

Evangelism

It is important for our children to know that everyone at church--young children, teens and parents--is always learning more about the Church and about God. One way to develop this insight is an All-Parish Education Session. Such a session can take place after the Liturgy on Sunday or at any other convenient time in your parish (e.g. Saturday after Vespers, Friday evening.) The possible topics are almost limitless.

As part of this particular session, the priest can include in his sermon some instruction on the meaning and practice of **Evangelization**. Prior to the Veneration of the Cross, directions for the program and the time frame for the activity should be given to the congregation, as follows:

Announce the groupings, room assignments and group leaders. (See the list below for suggested groupings. Adjust these according to the number and age range of people you have.) After the veneration of the cross, a short coffee hour, approximately 20 minutes, can precede the start of the discussions. Then the groups go to their assigned rooms and meet for 40 minutes.

Each group determines how it will report back to the congregation when everyone reconvenes in church. The groups of younger children can give their responses to the pre-scripted questions either individually or together, and either in words or with pictures and drawings. (Have drawing materials ready.)

Notice that the various groups have different questions to discuss. These should be distributed to the leaders a week or so prior to the All-Parish Session. For the upper grades and in the adult groups, one person should be chosen as a record keeper or reporter. This person will give a synopsis of the group's discussion to the reconvened congregation.

It is always interesting in these sessions to hear (and sometimes, with the younger groups, to see) the various responses to the questions. Encourage parents to continue the discussion at home, and to compare the responses in their own groups with those of their children. If questions come up during the group discussions, these might be addressed in subsequent Sunday bulletins so that the whole parish can share in learning from them.

Schedule

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

10:25 a.m. Program Introduction & Explanation

- What is expected
- Various groupings and where the groups will meet
- Introduction of group leaders
- Need for a record keeper/reporter
- Presentation of time frame/schedule

10:30 a.m.	Veneration of the Cross
10:35 a.m.	Coffee, milk, donuts etc.
10:55 a.m.	Participants report to appropriate group <i>Record Keepers are chosen to record group activity</i>
11:40 a.m.	Groups reconvene in the church <i>Record Keepers present to the congregation important comments and/or questions offered in their group.</i>
Noon	Dismissal with prayer

Discussion Questions

Group 1 (Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 1)

- What things can you tell your friends about the Orthodox Church and about your home parish?

Group 2 (Grade 2)

- What things can you tell your friends about the Orthodox Church and about your home parish?

Group 3 (Grades 3 & 4)

- How should we live our lives so that we can serve as an example to those who are not Orthodox?

Group 4 (Grades 5 & 6)

- How should we live our lives so that we can serve as an example to those who are not Orthodox?

Group 5 (Grades 7 & 8)

Select one question for discussion.

- What things about Orthodoxy would be of interest to your friends?
- What could the parish do that would encourage you to bring your friends to church?
- What do you think people should know about Orthodoxy?

Group 6 (Grades 9 & 10)

Select one question for discussion.

- If we want others to become Orthodox, what should we be doing?
- What things about our parish should people know?
- What can you do to interest friends in Orthodoxy?

Groups 7 & 8 (Young Adults, Adults & Seniors)

Select one question for discussion.

- What “glue” holds our parish together? e.g. Priest, fellowship, faith, family ties.
- What might hinder us in an effort to evangelize?
- What do we need to do to prepare ourselves and the church to evangelize?
- What personal experiences have any of us had in evangelization?
- If you are a convert to Orthodoxy, how did you find the Orthodox Church? Did someone invite you to visit? Did you read about the Church somewhere? What was there about your first experiences with the Church that made you return? What was the first thing that made you feel that you wanted to know more about the Church?

This *All-Parish Education Session* was created and successfully used at [Holy Trinity Orthodox Church](#) in **Parma, Ohio**. If your parish has used a different theme or have suggestions for a future theme, we encourage you to let us know.