



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Recommended Texts for Sunday Church Schools

The Department of Religious Education is continually developing new materials to replace older textbooks and fill gaps at all age levels. We realize that many parishes have been, of necessity, using a variety of texts from the DRE as well as those from other sources. The following recommendations will help parishes integrate new texts into their existing Church school curricula, use existing materials to their best advantage, and adapt or reorganize if needed. All materials are available from www.OrthodoxMarketplace.com. Please call (800) 566-1088 or email us at religiouse@goarch.org if you have questions.

Preschool

Use our textbooks and supplements in a two-year cycle:

God Loves Us teacher binder (N10)

Reaching for Jesus student book (N01) and teacher guide (N05)

TIP 📌 ***What We See and Do in Church*** student book (K01) and teacher guide (K05) were originally written for kindergarten, but they may also be appropriate.

TIP 📌 Include story time from a children's Bible (item codes BIB501, BIB551, or BIB554) and appropriate storybooks, creative spiritual play, and Bible activity and coloring sheets (for end-of-class time). To browse supplementary classroom materials, reproducible coloring and activity books, storybooks, and individual coloring books, visit <https://www.orthodoxmarketplace.com/esss/category/resources-supplements>

Elementary School – *Living Our Orthodox Faith First Series*

The comprehensive textbook series for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's curriculum at the elementary level is *Living Our Orthodox Faith*. Each grade level has a student text and a teacher guide. Grades 1–3 each include a special unit (at the end of the book) of feast days for use throughout the liturgical year. Music and lyrics are included as noted, either in the teacher guide or in a separate songbook.

Kindergarten ***Happy With God*** student book (K16) and teacher guide (K20)

Grade 1 ***Me and My World*** student book (110), teacher guide (115), activity book (126), and songbook (120)
Low stock! Free download: www.goarch.org/-/printable-curriculum-materials-worksheets

Grade 2 ***Loving God*** student book (211), teacher guide (215), and songbook (220)

Grade 3 ***Sharing God's World*** student book (320) and teacher guide (325)

TIP 📌 For supplementary classroom materials, reproducible coloring and activity books, storybooks, and individual coloring books, visit <https://www.orthodoxmarketplace.com/esss/category/resources-supplements>

✍ This book is from an older series of textbooks; develop interactive lessons to successfully engage today's youth.
📌 Please note that the DRE has not developed lesson plans for these resources, some of which are published by other organizations.
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GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Elementary School – Work continues on the New Series!

Grade 4

Growing with God (New Series)

Student book Parts I, II & III, containing a total of 7 study units (450-1, 450-2, 450-3)

Coming soon! Teacher guide Parts I, II & III, containing a total of 7 study units (455-1, 455-2, 455-3)

Good News Bible (BIB003) needed beginning in Part II

Grade 4 is presented in three parts. Music and lyrics are included as noted in the teacher guide.

- Part I contains 3 units with a total of 15 lessons, so it covers the fall semester.
- Part II contains 3 units with a total of 12 lessons to cover the spring semester, which usually has fewer Sundays in the classroom due to Pascha, spring break, etc. Lessons for this part presume that each student has a *Good News Bible*.
- Part III is an all-new unit with 4 lessons about the feast days of the Virgin Mary. It can be taught over the course of the year, near the feast days, or all at once.

Grade 5

God Calls Us (New Series)

Student zines for Units 1–6 (550-1, 550-2, 550-3, 550-4, 550-5, 550-6, 550-7)

Teacher guides for Units 1–6 (555-1, 555-2, 555-3, 555-4, 555-5, 555-6, 555-7)

Binder for teacher guides (550-0)

New Revised Standard Version Bible (BIB005) or **Good News Bible** (BIB003) needed for all units

Grade 5 is structured as 6 flexible teaching units. Music and lyrics are included as noted in the teacher guide. The teacher guides can be gathered and stored in the custom binder.

Each student should have a Bible in class. We used the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in preparing the Bible studies in each lesson, but your students may be more comfortable with the reading level of the *Good News Bible* used in grade 4.

TIP ✍ For grade 5, throughout the year, choose five or more topics from *Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days* student book (501) and teacher guide (505); coordinate so that other topics from this resource can be covered in grades 6–8.



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Middle School / Junior High and High School

Each year, choose 4–5 units (about 25 lessons) from the following options, depending on the length of the unit and the time allotted for class. Many lessons may fill two class sessions. Longer books can be divided into two units to keep the approach fresh for both students and teachers. As we create new zines and teacher guides, the selection of units available will expand, providing more flexibility.

These four aspects simplify and replace the fifteen strands described in the original *Living Our Orthodox Faith* scope & sequence chart. On average, each year would include units from the following areas:

1–2 units	Bible
1 unit	Christian Life/Ethics
1–2 units	Feasts/Liturgy
1–2 units	Faith/Church

TIP ✍ Throughout the year, choose 5 or more topics from *Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days* student book (501) and teacher guide (505); coordinate so that topics are not repeated in grades 5–8.

TIP ✍ We are retiring outdated textbooks from as we replace them with new zines. If necessary, teachers could use these texts as a “base” and by planning engaging, current, and educationally sound lessons using the “shared Christian praxis” approach:

1. Focusing activity

The focusing activity draws the students’ attention to the theme of the class session, using a story, allegory, or symbol. It is an introduction, and is not the heart of the lesson itself. Spend no more than 5–10 minutes on it.

2. Name present praxis

Help students to identify a part of the Orthodox Tradition or their current way of life, which was alluded to in the focusing activity.

3. Reflect on present praxis

Help students to inquire about and consider the implications of this part of their life and the Orthodox Tradition.

4. Access the Christian story and vision

Segue into the content of the lesson. If the students have not read the assignment, this would be the time. This can be done in a couple of ways. First, give the students 5–10 minutes to read silently on their own. Second, ask a few students to read a crucial paragraph or two aloud to the class.

5. Appropriate the story and vision

Help students to make the story their own. Allow students to retell the story in their own words, and to respond to and interact with it in an authentic way.

6. Decision for lived response

Students take what they have learned and consciously decide how this lesson can be put into practice and bear fruit in their lives from this point forward.

✍ This book is from an older series of textbooks; develop interactive lessons to successfully engage today’s youth.

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GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 6

Life/Faith	4 lessons	<i>Facing Up to Peer Pressure</i> student book (M01) & teacher guide (M02)
Feasts/Liturgy	4 lessons	<i>For to Us a Child Is Born</i> student zine (L184) & teacher guide (L184-1)
Feasts/Liturgy	6 lessons	<i>Heaven on Earth: The Divine Liturgy</i> student zine (M09) & teacher guide (M10)
Feasts/Liturgy	5 lessons	<i>Journey through Holy Week</i> student zine (L183) & teacher guide (L183-1)
Life/Faith	5 lessons	<i>Honesty</i> student book (M07) & teacher guide (M08)

Grade 7

Bible	5 lessons	<i>A Lamp to My Feet: Intro to the Bible</i> student zine (M13) & teacher guide (M14)
Life/Faith	5 lessons	New replacement coming soon! <i>Stewardship: Serving in God's World</i> student book (M03) & teacher guide (M04)
Feasts/Liturgy	9 lessons	<i>Journey through Great Lent</i> student zine (M15) & teacher guide (M16)
Bible	8 lessons	<i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 1 (lessons 1–8) Free download at www.goarch.org/-/printable-curriculum-materials-worksheets

TIP ✍ Ensure that students learn and understand the Nicene Creed—perhaps as a class opener or closer, building it up phrase-by-phrase over a season or the entire year. Coniaris's *The Nicene Creed for Young People* (CB055) includes age-appropriate discussion questions. You may also choose to adapt readings and discussions from the retired *The Creed* student book (1101) and teacher guide (free download at www.goarch.org/-/printable-curriculum-materials-worksheets). Note that *Heaven on Earth* (M09) also includes a feature on the sections of the Creed and its scriptural bases.

Grade 8

Faith/Church	5 lessons	<i>First among Equals: The Ecumenical Patriarchate</i> student zine (M19) & teacher guide (M20)
Faith/Church	11 lessons	New! <i>Holy Mysteries: Sacraments of the Orthodox Church</i> student zine (M23) & teacher guide (M24) (Replaces <i>The Sacraments</i> student book [801] & teacher guide [805])
Life/Faith	6 lessons	Coming soon! <i>Knowing Christ</i> student zine (M051) & teacher guide (M055) (Replaces <i>Knowing Christ</i> student book [M05] & teacher guide [M06])
Bible	8 lessons	<i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 1 (lessons 9–16) Free download at www.goarch.org/-/printable-curriculum-materials-worksheets



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High School A – the year most of your students will be freshmen

Comprehensive	12+ lessons	<i>Rejoicing in One Lord, Jesus Christ</i> teacher guide (901) Free student sheet downloads at https://tinyurl.com/goa-dre-rejoicing-student
Faith/Church	7 lessons	Coming soon! <i>The Church: We Are One in Christ</i> zine (M21) & teacher guide (M22)
Bible	8 lessons	<i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 2 (lessons 1–8) Free download at www.goarch.org/-/printable-curriculum-materials-worksheets

High School B

Life/Faith	14 lessons	<i>Who Is God? Who Am I? Who Are You?</i> student book (1011) & study guide (1012)
Feasts/Liturgy	5 lessons	<i>Of Your Mystical Supper: The Eucharist</i> student zine (M11) & teacher guide (M12)
Bible	8 lessons	<i>Come Receive the Light Bible Studies</i> , vol. 2 (lessons 9–16) Free download at www.goarch.org/-/printable-curriculum-materials-worksheets

Possibilities for High School Years C and D

Book groups for broader knowledge and deeper faith

- Theodore Stylianopoulos, *Bread for Life* (BIB440)
- Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray* (FL500)
- Compare and contrast the wisdom of the Church with secular advice by pairing George Grube's *Church Fathers for Young People* (CB350) and Stanley Harakas's *Contemporary Moral Issues Facing the Orthodox Christian* (FL081) with *What Do You Stand For (For Teens)* (YM651)

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

The DRE's annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival (www.goarch.org/oratorical) has thought-provoking topics and recommended reading lists. Even if students choose not to deliver a formal speech for the festival, the preparation and reading help them cement their understanding of the role of the Faith in their lives.

Y2AM Ministry Plan for GOYA



If your parish doesn't have a GOYA group, you could adapt the monthly modules of its ministry plan for a religious education setting: www.y2am.org/ministryplan (scroll down; previous years' archives also available)

Live the Word videos from Y2AM

Short videos exploring the Sunday Gospel and Epistle readings are a great way to start class:
<https://youtu.be/43Ta031sCms>

Bible Bowl from the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese's Department of Youth Ministry

Each year's Bible Bowl features one or more books of the New Testament. The program includes excellent, free downloadable study guides for each chapter of each book. These study guides can serve as the basis for a lesson plan; naturally, several shorter chapters might be covered in a single class session:
<https://orthodoxyouth.org/bible-bowl/scriptures>

 This book is from an older series of textbooks; develop interactive lessons to successfully engage today's youth.
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