

# Overview of the *God With Us* Series

The series offers materials for preschool through grade eight and is based on the primary forms of Holy Tradition: Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the liturgical life of the Church. These are presented in ways to enable students to grow in their awareness of God's presence among us and to strengthen their commitment to the Lord.

## *The Lesson Plan*

Each lesson plan in the manual notes the lesson objective, offers an overview of the lesson plan, and offers a section entitled "For the Catechist." This is written to explain the lesson. The section "Background Reading" includes more information on the ideas in the lesson. "For the Catechist" and "Background Reading" are not part of the Preschool lesson plan.

The lesson plan consists of the following:

**Opening.** The students gather at the icon corner for an opening prayer.

**Introduction.** The previous lesson is recalled and students are prepared then for the lesson of the day, bridging their experiences with the lesson content.

**Read Text Aloud.** Students read the text aloud. The manual offers questions and points for discussion during the reading. (This reading is not part of the plan for the younger children who cannot read.)

**Activity.** The lesson reinforcement is accomplished by one or more of the three activities offered. The activities are categorized as "Basic," which is a pencil-and-paper and marker worksheet review of the lesson; "Group," which is a game or activity for classes of several children; and "Craft," which is an art or a craft related to the lesson.

**Closing.** The students gather at the icon corner for a closing prayer.

**Scripted lessons.** The *Teacher Resource Manual* offers a full script for teaching the lesson. Words to speak are given in *italics*, and directions are given in [brackets]. However, the script is to be read prior to the lesson as an aid to presenting the lesson. DO NOT read the manual to the students. The manual also offers commentary and questions as the students work on the reinforcement activities in order to have them verbalize, once again, the main points of the lesson.

**Supplementary Material.** The names of icons from the *Icon Packets* and the names of pictures from *Teaching Pics* are included as an aid for many lessons. The *Icon Packets* include 8 1/2" x 11" color pictures of icons with a description and a prayer on the reverse side. *Teaching Pics* include 80 full-color photographs on 8 1/2" x 11" cards. The text and suggested activities printed on the reverse side of the cards provide simple explanations and encourage further study. The *Icon Packets* and *Teaching Pics* can be purchased from God With Us Publications, Theological Book Service (1-877-484-1600).

In the Grade 4 book use of the self-study guide *Finding Your Way through the Bible* is recommended for lessons 3, 4 and 5. It may be ordered from Theological Book Service as well.

## *The Prayer Curriculum*

The *God With Us* series will have an articulated sequence of prayers through the years. Our aim is to develop the children into people of prayer. In the classroom we can encourage meaningful prayer by making a place for an icon corner and beginning each prayer with a moment of quiet. Encourage parents to have an icon corner in their home for their family prayers.

## *The Liturgical Year*

Each year of the series offers lessons on observances during the liturgical year. These lessons should be taught close to the actual date of the observance. Lessons on the Great Fast and Pascha are included for every grade of the series. All the texts except the Preschool one, *Glory to God!*, has an appendix entitled "Our Church Year." In this appendix are one-page lessons that include an icon and a description of the feast.

## *Planning the Year*

There are 27 lessons in each book. The movable feasts such as Pascha, with the Great Fast preceding, make it difficult to write a text in which each lesson is appropriate to each week of the Church's year. In addition, each parish differs in the amount of class sessions allotted to teaching. A worksheet of 30 blocks is offered. The following guidelines suggest ways to use the blocks:

1. *Dates:* In the blocks write the dates of teaching sessions. Count the class sessions.
2. *Observances:* Pencil in when to teach the lessons.
3. *Count and plan:* Count the remaining blocks, plan the time for each lesson, and note their numbers in the blocks.
4. *Our Church Year:* If "Our Church Year" pages are used, pencil in when they would be taught.