



Report to the Archdiocesan National Convention, 2017

From the Report at the Meeting of the Department Heads, April 2017

The motto of the Department of Christian Education:

“This, then, is our task, to educate ourselves and our children in godliness”

St. John Chrysostom, Patron Saint

1. *How did your department change or develop in light of last year’s meeting?*

- Goal-setting was helpful toward organizing our efforts.
- Having the suggestions of other department heads and participants was also very helpful.

2. *Statement of the overall mission for your department*

The Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Christian Education (AODCE) endeavors to promote and improve Orthodox Christian education by inspiring, educating and supporting parents and church school staff, by providing significant curriculum, and by promoting adult education in the faith. Our patron saint is St. John Chrysostom, whose quotation above is the inspiration for our efforts.

3. *The exact nature of the work that is performed by your department*

The Department works in many areas to promote Christian education by:

- Providing resources and support via the Christian Education Website
- Providing resourcing and administering the Creative Festivals at the Archdiocesan Level
- Providing Facebook and the Social Media Ministry
- Training church school personnel upon request
- Organizing and implementing The Pan-Orthodox Continuing Education Conference (formerly Orthodox Institute)
- Organizing Diocesan Pan-Orthodox Continuing Education Conferences
- Responding to email and phone requests for assistance
- Developing curriculum offerings

4. *The specific measurable goals which were achieved in 2016/2017;*

- Established initiatives for 2016/17: Attendance Improvement, Quiet before Prayer, Knowledge of the Faith
- Developed 4 Certificates for Church Schools
- Organized Podcast: “How to Speak to Your Children About Homosexuality”
- Provided 2 articles for “Parenting” section of the website
- Developed the Department’s excel running balance sheet.
- Initiated the Faith and Culture webpage.
- Developed new webpage: Orthodox Baby Homecoming,
- Developed a database format for scripture, from both Old and New Testament, as a prior step to beginning the Pre3 through Grade 5 Scope and Sequence Chart for the new curriculum, *Walking the Path of Salvation*.

5. *Based on #4 above, an honest assessment as to whether your department/organization met, did not meet or exceeded its goals.*

The Department met 8 of its 13 goals. The energy put forth towards achieving these goals was compromised as we fell into the routines demands of the Department for each time of the year. As an improvement, a chart of the goals will be posted in the office, along with the intermediary steps as they can be determined at the time.

The task of curriculum writing advanced, notably by the very useful development of a database of scripture, but did not reach the scope and sequence stage. One of the high school projects, instead of being turned over to a writer, was taken up by the Director. It will soon be given to middle school students and teachers to review.

The plan for a “Faith and Culture” web page continued to be developed by the Director; however, due to issues with the new website, it has not yet become a reality.

The Director met a young woman in Seattle who is now an associate of the department serving Church School Directors, primarily through that Facebook page. The Director spent time orienting her to the Department and will continue to work with her to help build a community with this group that is key to the success of Orthodox Christian Education.

Plans for filming teaching techniques for a Departmental YouTube channel have begun, and equipment has been purchased.

6. *The specific measurable goals which have been set for 2017-18 and*
7. *A specific action plan for achieving these goals*

- a) Continuation of our work that is regularly performed each year, including support for the Diocesan Christian Education Coordinators, administration of the Creative Arts Festivals, responding to training requests, continuation the very successful educational programming of the Social Networking Ministry, which now includes an active Church School Director Facebook page and the blog “Orthodox Baby Homecoming,” and submissions from the Department to *The Word* four times each year.
- b) Organize Go-to-Meeting for Staff Quarterly (First one was February 2017)
Due: week of May 15. Leslie and Carole to develop agenda.
- c) Finish “My Orthodox Church” middle-school program
Set Wednesdays as the task day.
- d) Find a Diocesan Coordinator for the West
Due: September.
- e) Have staff more visible on the Archdiocesan level.
Due: September. Leslie Atherholt is working with the Diocesan Coordinators toward their submitting articles to *The Word*, and to our webpage. Their bios will also be featured.
- f) Begin filming one segment of Teaching Techniques
Due: June 15 Carole to plan meetings with Leslie Talley and Kristina Wenger
- g) Begin collecting Kristina’s WordPress blog entries on the topics each Fall and Spring
Leslie Atherholt to spend 30 min/wk to prepare these to go on our webpages.
- h) Develop small portion of *Walking the Path of Salvation*, Preschool to Grade 5, Scope and Sequence Chart
Due: June 15. Waiting on Carole completing Categories Chart.

BRIEF REPORT ON CURRICULUM PROJECT

- As the blueprint for the project continues to come to light it became obvious that the first entries on the Scope and Sequence Chart were dependent on the completion, which is imminent, of the Scripture database. Scripture will be the framework of the content, and several classifications will allow for age-appropriate usage.
 - The scriptures are from both the Old and New Testament are classified according to the five content areas, Conversion, Repentance, Struggle, Liturgy, Wisdom.
 - Additionally, they are classified according to the psychosocial developmental stages of Erik Erikson, and the faith developmental stages of James Fowler.
 - The database also provides the grade level at which a scripture was used in the GOA and OCEC curricula, and also references, in part, the scripture usage of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium of St. Athanasius Parish in Goleta.
 - There are a range of other classifications, for example, typology, parable, healing, liturgical usage, “relevant for current issues,” and moral issues.
 - A significant contribution of the database will be to record the grade level when a scripture is placed, and thus allow us to track its introduction, development and review.
 - The building of the database, although time-consuming, will allow for queries that will answer questions like, “Which are the scriptures that will be most helpful to a primary student for the unit of Repentance?” or, “At which grade levels do the OCA and GOA, and CGS use this scripture?” or “Where have we used this scripture already?”

After the first entries on the Scope and Sequence Chart are made, lesson samples will be created. At that point, it will be possible to see the entire vision for *Walking the Path of Salvation* and review committees will be convened. The next step will be composing the first materials; targeted for June 2018. The Preschool to Grade 5 project is estimated to be completed in no more than five years from that point. Once the writing has begun, a task force will be assembled to determine the needs of the middle and high school students, and how to best serve them.

8. *How is the department/organization staffed, including the names of the staff members?*

Carole Buleza, Director, full time
Rosemary Shumski, Administrative Assistant, part time

Hourly Employees

Kristina Wenger, 8 hours/week,
Leslie Atherholt, 4.5 hours/week,
Timm Wenger 1.5 hours/week

Volunteer Diocesan Coordinators and Associates

- Fr. George Alberts, Diocese of NY & Washington DC/Charleston, Oakland & the Mid-Atlantic
- Fr. Christopher Rigden-Briscall, Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada & Upstate NY
- Kh. Anna Hughes, Diocese of Worcester & New England
- Robert Snyder, Diocese of Toledo & the Midwest
- Vasiliki Oldziej, Diocese of Wichita & Mid-America

- Gail Meena Malaniak, Associate
- Sandy Mitchell, Western Rite Liason, Associate
- Kh. Gigi Shadid, Associate
- Anna-Sarah Farha, Associate

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