

Department of Christian Education

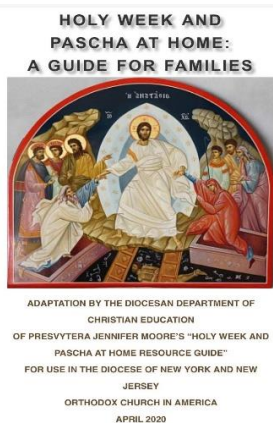
Master Bless!

Your Eminence, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many years ago, when I was working in the corporate world, I was given the book, *Who Moved My Cheese*. The book teaches how to deal with change and not be paralyzed by it, how to embrace change and look for “new cheese”. In trying to provide support to our Diocesan Family during this Pandemic, it has been necessary to change many of our plans in order to meet the needs of our Diocesan Family.

I am thankful to God for providing two excellent teachers to assist me in this work now: Christine Wood of Holy Trinity Parish in Randolph, NJ and Matushka Kathryn Karney of Holy Trinity Parish in Elmira Heights, NY. May God bless them in their efforts!

Here are some highlights of new projects since March:



Holy Week and Pascha at Home: A Guide for Families

This Resource Guide was provided to be used as a daily companion for Holy Week and Pascha. Featuring interactive links to videos, recordings and activities, it was specifically adapted to the traditions commonly celebrated in our Diocesan churches for each day from Lazarus Saturday through Holy Pascha. It was intended to supplement participation in live-streamed services, filling the at-home Holy Week and Pascha experience with purposeful, prayerful action during the early days of isolation due to Covid-19 pandemic sheltering-in-place.

Access the Guide [here](#)

#PumpedforPascha

Pumped for Pascha, a “virtual” week-long, self-serve event was a joint effort with the Dept. of Youth Ministry to help the members of our Diocesan family stay connected while “sheltering in place” during the Paschal Season. A Google Classroom was filled with 9 fun “virtual” activities for children, teens, and families. Many participated and enjoyed sharing the sights and sounds of “Pascha at home” throughout the Diocese. Many thanks to Allison Steffaro, President of FOCA and parishioner at Saints Peter & Paul in South River, NJ for collaborating on this effort!



www.orthodoxjourneys.com

As we went back to a school year that was vastly different from the last, many of our Diocesan parishes were in need of a Church School program with an **online format** for socially distanced settings and virtual meeting groups like Zoom. We were blessed to be introduced to the **Orthodox Journeys Church School Program**.

Each week’s lesson is sent *directly* by email to the Church School directors, and explores the feasts, fasts, saints, liturgical services, and lectionary of our Orthodox Faith. The weekly packet includes full-color handouts featuring a summary of the week’s commemorations, the hymns and scripture readings of the week, along with activity handouts for all levels (Grades K-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12) that can be printed by families at home.

A **Zoom Training Session** was offered on September 10 to learn about the program with tips for teaching virtually. There were 14 participants from around the Diocese attending the session.

We currently have over 10 parishes using this program with more interested in joining, so another **Zoom Training Session will be held Thursday, October 22 at 7:30pm (ET)**. Come and see what it’s all about!

[Register here](#)



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Although CGS Atriums around the Diocese were closed for a time, there are some, like at Holy Trinity Parish in Yonkers, NY that reopened in September with a social distancing protocol.

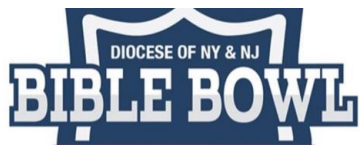
Due to Covid travel restrictions, the CGS Formation Training Level 1 Part B scheduled for October was postponed. However, our **Formation Leader, Shelley Finkler, will provide an online meeting in late October with our Diocesan Catechists** to touch base, answer questions, and discuss future training dates and regional locations in our Diocese for 2021.

New Facebook Page



www.facebook.com/nynjocaeducation

“Like” us and receive notification of upcoming events!



With hope, we look forward to the new year 2021 and are making plans for another **Bible Bowl Competition** (virtual or in-person, to be determined), possibly to be held in the Spring.

Many thanks to Danielle Geeza, Chair of the Department of Youth Ministry, for promoting our programs and events on Diocesan Youth Ministry social media, and for being a social media technical support when we've needed it!

A special thanks to Archbishop Michael, a teacher at heart and in practice, who works to ensure that all parishes are given the resources needed to come closer to Christ, especially during this year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and beyond!

In closing, I welcome anyone interested to join our Christian Education Department team to help bring these many projects to fruition for the benefit of our youth. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about these programs and upcoming events or to schedule a virtual meeting with your Church School teachers. We are here to help you keep moving forward! Glory to God for All Things!

With love in Christ,

Mat. Tamara Cowan
Chair, Dept. of Christian Education
Diocese of New York & New Jersey
tamarancowan@hotmail.com
www.facebook.com/nynjocaeducation