

Grade Two

Circles of Faith



We Believe Curriculum
Teacher Manual

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Table of Contents

Unit 1 Circles of Faith

1. Circles of Faith
2. Everything Comes From God!
3. Jesus, Son
4. Follow Me
5. A Holy Guide
6. My Church Family
7. A World of Faith

Unit 2 Jesus & Me

1. Prayer is Talking With God
2. A Way of Life
3. Day and Night
4. Help!
5. David's Prayers For All Feelings
6. Thank You!

Unit 3 Being the Church

1. Many Become One
2. A Gift For Everyone
3. This Is My Body
4. God Gives Us Laws
5. We Make Choices
6. God Forgives Us
7. Jesus With Us

Unit 4 Celebrating Jesus: The Church Year

1. The Church Remembers & Celebrates
2. The Church Year
3. Christmas
4. Easter
5. Ascension
6. Pentecost
7. Transfiguration
8. Exaltation of the Holy Cross

A Few Important Words

Welcome to Second Grade! If you are new to teaching second graders, you will find your students curious, enthusiastic, full of energy and fun, and yet ready to listen and discover. As God's little ones, they express their faith in fresh and often inspiring ways. You will find that you'll learn as much from *them* as they will from *you*. But you have to be *listening*.

In order to have the most effective and productive year, please note the following:

- **Curriculum in General.** By definition, a curriculum is conservative, reflecting the attitudes of the community about which it is teaching. If the community remains undecided or has multiple answers to an important question, that will resonate in the curriculum. (A classic example is how to teach the Armenian Genocide in Sunday School: as a lesson to prompt forgiveness or justice or both?) The approach to Scripture, prayer, and worship will be simple, appropriate for second graders, and kept at a literal level. The world was created in 6 days and God rested on the seventh. In later years, students will learn that a 24-hour day might not necessarily have been what the poets of the Torah meant to emphasize.
- **This Curriculum.** As in Kindergarten and Grade One, Grade Two is also designed as separate newsletter lessons to be distributed one at a time. *You* keep all student envelopes, and give out single lessons each week. *Holiday-focused lessons should be taught on or near the holiday itself, not necessarily in the order they appear in the curriculum.*
IMPORTANT: Since the Exaltation of the Holy Cross occurs around the opening of Sunday School, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST LESSON, EVEN THOUGH IT APPEARS LAST IN THE ENVELOPE, followed then by the first lesson of Unit One.
- **Curriculum as Cookbook.** Any curriculum should serve as a *foundation* and cannot take into account your experience and style, your students' maturity or temperaments, your specific parish setting, or unfolding events in the world. Therefore, feel free to adapt – as you would a recipe in a cookbook - to add or replace activities, shorten or lengthen an exercise. Additional *content* needs to be approved by your superintendent who will consult with your pastor.
- **This Curriculum.** *We Believe Grade Two* consists of **four units**. **Unit One: *Circles of Faith*** explores the sophisticated concepts of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Church. **Unit Two: *Jesus and Me*** reviews prayer as the all-important path to knowing our Lord, whether at home or in church, in good times and bad, knowing that trust and thankfulness will prevail. **Unit Three: *Being the Church*** examines the idea of becoming together what we cannot be alone. Nourished with the forgiveness and love embodied in the Eucharist, Sunday extends into a week of Christ-centered living. **Unit Four: *Celebrating Jesus: The Church Year*** demonstrates that Jesus and all the events and people connected with his ongoing story are celebrated in the seasons of the Church. Children learn facts and meaning so that feast day traditions might become vehicles to deeper faith.
- **The Teacher Manual.** Teacher manuals are now (starting with curriculum released in 2012) exclusively online. Whether you choose to print them out at one time or lesson by lesson, the entire manual should be reviewed prior to the first class. In addition to weekly use in preparing your lesson, use the teacher manual as a reference book for the future; make notes in the margin (on hard-copy or computer) that can help when you go to teach the same session next year (or when your replacement does).
- **Be Prepared.** Read the entire student and teacher texts. Understand the key concepts and objectives and think of materials and other resources you might want to collect or have ready as the year unfolds. Mark on your calendar those lessons that call for special materials, volunteers, help from the pastor or attendance at church requiring earlier arrival or later dismissal. Make the necessary arrangements well in advance, including emailing parents with special instructions. Never be just one lesson ahead of your class. Be prepared so that you make the most effective use of your hour as possible. It may well be the only hour of the week that the children are thinking and learning about God. Here are just *a few* examples of what's required in the way of resources during the year beyond the usual arts and crafts supplies: **Unit One: 1. (which will be the**

second lesson of the year) a student photo, 3. Pictures of Coats of Arms, 4. A jigsaw puzzle, 6. Bird-shaped muron container from church, 7. A world map **Unit Two:** 1. Composition-style memo notepads, 2. Laminating sheets, *The Giving Tree* **Unit Three:** 1. Legos/building blocks, 2 Home blessing display items, 3. A tablecloth, 7. Etch-A-Sketch, battery-operated toys **Unit Four:** 3. Christmas cards, 4. An egg and onion skins, 5. Balloons, 6. Battery-operated fan.

- **Order of Lessons.** Teach any lessons that focus on a specific feast *on the Sunday closest to that feast day*. This will be particularly true of Unit IV which is entirely about feasts and will need to be spread out over the year. Adjust review exercises accordingly. The last lesson of that unit will need to be taught first. But it has been left in position in its unit.
- **The First Ten Minutes.** In those first moments of class time, don't wait for students to filter in to begin. Use the opportunity to talk to each student who arrives, asking about their week, how they're feeling, what's new in their lives, etc. Do begin as close to the designated start time of class as possible. You might develop an incentive program for those who arrive promptly, either sharing a special treat, or adding points towards an award. Sit at the table with the children and have a conversation.
- **Timing/Being Flexible.** Timing for each activity (or a few of them together) has been provided for you as a helpful planning tool. It assumes a prompt start to the hour so if you are generally starting late, you will need to accommodate accordingly. Be aware that every group differs and that you may occasionally need more or less time than indicated, depending on your style of teaching, your class, and any number of other variables. Be flexible. A skit might not be the best activity for your particularly shy class. Adjust as you go along.
- **Read or Teach.** To adjust for different reading capabilities and simply for a healthy variety, alternate how the reading is accomplished. Reading aloud can certainly be done occasionally. At other times, read to the class or "teach" the contents, pointing out important words or phrases which students can underline.
- **Prayer.** The opening prayer time always has a formal prayer. But be creative here, as well, so that children learn that prayer is their time to literally "speak to God." You may use this opportunity to have them contribute according to the theme of the day. Always end class with a prayer. Get children to be still, bow their heads, and, although a final prayer is almost always provided, you might decide to say something topical, perhaps reflecting a recent event. "Lord, help us keep the people of ____ warm and safe after the recent flood." Etc. You will not be reminded of these ideas in each lesson, so remember to pray creatively and purposefully.
- **Bible.** Make sure your classroom Bible reading – if any is done outside of the passages that appear in every lesson – is from an age-appropriate version. Speak with your superintendent, pastor, or the division of Christian Education at the Diocese for suggestions.
- **Music.** The curriculum includes several excerpts from our beautiful Armenian Church hymns. Please make use of the joy that comes from singing. If you don't enjoy singing yourself or feel inadequate to the task, get a cheerful, capable volunteer. Although only excerpts are included in the text, you may choose to have the class listen and sing along with the entire hymn and then just rehearse the line or two in their texts.
- **Handmade With Love.** Every class ends with a fun, lesson-related craft. Make a sample of each craft yourself, in advance, *before* you create it with your students. This way you can streamline the process and resolve any unanticipated problems. Be on top of supplies so you make fewer trips to the craft store and are prepared with both materials and any volunteer helpers, if necessary. If you're not craft-savvy, find a permanent volunteer to conduct this part of the class. Don't short-change students because of time or your own disinclination. Crafts are extremely effective learning tools – and the kids enjoy them!

- **For My Family.** The parent information at the end of each lesson is a way to focus parents on the heart of the lesson and how it might be extended and enriched through activities at home. With the increasingly secular lifestyles of our families, this could be a wonderful opportunity. Follow up occasionally by emailing parents to ask if they are reading this section and attempting any of the simple suggestions. Talk about this as well with students.
- **Review.** Always have earlier lessons handy to refer to and hold up. Work review into your lesson often. You might say: “Remember this lesson, when we had a great conversation about our grandparents?” (At which point, hold up the lesson and point to the pertinent picture.) Or, if your new lesson is on Jesus’ resurrection (Easter), you can point back to the story of Christmas.
- **Love Your Students.** Get to know and care about your students. Be guided by I Corinthians 8:1-3: *“All of us possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.”*

So...more than the curriculum, more than the to-do list, a genuine and heart-felt interest in your students will be the best example to them of what faith in action is all about. *This* is what builds up the body of Christ and opens up hearts to the work that only God can do.

NOTE: THE FIRST LESSON OF THE SECOND GRADE YEAR WILL BE UNIT FOUR, LESSON 8: The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (since this feast day falls in mid-September). Go to the final lesson of this manual, which has been kept in unit order even though it needs to come first in the curriculum. Make sure you distribute the proper lesson to children!

APPENDIX

Craft & Activity Templates

UNIT ONE

- Lesson One...I.D. Badge
- Lesson Two...Stand-up Cross
- Lesson Four...Follow Me Math Puzzle
- Lesson Five....Dove
- Lesson Seven... Reader's Theater: Stone Soup
- Lesson Seven... World Map

UNIT TWO

- Lesson One...Instructions for Prayer Journal
- Lesson Two...Stained Glass Prayer Window
- Lesson Three...Daniel in the Lion's Den Coloring Page
- Lesson Three...Daniel in the Lions' Den(Color by Number)
- Lesson Four...St. Mesrob Mashdotz' Prayer
- Lesson Five...Psalm Cube
- Lesson Six...Reader's Theater: The Giving Tree
- Lesson Six...*Jashagestzook* Place Mat prayer

UNIT THREE

- Lesson One...Front of Church
- Lesson One...Back of Church
- Lesson One...Holy Etchmiadzin
- Lesson Five...WWJD Bookmark
- Lesson Seven..Radiance
- Lesson Seven..Nushkhar

UNIT FOUR

- Lesson One...Flame and Presentation
- Lesson Two...Daghavar Wheel
- Lesson Two...Psalm 145
- Lesson Four...Eggs
- Lesson Five...Ascension Coloring Page
- Lesson Six.....Pentecost Pinwheel
- Lesson Seven..Transfiguration invitation
- Lesson Seven..Spiral Rosette
- Lesson Eight...Cross