

# MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

## DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

### SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Fr. Zachariah Diju Skariah

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**May 1, 2013**

Respected Coordinators, Principals and Teachers,

As you know, there have been many changes in the leadership of the various ministries of our diocese this past year. Organizationally, His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius Metropolitan brought the Orthodox Vacation Bible School (OVBS) program under the Sunday School administration. This transition has resulted in a period of administrative adjustment but as summer approaches, we would like to update you regarding OVBS preparations.

As in years past, we are coordinating our efforts with the Sunday School and OVBS leadership of the Northeast Diocese. A number of volunteers from both Dioceses are developing the curriculum, texts, activities, and music for this year's OVBS. First drafts for each of the groups have been submitted for review and are being edited. **The materials are on track to be finalized and made available online by the end of this month.**

Along with the organizational and administrative changes, the OVBS program itself is in a period of transition. In order to continue the tireless efforts of our predecessors for the development of the OVBS, we have reviewed the program and are taking certain steps towards furthering the ministry. Over the next two years we hope to implement a new structure and way of conducting OVBS to maximize the efficacy of the program for our children and the effectiveness of the efforts of our volunteers. This year, we hope to witness the implementation of a set structured schedule for all participating OVBS communities. At the same time, we are also emphasizing a greater level of autonomy for your local OVBS to incorporate lessons, activities, crafts, and music that is the most appropriate for your individual community. We request your patience, trust and cooperation as we move forward with these changes. We will be following up soon in order to highlight the specific changes that we plan to implement this year.

This year's theme is: "**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up**" (James 4:10).

Training camps will once again be offered upon request. In addition, we will utilize online resources for OVBS training as well. At any time, we encourage anyone with questions, concerns, or suggestions to contact us directly.

We pray that God continues to bless this ministry and all the coordinators, teachers, volunteers and children involved in its efforts. Please continue to pray for everyone involved in OVBS and for your local community's leaders and volunteers as well. We look forward to the opportunity that God has given us to work with you in His ministry.

Yours in His service,

Fr. Zachariah Diju Skariah - Director

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