

Best Practices and Activities
In Implementing the
Eparchial 25 Year Pastoral Plan

PILLAR 1: TO KNOW GOD (The Word of God and Catechesis)

Daily Scripture (Bible) Readings (Lectio Divina)

To support the faithful in their prayer life, the reading of the bible passages assigned to each day of the religious calendar is encouraged. This daily reading of scripture enables us to “let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us,” as noted in the Carmelite website that describes the Lectio Divina.

Plan and execution:

- The daily readings for the following week are published in the parish bulletin. This information is available from a number of sources, including the Eparchy website under the heading “[Liturgical Propers](#)”. Many parish calendars or calendars available from the Basilian Press also reference these daily readings.
- Parishes may also consider printing the readings for the following week in the bulletin, or having these available for members who wish to take them home.
- Daily readings will be made available on the Eparchy website, for those who would like to access the readings on electronic devices. The Eparchy, in association with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, is currently developing this resource.
- The pastor may wish to have a homily on the role of reading scripture in our daily prayer life. Alternatively, as part of the homily or as a small entry in the bulletin, he may make reference to the readings coming during the week and how they fit with the Sunday Gospel.
- The Eparchy is also considering creating a webinar hosted by one of the priests from the Eparchy to discuss this topic (suggested length is five minutes).
- To support parish and Pastor efforts, the attached resource “Liturgical Year” has material that may be useful to include in the bulletin to explain various aspects of the Liturgical

Year and how the readings fit into that cycle. Parishes may use excerpts from this document as a “Did you know?” column (e.g., “What are the fasts in our faith tradition?”).

Scripture (Bible) Study in Parishes

Structured study of scripture is an important part of evangelization. We need to understand our faith before we can bring it to others. Parishes are encouraged to organize such groups.

Plan and execution:

- There are a number of resources available consisting of good technical quality video presentations supported by an instructors notes/facilitators manual and student manual. The Eparchy offers a catechetical training course for those who would like to lead a group. Depending on the size of the group, they can meet in participants’ homes or at some appropriate parish location. The “hardware” requirements are common and there are a number of options available. Many parishes, both eastern and western, have these programs and the cost of purchasing a program is very reasonable. Programs can be selected that fit into the time period available (i.e., six weeks, ten weeks, fourteen weeks, etc.)
- Have an individual or the Pastor invite members to a bible study evening. Arrange for simple refreshments (coffee, tea, sweets). Use a program that can be presented in a four-to five-week period, or break the large program into segments. The smaller the commitment, the more likely you are to attract participants. It is helpful to have the Pastor attend even if he is not the facilitator, as this adds legitimacy to the program, and he will be able to add depth to the material/information presented.
- Parishes with a library of bible study resources, especially video programs, may want to make them available to be taken out by parishioners for a specified period. The program should include the video and student or instructor notes, to provide background to the video.
- Newman College is presenting online learning courses related to general Catholic topics and those specifically relating to the Ukrainian Catholic tradition. Announcements of these programs should appear in the Eparchial and parish bulletins. This is an alternative to the classroom type of bible study.

Activity Sheets in Bulletin and Online (children and adult)

Activity sheets related to feasts and other religious themes are made available on a regular basis to encourage parents or grandparents to interact with their children or grandchildren in a fun way, and talk about God, feasts and other events in our tradition or from Scripture. These materials may be incorporated into the bulletin or as a separate handout.

Activity sheets will consist of various activities for children and also provide teachable opportunities for adults. We make learning fun for the whole family and contribute to developing the vibrant families that are a goal in the Eparchy's 25-Year Plan.

Plan and execution:

- Resources may be requested from the Eparchy office (upon request) and are also available on various websites.
- The Eparchy website, as a work in progress, will include resources for parishes or parishioners to access. In the interim, these materials may be sent, upon request, to pastors and/or pastoral councils responsible for education or communications.
- Parishes that create such documents are encouraged to share them with the Eparchy, so that they may be made available to other parishes.
- Parishes are encouraged to provide such activity materials on major feast days, when there is typically a larger attendance and more families visiting. This provides an easy topic about which to begin talking to our children and grandchildren, and providing the spiritual and Church tradition context.
- This activity fits into the larger Eparchy effort to transfer various catechetical materials into interactive electronic resources.

“Did you know?”

This is a short presentation on a topic related to the Divine Liturgy, that addresses what we do, why, how, when, and by whom it is done. There are a many topics. The intention is to present a two- to three-minute teaching opportunity before each Liturgy. Over time, this will educate parish members in the theological context of the Liturgy. Alternatively, the Eparchy can create make a weekly topic and short discussion (200 words or less) available on the website for use by pastors or for bulletin inclusion.

Plan and execution:

- Before, or when appropriate, during the Divine Liturgy, the pastor takes two to three minutes to explain something that occurs or is about to occur in the Liturgy.