

Learning Objectives:

“Living Our Orthodox Faith”

Elementary School Textbook Series

Prepared by Stephania Gianulis
Additional material by Anton C. Vrame, PhD

What Your Child Should Know

A frequent question that the Department receives from teachers and parents is “What should children know about their faith by the time they are “X” years old?” This question is fueled by a number of influences. First, schools have expectations that their students should reach certain milestones at various stages in their education. Teachers are expected to prepare their students to meet those points in the course of the year, usually because there will be some kind of test. Second, education itself is goal-oriented. Educational progress is measured by the acquisition of certain objectives. Teachers and students want to know their level of progress. Third, parents want to be able to assist their children in the learning process. Knowing the expectations and what the program hopes to accomplish is beneficial.

The aim of education in the Orthodox Church is “to nurture, instruct, and direct each member of the community of faith—the Church—in Christian living, or as Orthodox writers typically call it, the life in Christ, so that each person grows “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) and become “a partaker of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). Alternately stated, the goal of ... catechesis is for each person to become an icon, a living image of God, a person who lives in continual fellowship—communion—with God, reflecting a particular way—the Christ-like way—of knowing and living in the world.” (A. Vrame, *The Educating Icon*, 1999, p. 63). This vision of education involves acquiring information but also involves living according to the precepts of that information.

Thus, an Orthodox Christian ought to be well-informed about the rich content of the Orthodox Tradition. Being able to name, to retell, to identify, to list, and more are dimensions of what it means “to know” one’s faith. A Church school program should be able to transmit these concepts to its students. But “knowing the Faith” also involves being able to appreciate its content, to consider how it influences one’s life, to participate in it, and to respond to its call of commitment to faith in Jesus Christ and His Church. For example, what is the benefit of reciting the Lord’s Prayer in a classroom setting, and a teacher’s assessment that the student has memorized it, without praying the Lord’s Prayer at home and reflecting on the words themselves?

The real curriculum for learning the Orthodox Faith is the life of the Church as experienced in a dynamic, faith-filled parish. Our education in faith is a lifelong journey. No Church school curriculum can include or teach everything. Any series of published textbooks is merely the first step of learning. Even in the best series, the authors, editors, and publishers make choices about what they believe most valuable for learners to achieve in a certain timeframe.

What follows—for the elementary level—is the result of reading the existing “Living Our Orthodox Faith” textbook series, published by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education between 1989 and 1993, and summarizing the concepts that the textbooks strive to teach. We have tried to distill their contents, by grade level, to answer the question, “What should my child learn in grade X?”

Please note the following:

- New terms and concepts in a text are in bold type.
- At the end of each grade, the Bible stories, lives of saints, and hymns covered by the textbook are also listed. It should be noted that Bible stories are frequently summarized in the textbooks to present the main point of the lesson or the story as well as to meet the developing reading skills of a student. When appropriate, based on reading ability, a student should begin using the Bible directly and learning Bible skills.
- You will notice how the concepts become more involved and the number of stories increases as the learner progresses.
- You will notice how certain concepts and topics, e.g., the Divine Liturgy, repeat themselves from year to year and are presented in new ways based on the theme of the book. The goal of the textbook series is not to present all of the information on a single topic in one year, never to return to it, but to revisit key topics in an unfolding pattern of discovery for the learner.
- Some items, such as prayers introduced in each unit, are found only in the Teacher's Guides to the books.

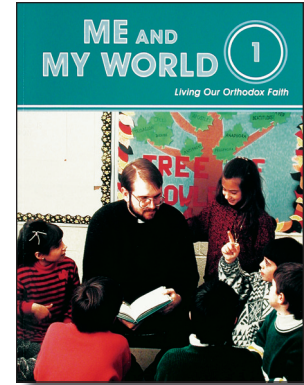
Of course, individual parishes and teachers add material, information (lives of saints, feast days, Sunday scripture readings), and activities, which will add to this list. Finally, the following list assumes that a child attends Church school faithfully, has a well-prepared teacher, and a family that is involved in the life of the Church, involved in the learning process, and reinforces the concepts at home.



Anton C. Vrame, PhD
Director

- First Grade: *Me and My World*
- Second Grade: *Loving God*
- Third Grade: *Sharing God's World*
- Fourth Grade: *Growing with God*
- Fifth Grade: *God Calls Us*

What Every First Grader Should Know After Using *Me and My World*



Unit 1—About Me

- God made every person to be a **special** and **unique individual**.
- **Jesus** is the Son of God.
- Learning is a gift from God; one thing we learn is how to make the **sign of the cross**.
- The **Bible** helps to guide our lives.
- God cares about our feelings, and He wants us to help and share with others.
- We should be **thankful** to God for the talents He gives us.
- Our priests teach us about God.

Unit 2—About the Orthodox faith

- Orthodox Christians light candles in church, venerate icons, and make the sign of the cross in a special way.
- We receive **Holy Communion**, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This brings us close to Him and to each other.
- When we are **baptized**, we are born into God’s family.
- Jesus was baptized by **John the Baptist**.
- At our baptism, we receive our name. Many of us are named after **saints**—holy people who fully lived God’s way.
- At our baptism, we also receive the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is a gift from Jesus and God working within us, to guide us toward doing the right thing in life.
- Jesus teaches us to love all people and to **forgive** others.
- Jesus Himself was once a child, and He loves children very much.
- Jesus Himself prayed alone and with others.
- He teaches us the **Lord’s Prayer**.
- When we pray, we talk to and listen to God. We can pray in the morning, at meals, at night, or any time.

Unit 3—About your family

- We are all part of a special group of people called a family.
- Families are different—some are large, some are small, some don’t have a mother or a father. Families love each other and share with each other.
- An Orthodox Christian family does special things.
- When a baby is **forty days old**, his or her parents bring him or her to church to be **blessed**.
- All Orthodox Christian families make up the church family.
- The church family celebrates special days like baptism and marriage.

Unit 4—About your church

- The church is a special place where we come together to pray.
- When we light **candles** in the church, we remember that Jesus Christ is the **light of the world**.
- We kiss **icons** in the church to remember the saints on them.
- In our church, the priest stands at the **altar** during our services.
- Long ago, Jesus was arrested and put to death in the city of **Jerusalem**, and then He rose from the dead.
- The church started with Jesus' twelve **Apostles**. After His resurrection, they traveled all over the world to teach people about Christ.
- During church, we pray by singing "**Lord have mercy.**"
- In the Divine Liturgy, receiving Communion joins us with Jesus.
- The first Liturgy was the **Mystical Supper**. In our Liturgy, the priest repeats the words of Jesus.
- We should offer our time, talents, and treasures to the church in any way that we can.

Unit 5—About people

- Jesus came to earth for **all people** in the world.
- We should love and respect all people no matter who they are or how different they are from us.
- Jesus taught that we should even love and pray for those who do harm to us.
- Some Christians are not Orthodox—they are Catholic or Protestant. Our leaders sometimes meet with their leaders to discuss our differences and similarities.
- Not all people are Christian.
- We should **respect** all people and their religions.

Unit 6—About your world

- God created everything in the earth, as a **gift** for us to take care of.

Unit 7—About Church holy days

- On March 25, we remember that the **Annunciation** is the day when the Angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her she would be Jesus' mother. We call her the Theotokos—the one who gave birth to God.
- On December 25, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, **Christmas**. Giving each other gifts reminds us that Jesus Christ is our greatest gift.
- On January 6, we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, which we call the **Theophany** or **Epiphany**. The priest blesses us with holy water.
- The Sunday before Easter is called **Palm Sunday**, when Jesus entered into Jerusalem and the people welcomed Him as a king. They waved palm branches. We also use palm branches and welcome Jesus as our King.
- On **Easter** Sunday, or **Pascha**, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We proclaim "**Christ is risen!**"

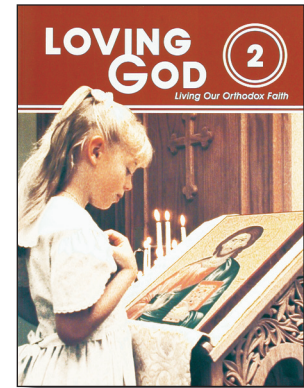
Hymns

- By the Prayers of the Theotokos (Tes Presvies)
- Save Us O Son of God (Soson Imas)
- Holy God (Agios o Theos)
- Blessed Be the Name of the Lord (Ei to Onoma)
- Christ is Risen (Christos Anesti)

Bible Stories

- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)
- Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5–25, 57–63)
- Jesus Heals the Paralytic (John 5:1–9)
- Noah and the Ark (Genesis 6–9)
- Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts of the Apostles 8:27–40)
- Jesus Gives the Holy Spirit after His Resurrection (John 20:19–23)
- Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 37:23–28, 45)
- Jesus and the Children (Mark 10:13–16)
- The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32)
- Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:4–25)
- The Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38)
- The Nativity of Christ (Luke 2:8–20, Matthew 2:1–12)
- The Baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:13–17)
- The Resurrection of Christ (John 19:38–42; 20:1–18)

What Every Second Grader Should Know After Using *Loving God*



Unit 1—We all need love

- All people **need love** in order to live.
- God loves us and gives us **gifts** in our life, such as our **talents**. He wants us to take care of all these gifts from Him.
- God gave us His son, Jesus, to save us from sin.
- In Jerusalem, **Jesus** taught people, healed people, and **was baptized in the Jordan River**. He died on the cross and rose from the dead.
- Jesus taught that the most important rule is to love God with your whole self.
- Jesus wants us to love others. People will know you are a Christian when you treat others with love.

Unit 2—Love at home

- God wants parents to love their children, and children should obey their loving parents.
- There are many ways to show love for your parents.
- The Church has **seven sacraments**, which help us to be close to God.
- Marriage is the sacrament of love.
- **Icons** show Jesus and the saints. They may tell stories about the Church. They remind us of God and the saints.
- When we burn incense, the smoke rises like our prayers rise to God.
- The Jesus Prayer is, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”
- We should forgive each other and ask for **forgiveness** from others.

Unit 3—Love in Church

- Our church is a family and we show each other love in many ways.
- At **Divine Liturgy**, we receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, a sacrament of love. To prepare, we pray, forgive each other, and fast from certain foods.
- Our church has many symbols, such as the Cross, the altar table, the chalice, the baptismal font, icons, and the incense censer.
- When we hurt ourselves or others, we sin. We should **ask God for forgiveness** of our sins in the sacrament of **Confession**. When we decide to confess our sins to God, we sit with a priest and he helps us and blesses us.
- Even when it is not easy to be loving, the **Holy Spirit helps us to love**.

Unit 4—Love means serving others.

- To serve means to do something good for someone, out of our love for them and for God.
- **When we care for others, we are caring for Jesus**. We should remember this whenever

we see a person in need.

- God made people the same in many ways, and different in many ways.
- We should love and serve people, even if we don't know them.
- People in the church can join together to help others who are in need.

Unit 5—Love means being respectful

- Respecting other people is a way of telling them that they are important.
- All people deserve **respect**.
- We should respect leaders such as our teachers, coaches, priests, and our president.
- Our church's leaders are bishops and priests. A bishop takes care of priests and the people in parishes.
- Our priests celebrate sacraments, teach us, and visit people in the hospital.
- **Deacons are helpers** to the priests and bishops.
- We also respect the **saints**, who were people who **lived God's way**. We remember the day the saint died. This is a feast day, because on that day the saint went to heaven. The night before a saint's feast day, we have Great Vespers to honor the saint and ask for him or her to pray for us. The next morning, we celebrate Divine Liturgy.
- We celebrate a person's name day on the feast day of a saint.
- We must **treat our world with respect** so that all people can enjoy it.

Unit 6—Love means obeying the rules

- **Rules help us to live together.** When we obey them, it shows that we care about ourselves and about each other.
- We follow rules in our church because we love and respect God and others there.
- God gave us rules in the form of the **Ten Commandments**.
- Jesus taught us to follow these commandments, and that the **greatest commandment is to love others**.
- **The Holy Cross is a symbol of love**, because Jesus died on the cross to save us. We celebrate this feast day on **September 14**.
- We show our respect for the cross by making the sign of the cross, putting it up on our walls, or wearing it on a chain around our necks. Seeing a cross should remind us of Jesus' love for us.
- We love and respect Mary, the Theotokos, which means the Mother of God. When Mary was three years old, her parents brought her to the Temple in Jerusalem, where the Jewish people prayed. She lived there her whole life, praying and following God's way. On **November 21**, the Church celebrates the day that **Mary entered the Temple**.
- When the baby Jesus was forty days old, Mary and Joseph brought him to the Temple to be blessed by God. A very old man named Simeon held Jesus in his arms, and knew that it was the Savior. After he did, he told God that his life was complete.
- This feast day is called the **Presentation of Jesus**, and we celebrate it on **February 2**.
- Just like Jesus, your parents brought you to be blessed when you were forty days old.
- We believe that after **Jesus** died, He rose **from the dead after three days**. This is the greatest miracle of our faith. We proclaim, "Christ is risen!"

Hymns

- Only Begotten Son (O Monogenis Yios)
- We Have Seen the Light (Eithomen to Fos)
- One is Holy (Eis Agios)
 - The Virgin on This Day (I Parthenos Simeron)

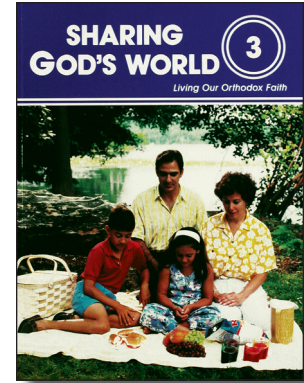
Bible Stories

- Adam and Eve (Genesis 2–3)
- The Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:1–23)
- The Miracle at Cana (John 2:1–11)
- The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32)
- The Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23–25)
- The Denial of Peter (Matthew 26:31–35, 69–75; John 21:9–15)
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35)
- David and King Saul (1 Samuel 24:1–15)
- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 19, 24)
- The House Built on Rock (Matthew 7:24–27)
 - The Nativity of Christ (Luke 2:8–20, Matthew 2:1–12)

Saints

- St. Demetrios and St. Nestor
- St. John the Evangelist
- St. Basil the Great
 - St. Helen Finds the Cross

What Every Third Grader Should Know After Using *Sharing God's World*



Unit 1—God wants us to share

- **Hospitality** means **sharing** our food and gifts with others.
- We also share our feelings, thoughts, and talents with others.
- We can share with God by going to church, singing the hymns, and giving to the poor; we should do this out of love.
- God made a **covenant** (promise) to **Abraham**, who became the father of the Hebrew people. Many years later Jesus was born among the Hebrew people, so all of His followers can share in Abraham's blessings.
- All Christians share God's gift of the Law to Moses, the Ten Commandments. Jesus taught that the greatest commandments are to love God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.
- We follow rules so we can live with each other peacefully.
- We should give thanks to God and to others for the things they do for us and give to us.

Unit 2—Jesus teaches us to share

- When Christians "share the good news," they tell others about how Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.
- Jesus wants us to be His helpers by helping others. This makes us His disciples, people who bring the good news to others.
- The service of the **Blessing of the Five Loaves** is based on the story of Jesus multiplying the five loaves of bread and four fish with the multitudes. This service **reminds us that we should share** our food with those who are hungry and have no food.
- Jesus made a sacrifice for us, and He teaches that sometimes doing the right thing is not easy, and we may have to make sacrifices, too.

Unit 3—The Holy Spirit helps us to share

- We received the **Holy Spirit** at our **baptism**. The Holy Spirit fills our heart with love and increases our kindness and closeness to each other.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to be brave when we're scared, to make good choices, and to say and do the right things, even when others around us do not.

Unit 4—Families share

- People in families should treat each other with love and share with each other.
- Family mealtime can be a special time for families to share with each other.
- Families can pray together before meals, at bedtime, before traveling, or any time. They can pray in their own words or use a prayer book.
- Families make and share special memories together.
- When families remember a special person who has died, the Church has a **Memorial Service** to pray for the person. His or her memory lives on forever.

Unit 5—We share in Church

- In the Divine Liturgy, we share special news about God.
- During the **first part of the Liturgy**, we learn through the **Epistle** and **Gospel** readings. These Gospels share stories about Jesus' life. The Epistles are letters from the Apostles that help teach us how to live Christian lives.
- During the **second part of the Divine Liturgy**, we offer the **gifts of bread and wine** to God. The Holy Spirit changes the gifts to the Body and Blood of Christ, to be Holy Communion.
- Before receiving, we say the Lord's Prayer. After we receive, we joyfully sing, "We have seen the true light!"
- God gave us the gifts of bread and wine; we give them back to God, and He changes them into something life-giving for us.
- When we receive **Holy Communion**, we are **joined to God and to each other** as one Church family.
- The sacrament of **Holy Unction** is a special service of **healing and forgiveness** through God's power. The priest anoints our faces and hands with **blessed oil**.
- The oil has special healing power, the same way that special lotion can help us heal after a bad sunburn.
- Being blessed with Holy Oil brings the Holy Spirit into our lives to help us live a healthy and good life.
- Water is another wonderful gift from God. **We need water** to live, to grow, and to clean. Our Church has a special service called the **Blessing of the Water**. When God blesses the water, it becomes a holy gift for us.
- Being sprinkled with or drinking holy water reminds us to keep our lives clean and away from sin, and to live God's way.

Unit 6—Sharing in the world

- A **missionary** is a person who **shares the Christian message** with others. We can be missionaries anywhere by sharing our faith with others.
- God shared His love with us by sending His Son; we can share our love with others, too.
- We should share the things we have with others who don't have as much.
- **Justice** means being fair to others and doing what is right. We can work for justice by standing up for people who are excluded and helping them to be treated fairly.

Feast Days

- On Christmas, we remember that God shared His Son with us, and we should share what we have with others.
- On the **Sunday of Orthodoxy**, the first Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the use of **icons** in the Church. We don't worship icons; icons help us to worship God and Christ.
- On Easter, we celebrate that Christ resurrected from the dead after three days.
- Forty days after Easter, Christ went up to Heaven; this is the feast of the **Ascension**.
- Fifty days after Easter, Christ sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples. They were then able to share the good news with anyone in the world.

Hymns

- The Wealthy Can Become Poor (Plousioi Eptocheusan)
- Praise the Lord (Aineite ton Kyrion)
- Your Birth O Christ (I Gennesis Sou)
- Blessed Are You O Christ (Eulogetos ei Christe o Theos)
- We Venerate Your Holy Icon (Ton Achranton Eikona Sou)

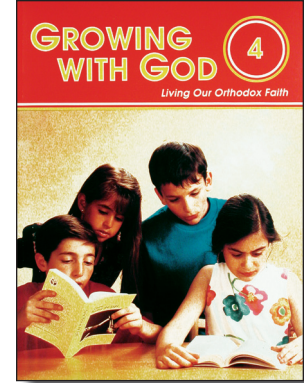
Bible Stories

- The Hospitality of Abraham (Genesis 18:1–15)
- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1–16)
- The Call of Abraham (Genesis 12)
- The Hebrews Build the Tabernacle (Exodus 35–36)
- Jesus Begins His Ministry in the Temple (Luke 4:14–22)
- The Call of the Disciples and the Great Catch of Fish (Luke 5:1–11)
- Jesus Feeds 5,000 People (John 6:1–14)
- The Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:14–22, 34)
- The Crucifixion of Jesus (Mark 14:32–15:24)
- Pentecost (Acts of the Apostles 2:4)
- Peter and John Preach (Acts of the Apostles 3:1–42)
- The Conversion of Saul (Acts of the Apostles 9:1–19)
- Isaac, Jacob, and Esau (Genesis 25:19–34)
- Cornelius and Peter (Acts of the Apostles 10)
- The Travels of St. Paul
- The Sermon on the Mount

Saints

- St. Stephen the First Martyr
- St. Polycarp
- Sts. Cosmas and Damian
- St. Nicholas

What Every Fourth Grader Should Know After Using *Growing With God*



Unit 1—We grow as we worship God

- When we see the beauty of the world God has made, we praise, thank, and worship Him.
- We worship the **one God** who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **three persons**:
 - The **Father** is the Creator of everything we can see and cannot see.
 - The **Son** is Jesus, who taught us how to live God’s way, died, and rose to save us.
 - The **Holy Spirit** is the power of God, which came upon the Virgin Mary, filled the disciples, and helps us to love God and one another.
- The most important way we worship God is through the **Divine Liturgy**, which means **“holy work of the people.”** Our work is to praise and worship God.
- Part of this work is listening to the Epistle and Gospel readings, which teach us about Christ and guide us in living a Christian life.
- We offer the gifts of bread and wine to God in the Liturgy. God blesses, or consecrates them, making them the Body and Blood of Christ.
- When we come to Liturgy, **we can bring many gifts**: prosforo, wine, lighting a candle, contributing money to the church, and incense or olive oil to be used in the worship.
- When we receive Holy Communion, we are joined to Christ and to each other. Christ forgives us and helps us to forgive others.

Unit 2—We grow as we learn God’s word

- Over many centuries, God inspired people to write books of God’s message, and they were put together as Holy **Scripture**, or the Holy **Bible**.
- Jesus read the Bible and taught people to follow its message. After He died and rose, His disciples wrote about Him, and these writings were added to the Bible.
- The Old Testament tells the history of the Hebrew people and has the Ten Commandments.
- The New Testament tells about Christ, the Apostles, and the first Christians.
- When we read the **Old Testament**, we believe that the **promises of the prophets** refer to **Christ**, and that the Passover lamb is a symbol of Christ.
- The New Testament is made up of several types of books: the four Gospels, which tell about the life of Christ; the Acts of the Apostles, which tell about the first Christians; the Epistles, which were letters written from Apostles to other Christians; and the book of Revelation, which tells about the coming of God’s kingdom.
- When we obey what we read in the Bible, we grow as Christians.

Unit 3—We grow through prayer and fasting

- When we **pray**, we **communicate with God**, by thanking Him, praising Him, and asking

for His help.

- Jesus prayed both by Himself and with His disciples.
- We also must pray alone and with others.
- God always answers our prayers, even if He does not give the answer we expect or want. When we don't get something we ask for from Him, He may have other plans for us.
- When we fast, we do not eat certain foods at certain times. We should also fast from doing and saying wrong things. This helps us control what we eat, say, and do. Fasting should help us focus more on prayer.
- Our Church tells us we should fast on Wednesdays and Fridays and before Feast Days.
- We should fast, but we must also be healthy; our priest, parents, and teachers can help us decide how we will fast in the best way.
- **Great Lent** is a journey that starts **forty days before Easter**. It is an important time for prayer, fasting, and doing good deeds, which prepares us to celebrate the great feast.
- On **Wednesdays** during Great Lent, our Churches celebrate the **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**.
- On **Fridays**, we celebrate the service of the **Salutations to the Theotokos**. We sing the Akathist hymn, which means "without sitting."

Unit 4—We grow as an Orthodox family

- A family begins when God unites two people in **marriage**. During the wedding service, the bride and groom wear **rings** that symbolize their commitment to each other.
- They wear **crowns** on their heads to symbolize God's blessing upon them.
- God teaches that when two people get married, they are now like one person, and they must work together for their family to live God's way, through both the easy and the hard times.
- Some marriages end in divorce. Sometimes one spouse dies. A person may marry again, and sometimes that forms a blended family.
- Some people never get married, but they are still part of a family.
- Children are a gift from God. They have qualities from their parents, and from God.
- **God's image** is in every person.
- Some families **adopt** children.
- We become Christians through Holy **Baptism** and **Chrismation**.
- Parents ask close friends or relatives to be godparents to their child, to help raise him or her as a Christian. Blessed water and oil are important symbols in the sacrament.
- The new Christian is anointed with chrism, or special oil.
- These two sacraments mean the child has joined the Orthodox Church.
- We all sin. God **forgives** us through our **repentance**: we admit our wrong, ask God for forgiveness, and sincerely try not to do the same thing again.
- When we sin against each other as family or friends, we should ask them for forgiveness.

Unit 5—We grow as Orthodox Christians

- No matter how old we are, we should honor our parents.
- Many people, like priests, teachers, doctors, and neighbors, help us to grow.

- God has given each of us different **talents** that we can use in our own ways to serve Him and each other.
- The Orthodox Church has many people who lead and serve:
 - The **bishop** leads a diocese (metropolis), or a group of parishes in the same area.
 - The **priest** is the leader of a parish.
 - The **parish council** is a group of people who help make decisions to serve the people of the parish.
 - The **Philoptochos** Society means “friends of the poor.” They raise money to help poor people and support the Church’s work.

Unit 6—The Church grows in the world

- The **saints** of our Church have taught us, by their example, that having faith in Christ can bring great courage, generosity to the poor, and Christian unity.
- **Missionaries** in our Church travel to other lands and spread the Christian message.
- Different Orthodox churches may have different **customs**, but the faith is the same.
- At our Chrismation, we receive the Holy Spirit, which gives each of us different talents to serve the Church in our own ways.

Feast Days

- Before the Virgin Mary was born, her parents Joachim and Anna prayed for many years to have a child, and God blessed them. The Church celebrates Mary’s birth on **September 8**, the **Nativity of the Theotokos**.
- On **August 15**, the Church celebrates the **Dormition of the Theotokos**, when Mary fell asleep, died, and joined her Son, Jesus. From August 1 to 15, we prepare for this day with prayer and fasting.
- On **June 29**, our Church celebrates the **Feast of Saints Peter and Paul**. Peter was the leader of the twelve disciples, and was martyred in Rome. Paul was once a persecutor of Christians, but after he converted, he preached the Christian message in many lands and wrote letters to the Christians there to encourage them.
- Jesus chose **twelve** men to be His **disciples**. After Pentecost, they all traveled around the world. We remember all of them on **June 30**; we prepare for this feast day with prayer and fasting.
- On **August 6**, the Church celebrates the **Transfiguration of Christ**, when His divine light shone to show His glory, and that He is God as well as man.

Hymns

- The Doxology
- To You the Theotokos, O Champion Leader (Te Ypermacho)
- Those Who Have Been Baptized (Osoi Eis Christon)

Bible Stories

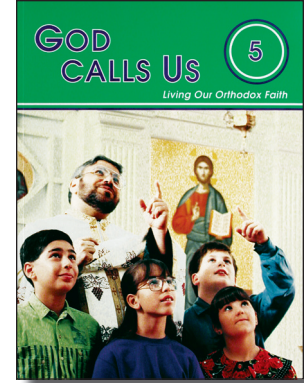
- The Passover Story (Exodus 1, 5, 11–12)
- Jesus Cleanses the Temple (John 2:13–16)
- The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4–8)

- The Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11)
- Moses Draws Water from the Rock (Exodus 17)
- The Life of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–23; Matthew 3:1–15)
- Repentance of David (2 Samuel 11; 12:1–17)
- The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9)
- Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:1–18)

Saints

- St. Ephraim the Syrian
- St. Timothy
- St. Romanos
- St. Katherine
- St. Andrew
- St. Ignatios
- St. John the Almsgiver or Merciful
- Sts. Cyril and Methodios
- St. Innocent

What Every Fifth Grader Should Know After Using *God Calls Us*



Unit 1—God calls us to faith

- When we put our **trust** in God even when we are afraid, we have faith.
- The **Bible** has many stories about people with strong faith in God.
- **We all struggle** with our faith, to know **what God wants** for our lives.
- **Faith** helps us to improve at the things we do and to try without fear.
- Faith gives us **courage** to use our strengths and to help other people.
- God has always been faithful to His people. He gave us the gift of the **Ten Commandments** to show His love and care for how we live our lives.

Unit 2—God calls us to holiness

- Since we are all created in the **image and likeness of God**, we should be pure and holy.
- We can do things to remind ourselves of **God’s presence** and holiness, such as lighting candles, venerating icons, and censing our homes.
- To help us make choices, we should ask ourselves what God would want us to do.
- **Ethics** are rules that help us know the difference between right and wrong.
- People who are **righteous** do what is right, and they **obey** what God tells them.
- God calls us to speak the **truth** and live honestly.
- God’s **prophets** spoke the truth, even if it was hard for others to hear.
- Even if many other things in our lives change, God will always love us.
- When we **sin**, we break our **relationship** with God. We can restore this in the sacrament of **Confession**, by asking for forgiveness and **repenting** from our sins.
- The books of **Psalms** and **Proverbs** teach us holiness.

Unit 3—God calls us to His kingdom

- Mary is called “**Theotokos**,” which means “the one who **gave birth to God**.”
- She was an example of obedience and love; we ask her to pray for us, knowing that Jesus will listen to her in a special way.
- We celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25.
- **John the Baptist** was Jesus’ cousin and a prophet who announced that people must repent and prepare for Jesus’ coming.
- The last three years of Jesus’ life are His **ministry**, or service to others. He was about thirty years old.
- We believe that Jesus is **both divine and human**. He lived like us and He lived God’s way, bringing the Kingdom of God.
- The Good News is that with the Kingdom of God, we are all free from our sins.

- Jesus taught people to treat others with love, forgive, share with the poor, not to judge, and to trust in God.
- During His ministry, Jesus healed people and showed many other miracles.
- Jesus chose twelve **disciples** to help him preach and heal.
- Some of the leaders became angry at Jesus and planned to kill Him. He knew that He must die and rise on the third day to save us from the powers of sin and death.
- Both the Old and New Testaments teach us how God gives salvation. Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved through Him.
- God will judge each of us, by how much we loved and cared for others.

Unit 4—God calls us to His Church

- St. Peter called the Christians to be “**living stones**” to build the Church. We can work together to keep our Church strong.
- St. Paul taught that the Church is the **Body of Christ**, and each person is an important part. Jesus has given each of us special “Gifts of Service” to do Christ’s work.
- Everyone in the Church has special **talents**.
- Monastics are God’s spiritual athletes because they dedicate all of their time and energy to Christ through a simple life of prayer.
- The fathers of the early Church, such as St. Athanasios, St. Basil, and St. Gregory the Theologian, taught about the faith.

Unit 5—God calls us to serve

- You can be a witness to Christ by standing up for your beliefs and living according to your Orthodox faith.
- Working for **justice** means helping those who are in need or who are treated unfairly.
- We are called to **sacrifice** for others, to give unselfishly.
- We are called to **encourage** others who are struggling.

Unit 6—God calls us to new life

- Every year, the **Lenten** journey prepares us for Christ’s Resurrection, through fasting and prayer.
- The four Sundays before Great Lent help to prepare us: Sunday of the **Publican and the Pharisee**; Sunday of the **Prodigal Son**; **Meat-Fare** Sunday (Sunday of the Last Judgment); **Cheese-Fare** Sunday (Sunday of Forgiveness).
- Each Sunday during the forty days of Lent, we remember the holy cross and many holy people whose lives teach us the way of prayer and repentance.
- Jesus teaches us to bear our cross, or our hardships, with faith in God, and that **freedom means doing what God wants**.
- Lent is also a time to think about how we can better live up to God’s way.
- During Lent, we celebrate **Presanctified Liturgies** and the **Akathist Hymn**, which praises the Theotokos.
- **The Prayer of St. Ephraim** is a humble prayer that helps us to be more loving in our relationships with others and with God.

- Setting aside a daily time and place for prayer is important for spiritual **growth**.
- During **Holy Week**, we remember the last earthly days of Christ. Our services remind us that Christ loves us, suffered for us, died, and rose from the dead for us.

Hymns

- Lord Save Your People (Somon Kyrie)
- Holy, Holy, Holy (Agios, Agios, Agios)
- We Praise You (Se Imnoumen)
- Eternal Memory (Eonia I Mnimi)
- Christ is Risen (Christos Anesti)

Bible Stories

- The Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:1–19)
- The Story of Jacob (Genesis 25, 27, 32, 33)
- Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 37, 39–46)
- Moses and the Burning Bush (Exodus 1–5)
- The Exodus (Exodus 7–12, 14, 19–20)
- Joshua and the Promised Land (Numbers 13–14, Joshua 3–4)
- The Story of Gideon (Judges 6–7)
- The Story of Solomon’s Wisdom (1 Kings 3)
- The Story of Elijah (1 Kings 16–18, 2 Kings 2)
- The Story of Ezra and Nehemiah
- The Book of Psalms
- The Book of Proverbs
- The Annunciation (Luke 1:26–56, 2:1–20)
- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)
- Jesus Heals the Blind Man (John 9:1–38)
- The Parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31–46)
- The Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9–14)
- The Passion of Christ and the Resurrection

Saints

- St. Peter
- St. Paul
- St. Philip the Deacon
- St. Anthony
- St. Basil
- St. Athanasios
- St. Gregory the Theologian
- St. Maximos the Confessor
- St. Philothei of Athens
- St. Herman of Alaska
- St. Nektarios