



Unit 3: Read Me First An overview for educators and clergy

Thank you for purchasing this church school lesson from Orthodox Journeys!

We've put together this handy overview to ensure lessons from Orthodox Journeys can be used "out of the box" by experienced educators, clergy, parents, and novice teachers alike.

- This content is meant to supplement, but not replace, weekly attendance of Sunday's divine liturgy by teachers and families
- Lesson content can be used for weekly in-person and online web church school classes
- Each lesson is designed for 45-60 minute class sessions
- Content can be used as is, or in parts drawn from the lesson study guides, incorporated into your existing lesson plans
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publishers at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

Tips & Hints

- **Study Guides** correspond with the Student Handouts, providing discussion questions, instructional notes, "prompting" questions with possible answers, for encouraging dialogue with youth of different age levels and comprehension.

Study Guides are intended for teachers/church school directors (and/or parents if homeschooling) and can be flexed based on student needs and their comprehension level of the Orthodox Faith.

- We recommend sharing the **Parent Overview** in a timely manner (no later than Sunday afternoon), informing parents of lesson topics, which can be discussed and explored with children at their convenience during the week.
- **Student Handouts** should be shared in print or digital format with the youth before or no later than the beginning of class.

Encourage young people to keep the handouts, as certain features carry-over and will be referenced in future lessons.

- **Bibles** should be available for each class, enabling student use/read-a-long, and search for answers to class discussion topics and questions.
- Pencils or pens will be needed, encouraging active listening, note taking, answering trivia, or fill in the blank activities during the lesson.
- Some lessons include **art/creative activities**, requiring crayons, colored pencils, or markers.
- Some lessons include **web-based links or resources** including YouTube videos, having a computer or sharing the content via "Zoom" sessions is recommended, followed by discussion or Q&A about the content.

Typical Lesson Structure

✦ Opening Prayers

- "O Heavenly King"
- Prayer before studies

✦ Review

- What we talked about last week

✦ This Week's Lesson

- Handout introductory message
- Review and discuss the liturgical hymns of the day
- Read and explore the scripture readings of the day
- Complete Handout activity
- "A Closer Look" on this week's discussion topic(s)

Optional:

- Watch related video from study guide links list
- Discussion upcoming feasts, fasts, and saints

✦ Preview

- What's coming up next week

✦ Closing Prayers

- Hymn to the Theotokos
- Prayer after studies

Prayer before studies *(read by all students and teachers)*

+ *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*
O God our Father, through the grace of Your Holy Spirit – by which You made fishermen into Your all-wise Apostles – enable us to learn and understand the teachings of Your Son's True Faith, so we may live in accordance with Your Will, and be made worthy to one day dwell in Heaven with You, Your Son, and Your Holy Spirit, and with all Your Saints. + Amen.

- Use as many or as few of the questions and discussion topics found in the study guides to help children learn about the lesson topics, discovering how the Orthodox Faith can be a part of their daily life.
- Watch for the ☞ in the handout for topics/questions which might spark conversations with participants.
- Asking open-ended questions is better for engaging conversations, encouraging young people to think about their Faith, sharing their experiences or ideas, and strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ and His holy Orthodox Faith.
- Don't be afraid of saying "I don't know," providing youth with an opportunity to see adults don't know everything about the Faith, and our own willingness to learn. *(Remember to follow-up when you have the answer, confirming you heard their question, and are supporting their desire to learn!)*
- Engage with your parish priest, providing opportunities for him to interact with your class, encouraging youth to develop a healthy spiritual relationship, while nurturing a willingness to come frequently to divine services, receive the Eucharist, and receive Confession at least four times annually (once during each of the four major fasts.)
- Pray for your students by name at least weekly.
- Be a positive examples of Christian love and living the Faith. May God bless you in your efforts to educate our young people!

Prayer after studies *(read by all students and teachers)*

+ *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*
O God, our Father, we thank you for the blessings received in Your Son's True Faith, help us, through Your Holy Spirit, to apply this knowledge to our words, thoughts, and deeds, that we may live as You desire, being made worthy to receive your precious gifts, glorifying You as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. + Amen.

