



ORTHODOX VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL - 2009

ovbs.america@gmail.com

Respected Principals and Teachers,

The Orthodox Vacation Bible School (OVBS) program has been a longstanding tradition of the American Diocese. It provides Sunday School students with an opportunity to learn more about the basic tenets of the Orthodox faith through participation in a fun and interactive program that can take place over a series of days. Your participation in the planning and execution of this program is not only a great service to the Church, but a wonderful way to enhance your own faith and knowledge of our Creator.

As the new OVBS director, I will depend on the help and support of all of you. I have inherited a wealth of resources and an already well-crafted curriculum. Since the foundation has been laid, it will provide my team with an opportunity to focus our efforts on sharpening and shaping the curriculum to meet the ever-changing needs of our Sunday School students. Special thanks go to the directors of previous years: Rev. Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese, Rev. Dn. George Mathew and Mrs. Omana Philip. I must also thank the countless number of Principals and Teachers who have selflessly volunteered their time, talent, and treasure to make the OVBS programs in previous years a grand success. I hope and pray that we will continue to work together to make this year's OVBS a success!

Theme:

Every year, the OVBS program in America chooses to coordinate their theme with that of the OVBS program back home in Kerala, India. I am proud to announce that the theme for this year's OVBS will be taken from Psalms 145:18:

"The Lord is near to all who call upon him."

Textbooks:

Following previous years, we have asked Principals and Teachers from around the Diocese to assist with writing our textbooks. This is certainly not an easy task, but a coordinated team effort can certainly make the task of writing an OVBS textbook an enjoyable and fruitful experience. Here is a breakdown of the different books and/or materials we will need completed:

1. [Beginner Class](#) (Age 5 and under)
2. [Primary Class](#) (Ages 6-8)
3. [Junior Class](#) (Ages 9-11)
4. [Intermediate Class](#) (Ages 12-14)
5. [Senior Class](#) (Ages 15-18)
6. [Arts/Crafts Guide](#)
7. [Quiz](#) (General Class)

The deadline for all textbook submissions is March 25th. If you have any interest in helping develop a textbook for this year's OVBS, please send an email to: ovbs.america@gmail.com and please write "Textbook" in the subject line.

Songs:

Theme related songs are a vital part of the OVBS experience. As in previous years, we provide individual parishes with an opportunity to submit songs for consideration of being included on the OVBS song compilation CD that is mailed out to parishes all over the world. We hope that every parish will make use of the opportunity to showcase the singing talents of their students. Please consider the following:

- a. Songs should be related to the theme. We will consider songs that do not relate to the theme under exceptional circumstances.
- b. Each church can provide **two** songs. One should be for children under the age of 12. The second song should be for children above the age of 12.
- c. Preferably the songs should be in English. Songs in other languages (i.e. Malayalam) will be allowed but must be theme related and easy enough for children to learn.
- d. Only songs of superior audio quality will be accepted. We encourage parishes to make use of professional equipment and techniques for recording.
- e. Background music is a must.
- f. Please provide scripts for the song.
- g. If songs are being used from another source, please provide the name and place where the song was found so we can avoid copyright infringement.
- h. Songs in .mp3 format is required.

The OVBS committee reserves the right to reject any song that does not meet the above criteria. We expect that there will be a large number of parishes making submissions, so the committee will be highly selective in their choices. I ask that all Principals please email the names of the songs that will be sung by Feb. 25th so we can be sure there are no conflicts with other parishes. **The deadline for final submissions will be April 1st.** All songs should be **emailed** to the director. Please include “song submission” in the subject line of your email. If you have any questions or submissions, please send an email to ovbs.america@gmail.com.

Some guidelines when recording....

1. Songs can be recorded using your instrument or a track
2. Find songs that have not been used in the past
3. Practice song couple of times before recording
4. Harmonize and use new singing techniques with the songs if possible.
5. Use Church microphone and amplifier – make use of the sound system available in your church.
6. Record song by using a musical instrument (connect your music instrument to the amplifier) or by using track of the song
7. Use a MP3 player if possible
8. Position the microphone evenly, so that one person’s voice does not stand out
9. Use as many Sunday School children as possible to get a good team effort
10. Listen carefully to your recording for any outside disturbances. Any disturbances present will probably result in your song not used on the CD.

Theme Picture:

The OVBS committee invites students from Sunday Schools across the country to participate in a drawing competition. The picture should be related to the theme for OVBS 2009. Here are some of the guidelines:

1. The pictures should be **hand drawn** and NOT computer generated on an 8.5"x11" paper.
2. Select the **ONE** best picture from the church and mail selected picture to the OVBS Director. Please make a color scan of the drawing before mailing in case the picture is lost.
3. The 1st prize picture will be used as the front cover of CD and text books.
4. The 2nd prize picture will be used as the back cover of CD and text books.
5. Some of the other pictures may be used for other purposes.

The OVBS committee will judge pictures based on the quality of drawing and how well it relates to the theme. **The deadline for all drawing submissions will be March 25th.** Please mail all submissions on or before March 25th to:

Dn. Gregory Varghese
OVBS Director
46 Dimond Avenue
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567

Any late submissions will be disqualified. If you have any questions, please send an email to ovbs.america@gmail.com.

Training Camps:

Training camps are conducted to help prepare each area on how to conduct the OVBS with the provided materials. If any region would like to conduct a camp for 2009, please send an email to ovbs.america@gmail.com. Please include "Training Camps" in the subject line of the email.

Dedicated Contacts:

Regional and Area Coordinators are responsible for disseminating and collecting information to and from individual parishes via the Principals. If you need any assistance please feel free to contact to your Regional/Area Coordinator. Please reference the Sunday School website for any contact information:
www.indianorthodoxsundayschool.org/

I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you. It is only by God's grace and guidance that we can make this years OVBS a fitting service to the Church. Your prayers, participation, help and support are much needed to make this year's OVBS a success. Please feel free to email or call me at the below contact information, if you have any questions or if you need any directions.

With prayers,

Dn. Gregory Varghese
OVBS Director
46 Dimond Avenue
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
Phone: 914.413.9200
Email: ovbs.america@gmail.com