

Summer: A Time to Grow, a Time to Plan

Another year of Sunday Church school has ended. The certificates and gifts have been awarded and the supplies have been packed away. Naturally, everyone is ready for a well-deserved break. Summertime, though, is a time to plan for next year and a time to grow as a teacher. Like your backyard garden with flowers and vegetables, summer can be a very productive time of year. With some planning and a little labor, you can prepare for a good harvest in the fall.

TIME TO PLAN

Review. Over the summer, spend some time reviewing what went well in your class or program and especially what did not go as well as you thought it would. Was there an activity that really well? Were there lessons that flopped?

Sundays in June and July so you can estimate your enrollment and order accordingly.

TIME TO GROW

Read. Select one book on the Orthodox faith to read this summer. Check out your parish bookstore or order from one of the various Orthodox publishers' websites. Check past issues of *PRAXIS* for book reviews, too. Summer is your time for growing and deepening your knowledge of the faith.

Connect. Get together with the Church school teachers in your parish. Enjoy time together; have some fun; get to know one another better. You work together, and it's important now and then to play together. Include your spouses and children if you can.

Worship. With Sunday school on hiatus, you can now attend



Look ahead. Will you be able to do everything the same next year as this year? Start with your calendar. Will there be an important parish event around the time when you need to organize Christmas pageant rehearsals? You may have planned for five weeks on a topic last year, but this year can only fit in four. Or you may need to stretch it to six. In 2016, Great Lent begins March 14, and Pascha is May 1—five weeks after Western Easter.

Shop. To help bring all of these fresh ideas to life, watch the craft shops and bookstores for sales, especially during the back-to-school rush.

Order. If you are a supervisor, order your supplies from the Department of Religious Education early. Hold pre-registration

services, focusing on prayer, thanksgiving and worship. The first two weeks of August, of course, are a time to focus on the Virgin Mary, observe the fast, attend the Paraklesis services, and celebrate the Feasts of the Transfiguration and then the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Attend. Plan to attend Orthodox Institute 2015, *Adult Education: Building on the Foundation of Faith*. It will be held November 5–8 at Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA. This religious education event is sponsored by the Antiochian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox Archdioceses, the Orthodox Church in America and the Orthodox Christian Education Commission. This year's keynote speaker is Kevin Allen. Visit www.facebook.com/OrthodoxInstitute2015 for information.