

**St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Sunday School Student Handbook 2016–2017
Bethlehem, PA**



Most blessed Lord, send the grace of Your Holy Spirit on me to strengthen me that I may learn well the subject I am about to study and by it become a better person for Your glory, the comfort of my family and the benefit of Your Church and our Nation.

Amen

WELCOME!

OBJECTIVES OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

According to the Gospel of St. Luke, Jesus appeared in the Temple at twelve years old and astonished the teachers of the day with His insight and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Guided by the Holy Spirit, He went forth from there and “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God.” (Luke 2:52).

It is this same Holy Spirit that we call upon today to guide and inspire the children of the Lord and our teachers as they participate in Sunday School at St. Nicholas Cathedral, so that they may also “increase in wisdom and stature and in favor with God.”

VISION

By the end of the twelfth grade, each Sunday School student shall possess a fundamental understanding of the Orthodox faith, which will inspire a lifetime commitment and devotion to the faith.

MISSION

The Sunday School Program has a curriculum of study of the Orthodox faith that will enhance each student’s knowledge in the following core areas: Bible and Church history, Doctrine, Spirituality and Worship.



SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS WITH WORSHIP

It is the calling and responsibility of Christian parents to actively participate in their children's religious education and spiritual upbringing. That includes making the religious education a family commitment, beginning with family worship. Part of that commitment is making sure children arrive on time for Church services, observe proper Church etiquette and are prepared to participate as can be expected given their age.

Families should try and arrive at the beginning of Othros or Divine Liturgy. Upon entering the Narthex, have your children light candles and offer prayers for themselves and others as they do so. They should reverence the icon(s) in the Narthex, which often contains a depiction of the saint or feast of the day, then quietly enter into the Nave for the service. During the course of the Divine Liturgy, children are encouraged to participate by following the service in the Liturgy Book and participating in reading and singing whenever directed.



HOLY COMMUNION

At the center of the Divine Liturgy is the consecration and distribution of Holy Communion. During the Divine Liturgy, we take the gifts of bread and wine, offer them to the Lord in thanksgiving for all His blessings, and the Holy Spirit, in turn, blesses them to become the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is important, then that we do not treat Holy Communion with a casual attitude, but one of reverence and thanksgiving.

Proper preparation for Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion on a regular basis as a family is an important part of keeping the Church alive in our homes. Many families maintain the Orthodox practice of going before their icons together the night before or morning of the service, offering their family prayers, and seeking forgiveness from one another before approaching the Chalice.

CONFESSION

As Orthodox Christians, we are expected to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Confession where we repent our sins and receive a prayer of absolution before receiving Holy Communion. We are blessed to have 3 priests. Call the office and schedule an appointment with either Father Palis, Father Petrides or Father Kossis. Confession should be practiced monthly if not then definitely before any Major Feast Day and Lenten Period i.e.: Fast of the Nativity, Great Lent of Pascha, Fast of the Apostles, Fast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. Children may start as young as 6 or 7.

FASTING

Confession and Fasting go hand in hand. Fasting from meat and dairy is observed on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year, during the 4 major Fasting Seasons as mentioned above as well other one day Feasts. Please refer to your Orthodox Church Calendar for more fasting periods. It is important to fast and repent our sins in order to empty ourselves from the cares and concerns of this world. This is a means of preparation and conditioning, which will enable us serve God and grow closer to Him.

It is important that we as parents set an example for the entire family. Our children will learn when the teachings and practices become part of our home, on a daily basis. In return, the Church is not limited to the physical building they attend on Sunday but that it is alive in our own homes.

DIVINE LITURGY and SUNDAY SCHOOL Schedule

NEW - We have a new Divine Liturgy Service Schedule, will have to have **two (2) Divine Liturgy services** on Sundays. There will be some Sundays where we will only have **one (1) Divine Liturgy service**. Please see time schedule below.

- **Two (2) Divine Liturgy Service schedule:**

- 1st Service*

- Othros - 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

- Divine Liturgy - 8:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

- Sunday School- 9:45am to 10:30am (begins right after Holy Communion)**

- 2nd Service*

- Divine Liturgy - 10:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

- **One (1) Divine Liturgy Service schedule:** (*Occasions for **one** Sunday Service would be: Sundays of Major Feasts, General Assemblies, Elections, Graduations*)

- Othros 7:30 a.m to 8:45 a.m.

- Divine Liturgy - 8:45 a.m to 10:00 a.m

- Sunday School- 9:45am to 10:30am (begins right after Holy Communion)**

Sunday School starts AFTER Holy Communion of the 1st Service at 9:45am and will dismiss at 10:30 am just in time for the Gospel Reading of the 2nd Service. All children who attended the 1st service will be dismissed at the end of Sunday School and the children attending the 2nd Service will arrive to Church at 9:45 a.m for Sunday School and at dismissal will proceed into Church to attend the rest of the 2nd Service already in progress.

CLASS ROOMS

Ages 2 year old through 10th Grades classrooms are downstairs and the 11th and 12th Grades have class in the library.

CHANTING CLASS

In an effort to continue teaching our children the hymns of our Church, we are starting all our Sunday School classes with an opening prayer and chanting of a hymn that coincides with the ecclesiastical season in both English and Greek as well as the hymn of St. Nicholas. This will provide a basis of learning that will be consistent from year to year. We are also continuing with Chanting class for Grades 4-12 the first Sunday of every month. They will be learning more of the Divine Liturgy and other Feastal Hymns. This is a wonderful way for our children to learn the hymns that are sung in the church every Sunday so they can participate in Divine Liturgy by chanting with the parish. We will also continue with our Youth Choir that will perform when we will have **ONE SERVICE Sundays**. Look out for 'The Weekend Update' email for our new schedule.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ETIQUETTE

In order for our children to get the most out of the lessons, we are asking that your children follow a few simple rules.

- Please arrive **ON TIME**. We are limited to 45 minutes and we need every minute!
- Walk to the classrooms, **DO NOT RUN!**
- While in class, our children are expected to:
 - Be respectful to your classmates and your teacher
 - Keep your hands to yourself
 - Listen attentively and follow instructions
 - **TURN OFF CELL PHONES** (We prefer **NO CELL PHONES**.)
 - **NO** chewing gum

VOLUNTEERS

There is a lot of preparation that takes place to put our Sunday school program together. We **ALWAYS** need help with class helpers, teaching assistants and teachers. If interested in volunteering to help the Sunday School with any of these positions, please let us know. Thank you!

ST. NICHOLAS "WEEKEND UPDATE" EMAIL:

A weekly parish events and information email is available to all who sign up and www.stnicholas.org. It contains information about information and upcoming events and various ministries of our parish, as well as electronic bulletin. Sign up today!

SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF

Proistaminos
Protopresbyter
Presbyter
Director
Co-Director

Father Nicholas Palis
Father Nicholas Kossis
Father Alexandros Petridis
Niki Hahalis
Thalia Schmidt

npalis@yahoo.com
610-694-0948
fralexandros@stnicholas.org
alex.hahalis@rcn.com
rtschmidt@rcn.com

Grade

Teacher

2 year old and 3 year old:

Mrs. Joanna Athanasiou
Mrs. Ellen Hiotis

4 year old (Pre-Kindergarten):

Mrs. Eleni Sitaras

Kindergarten:

Mrs. Helen Lavin

1st Grade:

Mrs. Stephanie Taddeo

2nd Grade:

Ms. Elleni Pippis

3rd Grade:

Ms. Elleni Pippis

4th Grade:

Mrs. Jennifer Adams

5th Grade:

Mrs. Aggeliki Gentis

6th and 7th Grades:

Mrs. Thalia Schmidt

8th Grade:

Mrs. Nitsa Vasiliadis

9th and 10th Grades:

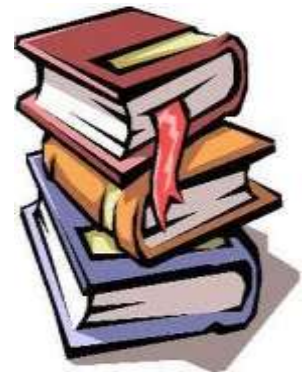
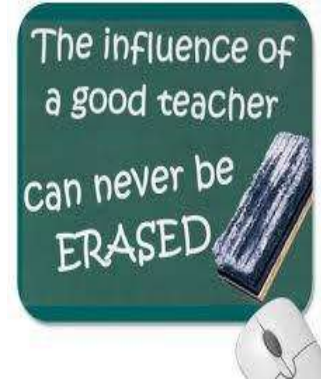
Mr. Dean Zalalas
Dr. Sotirios Vasilopoulos

11th and 12th Grades:

Mr. Steve Kandianis
Mrs. Georgia Vasilopoulos

Chanting Instructor:

Mrs. Georgia Vasilopoulos



The purpose of a Sunday School Program is to support and reinforce the parent's efforts as they guide and instruct their children in the "Orthodox Way of Life".