



## **President Dmitry Medvedev meets with Patriarch Kirill and bishops, clergy and church public**

[gallery]

On November 5, after his visit to the 10<sup>th</sup> Church-public Exhibition-Forum 'Orthodox Rus. Towards the Day of the People's Unity', President Dmitry Medvedev met with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and representatives of the episcopate, clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Manezh Central Exhibition Hall.

Participating in the meeting were representatives of the church public from many dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church including heads and staff of Synodal departments and charities, as well as Sunday school teachers and pupils, students of secular and church educational institutions, representatives of monastic communities and Orthodox youth organizations, lay activists, cultural figures, scientists and artists.

The head of the state addressed the patriarch and the assembly, saying, 'Today, thanks to our joint work and the efforts of His Holiness the Patriarch the Church maintains successful cooperation with governmental structures and public institutions. In the recent years, we have managed to carry out several very important initiatives'. One of these initiatives, the president said, was the teaching of Basic Orthodox Culture. 'In the last two years, beginning from the fourth term of the academic year 2009-2010, the values and traditions of Orthodoxy has begun to be taught to children in almost 10 schools in 221 regions of our country. Next year, the basics of religious culture will be taught in all the constituent regions of our state. Perhaps there are difficulties and nuances of its own, but the decision has been made and it is implemented. And the most important thing is that it is beneficial', President Medvedev stressed.

'Our state, which is secular in nature, is interested in involving the Church in the education of both children and youth, in setting new examples for emulation, and in supporting the defenders of our homeland. I have to admit that our traditional national values have always been the foundation for having an inter-ethnic peace and inter-confessional accord maintained in our multinational country. I am confident that it will continue to be so and for this reason I would like to thank all those present here for what you have done to maintain peace in our country and to promote the consolidation of spiritual principles in our society', President Medvedev said.

Patriarch Kirill spoke in response. Then representatives of the Church asked the Russian President

questions about urgent problems of relations between church and state.

*Patriarchal Press Service/DECR Communication Service*

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