



“My Orthodox Church” is a nine-lesson course that challenges middle-school students to learn about their faith and Church by composing and memorizing answers to frequently asked questions.

“My Orthodox Church” was prepared by Carole Buleza, Director of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Christian Education with the assistance of Elaine Atherholt.

## Dear Teacher,

First, ~~thank~~ you for accepting the task of nurturing our children in the faith!

Adolescents, according to developmental psychologists, have the task of building their identities. Identities are constructed primarily of one's standards, beliefs, and values. In the past, these were acquired from one's family and communities. In recent years, with access to the world-wide-web, beliefs, values and standards can be adopted from different cultures and religions, cults and movements. One's inherited identity factors, particularly faith, are starting points, but no longer guaranteed endpoints.

The children will also find themselves, in discussions or in homework assignments, facing questions about what they believe and why. These are to be welcomed as an opportunity for the children to learn and examine their faith and its meaning in their lives so that their faith can be truly theirs, or "owned." In this process, parents may find themselves with children who don't want to come to church. It is critical for parents to ask themselves two questions: "*Why am I a Christian?*" and "*Why am I an Orthodox Christian?*" so that they can respond, "*Let me tell you why I go to church.*" Teachers, as well, need to articulate their thoughts regarding those two questions.

The "My Orthodox Church" program provides seven frequently-asked-questions Orthodox Christians encounter as a platform for students and teachers to engage with our faith, with the goal of increasing their knowledge and appreciation of Orthodox Christianity. Students can work individually if you have enough materials, or in small groups.

### Materials:

- Student Packets and pencils
- *No Graven Image* by Fr. Jack N. Sparks (Ancient Faith Publishing)
- *Call No Man Father* by Fr. J. Richard Ballew (Ancient Faith Publishing)
- *Service Book of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church*, Tenth Edition
- *Heavenly Worship*, by Fr. J. Richard Ballew (Ancient Faith Publishing)
- *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishing)
- *A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*
- *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* by Stanley S. Harakas, (Light and Life Publishing Co.)

After some research and discussion with the class, the students write responses to the questions, and are challenged to remember those responses a month later. Seven questions are provided. You may wish to have the students look at the list and choose three of the seven as phase one of the program.

Our catechetical efforts are first and foremost an expression of God's love. Providing the children with knowledge of God and His love for them is imperative. Our attitude is key. We need to understand that this is a time of exploring ideas and building their identity, and be open to discussing their ideas, be sensitive to their moods, and genuinely care about each child's spiritual and intellectual growth. Be sure to acknowledge each comment as valuable and keep your reactions neutral. In addition, we need to ensure that the children respect, care and cooperate with one another--the Holy Trinity is our model for cooperating and caring. A Trinity icon poster is available from the Department. **Our classroom atmosphere needs to be comfortable and engaging as it represents the Church in miniature. (Who wants to be Orthodox if it is represented as stern and boring?)**

Envision yourself on a project of discovery *with the students*; begin with the Preview Page. You are together in the endeavor to present the true faith reasonably and clearly. Pray for your students that, by God's grace, they make Orthodox Christianity--*our life-giving faith*--the cornerstone of their identity.

*"... That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3*

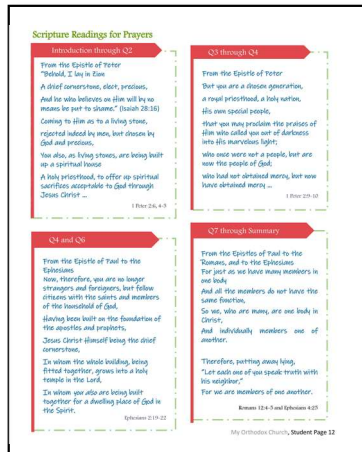
May God bless you and your students this year.  
In His service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole A. Buleza". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carole A. Buleza, Director  
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese  
Department of Christian Education

# Implementing the Program

**At Church, At Home.** Gather the materials, some of which will be on your pamphlet rack. Pray for yourself and your students and ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you with joy as you envision and prepare the learning experience. As you plan, keep in mind that each question may require more than one week's effort.



## Prayers (Scripture Readings).

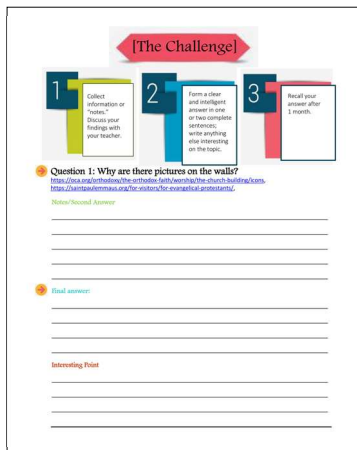
Each session begins with a scripture reading as a prayer. The topic for the readings is how each of us contributes to the building up of the Church and that we are members of one another in Christ's body. Each reading is used for two or more weeks for comprehension. The readings are provided on page 12 of the student pages. The closing prayer can be the same as the opening prayer, or it can be a spontaneous prayer.

**Game.** Next is the Password game with words from the Old and New Testaments. This is not so much a learning exercise as a way to engage the students and should take about five minutes. Two or more teams can play. Have the students count off according to the number of teams. A round consists of your showing the card to one member of each team and announcing the category, found after the number on the card. The team member provides a one-word, or in some cases two-word clue, for example, "Red Sea." The teammate gives one guess. The game proceeds until the correct answer is given, or until you decide to go to the next word.

4. Person, Old Testament

Moses

**Preview Page.** The student packet contains a Preview Page that asks the students to answer the seven Challenge questions before doing any research. This page is the content of the first week's lesson only.



"My Orthodox Church" is then implemented by having enough of the specified reading materials for each person or team and letting students research the question in small groups.

**Challenge Page.** Each question has its own page. You may choose to make a packet for the students, or print individual pages as needed. There are three parts to the Challenge.

**PART ONE:** The space "Notes/Second Answer," is where the students take notes as they research. Links are provided for internet

## [ Materials ]

- Student Packets, pencils
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### [Preview Page]

Give your best answer to these questions.

1. Why are there pictures on the walls?
2. Why do you worship Mary?
3. Why do you pray to saints?
4. Why do you call your pastor, "Father"?
5. Why do you make the sign of the cross?
6. How can you tell your sins to another person/your priest?
7. Why is your service so different?

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research if it is available. If it is not an option, you might want to use the links and make handouts for the class. **Please cite sources.**

After they have written several notes, they can answer the question again, improving on their response from the Preview Page. Afterwards, they share their notes with the class, and using the discussion questions in the lesson plan, you will lead the group to reasonable responses, allowing for individual variations. **Either with the class or on your own, determine three words or phrases from the provided criteria list that will be required for a correct response.**

**PART TWO:** The students then compose their “Final Answer” in one or two complete sentences and write down an “Interesting Fact.” Note the one-month mark for the challenge of answering that question again. Each week the students should review their answers.

**PART THREE:** At the one-month mark pass out small sheets of paper for responses to the question. Assess the responses according to the three criteria established. Extra credit is given for adding an interesting fact to the answer if you are keeping score, have formed teams.

### Notes.

1. The Lesson Plan is the same for the seven questions. You might vary the game with bonus questions, or consider bringing in illustrations, stories or guests to vary the lessons.
2. If students will do homework, you have the option of letting them research on the internet.
3. You can also look at materials in your church library or pamphlet rack.
4. Students can do research by interviewing parishioners.
5. If a question is too difficult for the students, you can eliminate it.

### Online Links Provided

Question 1: Why are there pictures on the walls?

<https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-building/icons>,  
<https://saintpaulemmaus.org/for-visitors/for-evangelical-protestants/>

Question 2: Why do you worship Mary?

<http://theorthodoxfaith.com/article/worship-of-mary/>  
<https://saintpaulemmaus.org/for-visitors/for-evangelical-protestants/>

Question 3: Why do you pray to saints?

<https://www.orthodoxprayer.org/Saints%20in%20Prayer.html>, <https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-building/icons>, <https://saintpaulemmaus.org/for-visitors/for-evangelical-protestants/>, [http://www.saintbarbara.org/growing\\_in\\_christ/praying\\_to\\_the\\_saints](http://www.saintbarbara.org/growing_in_christ/praying_to_the_saints),

Question 4: Why do you call your pastor, “Father?”

<https://theorthodoxlife.wordpress.com/2014/03/24/call-no-man-father>  
<https://www.holyascension.net/for-protestants>

Question 5: Why do you make the sign of the cross?

[https://orthodoxwiki.org/Sign\\_of\\_the\\_Cross](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Sign_of_the_Cross), <https://www.orthodoxprayer.org/Sign%20of%20Cross.html>  
<https://saintpaulemmaus.org/for-visitors/for-evangelical-protestants/>,

Question 6: How can you tell your sins to another person/priest?

<https://oca.org/questions/sacramentconfession/confessing-in-the-presence-of-a-priest>,  
<https://www.ocanwa.org/single-post/2016/02/13/Why-Do-I-Have-to-Confess-to-a-Priest>,  
<http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/reading/questions.html>

Question 7: Why is your service so different?

<https://oca.org/questions/divineliturgy/the-divine-liturgy>, <http://www.catholicdigest.com/from-the-magazine/outside-perspectives/the-divine-liturgy-and-the-mass/> <https://www.goarch.org/-/introduction-to-the-divine-liturgy>, <https://saintpaulemmaus.org/what-is-orthodoxy/worship/>

# Week 1: Introduction to Program

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## Materials:

1. Preview Sheet (In Student Packet)
2. Samples of Materials
3. Password Game

The objective of this week's lesson is to introduce the students to the course layout, the Password game, and how the lessons will be conducted each week. Lessons are written to encourage group cooperation, learning, and an open atmosphere where students feel comfortable asking questions about their Orthodox faith and joining the conversation.

## Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

### Preview Sheet

- "Tell Me What You Know!"
- Let students work independently.

### Discussion

- Prompt discussion by briefly reviewing the student answers to each question.
- Continue with the Discussion Questions (following page).

### Game

- Next is the Password game with words from the Old and New Testaments. This is not so much a learning exercise as a way to engage the students and should take about five minutes.
- Two or more teams can play.
- Have the students count off according to the number of teams.
- A round consists of your showing the card to one member of each team and announcing the category, found after the number on the card.
- The team member provides a one-word, or in some cases two-word clue, for example, "Red Sea."
- The teammate gives one guess.
- The game proceeds until the correct answer is given, or until you decide to go to the next word.

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

Use these questions to prompt the students as they discuss their Preview Sheet answers.

Ask:

1. "What other questions about Orthodoxy or your Church do you hear?"
2. "Why is it so hard to answer some of these questions?"
3. "Have you ever asked some of these questions yourself?"
4. "Why do you think your friends might have these questions?"
5. "If you were to describe Orthodoxy to someone, what would you say?"
6. "Have you ever found yourself stuck for an answer to a question about Orthodoxy?"
7. "Do your friends have trouble discussing their religion?"



# Question # 1 Why are there pictures on the walls?

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## Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #1
4. *No Graven Image* by Fr. Jack N. Sparks, Ancient Faith Publishing
5. Icon of Christ

## Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team's points to their score from Week 1.

### Question 1:

- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - Resources: *No Graven Image* by Fr. Jack N. Sparks, Ancient Faith Publishing, and/or online resources if available, or with printed pages you have provided from online sites.
  - Students add to the "Notes" on Challenge Page.
- Students write down and present their "Second Answer" and "Interesting Fact or Find" to the class.
- Sum up answers given (Also use "Final Answer Criteria Choices" to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer).
  - Ask, "If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?"
- Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

**Question 1: Why are there pictures on the walls?****Discussion Questions**

(To help guide research)

1. What do icons represent?
2. What do icons help us do?
3. What do some of the Saints say about Icons?
4. What do icons make manifest?
5. What is the difference between worship and veneration?

**Final Answer Criteria Choices (Choose 3)**(Provided by *No Graven Image* by Fr. Jack N. Sparks)

- 1) Icons are Windows into Heaven.
- 2) Icons help us worship God. God, by becoming incarnate through Jesus, “joined created matter, our humanity, to Himself...” “that we might know the Father.” (pgs. 13-14)
- 3) “An icon of Christ reveals to us the Original.” (p. 8)
- 4) “Orthodox worship involves the body with all its senses in worship.” (p. 16)
- 5) What other senses do we use during Divine Liturgy?
- 6) How do all the senses help us worship?
- 7) Icons act as the manifestation of angels, saints, martyrs, and eternal saving events. (p. 9)
- 8) In the same way, icons use one of our senses (sight) to worship, know, and grow closer to God.
- 9) To venerate means to “regard with reverential respect or...admiration.” (p. 10)
- 10) The plea of St. John of Damascus  
“Depict His wonderful condescension, His birth from the Virgin, His baptism in the Jordan, His transfiguration on Tabor, His sufferings which have freed us from passion, His death, His miracles which are signs of His divine nature, since through divine power he worked them in the flesh. Show His saving cross, the tomb, the resurrection, the ascension into the heavens. Use every kind of drawing, word, or color.” (*On the Divine Images*,” page 18. Quoted in *No Graven Image* pages 7 and 8).

## Question #2 Why do you worship Mary?

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### Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #2
4. *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing
5. Icon of Mother of God (*Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 739)

### Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team's points to their score from the previous week. If you wish, give bonus points to the team that can remember the previous week's question.

### Review Previous Questions/Answers

#### Question #2

- Students can add to the "Notes" on Challenge Sheet.
- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - Resources: *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing and/or online resources if available, or with printed pages you have provided from online sites.
  - Students add to the "Notes" on Challenge Page.
- Students write down and present their "Second Answer" and "Interesting Fact or Find" to the class.
- Sum up answers given (also use "Final Answer Criteria Choices" to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer).
- Ask, "If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?" Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."
- Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

**Question #2** Why do you worship to Mary?**Discussion Questions**

(To help guide research)

1. The Orthodox do not worship Mary, but rather venerate her. What is the difference between the two?
2. What does Mary represent for us?
3. What is another name for Mary?
4. What do you think is the significance of her role?

**Final Answer Criteria Choices**(Provided by *The Orthodox Study Bible* p. 1361)

- 1) To venerate Mary is to hold her in highest regard, to recognize her importance.
- 2) She was the “first Christian—” one who followed and dedicated her whole life to Christ.
- 3) Mary, by accepting God, His will for her, and His Son, showed us what it truly means to follow God.
- 4) “Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’” Luke 1:38
- 5) Theotokos is taken to mean “God-bearer.”
- 6) Mary’s role was to bring Jesus the Son of God into the world, raise Him, teach Him, and be his mother in every earthly way.
- 7) “It is the Word of God who dwells within her.” (Vespers of Annunciation. *Orthodox Study Bible* p. 1364)
- 8) “Mary was the source of Jesus’ human nature; yet the One she bore in her womb was also the eternal God.” (p. 1361)
- 9) Her character was pure and obedient to God. She is considered the “prototype of all Christians.” (p. 1361)
- 10) In what way can we also live by her example?
- 11) Because of her unique relationship with Christ, as well as her obedience to God, we pray for the Theotokos to act as an intercessor on our behalf. (p. 1361)

**Hymn to the Theotokos**

“It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you!”

## Question #3 Why Do You Pray to Saints?

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### Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #3
4. *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing

### Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team's points to their score from previous weeks. If you wish, give bonus points to the team that can remember questions from the previous weeks.

### Review Previous Questions/Answers

#### Question #3

- Students can add to the "Notes" on Challenge Sheet.
- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - Resources: *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing and/or online resources if available, or with printed pages you have provided from online sites.
  - Students add to the "Notes" on Challenge Page.
- Students write down and present their "Second Answer" and "Interesting Fact or Find" to the class.
- Sum up answers given (Also use "Final Answer Criteria Choices" to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer).
- Ask, "If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?" Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."
- Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

**Question #3** Why Do You Pray to Saints?**Discussion Questions**

(To help guide research)

1. Why do the Orthodox learn about, and include the Saints in worship?
2. What can we learn from the Saints?
3. In what ways do we commemorate and honor the Saints throughout the year?
4. What do you think is the purpose of praying to Saints?

**Final Answer Criteria Choices**

(Provided by *The Orthodox Study Bible* p. 652 and p. 1455 footnotes)

- 1) “We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.” (Heb 12:1)
- 2) Saints are witnesses of God, in the New and Old Testament. (p. 652)
- 3) The saints were considered friends of God, following Him in obedience out of love. (*Orthodox Study Bible*, John 15:14, 15 footnotes)
- 4) “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:13-15)
- 5) We venerate the saints because of their dedication to God.
- 6) When we pray to the saints, we are asking them to pray with us, and intercede on our behalf.
- 7) We look to the saints for guidance, and for an example of Christ-like behavior.
- 8) We commemorate the saints on special days in which we remember them, their lives, and their dedication to God. (p. 652)
- 9) The Orthodox believe we worship with all the saints,  
“For Orthodox Christians, it is the experience of worshipping God with all the saints that powerfully confirms their continuing presence in or midst.” (p. 652)

## Question #4 Why do you call your pastor ‘Father?’”

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### Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #4
4. *Call No Man Father* by Fr. J. Richard Ballew, Ancient Faith Publishing
5. *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* by Stanley S. Harakas, Light and Life Publishing Co.

### Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team’s points to their score from previous weeks. If you wish, give bonus points to the team that can remember questions from the previous weeks.

### Question #4

- Students can add to the “Notes” on Challenge Sheet.
- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - Resources: Resources: *Call No Man Father* by Fr. J. Richard Ballew, Ancient Faith Publishing, and *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* by Stanley S. Harakas, Light and Life Publishing Co., and/or online resources if available, or with printed pages you have provided from online sites.
- Students write down and present their “Second Answer” and “Interesting Fact or Find” to the class.
- Sum up answers given (Also use “Final Answer Criteria Choices” to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer).
- Ask, “If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?” Students write their response in the section, “Final Answer.”
- Students write their response in the section, “Final Answer.”

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

## Question #4

### Discussion Questions and Final Answer Criteria Choices

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#### Question #4 Why do you call your pastor 'Father?'

##### Discussion Questions

(To help guide research)

1. What role does the priest play in our worship and spiritual lives?
2. What do you think Jesus meant when He told us not to call any other man Father?
3. What do you think we mean when we call our priest 'Father?'

##### Final Answer Criteria Choices

(Provided by *Call No Man Father* by Fr. J. Richard Ballew, Ancient Faith Publishing and *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* by Stanley S. Harakas, Light and Life Publishing Co.)

- 1) Jesus did not want us to “build disciples around [our own] private opinions.” (*Call No Man Father*, p. 6)
- 2) In doing so, Jesus was instructing us to differentiate between the teachings of man and of God.
- 3) Priests serve as our Spiritual Fathers, we do not see them as the One Father, God.
- 4) Priests guide us in the ways of Christ, the one true Rabbi. (*Call No Man Father*, p. 7)
- 5) “What is condemned by Jesus is the use or acceptance of any titles and dignity which stands between God and man.” (*455 Questions and Answers*, p. 267)
- 6) Jesus is not primarily speaking here of words, but of an attitude.” (*455 Questions and Answers*, p. 267)
- 7) Priests act as a link between parishioners and God’s teaching, they are representatives. Therefore, calling them “Father” reminds us (and them) of the Divine Father and their position as leaders in the way and teachings of Christ.



## Question #5 Why do you make the sign of the cross?

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### Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #5
4. *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* (Light and Life Publishing Co.)
5. *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishing)

### Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team's points to their score from previous weeks. If you wish, give bonus points to the team that can remember questions from the previous weeks.

### Review Previous Questions/Answers

#### Question #5

- Students can add to the "Notes" on Challenge Sheet.
- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - Resources: *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing and *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* (Light and Life Publishing Co.), and/or online resources if available, or with printed pages you have provided from online sites.
- Students write down and present their "Second Answer" and "Interesting Fact or Find" to the class.
- Sum up answers given (also use "Final Answer Criteria Choices" to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer).
- Ask, "If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?" Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."
- Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

## Question #5

### Discussion Questions and Final Answer Criteria Choices

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#### Question #5 Why do you make the sign of the cross?

##### Discussion Questions

(To help guide research)

1. What does the sign of the Cross represent?
2. How do we incorporate the sign of the Cross into our Orthodox worship?
3. Does the sign of the Cross have a specific purpose?
4. How long have Christians been using this symbol?

##### Final Answer Criteria Choices

(Provided by *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers* and *The Orthodox Study Bible*)

- “The sign of the Cross...marks us as followers of Jesus Christ, since the cross is the chief symbol of Christianity.” (*455 Questions and Answers*, p. 316)
- The sign of the Cross is used in a variety of ways. To affirm or show acceptance of prayers, blessings, etc. Sometimes, the sign of the Cross can be a prayer in and of itself. (*455 Questions and Answers*, p. 316)
- It is a way to “invoke God’s presence.” In this way the sign of the Cross “has a sacramental character - in which the invisible and spiritual presence of God’s energies is made present through an external act.” (*455 Questions and Answers*, p. 316)
- The three fingers (thumb, index, and middle) we touch to our head, chest, and shoulders represent the Holy Trinity.
- The sign of the Cross has been used in Christian worship and life since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century.
- It is just one more way we engage our bodies and senses in our Orthodox Christian worship and Liturgy.
- We cross ourselves “not to separate ourselves from the unbelievers among whom we live, but to separate ourselves from an unholy manner of life.” (*Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 261)
- The sign of the Cross can be used as a way to realign our minds, hearts, and souls. “Let us put the sign of the cross on our breast, as it were a curb. Wrath is a shameless dog, but let it learn to hear the law of Christ.” (*Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 413)
- “Orthodox faithful bless themselves with the sign of the cross of Christ, in the name of the true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” (*Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 1109)

## Question #6 How can you tell your sins to another person/your priest?

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### Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #6
4. *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishing);
5. *A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*
6. *Service Book*, Order of Confession

### Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team's points to their score from previous weeks. If you wish, give bonus points to the team that can remember the questions from the previous weeks.

### Review Previous Questions/Answers

#### Question #6

- Students can add to the "Notes" on Challenge Sheet.
- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishing), *A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*, *Service Book*, *Order of Confession*
- Students write down and present their "Second Answer" and "Interesting Fact or Find" to the class.
- Sum up answers given (also use "Final Answer Criteria Choices" to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer).
- Ask, "If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?" Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."
- Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

**Question #6** How can you tell your sins to another person/priest?**Discussion Questions**

(To help guide research)

1. What is the purpose of confession?
2. Why is it important to confess our sins?
3. Who does the priest represent?
4. What part does confession play in the rest of our worship?

**Final Answer Criteria Choices**

(Provided by *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing, p. 1697 & 1698, and *Service Book*, Tenth Edition p. 203, and *A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*, p. 43)

- “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)
- Confession is a way for us to cleanse ourselves of sin and seek forgiveness.
- The original practice of public confessions in which parishioners confessed in front of the entire church, faded as the Church grew. Now, priests hear confessions on behalf of the rest of the Church, acting as a representative of Christ.
- Jesus gave his disciples authority to forgive sins. “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (Jn 20:23)
- Jesus ordained his disciples saying, “It is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.” (*Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 1698)
- Priests, as shepherds and as ordained disciples of Christ, are understood to have the discernment and compassion necessary for granting remission on behalf of Christ.
- Priests offer guidance for us, so that we may have “the grace to sin no more” (From the “Penitent’s Prayer before Confession.” (*Pocket Prayer Book*, p. 43)
- While confessing alone, to ourselves, may be easier, it does not free us from the denial of our sins, which is avoided when we say them aloud and “publicly” to someone else.
- It is also necessary for the faithful to come to communion with a clean heart. As St. Paul says, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” (1Co 11:28)
- We confess to God by our standing before His icon and are guided by our spiritual father (our priest) and find the joy and freedom of forgiveness.
- After confessing: “O almighty and merciful God, I truly thank thee for the forgiveness of my sins; bless me, O Lord, and help me always, that I may ever do that which is pleasing to thee, and sin no more. Amen.” (*Service Book*, Tenth Edition, p. 203)

## Question #7 Why is your service so different?

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### Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game
3. Challenge Sheet for Question #7
4. *Heavenly Worship* by J. Richard Ballew, Ancient Faith Publishing

### Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:** Add each team's points to their score from previous weeks. If you wish, give bonus points to the team that can remember the questions from the previous weeks.

### Review Previous Questions/Answers

#### Question #7

- Students can add to the "Notes" on Challenge Sheet.
- Use provided Discussion Questions to guide research.
- Students research answer.
  - Resources: *Heavenly Worship* by J. Richard Ballew, Ancient Faith Publishing
- Students write down and present their "Second Answer" and "Interesting Fact or Find" to the class.
- Sum up answers given (also use "Final Answer Criteria Choices" to help guide summary; choose 3 as required criteria for a correct answer)..
- Ask, "If you had to present one final, summarized answer to this question to a friend, what would you say?" Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."
- Students write their response in the section, "Final Answer."

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

**Question #7** Why is your service so different?**Discussion Questions**

(To help guide research)

1. What are some parts of the Orthodox Service that you don't think anyone else does?
2. In what ways do we use the whole body to worship?
3. What do the Orthodox believe the Liturgy is?
4. With whom do the Orthodox believe we are worshipping?
5. In what dimension does God exist?
6. How does the service answer the questions, "What is the purpose for my existence?"

**Final Answers Criteria Choices**(Provided by *Heavenly Worship* by Fr. J. Richard Ballew, Ancient Faith Publishing)

- Unlike some Christian churches, the Orthodox believe that the bread and wine of Communion are the body and blood of Christ. This is because we believe Him to be ever present, and "invisibly present at the Eucharist." (*Heavenly Worship*, p. 6)
- God exists in both the Heavenly and Earthly dimensions and, through our Baptisms we unite ourselves to Christ and allowing us to also live in the heavenly realm with Christ.
- In the words "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen," which begin each Orthodox Liturgy we declare the presence of God's Kingdom, acknowledging the ever-presence of the Heavenly dimension. (*Heavenly Worship*, p. 12)
- The Orthodox believe we worship with those in the Heavenly Kingdom, i.e. the angels and the saints in heaven. We join the worship of heaven. (*Heavenly Worship*, p. 12 & 13)
- "We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses." (*Heavenly Worship*, p. 14)
- The Orthodox use icons, candles, incense, and hymns in our Liturgical worship.
- God exists in the Heavenly dimension. Meaning, He does not dwell on Earth, and we cannot find him by searching Earthly areas or dimensions. God is not restrained by height, depth, length, or time. (*Heavenly Worship*, pgs. 3-4)
- The Scriptures teach us that humans were made to "worship, love, and serve God the Father." Therefore, when we worship, we are not only glorifying the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) Who created everything, but we are fulfilling two of our purposes: worship and serving God the Father. (*Heavenly Worship*, pgs. 1-2)

# Conclusion

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The objective is to take the last of the quizzes and to have students recognize how much they have learned in class, and to reinforce their learning with some discussion. You should share in writing out answers on the Preview Sheet, and also in discussing the class.

## Materials

1. Preview Sheet
2. Password Game Scores
3. Challenge Sheets
4. Blank pages for final “test”
5. Preview Sheet
6. Password Game

## Lesson Plan

**Opening Prayer:** See last page of student packet.

**Game:**

- Play a final game of Password.
- Add each team’s points to their score from previous weeks.
- Award the winning team at the end of the session.

## Review Previous Questions/Answers

- Pass out blank preview sheets (see following page) as a post-test.
- Correct as a class. Ask:
  - What question/answer was the most difficult to remember?
  - Which question/answer(s) were easy to remember?
  - What was the most interesting point you discovered?
  - Although this course was not intended to bring you closer to Christ, what effect did it have on your faith?

**Closing Prayer:** See last page of student packet, or spontaneous prayer.

## [Preview Page]

Give your best answer to these questions.

1. Why are there pictures on the walls?
2. Why do you worship Mary?
3. Why do you pray to saints?
4. Why do you call your pastor, “Father”?
5. Why do you make the sign of the cross?
6. How can you tell your sins to another person/your priest?
7. Why is your service so different?