

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

After General Websites, topics have been arranged alphabetically. Some of the resources can be downloaded. Others are available only in print, but can be ordered online. This list is by no means exhaustive. Please send other recommended sites to lfunk@shaw.ca.

Here is a listing of the main categories: General Websites, Camping Programs, Children's Bulletin, Church School Director Resources, Directories, Fine Arts, Games & Activities, Joy (Junior Orthodox Youth) Clubs, Music, Online Lesson Plans, Printed Curricula, Supplementary Reading, Teacher Trainings, Vacation Church School/Vacation Bible School.

GENERAL WEBSITES

1. Orthodox Christian Education Commission <http://www.orthodoxed.com>
2. American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA <http://www.acrod.org/education>
3. Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
<http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation>
4. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America <http://www.religioused.goarch.org>
5. Orthodox Church in America <http://www.dce.oca.org>
6. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA <http://uocofusa.org/offices.html>

CAMPING PROGRAMS

Visit these websites to get an idea of what's involved in running a camp:

Antiochian Village Camp <http://www.antiochian.org/AntiochianVillage>

St. Andrew's camp <http://www.standrewscamp.com>

Camp St. Raphael has programs for 2 groups: 9-11 and 12-18, and has put its curriculum online at <http://home.earthlink.net:80/~mitch5661>

CHILDREN'S BULLETIN

St. Nicholas Church publishes the Children's Orthodox Parochial School Bulletin weekly from September through June of each year. The Bulletin is an 8 ½" x 11" paper folded in half and run off in booklet form. The back cover of the bulletin contains a box with the heading "Reproduced by" which allows you to insert your parish name, address, phone number or any other information up to four lines.

The section entitled, "The Gospel under the Microscope" examines the Sunday gospel reading and clarifies and comments on its meaning. Other sections are: "Focus on a Feast," "Did You Know?" and "Fun and Games" with word searches or pages to color. Finally, the back cover gives information about St. Nicholas Orthodox Parochial School, Inc, and contains the box "Reproduced by" as mentioned above. The Children's Orthodox Parochial School Bulletin is an excellent resource for parents as well as church school. It can be used as a resource for those classes that are studying the gospel reading as part of their Sunday morning lessons.

To view a sample PDF, click on the link at <http://www.antiochian.org/node/16521>. Those who wish to use the Bulletin must establish an account, and log in each week. . The bulletin is provided free and posted on Tuesday of each week.

http://www.StNicholasOrthodoxChristianSchool.org/html/childrens_bulletin.asp

CHURCH SCHOOL DIRECTOR RESOURCES

This superb manual for Church School Directors parallels the course taught at the Orthodox Institute every fall at Antiochian Village:

<http://www.antiochian.org/assets/dce/csdmanual/2007%20CSD%20Manual.pdf>

Phyllis Onest has compiled a collection of articles on a wide variety of topics at <http://www.phyllisonest.com> (click on Resources, then Church School Director Resources). The articles are available to use free of charge; she only asks that you include her name with each article.

DIRECTORIES

Resource Directory – This directory has contact information (mostly phone numbers & postal addresses) for Orthodox institutions, publishers, vendors and service providers.

<http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation/resource.htm#other> or go to

<http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation> (Highlights, click on Resource Directory).

Yellow Pages – Phyllis Onest has an extensive directory of resources at <http://www.phyllisonest.com> (Click on Resources, then 2005 Yellow Pages for Religious Education). With websites and email addresses changing constantly, it's almost an impossible job to keep everything up to date, but even so this directory is well worth your time.

THE ARTS

The **Creative Festivals** were started by Met. PHILIP to help him personally meet and reward the children at Parish Life Conferences. Over the years the PLCs have grown so large that he can no longer attend and interact with all the children personally. However, the Creative Festivals continue to encourage children to use the fine arts (art, poetry, creative writing, and photography) to express their faith. The theme changes each year. Lesson plans and ideas for using the theme throughout the year, as well as guidelines and rules, can be found at <http://www.antiochian.org/festivals> or by following the link at <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation>

Drama

A lot of these plays are heavier on narration than on dialogue, which is easier for young children. Older students may enjoy the book (#4), which has more dialogue/memorizing lines.

1. The Trial of Jesus – An enactment of Jesus' trial; includes 2 scenes and narration. Role-playing like this could be easily adapted for any topic. <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/5>
2. A small collection of plays written and produced by local parishes: <http://dce.oca.org/resources/plays>
3. Christmas plays available in both HTML and PDF: <http://www.phyllisonest.com> (Click on Resources – Christmas Plays)

4. “Playing It up for Christmas” – to order this book of 5 Christmas plays:
http://store.orthodoxed.org/advanced_search_result.php?keywords=playing+it+up+for+christmas

GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Most of the online games are pencil and paper types. There is certainly a need for churches to submit their more kinesthetic and team activities to aodce@aol.com.

Activity books

1. Saints of North America: 74 pages of activities about 12 North American saints whose lives and witness built up the Orthodox Church in America. <http://www.dce.oca.org>
2. Saints in Times of Trouble: 101 pages of activities and information about 12 saints who suffered extraordinarily for the Orthodox faith. <http://www.dce.oca.org>

Bible activities

1. Discovering Biblical Meaning in Liturgical Verses – 13 pages of verses and scriptural references during the services of Nativity <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/1>
2. Examining the Nativity of the Theotokos – through hymnography and iconography and scripture <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/1>
3. Holy Women of the Bible – read about them & create a team game to identify them by their virtues. <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/2> This could be easily adapted for any topic.
4. The Theotokos in Scripture & Hymnography – an activity to examine and understand the OT references to the Theotokos in our services. <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/4>

Crafts

1. This website looks like a collection of crafts from camp. <http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/index.htm>
2. Good instructions on planning, a list of related books and publications, and instructions on making glass and/or laminated icons. <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/4> (click on Summer Crafts)
3. Celebrate the Feast Days – Patterns for stand-up centerpieces for each feast. On this page you will also find several resources and their ordering information. <http://www.antiochian.org/celebratefeastdays>

Games

This is a collection of fun games for groups. Most don't have a Christian theme, but could be adapted if you wanted to relate it to a particular lesson. <http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/index.html>.

Service Projects

Here's a good variety of projects for either groups or individuals. <http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/index.htm>

Word puzzles

You can make your own word puzzles (word searches, crosswords, word scrambles) for free at <http://www.armoredpenguin.com>

JOY (Junior Orthodox Youth) CLUBS

These pre-teen clubs focus on fellowship, instruction, community service projects, arts & crafts, etc. The JOY curriculum can be ordered from <http://www.orthodoxmarketplace.com/youth-young-adult-ministry-c-343.html> Volume 2 of the curriculum can be downloaded from <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/youth/youthworkers/joycurriculum2>

MUSIC

Liturgical Music

1. At the Orthodox Institute in 2005, Liz McMillan taught a course on introducing liturgical music through the Church School. Her class included technical topics such as how to teach pitch and rhythm, practical considerations such as time and place, and the importance of teaching liturgical music. Her material is in the process of being put online. <http://www.antiochian.org/music> (Music Downloads)
2. Most jurisdictions have a link to their music on their websites. However, many of them are choral arrangements that would be difficult to teach children.
3. <http://www.stjussianorthodox.com/music.htm> has an extensive listing of music from different jurisdictions, as well as liturgical music sung by contemporary artists such as Eikona. (Go to <http://eikona.com> to hear a clip of Rejoice O Unwedded Bride.) Most of the links have recorded samples and some also have printed scores available.

Non-liturgical Orthodox Music

1. **Children's folk-style songs** <http://www.stromanosrecords.com> (clips available on right sidebar)

a. Gigi Shadid – Fruits of the Spirit

Kids and adults alike will enjoy this production. Renowned youth worker Gigi (Baba) Shadid produced this awesome folk CD to teach children and to help them grow in their faith in Christ and their love for His holy Church. While many of the songs are directed specifically toward youth, all ages will appreciate the music, lyrics, and Gigi's joyful approach to life and faith. The CD features musical stories about saints, Scriptural passages, and aspects of Church Tradition from a uniquely Orthodox perspective.

b. Gigi Shadid – Celebrate the Feasts

The much-anticipated sophomore disc from Khouria Gigi (Baba) Shadid is finally here! The CD is a collection of 11 original tunes from American Orthodoxy's favorite female folk singer, plus 16 more tracks of Gigi and friends singing various festal hymns of the Church. Take a listen and you will agree that "Celebrate the Feasts" exceeds all expectations. May God bless Khouria Gigi and all of the work she does for our youth!

c. Fr. Michael Shanbour – Living in an Orthodox World

Youthful energy and theological soundness adorn this disc by former KERYGMA member, Fr. Michael Shanbour. Each song, directly or indirectly, focuses in on a liturgical service or theme in a way that is simple, singable, memorable, and educational. Some songs incorporate portions of prayers, hymnography and melodies from the liturgical services in order to implant a familiarity with and desire for the services of the Church. Features a choir of well-tuned young singers!

2. Other styles by Orthodox artists

Check out Folk-Rock, Jazz, Classical, etc. at <http://www.stromanosrecords.com/>

Non-orthodox Music

1. Scripture Songs

A very easy way to memorize scripture is to set it to music!

“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:11

<http://www.joyfulnoisescripture.org/scrsanth.html> - clips available, King James Version

2. Be very careful about using non-orthodox music that is not pure scripture, unless you check with your priest about the theology in it. Be sure to get your priest’s blessing before using non-orthodox music in your Christian Education programs.

ONLINE LESSON PLANS

Online lesson plans have their pros and cons. Just email the link to your local copy center and pick up the order the next day. If you’re computer savvy and have good quality paper at home, you can print them yourself. It’s also an easy way to get extra books quickly if you have new students join part way through the year. However, there is an undisputed simplicity to filling out a mail order form and putting a stamp on it instead. At first glance online lessons look like an inexpensive alternative to ordering books. You will save on shipping and handling, but copying still costs, especially for color. We highly recommend that you use both color **and** good quality paper since they make the material much more attractive to the students.

The Antiochian Gospel Program – Illustrated handouts of the each Sunday's Gospel for every Sunday are offered at five levels. It is paraphrased for the younger grades, and presented as it will be heard in the liturgy for the older students. With engaging graphics and great questions, it can be used as the curriculum for a small church school or by parents who wish to read the gospel on Saturday night with their children. Those who have used it report that the children are much more attentive to the Gospel Reading at the Divine Liturgy. A coloring page is included for younger children, as well as two audio files – one for the younger children, told by a master storyteller, and one for the older children, a reading of the Gospel. Check out the story for next Sunday at <http://www.antiochian.org/node/1448> or follow the link at <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation>.

FOCUS units – Modules of 5-6 lessons for 5 different age groups. Topics covered are the Journey to Pascha, the growth of Orthodox Christianity in N. America, the Theotokos and the Nativity season. <http://dce.oca.org/page/focus>

The Hub - A good resource for teens and young adults. Most of these are discussion based. <http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/StudyGuides/index.htm>

Mini Units – Modules of 1-2 lessons for 3-4 different age groups. Some of the lessons are based on the Orthodox Church in America’s Youth theme of the year, such as Champions of the Faith. Other topics are suitable for seasonable emphases such as stewardship, charity, and missions, and may work for retreat settings. <http://dce.oca.org/page/mini>

Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) – A single lesson for 4 different age groups, including adult. OCMC is the official international missions and evangelism agency of SCOBA. The lessons

highlight mission work and encourage students to support existing missions, join a short-term mission team or consider long-term mission work. <http://www.antiochian.org/1139526731>

The Scribe – 22-24 lessons for Middle School. On the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, Jesus explained to the disciples how the Old Testament pointed to Him as the awaited Messiah. In *The Scribe*, a fictional first-century journalist is covering current events in Judea. In an effort to write intelligently, he turns to his scholarly scribe friend for help in understanding the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus. <http://www.antiochian.org/thescribe> or follow the link at <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation>. Printing this curriculum is a little tricky right now because the student activity sheets have been included only in the Teacher Guide and not in the Student handouts. You will have to print one copy for each student, omitting the teacher notes. This will be revised soon

Tithing – 4-5 lessons for 4 different age groups. Tithing (giving 10% of our income to the Lord) and stewardship of our resources is important to teach from early childhood. Each year a new series of lessons is created, using various saints as models for us to emulate. The material can be used as an add-on to an existing lesson, or expanded to be a complete lesson in itself. It is recommended that one lesson be taught per month to reinforce the concept throughout the year. <http://www.antiochian.org/tithing2008> or follow the link at <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation>. There is also a link to priests' resources which can be used for short talks or bulletin inserts.

PRINTED CURRICULA

OCEC – Orthodox Christian Education Commission curriculum can be ordered from <http://www.orthodoxed.com>

Scope & Sequence – Good curriculum is written within a scope & sequence that aims to give a comprehensive education to students as they move from pre-K to High School. 'Scope' describes what subjects are taught in various categories such as Biblical, Church History & Tradition, Doctrine. 'Sequence' arranges the materials in an age appropriate order. The S&S for the Orthodox Christian Education Commission is described at <http://www.acrod.org/education/ACROD%20Religious%20Education%20Curriculum%202006.pdf>

Knowing Your Faith – educational standards for OCEC curriculum K-5. Questions, prayers & icons that summarize what you taught throughout the year. Available in poster format for classroom display and review. <http://www.antiochian.org/knowingyourfaith>

Learning Opportunities for Middle and High Schools – Many programs and materials are available for Middle and High School students. In the following table, materials from various jurisdictions have been categorized as: 1) Theology, Scripture, History, 2) Liturgy, Spirituality/Morality, and 3) Service, Witness, Saints, and 4) Other ideas. <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation>

Project Mexico has 3 lessons that can be adapted for different age groups. These lessons give students an opportunity to examine what it means to be poor, hear what Christ instructed us to do for those in need, and learn about Project Mexico's ministry to the poor and orphaned of Mexico. The length and focus of the curriculum make it a great option for Vacation Bible School or a Lenten project. Hopefully, the lessons will be available online or by email within the next year. Included are detailed instructions

for several different fundraising projects. Printed lessons can be ordered through <http://www.projectmexico.org/volunteer.html#curriculum>

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Book Discussions

In 1942, one of the founders of the very active Orthodox Youth Movement of Lebanon and Syria was Ignatios Hazim, now His Beatitude IGNATIOS IV. The goal of the movement was to organize and lead a renewal of church life in the Patriarchate of Antioch among ordinary believers. Participants committed themselves to personal and group studies and discussions, and future church leaders emerged, such as Patriarch IGNATIOS and Met. PHILIP.

The same thing can be done on a parish level. A church school teacher in Halifax, NS, Canada used this as a model for his teen class. He drafted a reading list and required his students to read two books during the year. They were to give an oral report to the class, as well as a written report to the parish that could either be posted or printed in the bulletin. Within a few weeks, two students came to him, saying that they had finished their books and asking for more. If these teens continue in this direction, that parish is well on its way to educating its laity and identifying future leaders!

Consult with your priest about drafting a reading list. Be sure to include various levels and types of materials for differing abilities in the group. Historical novels about the saints and /or life in the early church would be good choices for pre- or early teens. Eventually there may be a few participants who would like to meet together as a book club to read and discuss a common book. Once again, consult with your priest to make sure the content is true to the Orthodox faith.

Some publishers group their catalogues according to age levels.

Conciliar Press <http://www.conciliarpress.com/print-catalogs>

Holy Cross <http://store.holycrossbookstore.com>

Light and Life <http://www.light-n-life.com> (available only in print)

St. Vladimir's Press <http://www.svspress.com>

Thomas Nelson, Inc.

http://www.thomasnelsoninfo.com/ThomasNelsonCom/Catalog2008Fall/2008F_FULLCATALOG.pdf

There are several more publishing houses listed at <http://www.phyllisonest.com> (Click on Resources – 2005 Yellow Pages for Religious Education, p. 2)

For guidelines in teaching students how to read for content: <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/4> (click on Teaching Devices: Reading Strategies for All Content Areas)

For help in starting and leading a book club, check out:

http://www.litlovers.com/how_to_discuss_book.htm#resources (How to lead a book discussion group #1-#7 at top of page)

<http://www.litlovers.com/litkids.htm>

Cross and Quill

This web-based publication by and for teens is no longer in production. However, it yielded a harvest of over 100 very good articles during the two-plus years it existed. Most articles come with a response column containing questions to guide discussions. They are available individually by reviewing the index and clicking on the article you wish to download. <http://www.antiochian.org/594>

Reference Books

Following Bible Journeys –A list of books that provide background readings, Bible references, maps and charts <http://dce.oca.org/resources/activities/page/2>

TEACHER TRAININGS

Workshops – Trainers are available to come to your parish to conduct a workshop designed to train church school teachers. Two workshops are offered: basic and advanced, each consisting of three 2-hour sessions. To view brochures describing the workshops or to host a workshop, go to <http://www.antiochian.org/1121879918> or <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation> (Highlights, click on Teacher Trainings).

Orthodox Institute for Christian Education – This pan-Orthodox institute is held annually at Antiochian Village and features a different theme each year. Participants can choose from approximately 20 different classes to attend, including the Teacher Training Workshops (above). Click on the link at <http://www.antiochian.org/christianeducation> and follow the links to view a PDF flyer describing the classes.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL/VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

1. This page describes many details, such as choosing a theme, daily schedule, choir rehearsal, etc. <http://yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/Projects/SummerChurchSch.htm>
2. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has published the first of three VCS programs: The Twelve Great Feasts, available only in print. It is designed for 5 half-day sessions for ages 5-11, but includes suggestions for adapting it to different schedules and ages. It is available for purchase at 800-566-1088. A flyer can be viewed at <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/religiousec/folder.2009-04-29.4112196182>. (You'll have to zoom to 200% to read it easily.)
3. Adapt materials mentioned above:

Activity books

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2. Saints in Times of Trouble: 101 pages of activities and information about 12 saints who suffered extraordinarily for the Orthodox faith. <http://www.dce.oca.org>

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4. Read a blog that describes how VCS/VBS changed someone's life:

http://evlogeite.com/?page_id=158