

Eighth Grade: Seeking God

In Eighth Grade: The theme for this year is Pilgrimage concentrating on the Old Testament. The eighth grader is at an age of the continuation of searching for self-identity, asking challenging questions about their religious teachings, childhood notions of God, and the interplay of good and evil in life. Through the study of the experiences and events found in the Old Testament and how spiritual pilgrims in Scripture and Tradition searched and found God, the eighth grader is able to clarify questions and find answers in his own pilgrimage. (This definition is taken from the Scope and Sequence of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.)

During the Eighth Grade Catechetical School year, students should learn:

I. God the Father

Students recognize God as Creator; study the mystery of creation – the biblical and scientific evidence and about Creation and Evolution. They learn about the Fall-what, why & consequences, as well as Job's search for God. They become aware that God is a personal being who loves and sustains the world and humanity and seeks to draw people into an appropriate relationship with Him.

II. God the Son-Jesus Christ

Students learn that Christ, our Messiah, is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. They learn that Jesus is fully human and fully divine-God and Man.

III. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit inspired and empowered the Judges, Prophets and Apostles. Students study the convicting, judging and healing power of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Church

The highlights of the struggle, temptations, and key issues in the search of God are studied

V. Worship and Prayer

Students learn of Old Testament worship, prayer as an inner pilgrimage, Jacob wrestling with the angel, the Jesus Prayer and the Psalms.

VI. Liturgy

The Liturgy is studied as a spiritual journey seeking God through all the senses and as a foretaste of the Promised Land-God's Kingdom. The Liturgy is seen as 'work of the people' requiring active participation and openness with God.

VII. Sacraments and Other Services

The sacraments are spiritual provisions in our earthly journey. Holy Confession, Holy Communion and Paraklesis are studied.

VIII. Prayers and Hymns

Students learn many hymns which are sung during the Liturgy (Agios, Agios, Agios)

IX. Saints, Feasts, Cycles

Christmas Lent, Great Lent, Fast of the Apostles, the Dormition Fast and Menaia are discussed.

X. Scripture

Old Testament Passages highlight the lives of the Patriarchs, the Slavery in Egypt, the Exodus, Wanderings in the Wilderness, Sinai, and the coming to the Promised Land are studied.

XI. Tradition

Prayer books, icons, readings from Scripture and the lives of the Saints as provisions in our earthly journey are the focus.

XII. Christian Family

The Church is the family of Christ and families are seen as a group or travelers in the world.

XIII. Ethics and Spirituality

Men & women are considered pilgrims in life, and they struggle with good and evil. Students learn of the role of the conscience. Monasticism is seen as a pilgrimage and marriage is also seen as a pilgrimage.

XIV. Service and Mission

Study of Russia Orthodox missionaries in Alaska is discussed.

XV. Other Faiths, Society and World

The people of the earth are seen as co-travelers, and the earth is seen from earth is fragile. Students learn that working together for peace, understanding, and mutual respect between sexes, among races, nations and religions is necessary for people to find peace.