pascha.
( ) Knows the Mystery of Repentance is our way to receive God's healing grace when we come to Him for forgiveness.
( ) Knows the saints are those who have been filled with God's love and are with Him in glory.
( ) Knows the Dormition of the Mother of God recalls that she was taken from earth to heaven at her falling asleep.

Religious Feeling:
( ) Appreciates that through his baptism he is a part of God's People, the Church.
( ) Appreciates that he is part of one community with the entire parish
( ) Appreciates that the church building and its furnishings reflect the presence of God.
Melkite Greek Catholic
Eparchy of Newton
Religious Education
Progress Report

( ) Enjoys learning in class
( ) Respects and loves others in the class
( ) Shows willingness, attitudes, and creativity in group activities
( ) Pays attention in class appropriate for age
( ) Respects order and procedure in class activities
( ) Shows willingness, attitudes, and creativity in group activities
( ) Respects and loves others in the class
( ) Follows learning in class

Parent's signature and comments:

Other comments:

Attendance:

Class was held — lines for this evaluation period. The child was absent.
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education at home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator                      Catechist

Date:

Grade Four Progress Report

E - Excellent         VG - Very good         G - Good I - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:

( ) Can perform the practices taught in previous grades.
( ) Can find scriptural citations in the New Testament by chapter and verse.
( ) Can distinguish between the Old and New Testaments.
( ) Can distinguish between the types of New Testament books, particularly the epistles and gospels.
( ) Can name the four gospels.
( ) Can recite the Ten Commandments.
( ) Can identify elements of the biblical accounts in the icons of the nativity, the theophany, the crucifixion, and the transfiguration.
( ) Can exchange the paschal greeting
( ) Can chant psalms in the traditional manner.
( ) Can sing the liturgical hymns presented (God Is With Us, the beatitudes, and the kondakia of the theophany and pascha)

Religious Knowledge:

( ) Knows the Bible is the inspired word of God
( ) Knows the Exodus was the God-led deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt
( ) Knows the Law was given by God to the Israelites as a covenant sign that they were His special people
( ) Knows Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises to the Israelites.
( ) Knows the feast of the Theophany celebrates God revealing Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
( ) Knows Jesus has given us a New Commandment: to love one another as He has loved us
( ) Knows the feast of the Transfiguration celebrates Jesus' glory as Son of God

Religious Feeling:

( ) Appreciates that the Scriptures are to be reverenced as the word of God
( ) Appreciates that the first three Commandments are a call to put God first in our lives
( ) Appreciates that the remaining Commandments are a call to love our neighbor
( ) Appreciates that God loves us faithfully even when we do not follow His way
( ) Appreciates that prayer and fasting are important aspects to our Lenten discipline and the ongoing Christian life.
The following marks indicate your child's general progress:

**E** - Excellent progress
**VG** - Very good progress
**G** - Good progress
**I** - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

**Religious Practice:**
- ( ) Can locate, read, and comprehend the designated New Testament passages.
- ( ) Can look up and cross reference entries in the Study Guide.
- ( ) Has become familiar with the Church's liturgical calendar.
- ( ) Has found information on his or her patron saint.
- ( ) Has prepared a report on one of the saints indicated.
- ( ) Can explain the meaning of the following terms: apostles, martyrs, bishops, deacons, missionaries, monks, nuns, spiritual guides, hymnographers, iconographers.
- ( ) Can distinguish the principal sections of the Divine Liturgy.

**Religious Knowledge:**
- ( ) Knows that we are incorporated into Christ in the mystery of baptism.
- ( ) Knows that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the mystery of chrismation.
- ( ) Knows that in the mystery of holy unction we receive strength and healing when we are sick.
- ( ) Knows that in the mystery of marriage a couple becomes an image of God in their love and faithfulness.
- ( ) Knows that in the mystery of holy orders (priesthood) men are set apart for ministry in the Church.
- ( ) Knows that a saint is someone who has lived a good life in Christ and is recognized by the Church as being with the Lord.
- ( ) Knows that the iconography in the Church building represents our relationship to God and the Church.

**Religious Feeling:**
- ( ) Appreciates that the saints, like the saints, he too has been called to share the divine life he has received.
- ( ) Appreciates that we should expect to grow and mature spiritually as well as physically.
- ( ) Appreciates that spiritual growth comes when we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.
- ( ) Appreciates that the Spirit gives a variety of gifts to members of His Church.
- ( ) Appreciates that all of us with our diverse gifts are one in Christ.
Melkite Greek Catholic
Eparchy of Newton
Religious Education
Progress Report

24-33


To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator

Date:

Catechist

Grade Six Progress Report

The following marks indicate your child's general progress:

E - Excellent progress
G - Good progress
I - Improvement needed
VG - Very good progress

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:

( ) Can chant psalms in the traditional manner.
( ) Can recognize and identify the major figures of the Old Testament (Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, David, Jeremiah, Job)
( ) Can recognize and identify the major figures of the New Testament (John the Baptist and the Twelve Apostles).
( ) Can recognize and identify important Church Fathers and missionaries.
( ) Has researched the beginnings of his diocesan and parish story.
( ) Can locate on the time line these moments in sacred history.

Religious Knowledge:

( ) Knows that God's dealings with the Israelites prepared for the coming of Christ.
( ) Knows that the Bible records God's promises (Old Testament), their fulfillment in Christ (Gospels), and the beginnings of His kingdom in the Church (Acts, Epistles)
( ) Knows that the Old Testament includes books of the Law, of Jewish history, wisdom books, and the writings of the prophets.
( ) Knows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's prophecies.
( ) Knows that God used the ministry of St Paul to extend the Church to many nations (the gentiles).
( ) Knows that the five apostolic patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem are the mother Churches of all Christians.
( ) Knows that the Fathers of the Church were the first great Church leaders after the time of the apostles.
( ) Knows that Ecumenical Councils are gatherings of all the world's bishops to teach and direct the Church.
( ) Knows that our Church's heritage is the Byzantine tradition, derived from the Greek speaking Churches of eastern Europe and the Middle East.
( ) Appreciates that God always works for good for those who love Him.
( ) Appreciates that, because God is with us, we can approach life in the confident
assurance of His presence.

Other:

( ) Enjoys learning in class
( ) Respects and loves others in the class
( ) Shows willingness, alertness, and creativity in group activities
( ) Pays attention in class appropriate for age
( ) Respects order and procedure in class activities

Attendance: Class was held ___ times for this evaluation period. The child was absent ___ times.

Other comments:

Parents' signature and comments:
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

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All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator

Date:

Catechist

Grade Seven Progress Report

The following marks indicate your child's general progress:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Excellent progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VG</td>
<td>Very good progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Good progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Improvement needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:
- ( ) Has begun to incorporate the Christian worldview into his reflections on life issues through a personal journal.
- ( ) Can read and comprehend the passages from the Church Fathers in the text.
- ( ) Has practiced the format for private prayer time provided.
- ( ) Has participated in and understands the purpose of the service of vespers.

Religious Knowledge:
- ( ) Knows that the meaning of the Scriptural accounts of creation is that God made all things in His wisdom and power and therefore they are all good.
- ( ) Knows that God created us in His image and likeness.
- ( ) Knows that the brokenness we experience in the world is the result of sin.
- ( ) Knows that sin and its effects have been present to mankind from the beginning.
- ( ) Knows that Christ came so that we could fulfill our true nature ("God became man so that man could become God").
- ( ) Knows that through the holy mysteries we share in Christ's victory over sin and death.
- ( ) Knows that God works even in death to bring us closer to Himself.
- ( ) Knows that life after death continues the choices made for or against God while on earth.
- ( ) Knows that the final stage in our growth will take place at the resurrection.

Religious Feeling:
- ( ) Appreciates that everything, including ourselves, is a gift of God.
- ( ) Appreciates that, since everything is also touched by sin, we must always strive to find God's purposes for them.
- ( ) Appreciates that, because we have been united to Christ in baptism, our purpose in life is to grow according to God's image and likeness.
- ( ) Appreciates that prayer is our most basic way of growing in our relationship to God.
- ( ) Appreciates that the writings of the Church Fathers are an important means to understand God's ways.
- ( ) Appreciates that icons represent spiritual realities which also help us understand God's plan for us.
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator                                  Catechist

Date:

Grade Eight Progress Report

The following marks indicate your child's general progress:

E - Excellent progress                      VG - Very good progress
G - Good progress                           I - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:
( ) Has begun to incorporate the Christian worldview into his plans and directions (personal journal).
( ) Can read and comprehend the passages from the Church Fathers in the text.
( ) Can name five of the outward forms of Tradition.
( ) Can identify the Great Feasts of the Church and tell what each of them celebrates.
( ) Has continued the practice of the private prayer time format begun in the previous year.
( ) Demonstrates beginning acquaintance with the basic Rule of Prayer of the Church in A Book for Prayer.
( ) Demonstrates a beginning acquaintance with the Jesus Prayer.

Religious Knowledge:
( ) Knows that God's love for mankind is revealed directly in the events recorded in Scripture and in a hidden way in all His creation.
( ) Knows that the highpoint of this revelation is Jesus Christ who reveals the Father and bestows the Holy Spirit on His believing people.
( ) Knows that the various forms of Tradition are ways in which the Holy Spirit guides the Church in the Christian life.
( ) Knows that Spiritual Guide is someone who helps us discern the meaning of Tradition for us today.
( ) Knows that the mysteries of repentance and holy unction are important ways in which Christ sustains and supports us in our weaknesses as we journey to Him.
( ) Knows that the first result of being faithful to the Christian life is that we reflect the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
( ) Knows that the ultimate result of being faithful to the Christian life is that we will be deified.
( ) Knows that deification (theosis) is the process by which believers are transformed into sharers in the very life of God.
Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchy of Newton Religious Education Progress Report

24-39
To the parents of

This report informs you of your child's progress so that we may work together in guiding his or her religious development. It should be stressed that this is not a graded "report card", but an information source for you, the parents, which should help you to continue your child's religious education in the home.

A close correspondence between what is presented in the religious education class and what is practiced daily in the home will develop skills, habits and attitudes which will lead to your child's continuing growth as a person as well as to his or her religious life.

All of the students are very special to us and each child has unique and wonderful gifts. We have enjoyed teaching and learning from your child and are eager to talk with you at length about your child and his or her religious development. We are happy to confer with you often to keep aware of your child's progress.

Coordinator

Catechist

Date:

Preschool Progress Report

The following marks indicate your child's progress:

E - Excellent  VG - Very good  G - Good  I - Improvement needed

The following items under each subject category were considered in making this evaluation:

Religious Practice:

( ) Knows the catechist and fellow group members
( ) Hears and sees changes in Liturgy and Church seasons
( ) Can make the sign of the cross using right hand and moving from right shoulder to left
( ) Can venerate icons
( ) Can pray the Lord's Prayer
( ) Has beginning familiarity with the Liturgy

Religious Knowledge:

( ) Has a beginning knowledge of God as Creator
( ) Knows Jesus is His Son and as the Good Shepherd
( ) Knows Mary as the Mother of God
( ) Knows about the sacrament of baptism
( ) Knows saints and angels as God's friends
( ) Knows priests and bishops as God's helpers
( ) Has a beginning knowledge of major feasts in the Church year
( ) Is familiar with use of the Bible, the cross, icons and candles

Religious Feeling:

( ) Senses awe for God and the things of God
( ) Experiences joy in relationship to God's creation
( ) Is happy to be at church and among the church members

Other:

( ) Enjoys learning in class
( ) Respects and loves others in the class
( ) Shows willingness, alertness, and creativity in group activities
( ) Pays attention in class appropriate for age
( ) Respects order and procedure in class activities

Attendance: Class was held ___ times for this evaluation period. The child was absent ___ times.
It is possible, and has happened more than a few times, for a planner to expend a great deal of energy in preparing a program, obtaining materials, and preparing a facility only to find that few people knew about the event or understood what was to happen. Unlike the king in Christ's parable of the wedding supper, we cannot go out into the highways and byways and make them come in. We must rely on adequate communication to insure that people understand exactly what is happening.

Communication as it concerns the catechetical program has a number of levels. Basically the goals on each of these levels are the same. We seek to raise awareness of and support for our programs by increasing visibility among various elements in the parish community (clergy, parish council, parents, societies, general membership). We also seek to build a sense of identity and self-image among the participants by focusing on their accomplishments and directing the attention of the parish to their needs.

COMMUNICATING WITH LEADERSHIP

The most basic line of communication to keep open is with the parish priest(s) and deacon(s). In a smaller parish with only one cleric this is relatively easy: simply pick up a phone. In larger parishes, one priest or deacon may be appointed to oversee the catechetical program. In this case you still need to have some communication with the other clergy of the parish. One way is to provide each priest and deacon with the “minutes” of decisions you have made with the pastor or moderator. In this way they are informed before the news becomes general in the parish: a courtesy which may be expected and will certainly be appreciated.

Whoever your immediate supervisor is, you need to have a common understanding of what he can expect from you and others in the program and what you can expect from him. He may require, for example, that facilities be returned to a specific arrangement after each use, that notices for publication be in the rectory by a specific time, etc. He may also have specific goals he wants the program to achieve. It is best, at least at the beginning and towards the middle of each year, to plan on a lengthy meeting to determine how things are going and where he may want you to alter things.

You should expect, and be able to communicate these expectations to the clergy, that they take Christian education seriously and support the church school program through prayer, communication with parishioners, and administrative assistance. While they should not be expected to be educational experts, they should know the direction of catechetical efforts and directions in our Church and what is happening in your program. You should expect that at least your immediate supervisor be present at program activities whenever possible. He might be able and willing to conduct catechist formation or teach an adult course as well. This will depend on his own personal competencies, however.

You should not expect him to be a regular or even a substitute catechist in the church school. Even with careful planning, a priest or deacon's Sunday morning is busy enough and often hectic. Don't be surprised if he refused to take a class.

Another element in community leadership is the parish council. While advisory in capacity, it is the general weathervane of parish sentiment. As a rule, pastors respect its wishes unless these run counter to higher Church priorities. While the council should not interfere in the direction of the program, the members may have a good idea of popular sentiment and reaction to specific issues and personalities involved. By the same token, council members should be expected to promote participation in the program among their families, relatives and friends in the community. And so reports on the activities of the program should be presented from time to time to the council.

Some parish councils devote entire meetings or sizable blocks of time in them to a different major dimension of parish life. If this is the case, the parish catechetical program should certainly be included. If such a system is followed in your parish and religious education is not one of the targeted areas of concern, you should push for its inclusion. By leaving the program out of such a schema, the leadership is saying that it is not a major concern. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Another important time for direct input to the council should be when the parish calendar is prepared, when the budget is discussed, when facilities are built or allocated. These items should
not be finalized without determining the needs of the catechetical program.

Considering the amount of time needed to actually administer a catechetical program, it is not advisable for the coordinator to be a regular member of the parish council. It would be preferable for one of the council members to serve as liaison to and spokesman for the program in the council. This person should be made aware of the needs of the program, the conditions under which you operate, and the progress you are making. As more and more people are brought into the program in this way, your base of influence will grow.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PARISH

The goals and successes of the catechetical program should be put before the eyes of the entire parish on a regular basis. Many people who are not concerned with the program directly see it as glorified babysitting and see no difficulty in interfering with scheduling, facilities, etc. The more the entire parish sees the goals of your program and that it is having effects, the less will people see it as unimportant.

The following means should be employed on a regular basis to insure visibility to the parish program:

Preaching - the parish clergy should expect to preach on the important of Christian education at least once a year. The homily outline in Appendix C is suggested for use at the beginning of the Church school year.

Opening of School - the beginning of the year's program (eg registration day) should be marked by a public service including the blessing of catechists and the prayers for the start of the year (see Appendix C). The end of the Divine Liturgy is, of course, the time when the largest number of people will be on hand to participate.

End of the Year - here again, there is usually one Sunday to end the program for the season. Take the opportunity to briefly address the congregation, thank all participants, and note the successes of the year.

Announcements - Special events in the program (registration, openhouse, etc.) are good reasons for the coordinator or a catechist to say a few words to the congregation after the Liturgy about the planned event.

Namedays - The feastdays of class patron saints can be celebrated by focusing on that class on a particular Sunday. Listing names in the bulletin, bringing the class forward for special prayers and sharing about the saint, or to hold the icon of the saint while all venerate it are ways of making the day memorable and drawing attention to the program.

Parish Bulletins and Newsletters - After the Sunday Liturgy, general parish mailings are the farthest reaching means of communication in the parish. The catechetical program should have regular space (a column or a page) in these organs. Use the space to describe your goals and specific events, to feature your catechists, students, patron saints, namedays, birthdays and the like, or to note some brief facts of our Church's practice and tradition ("Did You Know...").

Special Mailings - Flyers to promote special activities can be mailed to a select list (eg families with children) or included in general parish mailings. Remember, something must be "said" several times before an otherwise unmotivated person will remember it.

Time at Parish Meetings - As with parish councils, parish general meetings should include time for discussion of religious education. Limit your presentation to one or two points and make it an upbeat approach rather than bemoaning your needs.

Parish Societies - Organizations such as the women's or young adults associations would often welcome a speaker from the catechetical program. If they seem to be open to becoming part of the program, share with them how they can help (purchasing equipment, sponsoring special events, serving as aides, etc).

Display Area(s) - Another way of increasing visibility for your program is to maintain a prominent display area where most people will see it. The church vestibule or the place where people line up for coffee are probably the most accessible. Under a large banner noting that this is the catechetical department's display, put things like attendance charts, posters, photographs of the classes and of special activities, examples of the students' work, and the like. Seasonal displays can also be created. Design a Christmas tree, for example, with photos of the students as ornaments on the tree. If this display area is designed in an eye-catching manner and changed monthly, it will go far in bringing your program to the attention of the parishioners.

Photo Records - One important way of getting attention is by have photos of all your events. Someone interested in photography will find it easy to capture memorable moments in your classes or other activities. If these are in slide - or better yet,
videocassette, format, that can be shown in parish meetings to illustrate your report. A sure-fire attention getter.

BUILDING AN IDENTITY

While all the above ideas are designed to attract the attention of the adults in the parish, you can be sure that the children who are in your program will be drawn to them as well. The more visible and recognized the program is in ways such as the above, the students will also take pride in being a part of it. There are a number of other devices which will help students identify with your program:

Individual Recognition - Techniques that recognize each student by name have the most effect. Besides listing names in your bulletin or newsletter, consider placing an attendance chart in a prominent place. Give the students a star on arriving in the classroom and allow them to place it by their own name or picture. Recognize and affirm all their efforts to be present and to participate in the group as well.

Personal Communication - Children love to receive mail; its part of adult life. They also love attention from teacher, father, and others of importance in their world. By laying in a stock of inexpensive greeting cards and sending one to each pupil from time to time, the catechists build up their relationship with the students and makes their message more "audible" in the church school session.

Attendance Incentives - Being part of a group is important to every young person. Make up teams in the group and have the teams vie for attendance. Give the team captain the responsibility to call the others on his team on Saturday evening and remind them of the importance of their presence on Sunday. They will encourage one another and do your work for you.

Recognition Symbols - Our culture possesses a number of popular signs of communication which say that "it is good for us to be here" (in this group): T-shirts, button, bumper stickers, theme songs, mottos. They promote pride in the group and again help the group's values more easily communicated. Design a new one each year and watch your group pride develop. Another device of this sort is to give your group a club name (such as "Byzan-teens") which will reinforce their identity as members of the Church community and yet have a contemporary ring. Our students, after all, belong to contemporary society as well as the Church.

YOUR P.R. PERSON —

Attending to all the things suggested in this chapter - writing articles, planning displays, mailing flyers, speaking to parish groups - can take up a great deal of time. Church schools would do well to recruit someone to do this kind of work exclusively. They need not make the weekly commitment of the catechist. Not need they be people with the catechist's teaching skills. However a "vice-president" (assistant coordinator) for public relations can be an important asset for enhancing your program's visibility and importance in the parish.

COMMUNICATING FOR SAFETY

One of the most important forms we need in our program is concerned with the identity of our parish community. We are accustomed to see the parish as a family, and so it is. The state, however, sees it as an institution with the same responsibilities and liabilities as any corporate body. The parish - and the diocese of which it is a part - are legally responsible for any untoward incidents on its property or in any activity it sponsors. One Byzantine Catholic Parish in the midwest is currently in bankruptcy court over a lawsuit brought by someone injured at the church camp.

The church school should, therefore, expect to take the basic steps in insuring the church's freedom from liability as much as possible. First of all, all activities should be adequately supervised. Secondly, parental permission should be secured in writing for participation in the regular program (the registration form serves this purpose) and in each and every special event as well. This permission slip should enumerate all the types of activities involved in the event, including transportation. "They were hiking: how was I to know they were going swimming!" could mean the start of big trouble for the parish which could be warded off by a little trouble on the part of the program organizers.

And so the form given here is not so much a mastersheet to be duplicated as a pattern to be adapted to your particular circumstances. Be prepared to include the specifics of what will be done, who will supervise, how you will get there, etc. as well as indicating a place for parental signature. Do not accept participants in an activity without such a permission and keep the slips in a secure place until the event is completed without incident.
SPECIAL EVENTS PERMISSION FORM

Youth Trip to the Green Mountains
Dec 28-31, 1989

Having been informed by the parish office of the Trip to the Green Mountains on December 28-31, I/we the parents of the student named below hereby give my/our approval to his/her participation in this event. I/we assume all the risks and hazards incidental to the conduct of and the activities and transportation to and from the activities; and I/we hereby release, absolve, indemnify, and hold harmless the Diocese of Newton, St George parish, its staff, and the chaperones and drivers of the religious formation program.

I/we also give permission to the chaperones of this Program to authorize emergency medical treatment, if necessary.

Parent's signature(s)  

Telephone ##

Student's name(s)

Medical Information

Please indicate any medications your child should be taking during this trip.

Please indicate any medical conditions we should know about (illnesses, allergies, etc).

Does your child get car sick?

Insurance Company:

Insurance number:

Other Information You Think We Should Know
A lesson on the church building in our third grade text notes that the design of a building reflects its purpose. A bank has a vault, because it is designed to keep money safe; a firehouse has large garage space to hold the firetrucks; a church has a holy place for the worship of the Holy One.

The same is true in the setting of the church school. The learning areas we set up have a purpose: to enable and support the projected learning experience. This generally means two things:

- The atmosphere created in the learning area must motivate students to participate in the learning experience; and
- The design of the learning area must fulfill the needs of the curriculum.

And so both function and environment are important in setting up, evaluating, and constructing facilities for the church school. Let us examine each in turn.

AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LEARNING

What creates a proper atmosphere for catechetical classes? There is no one answer to this question, as learning can take place in a variety of settings. However the setting should convey a positive feeling about the class. If the class meets in the furnace room or a corner of the hall during coffee hour without any indication that learning is an important activity, a message is communicated loud and clear. The same areas, however, can be transformed in ways that say, "This class is important". An unfinished basement area can be transformed into "catacombs" for a sixth grade class which studies Church history by painting the walls to resemble stone blocks, adding some Christian graffiti, and using pillows for seating. Build a canopy over that table in the hall and add a few balloons and it becomes a "Learning Booth". You have created an environment that says, "Learning is special and fun", and this is what the atmosphere of the facility should say. Put no effort into making an attractive facility and you say, "This class really doesn't count". It's as simple as that.

Generally the atmosphere requirements of a room or learning space are that it be clean, bright (but not gaudy), well lit, and inviting. It should be decorated with thought and attention with pictures, posters, plants, etc. to help make the material being studied come alive for the students. The students should know on first entering the area that they have stepped into another world: the world of the Gospel message. In this the learning area is like the church building which invites us by its design into the world of the mystery of divine life.

FACILITATING THE CURRICULUM

The second aspect of learning area design involves the specific teaching that is done in it. Thus if the class involves the use of films or slides, it must be held in an area from which all light can be removed. If the group is expected to do craft activities, they must have table space to work on; they cannot meet in the nave of the church. An adult discussion group, which will not need craft space, may find the same area quite satisfactory. And so in allotting space, you must know the requirements of the particular curriculum unit which will be used.

In general younger children need more space in their learning areas than older students. While high school students may spend their class time reading, discussing, or watching a film, younger children will need space for games, singing with gestures and the like. The following guide has been suggested for allotting space when different sized rooms are available:

- Preschoolers: 30-35 sq feet per person
- First-Sixth Grades: 25-30 sq feet per person
- Junior High-College Aged: 15-25 sq feet per person
- Adults: 15-20 sq feet per person

BASIC LEARNING AREAS

In general the minimum requirements for meeting areas are the following:

A - An Icon Corner - every Christian learning experience, whether for toddlers or senior citizens, is meant to lead us to prayer and so the learning area must have a place for prayer. The design will vary, depending on whether the area is permanent or temporary, or the age group who will use it, but it must be there. There is no exception to this rule.

A basic icon corner includes an icon, the Bible, and a candle (generally a votive light). They should be
placed on a shelf or small table in an area separate from the work or listening area so that students get up for prayer and actually move to the prayer center. An attractive cloth placed under this arrangement will help set it apart as a shrine.

Handsome folding rattan shelves which will hold an icon and a votive light are available from the Office of Educational Services. These help define the prayer center in a special way, even in temporary facilities. They can be folded and placed in the catechist's hamper when not in use.

B - A Teaching Area - Including a desk, stand or lectern for the teacher, depending on their preference, and a writing area. Chalkboards are not necessary and are really outmoded today. Much more practical are large (eg 2'x3') newsprint pads and felt markers. Not only are these more portable, but by dating and saving each sheet, the catechist can hang them around the room with masking tape and use them for review in subsequent lessons. By the end of the month, the group can have the entire unit before their eyes each week, no matter what kind of facility they are using.

C - A Listening Area - With seating appropriate to the style of learning envisioned. For lectures, auditorium-style seating may be best. For discussion groups, a circle of chairs would be most useful. Groups using a workbook would do better at tables or desks. Small children listening to stories can sit on the floor on carpet squares.

D - A Work Area - Groups involved in craft projects need tables on which to work. If they are working as individuals, desks would be appropriate. If they work as a group, large tables around which several could gather are necessary. If they are doing roleplaying or drama, they need a large open space.

E - A Display Area - Here student's work, attendance charts, mottos, or relevant pictures and posters can be placed. This presents no problem when you have a permanent room or even room dividers on which to mount these items. What do you do when this is impossible or inappropriate?

One suggestion is to obtain three or four large cardboard boxes of various sizes and cover them with contact paper. Put them one on top of the other like building blocks and attach your display material to them with straight pins. They provide a colorful display center and can be nested one inside the other for easy storage.

F - Electrical Outlets - for tape players, slide projectors, etc.

G - A Sign - at the entrance identifying the class by name, grade, patron saint, and catechist so that aides, messengers, or class visitors can find their way.

Each learning area both must and can have these centers, even when they are using temporary or borrowed facilities, as will be shown below.

FURNISHING ONE'S OWN CLASSROOM

A number of our parishes have individual classrooms which are used exclusively for church school classes. In such cases, facilities can be permanent and furnished to meet every need of the learning group. In such circumstances the above minimum requirements can be enhanced in the following way:

* The Icon Corner - Have a number of icons (eg Christ, the Theotokos, and the parish and class patrons). They should be hung on the wall, preferably in a corner, where the students can gather without other distracting sights in view. Suspend a hanging lamp from a wall bracket or ceiling hook in front of the icon grouping.

On a small table in front of the icons place the Scripture, a cross, holy water, holy oil, an incense burner, or other liturgical objects. A low metal tray, such as a small oblong cakepan can be filled with sand and placed on this table to hold individual tapers lit by the children during prayer.

In these circumstances it is possible to have the students take an active part in the maintenance of the icon corner: trimming the lamps, caring for the censer, providing flowers, etc.
* The Teaching-Listening Area - The focal point here can be an easel or easels on which your newsprint pad or flannelboard can be placed. The sturdier this support is, the easier it is for students to come up and write as well as the catechist.

In addition, the following are useful elements in the learning area, when circumstances permit:

**A Resource Center** - A bookcase or table on which appropriate material pertinent to the lesson (e.g., story books, games, activity books) may be placed for browsing or borrowing.

**A Windowshade** (not on a window) which can be used as an effective and inexpensive screen for slides or films.

**The Work Area** - When possible, this area should be in another part of the room from both the icon corner and the listening area so that unfinished projects can be left from week to week. The work should be done on a table which can be easily covered or cleaned. A table cloth or sheet can be thrown over the table and projects when not in use.

The work area can also contain your storage cabinets. When you have permanent classrooms, each room can have permanent storage facilities in the room for easy access. These may be in the form of locked cabinets or chests. If the room is too large for your group, these cabinets can be arranged as room dividers, marking off the learning area from the work area.

Finally, the Work Area can also include a coatrack for the use of the students.

**The Display Area** can include a Bulletin Board, a place for notices from the coordinator or catechist. This can serve as a message center where the coordinator and the catechist can exchange information. Where it is not possible to have one in each room, a catechist’s board can be placed in the coordinator’s office or some other place where the catechists will see it.

Another Bulletin Board can be placed in the room for the students’ use. They can be encouraged to post interesting items that they have read during the week, hand cards to one another, write and put up stories about their week, etc. Allowing the students to express themselves in this manner is a simple way of making them feel at home.

There also should be a bulletin board accessible to all the students and parents. Placing class pictures on this board helps insure that people will look at it.

**FURNISHING SHARED SPACE**

Some parishes hold church school classes in rooms that serve other purposes as well (meeting rooms, offices, homes, sacristy, chapel, public school). We will have little difficulty assuring the basic requirements listed above, with a few modifications.

First of all, everything must be portable, safely stored, and easily carried. If there is too much for the catechists to carry themselves, you can ask members of the youth group and men’s society to serve as “porters” when the church school meets after Liturgy. When it meets before Liturgy or at another time, it is best if the catechists arrive early enough to have everything set up before any students arrive.

It is not practical to have a craft area in the church, the sacristy, or someone’s living room. If you need to utilize these spaces, plan on having your older groups meet here. You can arrange a circle of chairs in church for discussion purposes, incorporating the first pew into the circle if necessary. The display area can be a movable partition which can be placed in the sacristy or a storage room when not in use.

If the area has unlimited access and people other than the participants are coming and going during class time, it is helpful to post a sign at the access area, asking for quiet while classes are in session. This is not inappropriate, even at the entrance to the church itself.

A word must be said about the behavior of children in shared space. Few children have unrestricted access to their own homes, so they will quite understand ‘hands off’ rules in church, especially in shared space. A list on the bulletin board of what may not be touched is a helpful reminder to both catechist and students.
Finally the coordinator is usually the one called to task if something is amiss in shared space after the catechetical session: items missing, furniture out of place, etc. It is helpful to determine with the pastor and any others involved just what the responsibilities of the users are.

In some places the space is used by a number of groups. In this case there is ordinarily a common arrangement to which the room must always be returned: the chairs are always folded and left against the wall, etc. In this case the catechetical team would be responsible for seeing that that rule is kept.

In other places, where one group has more regular use of the space than any other, the policy is that the space is kept set up for the more regular group. Others who use it are expected to return it to its regular format.

When the catechetical program is borrowing the space, it would be helpful to provide catechist with a checklist, similar to the one at the end of this chapter, detailing the way each room is to be left. In this way they are given a reminder of what must be done and you have evidence that it was done when the fire-breathing dragon next descends to complain about your Sunday school teachers.

When the catechetical program is the prime user of the space, it is to your advantage to draw up a diagram of the way the space is to be kept and to provide this as well as copies of the checklist to occasional users. Then you can be the fire-breathing dragon.

It is always helpful when space is shared for one group to communicate positively with the other. If yours is the borrowing group, a "Thank you" or "Happy holiday" note on the blackboard would be a sign of good will. If you are the proprietors, a "Welcome" note is certainly more welcoming than a "Don't touch" sign. It also teaches that we believe people are more important than property.

In some parishes members of an adult group may feel that, although they only use the space on an occasional basis, their dignity as parish elders gives them proprietary rights over the church school space. It is the duty of the pastor in this case to set them straight.

FURNISHING DIVIDED SPACE

Still other parishes are obliged to hold several classes in a large area, such as the church hall, which is divided up for the purpose. In this circumstance, the following hints may be useful.

The area must be divided at least visually so that one class is not distracted by everything that goes on by the other group. Visual dividers may also be equipped with chalkboards for writing and corkboards for display. You would do better to obtain dividers equipped for displays and employ newsprint pads for writing, as mentioned above.

It is also possible to obtain dividers treated to deaden sound. No portable divider will do this completely. You can achieve the same effect by covering the outside of the divider with carpeting or acoustical tile.

It is also helpful to have 'dead space' between each class. This means that two classes cannot share a divider. The dead space may contain your resource center, a reading nook, or headphone-equipped tape players. Another dead space between groups may be used as your common storage area for craft supplies, etc. if the area is not used for other purposes as well as the church school.

Another useful way of lessening sound interference is to play soft instrumental music or a 'noise machine' in the area. These latter devices give off a steady hum and are often used to shut out distracting noises so that people can sleep.

You may purchase dividers or make them yourself. Directions for making these and other teaching devices (felt boards, screens, write-on maps, etc.) may be found in Donn McGuirk, Better Media for Less Money (2 volumes, National Teacher Education Project, 2504 N Roxboro Street, Durham, NC 27704 1-800-528-2805).

In arranging the classes in divided space you should keep similar age groups near one another. Adult groups and teens in the same hall do better than
DESIGNING NEW BUILDINGS

If your parish is constructing a new facility which will include space for the church school, there are a few ideas which may be of help. Many churches think in terms of multi-purpose rooms which can be divided by sliding partitions or accordion doors. If your purpose in such a room is to adjust the size of the room to the number of persons present, that's fine. If your purpose is to provide space to two groups meeting simultaneously, know that even the most expensive partitions never exclude all sound. You would do just as well to buy or make cheaper portable dividers than to invest a large sum in permanent partitions.

In new construction it is preferable to plan on several separate rooms of varying sizes to accommodate different numbers of participants. Each should be completely separate and as soundproof as possible.

Likewise each room should have secure storage space which can be divided and allotted to different groups if necessary. Shelving in this storage space should be flexible, rather than fixed, to accommodate every need.

All seating should be flexible, preferably individual chairs with modular tables which allow for a variety of seating arrangements. At least some of your tables should have adjustable legs so that they can be set to fit either children or adults. With adjustable tables you will not be stuck with too many children's tables or too few.

Finally, each room should be media serviceable. It should have a number of electric outlets spaced evenly throughout the room. Room lights should be controlled from a single panel for easy use and it should be possible to exclude all outside light easily and completely. If possible, at least one room could be designated a media room, with large screen TV and VCR. With the number of computer Bible games on the market, your media room could use a computer as well.

Questions for Reflection

1. What should be changed in your learning areas to make them more conducive to learning?
2. How would you begin?
**CLASSROOM CHECKLIST**

This form should be designed according to the procedure set by those responsible for the facilities you are using. This is given as an idea rather than a model to be photocopied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Checklist</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before leaving your classroom, please take a few minutes to check the area, making sure that all is in order. Please mark each item as it is completed, sign this paper, and leave it on the table in the hall. Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Blackboards: cleaned and ready for use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Desks - teacher's and students': cleared and clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Desk Arrangement: same as when you entered the room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Materials: AV equipment, charts, etc. in their proper place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) General Order: papers picked up, glue or paint removed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Lights out, heat regulated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Windows and doors closed and locked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Checked by:
27 - DEVELOPING A RESOURCE CENTER

Obtaining, storing, and making available equipment and resources

Every catechetical program in every type of Church in our day is in competition with the communications media. The availability and accessibility of these resources have brought high level, professional entertainment and instruction to even the youngest child in your nursery class. One of the results is that a book or a lecture simply will not hold interest for long. The catechist needs a variety of media to work with and the basic skills necessary to use them.

Any parish which seeks to implement the *God With Us* curriculum will need to set up a resource center, as every grade level in that curriculum makes use of a variety of media, from videotapes to magazines. Besides the resources prescribed in the curriculum and the equipment necessary to use them, your resource center should have some other teaching resources adaptable to all kinds of situations. Finally, if your parish does not have a church library or bookservice, you may want to include some basic resources for catechist enrichment as well.

**BASIC CLASSROOM RESOURCES**

A number of resources are specified in the curriculum and are listed for your convenience in Chapter 15. It is essential that these be on hand and conveniently accessible if we are to expect the catechist to take the trouble to use them. If your parish has individual classrooms, each of them should have a locked cabinet which can hold all the resources proper to that particular class. If you do not have rooms with individual cabinets, then your resource center must also contain space for the catechist’s own materials. In this case you will need cabinets large enough to hold a bin for each catechist. A large plastic laundry basket for each catechist is the minimum that would be needed.

Resources used in common should be kept in the resource center. These generally are audio visual resources, but should also include general resources such as a magazine and photo file. Catechists and other parishioners can be encouraged to donate their old illustrated magazines to this collection. The photos, ads, and headlines are useful for collages and other craft activities. Photographs from parish and other Church activities are also useful for this file.

This file should also include back copies of *Sophia*, the journal of the eparchy, and other illustrated Eastern Church periodicals for the same reason. One valuable resource in this line is the *Catholic Near East* magazine, which is always lavishly and colorfully illustrated (1011 First Avenue, New York, NY 10022, 212/826-1480).

Another important Eastern resource is the *God With Us* series of Sunday church bulletins, which most of our parishes use. The full-color icon prints on most issues are ideal for mounting. Ask your pastor for a few unprinted copies each week, as the ink from a photocopier or mimeograph machine will often show through when paste is applied. If you find one or another issue of special interest (eg icons of your parish or class patrons) and want a sizeable quantity of them, write to the address on the bulletin as there are always overruns. These and other icon prints or photos of special interest (eg of the patriarch or the bishop) should be kept in labelled files for easy access.

Another basic classroom resource is the textbook and teacher’s manual. While everyone in the class should have their own copy of the appropriate text, it is wise to keep extra copies on hand. Your resource center should have another copy of each teacher’s manual and several extra copies of the student’s texts, depending on the size of the class for replacement purposes, new students, or the times when it is convenient to forget one’s book at home.

The most expensive materials in your collection will be the audio-visuels. Some audio-visual resources are prescribed for use by several grade levels (see Chapter 15). It is wise to begin your purchases with these items.

Other audio visuals may often be borrowed as low cost from Church diocesan libraries. The catalog of our own such library is found in Appendix D. Your area may have other diocesan libraries nearby (Episcopal, Lutheran, Roman Catholic) and these generally extend courtesies to all churches. As a rule the biblical and value-oriented resources from these Church are acceptable, but the liturgical-sacramental materials are not. Obtain their catalogs and see if there is anything you can use.

You should also keep the catalogs of religious and educational publishers themselves on file in your resource center. The names of several are found in
Chapter 14 and elsewhere in this book and it is easy

to write or call and ask to be placed on their mailing
list. There are also a number of discount stationers,
such as Quill, who issue frequent catalogs. These are
your best sources of paper, markers, etc. Your pastor
probably has copies of these catalogs in his office.

AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT

To use audio-visual resources, you need the
equipment to show them. The most basic items, used
repeatedly in most classes are the following:

- Tape recorder
- TV and VCR
- Filmstrip projector

You should have at least one of each for your
program, with access to others. If your catechists
actually follow the curriculum and use the prescribed
resources, you may want to obtain one for every two
or three grades. Ideally, each class should be able to
use these items in their own room. If not, designate a
media room and have catechists sign up to use it. Use
should be limited to no more than have the
catechetical period so that at least two classes can use
it each week.

While many people have tape recorders and VCRs in
their homes, a more elusive item is the filmstrip
projector. Automatic projectors that synchronize the
filmstrip with the inaudible signal on the audio
cassette generally sell for $500. Many people prefer
simpler models, which are easier to master and have
less moving parts to go wrong. These require a
separate cassette player and the operator must
change the frames manually, but they afford greater
adaptability. A most useful piece of equipment is the
Crusader 1202 (Radmar Corp., 1263-B Rand Road,
Des Plaines, IL 60016; 312/298-7980) which takes
both filmstrips and single slides as well. You can
obtain the basic unit plus the AC power module for
$69.50. The larger model, Crusader 1207, with a
built-in power module and capacity for a filmstrip
and 50 slides, sells for $125.00.

Other items which are useful, but less essential are:

- Record player
- Computer
- Overhead projector
- 16 mm movie projector (practically obsolete as
  most films are available in video format)

It is sometimes possible to borrow these less
frequently used items from nearby schools, libraries,
or even sales companies which may loan them to

maintain good community relations. It is worth
investigating these possibilities.

Items related to these pieces of equipment which you
should have on hand if you have the equipment are:

- Head cleaners (for audio and video cassette
  players)
- Blank cassettes
- Extra lamps for projectors
- Transparencies for overhead projectors

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Your catechists would profit from access to other
Eastern catechetical series which approach the same
material in complementary manners or which include
lessons on themes not covered in the God With Us
curriculum (see Chapter 16). There is also a good
amount of related supplementary material which
catechists should know. Chapter 14 lists a number of
these items which are worth obtaining for your
resource center.

Finally, if your center is the only library in the parish,
consider stocking some basic resources for the faith
development of your catechists. The Bibliography at
the end of this chapter will provide a basic
"bookshelf" on these themes. It is better to purchase a
few books which people will read than a great many
which look impressive in a library but see little use.

LOCATING YOUR CENTER

The resource center should be a secure facility: that is
it should be locked and only authorized members of
the program should have access to it. If your parish
has a room that can be devoted to this purpose, that's
great. In some parishes the same room doubles as the
coordinator's office. If you do not have such a room,
space in a shared facility must be secure. This may be
a closet or cabinet in the church hall. If your classes
meet there, the center may provide dead space or a
buffer between classes. In no case should a cabinet
shared with other organizations serve as your
resource center: it would be impossible to keep even
the semblance of order in such a circumstance.

Ideally your center should be directly accessible to
the meeting area. If all the classrooms are on one
floor, the resource center should be on the same
floor. You could then obtain food service carts or
laundry carts to transport resources to the rooms.
You might be able to persuade local supermarkets to
donate a grocery cart or two for this purpose. The
more easily accessible your resources are, the more
likely catechists are to use them.
In the same vein, a list of the equipment and resources you have on hand should be prepared and inserted into each teacher's manual. In this way the catechists can know what is available without having to scan the shelves or rummage through the cabinet. If you put your list of holdings on a computer it can be easily updated each summer and given to the catechists as the beginning of the Church year.

The easiest way to keep track of who has what resource is to keep a signout chart on the door of the cabinet or room. Catechists can record what they have borrowed so that others will know where to find it. They can also reserve resources for certain days and this too will be clear to all. It will also give notice what materials are or are not being used and what catechists are able to use them.
A) Eastern Christian Thought:


ECDD, *Life and Worship: An Introduction to Eastern Liturgy* (God With Us Publications, McKees Rocks, Pa 15136) - The basics of the spirit and various forms of divine worship in Byzantine practice.

Educational Services, *A Guide for the Domestic Church* (Educational Services, West Newton, MA 02165) - Concrete suggestions for implementing various aspects of our spiritual Tradition in family life.

Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith* (OCA Department of Religious Education, Syosset, NY 11791) - A basic presentation in four volumes of the doctrine, spirituality, worship and history of the Byzantine East.


A Priest of the Byzantine Church, *Reflections on the Jesus Prayer* (Dimension Books, Denville, NJ 07834) - A series of meditative thoughts on the text of the Jesus Prayer.


Andrew Ryder, *Prayer: the Eastern Tradition* (Living Flame Press, Locust Valley, NY 11560) - An interpretation of the major forms of Eastern prayer (the Liturgy, the Jesus Prayer, icons) as expressions of our relationship to the Trinity.


B) Melkite Church Structure:

*Almanac of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church* (Le Lien, Beirut, Lebanon) - A description of the various dioceses in the Middle East and abroad as of 1986.

*Bearers of the Mysteries: A Guide to the Local Church* (Educational Services, West Newton, MA 02165) - History and lifestyle of the eparchy of Newton as of 1988.

*Melkites in America: A Directory and Informative Handbook* (Educational Services, West Newton, MA 02165) - Background material and parish histories of communities in the eparchy as of 1971.

Patriarch Maximos IV (Sayegh), ed., *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity* (Herder and Herder, New York, NY 10007) - Essays and articles on the relationships of the Eastern and Western Churches in the Catholic communion.


C) Catechetics:


ECDD, *Discerning Your Call: An Introduction to Catechist Formation* (God With Us Publications, McKees Rocks, PA 15136) - An overview of the history of catechetics and the catechetical ministry today in the Byzantine Catholic community.

These and other resources are available from the distributors listed in Chapter 14. Write or call for current catalogs.
There are two major areas of concern when we think of money and the parish program. The first is the program budget: how much money do we have, who will pay, how should it be spent? The second is what we teach about money: how we promote a Christian approach to possessions and giving. We will begin our reflection with a look at this latter aspect.

ENOUGH vs. ABUNDANCE

Many Christians have come to see their financial resources in a new light through the stewardship programs instituted in many parishes. In this vision people are brought to see that God has entrusted us with many gifts, both spiritual and material, not simply for our own use but that we may manage them as His stewards. He remains the owner; we are but His trustees. While stewardship chiefly involves the management of our spiritual gifts and resources, it also governs the way we use our money. This, too, is not simply given us for our own use but to be managed according to God's purposes.

The key to the Church's understanding of God's purpose for our use of material goods is found in 2 Cor 9:8. There St. Paul teaches us to see that God gives us material blessings for two purposes: "God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works". The "enough" Paul speaks of refers to the blessings God gives so that we can meet our actual needs. The rest is "surplus", designed to enable us to share these blessings in His name.

A related concept introduced in many parishes is that of "proportional giving", in which people are urged to see that contributions to the church should never be seen in terms of payment for services rendered (Liturgy, baptism, having a priest on call, etc.) or in terms of set amounts (dues, seat money, or the like), but in relationship to one's income. Based on the Old Testament principle of tithing (giving the first 10% of one's resources to God), proportional giving encourages people to gauge their contributions to their individual circumstances, since our giving to God is in gratitude for all the blessings we have received, not simply buying the services of the parish.

The catechetical program should include opportunities for reflecting on our call to be stewards of God's creation and to give according to our means. As a rule, a stewardship or proportional giving program in a parish will be begun through the commitment of the clergy and parish council. The catechetical staff may be invited to enter into it and help communicate it to through the catechetical program. If this is the case in your parish, you may find the resources published by the Department of Stewardship of the Orthodox Church in America, Syosset, NY to be of use. They have published both programs for instruction and resources for soliciting the commitment of parishioners to the plan. Items of special interest to the church school are described in Chapter 14 under "Stewardship Programs".

Even if a formal stewardship program has not been instituted in your parish, church schools are often expected to encourage giving by students. Many parishes provide children's collection envelopes to help children get into the habit of giving to the church. Ideas drawn from the above mentioned resources will help catechists communicate the spiritual basis for such activity.

Many parishes also stress charitable projects from the earliest years to encourage almsgiving, as service is a basic dimension of Christian life (cf Chapter 6, "What Is a Parish Community?"). Here again catechists should be helped to communicate the reality that Christians are called to give without expecting return in imitation of the One we call the Lover of Mankind.

Questions For Reflection

1. What is the general understanding of and attitude toward church support in your parish?

2. Consult your pastor, deacon, parish council and/or financial commission chairman. What is their perception of the parish's stance on church support?

3. What are their goals for raising the level of Christian maturity on this topic?

4. How may this vision affect the catechetical program? How may the program assist in the realization of this vision?
FINANCING THE CATECHETICAL PROGRAM

The general outlook in the parish toward giving and the purpose of the Church usually affects the financing of the catechetical program. If most parishioners have a "pay as you go" attitude to church support, they will expect the students in any catechetical program to generate whatever funds they need. In this case they may expect the catechetical staff to raise their own funds. If they are used to paying set fees for particular expenses (fuel collection, flower collection, Liturgy stipends, etc), they may expect to contribute to the support of the program, perhaps through special collections for religious education. Which system is most in line with our vision of the Church? The following principles are generally accepted today throughout the Church and are the policies encouraged by the diocesan office:

1 - Since catechesis is a basic function of the Church of Christ, parishes should expect to finance the greater part of their catechetical programs from general funds. Thus parishes are to bear the cost of:

* facilities (regular classroom construction and maintenance);
* equipment (icon corners, easels, VCRs, slide projectors, etc.)
* catechist and other leadership formation programs and materials;
* parish library;
* guest speaker fees;
* publicity for programs;
* subsidies for special program costs.

Depending on the size of the parish, this should amount to from two-thirds to three-quarters of the catechetical budget.

2 - Participants should be expected to express their gratitude in a special way for the programs in which they take part by contributing directly to their support. This may be through donation or fund raising activities. While participants should contribute towards material which they appropriate (eg books, handouts, meals, etc.) in no case should they be expected to bear the total cost of the program.

While some parishes charge set registration fees for their programs, the following approach, more in line with the concept of proportional giving, is often used:

a) Determine the total cost of the program to the participants (total cost less parish subsidy);

b) Inform the participants of this amount so that they can understand the cost involved;

c) Invite them to contribute what they can: the stated amount OR more, if they can afford it, to help those who cannot OR whatever they can afford, as their conscience dictates;

In most cases your contributions will exceed the cost of the program.

3 - If the parish expects specific fundraising to subsidize the catechetical program, this should not be the responsibility of the catechetical staff. Catechist formation, lesson planning and teaching demand a gift of time far in excess of what most members, even the most active, contribute to the parish. This must be recognized by the clergy, council members and other parishioners. Alternative possibilities include:

* "Adoption" of the catechetical program by one or more of the parish societies (eg ladies’ guild) who conduct appropriate fund raising projects;

* Formation of a Parents’ Guild, in the case of the church school; here those parents not directly involved as catechists or aides accept the responsibility of fund raising.

Through a combination of the various means suggested above, the parish as a whole and the direct participants in the catechetical program will be brought to see Christian formation both as a fundamental responsibility of the Christian community and as an individual blessing for which thanks must be expressed.

DETERMINING YOUR BUDGET

It has been said that there are two ways to determine a budget: see how much money you have and plan accordingly or set your goals and then make it your business to raise the needed funds. Budgeting the catechetical program involves both kinds of designs. Several principles already set forth in these pages should help you determine your budget:

1 - The parish catechetical program must reflect the five-fold mission of the Church enunciated in the section "What Is a Parish Community?";

2 - The parish catechetical program must reflect the needs of parishioners of all ages and conditions of life and of spiritual awareness, as stated in the section "The Parish and Catechesis";
3 - From two-thirds to three-quarters of the funding for the catechetical program is to come from the general parish funds.

In assessing the costs of each program, the following should be considered:

a) Catechist Training and Support - Every program you are implementing demands that the catechists working in it develop their spiritual awareness and teaching skills. Also essential are various means of support and recognition to encourage continued participation and enrichment. All costs concerned with catechist formation (training programs, appreciation dinners, meeting refreshments, etc.) are to be considered basic to the parish program.

b) The Basic Requirements of the Curriculum - These are stipulated in the program and cannot be omitted if the program is to achieve its desired ends. Generally such requirements are stated explicitly in the leader’s guide. Thus in the God With Us series’ catechist’s handbook, there are lists of materials needed, audio-visuals called for, and the regular equipment and facilities (prayer corner, chalkboard, etc.) presumed by the program. The coordinator should go through all the texts in use and compile these lists to calculate the basic requirements of the program.

c) The Supplementary Requirements of the Program - These are generally determined by the local staff and may include the duplication of forms, parents’ letters, attendance incentives, refreshments, auxiliary texts, field trips, etc. as well as any material connected with special programs of your own devising, such as on Feast Days.

After determining the anticipated costs, you must assess your sources of income over and above ordinary parish funding. What do you anticipate receiving from student fees, what do you need to raise in addition to that amount, how will that be achieved. All these should be calculated in the budget.

Once you have determined both your anticipated income and the costs of your program, you must submit your budget to the parish administration for confirmation. While the pastor is ultimately the person who must approve your request, in most parishes a proposed budget is also circulated among the lay leadership for critiquing. In some parishes it is still the parish council which is consulted on this matter. Revisions in Canon Law currently under way propose that parishes have Financial Commissions to handle monetary matters while Parish Councils concentrate on pastoral needs.

Whichever structure is followed in your parish, those responsible have a standard time frame for considering the following year’s budget. In this diocese the fiscal year follows the liturgical year, which runs from September first to August thirty-first. Accordingly the budget is usually presented for approval sometime in the spring. Find out when the general parish budget will be discussed and submit your own needs in accordance with this schedule.

Your request should include a financial report of the year to date. Some parishes require regular reporting of expenses since the parish itself is required to submit financial reports to the diocese on a quarterly basis. Other parishes may only require an annual statement, considering the budgeted amount itself as sufficient for diocesan reporting. Find out whatever system your pastor prefers and follow it.

Whichever system is in use, the basic principle is the same. The monies of the parish are gifts of the faithful which now belong to the Lord. We are His stewards of these gifts, and we are accountable to Him through the bishop, the pastor and the entire People of God which is our local Church. The way in which we manage these gifts and render account reflects our own awareness that they are truly His.

Questions For Reflection

1. Evaluate the readiness of your parish and/or parish council to support the catechetical program financially. How can the statement of principles enunciated in this handbook be used to raise their awareness?

2. Review your catechetical program’s budget and/or financial report for last year. How well did it reflect the principles stated above?

3. Using the form provided below, prepare a sample budget for presentation to the parish administration.
MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF NEWTON

CHURCH SCHOOL PROJECTED BUDGET
for September, 19 to August, 19

I - Projected Income:

1 - General Parish Financing  $

2 - Participants' Contributions  $

3 - Other (specify):
   a)  $
   b)  $
   c)  $

   TOTAL  $

II - Projected Expenses:

1 - Catechist Formation
   a) Training Program  $
   b) Enrichment Resources  $
   c) Appreciation Gift & Dinner  $
   d) Other (specify)  $

2 - Basic Curriculum Requirements:
   a) Equipment (specify)  $
   b) Textbooks  $
   c) Required Audio Visuals  $
   d) Required Craft Materials  $
   e) Other (specify)  $

3 - Supplementary Materials
   a) Secretarial & Promotional  $
   b) Feastday Programs  $
   c) St. Nicholas Party  $
   d) Field Trips  $
   e) End of Year Celebration  $
   f) Summer Program  $
   g) Other (specify)  $

   TOTAL  $

Submitted by:

28-4
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A - A SAMPLE CALENDAR

The following is an example of a calendar plan set up to help clarify and organize your program on a 16-month cycle from April to August. By planning for over a year you can perceive the full picture of your program, sensing the breadth of your parish activity and the needs your program must address.

This calendar includes two distinctive kinds of listings. First it considers the components of the catechetical program. It is based on the concepts of parish life presented in Chapter 6 and the necessary components of catechesis discussed in Chapter 3. The lynchpins around which these various elements are gathered are the Great Feasts of the Church cycle.

This calendar is intended as a model. You will need to adapt it to suit your particular circumstances, but remember to preserve the elements of a well-rounded program. All these categories must be represented in a well-rounded program, adjustments notwithstanding. Your role as coordinator is to see that the elements of a total program are all represented in the year’s events.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

Secondly this listing suggests some of the coordinator’s own administrative tasks which may be considered more important in one season than another. The following list may help coordinators with very limited time to arrange the year well enough in advance that things do not creep up unawares.

(a) SUMMER - Concentrate on:

* Determining Potential Class Lists and contacting parents with reminders of your upcoming program;

* Ordering Materials for the fall and preparing your catechists’ working resources (see Chapters 14 and 15);

* Basic Formation of any catechists you have recruited (see Chapter 18).

(b) FALL - Concentrate on:

* Parent Involvement, to draw parents of your students into partnership in your program (see Chapter 21);

* Classroom Visitation, to insure that catechists are functioning effectively in terms of personal relationship and curriculum use (see Chapter 20).

(c) WINTER - Concentrate on:

* Reviving Interest, as most programs tend to sag after the Christmas holidays.

* Catechist Recognition, to acknowledge that your present catechists see that they are appreciated and the entire community realizes the importance of this ministry (see Chapter 19);

(d) SPRING - Concentrate on:

* Planning Your Calendar and Budget for the coming year (see Chapters 23 and 27);

* Catechist Recruitment, by firming up any recommitments by present catechists and seeking out potential additions to your staff (see Chapter 17).

* End of year activities, to assure an upbeat climax to your season.
APRIL

Sometime after Bright Week - Begin your Year-End Evaluations (see Chapter 24).

At the same time begin the recruitment of catechists for the coming year (see Chapter 17). First determine which of your present catechists will be available for teaching next year, whether any wish a year off, or if they want to leave the program altogether. There may always be contingencies which can affect their decision at a later date, but this will at least give you a general idea of how many teachers you will need ready for the fall.

You may also have dedicated volunteers whom you feel need a break, who should be gratefully retired, or who should be transferred to other duties. Discuss these cases with the pastor, then approach each one personally and share your thoughts with them before they have renewed their commitment.

JUNE through AUGUST

Spent time with your first-year catechists. Help them to become familiar with the textbook and teacher's guide which they will be using in the fall and with any procedures established in your program.

Contact the diocesan office to schedule the initial catechist's workshop, Introduction to Catechist Formation, for your new catechists. Open it to your entire staff.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday after Labor Day - Remind your pastor to preach on supporting the catechetical program. Schedule the blessing of catechists and begin registration for your program (see Chapter 24).

8 (Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos) - A mother-daughter potluck supper after the service combines the liturgical and social aspects of parish life. It also gives another opportunity to promote the year's program.

Sunday before the Holy Cross - Conduct the Service for the Opening of School (Appendix C). Continue registration, coupled with your Orientation for Parents (see Chapter 21). During the Orientation, a special session could be conducted for the children to prepare them for the upcoming Feast of the Cross.

14 (Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross) - A family supper after the service, with the proceeds going to charity.
Last Two Sundays of the Month - Regular catechetical sessions 1 and 2.

Last Sunday of the Month - Catechist's staff meeting (see Chapter 19) to assess the beginning of the year and to finalize plans for the upcoming formation session and parents' open house.

**OCTOBER**

First Four Sundays - Regular catechetical sessions 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Begin previously announced first cycle of classroom visitations.

Six Weeknights (October through mid-November) - ECDD Catechist Formation/Adult Enrichment course.

Last Sunday of the Month - Parent's open house with review of the first curriculum unit.

**NOVEMBER**

Every Sunday before Thanksgiving - Regular catechetical sessions 7, 8, and 9

21 (Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos) - Arrange for special participation of parents and girls in the service. Follow with a program of special interest to girls (eg fashions, baton demonstration, etc).

Sunday before Thanksgiving - Staff meeting to finalize holiday plans.

Sunday after Thanksgiving - free

**DECEMBER**

First Two Sundays - Regular catechetical sessions 10 and 11.

6 - Feast of St Nicholas - Special program based on the saint's charitable spirit. Let St Nicholas' visit kick-off an Advent project of collecting or making gifts for a nursing home or child care facility in your area.

Sunday before Christmas - Replace the regular classes with a conversion-oriented "Jesus Day" program (eg a special presentation - perhaps on the Jesse Tree - brunch, a film on waiting such as "Martin the Cobbler", culminating in a Penitential Service with the availability of confessions for the older students.
25 - Feast of the Nativity of Christ - Many parishes orient the Vesper-Liturgy on Christmas Eve to families with young children. Arrange refreshments and a Christmas carol sing-along to follow the service, perhaps with different church school classes or families leading their favorite carols.

Christmas Vacation - Plan at least one group activity for this time, such as a Field Trip combining the fun of visiting a local attraction with the satisfaction of delivering the gifts you had prepared during the Fast period.

Prepare for your Theophany Celebration. If you customarily have a Christmas play, deferring it to this feast gives you the Christmas break to work on it (perhaps with the help of your college students), rather than interfering with the regular class schedule. It also gives you a whole new range of subjects for the play.

JANUARY

First Sunday in January - Family Celebration

Many parishes find it difficult to draw children back to the program after the Christmas break. One way is by making this Great Feast the kick-off of your new church school cycle. By deferring your Christmas party and play to this time, you involve the children in the celebration of this Holyday and you resume activities with a high rather than a low.

Include a Catechist Recognition element in this program to encourage your staff to continue through the season.

6 (Feast of the Holy Theophany) - Another way of celebrating the Theophany with children may be connected with the blessing of the church school which could be conducted with all the students taking part, carrying their patronal icons and candles and singing the troparion of the feast.

Finally the various classes of children or children from particular neighborhoods might accompany the priest as he blesses their homes, concluding with refreshments at the last house. All parents could meet there at a stated time, bringing various treats and reclaiming their offspring.

Remaining Sundays of January - Regular catechetical sessions 12, 13, 14, 15

Insure that mid-year progress reports are prepared and distributed during this month.
Last Sunday of January - Catechetical staff meeting, focusing on the upcoming Great Fast.

FEBRUARY

Every Sunday except Cheesefare - Regular catechetical sessions 16, 17 and 18

Begin previously announced second cycle of classroom visitations.

2 (Feast of the Encounter of the Lord in the Temple)
- Arrange for special participation of parents and boys in the service. Follow with a father-son or parent-son gathering.

Cheesefare Sunday - Make this the occasion for another conversion-oriented "Jesus Day". Instead of regular classes have a dairy brunch, a program focusing on the theme of forgiveness (perhaps with the film Phos) and culminating in the traditional Forgiveness Service.

Last Sunday of the Month - Catechetical staff meeting, focusing on the paschal celebration.

MARCH

Every Sunday - Regular catechetical sessions 19, 20, and 21. Each Sunday before one of the processional Sundays should include practice on participating on the upcoming week's rite. Focus on other Sundays can be on the weekday services of the Fast, encouraging attendance at least periodically during the season.

Lenten Services - Designate occasional midweek services as a "family night", perhaps advancing the time to 5:30 or 6 PM and following it with a family lenten supper, making real the discussion of these services in the curriculum.

As during the Christmas Fast, this season could include an exercise in almsgiving for the students, culminating in the paschal celebration.

APRIL

The observance of the Great Week and Pascha provide many opportunities for participation. Lazarus Saturday, with its focus on children, is an ideal time for an Activity Day on which the students learn about the paschal mystery by decorating candles, coloring eggs, reenacting the raising of Lazarus, and entering into the heart of the Feast.
As at Christmas, the Spring School Vacation offers an opportunity for a Field Trip. If the break occurs during the Fast, make of it a pilgrimage. If it coincides with the Feast, take along picnic baskets of paschal food to help prolong the festal spirit.

All Sundays except Palm Sunday and Pascha - Regular catechetical sessions 22, 23, and 24. Rearrange specific lessons to coincide with the paschal calendar. Consider Palm Sunday for class if you have lost Sundays due to the weather.

Six Weeks after Thomas Sunday - The spring ECDD Catechist Formation/Adult Enrichment course.

Begin planning your Calendar and Budget for the coming year.

Last Sunday of the Month - Catechetical staff meeting beginning your Year-end Procedures (program evaluations, confirmation of returning catechists, recruiting of new catechists) and planning Year-End Celebration.

MAY

Sundays through the Sunday after the Ascension - Regular catechetical sessions 25, 26, 27

Pentecost Sunday - Mark this Great Feast with an End of Year Celebration (see Chapter 21), including recognition of catechists, students, and supporting parents. A picnic or special breakfast make a good setting for these events.

Catechists’ Dinner Meeting - After the last session to evaluate your program with your staff.

JUNE through AUGUST

Periodic "just for fun" outings, perhaps conducted with the help of vacationing college students, help keep the children focused around the parish as the center of life although the church school classes may be discontinued. This may help keep those families so inclined from disappearing until the fall.

July - It's not too early to start checking your stocks, order your materials for the fall and prepare your catechists’ working resources.

1-14 (The Dormition Fast) - is an ideal time to hold a Summer Program for children. Joining learning, craft sessions, and recreational times with the celebration of this season may also afford children who do not regularly attend church school classes opportunities to experience the life of our Church.
Take some incense, a bit of ordinary straw, a candy cane, a Christmas greeting card, a colorful bow, and an ordinary candle...

Add, for meditation, one or two of the troparia, stichera, or verses from our rich liturgical tradition...

... and you have a simple, but unique way for youth and children to share the Christmas Good News with families, fellow parishioners, shut-ins, visitors, or friends.

The following items can be assembled by youth group members or church school students each week and distributed in a variety of ways. Most effective is for youth to take turns distributing them at the church door on each of the six Sundays before Christmas. Older teens can deliver them to the homes of shut-ins, thus making the entire community present to them also.

The printed sheets should be folded into quarters, to resemble a greeting card. The very last page has been left blank. The church name, address, and phone number along with the Sunday and/or holiday schedule could be added before the folders are duplicated.

Week #1 - Place a few grains of incense in a small envelope and attach to the folder marked "Incense". Ask your parish priest how to obtain incense in your area.

Week #2 - Obtain some straw from a local farmer. Place a bit of it in a small plastic bag to accompany the folder on "Straw."

Week #3 - Purchase individually wrapped candy canes and attach one to the folder on "Candy Canes".

Week #4 - Attach a Christmas greeting card and envelope to the folder on "Angels".

Week #5 - In a small plastic bag place a stick-on type bow, available in quantity in stores, and attach to the folder on "Christmas Gift Exchanging".

Week #6 - Place a candle, any variety, for home or church use, in a plastic bag and distribute with the folder on "Light".

The folders may be stapled to the bags containing the items or inserted in them. Alternatively, hole punch the folder and tie it to the bag with red or green yarn.
Incense is hardly the gift we would choose for anyone on our Christmas shopping list.

Yet, for the Magi, it was a most appropriate gift to bring the newborn Child they had journeyed to find and to worship.

As we begin this Nativity Fast, the world would already have us rushing out to pre-holiday sales and parties. Let this incense remind us that, instead, this is the time to make ready to receive and celebrate the first and greatest of all Christmas gifts: God's gift of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who became man that we might all be saved.

Come, join us as we praise, worship, and receive Him who is coming to be born - not in a stable as He did 2000 years ago - but in human hearts.
Straw? Most of us have no use for it. Still it remains for us a simple reminder of Christmas: the lowly manger filled with straw on which the newborn Jesus lay.

There is certainly nothing glorious or regal about straw. How then did it serve as a bed for the King of kings?

Why did God choose for Himself the lowliest and humblest of beds?

How could the Creator at all be contained in a Virgin’s womb? Or be bundled as a Babe in swaddling bands?

As we move toward the celebration of this wondrous birth, let us find cause for rejoicing even in a bit of straw, for Christ was born of the Virgin that all of us may be saved.
Candy Canes: Even children are quick to identify them with this season. But how did this bit of candy come to be traditional holiday fare?

Some say it is to remind us of the staffs used by the shepherds as they tended their flocks on the hillsides of Bethlehem, to whom the angel came and proclaimed, "Christ is born!"

And when these shepherds came to see what Child was this, they found more than an Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes: they found the true Shepherd of all mankind. For it is with the loving concern of a devoted shepherd in search of his lost sheep that Christ comes.

So let us also rejoice like tired, lonely, frightened sheep gone astray when their Shepherd lifts them upon His shoulders and takes them home.
On that first Noel,
it was the angels
who spread the
Good News:

Christ is born!
Glorify Him!

bringing peace, hope, and joy to the hearts
of those lonely, weary shepherds who kept
watch over their flocks.

This Christmas, take a moment to imitate
those angels. Spread the Good News of the
coming of Jesus Christ to someone in need
of your concern: a friend, co-worker, a
neighbor, or a relative whose name might
not otherwise appear on your Christmas
card list.

Send one extra card to spread joy, hope, and
peace this Christmas season so that all who
long for God’s presence in their lives might
be reminded through you that Christ has
come that all may be saved.
Who wants to be reminded of how few Christmas shopping days are left! By now, for some of us, fatigue and frustration have turned our exchanging of gifts into more a chore than a joy.

All the more reason to remind ourselves that what makes our gifts welcomed and cherished is not what we paid for them, but the spirit in which we’ve given them.

Make your gift an expression of your love and concern. As you add a final bow to the gift, add your prayer as well. Pray that the hope, joy, forgiveness, peace, and salvation we receive from God through Jesus Christ might fill the hearts and lives of all those touched by your gifts. This Christmas, exchange more than a gift with others. Spread the true meaning of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Traditionally, a light in the window has been a sign of welcome home to weary travellers. Soon many of us will be welcoming home loved ones for the holidays.

Lights - aglow everywhere now - remind us of why Jesus Christ has come: to bring the light of hope to those overwhelmed by the darkness of fear, loneliness, despair, illness, and sin.

When we grow weary of the burdens, disappointments, and confusion of our lives, Jesus Christ awaits ready to light our return home: home to the forgiveness, joy, peace, and love of God our Father.

So take a moment to light one more candle and recall the wonderful, never-fading light brought into this world by Jesus Christ.

Christ is born!
Glorify Him!
The following unit of study is planned for a one-week program of approximately 3 hour's duration. Lessons are provided for four "class" days, with one day being allotted to the celebration of the feast-day itself. No significant changes need be made to allow for the timing of the feast, i.e. whether it falls at the beginning, middle/or end of the week.

SESSION ONE

In advance: Collect magazines that contain nature subjects, such as field and stream, flower magazines or catalogs, natural history or science magazines for young people, etc., art supplies: crayons, paint, colored paper, shelf paper; and several dictionaries (preferably at different levels of comprehension).

Gather together as a group (if the group is very large, it may be divided into two age levels). Talk about summer as one of the seasons of the year. How do we know when it's summer? What are some of the signs of summer? Of fall? Of winter? Of spring? Note changes in animal, plants, temperature, light and darkness, as well as more subtle changes in temperate climates.

Put the following words on the chalkboard or on a large piece of paper; have the older children check their meanings in dictionaries:

- change
- transform
- transfigure
- metamorphosis (point out that this is the Greek word for "transfiguration")

Discuss the meanings of the words in the light of the changes noted in nature. Ask for any other examples from life that illustrate the meanings of these words.

Divide into two groups. Take the younger children for a nature walk. Look for examples of things that undergo change or transformation, e.g. seeds, eggs, dandelions, etc. Divide the older group of children into pairs and send them outside to find samples of things that undergo change or transformation. Have them come back after 20-30 minutes to show and report on their findings.

When both groups have returned, make one or more large collages on the shelf paper, illustrating the meanings of the words discussed earlier.

Note that the feast of the Transfiguration will be celebrated during this week. Ask the students if anyone can recall the story of the event. Briefly note that the event focuses on the transfiguration of Jesus — His change in appearance when He revealed His glory to His disciples. (The details of the story will be covered in the next session.)

Practice singing the troparion and kontakion for the feast of the Transfiguration.

If your sessions are longer, you may check the local library in advance for science films that illustrate the concept of transformation in nature.

SESSION TWO

Today's session will focus on the biblical events that are celebrated on the feast of the Transfiguration. Have Bibles available for the older children, and Bible story books for the younger children that contain the following events:

- God appears to Moses in a cloud (Exo. 24:12-18)
- God reveals himself to Moses (Exo. 33:11-23, 34:4-6, 8)
- God reveals himself to Elijah (1 Kings 19:3-9, 11-13, 15-16)

Read together the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus in Matthew 17:1-9. Have the children list the important elements of the story on the chalkboard: (Include the following in their own words)

- Jesus changed in appearance, i.e. His face shown as the sun, His garment became white as light.
- Moses and Elijah appeared beside Jesus Peter's words: "It is good for us to be here."
- Bright cloud and voice — "This is my beloved Son . . ."
- Disciples fell on their faces, were afraid Jesus spoke . . . was alone
"Tell no one until the Son of Man is risen."
Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it.

Let Thine everlasting light shine upon us sinners!
Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!

Bring out the icon of the Transfiguration. Have the children identify the elements in the story as they see them in the icon.

Put the following words on the chalkboard and discuss them, with the help of dictionaries:
- reveal, revelation
- show
- manifest, manifestation
- appear, appearance

Divide into three groups. Assign one of the Old Testament readings or stories to each group. Read (or listen to) the story together. Identify the most important parts of the story which tell about an appearance or manifestation of God. Decide how to dramatize or tell the story in a creative way to the other two groups. Practice the dramatizations and then present them to the entire group. When all the presentations have been made, ask the students why these stories have been chosen to be read in church on the eve of the feast of Transfiguration.

Practice singing the troparion and kontakion of the feast. Add the festal antiphons. Note during the rehearsal the words which most obviously speak about the events that have been discussed thus far.

If there is additional time, ask the children if they remember and can tell the class any other stories from the Bible which tell of a manifestation of God.

SESSION THREE

The focus of this lesson is on light. You may wish to check the public library for films on the subject.

When the children arrive, select the first third of the arrivals and have them wait in another room. After the class has assembled, bring the others in (preferably through another door, or so the rest can’t see who they are) and have them participate in the following activity.

(In advance) Hang a white sheet from the ceiling. Darken the room and shine a floodlight from in back of the sheet, pointed towards the sheet. Have each of the “mystery” children stand, one at a time, between the light and the sheet — face forward, then in profile. Let the class try to identify them. After all have been silhouetted, then turn on the lights and lower the sheet. See how many were correctly identified.

Discuss the importance of light for seeing. What would the world be like if there were no sun, no light? Would it be possible to live in a world without any light? What is the effect on plants if there is no light?

Tell or read the story of the Blind Man (John 9:1-41). Discuss the story. What part did they like best? How
did the blind man receive his sight? How did his parents react when they found out? How did the other people react? What did Jesus mean when he said, "I'm the light of the world"? (If the group is divided, have the older students read John 1:1-14) Look up the following words and discuss their relation to the selections from John's gospel.

light
illumine, illuminate
enlighten

Examine the story of the Transfiguration of Christ in all three synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Pick out the passages that speak of light or refer to it in some way. Look for references to light in the troparion, kontakion and the other festal verses.

Review the following passages from the Bible. Let the students divide into pairs or small groups and choose a passage to illustrate in a poster. (Older students may wish to design a banner made from felt or burlap, instead of a poster.)

Gen. 1:1-5 Creation . . . light
Ps. 104:1-2 . . . "Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment."
Ps. 27:1 "The Lord is my light and my savior; whom shall I fear?"
Ps. 89:15 "Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance . . ."
Ps. 90:8 "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."
Ps. 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
John 1:4-5 "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."
John 3:19ff. "And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil . . ."
John 8:12 " . . . I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Supplies of crayons, marking pens, paint, colored paper, picture magazines (Time, Life, etc.) and white oak tag or light-weight poster board or railroad board should be available for the posters. Colored scraps of felt, large pieces of burlap, and white glue and yarn should be available for banners.

SESSION FOUR
(or the session for the day immediately preceding the day of the feast of Transfiguration)

Divide the class into two groups: younger students and older students for this session.

Younger Students:
Review (or if it is the first day, draw materials from Session One) the concept of transformation or transfiguration. Relate the concept to the manner in which bread and wine are made, i.e. wheat/flour plus yeast and other ingredients becomes bread; grapes & sugar (natural or added) becomes wine after fermentation. Note that any food we eat is changed into our own flesh and blood, which is how we are able to grow. When we receive holy communion, the bread and wine not only become part of our bodies, but make us part of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Spend the remaining part of the time making the prosfora for the Divine Liturgy. When making the dough, you may wish to make a small amount without yeast, so that the students can compare and see what yeast does to make bread.

Older Students:

Examine the stikhira and aposticha verses for the feast to see what they say about Moses and Elijah, and about the crucifixion of Christ. (For guides in interpreting the texts, see pp. 131-135 in WORSHIP: An Elementary Handbook on the Orthodox Faith, by Father Thomas Hopko).

Practice singing the stikhira and aposticha verses for the Vesper service. Review other music needed for the feast.

Prepare baskets of grapes and other fruit or vegetables for distribution to the shut-ins after the Divine Liturgy. Decorate the church with flowers and other greens, set up tables for the blessing of the fruit, and complete any other preparations necessary for the feast. (Some of the students may be needed to help the younger children prepare the prosfora.)

ON THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

The summer feast can in many ways become a special feast day for children, one they will look forward to celebrating each year. The priest may wish to perform the proskomedia in their presence so that they can offer commemorations directly as he cuts the breads that they have made and offered. Having learned the special verses of the feast, the students may sing either parts or all of the service on this day. Non-singers can assist in the altar or assist people in bringing their baskets of fruit to the tables where they will be blessed.

After the service, a picnic lunch and perhaps a presentation for the parents of what they have learned would be an appropriate way to celebrate the day. Later, (or, if the distance is not great, this can be done immediately after Liturgy), the food baskets can be distributed to the shut-ins. Greeting cards made by the younger children can accompany the baskets that are delivered.
Service for the Beginning of School
Service for the Beginning of School

Appendix - The Blessing of Catechists

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.
People: Lord, have mercy.
Deacon: this service at the indicated time
when the catechists are commissioned or invested in
This prayer may be offered at the end of the liturgy
Deacon: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: Amen.

The catechists, parents and children now venerate the Holy Gospel, the cross and the icon. The priest sprinkles each one with holy water, saying:

The blessing of the Lord be upon you through His grace and love for mankind.
\[ J O \text{ Erse's.} \]

[Music notation]

\[ J O \text{ Erse's.} \]

[Music notation]

Amen.

People: Amen.

Priest: The blessing of Cæcilius (Anæmu) may be added.

People: Amen.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Deacon: The blessing of Cæcilius (Anæmu) may be added.

People: Amen.

Priest: Brevium, Saint John and Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Deacon: Brevium, Saint John and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

The service is conducted before a eunopus on which is placed the holy cross. The service is conducted before a eunopus on which is placed the holy cross.

Service for the beginning of school:

Always and forever.

Blessed is our Lord at all times: now and forever.

Master, give the blessing.

The holy cross, holy water, and the cross of Pentecost:

For you are the God of mercy, blessings of your most holy name and become heirs of your commandments; so may advance in wisdom and in the fulfillment of your commandments, so
Cantor:  Glory to the Father and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit, now and always and
forever and ever, amen.

0 The-o-tokos, vir-gin all ho-ly,
guide aright the works of our hands and pray for the
forgiveness of our fail-ings as we sing
the an-ge-lic hymn.

Trisagion

People:  Holy God, holy mighty One, holy
immortal One, have mercy on us (three
times).
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit, now and always and
forever and ever. Amen.
Holy immortal One, have mercy on us.
Holy God, holy mighty One, holy
immortal One, have mercy on us.

Deacon:  Let us be attentive!
Service for the Beginning of Any Work

The service is conducted before a tetrapod on which is placed the Holy Gospel and the hand cross.

Deacon: Master, give the blessing.

Priest: Blessed is our God at all times: now and always and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Priest: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

O heavenly King, Consoler, Spirit of truth, present in all places and filling all things; the Treasury of blessings and the Giver of life: come, O good One, and dwell in us; cleanse us from all stain and save our souls.

People: Holy God, holy mighty One, holy immortal One, have mercy on us (three times).

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us;

Lord, forgive us our sins;

Master, pardon our transgressions;

Holy One, look upon us and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy (three times).

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

Our Father, who are in heaven...

Priest: For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Dismissal

Priest: Glory to You, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to You.

Reader: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever, amen.

Lord, have mercy (three times).

Give the blessing, Father in the name of the Lord.

Priest: May Christ our true God - through the prayers of His all-pure Mother, of the glorious apostles worthy of all praise, and of all the saints - have mercy on us and save us, for He is gracious and the Lover of mankind.

Deacon: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: Amen.
Amen

People: Lord, have mercy (three times after each)

Reade: Your great mercy we pray, O God, according to
Insistent Litanies
The rich have become poor and hungry, but those who seek the Lord shall not want any good.

Come, children, hear me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is the man who desires life, who loves to see good days?

Keep your mouth from evil and your lips from deceitful speech;

Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the just and His ears are open to their pleas.

The face of the Lord is against evildoers to erase their memory from the earth.

The just cried out and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them from all their trials.

The Lord is close to men of contrite heart and He will save the humble in spirit.

Many are the trials of the just, but out of them all, the Lord will save them.

He keeps watch over all their bones; not a single one of them shall be broken.

The death of the sinners is wretched; those who hate what is right will be condemned.

The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants, and none of them who hope in Him will go astray.

Epistle

Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: A reading from the epistle of the holy apostle Paul to the Philippians.
Deacon: Let us be attentive!
Reader: Phil 1: 3-11
Priest: Peace be with you, reader.
People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia (after each verse).

Cantor: Great are the works of the Lord, exquisite in all their delights.
Majesty and glory are His work; and His justice endures forever.

Gospel

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us stand and listen to the Holy Gospel.
Priest: Peace to all.
People: And to your spirit.
Deacon: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to the evangelist Matthew.
People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You!
Deacon: Let us be attentive!
Matt 7:19-23
People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You!
That He will bless the efforts of His Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

To the Lord, the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

God, let us pray to the Lord.

The Great Litanies

O our Hope, glory to You, O God (three times)
All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia: glory to You, O

forever and ever again,
Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to

The Creed

Hear us, O Mother of God, to intercede, and grant us the remission of our sins. Amen.
grace of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us and protect us, 0 God, by Your grace.

Remembering our all holy, spotless, most highly blessed and glorious Lady the Theotokos, and ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For all glory, honor and worship are Your due, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Troparia

2. O God, Creator and Master of all,

bless and direct the works of our hands.

As we begin, may we praise your name.

Help us to continue and deliver us from evil, for You alone are the merciful Lover of mankind.

Cantor: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

3. Hasten to help and protect us, 0 Lord;

come and abide among Your servants.

Let Your grace bless and strengthen us and guide the works of Your hands; for all things are possible to You, our almighty Creator.
and to your worship.

Father, you have given us your grace.
Help us save us. Have mercy on us and pray to the Lord.

Let us be attentive.

A reading from the Holy Gospel.

You are the light of the world.

Let this water may be hallowed by the Lord, the Clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

The Clergy.

Let us be attentive.

Reading according to the Evangelist.

A reading from the Holy Gospel.

Wisdom. Let us stand and listen to the Gospel.
Son and Holy Spirit - now and always and forever and ever.

People: Amen.

The priest, dips the holy cross into the water three times, singing the Troparion of the Cross. The people repeat it twice.

Cantor: Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice before Him with trembling.

People:

1. O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance; grant victory to our country over its enemies and preserve Your Community by the power of Your Cross.

Cantor: Accept His instructions lest the Lord be angry.

People: Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice before Him with trembling.

Cantor: Serve the Lord with fear,

People: And rejoice before Him with trembling.

Epistle

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the universal epistle of the holy apostle James.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Reader: James 3: 13-18

Priest: Peace be with you, reader.

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
A. Reacting to a Resource:

*Often we read an article, listen to a tape, or view a video and then say "What did you think?" When no response is forthcoming we are frustrated. To help in getting definite reactions, try this Triad Listening Situation:*

1. Divide your group into three subgroups before viewing the film.

2. Give one subgroup an outline of the content. Their task is to summarize as clearly as possible what the resource actually says.

3. Direct members of the second subgroup to view the resource from one particular perspective. If the film is about family life, this group would view it from the standpoint of a wife; if the film was on a Scriptural topic, this group might view it from the standpoint of a non-believer.

4. Direct members of the third subgroup to view the resource from the opposite perspective (in the above examples, this would be the husband or the believer).

5. Direct members of both second and third subgroups to take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. In one column they are to record their positive impressions and in the second their negative reactions.

6. If your subgroups comprise more than three members each, allow them to compile their individual reactions onto a sheet of newsprint. Then share reactions and open general discussion.

B. Melkite I.Q. Test

The test on the following pages is geared to junior-senior high school age levels. It may be used in whole or in part as springboard for research or discussion. For best results administer it one part (I, II, III, & IV) at a time. Then use the following resources for study:

a) OES Leaflets:  
*How Our Church Is Structured*  
*Welcome to this Holy House*  
*What Is an Eastern Church*  
*What's In a Name?*  
*What Eastern Christians Believe*  
*Worshipping in the House of the Lord*

b) New Life Publications by Fr. John Matusiak:  
*Our Faith*  
*Our Worship*

All are available from the Office of Educational Services.
I - Who We Are:

1. Complete these sentences:
   
   A Melkite is . . .
   
   For me, the **best** thing about being a Melkite is . . .
   
   For me, the **worst** thing about being a Melkite is . . .

2. List three specific differences between the Melkite Church and other kinds of churches:
   
   i -
   
   ii -
   
   iii -

3. I think I would be interested in learning something about Melkite:
   
   ( ) history  ( ) worship  ( ) beliefs  ( ) rules
   
   ( ) other parishes, groups  ( ) other: ________________
   
   ( ) None of the above (I'm a couch potato).

II - What We Believe:

*Most of these things you have heard and seen before. How much can you explain:*

4. What is the official statement of our faith called?

5. What do you believe about the Trinity?

6. What do you believe about Jesus Christ?
7. What does the Church teach about the Holy Spirit?

8. What does the Church teach about the mysteries (sacraments)?

9. What does the creed say about life after death?

10. Where will you find these teachings in more detail?

11. When we want to find out how to live as a Christian, where do we turn?

12. What is the "communion of saints"?

13. Connect the name of the sacrament in Column A with the appropriate ceremony in Column B and the explanation in Column C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sacrament</th>
<th>ceremony</th>
<th>explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baptism</td>
<td>stole on person's head</td>
<td>beginning a new part of God's kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chrismation</td>
<td>receiving holy gifts</td>
<td>the person is another Christ, sharing His Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucharist</td>
<td>crowns on heads</td>
<td>life to revolve around Christ and Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confession</td>
<td>immersion into water</td>
<td>forgiving hands of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td>procession around altar</td>
<td>healing touch of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holy orders</td>
<td>gospel on person's head</td>
<td>we receive the living Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holy unction</td>
<td>anointing with chrism</td>
<td>the 'old man' dies and is buried with Christ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III - How We Are Organized:

14. The official name of our Church is ( ) Roman Catholic; ( ) Syrian Catholic; ( ) Greek Catholic

15. What does the name *Melkite* mean?

16. In every Liturgy we pray for our archbishop. What is his name and where is he headquartered (name of the diocese)?

17. We also often pray for our patriarch. What is a patriarch and what is his name?

18. The patriarch's city is Antioch. What was this city famous for in the New Testament?

19. In our worship we follow the Byzantine way of doing things. What does *Byzantine* mean?
IV How We Worship:

20. When we enter a church, what are the first gestures we perform?

21. What is an icon?

22. Does an icon look like a photograph? Why? Why not?

23. What does the altar screen represent?

24. How do we make the sign of the cross? Why?

25. What is the Divine Liturgy?

26. The following are the Great Feasts of the Church year. What does each one remember:
   - Pascha
   - Nativity of the Theotokos
   - Entrance of the Theotokos
   - Holy Annunciation
   - Nativity of Christ
   - Encounter of Christ
   - Holy Theophany
   - Holy Transfiguration
   - Holy Ascension
   - Palm Sunday
   - Pentecost
   - Dormition of the Theotokos
   - Exaltation of the Holy Cross

27. Which three of these feasts would be considered the most important?

28. How many Lents are there during the year?

29. What is the meaning of the bread given at the end of the Liturgy?

30. How is baptism given?

31. What is chrismation?

32. Why is this mystery given so differently in the Eastern and Western Churches?

33. Have you ever seen a married priest?
PRESERVING OUR TRADITION
(a one or two session unit for elementary groups)

Aim: To explain the meaning of tradition.

We will compare our tradition to a treasure trunk full of things. Preserving our tradition is said to involve taking care of and sharing the things God has given us to use.

Style: After a basic presentation of these ideas, we will examine some of the holy objects that figure in our Tradition. Here the lesson relies primarily on physical objects due to the tactile nature of learning for younger children.

More than enough material is presented to that the lesson can be continued into at least one more session. Since simple concepts repeated often are necessary for learning at this age, it is important to repeat often as each item is presented and discussed that "this is part of our Tradition. Tradition is ...".

Materials needed: icon corner (small, cloth covered stand holding an icon, the Bible, a candle, etc.)

supply box, containing the following:
nametags and markers
songsheets (masters provided)
worksheets for coloring (masters provided)
masking tape
matches
scratch and smell stickers
cutout icon and letter 'O' to replace sun and 'U' on sun poster
gift box cutouts (master provided)
icon prints of Christ
crayons
cardboard candlestand (pattern provided)
refreshments (juice, cookies, and paper goods)
tinfoil
birthday candle

trunk containing the following:
incense burner, charcoal and incense candles
Build Your Own Church kit (available for $6.00 from OCEC, PO Box 69-Colvin Station, Syracuse, NY 13205)
liturgically covered (children's) Bible
poster board with the word 'sun' and a picture of the sun
large poster board with the words 'God's Creation' and cut out magazine pictures of creation, people, buildings on it
Lesson Plan

Greeting: Begin with a time for making friends. The children have a need for security and for knowing how they fit and belong together.

Gather in a circle and have the children share something about themselves (names, school, events of the week, etc.). Give each a nametag if they do not already know one another.

Songs: Continue binding the children together by singing one or more of the songs on the sheet provided. (All are taken from the third grade book of the God With Us Series. An audio cassette of these songs is part of the teacher’s manual for that grade.)

Opening Statement: Ask the children if they know what a ‘theme song’ is and if they know any theme songs from favorite TV shows (Sesame Street, Mr. Rodgers, etc.). Allow them to sing some of these songs if they can. Point out that a theme song tells something about the show and whenever people hear it they think about the show.

Tell the children that our parish has a theme too. It is not a song, but a saying. Tell them that our theme is "Preserving Our Tradition". Help everyone to say it and read it, if possible.

Preserving: Ask if anyone knows what "preserving" means? Explain it in terms of "taking care of" things. Compare it to taking care of their toys or clothes: what happens when we don’t take care of them? If we want something to last, we have to take care of it: we have to preserve it.

Note that taking care of things is only part of preserving them. If we keep our toys in good shape but never use them, they don’t do us any good. We also have to use them, to share them so that people can enjoy them. That’s why we want to preserve them in the first place.

Tradition: Ask if anyone knows what "Tradition" is? Say that its all right if/when no one knows, because its a special word we don’t hear all the time.

Draw the children’s attention to the trunk. Describe it as a chest full of treasures, such as you might find in your grandmother’s attic. What might it contain?

Compare "Tradition" to the trunk: it is God’s collection of treasures which He has given us to help us remember Him and how much He loves us, how we should pray, how we should act toward one another, and how we should love Him in return.
Ask the children **what they think some of God's treasures are in the treasure chest of Tradition?** What does He give us to remind us of Him? Make a list of these items (Church, Bible, Sacraments, Creation, Other people, etc.). As you mention each one, remind the children that it is a part of Tradition and that we must thank God for it and preserve it.

**Activity:** Let one of the children **pick an item from the trunk.** Do the appropriate activity below based on the item, then place the item in the icon corner.

After completing the first activity take a break for refreshments and/or a song as a change of pace. Then let another child pick an item from the trunk. Do the appropriate activity as before.

Repeat this process until ten minutes before the end of the session. Use what remains for subsequent sessions.

**Closing:** End the session by **repeating the song "We thank You, God"** adding the word 'Tradition' to the song.

Then take the children to the icon corner (or the church), offer a brief prayer of thanks for everything in God's treasure chest of Tradition, and hand out the lesson folder to each.

**Sing "We praise You, we bless You"** from the Divine Liturgy as the children venerate the scriptures and the icon and depart.

**Subsequent Sessions**

**Review:** Begin by introducing any new children who were not already part of the group. Discuss what everyone has done since the group last met.

Review the concepts presented in the first session (theme, preserving, Tradition). Do not hesitate to go over this at length, especially if you have new children present.

**Activity:** Go back to the treasure chest and continue picking and discussing items. Conclude in the same way as in the first session.
Activities for Items in Trunk

The Church

Pass around the cardboard model of a church. While the children examine it ask them to tell about their home church: what is it like? what is in it? etc. Remind them that the church is a beautiful place because something beautiful happens there: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are with us!

Remind them that the church is a place where we become one with God and with each other. In the church we become a great family: the family of God. When we remember this, we want the church to be the most beautiful of places. This is an important part of our Tradition.

Ask the children to tell what are some of the things we do in church (pray, light candles, receive communion, sing, kiss the cross, etc.) Describe how each thing we do in church brings us closer to God by talking to Him, listening to His Word, loving Him.

Help the children make a church book from the handout sheet, as follows:

1. Cut out the shaded part of each church.
2. Color the churches in bright colors.
3. Cut along the dotted lines.
4. Punch holes along the side of the four pages you now have and join them with colored thread or yarn.
5. With needle and thread attach a little bell in the opening on page one.
6. With silver or gold foil cover the cross and the top part of the church outline on page two.
7. Paste in a small paper icon on page three.
8. Paste a small birthday cake candle on page four.
9. Cut out small silver coins for the children to paste on the collection plate on page five.
10. Paste a few grains of incense or a portion of a scratch and sniff sticker on page six.
11. Cut a small chalice out of gold or silver foil and paste it in place on page eight.

While you are working, keep reminding the children how all these things bring us closer to God and His people in the church.

Tell the children that we preserve this Tradition, the Church, by praying for it. Remind them to use the little church they have made as a reminder to pray for their bishop, priest, deacon and everyone in their church every day. Take them to the icon corner and pray for each parish represented.
Activities for Items in Trunk

Candle

Pass the candle around. As each child handles it, point out that lighting candles when we pray is part of our Tradition.

Explain the importance of light since without it we couldn’t see in the darkness.

Point out that the candle is a sign of Jesus Christ. The bible tells us that Jesus is the light of the world. Read Jn 8:12: "Jesus spoke to them again, saying 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in the darkness but will have the light of life'".

Note that "To walk in the light" means living the way Jesus teaches us: to pray, to share, to love, to be thankful for all the good we have.

Question: Is a bully in the playground walking in the light? Is a boy or girl who is a crossing guard waling in the light? Is helping to pick up our toys walking in the light? Is fighting with our brothers and sisters walking in the light?

Have the children suggest other examples of people who are/are not walking in the light.

Remind them that whenever we pray we light a candle to remember that Jesus is the light and that He shows us how to act and be. This is why lighting candles is part of our Tradition.

Give out the worksheet and let the children color it. Tell them to give it to someone and share the Tradition by telling that person why we light candles.

Gather in the icon corner. Ask the Lord’s blessing on each one so that they can be a light to their family and church. Give them each a candle to light and place in the candlestand (see below).

Cardboard Candlestand

Take a flat box or box lid. Cut x-like slits in the cover as shown with an x-acto knife. Insert the candles in the slits.
### Activities for Items in Trunk

#### Incense and Hand Censer

Pass the incense burner around for each child to hold. Ask the children if they have seen the priest use incense in church. How is the church censer different from this one? (it is bigger and swings on chains). This censer is for people to use in their homes, because whenever we pray we can use incense. Explain that **using incense when we pray is part of our Tradition.**

Tell them that when we burn incense, **the smoke rises up** **This is like our prayers.** When we pray, our prayers rise up to God the same way. This is what we mean when we sing "Let my prayer rise like incense before You".

When we burn incense something else happens: **the sweet smell of the incense fills the room and makes it smell nice.** And when people people pray together, the place they pray in - church or home - becomes a happy place.

After each child has touched it, **light the charcoal and put in some incense.** Explain that just as the incense sends up a pleasant smell, so God calls us to live a life in our church and our homes that send Him up a pleasant smell as well.

Discuss **what kinds of actions make a pleasant smell like incense** (being kind to each other, to our family and friends and people we meet, by sharing our toys, being friendly, being prayerful).

Give out the work sheet on incense and let the children color it as a reminder to be a pleasant smell to God. Attach a scratch and sniff sticker to each picture as a reminder to offer a pleasant smell to God by prayer and action. Tell them to give the picture to someone and share the Tradition by telling them why we burn incense when we pray.

Place the censer in the icon corner. Ask the Lord's blessing on each one so that their prayer and action can rise like incense to God and make their word happy.
Activities for Items in Trunk

The Holy Gospel

Show the children the Gospel Book covered with icons. Ask them why they think the icon of Jesus is on the Gospels (because the Gospels tell us about Him and contain His words). Point out that the other icons represent the writers of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Remind the children of the Little Entrance in the Divine Liturgy. The priest walks through the church carrying the Gospel Book. He invites us, "Come let us worship and bow down before Christ..." We bow and make the sign of the cross when the priest carrying the Gospel walks by us because the Gospel is Christ’s special book. Treating the Holy Gospel with attention and respect is part of our Tradition.

Ask the children if they have ever seen the priest read from the Gospel Book in church. When he does, what do we do? (listen, stand under the Gospel, kiss the Gospel) All these things remind us that, when the priest is reading the Gospel, it is really Jesus who is speaking to us.

Tell the children that we read the Holy Gospel when we pray at home as well. This way we can hear Jesus speak to us every day, not just when we come to church.

In the icon corner read Mark 10: 13-16 (Jesus and the children). The Gospel tells us that Jesus loves us all: men, women and children too. He wanted to touch them and bless them.

Have each child come up and kiss the gospel, then touch his or her forehead with the Book so that Jesus could touch them too like the children in the story.

Have the children color the worksheet. Tell them to give it to someone and share our Tradition by telling them how Jesus speaks to us in the Holy Gospel.
Activities for Items in Trunk

**Sun on Poster Board**

Show the poster around so that everyone can see it. Describe how the sun gives light even when we don’t see it, as when it is behind the clouds.

Write the words ‘gives light’ on the poster as you take about it. Mention that the sun rises every day to provide light and life. Note that it is always shining somewhere in the world.

Now tape the cutout letter ‘O’ over the ‘U’ in the word ‘sun’. Mention that Jesus, the Son of God, gives us light. Note that Jesus, the Son, rose on Easter Sunday, providing life and light. This is why we worship Jesus, the Giver of life, every Sunday/Sunday. Place the icon print of Christ over the picture of the sun so that the sun forms a halo around the head of Christ.

Mention that Jesus the Son, unlike the sun, has no beginning or end. Remove the letter ‘O’ and point to the letter ‘U’. Show by tracing over this letter that the sun was created (has a beginning) and will end. Replace the letter ‘O’ and note that it shows that Jesus the Son of God has neither beginning nor end. He is always there to help us and love us and save us.

Tells the children that in the Gospel of John Jesus tells us "... that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life" (Jn 6:40). This means that if we walk with Jesus and stay close to him we will have no end either.

Give the children the icon prints of Jesus. Tell them to keep them in their room at the hotel and at home so that they can look upon the Son of God with their eyes and believe in Him in their heart every day.
Activities for Items in Trunk

Creation Poster

Tell the children how God created the world. *Everything in it helps us remember God's goodness and love for us.* When we look around us at creation, we can see the beauty and wonder of God. Seeing God's love in the gifts He gives us and being thankful for them is an important part of our Tradition.

Note that in Genesis (the first book of the Bible) we learn that *everything God makes is good and receives its life from God.* This is why we say that every good and perfect gift comes from above*.

Give the children the cut-out gift boxes. **Have them make a list of the gifts from God which they enjoy most and write or draw this list on the blank sides of the gift box.** Let them tell why they picked the things they did. Then tape the boxes together as indicated.

Tell the children that it is important to take care of the gifts we receive. This is especially true of God's gifts to us. When we take care of them we are preserving our Tradition.

Remind the children that when someone gives us a present, it is right to thank them. Every day God gives us more good gifts. This is why we thank Him every day for His gifts to us.

Conclude by taking the children to the icon corner. Take each box and incorporate what each has written into a prayer of thanksgiving, such as "For Mary's parents and her house and her kitten we thank You, O Lord." End by singing "We praise You, we bless You" from the Divine Liturgy.
Lesson One

MUSIC

IF YOU’RE HAPPY

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. (Clap clap)

If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will really show it. If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap clap)

2. If you’re happy and you know it stamp your feet. (stamp twice)
If you’re happy and you know it stamp your feet.
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will really show it.
If you’re happy and you know it stamp your feet.

3. If you’re happy and you know it shout Amen. (A - men)
If you’re happy and you know it shout Amen.
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will really show it.
If you’re happy and you know it shout Amen.

WE THANK YOU GOD

We thank You God for Fa-ther (pastor’s name) We thank You God for Fa-ther

We thank You God for all.
ODE TO JOY

Thank You Lord for all You gave us. Thank You Lord for families.

Thank You Lord for friends and people. Thank You Lord for all of these.

Now we long to be Your people, loving others as You do.

All together we can be Yours; to Your Name we'll all be true.

2. Thank You Lord, for the Church You gave us,
   Thank You Lord, for one and all.
   Thank You Lord, for (name of Pastor),
   Thank You Lord, for (name of Catechist).

   Now we long to be Your people, loving others as You do,
   All together we can be Yours, to Your name we'll all be true.

   We praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, O Lord.

   and we pray to You, O our God.
During the night we can’t see things clearly. When light comes, we can see the things around us. Jesus is our light. When we follow Him, we walk in His light.

We light candles when we pray to remember that Jesus is our light.
We light candles when we pray in church.

We light candles when we pray at home.
We burn incense when we pray.

Our prayers go up to God like incense and our lives become like sweet perfume to God.
"Let my prayer rise like incense before You, the lifting of my hands like an evening sacrifice."
The Holy Gospel is covered with a beautiful icon of Jesus, because Jesus’ story and His words are in it.
We read the Holy Gospel when we pray in church.

We read the Holy Gospel when we pray at home.
We Give THANKS to GOD

For every good and perfect gift comes from above.
Simple Quiz Devices
(for elementary groups)

A. Verse Scrambles

and said will fishers Me of
Jesus men make follow I you

1. Write a prayer, hymn, Bible verse or definition on 3"x5" cards. Code each word card of the verse with the same color. Mix up the words. Stack in a pile and secure with a rubber band.

2. Do seven more texts the same way, but with a different color to code each text.

3. Make at least ten sets of these eight texts.

4. Give a set of the eight texts to each player.

5. A caller states the color of the text to be unscrambled. The first person finished stands. Wait until each person has unscrambled the words. Then the person standing reads the text.

6. Scramble the words again and put them back in the rubber band.

7. Person in charge calls next color. Proceed until all verses are read.

Uses: Bible verses

Brief Hymns (Christ is risen, All of you baptized into Christ, We bow before Your cross, O Lord save Your people, Glory to the Father... etc.)

God With Us Series memory texts: "Words to Remember" (Grade Three), "Memorize" (Grade Four), "Remember" (Grade Five) "Points to Remember" (Grade Six)

B. Gone Fishing

1. Cut out fish shapes from construction paper. Write questions and answers on opposite sides of the fish.

2. Place fish bowl or aquarium in center of group.

3. Choose two teams and line up facing each other with bowl in the center. Give each team a 'net' (actual net or netting, string bag, or drawn on paper sack on a pole).

4. Caller stands at bowl. He draws a fish from the bowl, reads the question, then drops it to the floor.

5. When the fish touches the floor, players #1 from each team may run for the fish. The first one to pick up the fish may answer the question.

6. If the question is answered correctly, the player takes the fish and puts it in his team's net. If player misses, the fish is returned to the bowl and the caller draws another fish.

7. When all the fish are out of the bowl, the team the the most fish in its net wins.

Variation: Place a paper clip over the end of each fish. Tie a string to the end of a dowel and attach a magnet to the string. Scatter the fish on the floor, question side up. Allow the players to fish in turn. If the player answers the question correctly, his team may take a second turn.
C. Heavenly Hopscotch

1. Enlarge and duplicate copies of the hopscotch diagram on this page for each student.

2. Children are to write in the appropriate box the answers to each of ten questions asked by the catechist (first answer in square #1, etc.).

3. Review the questions and answers and have each child check his work. Allow the children to color one star in the cloud marked 'heaven' for each correct answer.
Craft Activities

A. Collage

A collage is a collection of objects (grass, corks, stones, yarn, shells, seaweed, feathers, sand, seeds, string, driftwood, etc.), pieces of paper, words from magazines etc. pasted on a flat surface (box, wood, metal, or posterboard), sometimes with the addition of paint to suggest a particular theme or story.

1. Discuss the theme or story and brainstorm objects which may be used.
2. After the discussion, have the students arrange the objects on the flat surface in the way they think best.
3. When the arrangement is decided, have the students attach the objects with glue or rubber cement.
4. Have the students present an explanation of the collage and the theme or story to another group (parents, other children).

Possible Topics: Scripture stories, holy mysteries, sin in the world, goodness of creation, etc.

Variation: A montage is a combination of several distinct pictures assembled to make a composite picture to illustrate a theme. Half-inch or quarter-inch strips of construction paper may be placed between the individual pictures to suggest a stained glass window.

B. Rebus

A rebus is an illustrated text, in which certain key words or syllables are replaced by pictures, letters, etc. Thus "You are the Light of the world" may become:

\[
[U] \quad [R] \quad \text{the} \\
[L+ \quad +T] \quad \text{of the}
\]

1. Select the text and write it on posterboard, replacing the key words and syllables you wish to illustrate with brackets or boxes.
2. With the students, brainstorm ways of illustrating the missing words.
3. Have the students illustrate the missing words by drawings, magazine pictures, etc.
4. Have the students present an explanation of the collage and the theme or story to another group (parents, other children).

Possible Topics: Any Scripture text or liturgical chant which would easily lend itself to illustration, for example: All of you baptized into Christ, We bow before Your cross, Only begotten Son, etc.
C. Living Mural

A mural is a large picture of a scene or event. The subject is usually of a dramatic action (e.g., a battle) or a series of scenes showing the sequence of episodes in a particular story. There are two interesting ways of using this medium as a reinforcing activity.

1. **Sequential Mural:** Before reading a story from Scripture, Church history or the life of a saint, assign individual students to pay particular attention to one aspect or character of the story. After the reading, have the students draw in sequence on a large roll of shelf paper the scene or character they were assigned. Then write captions under each panel. Finally, have the students 'retell' the story, using their mural.

![Image of a mural showing a scene from a story]

2. **Living Mural:** Prepare an almost life-sized, single panel mural of a scene from Scripture, Church history or the life of a saint. Cut out circles on the mural the size of a child’s head. Put making tape around the holes from the rear for reinforcement. Assign parts as above and have the children retell the story with their faces showing through the cutout circles.

D. Designer T-Shirt:

1. Choose a symbol and phrase relating to your presentation theme. If the lesson concerns Christ or the Theotokos, for example, you might feature in your design the Greek letters found on icons. A lesson on sacraments might suggest the phrase "Seven Wonders of the World" or the like.

2. Make a design on stencil paper or poster board. Cut away sections to form a stencil.

3. Place T-shirt on a fabric hoop or pad of newspapers. Tape and pit stencil and shirt in place. Point heads of the pins toward the inside of the design.

4. Dip a round, stiff brush in fabric paint. Wipe off excess paint on a paper towel. Brush over the stencil in a circular motion, away from the edge of the stencil toward the center of the open space on the fabric. Use a different brush for each color. Use a black ball-point fabric paint tube for writing.

5. Direct the students to explain the design on their T-shirts to five persons not in the class.

Stencilling can be done in this way on tennis shoes, burlap, denim, brown paper bags, and other material.
E. Jigsaw Puzzles

Creating a puzzle out of an icon print, photograph, or the students' own creation (drawing or montage) can provide an engrossing activity during which you can reinforce the message of your lesson. Putting the puzzle together again the following week turns it into a review of the previous week's lesson.

1. Create the puzzle on heavy posterboard. If you are using a photo, montage or icon print, be sure that it is glued evenly to the posterboard, with the paste spread completely over both surfaces. If your puzzle will be an original drawing, have the students draw directly on the posterboard with felt-tip markers.

2. Use an Exacto knife to cut the poster into puzzle shapes. Place in a plastic bag for storage.

F. Glove Puppets

Finger puppets make for a diverting way of presenting a story from Scripture or the life of a saint. Their small size is especially appealing to the youngest children. Team teachers and aides can divide the tasks, using 2 different gloves or having one person tell the story and the second manipulate the puppet. Then allow students to use the puppets themselves to retell the story.

1. Glue yarn pom-poms on the fingers of white work gloves. Trim with yarn and felt to suggest various characters. Use beads or doll’s eyes obtainable from some craft stores.

2. Insert hand into glove. Work individual fingers as you tell the story.

G. Story Pockets

This is another miniaturized variation: this time of a diorama, made from ordinary office and craft supplies, applicable to a multitude of uses (Scripture stories, lives of saints, etc.).

1. Glue a backing of colored construction paper to a manila folder. Decorate with an appropriate scene made from construction paper of other colors.

2. Cut a strip of construction paper of a contrasting color and tape across the lower middle of the page. Tape the bottom and sides on the folder to form a pocket.

3. Cut a second strip of contrasting colored paper and tape to the bottom edge of the folder, forming another pocket.

4. Cut out people and props from 3”x5” cards. Decorate with strips of fabric, yarn, etc. Use felt-tip pens to suggest details.

5. Move the figures around the various pockets as you tell the story.
H. Tryptichs

A tryptich is a set of three panels hinged together so that the two side panels may be folded over the central one. The inner portion, when opened, may reveal from one to three images (icons, texts, etc.) the 'doors' may also be decorated.

1. Select the material you will use. Younger children will be able to handle construction paper; older children will be able to use posterboard or balsa wood. If posterboard is used, you will still need to use a paper pattern to determine the appropriate measurements.

2. Fold the sheet of paper in half, lengthwise.

3. Open the sheet and fold the right and left ends of the paper into the first fold made.

4. Leaving the ends folded inward, refold the paper along the center crease.

5. From the top of the center crease, cut an arch to 1/4 of the way down the side. When the paper is opened again, you will have a rounded arch with the two flaps used as doors or coverings over the center panel.

6. If you are using posterboard or balsa wood, trace this pattern onto the posterboard and cut accordingly. Using an X-acto knife, lightly score the side creases which define the doors.

7. Glue the icon print in the center panel.

8. Decorate the side panels on both sides with appropriate designs or texts.

9. Have the students explain the icon and the designs they have chosen.

I. Scripture Covers

The unique character of the Scriptures has regularly been indicated by giving them distinctive bindings. Thus the Gospel Book and apostolos used in church are usually bound in precious metal with icons painted or etched into the metal. One way to emphasize the special quality of the Scriptures is to design special covers for them and place them in a special place (e.g., the prayer corner).

1. Trim felt or other sturdy material to the size of your Scriptures and paste to the book, beginning with the spine.

2. Glue gold braid around the edges of the book, tucking it over onto the inside cover.

3. Paste an icon print of Christ or the cross on the front cover, covering the frame with gold braid or ribbon. If you are covering a large book, you may prefer to use a wooden craft frame instead of braid.

4. A fringed ribbon may be made to complement the cover.
J. Banners

_Banners have long been a way of carrying portable icons in procession which make a striking and dramatic impression. Students can make their own banners for group use, employing a text, design, icon or any combination of these. The subject may be any theme, feast, season, or lesson concept._

1. Obtain the following: felt or burlap for the background; felt, braid, yarn, fringes and trims for the design; a wooden dowel and decorative cord with which the finished product can be hung, a sharp scissors, pencil and white glue (eg Elmer's).

2. Select and design your banner on paper.

3. Iron materials before measuring and cutting.

4. Measure and cut the background fabric. If you are using burlap, allow extra material for top and bottom hems. The top hem should be wide enough to receive the dowel. Felt needs only to be hemmed at the top; the lower edge can be made into a fringe or paneled.

5. Cut out designs and lay on the background, tracing lightly around the edges with pencil. Remove and glue one piece at a time.

K. Bookmarks

_A bookmark carrying the key concept of a lesson becomes a continual reminder of the message which has been taught. These can be made of felt (a mini-banner), contact paper, or construction paper with small icon prints, ribbon, yarn edging or fringe for trim._

1. Choose a brief text as your featured image (Christ is risen!, God is with us!, etc.).

2. Provide younger students with precut, printed markers for them to trim or draw on (2"x7" is a good size). Older students can make their own design, do their own lettering, etc.

3. A 3" length of yarn ending in a tassel may be strung though a hole punched in the top center of the bookmark.
The Joy of Pascha

Cast

The Lord Jesus Mary the Theotokos
Peter Mary Magdalene
Andrew Martha
Thomas Mary, Mother of James
James Susanna
Thaddeus Joanna
John Salome
Luke Mary, Sister of Lazarus
Cleophas

Narrator

Narrator: Our play begins early in the morning on Resurrection Day. We are in the house of Simon Peter with the apostles Thomas, Andrew, Thaddeus, John and James. They are seated at table, confused, bewildered and in deep mourning over the death of Jesus.

Peter: What do we do now that our Lord has been crucified? Who is to show us the way?
Andrew: Peter, didn't He say that you were going to be in charge?
Peter: How can I lead you when I myself can't accept the fact that He is dead?

(All sadly nod in agreement, wondering about the future. Suddenly the Theotokos and the ointment bearing women burst into the room.)

Magdalene: We have great news! We have just come from the tomb. Our Lord was not there!
Martha: Mary Magdalene's right! He has risen as He said He would. An angel of the Lord told us to come and give you the great news.
Mo. of James: How wonderful this is! We have seen the place where His body lay, and have seen the cloth in which He was wrapped.
Susanna: You should have seen it! The tremendous stone was moved as if it were a tiny marble, and the guards were stricken as if they were dead.

(The apostles look on in wonder, exchanging exclamations of awe and amazement)

Thomas: This can't be so! I don't believe it!
Andrew: Neither do I!
James: But the women have seen it: it must be so!
Thaddeus: Maybe they moved Him to another place to make it seem like we stole His body.
Peter: I'm going to the tomb to see for myself.
John: I'm going with you.
James: So am I.

(Peter, James and John dash out. Everyone freezes while the Narrator reads Luke 24:14-32)

Narrator: That same day Luke and Cleopas...

(At the end of the reading, Luke and Cleopas enter in great excitement.)
Luke: We have seen the Lord! We met Him on the road to Emmaus. At first we didn't recognize Him...

Cleopas: And the minute we broke bread together we knew it was Him!

(Enter Peter, James and John looking dazed.)

Theotokos: Peter, James John! My Son is risen! He is truly risen!
Sr. of Lazar.: Luke and Cleopas have been with Him.
Joanna: Tell us what He said to you.
Salome: Will we see Him?
Luke: Now calm down, everyone. There's no doubt about the fact that He is alive. Let's just make ourselves comfortable and we'll try to explain what Jesus said.

Cleopas: Jesus made everything in the Bible so clear. He said that mankind lost paradise when he wanted to become God by eating from the forbidden tree. Now, because He has won the battle over sin and death, Jesus is giving us His body and blood as food and drink so that we can become what He is. Jesus is the fruit of the tree of the cross.

Luke: Not only that: we have regained paradise. Jesus has taken Adam and Eve and all the dead who were waiting to be free to live with God. There is no death for us anymore.

Thomas: I don't quite understand all this.
Martha: We will all understand in due time, Thomas. Jesus will open our eyes and ears. We need only to look and to listen.

Cleopas: It's true, Martha. It's all in the Bible. The prophets foretold Jesus' coming and His death. Remember the Book of Isaiah, chapter 53. It tells us the Messiah has to suffer before coming into His glory.

Luke: And you don't have to offer up the paschal lamb as sacrifice any more. Jesus is the Lamb and was sacrificed to set us free once and for all.

Peter: We need to get together and read Moses and the prophets again in order to understand what Jesus has been telling us for three years, and...

(Suddenly Jesus appears in their midst. They silently stare in amazement.)

Jesus: Peace be with you! (He shows them His hands and His side)

(All sing "Christ is risen...")

Jesus: Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I send you. (He breathes on them.) Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven. If you hold them bound, they are held bound.

(turns to Peter and pointing to all in the hall and on stage) Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?

Peter: Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

Jesus: Feed my lambs. Simon, son of John, do you love me?

Peter: Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

Jesus: Simon, son of John, do you love me?

Peter: You know well that I love you.

Jesus: Feed my sheep.

(Everyone freezes while Narrator reads John 21:25.)
NEW ACQUISITIONS

August, 1988

BIBLE

B — Video Programs

Franco Zeffirelli, Jesus of Nazareth
(Livonia, Mi, CBS/Fox Video, 1976)

A three-cassette video of the acclaimed life of Christ produced with an eye for accuracy. Complete (376:00). Segments may be used to illustrate any segment of Gospel narrative.


A 7-segment documentary-style exposition of the development and use of Scripture from a historical perspective, witnessing to the faith of its compilers in Israel and the Church. Currently on hand are:

Segment 4, Gospel Truth — Remains of New Testament times and how the Christian Bible came into being (52:00)
Segment 5, Thine Is the Kingdom — The intermingling of the Gospel and Hellenism which was to produce the Christianity of the Roman/Byzantine Empire (52:00).

CHILDREN'S RESOURCES

C — Video Programs


A videostrip reissue of this 10-episode filmstrip with the following segments:

How Do We See God? (4:40)
What Is Torah, the Way? (10:40)
Who Can Guide Us (4 Comm)? (7:20)
How Precious Is Life (5 Comm)? (8:10)

What Are Weddings About? (9:30)
What Is Being Honest (7 Comm)? (8:50)
How Good Is Your Word (8 Comm)? (7:10)
Are We Covetous or Content (9 & 10 Comm)? (9:10)
How Do We Celebrate the Way of God (1-3 Comm)? (8:00)
Why Tell of Sinai and the Upper Room? (10:10)

A Teacher's Guide is included with considerable background and lesson options for youth and adults. Most of the segments are recommended for use in Grades 4 and 7 of the "God With Us" Series.

American Lutheran Church, The Story of the Apostles (Vision Video, Worcester, Pa)

Part of the "Children's Heroes of the Bible" Series, this is an animated retelling of the apostles' activity beginning with the appearance of the risen Christ on the seashore through Paul's journey to Rome for trial.

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

A — Audio Cassettes

David Kirk, We Are Called to Shelter the Homeless (Fair Lawn, NJ, Word Cassettes, 1988)

The Vision of the Gospel on caring for those in need as seen through the viewpoint of some Eastern Fathers.


Exegesis of six primary New Testament passages on diakonia, the Scriptural word for service.
B — Video Programs

Emmaus on Emmaus — Produced by members of the Emmaus Community, this program illustrates a number of facets of the work of this ecumenical outreach. (14:00)

The House on 124th Street — A CBS-TV documentary on the work of Emmaus/Harlem and its founder, Fr. David Kirk. (26:00)

The Visitor (Worcester, Pa, Vision Video) — Leo Tolstoy's short story, "Where Love Is . . ." is transposed to a Chicago suburb in the 1960's. A depressed and lonely man is startled to learn that "the Lord" will be visiting him. He discovers that the Lord does indeed come in the face of neighbors in need.

CHURCH RENEWAL

A — Audio Cassettes

1988 Conference on Missions and Evangelism (Conciliar Press, 1988)

A four cassette series containing the proceedings of this gathering sponsored by the Evangelical Orthodox Mission of the Antiochian Archdiocese. Included are:

Gabriel Ashie, Is Evangelism Orthodox?
Jon Braun, Evangelism in Church History
Jack Sparks, Unchurched, Unrepentant, Uninterested
Richard Ballew, The Holy Spirit and Evangelism
Peter Gilquist, A Vision for Orthodoxy in North America
Gordon Walker, It's Open Season in North America
Peter Gilquist, Reaching the Lapsed Orthodox
Jon Braun, How to Expand an Existing Parish

C — Video Programs

Thomas Loya, An Introduction to the Eastern Catholic Churches (Parma, Oh, Eparchy of Parma, 1988)

Documentary-style introduction to the development of particular Churches and Traditions in early Christianity. Designed to be used in presenting Chapter 2 of David Petras' "Eastern Catholic Churches in America" (12:00).

Jerusalem of Heaven and Earth (Nomad Films International, 1983)

TV documentary on the Christian presence in the Holy City, featuring the three principal communities there (Armenians, Greeks, Latins).

Sons of Abraham (Cine & Teleproduction)

European TV documentary series on the various Christian Churches of the Middle East. Segments on hand include:

Eastern Orthodox: Heirs of Byzantium
Maronites: Between Flower and Gun
Nestorians and Syrians: Primitive Christian Churches


Documentary on the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, whose renewed activity is spurred by both glasnost and the reported apparitions of the Mother of God in Hrishiw (55:00).

ICONOGRAPHY

C — Video Programs

BGW Associates, Icon (Washington, DC, the Trust for Museum Exhibitions, 1988)

An outstanding 18 minute reflective presentation on the spiritual and liturgical ethos of Byzantine architecture and iconography. Produced in conjunction with the exhibit, "Holy
Image, Holy Space".

"r. Lazar Puhalo, The Ikon as Scripture
,Chilliwack, BC, Orthodox Christian
Videos, 1989)

Lecture on the mystagogic aspect of
icons: celebrating and presenting the
Good News.

SPIRITUALITY

A — Audio Cassettes

Richard Rohr, Breathing Under Water
(Cincinnati, Oh, St Anthony Messenger
Press, 1989)

Two cassette series on relating the
principles of Alcoholics Anonymous' Twelve Steps to basic spirituality. The
embracing of our brokenness is at the
heart of both AA and traditional
spirituality.

MISCELLANEOUS

A — Audio Cassettes

Emile Karam, Spoken Arabic (Still River,
Ma, St. Bede's Publications, 1982)

A sixteen-chapter book with
accompanying cassette on the spoken
Arabic of Lebanon.

C — Video Programs

Granada Television of England, The
Christians (Carlsbad, Ca, CRM Films)

A thirteen-segment documentary series
on the history of Christianity, from the
apostolic origins to the confrontation
with Marxism. After the first two
segments, primarily Western history is
stressed. Currently on hand:
Segment 3 - The Birth of Europe

Gateway Films, C.S. Lewis through the
Shadowlands (Worcester, Pa, Vision
Video, 1985)

Originally produced for BBC, Wales this
award winning drama details the
experiences of confirmed bachelor
theologian C.S. Lewis whose experience
of God is radically changed when he
falls in love with a woman who soon
contracts terminal cancer (73:00)

My Name Is Bill W. - TV docudrama on
the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous
and the life of its founder, Bill Wilson.
Originally produced for the Hallmoark
Hall of Fame (110:00).
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INDEX OF FORMS

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