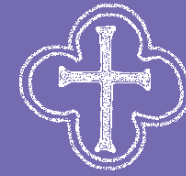




**P**arents: in preparing your children for living in the world, have you taken care to plant in their hearts faith and the fear of God which will be their guides in the future? Pray to the Lord that He protect their hearts from the tares that the enemy sows among the wheat.

SAINT MACARIUS OF OPTINA — †1860



## Table of Contents

Gratitude..... xi

### The Bigger Picture

A General Overview..... 1

The Problem and the Solution ♦ Another Homeland ♦ Instilling Our Spiritual Inheritance ♦ They Belong to God ♦ Admonitions from Saint John Chrysostom

### Marriage and New Beginnings

Choosing the Path of Marriage.....29

God's Gift of Marriage ♦ On Finding One's Path in Life ♦ Purity, Virginity and Chastity ♦ Marry Your Best Friend ♦ Wait to Date ♦ Chaperone! ♦ Marry for the Right Reason ♦ Wait for the Wedding ♦ Why Choose an Orthodox Spouse ♦ Marrying within the Church ♦ If I Could Change One Thing ♦ It Is Good to Marry While Young ♦ How to Treat Your Fiancée ♦ The Wedding Dress ♦ Advice to a New Bride ♦ The Family Name ♦ One Name ♦ Marriage Is a Mystery ♦ Marriage: The Great Sacrament ♦ Joy in Marriage ♦ Happiness in Marriage ♦ Abstinence in Marriage ♦ Carrying Your Cross in Marriage ♦ Irritability in Marriage ♦ Be of One Mind ♦ Quarreling ♦ If Divorce is the Only Way

## *A New Family Begins*.....67

Pregnant Mothers ♦ Within the Womb ♦ While with Child ♦ Infant Blessing ♦ Unique Names ♦ Forty Days ♦ How to Choose a Godparent ♦ Nap Time ♦ Parental Intervention ♦ Large Families ♦ Many Children as a Witness ♦ Contraceptives and Infertility ♦ Birth Control ♦ Trust in the Lord ♦ God Provides ♦ The Feminists' Big Lie and Those It Harmed ♦ The Error of Malthusianism ♦ Having Children in Today's World ♦ Infertility ♦ God's Will for Your Family ♦ Adoption ♦ Prayers for Your Adopted Child

## *Painful Losses*..... 79

Finding Peace After Miscarriage ♦ Prayer Following Miscarriage ♦ Call Your Priest for Prayers ♦ What to Say ♦ What Not to Say ♦ Where Is God's Love in the Death of a Child ♦ They Belong to God ♦ Angels ♦ Surrendering to God ♦ Afflictions Draw Us to God ♦ When Trials Come

# Raising Our Children

## *Early Training*..... 85

The Upbringing of Children ♦ Teach Them the Fear of God ♦ When Should Training Begin? ♦ Water the Tree ♦ Young Children in the Orthodox Church ♦ Helping Our Little Ones ♦ Orthodox Duties of Parents and Children ♦ Take Care What You Sow ♦ Nourishing Your Child ♦ Nurturing Your Children ♦ Vigilance ♦ Discipline and Obedience ♦ Obedience Before the Fifth Year ♦ Obedience Leads to Happiness ♦ Teach Children the Proper Way ♦ Our Children and Work ♦ Polite Conversation ♦ Choosing Our Words ♦ Respect for Parents ♦ Just Like Colts ♦ Scolding Children ♦ When Our Children Make Mistakes ♦ Correcting with Love ♦ The Ten Best Ways to Destroy Your Children

## *Fatherhood*..... 121

Being the Spiritual Leader ♦ Thoughts for the Head of the Family ♦ After a Tough Day at Work ♦ Christ Will Hold the Father Accountable ♦ Teaching Self-Restraint ♦ As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten ♦ A True Father ♦ A Father's View of Corporal Punishment ♦ Hierarchical Encouragement ♦ Excerpts from Family Life ♦ The Truth about Men and the Church ♦ Church Attendance of Men ♦ A Dad's List

## *Day Care and Early Education*..... 129

Day Care Deception ♦ I Want My Mommy! ♦ Dual-Working Parents ♦ God Honors Our Sacrifices ♦ Discipline at Day School ♦ Be Prepared ♦ Divorced or Widowed ♦ The Hand that Rocks the Cradle

## *Education of Youth*..... 133

Education is a Holy Work ♦ Education by Example ♦ Our Responsibility ♦ The Purpose of Education ♦ Anxiety Dissolves With Faith ♦ In the Image of God ♦ Educating Our Children ♦ Spiritual Reading ♦ Time and Money ♦ One Choice ♦ Know the Saints ♦ Oratorical Festivals ♦ CrossRoad Summer Institute ♦ Choose Schooling Options Carefully ♦ Different Children, Different Needs ♦ Homeschool Versus Public School ♦ Active Education ♦ Weekday Service Advantages

# In the House of the Lord

## *Coming to Church*..... 143

What Did We Do on Sunday Mornings Before Church? ♦ Let Us Be Attentive ♦ It's Okay to Help ♦ Discussing the Gospel ♦ Staying Focused ♦ My Son's House ♦ Preparing Ahead for Church ♦ When Our Children Have Challenges ♦ The Disabled in Our Parish Life ♦ Special Needs ♦ What Worked for Us ♦ Routines Reward ♦ Immersion ♦ Parish Family ♦ Parish Life ♦ The Job of the Parish ♦ Tradition Transitions ♦ The Simple Things ♦ Just Five Minutes ♦ The Virtue of Punctuality ♦ Matins ♦ Learn the Troparion and Kontakion of the Feasts ♦ Feast Days and Name Days ♦ Pascha! ♦ Sunday Activities ♦ How We Can Help Our Priests Help Us ♦ Raising Children "In" the Church ♦ The Challenges of Orthodox Youth Ministry ♦ Fill Your Child with Christ ♦ Our Parents' Wisdom

## *The Spiritual Father*..... 163

Disaster of Self-Direction ♦ Agree before Marriage ♦ Family Unity in Mutual Confessors ♦ A Simple Priest May Suffice ♦ Our Spiritual Father ♦ The Role of a Spiritual Father ♦ Paving the Way for Holy Confession ♦ A "Must Read" ♦ A Child's First Confession ♦ I'm Sorry ♦ Daily Forgiveness ♦ Keeping Notes ♦ At What Age Should They Confess?

*A Prayerful Home* .....167

What Makes a Home ♦ The Home Church ♦ House Blessings  
 ♦ Bless Our Home ♦ Prayer Corner ♦ Icons at Home ♦ Silent  
 Lessons ♦ All Things Beautiful ♦ Housework Sanctified ♦ Spiritual  
 Comfort in the Home ♦ Books at Home ♦ Beginning to Pray ♦  
 Let Love Reign in Your Home ♦ Prayer Instructions for Children ♦  
 Pray Always ♦ Sanctity in Our Homes ♦ Looking Inward ♦ Prayer  
 Is a Habit ♦ Pray All Day ♦ Before Breakfast ♦ God Accepts  
 Whatever We Can Give ♦ Keeping the Prayer ♦ Moments with  
 God ♦ Quiet Time ♦ To Rejoice Is a Command Not a Choice ♦  
 Cheerfulness ♦ Call Upon the Saints ♦ Help From Saint John ♦  
 A Plethora of Saints

*Food, Fasting, Alms and Beyond*..... 181

Fast and Pray; then Trust in the Lord ♦ How to Teach Children  
 to Fast ♦ That's Just What We Do ♦ On Parish Life and Fasting ♦  
 Prepare Them for Difficult Days ♦ Fasting with Joy ♦ Attention  
 Span and Snacks ♦ So What Do We Eat (or Not) During Lent?  
 ♦ Sweet Tooth ♦ Blessed Meals ♦ Saint John of Monemvasia ♦  
 Wisdom from the Table ♦ Table as Teacher ♦ Practically Speaking  
 ♦ Waste Not ♦ About Parish Cooking ♦ A Note on Halloween  
 ♦ Giving Alms ♦ Giving Our Time ♦ Let the Children Choose ♦  
 Street People ♦ Planned Giving ♦ Travel Tips from Our Friends ♦  
 Expanding Our Horizons ♦ Visiting Other Parishes ♦ Monasteries  
 ♦ Fear of Monasteries

*Guarding Against the Intruders* .....197

Cocooning Children Is Okay ♦ Seedlings ♦ In the Ears, in the Soul  
 ♦ Good Literature ♦ Music ♦ Balanced Teachings ♦ The Biggest  
 Mistake ♦ Television ♦ Spiritual Television ♦ Outside Air ♦ Little  
 Monsters ♦ Cut Your Cable ♦ Commercial Game ♦ But We Paid  
 for It! ♦ Moderation ♦ Exhausted? ♦ Prophecy ♦ Television and  
 Antichrist ♦ Internet Hints ♦ Internet, Cell Phones, Games ♦ Using  
 Cell Phones to Our Advantage ♦ Computer Games and Xbox ♦  
 Family Gate Keeper ♦ Parental Internet Time ♦ Internet and  
 Pornography ♦ Adult Peer Pressure

*Adolescence and Growing Up**Building Relationships* .....211

Souls in Motion: The Spiritual Life of Teenagers ♦ Busy, Busy, Busy  
 ♦ Need to Know More? ♦ Speak the Truth ♦ Teaching Moments  
 ♦ Age-appropriate Topics ♦ Tell Them ♦ Tendencies of Youth ♦  
 Doing Too Much? ♦ Trust in God ♦ Facing Challenges

*Instilling Modesty* .....229

Why Modesty? ♦ Modesty and Purity ♦ PVC ♦ On Virginity ♦ Purity  
 and the Media ♦ Speak and Act Modestly ♦ Practically Speaking  
 ♦ First Things First ♦ Modesty from the Inside Out ♦ Women: Teach  
 Your Daughters ♦ Lipstick ♦ The Elder's Wisdom on Fashion ♦  
 Bowing Down to Fashion ♦ Parental Rights in Choice of Clothing  
 ♦ Current Fashions ♦ Tattoos, and Dressing for Church ♦ Piercings

*Dating and Sexual Experimentation* .....237

Sexual Relations ♦ Sleep-Overs ♦ No Dating ♦ Good or Bad  
 Intentions ♦ Just Don't Look ♦ Soul Wounds ♦ Pre-marital Relations?  
 ♦ Passions ♦ Personal Experience ♦ Caveat ♦ Autoeroticism ♦  
 Reader, Beware ♦ No Privacy for Minors ♦ Failing Abstinence ♦  
 Growing Up Without Guidance ♦ "From My Mother's Womb, Thou  
 Art My God" ♦ Pick a Child ♦ Repentance ♦ Abortion ♦ Abusing  
 the Gift of God ♦ Warning ♦ Homosexuality

*Drug Awareness* ..... 259

Death-dealing Drugs ♦ OCCHY ♦ Digital Drugs ♦ ADHD Alert  
 ♦ Watch for New Drugs ♦ More Safety Hazards ♦ Inform Your  
 Children ♦ Drugs Open Your Soul to the Demons ♦ The Holy  
 Martyr Ephraim the New of Nea Makri ♦ More on Saint Ephraim  
 ♦ Raves ♦ Psychological Difficulties ♦ Mary's Story ♦ A Salvific  
 Word for Repentance After a Fall ♦ Praying Them Back

## So, They're Leaving Home

Off to College .....275

The Job of a Teen ♦ The Job of the Parent of a Teen ♦ Packing for College ♦ OCF

Final Thoughts..... 277

## Appendix

A Few Good Books and Resources..... 278

Inspirational Families.....282-283

About the Publisher ..... 284



## Gratitude

This project encompasses a subject whose breadth and depth has no boundaries. While there is abundant material on raising children, there are few books which specifically focus on Orthodox Christian parenting. Our vision was to create a book that Orthodox Christian parents would be able to read, little by little, even at the end of a full day.

In the spring of 2008 we began collecting material from our Orthodox friends: parents who were “in the trenches” of child raising, as well as those whose children had become adults. We also looked to our priests and their wives for contributions; and, of course, we could not be Orthodox without Scripture and writings from our holy Fathers. Our gratitude goes to each contributor.

In offering this collection, we make note that as Orthodox Christians we should have an experienced spiritual guide to help us in raising our families in the faith. Choose wisely; and perhaps discuss these ideas with your priest or spiritual father, as he will know what is best for your individual family. Remember, balance and consistency are the most important aspects of parenting.

So, dear reader, we offer the fruits of these labors with love. Read the book as time allows—from beginning to end, or just pick it up and read what catches your eye, without fear of drowning; yes, even starting from the back, as have some of our favorite test readers. Take what you like, dear reader, and leave the rest perhaps for another day,