

Denomination	EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH (ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH)
Statistics	With 200 million worldwide, the Orthodox Church represents one of the three major branches of Christianity (others being Roman Catholic & Protestant). There are about 4 million in the US.
History	Eastern Orthodox Churches trace their beginning to the establishment of the Christian church on the day of Pentecost. They separated from the western Latin Church in AD 1054.
Polity/Governance	Episcopal. However they do not have a single hierarchal institution, rather, there are dozens of national bodies which worship in their native language (such as: African Orthodox, Albanian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, etc...).
Authority	The Orthodox claim that the Scriptures and Apostolic Tradition, especially as recorded in the writings of the Church Fathers, as their authority. The canon of Scripture used by the Orthodox contains the 66 books of the Protestant Bible, plus 10 additional books that are in the Greek Septuagint. The Orthodox contend that since the canon of Scripture was created by the church, the entire body of believers, that the church has the sole authority to interpret the Bible. Extremely important to the Eastern Orthodox is the idea of “apostolic succession”, their claim to be the contemporary expression of the ancient church apostles. Each Bishop claims to be able to trace his ordination “pedigree” back to one of the first century apostles- an unbroken succession of church leadership throughout history.
Beliefs & Practices	The Eastern Orthodox recognize seven sacraments (or mysteries): 1) the Eucharist, 2) baptism, 3) chrismation (confirmation with consecrated oil), 4) ordination, 5) penance, 6) marriage, and 7) holy oil for the sick. They believe that the elements of the sacraments become grace-filled through the power of the Holy Spirit. Icons are used as religious objects instead of statues. Their liturgy follows the customs of the eastern churches.
Salvation	“The reception of the gift of salvation is not a one-time event but a life-time process. The teaching of the New Testament is that God’s grace, our free will, and our faith and good works, are intimately connected. We are co-workers with God.”
Compare between Eastern Orthodox & Roman Catholic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthodox priests do not have to be celibate, but Bishops do. • Orthodox do not recognize the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) nor his infallibility.
Guidelines for Witnessing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remember that salvation does not depend on works or on your association with a church. It depends on a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This relationship comes through faith (see Eph. 2:8-9). 2. Pray and trust the Holy Spirit to reach the hearts and minds of those who are lost with the gospel message. 3. Share your testimony. Many Orthodox have never experienced a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Your testimony of what Jesus has accomplished in your life could have a great impact on them. Keep your testimony short. Avoid using terms that are unfamiliar to Orthodox, such as: “walked the aisle,” “got saved,” and “born again.” 4. Explain that you are certain of your salvation because of God’s grace. Make sure that you communicate that your assurance is derived from God’s grace and not from good works or your ability to remain faithful (see 1 John 5:13). 5. Give them a copy of the New Testament. Lead them to texts that explain salvation. 6. Avoid issues that are not central to salvation. 7. Keep the gospel presentation Christ-centered.

Denomination	ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
Statistics	1.3 billion people in the world are considered to be Roman Catholic. This includes 30 million Americans, roughly 10% of the population.
History	Secular historians date the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church as an institution (with centralization and papal authority) to the fifth and sixth centuries.
Polity/Governance	It is a strict Episcopal single hierarchal institution.
Authority	Catholics accept three sources of authority: the Bible, Tradition, and the teaching ministry (Magisterium) of the Church. Bible: Catholics affirm the 66 books of the Protestant Bible, plus several apocryphal books that most Protestants consider spurious. Catholics are encouraged to read the Bible. The teaching of the Catholic Church “forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn ‘the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ,’ by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. ‘Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ’” (CCC, no. 133). Catholics believe that their bishops (in communion with the pope) have been given the task of authentically interpreting both the Bible and Tradition. This task “has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone” (CCC, no. 85). According to the CCC, “The faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms” (CCC, no. 87). The teaching ministry of the Church (Magisterium) is also considered equal in authority to the Bible and Tradition. According to Catholicism, the Bible, sacred Tradition, and the teaching authority of the Church “are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others” (CCC, no. 95).
Beliefs & Practices	The Roman Catholic Church recognize seven sacraments: 1) baptism (infant), 2) confirmation, 3) the Eucharist, 4) sacrament of reconciliation (formerly called penance), 5) anointing of the sick, 6) sacraments of holy orders (ordination), 7) marriage. Mary: Catholics believe that Mary “was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life” (CCC, no. 508). Catholics teach that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life, that at the end of her life she “was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things” (CCC, no. 966). Catholics refer to Mary as “the Holy Mother of God” (CCC, no. 975). They view her as a comediator of God’s grace and as a collaborator with the salvation of Jesus her Son (CCC, nos. 510, 973). According to Pope Paul VI, “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship” (CCC, no. 971). Saints, Purgatory, indulgences...
Salvation	“The saving grace won by Jesus is offered as a free gift to us, accessible through repentance, faith, and baptism. We turn away from our sins, we are sorry for them, and we believe in Jesus Christ and the gospel. Repentance shows our willingness to turn from things that keep us from God, and baptism renews us, filling us with the grace necessary to have faith and to live it.”
Curiosities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clergy must remain celibate.
Guidelines for Witnessing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Remember that salvation does not depend on church membership, but comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9). Pray and trust in the Holy Spirit to use the gospel message to reach the hearts and minds of those who are lost. Share a testimony of your personal faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Your testimony of what Jesus has accomplished in your life can have a great impact on them. Keep your testimony short. Avoid using terms that are unfamiliar to Catholics, such as: “walked the aisle,” “got saved,” and “born again.” Share the assurance of salvation that God’s grace gives you. Make sure that you communicate that your assurance is derived from trusting Jesus and not from your good works or your ability to remain faithful (1 John 5:13). Give them a New Testament. Catholics are now encouraged to read the Bible. Point out texts that explain salvation. (Rom. 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9, 13; John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9.) Avoid getting bogged down with secondary issues that are not central to salvation. Keep the gospel presentation Christ-centered.