

12th All-American Council – The Orthodox Church in America

Church-Wide Initiative Proposals

Parish Education Program

Proposal Summary

To create and publish contemporary and relevant Orthodox Christian education materials that are adaptable to parishes of all sizes and conditions, and that are usable in all age groups, from childhood through seniors. To create a means for resource training using these materials in the parishes of the Orthodox Church in America.

Statement of Condition/Problem

As missionaries in North America Orthodox Christians need to better understand the tenets of their faith and the applicability of the Church's teachings to their daily lives. A great deal has changed in our Church and in our society during the past 20 years. We have entered the computer age. Both communications and publishing have been dramatically transformed. The Internet has become something of a common parish and a household tool. Over the same period, the Orthodox Church in America has added many new mission communities, while membership in some of its older communities has declined. Pastors and the faithful need high-quality learning tools to engage in meaningful Orthodox Christian education and practice.

Statement of Goal/Objectives

1. Develop thematic materials, making it feasible for the entire parish-from children to seniors-to focus simultaneously on a single theme that will integrate biblical, liturgical, doctrinal and spiritual resources with applications to daily, family, parish, and community life; to witness and mission; to stewardship and outreach; and to personal identity and responsibility as Orthodox Christians.
2. Develop materials that will address the needs of parishes as they adapt to the changing realities of the 21st Century. Because the materials will be designed to be flexible, they will be adaptable to established parishes, to growing parishes and to parishes with declining memberships.
3. Develop materials that will not assume that there are "perfect" facilities or teaching staffs, nor require a minimum number of people in any learning session. The materials will be designed to be used by different-sized groups and, perhaps, with various age groupings, including parents and adults.

4. Develop materials that will provide parishes and the faithful with the needed tools for Christian ministry.

5. Earmark any sales of materials for future development of additional education materials.

Proposal Plan

In order to achieve these objectives, the plan calls for:

1. Build upon the June 1999 consultation of Christian educators sponsored by the Education and Community Life Unit and outline the program and the curricula to be developed and to identify parish education needs.

2. Assign development teams to produce specific curricula based upon the themes identified at the June 1999 consultation.

3. Establish a timeline for production and distribution of the materials.

4. Production of the materials may include the tools of CD-ROMs and Internet access to more efficiently and economically store and distribute developed materials. When appropriate, printed materials, videos, tapes and cassettes may be developed for use and distribution.

5. Distribution of the materials to the parishes of the Orthodox Church in America.

Proposal Evaluation

The actual appearance and usefulness of parish materials will in itself serve as the greatest evaluation of the proposal. Diocesan bishops, pastors, church school teachers, as well as the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America will be able to see the new materials and put them to use in the parish. After the initial consultation, a time line of goals will be established and the program will be measured to ensure that it follows the identified course of action. Long term the outcome will be visible in

strengthened, better educated communities. Appropriate evaluation instruments will be given to parishes and groups requesting their reactions to the effectiveness of the materials they have used. Our goal would be that over half of OCA parishes are using at least some of these materials by the end of the three-year period.

Proposal Expenditures

1. Expenses for travel and meeting for the initial consultation as well as meeting expenses for the individuals developing the materials.
2. Stipends and basic expenses for authors and editors of the materials, and for developers of multi-media resources, as well as for the project facilitator.
3. Cost of the actual production, publication and distribution of the materials.
4. Expenses for training sessions as needed for parishes and/or individuals who will be implementing the developed materials.