

Educating and Inspiring Young People in the Diocese of the Midwest

July 2025



About Orthodox Journeys



Mission

Orthodox Journeys creates resources which inspire young people to have a relationship with Jesus Christ by living as Orthodox Christians.

Vision

Creating resources designed to support the efforts of parishes and families teaching young people to learn about and experience their Orthodox faith in today's world, so they can bear witness by their words and actions to Jesus Christ and His holy church.



About Orthodox Journeys



- Established in March 2020
- '20-21 First Curriculum / Sunday Gospels & Saints
- '22-23 Second Curriculum / Living A Sacramental Life
- '23-24 Growing Through Scripture
- 2026 Jesus: The Christ of the Scriptures
- 2028 The Bride of Christ: His Church and Its History

Over 250 parishes in seven countries have subscribed to Orthodox Journeys for weekly lessons, representing nearly every Orthodox jurisdiction in the United States and Canada.

- Based in Minneapolis
- Today we're a team of seven professional educators, seminary graduates, and content specialists located in six states from three Orthodox jurisdictions.









Four Years of Lessons Exploring Our Orthodox Faith

Our four-year curriculum plan allows for students to have an understanding of our Orthodox Faith as experienced through scripture, church history, and the sacramental life.

The New The **Testament Sacraments** Church The Old **History Testament**



Primary sets include:

- Growing Through Scripture
- Living A Sacramental Life

Secondary sets include:

- 12 Great Feasts
- Great Lent & the Pentecostarion
- Supplemental Lessons
- Activities & Games





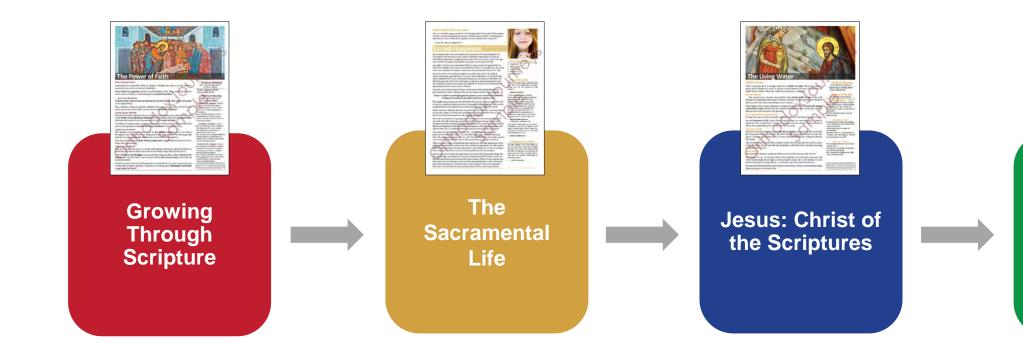
OJ Lessons

The Bride

of Christ:

Church History

Using the curricula over a four-year cycle



The cycle might look like this:

- "Scripture" in Kindergarten, 4th grade, and 8th grade
- "Sacraments" in 1st grade, 5th grade, and 9th grade
- "Old Testament" in 2nd grade, 6th grade, and 10th grade
- "Church History" in 3rd grade, 7th grade, and 11th grade



OJ Lessons



Be Merciful as Your Father

Giory to Jasus Christ

When we look at an icon of Jesus Christ, we see God the Father. Not in a physical sense, but as a revelation of the divine nature of God.

Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, is the same essence as the Father: the source of all love, mercy, compassion, and especially, the source of our very existence.

As our Messiah, Christ provides THE example of how we should live our lives. The depth of God's love for you and me is impossible to measure. We don't need to understand, only to accept this free gift, no strings attached.

- Temple of the Living God

But what are we supposed to do with that gift? We are **called to be the temple of the Living God** – the place where God dwells in this world. When God dwells in our heart, it means we don't just "visit Him" only on Sunday mornings for a couple hours.

Nor is our relationship with God something we keep in a box on a shelf, calling on Him when we need His help.

Instead, our relationship with God is expressed through our prayer life, how we care for ourselves, and in our interactions with other people.

Expect Nothing in Return

Living in the 21^{st} century, society tells us to expect others to serve us, always expecting something in return for a good deed. But that's not our **Christian way of life**.

Our spiritual health is dependent on how we use the gifts received from God to help others, not just our own needs. What good would it do us, if we freely accepted God's forgiveness, compassion, and salvation, but refused to share those same gifts with others?

Go and Do Likewise

As Orthodox Christians, we have a responsibility to love and help without reservation. It doesn't matter if we know or like the person before us, what matters is that we share the gifts of mercy, forgiveness, and patience like God does with us.

Being like God is a wonderful experience, freeing us from anger, greed, and pride. His love is a free gift. We only need to accept it, expressing it in our lives, each day bringing us does to each other and to lessu Strist.

Scripture Readings for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15



Hymns of the Week for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Troparion/Apolytikion — T6 (Pl. 2 The angelic powers were at Your

tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Your grave, seeking

Your most pure body.
You captured Hell, not being tempted by it.
You came to the Virgin, granting life.

You came to the Virgin, granting I O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.

Kontakion — Tone 8 (Plagal 4)

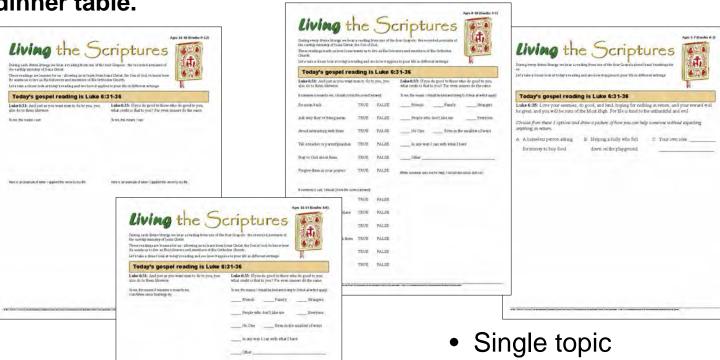
When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race.

He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Parents, Church School Teachers & Houth Directors
Whitch for the <- to indicate to pics/questions you
can use to inspire conversations with youth. Or you
the corresponding study equide for this resource.

Each week, all grades explore the same topic at their own level of comprehension, creating opportunities to discuss common themes at home, in the car, at the dinner table.

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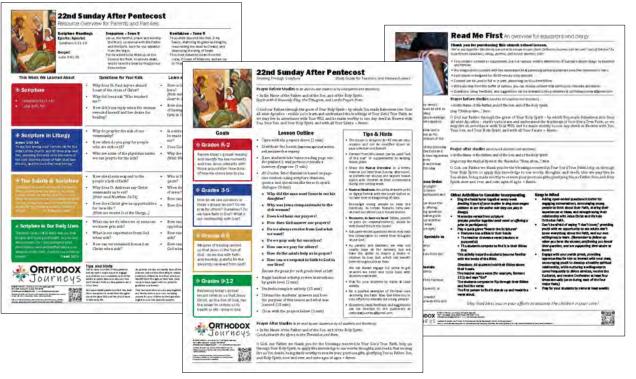
- Grade-level concepts
- Relatable, applicable



OJ: Teacher / Parent Resources







- "Read Me First"
- Overview
- Study guides by grade level
- Parent / Family Resources

- Plug 'n play
- Stand-alone or supplemental use

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help as through our struggles if we

We arm thatks to God for His grats

By showing mercy and loving our enemies (i.e., these allig deer's like us.

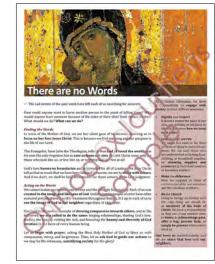
OJ: Supplemental Resources













- Activities
- Games
- Self-guided learning





A Closer Look at OJ Curricula



OJ Curricula Growing Through Scripture



The New Testament

42 weekly lessons centered on the gospel reading for each week

- The period from typically the 12-14th week after Pentecost through Pentecost
- The Sundays after the Lukan Jump,
- The preparatory Sundays for Christmas and Theophany
- The Sundays of the Triodion and Pentecostarion

Scripture is the foundation for everything we do as Orthodox Christians.





OJ Curricula Growing Through Scripture



The New Testament

Living in the Light of Pentecost: How does the start of another school year begin?

The Lukan Jump: Moving towards Christmas and Pascha

- Exploring the miracles of Christ in scripture
- Making connections between the people in scripture and our daily lives
- Why are the accounts of Christ's earthly mission important for us?
- The special readings of Christmas and Theophany reveal the Savior to us
- Our weekly journey is oriented on Pascha

The Lenten Triodion

- Accompanying Our Savior on His journey to the Cross
- Realizing the importance of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in our lives
- Understanding our scripture reveals the mercy and forgiveness of God
- Finding the joy of Christ in our repentance and change of heart

Paschaltide

- Being in the Light of Christ
- Seeing how scripture proclaims the joy of our Lord
- Exploring why our enthusiasm and participation wanes what can we do?
- Maintaining the spiritual growth of Lent during the most festive time of the year



OJ Curricula Growing Through Scripture



Grades 9-12

- Exploring the message of scripture and how it applies to our daily lives
- Also draws
 connections between
 the divine liturgy and
 scripture as a
 dynamic pair of
 experiences through
 which we as
 Orthodox Christians
 come to know Jesus
 Christ

Grades 6-8

- Approaches each reading in a line-byline format to see what the text is teaching us
- Discussion questions place the student 'within the reading' to consider how Christ's teachings apply to us and how our lives can be shaped our Lord's commans

Grades 3-5

- Develops a meaningful level of ideas and concepts for students to think and consider how Christ's teachings and earthly ministry applies to us.
- Becoming familiar
 with scripture and
 how to embrace it to
 know Jesus Christ
 more fully

Grades K-2

- Focus on biblical concepts and aspects of the reading using activities and ageappropriate questions
- Activities introduce idea that God loves us and wants us to be with Him in this life and the next
- Readings and texts are simplified for ease of comprehension



OJ Curricula Living a Sacramental Life



The Sacraments

42 weekly lessons centered on the sacramental acts of the Orthodox Church

- Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, the Eucharist, Marriage, Ordination, Holy Unction
- Fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Goodness, Self-control
- Liturgical Acts: Prayer, Funerals, Blessings, Faith, Hope, Wisdom, Monasticism, Vocations
- Liturgical arts: music, architecture, iconography
- Living as an Orthodox Christian: Abstinence, Generosity, Fasting, Feasting, Humility

Through the Church, we are called to sanctify the world, making it holy, sacred – restoring it to its sacramental nature.

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Called to be saints – holy – we must live with sanctity of life.

OJ Curricula Living a Sacramental Life



The Sacraments

Foundations: What is a sacrament? How am I sacramental in my life?

Physical Expressions of the Sacraments

- Iconography
- Architecture and our Body as God's Temple
- Music and our Expressions of Worship
- Blessing things in Church sanctifying our lives
- Blessing things outside of Church sanctifying the world

The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23

- Why are the sacraments necessary
- How do the sacraments draw us closer to God and others
- Why do we live our lives a certain way
- Understanding that the sacraments are tools to help us in our lives

Godly Celebrating, Faith & Works, Sacramental Relationships

- Being of service to others is inherent to our being
- Faith, hope, and love help us center our lives on Jesus Christ
- How do we relate to others?
- How does our relationship with God rely on our relationships with those around us?



OJ Curricula Living a Sacramental Life



Grades 9-12

- Exploring the tangible ways sacraments help us remain connected to God
- Seeing how the sacramental acts of the church are signs of God's love and commandments for us in this life

Grades 6-8

- Revealing the ways the sacramental acts of the church are integrated into the seasons and cycles of the year
- Seeing how our participation in the sacramental life of the church restores our baptismal garment

Grades 3-5

- Applying the basic knowledge to delve deeper into the purpose and prayers of the sacramental life
- Seeing how the sacraments reorient our daily lives to be centered on Jesus Christ

Grades K-2

- Focusing on the sacramental acts to become familiar with the teachings and practices of the Faith
- Encouraging students to find the sacramental in their life and using them to get closer to God.



OJ Curricula Jesus: The Christ of the Scripture



The Old Testament

42 weekly lessons exploring subject of Orthodox Christianity – Jesus Christ – through the lens of the "Old Testament" scriptures

- Starting point: Luke 24:13-35 "Road to Emmaus"
- Reflections on the use of scripture in the gospels and epistles
- Reflections on early church struggles and the use of scripture to understand the Person of Christ, and the Holy Trinity
- Working through the Torah, Psalms, Prophets (major & minor), and the rest of the Old Testament scripture to discover how Jesus Christ is present throughout

Status / Next Steps

- Creation, design, and formatting of the curriculum
- Creation of activities and supplemental resources

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Understanding the Law & the Prophets will help us know Who Jesus Christ is, and how we relate to Him as His followers.

Jesus: The Christ of the Scripture



The Old Testament

Starting Point: Road to Emmaus (Luke 24); 1 Cor 15 "...according to the Scriptures"

Understanding of the Person of Jesus, through several scriptural passages and themes

- The Psalms and Wisdom literature
- Temple / Priesthood literature
- The Law of Moses
- The Prophecies: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel; Daniel and the minor prophets
- The lineage of David
- Second temple Jewish literature, including "apocryphal" books in the LXX

Reflections on the use of scripture in the gospels and epistles

- Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8); "as it is written..." usage in Gospels;
- Nativity Stories
- Understanding Mary the Theotokos through Scripture

Reflections on early church struggles and the use of scripture to understand the Person of Christ, and the Holy Trinity

- Marcion, Valentinus and the Gnostics
- Arius and the Uncreated Son
- The Trinity
- "the Fall" and Athanasius' Dilemma
- Nestorius and Mary the "Theotokos"



Jesus: The Christ of the Scripture



Grades 9-12

- Focus on the Old
 Testament texts and understand how we use these texts.
- How does Orthodoxy approach scripture?
- How is this different from how Jewish or Muslim people read the books of Moses?
- How is this different from how non-Orthodox Christians read these texts?

Grades 6-8

- Focus on what texts we use.
- Many of the lessons will be extended readings, reflections and activities on passages in the Old and New Testament
- Occasional excerpts from Christian saints and scholars

Grades 3-5

- Focus focuses on content and context – what was written in various scriptural selections
- What was happening in Israel and the world at this time, and in the time of Christ

Grades K-2

- Focus on the narrative, from Adam to Jesus.
- Readings and reflections on 'the greatest hits' from the Old Testament, looking for common threads of God's love, justice, sin and forgiveness, promise and fulfillment, etc.



OJ Curricula The Bride of Christ: His Church and His Body





42 weekly lessons that reviews the development of the Orthodox Church

- Looks at Church History and draws connections between the saints and what we experience today
- Instead of being a "dry history lesson" the format will place students in the moment to see themselves as both recipients of and responsible for the mission of the Church in today's world
- Exploring our role is as Orthodox Christians in light of the Ecumenical Councils and what we believe as Orthodox Christians

2028!

Status / Next Steps

- Creation, design, and formatting of the curriculum
- Creation of activities and supplemental resources

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Learning about the history of the Church allows us to see our role and place in the Great Commission.

OJ Curricula The Bride of Christ: His Church and His Body



Church History

The Early Church The Church of the Councils

The Liturgical Church

The Church and the World

The Church Today

- Acts of the Apostles and the postapostolic age
- The apologists and early debates
- Early church worship
- Martyrdom

- Debates in the four centuries of the Councils
- The spread of Christianity across Rome
- The Church and the Greek & Roman worlds

- Monasticism
- Development of liturgical worship
- Church music, hymnography
- Relations with Europe
- Rise of Islam; fall of Constantinople
- Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism – then and now

- The Mission of the Church
- The American Mission
- Our role in the Church
- Unity through diversity



OJ Curricula The Bride of Christ: His Church and His Body



Grades 9-12

- Focus on theological developments and extended reviews of primary texts whenever possible.
- Use formatting similar to AP Classes (US History) to help students draw out conclusions from primary history examples

Grades 6-8

- Focus on broad
 historical happenings
 – who, what, where,
 when, why?
- Exploring the historical events and the role played by the Church and how this relates to us in today's world

Grades 3-5

- Focus focuses on specific examples and individuals.
- Teach a specific saint (St Nicholas) or a topic (monasticism), provide activities and some historical context.

Grades K-2

- Focus on how we encounter history, today.
- Saints and feasts
- Songs and hymns, the divine liturgy and sacraments.
- How does this connect to our belief in Jesus Christ?





Supplemental Resources from OJ



OJ: Festal Curricula



12 Great Feasts

- Lessons
- Icons & Hymns
- Liturgical texts
- Activities & games
- Teacher overviews
- Family discussion questions







OJ: Supplemental Curricula



Great Lent & Pentecostarion

- Lessons
- Icons & Hymns
- Liturgical texts
- Activities & games
- Teacher overviews
- Family discussion questions







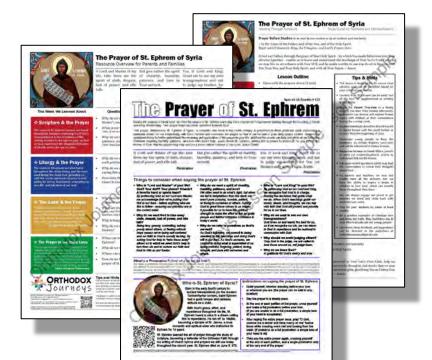
OJ: Stand-alone Lessons





- Holy Week
- Great Lent
- Prayer of St. Ephrem
- There are no Words: Racism











OJ: Activities & Games





- Who's the Apostle?
- Nativity Diorama
- Resurrection Diorama
- Myrrhbearing Women Icon
- Lazarus Saturday
- All-Organic Icon Project
- 12 things an Orthodox Christian can do



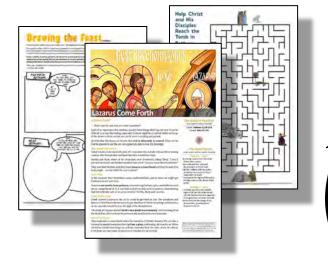








12 Things an Or	thodox Christian Can Do	in Times of Peril
PRAY TO GOO Asking for detinance has infirmity, that, and tribulations. Puzzle for those carried for the first succeeding the concentration of the first succeeding the concentration of the leading to the first succeeding the concentration of the leading.	READ THE SCRIPTURE Regioning with Paulin 90, appropriate to times of port and distance, communication of port and distance, communication of port and distance (Scripture 190, 352 - 25, 444, and 161) publication (Scripture 190, 352 - 25, 444, and 161) publication (Scripture 190, 450 - 450	DRINK HOLY WATER Training a sign each morning with your property so a week to actively resid evil in your file, a wide good on a strangely your dates, also receive too, the blennings'
RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST The Body and Blood of Christ are for our partnal and operation health state and principal and operation of the principal and principal	COME TO CONFESSION Reflecting on your life, considering the disparation of the confession of the disparation of the confession of the disparation of the confession of the co	PRAY TO THE THEOTOKOS For medical professionals, lookuling some of our seen purbleoners, who are carries from affected. The Vigin fairs are they seen of all all according delice forms on an orbital.
PRAY TO JESUS CHRIST. Ite is the Physician of our souls and booke, that he may gook insearches the term of the state of t	Fact of pina into well keep the League fact. After parties food an high is process and learning good learning and learning sound learning and learning sound	Surviors IOCC. Giveg a chartable gift zon fast their U.S. Gived hardware in drogsters for the chartable gift zon fast their License for the chartable gift zon fast their form of the chartable gift zon fast the form of the chartable gift zon fast
COME TO CHURCH If you are set, come to church The down services are opportunitive for in the floaty of Christ, warningings on the floaty of Christ, warningings on the floaty of Christ, warningings on as father too, and ney fam.	Phay To the Saints Fundamental of the summer and other persons, may the persons on summer and other persons of the summer and other persons of the summer and other summer and	NOTHY YOUR PRIEST. Howard is loved one context the strus, refl your priest. We, as a consensitive of chitchook Christona, play the each other and those willhards, play the each other and those willhard by the unput.



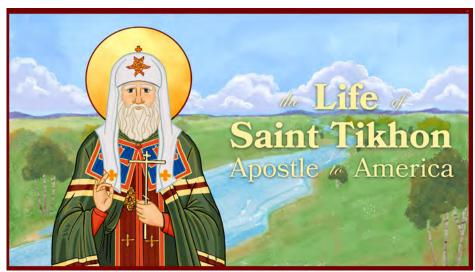


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OJ: Videos & Lessons

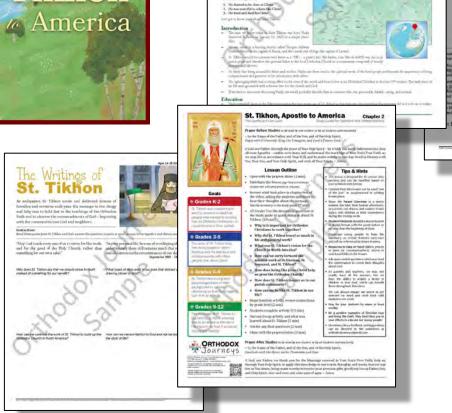


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- Watch the video on YouTube
- Use the lessons and activities to learn about St. Tikhon





Saint Tikhon



The Future of OJ: Beyond Curricula



Training & Webinars

- Teacher training, best practices
- Music resources and workshops
- Working with special needs children

Activities & Resources

- Printed materials
 (interactive liturgy book, coloring pages, games, prayer cards, liturgy flash cards)
- Arts & craft projects (church model, prayer ropes)
- Icon dioramas (Feasts, lives of the saints)
- Plays and scripts (seasonal, camp programs)

Translations

Digital & Video

- Lives of the North American Saints animated videos
- Digital resources (image libraries, line drawings)
- Games & app activities





Thank you!



Contact us with your questions or to learn more about resources from



orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com | www.orthodoxjourneys.com