



Saint Emmelia Ministries

Orthodox Christian Homeschooling

*Inspire, equip, unite, and educate
Orthodox Christian Homeschool families*



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Dear Brothers,

Considering that homeschooling has nearly doubled in the US since 2020, the importance of supporting homeschool families cannot be stressed enough. I would like to share the following information, compiled from the thoughts of homeschooling parents, so that you can help guide and advise any homeschooling families in your parishes. I am grateful to you for your work. Please visit <https://saintemmelia.com> to view our wide range of resources.

+Fr. Noah Bushelli, Director - Saint Emmelia Ministries/Chair - Department of Homeschooling

What Homeschool Families Want Their Priests to Know

about shepherding & supporting them

1. ***What homeschooling is and isn't.*** There are [many reasons](#) to homeschool, and each family has a different reason—or combination of reasons—for homeschooling. There are also many different ways to homeschool, from “traditional” homeschooling to using online classes to being part of a hybrid school. Taking time to talk to homeschool families about why they’ve made this decision and how they homeschool—essentially, caring—is a beautiful gift you can give them.
2. ***That homeschooling can be really lonely.*** If you have a parish with many homeschool families, you are blessed! In most places, homeschool families are in the vast minority—and finding other *Orthodox* homeschool families is even harder! You can help homeschool families by connecting them with the Saint Emmelia Spiritual Advisor for your diocese, or with other homeschool families you might know. Most of all, **you can help with loneliness by encouraging them to [start a parish co-op!](#)**
3. ***That homeschooling can be hard on marriages.*** Homeschooling requires a lot of sacrifice (perhaps most significantly a second income). It also takes a lot of investment and intentionality. These sacrifices and investment can put strain on marriages. Homeschool parents may, more than the average couple, need to come to you for advice and encouragement.
4. ***That homeschooling is hard work.*** Parents have to plan curriculum, teach, and be an administrator—all on top of being a parent! Opportunities to be involved at church without additional expectations because they’re “just at home” is a blessing. You can support families by sharing resources: online education providers (St. Athanasius, CLRC, St. Raphael School), priests or other mentors, or information about conferences and other opportunities.
5. ***That homeschool kids need mentors.*** As a priest, you know how important relationships with the children in your parish are. Often, homeschool kids don’t have the opportunities for mentor

relationships that they might be able to get in a brick-and-mortar school setting. Being available not just for confession but for conversations will be so impactful to many kids, especially teens.

6. ***That many people are hostile to homeschooling.*** There are many false stereotypes about homeschool families: children are awkward and unsociable, they cannot succeed after high school; parents indoctrinate and brainwash their children, they are abusive. These stereotypes can make homeschool families feel defensive and outcast. Families will be grateful for encouragement and understanding. Being balanced in how you speak about education can go a long way to making homeschool families feel understood. You may also want to learn about legal aspects of homeschooling to further support families.