



Read Me First

An overview for educators and clergy

Thank you for purchasing this church school lesson.

We've put together this handy overview to ensure lessons from *Orthodox Journeys* can be used "out of the box" by experienced educators, clergy, parents, and novice teachers alike.

- This content is meant to supplement, but not replace, weekly attendance of Sunday's divine liturgy by teachers and families
- We designed this content with the assumption that parents/guardians/teachers have few materials on hand
- Each lesson is designed for 30-60 minute class sessions
- Content can be used in full or in part, depending on your time frame
- We hope that from the buffet of options, you can choose content that will fit your interests and needs
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publishers at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

Goals

After completing this week's lesson, students should be able to articulate the following:

- How today's scripture readings and liturgical hymns apply to their life
- Understanding what God is expecting us to live as His followers and members of the Orthodox Faith
- How being part of the Orthodox Church gives us the tools and skills to live godly lives regardless of our circumstances
- Why they believe and follow Jesus Christ as Orthodox Christians

Suggested Lesson Order

- Opening prayer (*at right*)
- Recap last week's lesson
- Review the Epistle/Apostol and Gospel readings
- Engage in dialogue about the lesson of the day, offering insights and asking questions from the conversation guide
- Complete handout activities
- Preview for next week
- Closing prayers (*at right*)

Other Items to Sprinkle in

- Hymn of the day
- Sayings of the saints
- Saint of the week
- Suggested materials from the Web

Suggested Materials

- Bibles for all students
- Pencils or pens
- Printed copies of the handout for all students
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Scissors, glue as needed
- Internet access or web links and resources

Prayer before studies (*read by all students and teachers*)

+ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Sing "Christ is risen...", then:

O God our Father, through the grace of Your Holy Spirit – by which You made fishermen into Your all-wise Apostles – enable us to learn and understand the teachings of Your Son's True Faith, so we may live in accordance with Your Will, and be made worthy to one day dwell in Heaven with You, Your Son, and Your Holy Spirit, and with all Your Saints. + Amen.

Prayer after studies (*read by all students and teachers*)

+ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Sing or say the Paschal Hymn to the Theotokos "Shine, shine...", then:

O God, our Father, we thank you for the blessings received in Your Son's True Faith, help us, through Your Holy Spirit, to apply this knowledge to our words, thoughts, and deeds, that we may live as You desire, being made worthy to receive your precious gifts, glorifying You as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. + Amen.

Other Activities to Consider Incorporating

- Sing the festal hymn together every week (*making it part of your routine to sing encourages children to see the active role they can play in liturgy*)
- Memorize verses from scripture (*maybe practice together each week or offering a prize to participants*)
- Play a quick game "Search the Scriptures"

- Everyone has a Bible in their hands
- The teacher chooses a verse (random or purposeful)
- The students compete to find it in their Bibles first

This activity helps the students become familiar with the books of the Bible.

Directions: All students hold their Bibles above their heads.

The teacher says a verse (for example, Romans 12:1) and says "Go!"

The students compete to flip through their Bibles and find the verse.

The first person to find it stands up and reads the verse aloud.

Keep in Mind

- Asking open-ended questions is better for engaging conversations, encouraging young people to think about their Faith, sharing their experiences or ideas, and strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ and His holy Orthodox Faith.
- Don't be afraid of saying "I don't know," providing youth with an opportunity to see adults don't know everything about the Faith, and our own willingness to learn. (*Remember to follow-up when you have the answer, confirming you heard their question, and are supporting their desire to learn!*)
- Engage with your parish priest, providing opportunities for him to interact with your class, encouraging youth to develop a healthy spiritual relationship, while nurturing a willingness to come frequently to divine services, receive the Eucharist, and receive Confession at least four times annually (once during each of the four major fasts.)
- Pray for your students by name at least weekly.

May God bless you in your efforts to educate the children in your care!

