

I Am Orthodox — Who Are We?

Quick Summary Chart

Sessions & Themes	Level 1: PreKdgn-1 st Grade	Level 2: Grades 2-4	Level 3: Grades 5-8	Level 4: Grades 9-12	Level 5: Young Adults, Parents 19-35	Level 6: Adults, Seniors
FOCUS → Group Levels	We Are Family	It's About Us!	We Are God's People	Our Church and Our Neighbors	Shaping Our Future	Guiding New Generations
Session 1 Every Family has a Story [Origins, Events, Relationships]	Identify members of your family (immediate generations); tell how they are the same or different, what they do well, who looks like another relative, etc.	Children will explore family relationships through basic "family trees" with pictures and brief anecdotes or short stories about grandparents & other relatives.	Identify places on a North American or World map, where your family/parish "ancestors" came from; add taped music, stories or traditions of their homelands.	Conduct an oral history project of your family or parish history, by interviewing/taping stories of family members or parishioners. Prepare questions in advance.	Conduct a "look into the future" & make a list of things you hope to do or accomplish in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. To whom would you look as models or mentors?	Begin or add to a journal the stories, "wisdom" and pictures of favorite things you'd like to pass along to friends and relatives. Turn it into a coffee-table book.
Session 2 Life Together As Family [Values, Ethics, Belonging, Responsibility, Unity]	Tell what it means "to belong" to a family (or another group: class, church, etc.). Match photos, items, etc., that belong together. Name members of your family.	Talk with family members about what makes families work—list what rules, habits, daily tasks, favorite things, etc., help to make a real family.	Discuss where "rules," values & traditions come from (home, church, Bible, school, society, workplace, etc.). Why are they important? Who creates them?	List the kinds of influences or people that provoke changes in our values, ethics or practices. Why do some behaviors become stronger or weaker in our lives?	List 3-5 attitudes, practices, or values that you would like to nurture in yourself or your children. Why are these important and how would you try to do this?	Examine relationships within your immediate & extended families, relatives & friends. List initiatives or responsibilities you can take to encourage greater unity & support.
Session 3 God's Story and God's People [History of Salvation, Jesus Our King and Lord, the Church]	Identify & tell stories about some persons/families in the Bible (Adam & Eve, Noah, Abraham & Sarah, Moses & Aaron, David & Solomon, Zechariah & Elizabeth, Joseph & Mary, John and Jesus).	Explore lives of Bible families, those that were faithful to God, those that had problems, examples of "sin" and "return to God," repentance/confession (Jacob & Esau, the Prodigal Son, etc.)	Illustrate events (cf. Exo. 12-15; Deut. 6,11—Passover, the Red Sea, desert years) that helped the Hebrew people to understand they were God's People, chosen to do His will & follow His ways.	Tell (and/or role-play for the parish) the story of Pentecost—when the Holy Spirit came down and the Church, the first community of Christians, was formed. See Acts 2:1-24,36-47)	How did Jesus try to change the way people thought or behaved towards others. Give examples of how He challenged the relationships and customs of His time. Cf. Matthew, Chap. 5-7; 25	Reflect upon 1 Peter 2:4-10; 3:8-1:11 and its meaning for you. Keep a journal of your thoughts, values, commitments, struggles, and faithfulness, as you try to fulfill God's will in your life today.
Session 4 Members of God's Family, the Church [Baptism/Chrismation, Communion, Life]	Tell how you became a member of God's family, the Church. Look at pictures of your baptism and tell what happened when you were baptized, & anointed with the oil and the holy chrism.	Name things that separate/divide people and those that help bring people together. Role-play ways we can turn away from evil and to good (relate to the sacrament of penance/confession).	Locate verses of Holy Week and Pascha that connect events of the Old/New Testament Pascha, i.e., Passover, and the story of Jesus' passion, burial & Resurrection, with our life in Christ.	Compare Acts 2:41-47 with Rom. 12. Describe in your own words how St. Paul understands our life as Christians, both in the Church as members) and in our responsibilities to others in society.	1 Cor. 3:10-17; 12:1-31) St. Paul describes the Church as a body and a temple. Evaluate how we measure up to his criteria. Give examples of how we, as persons, families, parishes might improve.	1 Cor. 13) Reflect upon St. Paul's words on love by giving examples from your own life. In verses 1-7, substitute your name wherever the word <i>love</i> appears. How well do you live up to this model?
Session 5 Every Parish has a Story [Origins, Founders, Events, Life, Mission]	Identify & draw pictures of members of your church family. Tell stories about things our church family does together, and what you like best about "church."	Make a mural or scrapbook using (xeroxed) copies of photos, news articles, stories of founders and events that tell the story of the life of your parish.	Outline with pictures and titles the main events or actions in the Baptismal Service. Describe what each says about you as a member of the Church.	Collect anniversary books, articles & photos, about your parish for existing info. check Orthodox America & oca.org) Update your parish history with new articles.	Draw concentric circles on a map in radii of 1, 5, 10 & 25 miles from your parish. Locate areas where parish families live. Discuss ways you can know one another better.	Swap stories with other adults re: personalities, leaders or events in the church that made an impression on you. What example or legacy might you leave to others?
Session 6 Being Christian and Being Orthodox [Identity, Unity, and Difference among Neighbors]	Tell how other families/neighbors are alike or different from your family (customs, church traditions, ailes, feasts & celebrations, etc.) Tell what you like best about your family. What do you like best about a neighbor family?	Describe 3-4 of your best friends in your school or neighborhood. How are you the same, yet different as persons, families, racial or religious identity? What good things have you learned from each other?	List ways you can better know your classmates who come from different backgrounds. What things do you do with each other? Do you help those who are picked on by others? Do you stand up for your beliefs and values?	Describe what it means for you to be an Orthodox Christian in today's world. To what extent does Orthodox faith and practice shape your identity? Name problems you sometimes face and tell how you deal with them.	Evaluate your relationships: how well do you know your neighbors, co-workers, etc.; how well do they know you? Do you converse, help when needed, cooperate in raising children, watch their property, etc? Do you share similar values?	What do you do to make newcomers welcome in your local neighborhood? Put together a booklet or packet with a basic map, nearest neighbors, names/phone no's or emergencies, churches, shopping advice, doctors/dentists, etc.
Session 7 The Work of God's People [Ministry, Outreach, Service and Witness]	Prepare gifts to give to others, visit and assist people who need help, help a family member or neighbor, etc. Bring flowers or a gift to a neighbor who lives alone.	Keep a class journal each week; write what your parish has done as a family for each other, and others in your town or neighborhood. Share stories seen on TV about people/families in need.	Compare Acts 2:41-47 with the life of your parish today. How did his first community influence the people around them? How does your parish witness to others today?	Working in teams, plan/organize an ongoing community service project (for at least several weeks or visits) to help senior citizens in the parish/neighborhood, in ways that will make life easier for them.	Familiarize yourself with schools in your neighborhood. Talk with neighbors who have school-age children; share your values and concerns; become active in parenting groups; help build community spirit.	Give a few hours of your time each week to community service. Organize/participate in a group to regularly check-in on the elderly in your area. Provide transportation to church, doctors, etc.
Session 8 Following God in Our Lives [Faithful, Responsible and Accountable]	Name & practice ways you can be kind and helpful to members of your family, neighborhood, school, parish, etc. List things you can do to help at home.	Discuss jobs and responsibilities in your family, at school, and as a member of the church. What do we learn from having to do something that helps everyone?	Give an example of a way that you have helped someone else by being faithful, responsible or trustworthy. How did you feel about what you did?	Find synonyms and/or provide examples in your life of what it means to be faithful, accountable, responsible, trustworthy, in family, school, church, society.	Describe ways you are responsible for/accountable to your family (children, parents, extended family, friends), the church (local/diocese/national), community.	Plan ways to be responsible & accountable for yourself, family, church, etc., by wisely managing our finances, insurances, health & requests. Be faithful in spiritual life.