

Department of Religious Education

November 12, 2013

Your Grace, Bishop +MICHAEL, Very Reverend & Reverend Clergy, Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Clergy, parish council members, Church School personnel, and all who have contact with children were invited to three conferences that were held in August. Michael Herzak presented at the morning session on “Reducing the Risk of Sexual Abuse in Your Parish.” The training he provided equipped attendees with the steps to be taken to protect the children and parishes from the hazards of sexual abuse. The training was recorded and is currently available on the Diocesan website. The afternoon session focused on a guided group discussion regarding attendance, parental involvement, how to organize class sizes, and a practice lesson for all age groups. 41 people attended on August 3 in Watervliet, NY; 33 people attended on August 10 in Yonkers, NY; 43 people attended on August 17 in Wayne, NJ. Many people were back from last year and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

A Facebook and a Pinterest page were created. Both of these have the goal of increasing awareness between our department, the clergy and faithful of our Diocese, as well as to create opportunities for increased communication and sharing of ideas. To date we have 118 Facebook fans, many of them reading our posts on a mobile device. They are about equal percentage men and women aged 25-44, live in 16 countries but mostly America, they speak 12 languages. Our most popular posts were invitations to our conference, articles about children’s behavior in church, prophora baking, and reflections on Christ’s Cross. On our Pinterest page you will find lesson plans, crafts, homeschooling ideas, and all things pertaining to Christian education. There are 11 boards, 288 pins, 26 likes and 53 followers. We are currently working on verifying our account in order to access additional analytics. We have recently been invited to post on a board entitled “Notable Orthodox Blogs” from Jennifer Hock who runs the website *Illumination Learning*, a ministry of OCN.

I plan to attend a workshop on October 5, at St George Antiochian Church in Little falls, NJ for Church School personnel. The focus is on creating and executing engaging, effective lessons and on teaching the Divine Liturgy to all ages.

We are currently researching speakers for next year’s conferences.

If you have an education program in your parish for either adults and/or children and would like to be added to the database, please contact me.

Respectfully Submitted,
Matushka Andrea Diamantis
Chairman
Department of Religious Education