

A decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of small, stylized icons of people, possibly representing a church community, surrounds the text on all four sides.

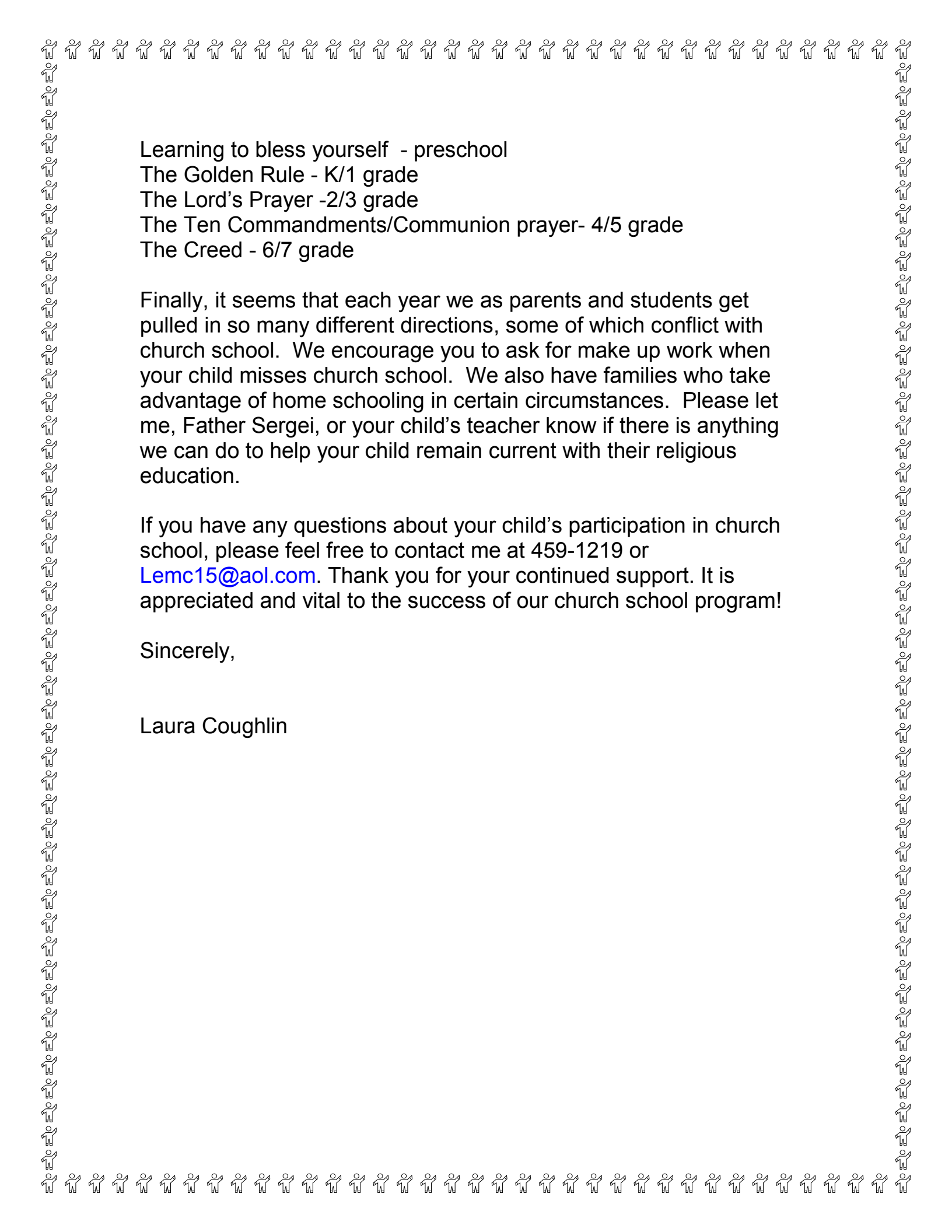
September 7, 2008

Dear Church School Families,

Welcome Back! I hope that you all had a wonderful summer and that everyone is rested, refreshed, and ready for a new year of church school. Each year I like to work around a theme for our school year. Last year in church school, we focused on our community connections with our theme of “My Orthodox Family.” This year, we will continue to build relationships within our school and parish community by getting to know each of our children better. Each week we will designate a “Special Person of the Week”, who will be featured on the Bulletin Board that welcomes you into the Church Hall. Every student will have a turn to be the “Special Person”. We will also include some special people who are part of our “extended family”. For example, the “Special Person” for our opening day is the Most Holy Theotokos, whose birthday is commemorated on September 8th. We will learn more about her and honor her with a “birthday celebration” of sorts. More information about the “Special Person of the Week” is included in a separate note.

As in years past, Father Sergei will greet the children at 9:30 in church for a fifteen to twenty minute discussion. Father often uses the icons of the major feast days as a springboard for instruction. We will continue to list in italics the major feast days on the church school calendar that your child will be receiving. Your continued reinforcement of these feast days at home will also help the children understand their significance. Following Father’s time with the children, we will proceed on downstairs to the church hall for instruction/ activities and return upstairs to join in The Divine Liturgy after the sermon.

We would also like your continued support in helping your children learn some of the major prayers. We see a good deal of growth as the children recite these during the Divine Liturgy. These prayers will be reinforced during church school lessons as well. The “general guidelines” we previously established for learning these prayers are as follows:

A decorative border of small, repeating icons of people with their arms raised, surrounding the text.

Learning to bless yourself - preschool
The Golden Rule - K/1 grade
The Lord's Prayer -2/3 grade
The Ten Commandments/Communion prayer- 4/5 grade
The Creed - 6/7 grade

Finally, it seems that each year we as parents and students get pulled in so many different directions, some of which conflict with church school. We encourage you to ask for make up work when your child misses church school. We also have families who take advantage of home schooling in certain circumstances. Please let me, Father Sergei, or your child's teacher know if there is anything we can do to help your child remain current with their religious education.

If you have any questions about your child's participation in church school, please feel free to contact me at 459-1219 or Lemc15@aol.com. Thank you for your continued support. It is appreciated and vital to the success of our church school program!

Sincerely,

Laura Coughlin