



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ADDRESSING THE MIND OR THE HEART

by

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?  
IS IT PERHAPS THE MAIN MISSION OF THE PARISH?

## Why Religious Education?

**“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now **teach these truths** to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”**

*2 Timothy 2:2*

**Most people, when they hear of Religious Education, they think of Sunday School or Catechism for Adults who enter the Faith.**

**But, Religious Education should pervade the life of the Parish and address all the levels of knowledge and existence.**

# THE MAIN MISSION OF THE PARISH

## **The Great Commission of Christ for us after the Resurrection**

**"Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded to you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. Amen." (Matt. 28:19-20)**

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION-  
THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE PARISH AND THE CHURCH

- *The ultimate goal of the Parish is to lead its members into the Kingdom of God.*

**The Question we should be asking ourselves:**  
**Are we leading people to the Kingdom of God?**  
**And do they actually know that our goal is to lead**  
**them to God's Kingdom?**

# SALVATION IS THROUGH CHRIST



**Religious Education  
has to be  
Christocentric**

**Restoration of Humanity is accomplished in Christ  
Everything we do should lead people to Christ.**

# SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

**What have we accomplished so far?  
Evaluation of our Success or Failure.**

**Statistics show:**

**60% of all of our youth will eventually leave the  
faith**

**Shall we panic or do something else?**

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADDRESSING THE MIND-KNOWLEDGE

- **We teach a lot of facts - History and symbolism**
- **We teach knowledge of the Bible - Biblical stories**
- **We teach the Liturgical Calendar of the Church- Feasts and events.**
- **We teach the meaning of things - Icons and symbols**
- **We teach the content of the Divine Liturgy and the symbolism of movements**

**But, do we help people come to Christ?**

# ARE WE ALSO ADDRESSING THE HEART? ARE WE EXPERIENCING GOD?

- Are we helping people learn how to pray - communicate with God in a personal way?
- Are we helping people live the Liturgical Calendar of the Church and experience Grace?
- Are we helping people use the Holy Icons to enhance their experience of the presence of God
- Are we helping people be transformed by the Divine Liturgy from fallen men/women to saints?
- Are we helping people experience the real presence of God in their lives in a mystical way?
- Are we experiencing the JOY of God's presence while we are doing all these things personally and as a Parish?



# ARE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE BEING CHANGED BY THE CHURCH THEY ATTEND?

- Are we helping people learn humility and repentance?
- The Lord said: "*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God*" (Matthew 5.8) Are we helping people understand how to make their hearts pure.
- Are the sacraments a life-changing experience?
- Is Holy Week a life-changing experience?
- Are the existential questions of the people being answered by the Church?
- Is there real meaning for our people beyond this life, or is this just another social experience that will fade away with time?

# PRACTICAL THINGS TO DO

## Practical things to do beyond Sunday School and Bible Study

- Encourage participation in worship beyond the Divine Liturgy; The Orthros is an amazing learning and prayerful experience. Paraklesis to the Theotokos, Great Compline during Great Lent. Salutations to the Theotokos (The Akathist Hymn). Small Compline every evening throughout the year.
- Cultivate the knowledge of the Hymns of the Church-When the heart is engaged in music and poetry, the soul is engaged in Grace. People have to learn to sing and pray the hymns.
- Encourage the reading of Spiritual Books and bring people together to discuss the various aspects of the spiritual struggle.

# THE NEED FOR CHURCH SCHOOLS: IMMERSION IN ORTHODOX LIFE

## Creating Christians by Immersion

- **Schools**
- **Schools**
- **Schools**
- **<http://youtu.be/UnfUoTcMY5M>**
- **The Case for an Orthodox Classical School in Wichita**

OUR MISSION CONTINUES . . .

**You are in the world, but not of the world. . . .**

We continue  
to serve Christ . . .  
offering Salvation  
to the World . . .