

Annunciation Cathedral of New England RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Welcome to our new and returning families!

The goal of the Sunday School is to show our children how to lead Christian lives. The Sunday School teacher supplements and reinforces the work of the priest and the parents in educating the child to know Jesus Christ and His Church. Our first concern is that the child learns about our Savior, Jesus Christ. Using His teachings as our foundations we bring the child to know and practice his Orthodox faith. Each teacher in the Sunday School is not only a source of religious information to the child, but also one of the child's prime examples of Christian behavior.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated, conscientious and responsible group of volunteer teachers and assistants who spend each week preparing a lesson to teach our children on Sunday. However they can only be with them for a mere 45 minutes to an hour a week. Family involvement is essential to a child's religious growth and development. As parents you can:

Encourage prompt and regular attendance each Sunday. Ask your children what was learned in class and discuss the lesson. Show an interest in your children's projects and take-home work. Encourage your children to do their assignments and help them if help is needed. When a family worships together, when classes are not in session, it helps the children realize that church worship and Sunday School go together.

You may not be in front of a class on Sunday morning, but you are indeed a teacher of Orthodox Christianity by the fact that you are a parent. *Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life.* (Proverbs 22:6). Church and home go hand in hand. SHARE THE EXPERIENCE!

The Teachers and Staff of the Cathedral Sunday School

PROCEDURES ON SUNDAYS: All students and teachers are expected to be in Church no later than 10:00a.m. All classes will leave to go to class after Holy Communion. Classes last a minimum of 45 minutes. Students and their parents and teachers are invited to sit together up front in the center left section of pews marked for the Sunday School. Parents & teachers to please be seated at either end of the pews and children in the middle so they can see Liturgy better. We do this for two reasons: 1) So you can participate in the Liturgy as a family, 2) To allow Fr. Demetri to address the children as a group. The only thing we ask is to allow the younger students to sit in the first 3 or 4 pews by age group (with their parents) so that they can witness the Liturgy easier.

BEHAVIOR: A respectful behavior for the teachers and other students is expected of all children. Misbehavior will be brought to the parents' attention.

BIBLES: All children registered in the Sunday School will be given bibles as a gift if they DO NOT have one. Please contact your teacher for more information.

HOLY COMMUNION: Students are encouraged to receive Holy Communion weekly during the school year when properly prepared. Children and their parents are invited to worship together at the Divine Liturgy and receive Holy Communion together. Students then go down to their classes for their lesson.

PTA: We have an active group of parents who work diligently during the school year on behalf of the Sunday School. They take care of most of the extracurricular events, breakfasts and children's snacks. We ask that all parents be a part of our PTA and participate as often as you can, whenever you can. Signups will be posted, or for more information contact Mrs. Lauren Jannakas, our Sunday School PTA President.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION:

Diane Valkanas Memorial Scholarship - Given to the senior who has demonstrated their knowledge of the Orthodox faith and is an example of true Christian values. The teachers in the class recommend him or her for this award. The scholarship is awarded annually by family of Diane Valkanas who was a member of our Sunday School and departed this earthly life at a young age.

Andrellos Sunday School Scholarship –This scholarship honors the memory of lifelong Sunday School teacher and registrar Anne Andrellos whose greatest joy was to be with the children. It is also named after her son Peter who worked tirelessly every year in support of the Sunday School with his many talents. This award is given to a graduating senior and is awarded by the Sunday School in their honor.

Thomas A. Saxonis Scholarship

Has been established in his memory by his wife Gayle, a former Cathedral Sunday School teacher. Tommy was a successful businessman who had a deep appreciation for family. He would have been proud and honored to know that this fund has been established to help a Cathedral Sunday School student each year.

Attendance Award – An end of year award given to those students having the best attendance (two or less absences). Attendance at another church is not marked as an absence provided a note is given to the teacher.

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL: All students in grades 4-12 are required to write an essay for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Students in grades 4-6 are asked to give their speeches in front of their class and are given certificates of recognition. Students in grades 7-12 are given a chance to give their speeches at our Parish festival with a chance to go on to the District festival. We ask that parents encourage their children to participate in the oratorical festival by helping them write their essay and practice giving the speech in front of their family.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL: Our main mission in the Sunday School is to help the children to know their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One way this is achieved is by practicing their Orthodox Faith through doing good works. We offer many community projects that our students and their families can participate in.

1) TOYS FOR TOTS

Every December we support the efforts of the U.S. Marines by asking for donations of unwrapped toys. The collection happens during the first three Sundays in December. The toys are given to the U.S. Marines who distribute them to needy families throughout New England.

2) HELLENIC CARDIAC FUND FOR CHILDREN

A favorite of the Sunday School this fundraiser donates all of the proceeds gathered to the Hellenic Cardiac Fund at Children's Hospital in Boston. The fund helps children from Greece who are in need of surgery or other hospital care.

3) ORTHODOX MISSIONS

A collection is taken each year to help our spread the word of Orthodoxy in the world. Past donations have helped build churches in various countries including Africa.

OUR CURRICULUM: The curriculum follows the “Living Our Orthodox Faith” curriculum set by the Archdiocese Religious Education Department. Books, pamphlets, activities, arts and crafts and music from a variety of other Orthodox and Christian sources supplement this. Most of all, the experience, dedication and ingenuity of our teachers brings to life HIS WORD in each of our children.

KINDERGARTEN Age 5: The children are exposed to basic Church teachings and liturgical events and introduced to our Orthodox feast days. Singing, coloring and flannels are also done. The main book is “Happy With God”.

FIRST GRADE Age 6: This grade focuses on the students expanding world from the family to church to the world in which they live. They begin to learn the Lord's Prayer. The main book is "Me and My World".

SECOND GRADE Age 7: By exploring that they are loved by God through experiences at home and at church, the students come to realize that service to others, respect and obedience are ways we show our love for God and one another. The Lord's Prayer is reinforced and the Ten Commandments are introduced. The main book is "Loving God".

THIRD GRADE Age 8: The students discover how Jesus has taught us to share. The experience of sharing is connected to the home through family events at church through the Divine Liturgy and in the world through acts of justice and charity. The Lord's Prayer in Greek and English is taught and the Ten Commandments are reviewed. Main book is "Sharing God's World".

FOURTH GRADE Age 9: The students learn how an individual grows through worship in the liturgy, prayer, fasting and through relationships in and outside the family. History of the church is discussed and bible skills are developed. The main book is "Growing with God".

FIFTH GRADE Age 10: The students will learn to respond to God through terms of personal faith and the basics of Christian morality by reading stories of the heroes of the Faith who have responded to God's call through their examples of faith, loyalty, self-sacrifice, love, justice and social responsibility. The saints and major feasts are also discussed as well as the parables of our Lord and how they present major teachings and basic truths for application to daily living. The main books are "God Calls Us", "Lives of the Saints and Major Feasts" and "Parables of Our Lord".

SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADES Ages 11 & 12/A two-year program: A detailed discussion of the Divine Liturgy is done. Church history is expanded upon. An introduction to the "Creed" is begun. The main book is "The Joyful Feast". The second year of study is on the structure of the church and church services. Prayer and how to grow in prayer is taught. The "Creed" is taught in depth. Main books are "Worship in the Orthodox Church" & "My Orthodox Prayer book". Some of the teenage curriculum from the archdiocese is also used during this class.

EIGHTH AND NINTH GRADES Ages 13 & 14/A two-year program: Our relationship to God, to others and to ourselves is discussed. The focus is on the moral and spiritual lives of the students through the discussion of contemporary issues. History of the Church is done as a review. The main books are "Moral and Contemporary Issues" and "Rejoicing in One Lord, Jesus Christ". Some of the teenage curriculum from the archdiocese is also used during this class. The second year of study is devoted to each of the "Ten Commandments" and "The Sacraments" in detail. The "Creed" is reviewed and church history is reviewed. The Main books are "Sacraments of the Orthodox Church" and "The Teenage Ten Commandments".

TENTH/ELEVENTH/TWELFTH GRADES Ages 15 - 17/A three-year program: This class alternates between discussion of moral and contemporary issues and how church doctrine deals with these issues and the origins of the Orthodox Church and the differences and similarities with other faiths. Main books include "Contemporary Issues", "455 Questions on Faith" and "The Orthodox Church". The 12th grade seniors are assigned to be an assistant in one of the Sunday School classes and volunteer for a charitable event such as the "Toys For Tots" or the "Walk For Hunger".