



**REGULATIONS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
OF THE
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES AMERICA AND CANADA**

**PROMULGATED
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REGULATIONS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**In accordance with
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
IN AMERICA AND CANADA**

THE EPISCOPAL COUNCIL

1. The Episcopal Council shall appoint a National Director of Christian Education, who will work closely with each Diocesan Department of Education.
2. The duties of the Director - Referent are as follows:
 - a. Visitations and evaluations of parish church school programs, funded by the congregations;
 - b. To receive copies of priests reports on parish education, and the reports of the chairmen of the Diocesan Departments of Christian Education;
 - c. To submit reports for the meetings of the Episcopal Council, and to the Church Sabor on the state of Christian Education in the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada;
 - d. To arrange for all educational displays and work shops at the Church Sabor, in cooperation with the Diocesan Departments of Christian Education.
3. The Episcopal Council shall receive the reports of the referent and initiate co-ordinated programs to benefit the cause of Christian Education throughout Church.

4. The Episcopal Council shall appoint working committees from the members of the respective Diocesan Departments of Christian Education to study specific educational problems and to carry out coordinated educational programs.

5. The Episcopal Council shall appoint qualified persons to represent the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada at the Orthodox Christian Education Commission (OCEC), a commission of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas.

6. The duties of the representative(s) are:

- a. To attend the bi-annual Board of Trustees meetings of the OCEC;
- b. To defend the interests and represent accurately the needs of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada, and to see to it that these interests are reflected in the educational materials published by the OCEC;
- c. To report to the members of the Episcopal Council and the Referent - Director of Education on the meetings and the general activities of the OCEC.

THE CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY (SABOR)

1. The Clergy-Laity Assembly (Sabor) hears the report from the Referent - Director of Christian Education on the state of Christian Education in all the dioceses.

2. The Sabor shall provide for a workshop and display area on Christian Education. All clergy and delegates to the Sabor will attend the workshop on Christian Education, which will be prepared by the Director of Christian Education in cooperation with the Diocesan Departments of Christian Education.

3. The Sabor deliberates on proposals by the Sabor Education Committee dealing with financial and budgetary questions of the Church on the national level concerning Religious Education.

THE CENTRAL CHURCH COUNCIL

1. The Central Church Council, in accordance with Sabor decisions, funds the Director of Christian Education - Referent, both for expenses and an honorarium, in a sum commensurate with current living standards.

2. The Central Church Council shall fund co-operative educational programs of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada, in accordance with decisions of the Sabor.

3. The Council shall pay the travel expenses of the Serbian Church representative(s) to the meetings of the OCEC.

THE DIOCESAN BISHOP

1. The Diocesan Bishop, by virtue of his archpastoral office being the chief teacher of his flock is responsible to safeguard the teaching of the True Faith, and therefore has the primary and ultimate responsibility for all Christian Education in his diocese.

2. The Diocesan Bishop oversees the work and the progress of the Church School directly and through his representative, the parish priest, through the Director of Christian Education - Referent and any other organ he may establish for this purpose. The Bishop fulfills his teaching ministry in the following ways:

- a. Teaches and educates his flock by words, deeds and Archpastoral epistles;
- b. Organizes conferences and retreats for the clergy of the diocese for their theological and spiritual growth;
- c. Receives and examines annual reports submitted by the parish priest, to include the information as outlined in the section under Parish Priest (No.3);
- d. Prepares a summation of these reports and presents it to the August meeting of the Department of Christian Education;
- e. Approves, with the assistance of the Department of Christian Education, the educational budgets of each congregation, submitted to him by the parish priest;
- f. Appoints the teachers to each parish church school, upon the recommendation of the parish priest;
- g. Appoints a clergyman to be the General Director of the summer camping program, who will be responsible for the educational program and the staff. This General Director will report directly to the Bishop and the Department of Christian Education.
- h. Names qualified clergy and laymen to constitute a Department of Christian Education, and appoints the chairman and secretary.

3. The function of the Diocesan Department of Christian Education is as follows:

- a. To aid the Bishop in the formulation of programs for the academic year and the summer educational program;
- b. To plan and sponsor an Annual Teachers' Conference, teacher training courses, retreats and seminars for teachers, college students, teenagers or adults, and other educational beneficial programs for the teachers and faithful of the diocese.
- c. To assist the Bishop in evaluating and approving the annual budgets for each parish church school, to be submitted no later than August 15;
- d. To maintain actively the following committees: summer camping; curriculum review; teacher training; budget review; youth ministry; college student ministry; publications; adult education; theological education; public-relations and information; and any other committee as deemed necessary by the Bishop and/or the Department;
- e. To maintain current address lists of all teachers and church school personnel in the diocese to facilitate communication with the teachers from the Diocese;
- f. To meet at least once a year in entirety, in August, and the committees to meet as often as necessary to complete their appointed tasks.

4. The responsibilities of the Department chairman are as follows:

- a. To call and chair the annual meetings of the Department, and to examine reports from the various committees on their work;
- b. To keep the Bishop informed on all workings of the committees;
- c. To prepare an annual report, to be presented by him to the Diocesan assembly, with a copy being forwarded to the Director of Christian Education for the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada;
- d. To be an ex-officio member of each committee

5. The responsibilities of the Department secretary are as follows:

- a. To keep minutes of the meetings of the Department and distribute them to all members and the Bishop;
- b. To keep an orderly file of the minutes;
- c. To answer correspondence directed to the Department.

6. The Diocesan Bishop interviews all candidates for the priesthood, as well as candidates for theological study in the areas of Christian Education, liturgical music and other Church-related disciplines. The Bishop shall, grant his blessing for theological study to worthy candidates in the above areas.

THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

1. The Diocesan Council tenders decisions on requests for scholarship grants, stipends and loans submitted by approved candidates for theological study from diocesan funds earmarked for this purpose.
2. The Diocesan Council funds the programs of the Department of Christian Education.

THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

1. The agenda of the annual Diocesan Assembly shall include a Christian Education workshop and the viewing of a Christian Education display, both to be prepared and offered by the Department of Christian Education. The workshop shall be offered for all the delegates and clergy.
2. The Diocesan Assembly shall hear the report of the Chairman of the Department of Christian Education on the activities of the Department and a review of Christian Education throughout the diocese for the past year.

THE PARISH PRIEST

1. The priest is the representative of the Bishop, the Icon of Christ, and the leader of the worshipping community and has primary responsibility for the apostolic mission of teaching in the local community.

2. The parish priest shall be the director of all religious teaching in the parish, which includes the organization and functioning of the Christian Education (church school) program, to include the following:
 - a. A church school program for the youth of the parish (pre-school through high school) shall be organized to function from September to the end of the regular school year;
 - b. The priest recommends to the Bishop persons to be appointed for the teaching and administrative staff of the parish church school; The priest's recommendation shall reflect his evaluation of the candidates for teachers and staff on the basis of their moral, educational and spiritual qualifications; program, and are governed by the same precepts; budget for all the needs of the entire parish educational program. The budget shall be submitted to the Diocesan bishop and the Department of Christian Education for approval prior to August 15, in time for the beginning of the school year, and shall be funded by the Church-School Congregation.
 - e. The priest shall call and chair regularly monthly meetings of the church school teachers and staff, the proceedings of which are found under the section entitled "Parish Church School Regulations."
 - f. The priest shall meet with the teachers on an individual basis to discuss, answer questions on, and give assistance with their lesson plans, and to approve the final lesson plans;
 - g. The priest shall organize and supervise all summer church school programs;
 - h. The priest shall organize, supervise and teach in the parish adult education program.

3. The parish priest shall submit an annual report to the Bishop at the end of each church school year, reporting the work and progress of the church, to include the following information:
 - a. Total number of children registered at the beginning of the school year;
 - b. Total number of children completing the school year;
 - c. Copies of the reports submitted to the priest by each church school teacher on the work and progress of his/her class;
 - d. Copies of the minutes of each monthly church school staff meeting;
 - e. The priest's evaluation of the effectiveness of each church school teacher, including his/her ability to work with the church school texts and grasp the materials provided;
 - f. The priest's summary of all the above.

4. Other educational responsibilities of the parish priest include:
 - a. Actively seeking and encouraging candidates for the priesthood, as well as candidates for theological study in the areas of Christian Education, Liturgical Music and other church-related disciplines.

- b. Involving himself and his teaching and administrative staff in all the Diocesan Christian Education programs, as well as any Pan-Orthodox programs organized on a local/regional level.
- c. Promoting the summer Diocesan camping program.

PARISH CHURCH SCHOOL REGULATIONS

1. The parish is the local worshipping community of the people of God, the manifestation of the Church, the Body of Christ, whose Head is our Lord Himself. The parish is directly under the spiritual omophor of the canonical Diocesan Serbian Orthodox Bishop, "who rightly defines the Word of (Christ's) Truth," who sends as his representative to the parish the local parish priest. As the local worshipping community, headed by the Bishop's representative, the parish priest, the parish has as one of its main functions the proclamation of the 'Good News' to first its own members, and also to the entire community at large. This shall be manifested by the parish community through their adherence to the teaching of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church, through their exemplary moral and spiritual lives, through their rejection of heresies and all activities contrary to the teachings of the Church, through their regular and active participation in the divine services and Holy Sacraments of the Church, and through their sponsorship of an organized and competent religious education program for the parish community.
2. The worship of the Orthodox Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit: and led by the priest, reflects most adequately and perfectly through its readings, hymnography and sacramental grace the Gospel of Christ and the dogmatic Tradition of the Church. It is the basic and most indispensable element in the parish's Christian Education program. Therefore all other Christian Education activities must be scheduled at a time other than during the worship services of the Church.
3. The church school (Christian Education) program of each parish is the vehicle through which the priest, in his apostolic mission, and the congregation, through its sponsorship of the programs, present the formal teachings of the Orthodox Church in a systematic fashion to the parish community.
4. The church school program for the youth of the parish (pre-school through high school) shall be organized to function from September to the end of the regular school year.
5. The teaching and administrative staff of the church school shall be recommended by the parish priest and appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
6. The teaching materials shall be based exclusively on materials which have been produced or approved for use by the Episcopal Council, the Diocesan Bishop and the Department of Christian Education of the diocese.
7. The priest shall supervise the teaching in the church school program; he shall sit in on the various classes offered and shall maintain regular contact with the students through teaching, praying and participating in the overall church school program.

8. The church school year shall begin and end with special services for the Beginning of Instruction, and the Closing of the Church School Year, with the pupils, the teaching and administrative staff and the parish community praying together for divine guidance in study.

9. The priest shall call and chair monthly meetings of church school teachers and staff, at which all of the teachers and staff shall be present. The agenda should include:

- a. Opening prayer;
- b. A segment of time devoted to teacher training either in the form of a question-answer period, or an appropriate presentation on the teachings of the Church or methodology for the edification of the teaching and administrative staff;
- c. A segment of time devoted to teacher discussion of problems in the classroom of a teaching or disciplinary nature of pupil attendance;
- d. A segment of time devoted to the teachers sharing their lesson plans for the coming month with the other teachers; so that the whole school may be kept abreast of the activities of each class;
- e. A segment of time devoted to the planning of special church school activities and preparing a church school calendar, which may be published for the edification of the parish. Special activities may include the St. Sava Day Program, special Lenten presentations for the parish, church school outings, Open House for the parents and parish and other activities;
- f. The announcing of diocesan educational conferences and training programs, as well as Pan-Orthodox teachers programs and the registering of the teaching and administrative personnel for their participation;
- g. A segment of time, when applicable, to assist the priest in planning and executing the summer church school programs, including the promoting of the diocesan summer camp;
- h. A segment of time to assist the priest in planning and executing the adult education program;
- i. Any other pertinent topics which the priest, or the teaching and administrative staff with the approval of the priest, deem necessary to discuss.

10. The cultural, language and youth programs organized, supported and affiliated with the parish and church school congregation (where applicable) and, an integral part of the church school program, and as such are under the direct supervision of the parish priest. Teachers of these programs shall be appointed in the same manner as the other church school teachers, and they are required to attend the monthly church school meetings as stated above. The time of the cultural and language programs will neither conflict with the worship services of the church, nor with the regular church school program. **All students of the cultural and language programs must participate in the regularly scheduled church school program.**

11. All church school pupils and teachers shall attend the worship services of the Church, and shall regularly participate in the holy sacraments.

12. The duties of the church school teacher are as follows:

- a. To be a constant example to the students of Christian life, of participation in the church services and in the sacramental life;
- b. To attend all classes and monthly meetings
- c. To promote order and discipline in the school and church;
- d. To prepare lesson plans with the aid and supervision of the priest and to present them monthly to the teaching staff;
- e. To follow the lesson plans, and immediately after each class to write the evaluation section on effectiveness;
- f. To participate in teachers' conferences and training programs;
- g. To submit a written report to the parish priest at the end of the school year on the work and progress of the class, including attendance, field trips, activities and other learning related project, and comments on the teaching material used; and to assist the priest in the preparation of his annual report to the Diocesan Bishop on the state of the church school.

**Official
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These Regulations on Religious Education were promulgated and approved in accordance with the Constitution of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada by the Bishop's Council.