



Holy Transfiguration Curriculum & Teacher's Guide

2008 - 2009

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Catechism Curriculum: The Three Phases

Phase I: Relationships (Pre-school through 4th Grade) “The Heart”

Matthew 22: 37 – 39 “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Building relationships with:

God

Family

Friends

Initial awareness of: Old Testament, New Testament, The Church, Orthodox Life

Phase II: Knowledge (5th Grade through 8th Grade) “The Head”

2 Peter 3:18 “... grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Understanding the fundamentals of the Faith:

Holy Scripture

- Old Testament**
- New Testament**

Holy Tradition

- The Creed**
- Sacraments**
- Church History**
- Saints**
- The Divine Liturgy**

Phase III: Application (9th Grade through 12th Grade) “The Hands”

Philippians 4:8 “Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”

Applying principles for daily living:

- Role Models**
- The Orthodox Year**
- Contemporary Moral Issues**
- Orthodox Life**

Preschool

A. Goals:

- To understand that God made everything – nature, plants, animals, and all people.
- To know that we should give thanks to God for all things.
- To learn important stories from the Old Testament – Adam & Eve, Noah's Ark.
- To recognize important moments in the life of Christ – birth, baptism and miracles.
- To understand that going to church is a joyful experience of prayer, singing, and proper conduct.
- To learn how to make the sign of the Cross and how to receive Holy Communion.
- To understand that we should share God's gifts with others.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

1. Thanking God: Learning how to pray.
2. Learn one verse of the Lord's Prayer each week.
3. Make sign of the Cross; learn how to receive Communion and Antidoron; how and when we light candles.
4. Learn simple hymns – Holy God; Lord Have Mercy.
5. Collect examples of the things God made outside. Make thank you cards to God for his gifts.
6. Bible stories to learn God loves us and understand the Bible is the word of God. Learn a sampling of Bible stories to demonstrate that the Bible is a great source of knowledge and understanding. Tie to icons.
7. Bring foods, mittens, etc., for the needy, coins for mission center canister to learn sharing and giving.
8. Begin understanding stewardship by collecting things God has created: leaves, water, flowers, earth. Stewardship dimensions will expand as child goes to succeeding grades.

C. Vocabulary:

Altar bread (Prosporo)
Blessing
Cross
Censer
Antidoron

Chalice
Godparents: Nouno
& Nouna
Icon

Titles: Father, Bishop
Archbishop, Presvytera
Holy Spoon (Lavida)
Theotokos – Virgin Mary

Kindergarten

A. Goals:

- To identify important events in the life of Christ – birth, baptism, and miracles.
- To connect these events in Christ's life with the major feasts of the Church.
- To recognize important aspects of the Church's liturgical life such as Baptism, Holy Communion, the Bible, prayer, iconostasion, the Cross, candles, and incense.
- To recognize aspects of the Church's faith and tradition (angels, saints, Epitaphios, and others).
- To understand the meaning of prayer and be able to recite the Lord's Prayer.
- To learn how to sing Church hymns.
- To learn Old Testament stories – Adam & Eve; Noah's Ark, David & Goliath.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

9. Recite the Lord's Prayer and make the sign of the Cross. Encourage children to say Lord's Prayer with family at meals or at bedtime to reinforce the prayer; learn the proper way of making the sign of the Cross.
10. Light a candle and learn why.
11. Learn about Saints and specifically own Saint; have personal icon.
12. Build model of Church with removable roof – teach by adding small models of baptismal font, the Altar, Bible, and Iconostasion to explain what happens in the Liturgy. Learn the different parts of the Church.
13. Learn "Tes Presvias;" begin Liturgical participation by singing.
14. Home Project: Invite parents to share stories of when they were very young in Church, and share how they learned to show respect in the service.
15. Make a depiction of the Creation.
16. End each lesson with a prayer.

C. Vocabulary:

Altar bread (Prosphoro)
Blessing
Cross
Censer
Antidoron

Chalice
Godparents: Nouno
& Nounna
Icon

Titles: Father, Bishop
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Holy Spoon (Lavida)
Theotokos – Virgin Mary

1st & 2nd Grade

A Goals:

- Understand God is our Creator who loves and cares for us
- Old Testament:
 - Ten Commandments
 - David & Goliath
- New Testament:
 - Nativity
 - Parables/Miracles (prodigal son, Samaritan woman, paralytic)
 - Crucifixion
 - Resurrection
 - Transfiguration
- Values/Church Participation:
 - Good manners (in church)
 - Forgiveness
 - Saints (Specifically Nicholas, Basil, Anthony, George)
 - Sacraments: Communion, Baptism
 - Recognize major feasts – Annunciation, Christmas, Easter
 - Recite Lord's Prayer
 - Understand liturgical traditions such as receiving Holy Communion, the forty-day blessing, Holy Water, and icons
 - Fasting – why & how
 - Introduce stewardship
 - Understand the Holy Spirit

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

17. Learn name of Church Icon; learn and become familiar with Church items.
18. Understand symbols and customs: i.e. fish, dye red eggs at Easter, Vasilopita.
19. Learn why we light our candles at the Narthex.
20. Identify Church objects: icons, candles, incense – identify and make Christian symbols: fish/IXTHS, red eggs, XP.
21. Learn how we received our name at Baptism.
22. Using a shoebox Church – identify the three sections of the Church: Iconostasis, placement of Icons and why.
23. Begin Sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, Communion
24. Fasting: Why and how.
25. Introduce Feast days with:
 - a) Bible story
 - b) Icon
 - c) Troparion of Parish of the major Feast days – Example:
Nativity – Christmas – Virgin Mary – her parents and why she was taken to the Temple. Joseph – their journey and the Wise Men.
10. Learn the Lord's Prayer. Tie in to Icons.

C. Vocabulary:

**Akathist Hymn
Alms
Banners
Chalice Veil
Chanter
Chrismation
Churching**

**Deacon
Eucharist
Fasting
Great Entrance
Icon
Iconostasis
Incense**

**Jesus Prayer
Lance
Martyr
Myrrh
Narthex
Orthodox
Panagia**

**Proskomide
Sub-deacon
Sunday of
Orthodoxy**

3rd & 4th Grade

A. Goals:

- **Old Testament**
 - Ten commandments
 - Moses, Egypt
 - Jonah
- **New Testament**
 - Jesus' life – birth, baptism, crucifixion, resurrection
 - Parables
 - Disciples
- **Church Participation**
 - Identify sacred vestments, vessels, and instruments
 - Church Architecture; take a tour of the church
 - Recite the Creed
 - Learn how to use the Bible; practice referencing verses
 - Know what each level of Clergy does (Altar Boy, Deacon, Priest, Bishop, Archbishop, Patriarch)
 - Learn major Feast days
 - Stewardship – time, talent, and treasure
- **Sacraments**
 - Communion, Baptism, Chrismation, Ordination, Unction, Marriage, Confession

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

1. **Arrange for a tour of Church. (Identify the areas of the Church.)** Father will explain Church Vestments: Altar boy and Deacon, Priest, Bishop; he will show the class his Vestments and describe why and how they are used.
2. **Know order of Clergy from Reader to Patriarch – and identify by picture.**
3. **Make Proskomo and bring in names of living and deceased. Observe Proskomide.**
4. **Learn the Creed; explain the sign of the Cross.**
5. **Know and understand the Lord's Prayer and find it in Scripture.**
6. **Continue learning one Bible verse per week; recite Ten Commandments.**
7. **Fast.**
8. **Learn major Feast days.**
9. **Learn how to use the Bible**

C. Vocabulary:

**Absolution
Advent
Apostolos
Asterisk
Chant
Cupolas
Dikiro-Trikiro**

**Eagle
Epigonation
Epimanikia
Epiphany
(Theophany)
Epitaphios
Forerunner**

**Incarnation
Lamb
Lamentations
Of Christ
North Door
Pantocrator
Patriarch**

**South Door
Sponge
Synod
Zeon
Zone**

5th & 6th Grade

Rotation A: Old Testament

Why is studying the Old Testament imperative for Orthodox Christians?

Guiding Premise: Although there were many early religions, “the Old Testament religion of the Hebrew people proved to be the only religion of the ancient world ready to receive the Christian Gospel (Koulomzin, *Heroes for Truth*, p. 5).

Things to consider while studying/running theme: “Covenants with God”

- What does God promise key people in the Old Testament?
- What does God expect from them?
- What do they do? Do they follow God’s command or do they disobey it?
- What is the result of their decisions/actions?
- What is the inter-relationship between the Bible and tradition?

Geography is important. Maps should be placed on the walls to help students learn geographic locations in relationship to the Old Testament.

A. Goals:

- To understand the Creation of Man.
- To recognize the significance of the Fall of Man.
- To understand the story of Noah and the Flood and recognize the significance of God’s covenant.
- To understand Abraham’s loyalty and trust in God’s promise.
- To recognize God’s covenant with Moses, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
 - To understand the events after the exodus from bondage in Egypt and relate these events to God’s covenant with the Jewish people. (cause and effect)
 - To understand the significance of the letters on Christ’s halo on icons: I AM WHO I AM.
- To discuss the Ten Commandments, understand they are part of church morality along with the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the church, and recognize their application for Christians today.
- To understand the role of David.
- To understand the role of Solomon.
- To understand the Babylonian captivity of Israel.
- To recognize other prophets (teacher’s choice), their prophecies, and their central themes.
- To study the psalms, “songs of God’s people.”

- To recognize the various types: prophecies (Messiah), personal lamentations, songs of praise, songs of Thanksgiving, royal psalms.
- To understand that psalms are considered “dialogue between the Church, the body of Christ, and Christ, her head. Therefore, they make more sense when they are prayed, not simply read” (The Orthodox Study Bible, p. 635).
- To understand the purposes of psalms.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

1. Construct a biblical “time table” of Old Testament events.
2. Create a poster of a biblical event.
3. Compose a poem of a biblical event.
4. Create a chart of the various prophets, their covenants with God, and the results of those covenants.
5. Discuss the Ten Commandments and make a list of ways to practice these commandments in everyday life.
6. Examine several psalms and identify their type and purpose.

C. Vocabulary and/or terms for discussion:

absolution	lamentations	Covenant	exodus
Psalm	covet	commandment	prophet
prophecy (noun)	prophecy (verb)	creation	temptation
deliverance	captivity	tradition	praise
Morals	honor	image	Sabbath
Idol			

Rotation B: The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Guiding Premise: To fully experience The Divine Liturgy, Orthodox Christians must first understand the different parts of the liturgy, the architecture of the church, and its relationship with The Divine Liturgy, and

A. Goals:

- To understand the meaning of sacramental and devotional practices.
- To define “litany” and recognize the Great Litany in the Divine Liturgy.
- To define “anthem” and recognize the First, Second, and Third Anthems in the Divine Liturgy.
- To identify and understand the purpose of the Small Entrance with the Holy Gospel.
- To understand the Thrice-Holy Hymn.
- To recognize the New Testament readings (Acts of the Apostles or Epistle) and Gospel readings.
- To identify and understand the purpose of the Great Entrance with the Holy Gifts.
- To recognize and understand the Ectenia of the Oblation and the Petitions of Oblation.
- To recognize the Confession of Faith—The Creed.
- To understand the Sanctification of the Holy Gifts.
- To understand the Ectenia before the Lord’s Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer.
- To understand the Elevation of the Holy Gifts, the Communion prayers, and Holy Communion.
- To understand the Thanksgiving and Dismissal prayers.
- To understand the architecture of the church and how this architecture relates to the Divine Liturgy.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

1. Memorize: The Jesus Prayer, The Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, and The Communion Prayers.
2. Read and discuss the Thrice-Holy Hymn.
3. Practice and then set up a schedule for students to read the New Testament readings during The Divine Liturgy.
4. Bring in a picture of a church narthex and discuss where various parts of the Liturgy occur and why.
5. Draw a diagram of the nave and identify key areas where various parts of the Divine Liturgy occur.
6. Discuss church etiquette in general and at specific times during the Liturgy. (i.e. bowing in reverence, making the sign of the cross, kneeling)

7. Take a “field trip” to closely examine the icons on the iconostasis.
8. Examine and discuss a picture of a sanctuary and its furnishings.
9. Examine and discuss a picture of the altar table and its furnishings.

C. Vocabulary and/or key terms to discuss:

litany	sanctification	Eucharist	intercession
anthem	The Great Entrance	The Small Entrance	Apostles
Gospel	supplication	Theotokos	altar
hymn	consecration	Reverence	creed
Epistle	catholic	Apostolic	resurrection
confession	nave	icon stand (in some churches in the nave and others in the narthex) (“Proskinitarion”)	righteous
Solea	Bishop’s Throne (“Despoticon”)	Iconostasis	Pantocrator
narthex	sanctuary	Royal Gate	Northern Door
Southern Door			

7th & 8th Grade

Rotation A: New Testament

Why is studying the New Testament imperative for Orthodox Christians?

Guiding Premise: Holy scripture combines with holy tradition as the foundation for the Orthodox faith.

A Goals:

- To understand the themes and truths of Christian worship against the background of worship practices in the Bible and the ancient world.
- To review the structure of the New Testament: Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation.
- To recognize that the Bible is God's Book and that its truths are communicated by the Church.
- To connect the weekly Gospel and Epistle to daily life.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

26. Prepare for Feast Days by learning applicable Scripture.
27. Identify scripture references in the Divine Liturgy.
28. Review major parables of Christ.
29. Review major miracles of Christ.
30. Establish Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.
31. Highlight Paul's Epistles and apply them to foundation of the faith.
32. Review the Acts of the Apostles.
33. Tie the Church, patron Saint, iconography, hymnology, and scripture together.
Example: Annunciation: apply Mary's example to our lifestyle. Can we say "YES" to God as she did? And, at the same time, learn the icon, the Troparion, and the Scriptural teachings about Mary and why we call Mary Theotokos.
Explain and celebrate personal patron Saint.
34. Participate in all Lenten Services (read, sing).
10. Scripturally identify the events of Holy Week.

C. Vocabulary:

Absolution	Eagle	Incarnation	South Door
Advent	Epigonation	Lamp	Sponge
Apostolos	Epimanikia	Lamentations	Synod
Asterisk	Epiphany	Of Christ	Zeon
Chant	(Theophany)	North Door	Zone
Cupolas	Epitaphios	Pantocrator	
Dikiro-Trikiro	Forerunner	Patriarch	

Rotation B: Sacraments and Church History

A. Goals:

- To understand the origins, development, present form, and meaning of the sacraments.
- To know how to prepare and participate in the celebration of the sacraments.
- To understand the importance of the Saints.
- To understand the highlights of church history.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

- a. Sacraments:
 - i. Find Biblical sources. Read and discuss together.
 - ii. Identify and find Scriptural references for each and explain what each does. Example: Confession...what do we confess?
 - iii. Know visible and invisible signs of each Sacrament.
- b. Review lines of the Saints.
- c. Review the Seven Eucumenical Councils.
- d. Know how to find Orthodox sources for information: the Fathers, contemporary sources.

C Vocabulary:

Absolution	Eagle	Incarnation	South Door
Advent	Epigonation	Lamp	Sponge
Apostolos	Epimanikia	Lamentations	Synod
Asterisk	Epiphany	Of Christ	Zeon
Chant	(Theophany)	North Door	Zone
Cupolas	Epitaphios	Pantocrator	
Dikiro-Trikiro	Forerunner	Patriarch	

9th – 12th Grade

A. Goals:

4-Year Rotation as follows:

- **Year 1 - Koinonia (Fellowship)**
Title - Come Receive The Light
Subject – Orthodox Life
 1. Establish framework for living an Orthodox Christian Lifestyle.
 2. Identify “how to” principles for daily living.
 3. Create familiarity with Come Receive The Light version if the New Testament.
 4. Create awareness of critical issues including becoming a Christian, knowing God’s will, dealing with evil, growing in faith, and using your gifts.
 5. Contrast contemporary secular philosophy with an Orthodox Christian world-view.

- **Year 2 – Liturgia (Worship)**
Title – This Is The Day
Subject – Church Calendar
 6. Identify major feast days and fasting periods.
 7. Identify key Saints’ Days and holidays
 8. Establish “lessons learned” from major biblical and church history events.
 9. Use the lives of the Saints to exemplify key principles for students to apply in their daily lives.
 10. Communicate significance of church services in relation to the Liturgical cycles of the year.

- **Year 3 – Diakonia (Service)**
Title – Lifestyles of the Wise and Faithful or We are the Champions
Subject – Heroes of the Faith
 11. Identify role models from four sources: Old Testament, New Testament, Saints, and contemporary historical heroes.
 12. Identify most important figures in Christian faith.
 13. Establish significance of highlighted hero.
 14. Create context for story concerning hero.
 15. Apply “lessons learned” from particular biblical figure, Saint, or hero
 16. Illustrate principles for living.

- **Year 4 – Martyria (Witness)**
Title – Let Your Light Shine
Subject - Contemporary Moral Issues
 17. Identify significant moral issues in contemporary society.

18. Establish contrasting views of major issues including gambling, addiction, dating, evolution, sanctity of life, astrology, racism, pornography, abortion, etc.
19. Identify biblical principles relative to contemporary issues.
20. Establish plans for resolving difficult life issues.

B. Practical suggestions and learning objectives:

1. Leverage current news stories (magazines, newspapers, T.V./radio, Internet).
2. Stimulate dialogue through open-ended questions.
3. Create interactive environment in every class through games, exercises, role play.
4. Establish outlines for each class of major points.
5. Ask each student to identify/share “takeaway” regarding most important point to them at the end of each class.
6. Use relevant examples for discussion.
7. Apply simple language for discussion.

Lesson Plan Template

Title of Lesson: Date: Grade Level:
Lesson Objective: (What do you want your students to learn by the end of the lesson?)
Performance Objective: (How will you know if your students have learned the material?)
Key Vocabulary:
Materials Needed:
Sponge: (How are you going to get the students interested? What background knowledge must they have to understand and participate in the lesson?)
Procedure:

Things to Know About Church Etiquette

During the Liturgy

- We should arrive when the Liturgy begins, normally by 10:15 a.m. on Sundays during the school year. If we do arrive late, there are certain times when we should wait before entering the Nave (sanctuary) to light our candle and enter the church. Please do not enter:
 - During the Small Entrance and the Great Entrance.
 - During the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel.
 - During the Consecration (when we are kneeling).
 - During the reciting of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.
 - Whenever the priest is censuring the congregation.
- During these times (above), we should also not leave the Nave, unless it is to take a young child out.
- You can and should do your cross any time you wish, but particularly, there are certain times during the Liturgy when we all do our cross:
 - When entering the Nave (sanctuary).
 - Whenever we hear the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - Whenever we hear the name of the Virgin Mary.
 - Whenever we hear the name of our patron saint.
 - When we enter the altar area (for men and boys only)
 - Whenever we cross in front of the altar (for everybody).
- No snacks are allowed in church; if small children need to be fed, please take them out and feed them.
- No gum chewing is allowed during the Divine Liturgy.
- Talking in the Nave of the church should be kept to a minimum and only in a low voice. We are here to worship; fellowship comes after the Liturgy.
- Our children are the apples of our eyes and definitely belong in church. There are times, however when their behavior can be distracting to others. When this happens, tell them to calm down, and if they can't, it is our job as parents to take them outside until they do settle down. Please restrain the children from running around.
- Soft toys and church related books are great for the little ones – please, no hard toys such as blocks, cars, trucks, dolls, etc. When banged on the pew, these are very distracting.

Holy Communion

- Ladies should remove lipstick with a tissue before receiving Communion.
- On Sundays when we are receiving Holy Communion, we should not eat or drink anything, including water from the water fountain, beginning from when we wake up until after we receive Communion. The only exception to this is small children and any kind of medicine for anyone.
- While Communion is being served, we should stand quietly and recite the "Prayers of Thanksgiving after Receiving Communion" that are found in the Liturgy book. It is okay to acknowledge friends that pass by, but we shouldn't get into conversations; wait until after the Liturgy.
- When receiving Communion, we should hold the cloth under our chin, in order to catch any that may fall. After receiving, lightly touch the cloth to your lips to blot up any remaining Communion.

- When we are standing in line to receive Communion, we don't stand with our hands in our pockets; it is considered irreverent.

Andithoron (the blessed bread)

- When receiving Andithoron from the Priest, we should kiss his hand as we receive it. We should then keep it cupped in our hands until we have eaten it. We put both our hands together in the form of a cross and cup them so that we can catch the crumbs.
- If you see a crumb or piece that has fallen to the floor, you should pick it up, kiss it, and either eat it or place it somewhere people do not step.
- We never throw Andithoron into a trash can; after all, it's not trash; it's blessed bread! If there is leftover Andithoron, it is to be given to the faithful and the crumbs are placed where they may be eaten by the birds.
- Please watch your children as they eat their Andithoron so they don't leave it on the pew or other inappropriate places.

Church grounds

- We should respect all church property, the buildings and the grounds, and particularly the Narthex (just outside the sanctuary doors) and the Nave (inside the doors). This is God's House, and we should treat it even better than we treat our own.
- When entering the Narthex, refrain from conversations except brief greetings.
- During coffee hour, please do not let the children run around the room. This is an accident waiting to happen, with hot coffee and food being juggled in many hands.
- We don't run inside the Nave of the church.

General

- We always stand when a Priest enters a room, and we greet him with a kiss on his right hand. We do this in and out of church to show respect for the Priest himself and for the position of the Priest because the Priest's hands are used to consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ during Communion, and to receive a blessing from the Priest.
- We don't cross our legs when sitting in church; it is considered irreverent.
- Clothing – dress conservatively for church. If you can't wear it to school, don't wear it to church. Remember – too tight is not right!

Resources

<http://www.theologic.com/offweb/>

<http://theologic.com/links/>

<http://www.orthodoxonline.com/>

These aren't Orthodox, but have some great activities & games...

<http://www.kidssundayschool.com/>

<http://www.christiancrafters.com/>